

DARK HERESY™

CREATURES ANATHEMA™



A BESTIARY OF ALIENS,
BEASTS, AND DAEMONS

WARHAMMER
40,000
ROLEPLAY

DARK HERESY

CREATURES ANATHEMA



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM
DARKNESS OF THE 4^IST MILLENNIUM

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INTRODUCTION

The Imperium faces many foes. Aliens and daemons lurk beyond its borders, while corruption, heresy, and treachery fester within. Agents of the Inquisition face these threats more often than most, and the Holy Ordos have become adept through necessity at surviving against and defeating such opponents. The Calixis Sector is no stranger to creatures both bizarre and nightmarish—it is home for many persistent and deadly enemies of mankind. In order to prevail against such monsters, no matter how bizarre or lethal, the Inquisition provides its Acolytes with the most powerful weapon at its disposal: knowledge.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

CREATURES ANATHEMA is a bestiary of the monstrous enemies that await in the shadows of the Calixis Sector. Also present is a series of commentaries and advice from Inquisitor Felroth Gelt, a very experienced member of the Ordo Malleus who is very knowledgeable about the sector at large. Gelt began his career as a Monodominant Puritan, but over the centuries he turned more and more often to the lure of the Radical. He joined the Xanthite faction in 809.M41 and vanished from official records. Thus, his contributions to the book are quite suspect, having been born in such a contrary and inconstant mind. Other contributions are included from Gelt's allies or contemporaries, and should also receive the same scepticism.

The creatures listed in this book come with ready-made hooks that a GM can use to drop the monsters directly into his game. The following chapters each focus on a different breed of monster that Acolytes may face in the course of their duties.

CHAPTER 1: MUTATION

Chapter 1 begins with a section on mutants and mutation in the Calixis Sector, including a look at some specific mutant threats and two breeds of mutantkind that hunger for the downfall of the Imperium. Mutants like the ones found in this chapter can provide excellent sources of villains and antagonists for Acolytes.

CHAPTER 2: FORBIDDEN SCIENCE

Chapter 2 focuses on Forbidden Science: the horrors and mistakes of tech-heresy laid bare.

CHAPTER 3: DEATH WORLDS

Chapter 3 discusses death worlds of the Calixis Sector and provides both an overview of these deadly planets and also details some of the more dangerous denizens thereof.

CHAPTER 4: VERMIN & PREDATORS

Chapter 4 showcases certain verminous and predatory lifeforms existing in the Calixis Sector. The teeming masses of humanity found in hives across the Imperium attract vermin and other beasts which prey upon mankind.

NEW TRAIT

IMPROVED NATURAL WEAPONS

This creature's attacks are powerful enough to crush plasteel or punch through armour. The creature's natural weapons no longer count as Primitive.

CHAPTER 5: XENOS

Chapter 5 includes several different alien species inimical to human life; the alien is an obstacle to the Imperium's prosperity. In addition, this chapter also includes a sampling of xenos weaponry.

CHAPTER 6: THE FORCES OF CHAOS

Chapter 6 deals with the Great Enemy, Chaos, and those daemons and other warpspawn who serve the Ruinous Powers and are often found within the Calixis Sector.

CHAPTER 7: ADVERSARIES

Chapter 7 centres around how to use adversaries in a Dark Heresy campaign, including advice on how to scale enemies for your player group and some optional rules to shape the roles of enemies in the game.





MUTATION

USING MUTATION IN
YOUR GAME

•

ARCHIMEDES NOXT

•

HULLGHAST

•

SINNER'S PLAGUES OF
THE DRUSUS MARCHES

CHAPTER I: MUTATION

Twisted in flesh is twisted in soul.

—Abbess Sevencia of Sisk

Mutants, also known as twists and chem-dregs, can be found on almost any human world in the galaxy, and are often a fact of life that Imperial authorities (and most Imperial citizens) would rather ignore. In its most basic sense, mutation is the changing of the divine physical form of mankind into something unnatural or even alien. This twisting occurs within a person's very genes, warping them at the deepest level and ensuring that their progeny will be tainted with mutation as well.

The Magos Biologios has long striven to determine the causes of mutation, often with varying levels of success. The most accomplished Tech-priests theorize that mutation is the result of extreme environmental conditions, radiation, or toxins. It is certainly true that the largest concentrations of mutants can be found in the rad-sumps beneath hives or on heavily polluted worlds such as Solomon. However, families have lived in the blighted Interior Zones of Solomon for generations without exhibiting mutation, and some of the wealthiest spire-families on Scintilla have abominations in their family trees hidden away behind locked doors.

In the Calixis Sector, as with the Imperium as a whole, mutants are dealt with in one of two ways. If they are not exterminated, they are oppressed and controlled. Most worlds,



USING MUTATION IN YOUR GAME

Corruption is a strong theme in Dark Heresy, and mutation is one outward method to illustrate it. The lot of a mutant is a sorry one, filled with guilt imposed by the Ecclesiarchy for whatever sin may have caused his body to twist and change. However, it is important to remember that mutants, while bizarrely altered by their cursed "gift," are essentially humans, and the kinship between mutantkind and mankind can be a potent story element.

hive worlds in particular, have sizable mutant underclasses that are employed as serfs or indentured labourers. They are often responsible for handling the jobs no one else will take, and work in hellish conditions with little in the way of rest or recompense.

It is no surprise that while the Ecclesiarchy preaches that the mutant should beg forgiveness for their sins of mutation, many mutants rebel against this line of reasoning. Some mutants take pride in their deformities, dubbing themselves the next step in human evolution. This is dangerous for the Imperium, for once a mutant believes itself superior to 'true' humans, it is but a short step before it actively resents its position in Imperial society. Such resentment can breed insurrection and all-out rebellion. These bitter, merciless wars are usually fought to the total annihilation of one side or the other, for the mutant knows better than to expect mercy from the Imperium, and the Imperium knows mutantkind is eager to extract retribution for a lifetime of oppression.



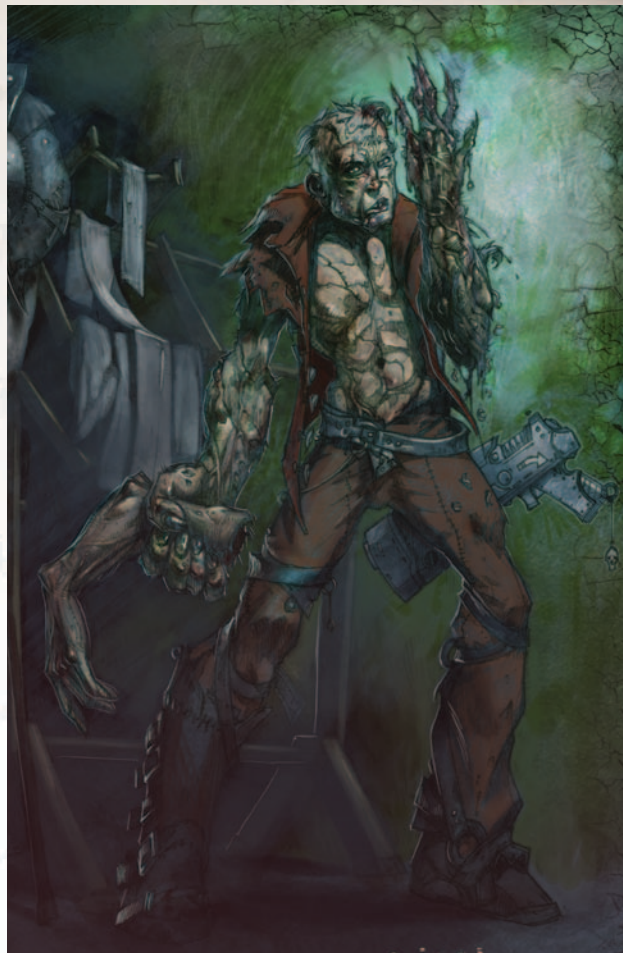
ARCHIMEDES NOXT

Legends exist even among the criminal networks of Calixis: the Overscum Quorum of Praxilla, who rule the spires from the bottom of the hives; the Flit-Runner League, who can move anyone to any planet, no questions asked and never intercepted; Qeel D'ait, the shadowman whose gelt-throne was bought with a thousand thousand kills. And then there is Archimedes Noxt, creature of solitude but hidden operator of countless gang networks, faceless and invisible to his minions except for odd messages and even odder messengers—and unknown to almost all, a mutant of the highest degree.

Imperial records have no record of his planet of birth or true identity. Most intra-system Arbites Judges know him only as a criminal of the worst kind, to be captured, interrogated, and executed (preferably in that order). The Ordo Hereticus know more of course; he has been operating in Calixis for many generations under a variety of names and faces, a by-product of his unique mutation.

Noxt's flesh is unstable, growing necrotic and falling in clumps as the tissue expires. The only way he can stave off total decay is by replacing the carrion with new flesh, ripped fresh from living humans and implanted where the dying tissue existed. His body can accept entire masses of tissue, including internal organs, limbs, and skin. While the process is extremely painful and it takes time for the new tissue to meld, it does allow him effective immortality. His appearance can vary wildly, but is oftimes a revolting patchwork of skin tones and musculature even though he attempts to seek similar replacements. As he cannot replace flesh until it begins to decay, he is sometimes forced to exist with legs of differing lengths, eyes of differing colours, and the like. For these reasons, he normally wears very loose clothing, long gloves, and a wide-brimmed hat to cover his often disturbing visage.

Noxt keeps his mutation hidden from all, and has killed without hesitation if any of his allies have even suspected he is not entirely human. Knowing he already has some Inquisitorial attention, he does not want to run the risk of betrayal—even some of the crimelords he deals with have puritanical views on the mutant threat. Those closest to him



are led to believe he is either a messenger from the real Noxt or simply an unfortunate opportunist recovering from a brutal assault.

No one knows how long Noxt has truly been operating in the Calixis Sector, and it is likely Noxt himself has either forgotten or cannot remember the years gone by. Certainly he is insane by any standard definition of the term, utterly amoral and capable of the most heinous acts; in order to survive, he is willing to perform any act or butcher anyone he finds.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Galt: 778. Mar

Do not be fooled by the smokescreens and rumours. Noxt exists, as any who have seen the remains of his victims can attest. Indeed, sometimes the only way our local Enforcers find he is now on their planet is from the torn corpses he leaves behind. Noxt's criminal activities are worrisome enough, but his mutant abilities are something I would wish to examine and study first hand. Could his mutation be replicated in a more practical form, allowing perfect organ and limb transplantation? Could he be even used as a nearly indestructible agent?

It would take some persuasion to bend him to my will, but then I have many excellent persuaders in my employ. Though clearly not sane, he is obviously intelligent, with extensive contacts throughout the system both criminal and heretical, and possesses a network of minions to rival that of any of my colleagues. To gain Noxt's knowledge could be a valuable enterprise on a number of levels...

It is possible that in previous incarnations Noxt was a righteous citizen or even a hero. For now, however, Noxt is certainly no saint and is responsible for some of the most insidious if not outright heretical criminal activities in Calixis. With the only constant to his features being his grotesque collage of patchwork flesh, even genetic or morphic scans are unreliable at best. He is the dark stain throughout the sector, hidden behind myths and underhive legends even as he creates new ones to better cloak himself. Most who encounter him never know who they face, and those who do know rarely live to tell of it.

Archimedes Noxt Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
33	35	34 ⁽⁶⁾	44	21	43	37	47	39

Corruption Points: 49

Insanity Points: 58

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 24

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Adeptus Arbiters, Administratum, Imperium, Underworld) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +15, Disguise (Fel) +5, Evaluate (Int), Inquiry (Fel), Intimidate (Int) +15, Secret Tongue (Underworld Lords), Speak Language (High Gothic, Hive Dialect, Low Gothic).

Talents: Air of Authority, Decadence, Die Hard, Disturbing Voice, Hardy, Hatred (Inquisition), Iron Jaw, Jaded, Melee Training (Chain, Primitive), Paranoia, Peer (Underworld), Pistol Training (Bolt, Las, SP), Street Fighting, Strong Minded.

Traits: Disturbing, Mutations, Patchwork Flesh[†], New Flesh for Old^{††}.

Mutations: Feels No Pain, Grotesque, Hideous Strength (x2), Tough Hide, Vile Deformity.

Malignancies: Fell Obsession.

Disorders: Flashbacks.

[†]**Patchwork Flesh:** Depending on the suitability and appearance of the body parts he has recently absorbed, Noxt may cause Fear 1 (Disturbing) at the GM's discretion. Note this should only be where his appearance is beyond grotesque, or when large portions of flesh are dying off in chunks.

^{††}**New Flesh for Old:** Noxt's special mutation grants him the Regeneration trait. Also, should he suffer Critical Damage that effectively removes or ruins a body part, he can replace the damaged/missing part with a new one should he be able to secure it (i.e., rip it away from another living being). It takes 1d5 rounds for the new flesh to meld with his body.

Armour: Flak jacket (Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3), mesh vest (Body 4), wide-brimmed leather hat with concealed mesh (Head 2).

Weapons: Hand cannon with red-dot laser sight (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Reload 2 Full), unarmed (1d5+3[†] I; Primitive), chainsword (1d10+8[†] R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), weighted leather gloves (treat as brass knuckles; 1d5+5[†] I; Primitive).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: 4 Hand cannon ammunition clips (mix of man-stopper and dumdum), functional but well-made loose clothing, large tinted eyeglasses, 12 lho-sticks, makeup kit, 4 different ident

slates, lascutter, manacles, multikey, micro-bead, 3d10 Throne Gelt, 100xd10 Throne Gelt in hidden belt pouch, concealed pouch with precious gems or metals (worth 50xd10 Gelt).

Threat Rating: Hereticus Minoris.

Definition: Human Mutant, Hereticus Minoris.

Explication: Even the flesh of this mutant rejects his diseased spirit and dies off. Only by killing others and stealing their healthy tissue can this abomination continue his existence.

Admonition: Approach this being with extreme caution. Though misshapen and awkward in appearance, the mutant has many lifetimes of craftiness and many equally damned accomplices ready to aid him. When cornered or cut off from retreat, he becomes wildly brutal as he seeks escape, but there can never be refuge from the Emperor's Gaze.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Acolytes are sent by their Inquisitor to aid local Enforcers against a serial killer operating through a high-class hab network. Important people are being mauled and ripped into parts, and favours are being called in for the high level attention. The true killer is, of course, Noxt, who unknowingly selected a plague-infested victim for a new shoulder and upper chest. The disease is causing Noxt's ever-present necrosis to advance, and he is racing to replace tissue before his body expires. He only trusts the rich to be healthy enough to serve, and is willing to kill as many as he can to survive until his body stabilizes. The Acolytes must penetrate his criminal associates as well as any blackmailed Enforcers in order to find the truth of the matter.

Reports of a mutant enclave lead the Acolytes to a feral world where extensive forests conceal much from Imperial scrutiny. The mutant commune is discovered by the Acolytes, only to be destroyed in a massive explosion. More detective work reveals this enclave was the setting for a large scale drug refinery, using native plants to produce highly sought after narcotics. One side effect of one of the drugs is biological regeneration, something which drove Noxt to produce that drug as well as destroy the factory when it drew Imperial attention. Now with the Acolytes investigating and limited off-world transport, he is hunting them to eliminate any scrutiny as well as for any needed spare parts.

HULLGHAST

Deep in the forgotten reaches of voidship holds, scattered in countless Space Hulks drifting through space, and hidden away even in such innocuous vessels as bulk refinery and pilgrim ships lurk two breeds of highly dangerous mutants—the Ghilliam and, their more dangerous brethren, the Hullghasts. These mutants have become inured to the worst of the polluted and irradiated voidship decks and are able to thrive there, albeit with a loss of any remaining humanity.

Some Hullghast corpses have been recovered (usually from lifeless derelict vessels), and there is a clear indication that Hullghasts share an origin with the far more common Ghilliam and are a more mutated version of that wretched creature. Hullghast bodies are twisted in the extreme, with hairless leathery skin and vicious talon-like claws. Their oversized mouths are filled with layers of huge teeth, ready to rend flesh from bone. Pustules of flesh erupt in tusks and horns, covering their bodies with natural weaponry. While the more humanoid Ghilliam look like sickly and crazed men, Hullghasts appear more akin to daemons or the stuff of nightmares.

Also, unlike the wretched Ghilliam who exist primarily as furtive scavengers, Hullghasts are more aggressive and dangerous. Where the Ghilliam generally form groups to overwhelm their prey, lone Hullghasts openly attack any crewmen who dare venture too deep below decks. Often times, they also prey on Ghilliam who drift too far from

their squalid hovels, though the cleaner meat of unmutated humans seems preferred.

For those travelling through the void, these horrific mutants present a danger within that matches the dangers without, as terrifying as the warp entities held back only by the ship's Gellar Field. Just as travellers' souls would be devoured should the field collapse and fail, so their bodies would be ripped apart as food if these terrors of the Black Holds are unleashed.



Hullghast Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
44	10	37	40	38	16	39	34	04

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 18

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S) +20, Concealment (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +10, Speak Language (Ship Cant).

Talents: Berserk Charge, Hardy, Hatred (Humans), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Resistance (Cold).

Traits: Bestial, Brutal Charge, Dark Sight, Fear 1 (Disturbing), Improved Natural Weapons, Mutations (1d5 Minor Mutations, see page 334 of **DARK HERESY**), Natural Weapons (Bite and Claws), Toxic, Survival of the Fittest^{††}.



††**Survival of the Fittest:** The Hullghast mutation allows the creature to survive in the most hostile surroundings known to man. They are immune to most environmental hazards such as poisons, mild doses of radiation, pollutants, intense gravity fluctuations, airborne toxins, and almost anything else that could be encountered in the Black Holds. What has not killed them has indeed made them stronger. Hullghasts automatically succeed on Toughness tests versus Toxic weapons.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Club or sharpened bone (1d5+3† R; Primitive), bite and claws (1d10+4† R).

†Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Hereticus Minoris.

Definition: Humanoid Mutant Extremis, Carnivore/Necrovore, Hereticus Minoris.

Explication: A stable mutation allowing the already wretched Ghilliam and other bilge scum to flourish in their diseased and foul pits. Ferocious and aggressive, they are to be destroyed wherever possible.

Admonition: As these bestial mutants seek out the dark places to dwell, let fire act as the Emperor's Wrathful Light to burn their unclean flesh with purifying flame.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Acolytes are travelling to their next mission when they discover their stowed cargo has been broken into and stolen, their quarters invaded and ransacked. The ensuing investigation leads them below decks to horrors they were not expecting—a conspiracy between the mutants of the Black Holds and the cultists among the voidship's crew who both worship and fear these creatures.

The Acolytes are assigned to guard an important dignitary, a personal friend of their Inquisitor. En route, the ship undergoes a mutiny as the impressed conscripts and deckhands seek to challenge the rightful rule of their captain. However, the truth is far more complicated than it initially appears. The uprising of the voidship's crew was triggered by a flood of Hullghasts clawing up out of the Black Holds to overwhelm and devour anything in their path. The Ghilliam who normally leave offerings for the Hullghasts had been purged recently to ensure a smooth transit for the dignitary, thus precipitating the Hullghasts to riot and the conscripts to flee for their lives. The Acolytes must fight alongside the ships' officers to not only defeat the conscript uprising but also the nightmare mutants following right after them.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 799 Mar

I've never quite trusted those who travel their whole lives in the void. Constant exposure to the Warp can taint even the strongest soul. I myself have spent decades traversing the Emphyrean, and I have learned this bitter lesson: devout faith and the most secure Gellar Field provide only so much protection.

In more recent years, however, I have uncovered reports of similar incidents occurring elsewhere in the Battlesheet Calixis and on some merchant vessels. These reports reveal the Hullghast's presence, if only one knows where to look. On one system ship for example, conduit leaks blew several deck layers open. Much like a woefully placed spade can bring forth a plague of worms from the ground, the venting plasma brought forth bellowing multitudes of Hullghast mutants. Over half the crew and all of the passengers were lost, and the ship abandoned to its fate. The mysteries of vessels found emptied of their crew or Battlesheet cruisers that never reach their destination have gained another potential explanation other than xenos raiders or warp storms. I find that this investigation has only aggravated my personal dislike of warp travel.

THE SINNERS' PLAGUES OF THE DRUSUS MARCHES

In the first decades of the 8th century M41, the Sinners' Plagues flared like pox-marks upon worlds of the Drusus Marches. It was a time of weeping, uprising, and apostasy, a riot of fear that brought death and corruption far beyond that of the Plagues themselves. The stricken suffered a rapid and dire mutation of twisted bone and misshapen growth within hours or days of contagion—and warping of the mind soon followed that of the flesh.

The Calixian Ecclesiarchy called it the God-Emperor's Scourge, preaching that the Plagues were a punishment for hidden corruption, the sins of the soul made manifest and apparent upon the flesh. False seers and cults arose, predicting the next victim world of the Plague of Sins Revealed. Structures both civil and orbital burned across the Marches.

Yet the Plagues were not an act of the God-Emperor or a curse of dark gods, but the work of the heretek Magos Biologis Sar Resque. Resque was declared heretek and Excommunicate by a Mechanicus tribunal in 710.M41, after deliberately releasing a mutation-plague upon Outpost 1253. She fled with her followers, and the Sinners' Plagues blossomed in her wake. It was not until 718.M41, when the Cult of Sollex battled Resque's warships in the outer voids of Tygress I, that the Inquisition learned the truth. The Iron Wall of silence had held for eight long years whilst the Sollexi hunted Excommunicate Resque and she sowed plague and mutation across the Marches.

The last group of Resque's heretek followers were destroyed along with the colony hive of Teruxyne in 722.M41, but the Plagues have continued throughout the Marches, a lesser outbreak once or twice in each decade. Resque herself remains at large, working towards a goal that is largely unknown to the Ordos and kept a dark secret within the Mechanicus.

The hidden truth is that Resque suffers the mind-rust of Transcendancy: she denies the Omnissiah's existence, believing instead that the Omnissiah Who Will Be must arise from the Mechanicus. Resque is creating a grand tech-heresy of genetic corruption—enacting data-psalms upon sacred genes, tainting the pattern of man as though it were a cogitator and her Plagues the key-slate. She seeks the Golden Gene-Pattern, believing it unlocks the race of Men Beyond Men—beings of infinite knowledge, each one an Omnissiah. Fragments left by past hereteks have taught Resque to watch for the Five False Patterns, each an abhuman monster that is nonetheless a step upon the road to Transcendence.

Later Sinners' Plagues have already created some examples of the First False Pattern, a profoundly mutated class of being Resque calls the Transfigured. A Transfigured's flesh is made strong, its appearance warped far from human, yet in some way glowing with righteous health and vigour. Its twisted face has a saint's calm and surety. A Transfigured has intelligence and will to dwarf any Magos, but has become alien and incomprehensible to men.

A Transfigured is almost a mutant-saint, cast into a new life and understanding by no choice of its own, and worshipped by lesser Plague victims that it tends as best it can. This care might be a remnant of compassion from its former human life, or perhaps a sign that it has left Imperial cruelties far behind. The contagious few still capable in their madness defend the Transfigured with their lives.



The Transfigured Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
26	23	42	45	23	(8) 49	44	(8) 47	42

Move: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 14

Skills: Awareness (Per), Chem-Use (Int), Command (Fel) +20, Literacy (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority.

Traits: ++Beyond Sanity, +++Lesser Contagion, Unnatural Intelligence (x2), Unnatural Willpower (x2).

Beyond Sanity: The Transfigured is unaffected by fear, pinning, Insanity Points, and Psychic Powers used to cloud, control, or affect its mind.

Lesser Contagion: Touching bodily fluids of the Transfigured transfers the Plague, as will extended contact with flesh, unless the subject succeeds at a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test**. The new victim becomes contagious, begins to mutate within a day, and loses his mind within a week.

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

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+1[†] I; Primitive).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: Tech-adept robes, strange trinkets of twisted metal, chemical vials, lesser tech-devices, scrawled parchment of maddening ciphers.

Threat Rating: Hereticus Extremis.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Acolytes' Lord Inquisitor demands samples of mutant flesh corrupted by the original Plagues so that Biologis Adepts may thereby confirm a new hypothesis on the nature of Resque's heresy. Armoured against contagion, the acolytes descend to the devastated colony hive of Teruxyne. They must return with mutant brains, intact within their skulls, for therein are secrets of the Plague. Teruxyne is a poisoned, cratered ruin now returning to the wild. There are scattered signs of civilisation: strange writings, broken tech—devices hung as way—markers, and abandoned hovels. A Transfigured herds drooling, idiot, plague—ridden mutant children who have never known sanity, attempting to protect its charges from the Acolytes by clever misdirection—it must be defeated so as to bring the Emperor's mercy to these unfortunate souls.

Mutants are upon the frontier world of Zel Tertius, seen in the wildlands where there should only be loyal Imperial settlers of verified genes and purity. The stench of the arch-heretek Resque is about this, but rumours exist on every world of the Marches. The acolytes are sent to discover the truth of it. Small communities are deserted, littered with contagious, twisted corpses and burned shrines—and mutants moan in the dark places beyond, tended dutifully by Transfigured twins. Imperial Guard veterans are out there somewhere too, deployed from the fearful hives. This trail leads to wizened biologis adepts and gun-servitors in a cavern laboratorium doing the will of Resque. Can the acolytes rally enough of the ragged Imperial Guard remnants to overcome these hereteks?

FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT 3.937.750.M41

I came to the holy voids of Saint Drusus in 720.M41, called to the Plague Conclave held upon Archaos in the Towers of Screeds. Thereafter were years of Ordos actions leading to the Purge of Teruxyne, in which the last hereteks bent upon spawning Sinners' Plagues were destroyed. But of the Excommunicate Resque, there was no sign. I withdrew from the conclave to assess the debris and ruin, to search for the prime cause that would reveal the mind of Resque—and thus her future course.

The mind of Resque: I did not begin to know it until my return to Archaos in 727.M41, in response to panic over mutation in the Failing Levels. This region is a pit of banishment from the great hive, a place of despair for philosophers cast from the Foundation Scholae. There, as in a hundred hives throughout the worlds of Saint Drusus, the Sinners' Plague rose again.

We found mutation and Plague, yes, but also a terrible mockery of holy transfiguration wrought by the tools of the heretek. I know this now: Resque believes fervently in imperfection and sin, but she is a madwoman for whom mankind is beyond redemption. She searches for a seed to Mankind Reborn—sifting men for those without sin, who remain uncorrupted by the Plagues she has wrought. This idea is madness to speak out loud, yet I learned of it from such a mutant, transfigured by the Sinners' Plague to a state of being that was beyond good, evil, and sanity. I cannot explain how I learned from his brief, strange speech. It was as though a cipher of a few words blossomed to later understanding, complete and wondrous as the speaker intended.

We found the transfigured within abandoned librarium vaults, attended by lesser mutants who sold their lives in futile defence. It is ever a mercy to deliver a victim of the Plagues from their painful corruption of mind and body. But the transfigured comported itself as a saint trapped within mutation most foul, calm and possessed of an inner glow as it stood awaiting us within a laboritorium biologis of crude means. It spoke to us in ways none of us have been able to describe since—and then bowed its head for the axe, accepting the necessity of its end. I have not seen the like since, and I pray to the God—Emperor that I never will again.

The Excommunicate Resque remains alive yet, and Plagues of Sin Revealed arise anew with the passing years. The heretek shall continue until she is found, brought to recant, and burned in the name of the God—Emperor. Only then will these abominations cease.





FORBIDDEN SCIENCE

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TECH-HERESY OF THE CALIXIS SECTOR

Archivite Busa Marami, for Inquisitor Felroth Gelt 3.296.752 M41

Place yourself within the metal skin of a Magos of the Lathes, let your heart see as his does. You will see thusly: that lesser tech-heresy is endemic, a creeping pox of the soul across Calixian worlds beyond the forges. These least-heresies, akin to Denialism or lay-preaching, are a shameless mimicry by the uninitiated of the holy duties of the Mechanicus Calixis.

Least-hereteks of the Calixis Sector employ the blessings of the Machine Cult without sanction, and in their foolishness stain their souls. The medicus-augmentor who falsely crafts autolimbs is guilty. The hidden vox-artisans of burning outer Tarsus are guilty. Noble families and wealthy guildsmen who pass coin in dead of night to break Mechanicus compacts are guilty. Scavenger brethren of the wastes are guilty a dozen times over for their calumnies upon stolen tech-devices. These heretek souls are tainted and run astray by contempt for the rightful path.

Wear once more the heart of the Magos: the plague of least tech-heresy is abominable; it is the shame of the Mechanicus Calixis; it is an insult to the Omnissiah who Was, Is, and Will Be. Yet while the Calixian worlds of Mankind are riven by far greater tech-heresy, of mortal threat to life and utmost moral threat to soul, least-heresies are left to run their course. This is of necessity rather than choice. The attentions of forge world Magi are turned to where they are most needed, and scourging of the least-heretek is thereby the duty of Machine Cults upon Imperial worlds of the Calixis Sector. Much forbidden tech-knowledge exists, all of it declared greater tech-heresy and a blasphemy against the Omnissiah by Calixian Archmagi: twisting the sacred genes of mankind; resurrecting the Iron Men and other horrors of the Dark Age; studying and constructing the vile device-patterns of the Archenemy; protean engineering to return life to the dead; binding daemons by Empyric device; and raising the dead through the arts of Anima Mori. These are but a few of the Omnissiah's forbiddances known to the Ordos.

It is unforgivable for any tech-adept to turn from the Via Mechanicus to embrace unhallowed tech, no matter whether it be from slavery, madness, or the black path of good intentions. The Magi of Calixian forge worlds show no mercy and stop at no barrier to destroy greater tech-heresy, and further to tear out and burn all that has been shown to turn tech-adepts from the Lux Omnissiah. This, the Mechanicus Calixis desire to accomplish in fervent silence, behind the Wall of Iron. Yet when it was not possible to hide the fallibility of lesser tech-adepts, forge world Magi reached out to their Imperial brethren as compact-bearers, albeit in great reluctance, to uphold the Imperial Creed.

Of great torment to Archmagi are those most notorious greater hereteks who multiply and elude the vengeance of Tech-Guard and Auxilia Myrmidon: servitor-slavers of the Periphery; factors of unhallowed cogitators touched by arch-heretek Nomen Ryne; machine-wrecker cults of Malfian worlds; Excommunicate practitioners of forbidden tech-knowledge; tech-witches who call the warp upon machine spirits; and world-reavers who slave tech-adepts to their militant voidships. It is the knowing stain upon the purity of the Mechanicus that causes such anguish—but Magi-militants would zealously seek the death of such hereteks regardless. Let it be said that tech-priests of Machine Temples upon Imperial worlds of the Calixis Sector stand apart from their forge world brethren. Their feet are to either side of the Iron Wall of secrecy, their tech-adepts and menials advanced from Imperial stock loyal to the world of their birth. They are your gate to the Mechanicus Calixis, if you can but find the key.

Upon the greatest of tech-heresies, Calixian Archmagi have declared city, hive, and even world Excommunicate from the blessings of the Omnissiah. This is a rare but great ruin upon the Imperial Creed, a casting forth that ensures descent into darkness for the Excommunicated. Just as pronouncement of Exterminatus, it is our greatest failure when it comes to pass.



CHAPTER II: FORBIDDEN SCIENCE

Silent in the Calixian extent are worlds from which the Ommissiah has withdrawn His blessings. They trail their parent stars like errant children struck dumb and bloodied. Their ruins are profound, their catacombs endless, their savages sorrowful—for these wards of the Imperium of Mankind have paid a great and terrible price for the tech-heresy of their forbearers.

—Warrus the Secondmost, Indexus Astrae Calixis

In the Imperium, technology is the province of the Tech-priests of Mars, servants of the Ommissiah. Certain avenues of research, innovation, and development lie outside the strictures of the Ommissiah's creed, and thus are labeled tech-heresy. Most Xenos tech and even some advancements from the Dark Age of Technology are considered forbidden by the Tech-priests, and any who dabble in such blasphemous experiments are hunted with righteous fury.

Nevertheless, there exist some who continue these heretical practices and unleash terrors or mistakes to ravage the worlds of Man. In the Calixis Sector, the Tech-priests of Mars and the Inquisition often confront such renegades and their tools, many of which are described in this chapter.



USING FORBIDDEN SCIENCE IN YOUR GAME

The fruits of forbidden science and tech-heresy make for interesting villains in a **DARK HERESY** campaign. Sometimes, a renegade Tech-adept makes for a flawed and tragic antagonist, seeking only to advance knowledge or even the quality of life for the average Imperial citizen. Others are little more than “mad scientists,” delving into proscribed analysis simply because they can.

One of the true strengths of a story that involves the creatures and personalities of this chapter is their shared common origin with those of the player characters. Many **DARK HERESY** groups contain a loyal Tech-priest, after all, and the same basic technologies are shared between both the protagonists and their adversaries. A particularly effective trick is to make the adversary sympathetic in some way; perhaps he is only misguided or a brilliant yet flawed genius. Playing up these elements can build a stronger story and offer many opportunities for roleplaying.



BRONZE MALIFECTS

A strange tech-heresy gripped the Josian Reach in the latter half of the 8th century M41. The augmetic scholae, tech-adepts who built and maintained cybernetic devices, became warp-tainted in many diverse locations. The heretek built malformed machine altars and conducted corruptions of Mechanicus rituals. They succumbed to madness and mind-rust, engraved screeds of warp-nonsense across every surface, and toiled upon twisted devices.

One such device is the bronze malifact, an ugly arrangement of bronze augmetic limbs infused with a murderous spirit of the warp. Inactive, a malifact appears to be a large heap of war-damaged augmetic arms and legs, as though they were removed from dead Guardsmen and thrown in a pile. On closer inspection, the arrangement is the deliberate work of a madman. The bronze autolimb is plasma-welded together such that the mass is joined into one large device, capable of articulation and movement: a stump to a wrist, legs side by side, an arm projecting from a thigh, and so on. Data conduits and power lines weave throughout the whole, linking small potentia coils and scavenged flexor-devices. Heretek sigils and nonsensical machine cant scripts are inscribed upon the most crucial linkages.

When active and infused with the power of the warp, a malifact moves rapidly with purpose and malignant intent. The daemon-spirit within guides the machine beast and senses terrified victims through unknown means—the malifact incorporates no ocular components or processing devices capable of initiating movement. It is the warp alone, clothed in metal, hungry for death and pain, that motivates the device.

The bronze malifact is guard and ambusher within remote Machine Temples and drifting medicae vessels touched by the warp. It has a simple-minded fascination with medical tools: saws, scalpels, hooks, clamps, and probes. The daemon within exhibits a low cunning, lying in wait until its lust for flesh can no longer be suppressed—and then it leaps forth to choke and stab. More complex strategies are beyond it. The bodies of the dead are left torn, sliced, and splayed open as though examined by a mad vivisectionist.

Other perversions of medical tech-devices and machine

spirits accompany outbreaks of tech-heresy in the Josian Reach: the dead made to rise and walk on warp-infused machine limbs, the living driven irrevocably insane upon operating tables, and sacrificial altars made of scalpels and bone-saws. Of all these, the bronze malifact presents perhaps the greatest danger to servants of the Holy Ordos.



Bronze Malifact Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	20	40 ⁽⁸⁾	60	35	10	35	40	—

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Unarmed).

Traits: Machine(4), Multiple Arms, Size (Hulking), Strange Physiology, Sturdy, ††Two Hands for Each Throat, †††Two More to Hold Them Down, Unnatural Senses (100 meters), Unnatural Strength (x2).

††**Two Hands for Each Throat:** With its many Multiple Arms, the Malifact may make two attacks against every target within reach of its arms each Round.

†††**Two More to Hold Them Down:** A Malifact typically attempts to Grapple all of the opponents it is attacking. It may continue to make one attack each Round against a successfully Grappled opponent, gaining the normal bonuses and benefits from attacking a Grappled opponent.

Armour: None (4).

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+7⁺ I; Primitive), medical implements (1d10+8⁺ R; Pen 2; Unbalanced).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Minoris.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

Not all Inquisitors look upon Felroth Gelt's actions in the Josian Reach with favour. The Acolytes' Inquisitor is one such, and he views Jagamar Elste—Gelt's Battlefleet rogue, unsung hero of the Surenis Purge—with particular suspicion. The Inquisitor's governing belief is that anyone other than Gelt's pledged scum is better set in opposition to the heretek threat. Thus the Acolytes are dispatched to Fenksworld to find what Elste knows. Meanwhile, a Volg underhive Machine Temple that augments sump-workers has fallen silent, no doubt afflicted by the same curse seen elsewhere in the Josian Reach.

The high Machine Temple of the Barahest Mountains upon Tsade II once sent forth tech-adepts to assuage the machine spirits of harvest-devices and perform devotion over threshing-limb augmetics common amongst harvest serfs. That was until unseasonal storms before the Balefruit Festival, an ill-omen. Now there are strange lights in the mountains, and tech-adepts descend to the plains no more. Machine spirits grow restless and unwilling to labour, limb-augmetics balk at threshing duties, and representatives sent into the mountains have not returned. Petitioners travel to the capital city for aid, and word of these happenings comes to the ears of the Holy Ordos. The Acolytes must journey to the Barahest Mountains; there they find a coven of mad tech-priests, the corruptions of the warp, and malifacts of bronze.



CHAPTER II: FORBIDDEN SCIENCE

Vox-record // Skull-drone Fenksworld-Volg-Templus Iridus-563/a15**Subject // Jagamar Elste****Transcripitor // Least-Archivite Yalane // 3.237.795.M41**

++ Ignorance is a blessing not
to be disdained by the wise ++

'Twas the brig where it started, as I said—and the executioner's lasgun waited for my neck. But there's always the need for men who'll face the worst and win, and so that dog Gelt came and had me taken from my dark hole. I was to lead the scum who he took within the hulk of the Merciful Saint Surenis, medicae vessel of the Sisterhood of Sorrowed Matrons—and may her damned hull-bones remain forever upon the void-rock where she lay.

Gelt had need for scum like me. Scum to soak up death and warp-craft with our lives to defend those of the uniform I once wore. Drink to the scum, the beating heart, and honest soul of the Battlefleet!

My bad luck kept me far from the action at first. Battlefleet regulars in good favour had the easy aft flank rise, where the flight bays still yawned. We heard those regulars fighting and screaming on the vox, 'gainst a tide of dead women and mad women with bronze autolimbs that dragged them drooling to attack.

But we useful scum had the soft heart of it, the mid-decks where bronze-limbed dead walked patterns of the Mechanicus and drew strange things on the plating. Killing the Sisters and torching the fallen was a mercy after the first we saw, for they had been hard used by scalpel and bone-saw. Two decades the Merciful Saint had rested where it fell, long years of insanity and the warp, the soul of the ship given way to an asylum. It should all have been burned by lance fire—there's the kindness that wasn't shown!

I'll never forget the beast of bronze. It was in the wards that it came for us, autolimbs and machine-legs all fused together. It clambered over rotting mattress and rusting frames, with scalpels in every one of 10 bronze hands, lusting for the flesh it had naught of. "Fire, you dogs!" I cried. Rot their hides for not pulling triggers in fear first of all, but they rallied, bless them! Those zealous hands fired 'til naught was left whole, and bronze-melt ran to the blood-gutters. There's the Emperor's welcome! There's how we greet the warp!

The lasgun is the God-Emperor's gift—both droning preacher and censer-shaking priest should set Battlefleet long-arms high upon the altar. A round to long-arms on the altar! The Aquila to bless the shot and charge! We'd pack the Cathedral full each day, we Battlefleet faithful.

The Merciful Saint burned in the wards, with smoke in the deckways and flames in the least-holds. At the middle of it all, in the half-crushed medicae centrum, we found the laughing metal cankers—mad tech-priests, diseased and chanting. How we crushed them for what they did to that proud vessel! There was our salvation to the ranks of the blessed in the eyes of the Lord-Captains and black-hearted Gelt. We took limb from metal limb with such rightful savagery, heedless of our wounds and dead, and then burned the corruptions hung upon solid Imperial bulkheads.



DREAMING DEAD OF HIVE GLORIANA



Dreaming Dead Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	—	(8) 40	50	30	30	45	45	10

The belief of millions carried across centuries ripples the Calixian warp. Fears take form in the foaming madness that lies within the Immaterium. The hidden truth of Hive Gloriana is that the warp has long stalked the Crushtop alley depths in the form of murder-spirits that possess ruined servitors, summoned and sustained by the retelling of low-hive myths.

The Crushtop district of Hive Gloriana upon Solomon is crisscrossed by narrow chasm-alleys, each a full league deep but of barely a stone's throw between facing hab structures. Denizens descend by the Choking Stair or the steam-hydraulic tithe platforms, and sunlight is soon lost to a canopy of cable bridges, overhangs, and boardwalks. An ever-present haze sinks from uphive promethium refineries and fyceline alchemical plants to cloud these narrow, crowded thoroughfares.

The alley depths clear by night, even though night is barely distinguishable from day. Hereditary lumenbearers retreat to caves carved from the crush and communal rooms that were once generatoria. Doors and shutters close, bolts are thrown, and Aquila charms hung and blessed. The blackness is absolute. Nightwalkers and thieves upon lumen-lit boardways and cable-bridges half a league above look down and make the sign of the Aquila as a ward against the depths.

In the blackest depths lies the crush fundament, an alley floor made of ruins of the ancient hive pressed flat by the weight of years. There on the boundary, outcasts, Sanctioned Thieves, and hopeless, excess workers of the Waiting Guilds tell their tales. These least-citizens believe in ghosts of the old hive, long-dead servants of daemons defeated by the God-Emperor and driven below. Dreams are a gate: dreamers must be protected by prayers and Aquila charms, lest murderous ghosts rise from the crush and wear their bodies. The low-hivers believe that servitors and the recently dead are those who dream most deeply. Crushtop mortuaries are shrines to the God-Emperor, and any appearance of labour-servitors in the alleys is cause for disturbance and rumour.

The eyes of a possessed servitor are glowing pools steaming with warp-light, its churning dreams filled with murderous desire. Makeshift knife gripped in metal fingers, facial actuators clicking and twisting in ways beyond their design, the servitor hunts its lone victims through the night alley depths, feeding upon the terror of their final moments.

In the alley depths, many mornings see ritually dismembered bodies discovered at the crush boundary. The low-hivers make the sign of the Aquila and hurry to raise the remains to their shrine-mortuaries. Thus, the warp continues to corrupt labour-servitors one by one whilst the Inquisition searches Hive Gloriana for witch-cults and heretics that don't exist.

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Per), Concealment (Ag) +20, Search (Per), Shadowing (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +20.

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Traits: Daemonic Presence, Fear 1, Machine 4, ††The Emperor Protects!, Unnatural Strength (x2).

Daemonic Presence: All creatures within 20 metres suffer a -10 penalty on Willpower Tests.

††**The Emperor Protects!:** If presented with an Aquila held forth by one of true faith, the Dreaming Servitor must succeed in a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** to advance or attack that person.

Armour: None (All 4).

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+5[†] I; Primitive), long knife (1d5+8[†] R; Primitive).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: Long knife made of a sharpened fan-blade.

Threat Rating: Malleus Minoris.





ADVENTURE SEEDS

There is a sweltering archeoruin complex upon Vaxanide, on the very outskirts of the jungle from which noone returns. The acolytes are sent in the company of Exorcist Tomas Locain to expunge an affliction fallen upon the latest expedition. The archeoexcavation is funded by Lord Givale Vaxanide, lesser member of the great House, on evidence that an ancient cathedral lies buried below. A sanctioned psyker compacted to the expedition went mad, however, and now babbles of daemons. Indentured workers and high-browed magisters coming to the site from nearby Scholam halls are murdered. Monotask and scribe servitors go missing. Lord Givale Vaxanide demands that the Ministorum and Inquisition banish the foul spirits and make his archeoexcavation safe—but what lies beneath that has so roiled spirits of the warp to servitor-possession and murder?

The low reaches of Hive Gloriana upon Solomon are gripped by riots, sparked by rumour of peasant warp-craft and mysterious deaths. Talk of witches and ghost-servants of the dark gods drenches the hive. The credulous rise up in fear, whipped into destructive acts by Redemptionists, Denialists, and rogue clerics. The Acolytes are tasked to put an end to these foolish uprisings by striking at the root. They are instructed to have every rabble-rouser and demagogue excruciated and burned until the rumours spread no more. The Redemptionists and lesser heretics are scum who deserve death and worse, but errant preachers of the Crushtop only wish the Emperor's work to be done. They can provide the Acolytes with evidence of strange happenings and the taint of the warp in the depths.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT: 3.582.710.M41

I lost my first acolyte in Hive Gloriana upon Solomon, many years ago. I was young then, an Inquisitor barely a decade, free from the weight that besets me now, from the many deaths I've seen in service to the God-Emperor of Mankind.

I forget the name of the woman who told me the legend of the Old Hive. She was a link to Factor Grucul and rightfully terrified of what I represented. Yet she told me the legend because she wanted to curse me. As I later learned, all who hear the legend must ask the God-Emperor's blessing lest dark powers take notice. Rin and myself, marked as offworlders by our accents, did not know. It was a last act of defiance by one soon dead.

The legend told of dark gods trapped in the Old Hive ruins below...sending up heretic spirits to possess the dreaming and the dead. I gave it no weight at the time—a foolish mistake. The fate of Factor Grucul is unimportant, a simple matter soon dealt with. The true matter lies in the alley depths and Rin's screams echoing across the vox that night. I dropped the last levels at a run, the lamp of my buzzing skull-drone barely illuminating the cluttered darkness as I leapt recklessly downward past line and walkway. I found Rin's blood spread across hab walls and the taint of the warp in the air. A faint warp-glow limned metal spars projecting from the crush-floor.

Suddenly, blazing eyes stared at me from a distance. I shot the darkness thrice with my hellgun and charged forward, only to find nothing more than a rusting servitor-corpse, propped upright, its lenses reflecting the lamplight. Discarded nearby, I found the bloody knife that was Rin's death.

There was nothing more, and I found nothing more, even though I excruciated the tale-telling woman most diligently. I haunted the Crushtop for three long months, seeking some recompense for Rin's soul. But I found nothing.

I have never since returned to Solomon in the centuries of my service. The burden of my obligation to the God-Emperor is heavy when weighed against a single debt of vengeance long overdue. This, among many things, I regret.



FALSE-MEN OF NOMEN

RYNE

The arch-heretek Nomen Ryne has plagued tech-priests of the Malfian and Golgenna subsectors since he issued his Precepts Mechanicus in the 4th century M41. Originally a Levelist, he taught a tech-focused form of that suppressed creed of equality: that the God-Emperor provided mankind with technology as weapon and shield against the darkness and that it was His most ardent desire that all men be so armed, equally and in brotherhood. Ryne declared the Mechanicus to be slavemasters and sought to spread tech-knowledge to all.

Nomen Ryne vanished into hiding some few years after the issuance of his Precepts, declared heretek by Mechanicus and heretic by Ministorum. The Cult of Sollex hunted Ryne's followers most zealously, as their number included many known for their skill in constructing unsanctioned cogitators.

It is not known whether Ryne himself was the originator of the unholy Thirteenth Pattern of Cogitation, a way to construct cogitation cores that is reviled by the Calixian Mechanicus. By the 9th century M41, such questions of origin have become unimportant. The Thirteenth Pattern is endemic amongst outlaws of Golgenna and Malfian hives; devices and unsanctioned cogitators travel the black paths of smugglers and pirates alongside vox-heresy and scofflaw augmetic limbs.

The Mechanicus hatred of Ryne has not diminished, as his name and influence have only grown over the centuries. Cults arose with the spread of cogitation-heresy, such as the Children of Ryne who worship the arch-heretek as an Imperial saint. It was through these cults that the Mechanicus and the Ordos first learned of the false-men of Nomen Ryne, for the false-men are angels in the eyes of Ryneite hereteks.

Enough false-men have been dismantled by the Ordos for their nature to be clear, albeit horrifying. The false-man is a machine built to appear as a heavily augmented tech-priest, incorporating all the traditional Mechanicus cybernetic modifications, or at least the appearance thereof. A false-man is capable of volition, speech, and planning—more than enough to cast it as the forbidden Silica Animus, an attempt to recreate the dread Men of Iron and so bring back horrors of the Dark Age of Technology. But false-men are paltry manikins by comparison to the Men of Iron. Their speech is disjointed and often irrelevant, as though mad or mind-rusted. Their reactions to circumstance are similarly telling—unexpectedly violent, strange, or illogical. Their movements are off-key and inhuman, exactly as though a machine pretended to be a man. Yet they can construct tech-devices, plan ahead, and perform the functions of a fabricator tech-adept.

False Machine Temples populated by false-men exist in the Malfian subsector. The Children of Ryne believe false-men bring messages and new tech-patterns from Nomen Ryne himself. Some false-men claim to be Nomen Ryne. It is possible that insanity and a strange form of ascension to life eternal in the embrace of the machine lies behind these



centuries of heresy—but both the Cult of Sollex and the Ordos Calixis are set on destruction of the false-men and are little interested in answering deeper questions.



False-men Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	40	50	30	35	35	35	15

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Skills: Awareness (Per), Chem-Use (Int), Common Lore (Tech) (Int) +20, Logic (Int) +10, Scholastic Lore (any one) (Int), (Int) +10, Secret Tongue (Techno-Cant) (Int) +10, Speak Language (Low Gothic), Tech-Use (Int) +10.

Talents: Binary Chatter, Electrical Succour, Energy Cache, Luminen Charge, Luminen Shock, Mechadendrite Use (any), Pistol Training (Bolt, Las, Plasma, SP).

Traits: Machine 4, Natural Weapons (Fist or Mechadendrite).

Armour: None (All 4).

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+1[†] I; Primitive), laspistol (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable), luminen shock (1d10+3 E).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: Basic MIU interface, up to three other cybernetic devices—such as mechadendrites—appropriate to a fleshless being, tools, dataslate, personal cogitator, 2 laspistol clips.

Threat Rating: Hereticus Minoris.

From the Journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt 3.582.910. Mar

This past year upon Alactra I have trapped and excruciated the least-hereteks known as Children of Ryne, but not because I care one iota for the forbidden cogitation-devices that Magi call a plague upon the Malfian worlds. No, I hunt the beast Nomen Ryne himself, he who seeks to return the Iron Men to existence and thereby tear down the Imperium with terrors from the Dark Age. Those who adulate him are the fingers I must follow to find the arm, shoulder, chest-and thence, his beating, blackened heart.

Twice across the past decades have I come face to face with devices that pretend poorly to be men, clad in red robes of the tech-priest, acting as clumsily as serf mummerys playing Mechanicus upon the feast stage. I have held conclave with Interrogators and Inquisitors who have seen the same. The intellect of the arch-heretek Ryne labours these centuries, hidden in some secret retreat, sustained by tech-devices stolen from the Machine Cult. He works towards the pinnacle that is the Iron Men, but has not progressed past these false-men, these manikins.

You will know them by their strangeness of speech and movement, their disjointed statements seeming of a mind broken within the madhouse, by their very psychic emptiness. Yet they look every part the tech-priest, labour upon devices, and can fight in desperation when pressed. Who knows when these false-men might take wrongly the acts of men around them and leap to murder without warning like one driven insane by the warp. This too, I have seen.

The cultists I hunt dote upon every hint and whisper of Nomen Ryne's creations, calling them angels, and he a saint. Some have begged me, even under the flensing knife and electrobrand, to share what I know with them prior to their end, that they will go happy into oblivion. Hidden amongst credulous least-hereteks who knew but little, I eventually found the few who had bowed to false-men and who knew some hint of the path onward. That path led my retinue and I away from the Alactran hives and far into waste-blackened outlands, to a false Machine Temple distant from any living being.

The false-men within the Temple put up little resistance, little pretence. They spoke to us, but of nothing I did not already know. "I am Nomen Ryne," said one. "Hear me." But I know it lied, by the way in which it struggled to walk in the rhythm of a man. As we disassembled them, in search of their secrets, Adept-militant Mamin discovered a gallery, a mirror of our actions, in which the manikins themselves had been assembling more false-men forms. My most trusted vat-psyker saw mind-runes in the abandoned scatter of volitors and was disturbed.

We gathered much; an assessment of it will be years in the making. I pray that the path continues on from here to new and darker places, that I may find the arch-heretek before he achieves his goal.

LOGI DAEMONIS

The Calixian warp is fickle and sometimes the very shape and movement of objects within the Materium can excite the tides of the Immaterium. Then the barrier between realities thins and daemons far beyond any human conception or emotion spill forth to wreck brief havoc.

This type of event has happened often enough that the Inquisition in the Calixis Sector has become aware of it. Certain complex configurations of rods, spindles, and other structures can conjure forth daemons and the fury of the Emyrean when manipulated in a particular fashion. The Ordos know these configurations as Logi Daemonis—a term derived from the babblings of witches and careful notes of heretek tech-priests who sought revelation from Emyric engineering. Numerous suppressed references refer to “logi maleficium,” “perfect words,” “warp-questions,” and the like.

To the Ordos, a Logos Daemonis construct is an instruction to foul beasts of the Emyrean and a danger to Mankind by its apparently innocent nature until moved into the final configuration. The attendance of any other form of warp-craft or psyker taint is not necessary for a Logos to activate and call down destruction upon all around it.

The Inquisition has never obtained an intact Logos to examine, as the fury of a warp manifestation destroys that which created it. Known Logi have existed within manufactory equipment and moving scaffolds, or were crafted by the insane in the form of folding metal-wicker altars. All recorded daemoniac manifestations created by Logi have occurred in crowded holy places: cathedrals, saint’s shrines, and Mechanicus manufactories. The Ordos considers this last fact as proof of malign intent, as it is the nature of the Archenemy to strike at the holiest places of the Imperial Creed.

An active manifestation begins with the raw light of the warp pouring forth from the Logos, as the barrier of the Materium gives way. The warp-light will drive weak men mad, burn flesh, and set fire to flammable materials. Invisible warp-spirits pour from a Logos to possess terrified Imperial citizens, forcing them to stand and watch the warp-light until they combust—or walk into the warp to be destroyed.

More powerful daemons emerge from the Logos as fires



start to burn and Imperial citizens flee or die. They ripple forth as streaming ribbons of warp-matter, formed into shifting shapes and outlines that hurt the mind. The ribbons knot into central bodies and create limbs by enmeshing the dead and possessed with loops of warp-stuff. In the midst of fire, warp-light, and insanity, these strange daemons stride about the zone of manifestation until the Logos melts and the grasp of the Emyrean fades.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

A mad merchant baron built a Logos Daemonis across five hive-districts, a hundred leagues broad, but died before its completion. An oblivion cult led by the baron’s youngest daughter seeks to place the last structure, and thus unleash the warp upon the hive. The heretics understand what they can do with smaller Logi of the same design—and that is their undoing. They activate a Logos within an Imperial shrine attended by enemies of the baron’s daughter, leading to panic and riot in that district. Adeptus Arbites now march through the streets, and those who claim to have seen foul beasts, or were driven mad by warp-light, are held in Arbites cells until they recant. The Acolytes must sift through a web of deaths and lies to find these heretics before doom falls upon the hive.

Administrator Prell of Sibellus has long been a friend to the Machine Cult, a collector of unusual devices that lie treasured in his modest manse museum. A tech-priest arrives from the Lathes to view the collection. Shortly thereafter, the Administrator is declared a heretek and his manse destroyed by Auxilia Myrmidon. Prell has vanished, however, and the Mechanicus has not found what it seeks. The Machine Cult is roiled, and Inquisitors watch carefully. So it is that the Acolytes are sent to investigate the trail of Administrator Prell—what is it that he possesses that so angers the Lathe Magi, and where is he now?

From activation to vanishment, a manifestation might last less than 10 minutes, leaving the building in flames, and all who did not flee, dead or carried into the warp. Unless quickly controlled, rumour, fear, and panic will spread through the populace. Whatever the result, the area will bear a disturbing, inhuman warp-taint evident to psykers for decades.



Logos Daemonis Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	—	⁽¹⁰⁾ 55	⁽⁸⁾ 40	40	20	45	40	—

Move: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 30

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Lightning Attack, Swift Attack.

Traits: ††Bodies for Limbs, Daemonic (TB 8), †††Chattering Daemon Voices, Daemonic Presence, ††††Haloed by the Light of Madness, Fear 3, From Beyond, Size (Enormous), Strange Physiology, †††††The Burning Light, Unnatural Strength (x2), Warp Instability, Warp Weapon.

††**Bodies for Limbs:** The Logos Daemonis first aims to slay

up to five victims with its ribbons, wrapping their bodies to act as limbs. It will then stride around, bringing terror, stepping high, and only attacking if it is attacked itself. Without using corpses as limbs, the Logos is limited to half its normal movement and may not make limb-body attacks.

†††**Chattering Daemon Voices:** In each Round the Logos remains active, the Logos may attempt Possession at Willpower 30 on one random victim within 30 metres who views the light of the warp as a Free Action. Possessed victims attempt to immolate themselves in fire or enter the warp.

Daemonic Presence: All Willpower Tests are made at a -10 penalty within 25 metres of a Logos Daemonis.

††††**Haloed by the Light of Madness:** The warp-light pouring forth from the Logos drives men mad. Any Insanity Points resulting from failing a Fear Test (see page 232 of **DARK HERESY**) caused by the Logos Daemonis are increased by 2.

†††††**The Burning Light:** In each Round the Logos remains active, there is a 10% chance that easily flammable materials ignite under the warp-light within 20 metres. These materials include wood, parchment, cloth, chemicals, and similar items. Only one check is made each round; there is no

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt 3.267.690. Mq1

There exist devices that call upon the warp called the Logi Daemonis, and I have seen their aftermath. It was in 651. Mq1 that I and three other Inquisitors of the Scintillan Conclave picked through charred and warp-tainted ruins of the Runcus Cathedral in outer Sibellus. We had arrived within hours of the flames and daemonic manifestation, in haste and alarmed by the screaming of psykers deep within the Tricorn. Mayhem surrounded us beyond the scorched walls and collapsed ruins. The efforts of our retinues and deployment of Arbiters from the Rasus barracks were required to end the rioting. A holy temple had been struck down by the Archenemy, and the faithful were in upheaval.

We gathered warp-maddened survivors and heard testament of man-crushing red serpents, strange ribbons, and a burning light that brought insanity. We scoured the district for any remaining daemonic presence and prepared to hunt down those responsible the abomination. We found nothing but tales of horror and a lingering taint of death and the warp—no heretics, no witches, no daemons.

It was years later that my then-savant Misa en Gravan discovered materials relating to the slaughter-witch of Malfi and, further, a testament of 9th century heretek Empyric engineers. Armed with that knowledge, we came to suppose that a Logos Daemonis somehow formed within the Runcus Cathedral. Perhaps it was within the articulated scaffolds we found half-melted beneath restorative vault-works. The warp is an evil beyond our understanding, and it strikes in ways that we cannot always prevent—even guiding the innocent to build its weapons unknowing.

need to roll for each and every item. In addition, victims that take damage from the creature's melee attacks must succeed at an Ordinary (+10) Agility test or catch on fire.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Piercing, crushing ribbons (1d10+10[†] I or R; Primitive, Warp Weapon), limb-body (1d10+10[†] I; Primitive, Unwieldy). The creature may attack targets up to 10m away with its ribbons.

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Majoris.

Definition: Tech-heresy, Daemon, Malleus Majoris.

Explication: The Logos Daemonis is a device of complex form that calls forth ferocious daemons of the warp at the hands of either witch or innocent.

Admonition: Record most carefully the form of the Logos for your lord Inquisitor, and then destroy it utterly. Should the warp be unleashed, no man can stand before it: ensure that the manifestation is contained, the victims interrogated and martyred, and that silence smothers all possibility of fear and uprising.



OBLIVIATES

The Ministorum Calixis preaches that “the Emperor protects” refers to the immortal soul of the Imperial subject. Death is not to be feared, but destruction of the soul is a horror almost beyond words—it is a fear that can roil hives to uprising and overturn the Dictates Imperialis in panicked riots. The body of one whose soul has been destroyed is a terrifying abomination, and to burn that empty shell upon the pyre is an act of cleansing.

The notorious Illucis Grizvaldi and his heretek followers prey upon these Imperial fears through heavy-handed use of oblivion volitors. These tech-devices are a corrupted and clumsy pattern of neuroaugmetic; when surgically implanted into the brain, an oblivion volitor turns a man into a soulless “oblivate.” Obliviates are empty shells, living on after the soul is consigned to nothingness.

Hereteks further augment obliviates with crudely implanted blades and metal fangs, so as to use them like attack animals. They debase the divine form of man by whipping oblivate packs to savage their foes. But the true weapon is terror—terror of oblivion brought to cherished souls, terror that the God-Emperor’s protection is sundered.

To the psyker, there is little difference between an oblivate and an aggressive combat servitor. The Mechanicus Calixis have many times pressed upon the Inquisition that the results of heretek destructive neuroaugmentation are often indistinguishable from many servitor patterns. Speculation following from this observation is best kept quiet, however. It is doctrine within the Ordos and Ministorum that oblivion volitors destroy the soul—and it is thereby in the interests of the Mechanicus to earnestly aid in suppressing what might otherwise have been a lesser tech-heresy.

Illucis Grizvaldi held court for heretek vermin upon Scintilla at the opening of the 8th century M41. Iron-clad hereteks paraded those who once spoke against their master: the newly made obliviates were leashed and naked—bloody, drooling, and empty-eyed. The idea that those torn souls would never feel the God-Emperor’s embrace put terror into Imperial hearts. For all to see, the arch-heretek had destroyed the essence of the faithful by means of the heavy, clacking augmetics embedded in their skulls. It was by fear and death that Illucis Grizvaldi held sway over his underhive domain.

However, these unfortunate victims of such a process are by no means related to those rare humans who case no shadow in the Warp; Untouchables, or “Blanks” as they are sometimes called. The Oblivate’s soullessness is of a different kind entirely; their minds irrevocably broken and twisted by heretical technology.

Thirteen bestials were discovered by Brecht District Magistratum in the low- and mid-hive strata over the course of late 705 and early 706.M41, minds and souls destroyed by oblivion volitor neuroimplants. Ministorum preachers performed exorcisms, ward-prayers, and blessings upon the wretches, and word began to spread. It was judged necessary for the Ordos to act before fear and rumor led to greater unrest in the hive.



Oblivate Profile

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

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Fearless.

Traits: Bestial, ^{††}Ignorance is Strength, Natural Weapons (Implanted Metal Teeth and Blades).

^{††}**Ignorance is Strength:** Obliviates have the effect of Fear 1 upon those who understand the ramifications of oblivion volitors for the immortal soul. If that person is also a friend or loved one of the oblivate, then the effect is Fear 3 instead.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Implanted metal teeth (1d10+3[†] R; Primitive), implanted blades (1d10+5[†] R; Primitive).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Hereticus Minoris.

From the Journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelts. 056.707. M91

The mind of Archmagus Rahnure the Golden, no neurodilator device can destroy the soul. He called it a "fragile and evident lie, unsupported by the revelations of the Scholastica Psykana." My faith tells me the falsehood of his words: his heart is two centuries metal, and it has led him astray. Still, Rahnure would see Illucis Grizvaldi dead, just as I. Slaver, destroyer of Imperial souls, too of the Archenemy... slayer of my acolytes.

Thus I and my retinue, in the company of a maniple of militant tech-priests called down to Sibellus from hidden orbital shrines on Rahnure's word, sought the arch-heretek Grizvaldi. They were heavily literal of outlook, weighed down by armaments fit to breach fortress walls.

Beneath noble spires was the tiered spirebase, 50 leagues broad. Beneath the spirebase lay the spines and Machine Temples of the deep generatorium. About the lowest plasma generators and capacitance vaults of Karvelt Underdistrict were crowded poverty caverns, communes of the indentured, and crush zones of fallen pillars and broken macrastatus, rife with the hopeless and the scum who preyed upon them.

Grizvaldi was there, somewhere. We knew because a soulless obliivate had murdered and consumed a child upon the steps of the Shrine of Saint Drusus in Karvelt-Generatorium¹⁰. The poor rioted fitfully through tunnels formed of fallen manseas, in fear and anger by turns, far beyond the control of ragged preachers. The latter no more than the human waste of the Ministerium, assigned as punishment to low hive parishes of filth and choking, stale air.

The Magistratum stationhouse of Karvelt-Generatorium¹² was built as a bunker of metal and ceramite within the crush of what had once been a white stone noble manse. Broken open, the stationhouse was full of the dead. Bloody, torn corpses lay swelling in vaults scarred by violence and then stripped bare... not by the underhive poor, for they shunned these vaultways and low crawls in abject fear, but by Grizvaldi's unholy Obliviates.

Vault-ceiling recorders remained within the stationhouse, sealed there since its construction. We watched in pict-capture as the hereteks, red-clad in mockery of the Mechanicus and wielding sparking electromhips, set a pack of naked obliivates upon the Magistratum officers. The Obliviates were augmented beyond their bulging skulls with spines and teeth of metal, faces and bodies marred in bizarre ways. That is how heretek tools of the Archenemy maintain their hold. They take the cared for, the vital, and the trusted... and destroy them to cov the rest.

Obliviates are mere empty shells, the echo of a horror already taken place. Had the faith of the enforcers of ¹² held firm, they might have steadfastly slain obliivates and hereteks alike. I have seen greater feats from oft-maligned Magistratum squads. But in low Karvelt they faltered in terror at what the obliivates represented, and so were torn apart by soulless flesh. To set their remains correctly for consecration was perhaps a forgiveness they did not deserve, but Adept Scavval insisted.

As for the tech-priests, they showed their first anger upon seeing hereteks tainting the red robe. They cared not for the true abomination visited upon the least of Imperial citizens, but I gladly rode their rage, for it heralded the death of Illucis Grizvaldi.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

The heretek Illucis Grizvaldi lives yet, despite a claimed victory in Sibellus underhive—his cursed sigils inscribed upon oblivion volitors are now seen in the Tsares Hive on Merov. The Acolytes' lord Inquisitor sends them across the void to find the heretek, destroy the cursed volitors, and burn the obliviates that plague souls pledged in humble labour to the holdings of the Tsares. Of course, it is far easier said than done. Feral obliviates roam through the crumbling and abandoned Volyan Waste Conduit strata. Locating their source will prove a challenge, especially given that the 30 rival Brother-Generals of the Merov Penal Legion are set upon escalating paths of superficial and destructive solutions—death gas, poured rockcrete, and demolition by battle-cannon are but the least of what is underway.

Within the finely furnished wards of the mid-spire Hospice of Saint Heleyne, wealthy and influential patients are being altered one by one, turned into drooling, empty-eyed obliviates. The Magistratum elite have sealed the Hospice; gun-servitors and their handlers watch the corridors. Yet still the oblivion volitors appear upon the skulls of the sick, seemingly from nowhere. Rumours are spreading, and the seeds of panic are taking root in the mid-spire district. Soon there will be riots and burning Imperial shrines as malcontents and Denialist heretics exploit the fearful masses. The Acolytes of the Holy Ordos must act and prevail where the best of the Magistratum are failing.



SCHISMATICALS OF THE DEEP INFOTOMBS

She cried in anguish as her augmetics dragged her to battle, her flesh arm scrabbling for purchase on the vault wall. I killed her first, an aimed shot as mercy, and then the mass of them were upon us—her dead body with them, mechadendrites seeking for my throat.

—Vox-Record of Enforcer Quintus Cortez

The Lathe world Hadd was at first a repository domain of mighty infotemples set down from orbit, claimed by the Mechanicus while the Angevinian Crusade still swept xenos from the stars. Suspensor Magi, layered menial hives, and great floating manufactory slabs came later, after an Administratum grant of the Lathes—a political gesture to assuage those angered that the Mechanicus had already taken the system.

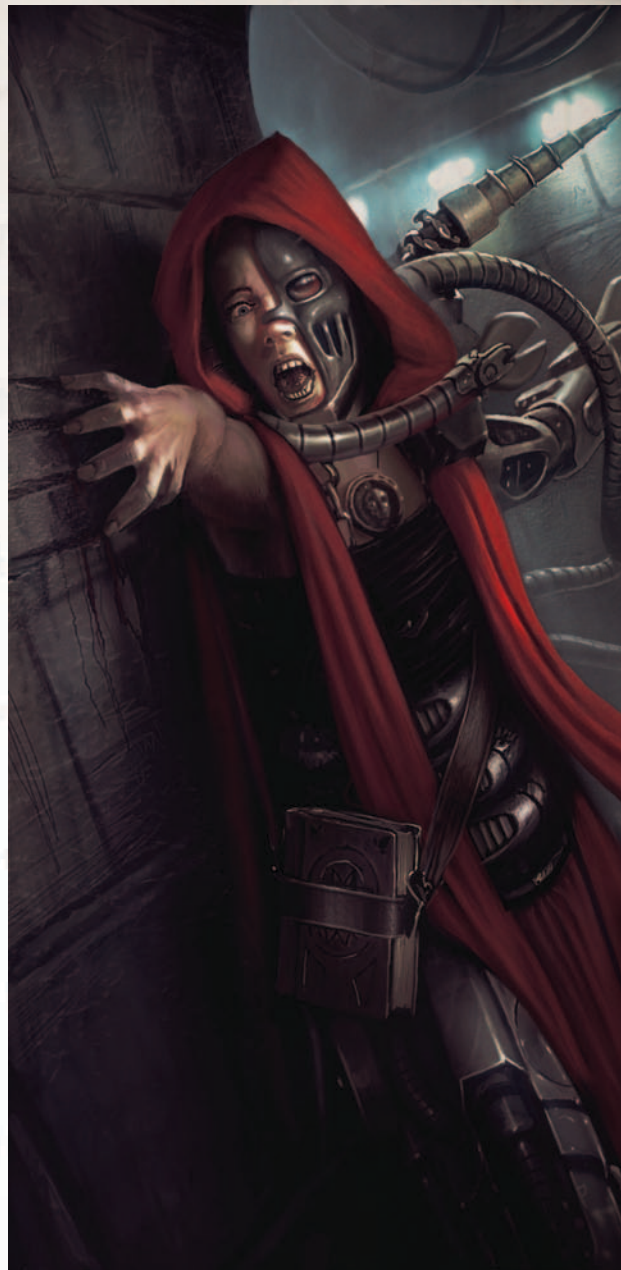
Manufactory and laboratory layers have grown high above the surface over the centuries, but the deepest strata of Hadd remain an endless maze of silent infotombs devoted to the Ommissiah: silver walls of binary microrunes, millennia-old data transepts, crystal arrays of machine psalms, archeodata vaults, and sealed tech-librariums and cryogenetorium. These are holy places for the Mechanicus Calixis, too holy even for pilgrimage, as though a relic world of Saint Drusus lay buried beneath mundane hives of the Imperial Creed.

Unlike the upper manufactory and laboratory strata, the infotombs are empty of menials and tech-adepts and are entered only for infrequent ritual, such as conjunction invocations or quests for archeotech suspensor devices upon initiation to deeper mysteries of the Lathe Mechanicus. More activity takes place within the infotombs than most Lathe Mechanicus suspect, however, and within the depths of ancient cogitator cores lurk malign data spirits—the schismatics.

A schismatical is a memory-cloud of suppressed ideas, an archive of heretical data that should have been destroyed, a folio of vile plans and whispers that has acquired forbidden volitional urges. It incorporates data-patterns by which other machine spirits can be rapidly corrupted into echoes of itself, and so the predatory schismatical awaits the one unlucky machine spirit trespasser that it consumes and supplants so as to bear it to the forge world above.

Once free, a schismatical rampantly converts an army of machine spirits to its cause. It creates machine covens populated by its echoes, each of which is an independent schismatical in its own right. Any vox-aware device can be converted via broadcast, while others require the use of dataconduit links. Any Mechanicus device governed by a cogitator can contain some echo of the full schismatical. Simpler devices fall under the schismatical's sway in its presence, but are too simple to house its essence: voxcasters, augmetic limbs, elevators, auto-doors, weapons, servitor components, and manufactory power-manipulators, to name but a few.

A schismatical device cannot accomplish any more than it was already capable of, but that is more than enough on a forge-world filled with heavily augmented tech-adepts, servitors, and cogitators. Even doors and other common technological devices have a role to play when they refuse to function at the behest of the schismatical within. The minds



of tech-adepts are the last to convert; there the schismatical must persuade, threaten, or drive mad. But it does not really need men—only the machines they have created. Schismaticals imprison unwilling tech-adepts within their own treacherous augmetic enhancements, dragging them screaming and weeping into battle when the schismaticals must defend themselves.

In 596.M41, a schismatical rose from the Hadd depths infused with knowledge of forbidden Empyric technology. It sought to open the way to transcendence within the warp and claimed enough of the low Machine Temples of Hadd Nordus to work effectively in secret. The schismatical was only discovered before it achieved its aim because it sent echoes of itself within a Mechanicus vessel across the voids to Sleef, an act which led the Ordos Calixis back to its machine coven upon Hadd.



Schismatical Convert Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	30	30	30	30	35	50	10

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

(Tech-priest) / 12 (Schismatical)

Skills: Awareness (Per), Tech-Use (Int) +30.

Talents: Electrical Succour, Energy Cache, Luminen Charge.

Traits: Mechanicus Implants.

Machine Contagion: With a Difficult (-10) Willpower Test, the schismatical can convert any machine spirit linked to a cogitator designed to listen to data broadcasts. It may also attempt to convert machine spirits through a dataline cable. Conversion takes 1d10 Rounds to complete, after which the machine spirit is an independent schismatical echo, capable of creating further converts itself. Machines that are not governed by a cogitator (such as doors, weapons, or vox-casters) instead fall under the Schismatical's control; the schismatical may control one machine per degree of success for one round, provided that the target machine is within 10 metres of the schismatical. It is left to the GM's discretion to decide whether or not a given piece of technology is cogitator-operated.

Against a character with cybernetic implants, Schismaticals engage in an opposed Willpower Test with any target they can reach through data broadcast or dataline cable. The Schismatical continues these tests until it has achieved four degrees of success, at which time the Schismatical is in complete control of the character's cybernetic implants. A character can banish a Schismatical with the aid of the correct data-cants, incense, and a successful Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test.

Irrelevant Flesh: Damage done to fleshy locations counts only to the Tech-priest victim's wound total. Damage done to augmetic locations counts against both the Tech-priest and schismatical wound total. Even after the schismatical is too damaged to move and attack, its echoes remain: so long as potentia coils supply power, intact implants thrash about, and the micro-bead attempts to spread schismatical echos.

Armour: Flak cloak (Arms 3, Body 3, Head 3, Legs 3).

Weapons: Mechadendrite (1d5+5[†]; Primitive), laspistol



ADVENTURE SEEDS

Sleef Outworld: a place so tainted that none who goes there returns unchanged. But the Acolytes are ordered there now, to search an unmapped region of that blasted world for an unnamed something: "You will know it when you see it." They are told that schismatical influence has lingered since the breach of Battlefleet interdictus in 598.M41—there are strange voxcasts and glimpsed structures that should not be there. The Acolytes find a fragmentary schismatical that has driven a handful of age-maddened tech-adepts and damaged servitors in a toil of centuries to build a mighty warp-machine. It aims to penetrate the barrier between Materium and Emyrean—and in the Acolytes and their tech-devices, it sees fresh material for this labour. How will the Acolytes overcome the treachery of their own tech-devices and vehicles to prevail against this foul data-spirit?

The Acolytes accompany an embassy of Inquisitors to the Iathes. Once there, the Acolytes are set loose with special equipment and a renegade Tech-priest to disguise them as servitors and tech-adepts. Their mission: penetrate the infotombs beneath once-blasted Machine Temples, pretending to a holy purpose, and learn whatever they can within 10 days—without being caught by Mechanicus wards, for they will be denied and forsaken by the Ordos if that happens. The hulking menials of Hadd who crowd the lowest manufactory and habitat districts are but the least challenge; far more sophisticated machine spirits and militant tech-adepts prowl the barrier zones between the sacred and the mundane strata.

(30m; S/-/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable).

[†] Includes Strength Bonus

Gear: Basic MIU interface, optical mechadendrite, manipulator mechadendrite, schismatical cogitator, micro-bead data communicator, dataline cables, 2 laspistol clips.

Threat Rating: Hereticus Terminus.



From the Journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 3.506.788. Mqr

In 599 Mqr, I became involved in understanding a strange and violent breach of the Sleeef Outworld interdiction by a Mechanicus vessel, destroyed by the Battlesleet ships stationed there. An ensuing moral threat struck at Battlesleet-pledged tech-adepts, and warp-tainted Tech-priests were later destroyed upon Sleeef's volcanic surface. What sent those corrupted Mechanicus thence to suffer and die? At that time, we were blessedly ignorant of what Savant Nalseus would come to call "schismatics" or "conquinae machina," a vile plague of warp-tainted machine spirits.

We followed the trail of machine corruption from Sleeef back to Madaa, and in 602 Mqr we found that forge world upon the brink of falling to a malign and willful contagion of heretical knowledge. Schismatical machine spirits from a frozen infotomb of the depths had secretly taken all of low-strata Nordus for their own, and our action soon escalated to an engagement of two full Legio Machina and weeks of ceaseless bombardment by Incendi-pattern voidships. Understand that this was the best of all immediate choices...and we were by no means sure that it would be enough to destroy the wild contagion of evil machine spirits. It is by the God-Emperor's grace that I am not reviled as one whose hand was forced to pledge Exterminatus upon a forge world.

That year I praised Archmagos Kevikal for embracing our Ordo over and above a prideful secrecy that would have ensured doom at the Archenemy's hands. Yet he hid much I would have known then, and that my savants learned but slowly and painstakingly over the decades that followed. I recall well stoic Bette-Jann and laughing deWald, fine adepts lost to the treachery of corrupted tech-devices and to the knowledge that Kevikal would not share.

The greatest weakness of Calixian forge world Archmagi, secure behind their Iron Wall of silence, is a flat refusal to embrace doctrines of sacrifice to ensure purity. Even knowing that somewhere within the deep strata of Madaa lie tainted infotombs, they make no purge. To the heart of the Archmagos, it is better a million die by plasma-fire and orbital bombardment than a single infotomb be trammelled. Lath world rulers of the forge are overconfident in their ability to overcome even the direst manifestation of dark powers. This hubris only invites the Archenemy, who has risen again and again from the ancient depths.

All machine-spirits must be safeguarded against these foes!

- F J

TECH-WITCHES OF AMMICUS TOLE

Sinophia is a decaying world, its civil structures failing, its ancient grandeur rotted. Ruins of the past loom tall, towering above squabbling noble courts and the half-hearted Imperial caste. The Sinophian Machine Cult is as corroded as the manufactories and spires it once diligently maintained. It has fallen into mind-rust—a mix of disarrayed beliefs and damage to neuroaugmetics that would horrify a forge world tech-adept. The Tech-priests of low Sinophia have become ineffectual and strange, largely confined to their verdigris-stained temples and delusional contemplation of past glories. In their absence has risen a minor cult of tech-heresy and a society of tinkers who aspire to its ranks.

The arch-heretek who bends lesser Sinophian denizens to his will is Ammicus Tole, fled to that world and hidden there from the Inquisition. Tole's followers are tech-witches, heretekes, and lesser sorcerers who clutch at words written by their master. Their tech-knowledge is a mix of rote practicality and mysticism, either tortured from Mechanicus adepts or gleaned from Tole's writings. The Tome of Ammicus Tole, while largely heretical ramblings, hides true warp-rituals and working device-patterns. Most tech-witches possess only a few pages or fragments within a failing dataslate. To all but the inner circle, Ammicus Tole is a rumour—a distant and hidden lord of tech-heresy.

The tome's contents include: schemata-patterns for silver neuro-needles that enslave servitors, rituals of warp-craft that will do little more than harm the sorcerer, designs for charms made of the innards of tech-devices, and ramblings that talk of powerful device-gods hidden by the Mechanicus. Tech-witches employ the tome to enslave servitors to their will and create strongholds from long-abandoned ruins. They practice vile ceremonies, make human sacrifice, and attempt to call the warp into treasured tech-devices.

The cult of Ammicus Tole has made its mark upon Sinophia, its heresy overflowing to taint the poor and the villainous. For every tech-witch who has sworn his soul in blood to the arch-heretek, there exist a hundred envious junk foragers. These least of heretekes ply the device-markets and set huts of flakboard and rusted plate at city gates. Some can perform the lesser labours of tech-adepts, whilst others are wishful mystics with little knowledge. All earn Thrones by placing mumbled blessings or curses upon devices, casting auguries from smashed components, and scavenging deserted ruins for scraps left behind by a previous age. Foragers are the swarming flies that hide the rotten meat—it is hard for an outsider to discern a true cultist tech-witch from the vermin of the device-markets.

LYSEE THE MURDERESS

Butchery, immolation, and forbidden tech-knowledge have raised Lysee into a coven of the Sinophian witch-cult. She rightfully terrifies lesser cultists. Lysee has called upon the device-gods, slain caged sacrifices to bathe her slaved servitors in blood, and pledged herself to the arch-heretek.



Lysee the Murderess Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
26	32	27	31	33	38	35	44	40

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 14

Skills: Awareness (Per), Chem-Use (Int), Common Lore (Tech) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +10.

Talents: Paranoia, Pistol Training (Flame), Strong Minded, Unshakable Faith.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+1[†]; Primitive), hand flamer (10m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 E; Flame; Pen 2; Clip 2; Reload Full).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: Charms, chalk, salves, servitor-slaver needles, fragment of the *Tome of Ammicus Tole*, array of minor tech-devices, 2 hand flamer canisters, 2 warp-tainted manufactory servitors.

Threat Rating: Hereticus Minoris.

WARP-TAINTED SERVITOR

The servitor's eyes glow, and slaving needles project from its flesh and neuro-interfaces. Signs are carved upon bloodless flesh and dripped in wax upon metal; parchment charms trail from its torso. The blood of human sacrifice has dripped upon it, and its taint is manifest.



Warp-tainted Servitor Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	25	⁽¹⁰⁾ 50	50	10	10	30	40	10

Move: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 16

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Basic Weapon Training (Primitive).

Traits: Dark Sight, Machine (5), Natural Weapon (Metal Shears), Size (Hulking), Sturdy, ^{††}The Needles, By the Emperor!, Unnatural Strength (x2).

^{††}**The Needles, By the Emperor!:** Servitors such as these have several needles placed into their skin. Forcefully removing the special neuro-interface slaver needles will kill the servitor, whilst removing the others has no effect. This removal requires a successful unarmed attack on the servitor, followed by a Difficult (+0) Strength or Agility Test. All the neuro-interface needles can be removed with one successful test.

Armour: None (All 5).

Weapons: Industrial metal shears (1d10+10[†] R; Primitive), gas-compression rivet gun (15m; S/3/-; 1d10+8 I; Pen 0; Primitive).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: Internal micro-bead, binding sigils, parchment charms, embedded servitor-slaver needles.

Threat Rating: Hereticus Minoris.



CHAPTER II: FORBIDDEN SCIENCE



ADVENTURE SEEDS

No upstanding Rogue Trader or Chartist Captain journeys to Sinophia, but even the worst of those who do understand what the Inquisition would do were they to give passage to tech-witches. Except Calrok Jorn, it seems, who packs his decaying holds with the desperate who seek passage—and takes handsome payment to hide tech-witches amongst their number. Jorn must be punished for his crimes, and more importantly be seen to pay the price: detention, excruciation, and the pyre. The Acolytes are sent to await his next planetfall at Sinophia's crumbling landing zones. When Jorn is in their hands, the Acolytes are charged to discover why he is transporting tech-witches—perhaps this is an opportunity to create a path into the secret bastions of the cult, and there strike at the black heart of Ammicus Tole. Or perhaps the arch-heretek is one step ahead, and is doing exactly the same to the Ordos by means of his unwitting tool, Calrok Jorn.

The renegade Tech-priest Imbulon slew Acolyte Tien and fled to Sinophia. The Acolytes are sent in pursuit of vengeance and to complete the scourging of this coven of tech-heresy. Yet Imbulon vanishes, taken by tech-witches. Everywhere is the sign of such calumny: mind-rusted tech-adepts penned like criminals, debased by tinkers of the ruin-districts. Machine Temples are fallen and decadent beyond caring, and the heretek is now stolen away by yet more hereteks. Nonetheless, the Acolytes must find Imbulon and inflict upon him the holy wrath of the God-Emperor.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT: 3.506.788.M41

I well recall low Sinophia Magna, three days prior to the celebration of Saint Ummis the Vengeful in 744.M41. It was as though the Saint's Purge five years prior had never occurred, as though the tech-witches had risen from their pyres unburned the moment we turned our backs. They were in the device-markets of the Consilium ruin, their chalked missives crowded the Blind Wall, and their huts stood upon the Militant's Highway as though never crushed under armoured tread.

Within the markets, I saw a drooling tech-adept caged like a beast for the crowd, smugglers selling vox-devices, and tinkers trailing a line of looted servitors. Servitor and tinker alike were bedecked with ugly runes and parchment charms, but not the slaving needles that would have signified a connection to the cult of Ammicus Tole.

My retinue had seen the signs, however. Charms and sigils in the markets were pale reflections of Ammicus Tole's warp-craft. Even without seeking wilfully to call upon the Ruinous Powers, the tinkers were a pallid emanation of the arch-heretek's presence.

The night before the feast of Saint Ummis, I accompanied the forager Ocran to a coven of the inner-ruins, those parts of deep Sinophia Magna without power or good air. Ocran had risen above his fellows, perhaps because he understood that he was a charlatan, whilst others believed in their false charms and curses. Ocran agreed to guide me in exchange for a tithe-pledge for introduction to greater witches of a hidden stronghold. My retinue followed, and I recall I was confident we would take a step closer to the arch-heretek Ammicus Tole.

How fate laughs at our hopes and plans. The night began with treachery and ended in blood. A dozen tech-witches lay dead, telling us naught, and my adept Balthus hung pierced upon the blades of their slaved servitors. Nothing was gained, and much lost. Sinophia is a world of death and frustrations, and would that I could justify a pyre of it all.



VORE-WEAPONS

A vore–weapon is a made beast, a living assassin’s tool crafted by heretek genetor and xenobiologis tech–adepts from raw xenos breeding material. This crafting is a dangerous practice for a Calixian Mechanicus priest. While the Ommissiah blesses the toil that created grox, beremoth, and a dozen other worthy agri–breeds, the creation of new xenos beasts from breeds declared corrupt or vile is tech–heresy. The line between the holy and the heretek xenobiologis is smudged and often redefined, but creation and use of vore–weapons are emphatically tech–heresy in the Calixis Sector. No faithful servant of the God–Emperor would create or employ such obviously corrupt xenos life, and those who do must be hunted down and burned.

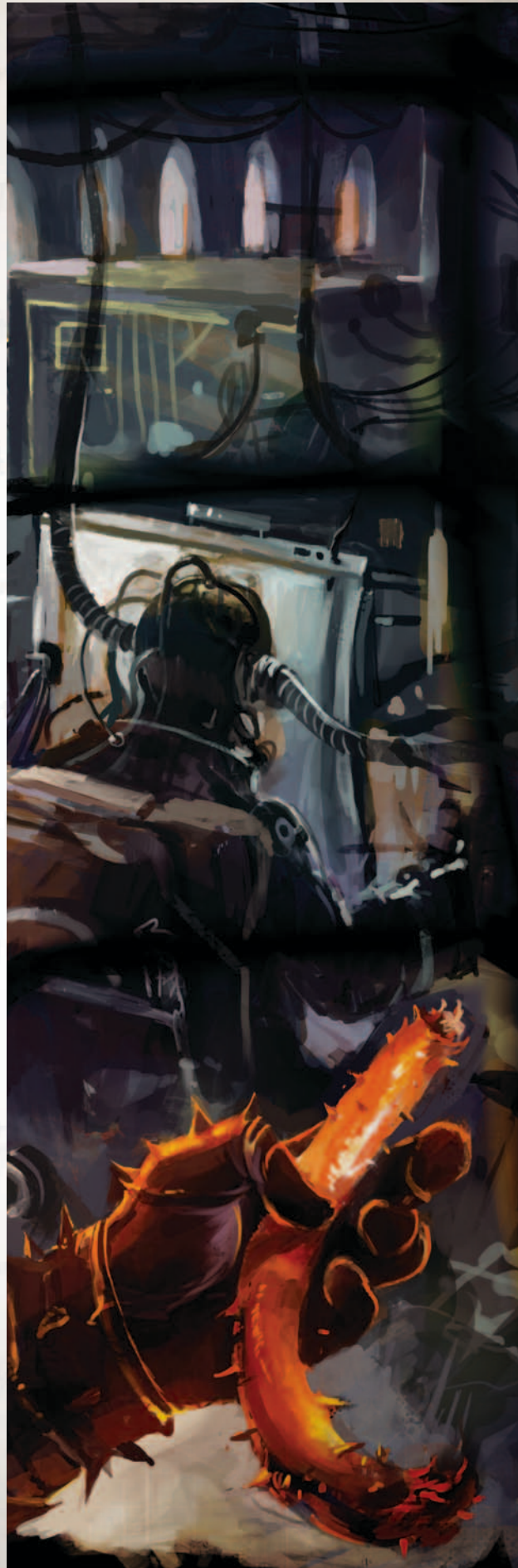
The most common breed of Calixian vore–weapon is a thin worm–like creature less than a handbreadth in length, bristling with hard spines. It is possessed of startlingly strong hooked fore–limbs and a maw of razor–teeth. It can coil to leap clear across a room if needed and employs its hooks and spines to scuttle with alarming speed.

A vore–weapon is docile until enraged by chemical cues. Typically, an assassin activates and throws the vore–weapon upon its target by means of an armoured gauntlet of particular design. A frenzied vore–weapon is fast, fearless, and extremely aggressive. It tears through even light armour to get at the flesh beneath, and then rapidly levers, thrashes, and burrows its way within to destroy internal organs. Once the xenos has maw and fore–spines within flesh, the target is as good as dead.

Just as for an assassin’s envenomed dagger, however, a vore–weapon is ineffective against the armoured, the alert, and the forewarned. Its primary use is often as a coded missive intended for someone other than the victim—the assassin’s master displays power and ruthlessness in using a heretek’s vore–weapon, and threatens the same terrible death to those who continue to go against his wishes.

The noted Inquisitor Embuleos raged against vore–weapons in his lifetime, calling them a great heresy forced upon the Imperium by negligent and degenerate Magi. Despite periodic purges by the Calixian Ordos and Mechanicus, vore–weapon breeders continue to practice their ugly craft throughout the Calixis Sector. Renegade Tech–priests and biologis heretek outside the Machine Cult ensure that the wealthy and unscrupulous have access to this terrifying means of assassination. They cultivate squirming colonies of the beasts, hidden away behind facades of wealth, and hold court for the factors of assassin guilds and death cults.

In recent years, more and more of these bizarre living weapons have been used to commit murders across the Josian Reach, leading some to speculate that a large storehouse of these xenos creatures somewhere in the region.





Vore-Weapon Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	30	30	30	30	35	50	10

Move: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 5

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Fearless.

Traits: Bestial, ††Burrow into Flesh, Crawler, Fear 1, †††Find the Flesh, ††††Get It Off Me!, †††††Leap, Natural Weapons (Gnashing Teeth), Size (Puny), Unnatural Speed.

††**Burrow into Flesh:** When clinging to a target, the vore-weapon tries to Burrow into Flesh once per Round. After the vore-weapon has caused damage once, the vore-weapon's burrowing incapacitates the target with agony. Each action attempted by the target thereafter requires a **Very Hard (-30) Willpower Test** to undertake. The vore-weapon causes 2d10 Rending damage every subsequent Round until the victim is dead, at which point the xenos beast also expires. The vore-weapon may be removed by succeeding at an Opposed Strength Test by at least one degree of success. Removing the vore-weapon inflicts 1d10 points of

Rending damage to the victim, as its barbs and hooks slash at the victim's flesh wildly. Once the vore-weapon has been removed, the victim must succeed at a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or lose 1d5 Toughness permanently.

†††**Find the Flesh:** After the vore-weapon succeeds at damaging the target one time, all further attacks against that target ignore armour.

††††**Get It Off Me!** If a vore-weapon hits but does not cause damage, then the vore-weapon clings and scuttles about the target, automatically hitting the target in a random Hit Location in the next Round. Any attack against the vore-weapon must be made as a called shot. A successful called shot hits the creature, while any failed called shot within the -20 penalty strikes the victim instead, and all other results miss entirely.

†††††**Leap:** The vore-weapon can leap to cling to a target at up to its charge movement distance. If it hits and causes damage, then it begins to Burrow into Flesh immediately.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Gnashing teeth (1d10+1† R; Primitive, Tearing).

†Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

Such a simple thing to bring chaos upon a hive spire: a fallen container of chemicals. An enraged colony of vore-weapons turns on its heretek breeder; the xenos consume her and then spread slowly from the heretek's well-kept spirebase manse. Spire-dwellers begin to die, and a panic grips the upper hive—fear of the xenos beast that hides in pipe, shadow, and vent. The Acolytes are soon assigned to coordinate with Magistratum, Adeptus Arbites, and PDF forces: suppressing riots, sweeping the spire levels with cyber-mastiffs, and purging winding, endless vent systems with flamers. The Inquisition must have answers—what are these xenos beasts, and where did they come from?

The Acolyte's Inquisitor maintains a menagerie at his sprawling estate. It is a sealed vault system of stasis field generators, each enclosing live specimens of xenos breeds, attended by Ordo-pledged xenobiologis Tech-priests. The Acolytes' orders are to track down a cult of assassin-monks who venerate Saint Wellas the Silent and from their unwilling hands obtain live vore-weapons for the menagerie. Further, through the Wellasite monks, the Acolytes are to locate the heretek weapon-breeders who are the monks' source for the weapons. The death cult of Saint Wellas is scattered throughout the subsector worlds, its monasteries hidden, and its assassin-monks sent forth as tools of the high-born and influential. Archivites and savants of the lord Inquisitor's library stand ready to assist. Where will the Acolytes begin?





DEATH WORLDS

USING DEATH WORLDS
IN YOUR GAME

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KENOV III

•

PHYRR

•

ZEL SECUNDUS

•

WOE

CHAPTER III: DEATH WORLDS

Among the planets of the Calixis Sector, there are those who harbour nought but darkness. Death worlds, they are; fit only to kill the unwary and slay the impure.

—Noted passage from *The Greyskin Psalter*

There are many death worlds in the Calixis Sector, from mysterious and lethal Dusk to mountainous Mortressa. (In particular, Dusk has a dark and ominous history, one that would take far more space than these pages allow to fully describe.) Death worlds are both a blessing and a curse all in one, as they are often a source of valuable resources yet home to some of the most dangerous and aggressive lifeforms in the galaxy.

Death worlds are planets which are too dangerous to support widespread human settlement. These worlds vary from planet-wide jungles teeming with carnivorous plant and animal lifeforms to barren rockscapes strewn with volcanoes and wracked by ion storms. Death worlds are nearly impossible to colonise, but many outposts and other facilities are necessary on such planets for a variety of reasons ranging from system security to the need for a remote research station. In addition, many death worlds harbour precious resources of minerals, biologicals (both animals and plants), gases, and other, unique materials.



USING DEATH WORLDS IN YOUR GAME

Rather than an opponent to defeat, the death worlds of the Calixis Sector present an environment that can be every bit as challenging as a raging Ork warband. Death worlds make the journey just as dangerous as the final battle for Acolytes, and overcoming the obstacles that the planet itself presents can be quite dramatic. One great way to use a death world is to present it as the setting for one of the climactic confrontations with the campaign's main villain. Another alternative is to place vital clues hidden within the depths of an especially vicious death world such as Kenov III or Woe. However, although the



challenges of a death world should be significant, they should also be within the characters' ability to overcome. With proper planning, such as bringing the right gear or interviewing a survivor of a previous expedition, the Acolytes may succeed where others fail.



KENOV III

By all accounts Kenov III is beautiful, a planet so fertile it would take its place as one of the greatest Agri-Worlds in the Sector—if only Man could tame it and bring it to heel. The desire to bring Kenov III under the domain of the Imperium is great indeed, as many understand the world's value.

There have been at least 12 expeditions to the planet's surface—all of which have ended in disastrous retreat, for Kenov III is a world at war with itself. The verdant growth covering the planet's surface, so indicative of a ripe Agri-World, is alive in ways not seen in most other systems. Native inhabitants of Kenov III combine aspects of both plant and beast, and have only one dread purpose—to grow as large and be as prolific as they can before being pulled down and devoured by another.

Pieced together survey records and vox-reports show that the autochthons of Kenov III battle each other with airborne toxins, dripping digestive juices, excreted corrosive sap, and physical assaults, all in an effort to gain light, water, and nutrients. Parasites feed on the weak, while seedlings are quick to infect the wounded. Anything slain is not only broken down and digested, but serves as a host for a new crop of growths.

Kenov III is home to a variety of lifeforms inimical to Man, some of which include:

- Pit-Blooms—These creatures appear as large flower-like structures that lie flat against the ground. When prey passes over the creature's petals and fronds, they curl up and scoop the victim into the digestive pit located in the main body, which is buried underground.

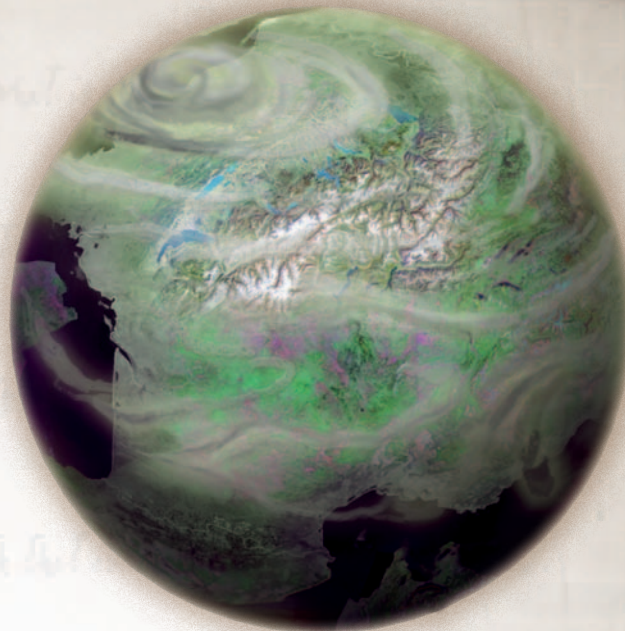
- Thrash Briars—These thickets of thorny stems violently flail at anything within reach.

- [Species X]27R—Several expeditions reported seeing vast stilt-like creatures from great distances. These otherwise unknown beings appear to graze on all other life.

- [Species X]36N—Described only as immense living balloons that drift with the winds. Under the main body are hundreds of dangling tentacles, which snatch up prey.

- Ripper Whips—The dreaded “trees” of Kenov III, Ripper Whips are large semi-mobile entities with a profusion of thin tentacles and/or branches sprouting from a central trunk. Spines, hooks, and innumerable sucker-like mouths line these tentacles. A Ripper Whip will lash out at anything within the spread of its roots, tearing its victim into small gobbets to be transferred to the maw in the trunk. Small enough prey will be dragged bodily into the mouth to be devoured.

Ripper Whips can move after a fashion, slowly making their way across the surface in search of new hunting grounds. Evidence shows Ripper Whips will cooperate to take down large prey.



RIPPER WHIP

Possibly the most infamous inhabitant of Kenov III, Ripper Whips are strange tree-line animals (or, perhaps, animal-like trees). Easily 7 meters in height, large specimens can reach upwards of 20 meters, although this is rare. They tend to cluster in small groves, and can be detected simply by the clearings around each trunk—clearings where just about anything living has been ripped from the ground and consumed. The trunk of a Ripper Whip hides a powerful maw, lined with thick thorn-like teeth, this circular opening is found near the crown, where the various feeding tentacles branch off. Covered in thorns, these tentacles are lined with small mouths surrounded by short hooks, and will start to devour anything caught in them as the Whip drags its prey back to the trunk.

An ambush predator, Ripper Whips tend to remain quiescent until something strays within reach of their tentacles. Once this happens the Ripper Whip will explode into a flurry of activity, lashing out with its tentacles in order to securely immobilize prey. As Ripper Whips tend to cluster in small groves, an attempt to escape from one will often result in the victim blundering into range of another, and there are reports of Imperial subjects torn asunder in a grisly tug-of-war between two or more Ripper Whips.

There is a certain fascination among cultists of Khorne and similar daemons with the Ripper Whip. Its ferocious and unrelenting form of attack, as well the sheer amount of blood spilled when it feed, bring about a sick lust for death and destruction among these heretics, and sacrifices are common during ceremonies honouring these dark gods.



Ripper Whip Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	—	55	40	⁽⁶⁾ 35	20	38	35	—

Move: 1/1/1/1

Wounds: 40

Skills: Concealment.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Dual Strike, Lightning Attack, Rapid Reaction, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee).

Traits: Blind, Multiple Arms, Long Tentacles^{††}, Natural Armour 2 (All), Natural Weapon (Tentacles and Maw), Size (Hulking), Slow^{†††}, Strange Physiology, Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Senses (Ground Sense^{††††}).

^{††}**Long Tentacles:** Ripper Whips can attack targets out to the

edge of their root system (i.e., 7–10 metres away). They also have a number of such tentacles, and can easily engage multiple targets at the same time. The Ripper Whip may attack up to three different targets within range each Round.

^{†††}**Slow:** As a Ripper Whip is a walking tree, it can only move 1 metre a turn regardless of its Agility Bonus.

^{††††}**Ground Sense:** A Ripper Whip hunts prey by sensing pressure on its root system, which usually extends 7–10 metres out from the trunk. Ripper Whips also seem to be able to sense the presence of large prey from further away and will slowly move towards it.

Armour: None (All 2).

Weapons: Tentacles (1d10+5[†] I, Primitive), Maw (1d10+5[†] R, Primitive).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 189,802 M41

I have found that beauty, in all its forms, to be the most corrupting influence of them all. It is deception at its worst, luring in the unwary and weak-minded with promises of pleasures base. But behind the facade lies a metaphysical rot named Heresy. Trust not that which appears beautiful, expose it to the purifying light of the Golden Throne, so its true nature may be revealed.

I liken Xenov III to a Daemonette pirouetting about before battle. Both are seductively graceful to the foolish and weak of will. Both wish nothing more than to slay the timid and ill-prepared. It is obvious to me Man has no place on on this world. He is just another invader to be fought, killed, and digested, food and fertiliser for mere plants.

Xenov III is too fertile a place to ignore. At times I wonder if it is similar to Woe, a world driven by a great unknowable intelligence that actively counters any intrusion. However, no Psyker has detected anything similar to Woe's malign mind. I think the best answer to the problem of Xenov III is a tailored virus capable of infecting all of the lifeforms Xenov III has to offer. Once the virus has run its course on the planet, the autochthons thereon can be ground underfoot to serve as fertiliser for Imperial crops.

Perhaps nothing demonstrates more the inherent wrongness of Xenov III than the Ripper Whip. Is there any greater affront to the natural order of things than a tree desiring to walk in the manner of Man? Heretical followers of the Dark Powers think so, for more than once have I uncovered pits in which Ripper Whips have been planted. Into these feeding-pits the cultists forced their sacrifices, chanting their treasonous prayers amid the screams of the dying.

I felt a certain poetic justice in driving these rabble before us, forcing them into their own pit, so they could suffer the same fate as so many of their victims. Such music did their shrieks make! Afterwards, we brought down the cleansing gift of the Emperor's fire, scouring the pit with flame, lasgun, and grenade, until all within had been reduced to ash.



CHAPTER III: DEATH WORLDS

PHYRR

Explorator teams discovered Phyrr a few decades after Lord Militant Angevin finished conquering the Calixis Sector, part of a massive effort by Sector Governor Drususto to survey and catalogue the Imperium's newest domain.

From space, Phyrr looked like a glimmering, blue-green jewel, with pristine oceans, rolling sun-warmed plains, and lush forests. It was truly a rarity amongst the dying stars and deserted planets of the Hazeroth Abyss. The Tech-priest Magos amongst the explorator team determined the atmosphere was safe to breathe. The explorators dispatched a shore party with all haste.

The ship lost contact with the shore party 10 minutes after they landed on the planet's surface. A second party, larger and better armed, was dispatched—they too, fell silent shortly after planetfall. It was only when the captain sent a third party equipped with sealed void suits and autonomous servo-probes that the explorators learned Phyrr's deadly secret.

Though the water of Phyrr is pure and the air clean, every plant and animal on the planet is completely lethal to human life. If ingested, a handful of spores can kill a full grown man within an hour, and a bite or sting from any of the planet's indigenous creatures slays more quickly than that.

The gene-toxins contained within the animal and plant life of Phyrr devastate the cells of any non-native creature, quickly rendering that creature into a skeleton surrounded by a pool of bloody sludge. After years of unsuccessful (and often fatal) experimentation, the Magos Biologos declared there was no cure or inoculation against Phyrr, save a contained bio-suit. The only way to safely inhabit the planet was to virus-bomb it first.

However, as fate would have it, those same toxins so deadly to humanity are also extremely valuable to some of the more esoteric and incomprehensible industries of the Biologos branch of the Mechanicus. Few can comprehend what the Tech-priests do with these bio-compounds, but it is vital enough that the Administratum has bequeathed Phyrr to the Mechanicus as a harvest-world.

A thousand years after its discovery, the planet is still mostly pristine and uninhabited. The Mechanicus keep a small spaceport and research facility on the larger of Phyrr's two moons, and a larger harvest facility on Phyrr's surface. The facility is staffed by criminals—for whom Phyrr is considered a death sentence. Although the air is quad-filtered, the entire complex void-shielded, and the convicts equipped with bio-suits, a single failure to follow decontamination procedures kills dozens. The Mechanicus require "complete personnel replenishment" every few years.

The Mechanicus remotely operate the facility from the moon base. They do not bother with guards or security systems—there is nowhere for the prisoners to escape. Should the convicts become violent or riotous, the Tech-priests are willing to switch off the air filters and let Phyrr's nature take its course.

Ships seldom stop at Phyrr save the occasional heavily armoured convoy of the Mechanicus, arriving to pick up the accumulated stocks of bio-compounds. More rarely, prison scows arrive bearing a new supply of labour for the planet-side



facilities. Chartist captains avoid the planet, for the Tech-priests of Phyrr are an insular bunch, disinterested in trading.

Some of the crews of the prison scows tell stories, however. They claim to have seen strange ships entering Phyrr's atmosphere on the far side of the planet, ships that do not respond to hails or commands. The Tech-priests of Phyrr claim they know of no unauthorized ships in their domain. However, there are rumours whispered throughout the sector of a secret pyramid buried deep in the darkest jungles of Phyrr. The stories speak of a temple dedicated to an ancient fellowship of assassins, but if anyone has been foolish enough to explore the jungles of Phyrr, he has never returned.

PHYRR CAT

The Phyrr Cat is the apex predator of the plains and forests of Phyrr, located deep within the Hazeroth Abyss. These felids grow rather large, some of the oldest reaching the size of a small pony. They are completely carnivorous, but also very reclusive. A Phyrr Cat's prowess in stealth is so phenomenal that someone travelling through Phyrr's forests could pass within 4 metres of one and never know it was there.

That is not to say Phyrr Cats will not stalk and kill a man if given the opportunity. The penal harvest teams stationed on Phyrr live in terror of the creatures. They are doubly dangerous—if their teeth and claws do not kill a person outright, the unfortunate is still doomed. Like every other plant and animal on Phyrr, the Phyrr Cat is toxic to human life. If that were not enough, there is some evidence to suggest that Phyrr Cats have some sort of ingrained psychic ability, allowing them to hunt without using their more mundane senses. Certainly, in several cases the cats have savagely attacked psykers who strayed too close to them.

Although the Phyrr Cat is toxic to humans, the reverse is not true. Some ambitious Rogue Traders travel to Phyrr to capture the creatures to sell to noble game preserves and mid-hive carnivora. The reward is often worth the cost in men the planet inevitably extracts. For those interested in such pursuits, little rivals the sight of a Phyrr Cat on the hunt.



Phyrr Cat Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
4I	—	42	34	53	16	47	40	05

Movement: 10/20/30/60

Wounds: 19

Skills: Awareness (Per), Concealment (Ag) +20, Dodge (Ag), Silent Move (Ag) +20, Tracking (Int) +10.

Talents: Catfall, Swift Attack.

Traits: Bestial, Natural Weapon (Fangs and Claws), ††Psychic Hunter, Quadruped, Sturdy, Toxic.

††**Psychic Hunter:** The Phyrr Cat possesses a low level psychic awareness of its surroundings. It always counts as sustaining the Sense Presence Minor Power within 60 metres. The Phyrr Cat is never required to make a test to manifest this power and is never required to roll on the Psychic Phenomena Table.

Psykers may make a Challenging (-10) Psyniscience Test at the GM's discretion to detect the Phyrr Cat's presence. However, to a Phyrr Cat, the mind of a psyker is immensely irritating, and makes it feel as if it were constantly being poked. Unless there is a good reason to do otherwise (determined by the GM), Phyrr Cats will always choose to attack targets with a Psy Rating over any alternative.

Weapons: Fangs and claws (1d10+7[†] R; Primitive, Tearing).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.



From the Journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 203.987.141

For all the legends and fables of the "deadly felines of Phyrr," my one experience with a Phyrr Cat was quite benign.

My once-Interrogator Lyra Morrell, having completed four decades of service to both our satisfactions, chose to leave the Ordos and seek fortune as a Chartist captain. However, she often provides me and mine with information and the services of her vessel.

It was during one such journey that Lyra summoned me to the forward hold of her vessel. There, she showed me a large, sealed container. Inside the cage, a tawny gold feline paced back and forth.

Lyra told me it was indeed a Phyrr Cat and that she had "recovered" it whilst fighting with a rival she suspected of working for the organisation of xeno-smugglers known as the Beast House. Now she planned to present it to the wardens of the Lord Subsector's private game preserve.

As I watched, the creature stopped pacing and stared at me with unreadable green eyes, as if it were studying me. My hexagrammically-warded pendant grew warmer, as if the cat were employing some inner sight against me. I wanted to bring my vat-psyker to investigate further, but Lyra refused.

ZEL SECUNDUS

Seen from the surface, Zel Secundus is a scorchingly hot world, dry and desiccated and scoured constantly by powerful storms of sand and grit. The atmosphere is poisonous and corrosive, and any man caught outside without proper protective gear will either have the flesh rasped from his bones by the wind or his lungs filled with toxic gases. Such a death, while quick, is also agonising.

Geologically unstable, Zel Secundus is beset by constant tremors and quakes, and volcanic eruptions are an almost daily event. Scattered across the surface of the planet are clusters of smoking vents and steaming fumaroles, usually surrounded by bubbling pools of magma or highly toxic lakes of super-hot water full of dissolved salts, heavy metals, and other chemicals. These chemicals are what give Zel Secundus its (admittedly meagre) value, as these boiling caldera produce great masses of sulphur, sulphuric compounds, and liquified silicates. After an eruption, these rich fields are mined using immense armoured crust-scrapers, which strip off the upper surface of Zel Secundus and break it down into holding tanks for shipment off-world for processing. These giant machines are similar in size to the largest vehicles in the Imperial Guard armoury, and almost as well protected.

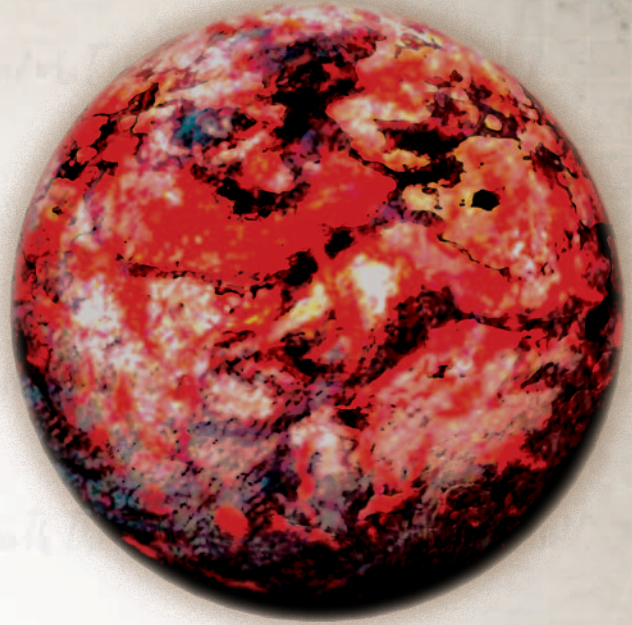
The only places man has a chance of dwelling for any length of time on this planet are the poles, which are cool enough, and stable enough, for permanent settlements. Even then, life is a constant struggle against the hostile environment, as sulphuric rains eat away at the seals around doors and windows and thick masses of toxin-laden dust clog filters and vents. Vigilance is the only weapon against Zel Secundus's constant assault on the mining camps—vigilance and regular cycles of cleaning and maintenance.

OSEDEX

Zel Secundus is a harsh world, wracked by seismic disturbances and vast atmospheric storms. What life there is to be found here has developed to withstand the extreme environment, resulting in some of the most hardy and dangerous xenos species known to the Calixis Sector. At the top of an altogether unforgiving and brutal food chain is the Osedex. Measuring 3 metres in length for a hatchling, a typical specimen is nearly three times that length, with a broad, low body that gives little resistance to the powerful winds of Zel Secundus. Resembling immense centipedes, these ravenous creatures are completely blind, detecting prey through clusters of sensitive bristles lining the underbody. As food is scarce on this blasted world, Osedex will readily attack anything they perceive as prey, which is usually anything smaller than itself.

Having little to fear from their fellow inhabitants—aside from a larger Osedex—these creatures attack almost relentlessly and are extremely difficult to drive off. Once they get their mandibles into their prey, they'll consume the victim on the spot.

Offworld, the thick scutes of the Osedex's heavily armoured segments are prized for their durability and protective qualities. This has led to some attempts to actively hunt immature Osedexes, but considering the dangers inherent in simply venturing abroad on the surface, most people are content with harvesting the remains of Osedex that have died naturally. Still, there are those



(usually offworlders) who feel the gains far outweigh any risks.

What little study has been done indicates Osedex grow throughout their lives—and no one is sure how long they live. There are rumours of immense Osedex measuring 30 metres or more, with a few claiming to have seen truly gigantic 100-metre Osedexes.



Osedex (Young) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	—	⁽¹²⁾ 60	45	40	10	35	40	—

Move: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 35

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Tracking (Int).

Talents: Fearless, Hardy, Heightened Senses (Touch), Iron Jaw.

Traits: Armour Plating, Bestial, Blind, Crawler, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour 4 (Head and Upper Body), Natural Weapon (Mandibles), Size (Enormous), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Senses (††Ground Sense).

††**Ground Sense:** An Osedex has no eyes; instead, it hunts by detecting vibrations through the surface of the planet. It can easily detect nearly anything upon the ground within 15 metres, and receives a +10 bonus to Tracking Tests involving prey in constant motion. Large vehicles and the like can give greater bonuses. Anything that is not directly in contact with the ground or which remains perfectly still beyond 15 metres cannot be sensed by the Osedex.

Armour: None (Head 6, Upper Body 6, All Other Locations 2).

Weapons: Mandibles (1d10+12† R, Pen 10; Tearing).

†Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Xenos Majoris.

Being an Account of the World and the Beasts Found Thereon: 258.613.M41

Unto Inquisitor Felroth Gelt does his loyal servant Acolyte Grigor Kyrre send greetings. As requested, I have summarized my recent expedition to Zel Secundus.

Never have I seen a place so unfit for life. Seen from orbit, the planet has a sickly yellow color, the surface usually hidden from view by roiling clouds of haze, dust, and sulphuric smoke. It reminded me of a great jaundiced eye, staring balefully out into the void, and I wondered perhaps if the Calixis Sector might be better off if this eye were simply plucked out, lest its gaze fall upon and corrupt a more fertile world.

The trip to the surface was one I care not to repeat. Strong winds buffeted the shuttle to such a degree I am not ashamed to admit that I (and others) offered up constant prayers to the Emperor and Saint Drusus to look after the well-being of ourselves and the vessel we rode in. I can't imagine anyone coming to Zel Secundus willingly. The miners are all convicts, guilty of crimes that have garnered them all death sentences. But the Emperor, in his infinite wisdom, has ensured such individuals can still make themselves useful to the Imperium, until they eventually succumb to one of the many hazards of Zel Secundus.

I myself will never forget the views I had of the surface. There were vast plains of cracked earth carpeted with ash and dust, mounds of boulders worn smooth by the wind-blown sand and pitted from sulphuric rain, still pools of brilliantly-coloured toxic liquids, dense clouds of vapor issuing from salt-encrusted holes, and rising above it all, the twisted fingers of what passes for mountains on Zel Secundus, each spire slowly being ground down by the never ending storms. If the world itself isn't lethal enough, there are Osedex to watch for. Also known as "Bone-Eaters," these horrid creatures are immense, the smallest measuring 3-4 meters, with many 7-8 meters in length. Each segment of their broad bodies is covered in thickly-armoured plates, while the underside bristles with crawling legs and gripping claws. Virtually blind, they hunt by sound and feel, able to sense a man's footsteps amid the tumult of their world. Regular vibrations, so unlike the random quakes and shudders typical for Zel Secundus, attract their attention like no other, and many armored transports have found themselves under attack by an Osedex.

As anything living (and thriving) on Zel Secundus must be able to survive almost unimaginable extremes, what life there is on this hell world is incredibly resilient. Even the smallest of the planet's inhabitants, the Sulphur Skimmer, is covered in armour plates capable of turning blades and stopping rounds from a heavy stubber.

Osedex have jaws capable of dealing with such defenses, and I have seen first-hand what one can do to reinforced steel plating. True to their name, they can (and will) devour anything remotely edible, consuming flesh, fabric, rubber, plastic, and so on. Wrapping their flexible bodies around the hull of a transport or crust-scraper, an Osedex will relentlessly attempt to peel its prize open, seeking to devour the softer contents. The only hope for the trapped crew is to call for a patrol strike and hope the barrage will drive off the Osedex with out destroying them in the process. Of course, since these are convicts, if there are too many Osedex, it is often considered easier to let the bears have their prize and retrieve the remains at a later date for repair or salvage.

To illustrate the power of an Osedex, I was given pict-captures showing the scant remains of what was said to be a Baneblade tank. Sent out on a long-range patrol into the equatorial wastes, the last contact with the crew stated they were under attack from one or more Osedex—each well over 30 meters in length. I dismissed the story as a mere miner's tale, until a brief break in the weather allowed a short reconnaissance flight, during which we passed over the skeletal remains of a Osedex. The scutes, still whole after the rest of the body had been devoured and dissolved, stretched in a line tens of meters long.





From the Journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt 307.69. M41

I am blessed to have never had to deal with the likes of the Osedex, as my investigations as yet have not given me cause to travel to Zel Secundus itself. It was with some concern I read the report of Acolyte Grigor Xyrre and wondered at what sort of creature could possibly bring down and destroy a Banblade. What use would bolters and lasguns be against such a ravenous thing?

Fortunately, Acolyte Xyrre's letter contained a clue as to how best deal with the Osedex. While their upper bodies are covered with thick, nigh-impregnable scutes, their undersides are mostly masses of legs. Here, the plates are much smaller and far thinner and more susceptible to penetration. If a man puts his faith into the God-Emperor and stands fast before an Osedex, he can prevail. He must be willing to allow it to encircle whatever conveyance he's traveling in, then, while the Osedex is occupied with trying to chew its way in, he can mount an assault on the exposed underbody.

The harsh environment of Zel Secundus grants the Osedex a natural resistance to las weapons and flamers, meaning one must consider physical weaponry. Slug-throwers may succeed in driving the Osedex away, thus I would think bolters would be more preferable. Their shells can penetrate the soft parts of the Osedex's underbelly and explode within the creature's body, hopefully killing it in short order.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT 3.305.778.M41

Woe is known as a hell world. I can attest to the truth of this, as I have set foot upon its surface.

In 770.M41 my retinue and I were aboard the Triumph of Saint Drusus, a Chalice-class battlecruiser under the command of Captain Laomyr. So much of my time in the Josian Reach has been spent aboard ship: device-cycled air and the squalid low-decks vie with cultured officer tradition and the magnificence of the void. The Captain was gracious in pledging his capable vessel to my wishes, all too rare a demeanour amongst Lord-Captains of the Battlefleet. He proved a worthy ally in pursuit of the Archenemy.

Then, as so many times past, I hunted adorants of Baphomael: arch-vile, slaughterer, beast of a thousand curses. I have well chronicled my battles with the daemon. I shall confine myself here to talk of Woe, a grave for many members of the misguided Brotherhood of Horned Darkness. They were clouded of mind, simple men seduced by Baphomael to acts of lunacy. Yet even these least of the Archenemy must be struck down lest their contagion of worship spread, and lest they rise by unholy chance to strike some great blow against the Imperial Creed. The Brotherhood eluded me at Teneroth's Grasp, but their course hence was left obvious by their actions.

It was in the orbital space of Woe that we finally brought the cultist shrine-vessel to bay. If any faithful were left alive after years of its perversion to daemonic worship, we gave them mercy by our actions. The Captain and I watched the shrine-vessel burn to a cindered hulk under relentless lance strikes. Like fragments from a smashed seed, shuttles and saviour pods fell from the cultist voidship, some escaping to plunge beneath the ugly clouds of the deathworld below.

Soon thereafter, we followed them down in an assault drop. It was a modest group: I, my acolytes, a single vat-psyker in her suspensor transport, and a few silent Black Regiment kill teams. The drop buffeted through yellowed cloud to the fetid, uniform landscape that the trader Calmaxicus called "foul and bereft of aught but death."

Woe is a solitary world beneath a weak, dim star. The surface is a drear place of endless, oily bogs, shrouded in malodorous mists. Beasts of poisonous aspect slithered away from our every mired step, and rebreathers struggled with the thick air. The Black Regiment teams spread professionally, nonetheless, and secured a nearby hummock for our initial assay. The drop's auspex and our personal devices gave no clear indications of what lay beyond the enclosing mists. My vat-psyker—designated IV—felt only a withdrawal of life, a silence.

Yet the heretic remnants were there, and we moved to find them. Soon enough, we discovered a forest of tall metal spines looming from a black lake in the cloying swamp. It too was absent from our auspex, as though everything there were made a ghost. The shape suggested a ruined vessel, decayed to a hollow hulk. Woe must be littered with a thousand years of those who came and, like the Brotherhood of Horned Darkness, were never to leave again.

But Woe is not a barrens, but rather a death world. Soon enough it claimed one of us, as we sought sign of the heretic shuttles. Woe was an end for Proctor Amis Ethran, a soul of faith and vigour, but who was sucked below with a cry of anguish before the nearest troopers could wade to reach him. "Something... something moves. A mass of thought," said vat-psyker IV. But there was nothing.

We moved to find higher ground as horribly suggestive liquid sounds came from the vox, continuing intermittently for more than an hour. Why did the Brotherhood journey to this desolate deathworld? Even servants of the Archenemy have goals beneath their mad acts. We debated this inconclusively in our staterooms upon the Triumph and whilst descending from orbit—and we debated again after the proctor's death.



We discovered a cracked saviour pod as the mists thickened, and the broken corpses within. The bulk of it was sliding slowly beneath the muck even as we watched. There were signs of egress, of living heretics, but nothing more than signs. Had the bog swallowed them as it had swallowed Ethran? With what came thereafter, I believe a more terrible fate befell those lost souls—worse than they would have received at our hands. As the kill-teams swept the area, drifting in and out of sight, IV became disturbed. She lowered her suspensor transport to rest upon the filth. Across the years, I have learned to read the strange moods of the confined psyker, to differentiate between distress that stems from their abhuman condition and that which is a warning of the daemonic. I recall that on Woe, IV traced sigils in the bog with her mind and moaned that we were “amidst the awoken.” Her speech and actions became less intelligible thereafter, and we were forced to take control of her transport.

Only once before had I seen such disarray in my vat-psykers, when they were faced by a xenos beast of vast extent in the Krassus Depths rock fields. Its mind-maze, as they laboured to explain to me afterwards, spilled beyond its form and caused them to temporarily lose themselves and their humanity. I was minded of this upon Woe, though in truth I believed it some sorcery of Baphomael, and so gathered our forces in readiness for battle. Our minds prickled, and was that tension pre-combat jitters, or the presence that so deranged my loyal vat-psyker? As is so often the case, revelation came late.

We encountered the mass of heretics thereafter, who suffered Woe more greatly than we. The Black Regiment kill-teams slaughtered them to a man, suffering only the loss of two of their own. Even those deaths might have been avoided had we the support of IV, but she babbled yet, her beslimed suspensor transport pulled by line.

The remnant of Horned Darkness bore rune-poles and vile sigil-charms, but little else. They had been set to a desperate completion of purpose by our attack in the voids, but what was it? With the benefit of time and savantry, I now believe they attempted to build a machina psykana to manifest an unholy rite of Baphomael that tears open the mind, spills secrets, and forces compact with the darkness. The hints were all present, but we had not the time then to assemble them. The proctor would have done so, incisive as he was, but we were yet turning over bodies when the alien soul of Woe awoke fully. IV screamed, her vat hissed forth chemical overspill, and the transport swayed and dipped. An enormous shadow rose within the mists; the landscape shuddered and a tide of stench, filth, and decaying mud buried half of my force, Adept-militant Sassis amongst them.

We could do nothing but abandon the field to the barely-glimpsed behemoth. Its very movements sent tides ahead to pull us down into the bog—and it was only the first to loom from the encompassing fogs. “Death, death, death” whispered IV over and over, but by the God-Emperor’s grace, the vox worked to bring the assault drop close enough for flares and smoke to mark our location. The landscape quaked and rippled as we embarked, as great beasts directed by a greater presence sought our destruction. There is no doubt Woe is to be avoided by the faithful. The Triumph placed a warning beacon in orbit, declaring the world interdicted in the name of the God-Emperor. I have since ensured that Battlefleet vessels maintain that order—for heretics have shown they seek some use of Woe, and I will see that use denied.

In the years since Woe, Savant Byerette and I have assembled a view independent of that held by the Ordo Xenos. We believe the world itself to be an entity, its xenos life in some way beholden to that slow-thinking leviathan. Such a being can only be implacable to man—yet the servants of the arch-fiend Baphomael sought it out. Their plot, as viewed by rune-poles of a machina psykana, is laughable—sub-mites to sway the allegiance of a grox. Was it their plan, born of clouded minds who know not their limits, or was it at the direction of the daemon? I know not. Savant Byerette suggests that the cultists sought power, great power, to apply to the vaults of Teneroth’s Grasp. Perhaps.

Should there ever be need to return to Woe, I would employ a small force of fast suspensor vehicles and further, I consider psykers skilled in mind-speech and inured to contact with xenos as essential. My vat-psyker IV has not recovered her sanity since our destruction of Baphomael’s heretics—as great a loss to me as that of Amis Ethran and Te Sassis.





VERMIN & PREDATORS

USING VERMIN & PREDATORS IN YOUR GAME

-
- AMBULL
-
- CRUORIAN WAR BEAST
-
- FENKSWORLD PIT THING
-
- GLOOMHAUNT
-
- MAW-FLUKE
-
- SINOPHIAN BORE WORM
-
- SKIN TAKER OF FEDRID
-
- STENCHBEAST OF STRANK
-
- VERMINSPEAKER
-
- XOTHIC BLOOD LOCUST

S. Kofinska

CHAPTER IV: VERMIN & PREDATORS

"Hey, Syllas. Are you sure you heard something down he—"

—Final transmission from Hive-sweep Team 35

With the vast host of threats towards humanity's existence in the galaxy, it is unsurprising that most within the Holy Ordos do not concern themselves with the indigenous predators found on the worlds throughout the Imperium. Even the Ordo Xenos, with its mandate to protect against the alien, finds itself preoccupied with the organised threats presented by species like the Eldar, Orks, and Tyranids. Typically, that leaves little time for the lesser threats of unintelligent xenos and underhive vermin, which for the most part, do not present a danger to the Imperium as a whole.

The lesser agents of the Holy Ordos, however, may not share their masters' lack of concern. While Maw-flukes or Stenchbeasts may not be able to wipe out worlds, an acolyte exploring the darkest recesses of the underhive or trudging through a feral world's swamps may find the local wildlife quite dangerous. For them, any information on how to combat the horrors they may face is necessary and welcome.

Indigenous predators and vermin are not sentient or possessing of civilisation, though they may have bestial cunning or pack instinct. They are not capable of organising themselves against the Imperium, and, except in rare cases, are only motivated by the most basic of instincts—the desire to feed and protect themselves, for example. Their simple motivation makes them no less deadly, however, to the individuals that have the misfortune of encountering them.

Throughout the multitude of planets in the Calixis Sector, a staggering variety of indigenous creatures can be found. Some, like the dreaded Ripper Carnosaur of Norcarnos V, remain confined to a single world. Others, however, have spread the length and breadth of the sector and perhaps beyond, hitching rides on unsuspecting starships or being smuggled by opportunistic Rogue Traders or beast-wranglers with some mad scheme. Finally, some creatures have been deliberately unleashed on worlds as biological terror weapons by insidious forces or malign cults.

The enemies of the Imperium often make use of indigenous predators and vermin to further their malicious schemes. The uses are varied—a small-time cult might keep a Cruorian war beast chained up outside their headquarters, while a heretical mastermind feared across a sub-sector may release a brood of Xothic Blood Locusts in the air exchangers of a major hive.

However, whether the creatures are weapons or merely tools, they are a dangerous threat to any investigating agents of the Inquisition, perhaps more dangerous than the actual cultists. An intelligent acolyte studies the worlds he travels to and creatures there he might encounter. After all, a Pit Thing's fang-filled maw can prove far deadlier than a heretic's knife.



USING VERMIN AND PREDATORS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Of all the creatures presented in this book, hive vermin and indigenous predators form the most simple-minded and straightforward group. These monsters are useful as a "logjam breaker" or when the action needs to heat up. Another option is to utilise these creatures to keep the Acolytes on guard when things seem to be going too smoothly. Lastly, the Verminspeaker is presented as both a player character option and as a possible intelligent adversary to wield the monsters of this chapter like weapons under his psychic control.



AMBULL

Ambulls are massively built, roughly humanoid creatures with an insect-like armoured casing and hugely oversized arms tipped with iron-hard claws. Their pronounced hunched simian stance lowers their true height greatly, but when fully upright with claws stretched overhead they can easily reach 4 metres. Ambulls are extremely hardy and long lived social creatures, usually forming close-knit family units with several adults tending to broods of 4–7 offspring. They are also natural tunnellers, with eyes sensitive to the faintest light and infrared spectrums and claws that can excavate through soft rock and earth at alarming speeds. Their communal tunnels and caverns can stretch for many kilometres underground, forming a vast network of what can appear to the unwary as safe havens from threats above the ground.

Most Imperial xenologists believe the species evolved in the deserts of the distant death world Luther McIntyre IX in the Segmentum Solar. There, Ambulls primarily live underground during the harsh days, emerging at night (sometimes in packs) to scavenge and hunt, but also stalking any underground prey through their networks of tunnels. They can burst on their victims through the ground and smash with their huge arms, devouring flesh with their huge razor edged mandibles. Often they will drag the insensate body back to their burrow-nodes for the group to feed upon, especially immature Ambulls still learning how to hunt on their own. Ambulls favour live prey but are capable of eating almost anything they encounter.

Despite Delta-level bans on their transport, many ill-informed but ambitious groups (ranging from wealthy nobles to forbidden cults) have endeavoured to import and domesticate them as attack creatures or compound guards. Even when working with immature specimens, these attempts have always proved disastrous (often spectacularly so), usually resulting in groups of Ambulls escaping captivity to breed on their new planetary home. As almost any environment is less hostile than their native one and their new local prey both more plentiful and easier to hunt, they are known to breed at alarming rates and quickly become dangerous threats.

One thing that Imperial xenologists have noted is that



no matter where they are found, Ambulls show no sign of genetic drift or other morphologic changes. Even in the harshest, most radiological or polluted environments, these creatures remain unchanged, other than expected variations in colouring. Their extreme stability against the effects of mutation has been the subject of several intensive studies but with inconclusive results so far. The more radical elements of the Xeno Biologis even propose that the Ambull may represent an engineered breed designed to withstand Chaos. Wiser Adepts believe they are simply the result of the intense struggle for survival on their native hellish planet.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

A primitive tribe on the feral world of Volonx is reportedly involved in a Xenos-smuggling operation in the Andrantis nebula. An investigation reveals that this tribe has somehow domesticated a herd of Ambulls, training them with crude methods and narcotic poultices made from local flora. When the Acolytes investigate, the tribesmen freely explain that the Ambulls (or “Burrow Beast” in the local parlance) were found in a strange valley in the mountains, a valley said to be cursed by “ancient spirits” in the legends of the tribe. The Acolytes must uncover the mystery of this valley and answer the question: how did the Ambulls get to Volonx in the first place? Some kind of alien portal or gateway? Or something more sinister?

The Acolytes are investigating a group of pirates who may be dealing in proscribed xenos. The trail has led the Acolytes to a remote asteroid, hollowed out to form a habitable space station that the pirates have been using as a base of operations. The pirates also have a trap set for the Acolytes—arriving without the proper security codes results in the release of many Ambulls throughout the station, serving as a defensive guard against any who might stumble upon the pirate base. The Acolytes must fight off the creatures in order to get to the main headquarters, download and gather information on the pirates, and get out alive.



Ambull Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
32	—	⁽¹⁰⁾ 55	60	53	16	33	43	—

Move: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 22

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S).

Talents: Bestial, Burrower, Dark Sight, Fear 1 (Disturbing), Hardy, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (All 8), Natural Weapons (Claws and Mandibles), Size (Hulking), Sturdy, Swift Attack, Unnatural Strength (×2).

Weapons: Huge claws and serrated mandibles (1d10+10† I or R).

Armour: None (All 8).

†Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.



From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 799. M41

On more than one occasion, I myself have used resources that other, more limited, minds may have found improper. If the end result is a stronger Imperium, then I am content. However, some tools are simply too hazardous to utilise in a controlled manner. The Ambull is one such example, the result of attempting to tame the untamable. Ambulls are not native to the Calixis Sector. They are imported from elsewhere in Imperial space, bought and sold at high prices by those who wish to harness the beast's immense strength for their own ends.

It seems clear why so many have risked Excommunication in order to acquire an Ambull. These beasts are physically powerful and seemingly can survive on any diet in nearly any environment. Ambulls display some limited intelligence, and their social behaviour would lead one to believe they could be trained to become fearsome guardians or attack animals. To have such a beast at one's command would be a mighty achievement indeed. Many fools have lost their lives chasing that temptation.

If a tool cannot be turned to the service of the Emperor, it should be destroyed. Thus, I have encouraged my own allies and agents to eliminate these beasts wherever they are found. It seems there is no shortage of foolish heretics who see the Ambull as an opportunity for profit or prestige, only to discover too late that they have damned themselves for little return. The remains of the Quicksilver Palace on Arvus One lie a mute testament to such folly, destroyed by seismic charges placed by my own hand. May it serve as an example to others who turn away from the Emperor's Light.

CRUORIAN WAR BEAST

No one knows where the war beasts known as Cruorians hail from, only that they've plagued several worlds in the Calixis Sector. The name comes from Magos Biologis Harven Cruor, who first discovered the war beasts within xenos ruins in the Bloodfall system. Massive in form, Cruorian war beasts seem to revel in battle, showing no fear even when faced by the full might of the Imperial Guard. Standing on four long legs, each ending in thick claws, and fur that ranges between dark green and blood-red, a Cruorian war beast presents a frightening aspect. Short spikes protect the head, neck, and spine, although from what one can only hazard a guess. The forefeet have opposable thumbs, and it's possible the Cruorian are slightly more intelligent than most think—they've been witnessed using crude melee weapons for example.

Gathering in large packs, Cruorian war beasts tend to open their hunts (or a battle) with a chorus of nerve-racking howls, eventually reaching a crescendo right before the entire pack charges. Once engaged, Cruorian war beasts are utterly merciless, and take no prisoners. In fact, some go so far as to eat the slain, even before the fighting is over.

Armoured vehicles are no guarantee of protection from a Cruorian war beast charge. They are burly enough to upset smaller vehicles simply by crashing into them and have been known to work together into order to tip over larger troop carriers and the like.

Due to the non-technical nature of the war beasts, the question has arisen of how they've managed to appear on such



Transcript of interrogation/Subject: Corporal Tyrese Lun/32nd Steuven Light Horse.

Subject was one of the few survivors of the Aramburu Massacre. Corporal Lun was later executed on suspicion of Moral Corruption.

The 32nd was strung out when the order came to form fire teams. We set up in our squads, each around a vehicle. I was part of a stubber crew, with Ian handlin' the ammo feed.

We heard them first, a howlin' that made my hair stand up. It sounded like the shriekin' of dyin' men and it went on and on, gettin' louder. Some of the boys got spooked, and Sergeant Scardo gave him hell for it.

They came over the rise and for a moment I saw them clearly: huge hulkin' things with dark green fur. The line let them have it, lasguns, bolters, stubbers, everythin'. I never let up on my stubber. Didn't aim, didn't need to, they were so many. The stubber did the job, chewed them right up, but more kept comin'.

They hit the line down to my right. I heard the screams and yells. Captain Zedin yelled for them to not give ground, then one took his head off with a swipe of its claws.

I'd rather face orks than those war beasts again. Each taller than myself, with those huge, rippin' claws. I was tryin' to bring the stubber around while Ian loaded a belt when I saw Corak get it. Thing got its claws on her shoulders and tore her in two. I opened up with the stubber, and about then it finally jammed. Dagmar and I grabbed lasguns and climbed up on the Salamander. I had a good view there, and could see how much a mess the line was. War beasts were everywhere, and bodies lay in piles.

Ian tugged my sleeve then and pointed up to where the war beasts had come from. I looked up the slope and readied my lasgun to stop another charge. That's when I saw who were driving the war beasts forward. They were +++/CENSORED//CODE 11/310/Kappa//+++

widely separate worlds in the sector. Rumours abound, ranging from the almost logical (the war beasts are being used to soften up different worlds for an invasion) to the outright inconceivable (Cruorians can pass through the Warp unaided). Of growing concern are whispered accounts of Cruorian war beasts being seen in the company of elements of the Ordo Xenos. As of yet, no one has been able to prove these allegations, but there's enough circumstantial evidence to indicate that something is going on.



ADVENTURE SEED

What did Corporal Lun see? That's the question the GM needs to decide for himself. Suggestions include: Orks (a Nob or Warboss has found the ultimate in shocktroops), a Xenos Cult of the Bear (the cultists wish to gain metaphysical power by sacrificing others to the Cruorian war beasts in battle; they also help eat the Cruorians' kills), or Radical elements of the Ordos Xenos (this presumes Gelt's fears are correct, and Istvianians are using the Cruorian war beasts to destroy certain Agri- and Feudal Worlds).



Cruorian War Beast Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	—	(8) 45	(8) 40	38	23	43	38	10

Move: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Int), Climb (Ag).

Talents: Berserk Charge, Fearless, Furious Assault, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Sprint.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Dark Sight, Fear 1 (Disturbing), Howl^{††}, Natural Weapon (Teeth and Claws), Quadruped, Size (Hulking), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength(x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

^{††}**Howl:** The Cruorian's unnerving howl causes a -10 penalty to Willpower checks to avoid Fear.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Teeth and claws (1d10+8[†] R; Primitive, Tearing).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 972.784 Mar

What am I to make of such a story? If it wasn't for the description of dark-furred, sharp-clawed beasts, I would think the massacre to be Ork work (it has all of their markings). But no, these Cruorians are far different from those brutish green-skinned war-mongers.

I have only scattered and incomplete reports to work from, but as near as I can discern, a Cruorian war beast usually walks on all fours, but can move upright on two for short distances. It is frightfully strong, with claws capable of tearing into light armour, as the crew of Corporal Lun's Salamander found out. With a mass many times that of a man, it can still run at great speed. They tend to travel in small packs, howling before they charge into battle.

Even more disturbing is Xeno-File 908.332, which shows a massively built monstrosity covered in thick fur and equipped with extremely long claws that no doubt could cut a man in two. Per this file, these same beasts took Prospero Colony in the distant Donorian Sector of the Segmentum Tempestus. I find them to be strangely similar in general form to Corporal Lun's encounter, but hope this is only a curious coincidence. If not, it means this xenos threat is far more wide-spread than I had initially thought.

Strange was the order to cease my investigations soon after I located this file. I acknowledged this request for a time, but eventually reopened my files, having uncovered more about the Cruorians in the hands of heretics and xenos-worshippers. As large and powerful as they are, the Cruorian war beasts are little more than bestial brutes. So why are they so important to these circles of xenos-lovers and why do I find evidence detailing their nature on such distantly separate worlds?

What did Corporal Lun see lined up on the ridge above him? I have come to suspect the hand of the Ordo Xenos in this...some darker reasoning and corruption has infiltrated their ranks, twisting their work for some vile motive. I fear that the Istvianians may be involved.

THE FENKSWORLD PIT THING



Pit Thing Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	—	(10) 56	(10) 54	40	10	35	24	—

In the depths below the hives of Fenksworld, pale things writhe. Varying between two and three metres high at the shoulder, Pit Things are vicious predatory beasts that are fuelled by hate. The strong chemical reek that surrounds these creatures is often the first sign of their presence, and Fenksworld underhivers heed that warning well. Pit Things are bulky, colour-leached carnivores with four stumpy legs. Pit Things also possess webbed claws and feet, making them agile swimmers, and they seem to be resistant to the typical chemical and toxic hazards of industrial hives. Their four eyes are arranged symmetrically in a vaguely canine skull, while their mouths are circular, lamprey-like maws studded with razor-sharp teeth meant to rend and tear. They are nonsentient and seem singularly unintelligent, perhaps the only reason why the Pit Thing has not claimed the title of apex predator on Fenksworld.

The Pit Thing uses its size and strength aggressively in combat, often charging into battle with furious rage. Those unfortunate enough to fight the Pit Thing must be as wary of its acidic drool as its rending claws, as every savage bite inflicts wounds that burn through armour and flesh alike.

Sump-skiffs cruise the polluted vaults below Fenksworld's hives, seeking out Pit Things to capture with gaffs, nets, hooks, and electro-poles. A handful of men never make it back from each trip, torn from the skiffs and pulled down into the burning, toxic sludge. Usually, these hunters lace a piece of meat with powerful soporifics to use as bait, a tactic that enhances the odds of each hunt's success. The Adeptus Arbites struggle to suppress these heretical hunts. However, the value of each Pit Thing makes this highly dangerous occupation extremely lucrative. Thus, every time the Arbitrators shut down one beast-hunting group, two more form from the remnants to begin operations.

Once a Pit Thing is captured, it is placed into an iron cage and delivered to the arenas to provide bloodsport for the hive populace. The Pale Pits of Volg Hive are the most infamous for utilising alien beasts in their gladiatorial matches, but the sheer savagery and unthinking malice of the Pit Things make them unique even in these blood-soaked environs. These terrifying beasts rampage through as many as a dozen men at a time, painting the sand red with blood only to crush the final few beneath its rubbery bulk.

There are some indications that link the Pit Things to the Blight of Nova Castilia, a gene-atrocity committed by the Logician cult. Tech-heresy on a planetary scale, the Blight spread like wildfire through the hive population. There are whispers that during this event, several families simply went missing, replaced by pallid, raging monstrosities.

Move: 8/16/24/48
Wounds: 30
Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S) +10.
Talents: Berserk Charge, Furious Assault, Iron Jaw.
Traits: ††Aura of Hate, Bestial, Brutal Charge, Fear 2 (Frightening), Natural Weapon (Bite and claws), Quadruped, Size (Hulking), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).
 ††**Aura of Hate:** The Fenksworld Pit Thing generates such a raw torrent of emotion that it can disturb psychic abilities used in close proximity. If a psychic power is used within 15 metres of a Pit Thing, the power's threshold increases by 5.
Armour: None.
Weapons: Bite or claws (1d10+10† R; Pen 3; Primitive).
 †Includes Strength Bonus.
Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

An influential Imperial Noble asks the Acolytes to look into the disappearance of his wastrel son and heir. A trail of clues leads to Fenksworld and the Pale Pits of Volg Hive. There, the Acolytes discover the wayward son has lost a considerable sum gambling on arena fights. After defaulting on his debts, the heir has been dosed with combat drugs and will be placed into a battle with a Pit Thing for the crowd's entertainment. The Acolytes must somehow save the raving, drug-addled heir from a violent end.

Disembarking from their shuttle, the Acolytes witness a group of men cursing and struggling to load a huge iron crate onto a nearby orbitus transport via a crude hydraulic crane. The crane arm fractures, dropping the crate with a thunderous crash—exposing a Fenksworld Pit Thing. The creature is furious at being sedated and confined... and it is ravenously hungry. The Acolytes now have a solid link to xeniform smuggling in the Calixian extent, and a dangerous creature on the loose.

CHAPTER IV: VERMIN & PREDATORS



FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT: 164.788.M41

Fenksworld: location of the most callous and bloody fighting pits of the Calixian worlds, a fitting mirror to the misery and poisons beyond its hives. It was many years ago that I and my pledged delved beneath Volg Hive in search of a cult bound to the Ruinous Power of blood sacrifice. In finding the heretics in the Pale Pits, we found also a xenos breed most foul—and yet most suited—to the taint of that violent underhive. It knew only blood-soaked arena sands and desired only to rend and tear; it was by the blessings of the God-Emperor alone that none of my acolytes fell to that beast.

Terrified cultists loosed the creature upon seeing our rosettes, a desperate attempt to purchase time in which to flee the hammer. It might have worked upon lesser men. The thing's bubbling roar almost froze us, its rage a near-physical assault on the heart and mind. My vat-psyker's suspensor transport faltered and dipped—he moaned in anguish within as the beast's four reddened, hate-filled eyes rolled independently to look at each member of my retinue. It was an abomination to the God-Emperor's sight, drooling acidic slime and casting forth a loathsome, alchemical reek, seeming sure in its ability to cow human prey.

We did not slay it, though it wounded Lammdin and Half-Amend most grievously in its charge. Foul and deserving of death as it was, the heretics, our true targets, were escaping. Adept-militant Prandus bore a plasma weapon, and by that we drove it back to the cage-pit, steaming skin hanging in flaps from its charred flanks. Of the heretics, I will say no more here, save they were crushed, their fanes and influence torn from the hive.

It was many years before I again had cause to visit Fenksworld, but memory of the xenos pit-beast lingered. I was engaged in research upon certain signs in the void, rather than some more vigorous action, and time was made for other investigations. Beneath crumbling manufactoria bastions, I and my savants learned more of the xenos. The beast is known to the low-hivers as a "Pit Thing," and wagering on the deaths it causes is a sport of the pale pits. Arena magisters promise a wealth of Thrones to any who can prevail against a Pit Thing in hand-to-hand combat, a feat of arms none have claimed in living memory, or so the low-hivers tell.

After the Feast of the Ascendance that year, I resigned myself to call upon the service of Lexographer Morria within the Library of Knowing. There is a certain eagerness of the Library elders I find distasteful, and so have as little to do with them as possible—they await bad news with undecorous glee, and seek obsequious favour with anyone who might be its bearer. Still, with Messia's assistance I traced hints of an origin to the Pit Thing breed. One carefully inked account faithfully recorded the ramblings of a mad seer thought-touched by the Lux Imperia. His visions were of a treacherous clade of workers banished to the depths of Volg Hive and forgotten there for centuries amidst the poisons and darkness. Could these Pit Things have once been human? Or are they a beast native to the poison sumps of Fenksworld, altered by the effluvium of the hive? Some records claim the existence of mindless xenos upon Fenksworld prior to the first hive spine construction. I suspect the latter explanation to be far more likely than the former—but such dire mutation of the God-Emperor's holy form would be just cause for purge and flame throughout the low hive if shown to be true. Beyond all this are the persistent tales of vanishment in the low hives, but I see little of value there. They may well be true, gangers cast as live food into beast pits, or taken by xenos rising from the poison-sumps. I would believe worse of Volg from what I have seen of it. But such tales are told in the depths of every Imperial hive, as the black-hearted prey upon the faithful. Volg is no different, and no less deserving of purification by flame and sword.



GLOOMHAUNT

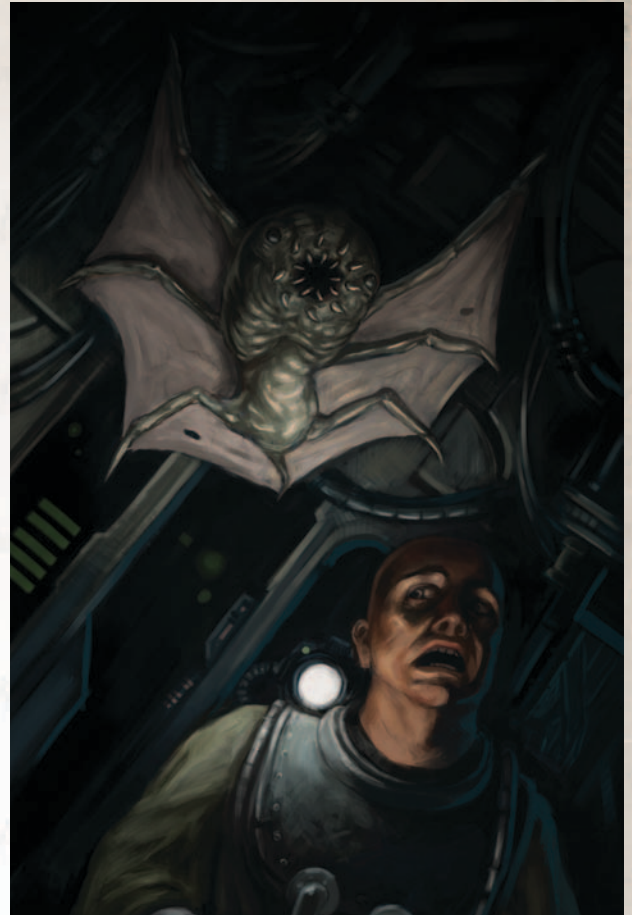
The depths of the Imperium's underhives have no end of ravenous predators, but there is one beast hive dwellers regard with particular dread.

In the dreg villages and sump outposts, the underhivers only leave their homes in pairs, and keep a careful eye on the roofs of the domes they walk through. Even then, it is all too common to find a headless corpse in an abandoned hab-dome or junk cavern, victim of a gloomhaunt.

Gloomhaunts are flying hunters, with a small body between two large, leathery wings. Their round maws are in the centre of their chests and filled with needle teeth. Gloomhaunts prefer to hang from the rafters of the largest underhive caverns, like a dangling scrap of cloth, until an unfortunate victim walks beneath. Then they spread their leathery wings, swooping down on their prey.

Though gloomhaunts are not large creatures, they strike at their victim's heads and wrap their wings around the prey's skull with a vice-like grip. Once the prey is helpless, the gloomhaunt begins to feed.

The victim's companions are faced with a cruel choice. Though the victim's companions wish to kill the beast, any shot or blade that pierces the gloomhaunt's flesh is likely to harm the person underneath...



Gloomhaunt Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
49	—	21	25	23	05	51	07	—

Movement: 2/4/8/12

Wounds: 9

Skills: Awareness (Per), Concealment (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +30.

Traits: Bestial, ^{††}Cranial Clasp, ^{†††}Death From Above, Dark Sight, Flyer (4), Natural Weapon (Teeth and Claws), Size (Puny).

^{††}**Death from Above:** Lurking in the shadows above its prey, the Gloomhaunt glides down and latches onto its target's head before the unfortunate knows he's under attack.

If the target is unaware of the Gloomhaunt's presence, the Gloomhaunt may use Death from Above as part of a Charge Attack. To do so, the Gloomhaunt must make an opposed Silent Move Test against the target's Awareness. If the Gloomhaunt fails, it may attempt to Grapple as normal. If it succeeds, the Gloomhaunt need only hit the target with a Weapon Skill Test (receiving +10 for the Charge Attack) to initiate a Grapple. The target may not avoid it.

^{†††}**Cranial Clasp:** The Gloomhaunt kills its opponents by attacking their heads and latching on. It will always attempt to Grapple its opponent if possible, and will always make a Called Shot against the target's Head location. The Gloomhaunt counts as having a Strength Bonus of 6 when making Opposed Strength Tests during a Grapple. The Gloomhaunt deals 1d10+2 R; Pen 2 damage during a grapple. The target also counts as suffocating. Someone not involved in the Grapple may attempt to attack the Gloomhaunt. This attack is made against the target the Gloomhaunt is Grappling, and must hit the Head location to

succeed in hitting the Gloomhaunt. Any damage dealt is divided equally between the Gloomhaunt and the Gloomhaunt's target. Others may join the Grapple in an attempt to pry the creature free following the rules on page 197 in DARK HERESY.

Amour: None.

Weapons: Teeth and claws (1d10+2 R; Primitive, Pen 2[†]).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus

Threat Rating: Xenos Minima.

Definition: Indigenous/Void Predator, Xenos Minima.

Explication: A cunning lurker, dangerous if unnoticed.

Admonition: Endeavor at all costs to keep the creature from your skull. If one is attached, it is very difficult to remove.

Caveat: Take care when attacking this creature after it has latched onto a target; it is all too easy to kill the victim in order to save him.



From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 351.926. M91

After her troubling experiences in Smeltery 2nd B, my acolyte Lyra Morll took a rather obsessive interest in underhive ecology. I felt there was no harm in indulging her curiosity, and directed her to my informant Verb'l.

The old hive ganger was more than willing to take Lyra under his wing, and over the next two weeks provided her with a series of lessons on the underhive, punctuated with several "tours" into its depths. I'm pleased to say she learned much, and since then has been invaluable to many of my hive operations. However, on one occasion she confided to me that one of Verb'l's lessons left her profoundly disturbed.

Verb'l had taken her to meet a tavern owner in the deep underhive. Lyra told me she was shocked to find the man's face a solid mass of scar tissue. The tavern owner explained that he used to be part of an expedition to recover ancient archeotech from forgotten vaults beneath the hive. As the group passed through a ruined hab dome, he was attacked by a creature, a "gloomhaunt," that swooped down from the overhead girders. The creature wrapped itself around his head, biting and flaying the flesh from his skull and face.

The man said he likely would have died, had one of his colleagues not shot the creature with a burst from his hand-flamer. Of course, the man suffered horrible burns in addition to his other injuries, but he regarded it as better than the alternative...

A Chartist captain I know told me once that crews of spacesfaring vessels pass legends of a similar creature, hiding in the darkest holds and attacking lone crewmembers. My Chartist friend was inclined to dismiss the stories, but after Lyra's research, I have my suspicions. A starship's hold is not that different from the larger spaces in the underhive.



MAW-FLUKE

Maw-flukes are a nasty species of hive vermin whose evolution is likely due to the extremely toxic conditions found in the lowest reaches of any major Imperial hive. Vicious pack hunters, they'll eat anything they can chew through.

Maw-flukes prefer dark, damp, and enclosed environments, making the lowest reaches of hive cities perfect for them. They have often been found swimming in the toxic channels and waterways of hive cities across the Calixis Sector. They frequently hunt in small groups, but their burrows have been known to house upwards of a dozen or more. The Maw-fluke's body (up to one and a half metres in length) is segmented and has multiple small, articulated legs, allowing it to scale most sloping surfaces and worm its way through tight spaces. If they cannot find a way around an obstruction, they are quite capable of burrowing through rock and even some metal alloys with their shovel-like mandibles and maw full of sharp, grinding teeth.

Maw-flukes prefer to hunt through ambush. Packs of the creatures will locate a suitable hiding place (or burrow to create their own) and then wait until prey comes within reach. They prefer to attack their targets with mandibles located on either side of their mouths. Besides the crushing damage, these mandibles are also capable of injecting a powerful paralytic poison. The Maw-flukes then drag their helpless prey back to their burrows to feast undisturbed.



Maw-fluke Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
39	—	22	43	51	08	37	15	05

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 11

Skills: Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Swim (+10).

Talents: Heightened Senses (Hearing), Resistance (Poisons).

Traits: Bestial, Burrower (2), Crawler, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour 7 (Body and Head), Natural Weapons (Toothy Maw and Mandibles), Size (Scrawny), Sonar Sense, Paralyzing Bite^{††}.

^{††}**Paralyzing Bite:** The Maw-fluke's bite is able to paralyse its victims. Targets damaged by the Maw-fluke's bite must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or be Stunned for one round plus a number of rounds equal to the degrees of failure.

Armour: None (Head 7, Body 7, Legs 0)^{†††}.

Weapons: Toothy maw and mandibles (1d10+2[†] R: Pen 4).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.

^{†††}The Maw-fluke obviously doesn't have "arms" or "legs" in the traditional sense. Any hits to the Arm location are considered to hit the creature's Body. Any hits to the Leg location have struck the creature's soft underbelly.



From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Galt: 715.M41

Interrogator Lyra Morll's first experience with the...unique ecology of the Imperium's hive worlds took place just six months after she entered my service. I had dispatched her to to investigate a manufactorum in Sibellus' underhive. The local Arbitres suspected cult activity, but a week into their investigation all contact with the manufactorum (and their informants) was lost. As I was busy in Sibellus on another matter, I volunteered Lyra to accompany their response team. The following is her report:



Report From: Interrogator Lyra Morll, investigation 26/Aleph-12, cult-designate
"Pilgrims of Hayte."

Smeltery 21-B, Hive Sibellus, Scintilla

Signum Temporis: 211.715.M41

The Arbitrators and I arrived at Smeltery 21-B to find the entire complex sealed. I was able to cajole the machine spirit of the manufactorum's cogitator to open the outer blast doors. Inside, we found Smeltery 21-B completely deserted, with no sign of the 30 workers that should have been on duty.

The squad split up and began a thorough search of the complex. I had just found a number of holes in the rockcrete walls of the main smelting room that looked like someone went berserk with a rock-borer, when I heard shouts over my micro-bead.

Two Arbitrators were checking out a sub-storeroom when they had been ambushed, and one was grabbed and pulled, screaming, back amongst a pile of crates. I immediately led a fire-team into the crate maze to recover the Arbitrator. In a hidden corner of the storeroom, we discovered the body of our comrade, obviously dead. His chest carapace had been bored open in much the same manner as the rockcrete walls of the smelting room.

At that moment, we were attacked. Wormlike monstrosities lunged from the darkness and slew two Arbitrators almost immediately. We responded in good order with a volley of fire, but the shots from the Arbitrator's riot guns skipped off the shell-like carapaces of the creatures without effect and my laspistol proved just as useless.

I ordered the squad to fall back, but it appeared the creatures had turned the manufactorum into their lair. Out of the 12 men and women who entered Smeltery 21-B, only myself and four others made it out. It would have been five, but we had to leave one man behind after a seemingly minor bite to the arm dropped him, paralysed and helpless, to the manufactorum floor.

Perhaps the Venosm can be harvested somehow?

-LM

SINOPHIAN BOREWORM

A small, aggressive beast with a voracious and insatiable appetite, the Sinophian Boreworm is as dangerous as it is unnerving to look at. Normally a pallid length of bristly segments, Boreworms have such semitransparent flesh as to render their internal organs visible in faint light. The “head” of the animal is marked by a circle of hooks, designed to dig into exposed flesh, while the gullet is lined with rings of teeth. Able to feed on virtually any source of flesh, the Boreworm uses these teeth to literally chew its way inside of a corpse or living creature. As it feeds, the worm becomes flush with blood, and more than one brave man has felt a rush of horror at seeing the scarlet length of a Boreworm, slick with blood and slime, emerge from a body, its hooked anterior questing about for more.

In the wild, Boreworms prefer long-dead corpses, devouring flesh too rotten for larger scavengers. They’ll also attach themselves to anything desperate enough to grub amid the remains, eating the luckless animal from the inside out. Those few human victims who have survived a Boreworm’s attack state they can feel every twist and turn the Boreworm makes inside their bodies. Only a precious few can deal with the sensation and seek help—most commit suicide, indirectly serving the worm’s desire for a meal.

After a time inside a victim, the worm starts to break apart, each segment quickly maturing into a fully mobile worm itself. If caught early, Boreworm infection can be cured with a combination of surgery and chemical treatments. However, once the worm starts to break up, death is almost certain.



Sinophian Bore Worm Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
28	—	15	20	42	05	30	25	—

Move: 2/4/8/12

Wounds: 3

Skills: Climb (S), Concealment (Ag), Contortionist (Ag).

Talents: Fearless.

Traits: Bestial, ++Burrowing Teeth, Crawler, Fear 1 (Disturbing), +++Independent Segments, Natural Weapon (Burrowing Teeth), Size (Puny), Unnatural Senses.

++Burrowing Teeth: If a boreworm successfully hits its prey with a melee attack, it latches on and starts to burrow into exposed flesh. A boreworm can easily burrow through Primitive Armour with an AP of 2 or less. Once it starts to burrow, the bore worm automatically does 1 point of Damage per hour regardless of the creature’s Toughness. (Depending on where the boreworm is burrowing, the GM may determine Damage actually occurs earlier in that hour rather than at the end of it.) A boreworm can be removed from a victim by winning an Opposed Strength Test if the attempt is made within 3 Rounds. The victim may gain the benefits of Assistance from others (see page 185 in **DARK HERESY**). Others that attempt to assist the victim must first succeed at a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test** in order to grasp the squirming worm. The boreworm gets +5 Strength on the first Round, +10 on the second, and +15 on the third. Afterwards, it has burrowed inside the victim and can only be removed via surgery.

+++Independent Segments: Once inside a victim, a boreworm

starts to break apart, each segment becoming a new boreworm. Roughly once every hour after entering the victim’s body, the boreworm loses a segment (an average worm has 8–12 segments), which starts eating on its own after five minutes. Each segment comes equipped with Burrowing Teeth and causes damage on its own. Victims are almost always already dead by the time the new boreworms are large enough to begin to split into segments themselves.

The boreworm can also be removed with a successful **Hard (-10) Medicae Test**. Removing the boreworm takes one hour.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Burrowing Teeth (see above).

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.



ADVENTURE SEED

Boreworms are a popular terror weapon of Khorne cultists. For example, captives with information the cult needs will be threatened with the “kiss” of a boreworm in order to make them talk. The cultists are more than willing to introduce the worms into a hive’s food supplies, especially livestock, in the hopes that either A: the boreworms will infect the livestock, cause a food crisis, and thus riots, or B: the boreworms will infect people who consume the tainted meat and thus infect the hive as a whole. Acolytes may be called on to put a stop to either of these plans, as well as to investigate where the cultists are getting the boreworms from in the first place. As the boreworms can live in almost any carrion, they could be hidden in just about any cadaver.

Inquisitor Gelt, please accept my initial examination for what it is: only the most basic of dissections. I will prepare a far more exhaustive data-slate at a later date. First, allow me to state that under no condition should a boreworm be handled without first donning some form of protective glove, or better yet, using a metal instrument to manipulate a living worm. These creatures have gullets ringed with numerous chewing teeth and will readily attempt to burrow into any flesh they come into contact with.

Once inside the body, a boreworm burrows slowly, consuming flesh, blood, and viscera freely. As they eat their way in, the segmented body of the worm breaks apart over time, with each individual segment quickly maturing into a fully-grown and active worm. Thus, a boreworm uses a host as both larder and nursery, devouring it alive from the inside out.

It is my theory that this practice is to enable the distribution of the worm. An infected host often staggers some distance before finally succumbing to the worm and its progeny, to then fall prey to scavengers, many of which will consume segments of the boreworm in the process. And thus the cycle begins anew. Most disturbingly, the boreworm has a distinct resemblance to other xenofoms created by the Slaught, a particularly vile and disgusting breed of alien that plagues our sector.

Your servant,

Magos Biologis Kaltos Melinte



FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT 124.754.M41

One may encounter great threats in the smallest creatures. Recently my retinue and I have come across a truly foul xenos, scarcely longer than my hand when fully grown. I speak of the Sinophian Boreworm, a simple carrion eater, pressed into a far different service. Normally pale, almost translucent, a feeding boreworm becomes bright red with devoured flesh and blood. This has led them to be considered sacred by cultists of the Blood God, and encouraged their trade. Khorne cultists use them to torture captives, and I have personally witnessed great vats of worms writhing obscenely in a soup of blood and offal.

I shall not forget my first encounter with victims of the boreworm. We were on Malfi, where nigh-traitorous dissent seems to be an occupation and heresy, a common pastime. There cults thrive, especially those dedicated to the Skull Lord. One such sanguinary cult had found employ with a minor noble house, ridding them of undesirables and political rivals. My entourage and I pursued these heretics deep into the depths of Hive Cero, finally cornering them amid their torture chambers and slaughter rooms. As the cultists worked themselves up into a battle frenzy, they sent forth their prisoners to buy time. These wretches had all been given "Khorne's Kiss," a euphemism for boreworm infection.

Moaning and staggering towards us, with small red worms dropping from any open orifice, these hive-dwellers were beyond any help but swift elimination. Commanding my cadre to do their duty to Ordo Malleus and the Emperor, we cut them down. Even now a clean death was denied these wretches. From open wounds spilled numerous boreworms, all engorged and red with consumed flesh and blood. Some burrowed back into the cooling bodies of their hosts, while others made their way to where we stood and were crushed under our heels.

I considered delivering what few cultists we captured still alive into the storage vats for the worms, but realised that for followers of the Blood God, this would be akin to making them one with their patron. Instead, I executed them swiftly.



THE SKIN TAKER OF FEDRID

How does one describe a creature no one has seen? The Skin Taker, a strange being native to the feral world of Fedrid, is known only by its distinctive habit—killing men for their skin. Long-rumoured to exist by those familiar with the beasts of Fedrid's thick forests, the Skin Taker has announced itself with a vengeance, slaughtering several hunting parties. The flayed remains were found strung up on simple frames, a grisly warning to any who might take the dangers of the forests lightly.

Few people have survived a Skin Taker's assault, with fewer still able to describe one in action. Virtually all eyewitnesses state the same thing—an attacking Skin Taker is no more than a ripple in the air, a blur of motion with no discernible form. Some have said it appears as a “hole” in the air, a moving spot of visual distortion.

These descriptions have led to several theories as to the true nature of the Skin Taker. Some feel they are a form of tree-jumper, a mantid with unparalleled powers of concealment and camouflage. Others say its invisibility smacks of alien technologies and point to the Dark Eldar. And finally, there are whispered tales stating the Skin Taker is a Warp-born daemon, a creature of Chaos come to Fedrid to engage in unopposed slaughter.

Regardless of the creature's origin, it relies on stealth and striking from ambush. Skin Takers seem to share the upper canopy with tree-jumpers, using the comparatively safer tree-tops to track a potential victim for kilometres before descending to make a kill. Usually loners or stragglers are taken first, the Skin Taker whittling down a party one-by-one until only the strongest, most skillful, or luckiest hunter is left. Normally the only thing left to find once the Skin Taker has finished are skinned corpses, often missing the head.



The actions of the Skin Taker has led to the rise of several cults on Fedrid. Seeking to emulate the skill of the Skin Taker in taking trophies, these cultists prey on their fellow men, pursuing, killing, and skinning those who travel out into the wild of Fedrid on hunting expeditions.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt 042.321.141

Information has recently been brought to my attention concerning the rise of a disturbing new cult on Fedrid. Feral worlds are prone to such things, and usually these primitive superstitions can be swayed to the Imperium's favour by directing their worship to the veneration of the God-Emperor. But this cult is different. It smacks of influence from Darker Powers and has an insidious nature to it.

The cult I speak of is called The Way of the Skin Taker and also The Brethren of Flesh Reavers. It's common among the guides and hunters of Fedrid and can draw both native born and off world visitors into its ranks. Normally, I'd discount such a thing as yet another example of a barbaric warrior society—members of which often make good PDF and Imperial Guard members. However, these “Brethren” are not warriors; they are hunters who now prey upon their fellow citizens. In doing so, they engage in grisly rituals that must be stopped, else Chaos find a welcoming reception in the Brethren's hearts.

SKIN TAKER OPTION #1: MANTID BEAST



Mantid Beast Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	—	40	40	50	25	45	25	20

Move: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 15

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per), Climb (S) +20, Concealment (Ag) +20, Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Tracking (Int) +10.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Assassins Strike, Catfall, Lightning Attack, Swift Attack.

Traits: Chameleon^{††}, Darksight, Multiple Arms, Natural Armor 2, Natural Weapons (Ripping Claws), Quadruped, Sturdy.

^{††}**Chameleon:** The Skin Taker is virtually invisible, usually appearing as little more than a hole in the fabric of reality. All Awareness Tests to discover a Skin Taker suffer a -30 penalty.

Armour: None (Head 2, Body 2, Legs 2).

Weapons: Ripping claws (1d10+4 R[†]; Primitive, Tearing).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Obscuro Majoris.

SKIN TAKER OPTION #2: WARP DAEMON



Warp Daemon Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	—	45	⁽⁸⁾ 40	40	30	45	40	20

Move: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 15

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Speak Language (any one) (Int).

Talents: Assassin Strike, Catfall, Heightened Senses (all), Swift Attack.

Traits: Chameleon^{††}, Daemonic (TB 8), Dark Sight, Daemonic Presence, Fear 2, From Beyond, Natural Weapon (Claws).

^{††}**Chameleon:** The Skin Taker is virtually invisible, usually appearing as little more than a hole in the fabric of reality. All Awareness Tests to discover a Skin Taker suffer a -30 penalty.

Daemonic Presence: The Skin Taker's mere presence is enough to manifest a feeling of being watched and spied upon. All creatures within 20 metres take a -10 Penalty to Willpower Tests.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Claws (1d10+4[†] R; Primitive, Tearing).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Majoris.

Inquisitor Gelt, please excuse my boldness, but I believe you'll find these transcripts enlightening. They relate to that "Skin Taker" business I mentioned in my last missive, and I thought they'd prove useful to you.

-Confessor Lino Rybak

"I was leading a party of noble-born come all the way from Hive Sibellus on Scintilla herself. One of them, a young prancing fool named Armand, wandered off into the bush alone, despite my explicit warning not to. We found him two days later, strung up on a frame hanging in a clearing. They'd taken his hair, his skin, and all of his fancy gear. Skin Takers did that, mark my words."

-Sy Nisbay, Sister Famulous

"Flesh Reavers? Hah! I've heard of them. Anyone who goes out into the wilds of Fedrid has. Supposed to hunt the hunters they say. Never seen them myself, but then, I hear you can't see them, although Shaan, a friend of mine, saw one once. Said the jungle opened up and swallowed some fool."

-Gilante Mee, Guide



ADVENTURE SEED

As GM, you have several choices with the Skin Takers. First, you need to decide what they are—alien, beast, or daemon? Once you know that, you can then task your Acolytes to bring one back (dead or alive) for either the Ordos Malleus or the Ordos Xenos. On top of that, you can add the cultists to the mix, forcing the Acolytes to not only pursue a creature that is very good at not being found but also deal with a heretical band of bloodthirsty killers. If you want a longer plot arc, reverse the order of events—send the Acolytes in first investigate the cultists and their deeds. Then, present the stories of the Skin Taker and let the Acolytes witness the results of one of its kills. Now they not only have to eliminate a dangerous cult, but also hunt down the god they worship.

If you wish to truly complicate matters, make all of the rumours true. There really is a highly-intelligent race of tree-jumpers out there, as well as a blood-thirsty Warp Daemon. Add in a group of investigating Acolytes, and the stage is set.

STENCHBEASTS OF STRANK

In the fetid wastes of Strank lives the infamous Stenchbeast, a creature so pungent in aroma it's become a byword for anything foul and odorous in Calixis Sector. While most consider it to be nothing more than a metaphor for filth and the fuel for many a crude, lowbrow joke, the truth is horrible.

Stenchbeasts have a corpulent human-like form and, if capable of standing erect, would be nearly three metres in height. Normally, they wallow on all fours in the dark waters of the swamps in which they dwell, grunting and bellowing to each other as they feed on tender water plants and small animals too slow to escape from them. Covered in rolls of fat, it's a wonder they can move their vast bulks, but they are swifter than they appear, and a charging Stenchbeast can be a fearsome sight indeed. Their once-human faces are bloated and bestial, with pig-like eyes and heavy jowls. Their hair is lank and greasy and grows in thickets along the neck, spine, and lower abdomen.

The hide of a Stenchbeast is a maze of cracks and fissures, each split showing multiple layers of rotting flesh underneath. The outer layers of skin often slough off in great sheets, only to be consumed in turn by the Stenchbeast itself. This cycle of decay and renewal results in the horrid stink that gives the Stenchbeast its name and sector-wide renown. Each creature emits an eye-watering reek capable of eventually defeating even the most advanced respirators.

When attacked, a Stenchbeast usually tries to rush its attacker, attempting to bowl it over so it can trample it into the muck and mire of the swamp. While its teeth are too small to be of any use, a Stenchbeast still retains a semblance of human hands, which it uses to push a foe under the water's surface, seeking to simultaneously pummel and drown its opponent.



within 10 metres suffers a -20 penalty to his Weapon or Ballistic Skill. Once again, a successful **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** when wearing a respirator will remove the penalty, but re-rolls are not allowed for failed results.

Armour: None (Head 2, Body 2, Legs 2).

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+7† I; Primitive, Toxic).

†Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Minoris.

Stenchbeast Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	—	(8) 48	48	20	10	35	40	—

Move: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 25

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Berserk Charge, Fearless, Iron Jaw.

Traits: Bestial, Brutal Charge, Disgusting Stench††, Fear 2 (Frightening), Natural Armour 2, Quadruped, Regeneration, Stampede, Sturdy, Toxic, Unnatural Strength (x2).

††**Disgusting Stench:** The smell of a Stenchbeast is so pungent as to make Smell and Taste Tests impossible within a radius of 10 metres from the beast. In addition, Sight Tests are at -20 due to eyes watering. A successful **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** when wearing a respirator will remove the penalty to Sight Tests. However, the smell is such that respirators do not allow failed Toughness Tests to be re-rolled against it. In addition, anyone attacking a Stenchbeast



ADVENTURE SEED

Sent to eradicate the Stenchbeasts on Strank, the Acolytes are tasked with finding Interrogator Sarangaas, who vanished on Strank while investigating the same creatures himself.

Once the Acolytes start to search for the Stenchbeasts, the GM then introduces some of the rumours surrounding the creatures—such as their supposed immortality due to Warp contact. This information leads to the temple where some of the original colonists worshipped the Ruinous Powers. There, the Acolytes find more Stenchbeasts, including some that haven't sunk into mindless bestiality, as well as the altar where cultists sacrifice their fellow citizens of Strank to nameless warp-spawned horrors.

Report of Acolyte Kaaper Baar 007.756 Mq

As per your directive, I conducted my searches in Natan Province. We found evidence of ruins, but of what I have no idea. Certainly this couldn't be the temple Interrogator Sarangaas spoke of, as there was little to be found but crumbling walls and a few lonely pillars.

We pushed deeper, driving the skimmers through masses of jungle, until the water turned fetid and foul fumes hung in the air. One of the locals said this was certain evidence of Stenchbeasts being in the vicinity. I commanded all to don respirators, reminded them of their duty to the Throne, and continued.

We had not gone far when a great bellow rent the air. I stopped our skimmers and we readied armaments. Scanning the dense-set trees with magnoculars, I noticed many of them were sickly in colour and twisted in shape, as if diseased. Nothing moved amidst the branches, which is unlike much of Strank, where even the smallest thicket is alive with many small creatures.

As all around me held still, I realised I could hear great splashings and the grunts of some xeniform. Slowly, I had our skimmer advance until I had a clear view of an open lagoon amidst another cluster of ruins. Raising my magnoculars, I focused on what could only be the well-named Stenchbeast.

By the Throne, I swear I have never seen the like of the Stenchbeast before, or wish to again. Each was a bloated mockery of a man, of such size I could scarce see how they moved. Only one stood upright; the rest wallowed in the water like bestial abominations.

It was with a quivering hand I pressed the recorder on my magnoculars, the unnaturalness of their forms being painful to view. Offering a prayer for strength to the God-Emperor, I commenced my recording, so we might better understand this enemy. I have included a number of pict-captures with this missive, but believe me when I say they don't begin to fully capture the strength of uncleanness that surrounds each Beast.

Once I felt I had sufficient records, I commanded our skimmers forward, through the thickening miasma, where we opened up with all weapons. The Beasts blundered about as our armaments chewed apart their bodies. The resulting smell penetrated even our respirators, causing some to fail. One Beast made it to a skimmer and upset it with a tremendous shove. The men who fell into the foul water sickened almost at once, their flesh developing suppurating sores that soon consumed them.

With great effort, we were able to avenge our fallen comrades by slaying two of the Beasts. The rest fled deeper into the swamps. I fear slug-throwers and lasguns won't be sufficient to exterminate this threat; instead, we will need to bring plasma weapons and flamers to bear.



For the attention of Inquisitor Felt

FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT 401.737.M41

Over the years, I have seen many Acolytes pass through my retinue. Some are of limited use and are set aside once my needs have been met. Others I have deemed unworthy of further contact and are dealt with accordingly. A few have proved their merit and remain by my side as long as they are able, while a precious few show such promise I am proud to elevate them to the ranks of the Ordos Malleus.

Interrogator Sarangaas was one such individual. He showed himself brave, loyal, and dedicated to the Order, unwavering in his faith in the God-Emperor. But Sarangaas is gone now, lost somewhere in the vast swamps of Strank, that most malodorous of worlds.

Sarangaas traveled to Strank to investigate rumours of strange rites being performed in honour of the Ruinous Powers. The cult performing the rites (the true aim of which I still do not understand) was centred about the First Families, the nobility to Strank, who are descended from the original settlers of that undesirable world.

I too have heard some of these rumours. They deal mainly with certain ruins to be found deep in the thickest and most forbidding of Strank's many stinking mires and sloughs. These crumbling masses of stone—which were never raised by human hands—are said to be covered in pictographs both blasphemous and strange. On certain nights, the cultists dance under the full moons and call upon their masters—daemons most foul. Supposedly, the patrons of this cult are one or more of the First Families, so driven by their desire for power as to succour the Ruinous Powers in exchange for gifts of a nature I do not care to contemplate. Eternal life, it is said, was their request. To never fall ill, age, or die and to remain masters of Strank throughout the millennia.

If true, this shows the traitorous Family to be fools one and all. Nothing is given freely by the malign influences of the warp. All requests have a cost, and even the performance of a minor favour by a denizen of the warp may bring unimaginable costs to the requester later. It is as I have told my Acolytes many a time—the price of any dark pact will be your sanity and soul, and once payment is due the daemons will come to collect with a vengeance.

Acolyte Baar's pict-captures show obscene parodies of the human form. Great bloated masses covered in what appear to be layers of broken and rotting skin, peeling away in sheets, to foul the waters in which they wallow. I shudder to think of what Baar must have experienced first-hand, and realise now why some were unable to effectively fire—they were sickened by the reeking aura that surrounds each beast.

If these beings were once men, they are no longer. These Stenchbeasts are nothing more than mindless monstrosities who have long ago lost all sense of thought and reason. I can see only one solution—swift and merciless termination.

Are the beasts Acolyte Baar encountered some of the original First Family? Are the Stenchbeasts really immortal? If so, I can think of no greater warning for the dangers of trafficking with the Dark Powers than the pict-captures now on my desk. If these be the warp's idea of immortality, then I will gladly consign my soul to the blessed God-Emperor rather than live forever trapped in such a state.



THE VERMINSPEAKER

“Verminspeakers? As dangerous an ally as an enemy, in my mind. Hive dross with oft unsanctioned power bubbling through their veins, they flee from the righteous justice of the Aquila to cower in the lowest depths of the hives and dankest death world jungles. On occasion, however, I have found their unique talents to be useful...”

—Inquisitor Felroth Gelt

Although the Inquisition and the feared Black Ships work rigorously to ensure that every psyker is taken to the Scholastica Psykana and either sanctioned or sent to Holy Terra for “final processing,” the authorities cannot be everywhere at once. Sometimes a potential psyker slips through the cracks. This is especially true amongst the teeming masses of people on hive worlds, or on the savage frontier and death worlds where Imperial rule is weak or non-existent.

Lacking any sort of guidance or understanding of their powers, these poor wretches often suffer a grim fate. If they do not destroy themselves with bursts of uncontrolled warp power, they often find themselves killed by their superstitious neighbours and kin. A very few survive long enough to flee into the wastelands of their world, be it the underhive or deserted mountains and forests. There they develop their powers on their own, through a mixture of guesswork and experimentation.

Those that survive without drawing the attention of the powers that lurk within the warp become a strange breed of psyker, partially feral and unnaturally attuned with their environment. Frequently, they exhibit the ability to summon beasts to aid and fight for them, and in some cases are even able to communicate with creatures.

These psykers, sometimes known as Verminspeakers, can become valued, if distrusted, allies to both hive gangs and savage tribes. Their powers make them fearsome in battle and useful in matters of strategy, and some may rise to positions of power within these social organisations by putting on a front of a fortune teller or seer. In these cases, it is more likely the Verminspeaker is using chicanery and dramatic flair than actual warp power. But when dealing with someone who allies with Maw-flukes and Sabre-wolves, few are willing to voice their doubts.

The Inquisition’s preferred method of dealing with a Verminspeaker is a kill-team followed by a witch’s pyre. On occasion, however, some radical Inquisitors have been willing to use these individuals for their own purposes, finding them a hardy and resourceful breed of psyker. Of course, if anyone learned they were unsanctioned, the Verminspeaker minions would likely have to be executed without delay. Most Inquisitors regard that as an acceptable risk...for the Inquisitor.

Even working under the Inquisitorial seal, the typical Verminspeaker is still mistrustful of and isolated from his fellows, even more so than a typical psyker. Those from advanced worlds or the upper echelons find them horribly backward and disgustingly uncivilised, while people hailing from primitive societies regard them as dread mystics and sorcerers. Almost everyone feels a great unease around a Verminspeaker, as if they can smell the untrained power of the warp just beneath the Verminspeaker’s skin.



TAKING THE VERMINSPEAKER ELITE ADVANCE

This Advance does not just define the focus of a psyker’s powers. It also defines who he is—an outcast from Imperial society, mistrusted and potentially dangerous to those around him. This Advance may only be taken at Character Creation, using the character’s starting experience, as Verminspeakers are born, not trained.

Restrictions: Only Psykers may take this Advance. The Psyker must take the Beastmaster power as soon as it becomes available. (This means the Psyker must select powers from the Telepathy discipline.)

Advance Cost: 200 xp

Effect: Verminspeakers gain the Unsanctioned Trait as well as the Primitive Trait as per someone from a Feral World. (If the Verminspeaker is already from a Feral World, this has no further effect.) They gain the Survival and Awareness skills and gain the Call Creatures Psychic Power (in addition to any other minor Psychic Powers they may have at Character Creation). They are also able to take the Advances listed below at any point during their career. If a Verminspeaker is from a hive world, they do not gain the benefits of Caves of Steel.

Unsanctioned: Unlike most psykers, the Verminspeaker has not been taken aboard the dreaded Black Ships to travel

to Holy Terra. He does not add 3d10 years to his starting age and does not roll on the Sanctioning Side Effects table in the Dark Heresy Core Rulebook. This, however, has its own dangers. If authority figures in the Imperium learn the character is unsanctioned, they will endeavour to have him

burnt as a witch or simply hunted down by a kill team. Even the power of the Inquisition may not be able to save him from this fate (In fact, it may be factions within the Inquisition that are doing the hunting!). Radical Inquisitors are far more likely to employ the services of a Verminspeaker.

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Common Lore (Underworld)	100	S	—
Disturbing Voice	100	T	—
Heightened Senses	100	T	—
Minor Psychic Power (Verminspeaking)	100	T	—
Sound Constitution	100	T	—
Survival +10	100	S	—
Tracking	100	S	—
Dark Soul	200	T	—
Deceive	200	S	—
Hardy	200	T	—
Iron Jaw	200	T	—
Jaded	200	T	—
Major Psychic Power (Bestial Ally)	200	T	—
Melee Weapon Training (Chain)	200	T	—
Peer (The Insane)	200	T	—



NEW MINOR PSYCHIC POWER

VERMINSPEAKING

Threshold: 10

Sustained: Yes

Focus Time: Full Action

Range: 50m

The psyker reaches out with his mind, seeing and hearing through the eyes and ears of nearby creatures. Once activated, the psyker may see and hear anything one creature within 50 metres sees and hears. The psyker must first be aware of a creature before he can target that creature with this power. While sustaining this power, the psyker may only take a half action each turn, as he is distracted by what he is seeing and hearing through this other pair of eyes and ears. The psyker may make Perception based tests through the creature at the GM's discretion using the creature's Perception Characteristic and any relevant Perception based skills the creature possesses.

With this power, the psyker cannot perceive through a creature using senses that the creature lacks (for example, seeing if it has no eyes). The power also does not allow the psyker to use any extraordinary senses, such as sonar, the creature possesses.

Note: This power does not grant the psyker control over the creature he is "looking" through. This creature will behave normally, wandering out of the psyker's control zone (in which case the power ends) or even attacking the psyker if it's particularly hostile or hungry! The psyker may use another power, such as the Beastmaster power, to control the animal he is seeing through.

Overbleed: For every 5 points by which you exceed the power's Threshold, you may extend the range of the power by 10 metres.

NEW MAJOR PSYCHIC POWER (TELEPATHY DISCIPLINE)

BESTIAL ALLY

Threshold: 18

Sustained: No

Focus Time: Full Action

Range: 10m

The psyker attempts to dominate a creature so utterly that it imprints on the psyker and becomes his steadfast ally. The psyker may only use this power on a creature that has the Bestial Trait, less than 20 wounds, and an Intelligence statistic of at least 05. (The GM may impose other limitations as he chooses.)

Once used, the psyker and the target make opposed Willpower Tests. If the psyker succeeds, the beast sees the psyker as a pack leader or dominant member of its own species. The beast still behaves instinctually, but stays close to the psyker and follows the psyker's telepathic commands. This effect is permanent. However, if the psyker gives any command that would force the beast to harm itself (walking into a fire, throwing itself off a cliff, etc.), the psyker must succeed at a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**. If the psyker succeeds, the beast will follow the command. Failure means the beast breaks free of the mental control. The Psyker may never have more creatures under his control than his Psy Rating.

If the psyker fails to dominate the beast or if the beast ever breaks free of the psyker's control, the beast throws itself at the psyker and attacks in a berserk fury. It will not flee or retreat. If the psyker attempts to use this power again on the beast, it receives a +10 bonus on its Willpower Test.



XOTHIC BLOOD LOCUST

For the most part, the indigenous alien vermin of most worlds are just that...vermin. Though dangerous to individuals and small parties, they seldom pose a threat to the overall population of a planet, and therefore are ignored by the authorities.

The Xothic Blood Locust is a notable exception to this, so much so that it is the subject of horror stories on agri-worlds throughout the Calixis Sector. First discovered by the reckless and foolish Rogue Trader Severthon Xoth in the 39th millennium on a planet just to spinward of the Calixis Sector, the swarms slew most of the shore party. The survivors fled back to Xoth's ship, unknowingly carrying several caches of eggs aboard their shuttle. By the time Xoth realised his error and the Ordo Xenos quarantined the planet, the creatures had spread to several Calixis worlds.

Xoth was executed for his mistake, but his name has lived on with his discovery, a morbid joke on the part of the Ordo Xenos. The creatures are called blood locusts (due to a preference for that liquid), but they are not particular. These insatiable swarms drain the fluids from any plant or animal they come across. On agri-worlds, large swarms have been known to decimate crops and cause massive famines. On planets with larger human populations, whole communities can be wiped out in a matter of hours. Worse, the creatures are known to lay eggs in grain and produce shipments, ready to hatch when they reach the next planet.

The Administratum has found standard pest control methods insufficient. Standard procedure calls for the requisition of Imperial Guard or PDF forces armed with flamers and Hellhound tanks to incinerate fields, forests, and even entire towns. In the case of truly massive swarms, some officials have turned to the awesome firepower of orbiting warships for localised bombardments. Thoroughness is essential, for it just takes one egg cluster for a swarm to grow anew.

**(+0) Agility Test.**

††Overwhelming: A Blood Locust Swarm is made up of thousands if not millions of individual insects, and is capable of attacking many things at once. For every 10 Wounds the swarm has remaining, it may make one additional melee attack as part of a standard attack action. These attacks may never be against the same target.

†††Size: The swarm grows or shrinks depending on how many Blood Locusts are still alive. 1–20 Wound swarms are Average, 20–40 Wound swarms are Hulking, 40–60 Wound swarms are Enormous, and swarms with more than 60 Wounds are Massive. In addition, swarms may fill rooms, cover fields, and generally take up large amounts of space at the GM's discretion.

††††Swarm Creature: Any attack that does not have the Blast, Flame, or Scatter quality only inflicts half Damage on the creature. In most circumstances, a swarm creature cannot be Grappled, Knocked Down, or Pinned, and the swarm may "pour" through suitable small openings such as ducts, vents, and the like, but it may not Jump. The swarm is counted as being destroyed once all its Wounds are lost. The swarm's attacks have a variable Penetration value (roll each time an attack lands), representing its ability to engulf its victims and attack vulnerable areas.

Amour: None.

Weapons: A Thousand Needle Fangs (1d10 R[†]; Pen 1d5; Primitive, Tearing).

†Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Xenos Majoris.

Xothic Blood Locust Swarm Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	—	07	12	35	05	4I	10	—

Move: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 60

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

Talents: None.

Traits: Bestial, Dark Sight, Exsanguination[†], Fear 1 (Disturbing), Hoverer 4, Natural Weapon (A Thousand Needle Fangs), Overwhelming^{††}, Size (Variable)^{†††}, Swarm Creature^{††††}.

†Exsanguination: The Xothic Blood Locust drinks the fluids from its prey while the unfortunate is still alive, and a swarm of the creatures can make short work of even a human sized target. Whenever a target takes damage from a Blood Locust Swarm, during the target's next Turn he suffers 1d5 Wounds ignoring Armour and Toughness as the Locusts drain him. To avoid this, the target may take a half-action to crush and brush away the insects. Doing so requires a successful **Challenging**

FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT 760.M41

My only experience with the dreaded Xothic Blood Locusts occurred during my adventures on the agri-world Orbel Quill. I had travelled there, accompanied by several of my Acolytes and the frigate *Courageous*, to hunt down a sub-cult of the Pilgrims of Hayte. I had it on good authority that this particular group of heretics was experimenting with a “dreadful bio-weapon of fearful simplicity.” Troubled by the possibility, I tracked them to Orbel Quill.

Once we arrived, I determined the cult had gone to ground on a small island off the main continent. There was only one settlement on the island, and I immediately landed there with several trusted companions and a fire-team of naval armysmen.

We had prepared several false ident codes, but we were not challenged or hailed as our shuttle flew over the settlement. We set down at their crude landing field, and I led my team into the village centre. The entire village appeared to be deserted, and the orchards and fields surrounding the buildings were strangely withered and dead. My team spread out through the settlement and quickly found signs of hasty retreat. Alger Van Cleef, a tracker of no mean skill, followed the Pilgrims’ trail to a large storage barn dug into a hillside.

The door was sealed from the inside, but I made short work of the lock with my hellgun. Inside the vast storage space, we found the farmers of the village...or what was left of them.

Man, woman, and child, none had been spared. They appeared to have died in agony, withered and desiccated, every drop of liquid torn from their flesh. As soon as he saw this, Van Cleef grew greatly agitated and demanded we leave immediately.

As we fled back to the shuttle, we heard a strange humming, like the beating of a million tiny wings. A vast, black cloud of Blood Locusts rose out of the dead grass and swarmed over us. Two of our number were overcome almost instantly. I can only pray their deaths were quick. We shot and struck at the buzzing horde, but it was like flailing at the ocean.

I am certain we all would have died then if not for Galvar Stern. The redoubtable ex-Guardsman had brought a boarding-flamer, and the gout of burning promethium drove the horde back long enough for us make good our escape in the shuttle. Once returned to the *Courageous*, I ordered the entire island destroyed with precision lance strikes from the frigate’s main battery. My sole consolation is that I am certain that the cultists suffered the same fate as their victims.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

While investigating a local sanguinary cult, the Acolytes make a disturbing discovery. Khorne worshipers have infiltrated the cult, bringing with them several sealed cases of Blood Locusts. Their plan is to release the insects during one of the cult’s ceremonies, where the surplus of blood will drive the insects into a frenzy. Eventually, the Chaos cultists hope every man and woman on the planet will be drained of blood in dedication to their murderous master.

When the Acolytes hitch a ride on a Chartist trade vessel, they are unprepared for a clutch of Blood Locust eggs amongst the ship’s grain holds. The bugs hatch mid-voyage and are very, very hungry. Now the Acolytes are trapped on a ship with a ravenous swarm, and there’s nowhere to run...

RISE UP



97th

**Wait not for the
Alien to reach your
world. JOIN TODAY!**

**Kill them before
they kill you.**



XENOS

USING XENOS IN YOUR GAME

-
- ELDAR
-
- ENOULIANS
-
- ENSLAVERS
-
- GENESTEALER
-
- LICTOR
-
- ORKS
-
- SIMULACRA

CHAPTER V: XENOS

I have met many aliens in my travels both within the Imperium and without. There are many who are interested in the stars of the Calixis Sector—some for plunder, some for revenge, and some who seek to feed upon citizens of the Emperor's realm. Xenos species are as varied and inconstant as the stars themselves, and I have met none I would consider worthy of trust.

Above all others, I avoid the Slaught. The maggot-men of Hazeroth are foul and debased carrion-feeders. Nothing good comes from contact with them. I suffer from lingering nightmares of the worm-who-walks.

Above all others, I hate the Greenskins. Orks are nothing more than bullying, conquest-minded beasts. They seek battle, and I give it to them gladly whenever I encounter one of their rattletrap ships.

Above all others, I fear the Eldar. Rare they may be in the Calixis stars, but those who do remain are not to be trifled with. I fear them because the Eldar know many secrets, and such knowledge they do not share unless it suits their needs. I have done business with an Eldar only once, and I have regretted it ever since.

—Rogue Trader Ansellion Aquairre

Although the Imperium of Man dominates the Calixis Sector, it was not always so. The Angevin Crusade encountered and destroyed a number of alien civilisations who dared defy the will of the Emperor, leaving only ruins on a scattering of worlds. Others fled rather than face the might of the Imperium, escaping to distant worlds and far stars. However, some xenos species still lurk within the sector or among the depths of the nearby Halo Star region where they watch...and wait. Other xenos actively seek the downfall of the Calixis sector; Hordes of Orks have assaulted the world of Kulth for decades, while the mercenary Enoulians and the mysterious Simulacra haunt many Imperial worlds in the Drusus Marches.

Most aliens regard the Imperium with a mixture of fear and dread, and rightly so, as they know it is only a matter of time before they draw the attention of the Ordo Xenos. But not all xenos await extermination like a Grox being led to the slaughter. There are those, secure in their perceived might, who seek to oppose the Imperium at any opportunity, and take great pleasure in attacking the works of Man, destroying his mighty starships, sacking distant colony worlds, plundering them of goods, and enslaving its citizens.

The nearby Halo Stars are a fringe region where many Xenos remain, glimpsed only dimly by Imperial citizens inside the Calixis Sector. Rumours persist that many alien civilisations that were driven out by the Angevin Crusade are only biding their time, someday to return and wreak a terrible vengeance upon the worlds of Man.



USING XENOS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Intelligent alien species offer much more than simply a “monster of the week” to confront. Xenos have their own agendas, their own wants and needs that make for a better story. For example, a Lictor stalking the wilds of Mortressa could be selectively eliminating humans in the most horrific way possible, but sparing any psykers in order to create a psychic miasma of fear and horror that will draw the Tyranid swarm like a moth to flame.

One other thing to keep in mind is that most xenos creatures have a society and a culture all their own. Exploring aspects of that culture, whether it be a strong sense of personal honour or a code that allows no room for an individual or something completely different, can be an excellent roleplaying opportunity.

Xenos offer an inhuman perspective from a source that does not (necessarily) require the player characters to destroy it on sight. The “moral corruption” that can occur from those who sympathize with the plight of an alien race is another interesting facet the GM can introduce into his campaign.

ELDAR

Beware the Xenos who wears the face of Man. If you suspect someone of harbouring xenos or having xenos sympathies, report them to the Adeptus Arbites without delay.

—sign posted in the spaceport at Port Wrath

The Eldar are a rare and mysterious race, the last surviving members of a far older civilisation teetering on the precipice of extinction. The Eldar once ruled over the galaxy, when the ancestors of humanity were making their first faltering steps on dry land. Such transcendental power led to a descent into decadence and debauchery, their civilisation falling into anarchy and Chaos, the psychic backlash from which tore a hole in the fabric of reality that remains visible to this day—the Eye of Terror. Vast swathes of the Eldar race died in the Fall, the survivors fleeing the destruction on huge spacecraft known as craftworlds. How many escaped is unknown, even to the Eldar, but they have been a migratory people ever since, the scattered remnants of a once great culture drifting amongst the stars, fighting for their very existence.

The Eldar have little presence in the Calixis Sector, with the exception of Craftworld Kaelor, whose migration route brings it through the sector once in a thousand years. On such occasions, Imperial authorities have strict—and highly confidential—instructions from the Ordo Xenos to give it a wide berth. Battlefleet Calixis is tasked with intercepting any ships that would attempt to make contact with the Craftworld.

More often, the Eldar can be found discreetly on worlds across the sector, enacting their subtle machinations from the shadows. Unofficially, it is thought that some of the more radical members of the Calixan Conclave maintain intermittent contact with agents of the Eldar, typically through human contacts. Rogue Traders are the most common agents to act as intermediaries, as their sanctioned activities often give them legitimate reason to trade with xenos races and commune with the Inquisition in turn. The Ordo Xenos is ever-eager to learn more about the Eldar and their technology, both to combat their insidious influence and to turn their advanced technology to the Imperium's own ends.

MAIDEN WORLDS

A number of worlds in the remoter parts of the Calixan Sector—notably those along the migratory route of Craftworld Kaelor, including Seedworld AFG:218—are designated as maiden worlds by the Eldar. These were worlds created by the Eldar prior to the Fall, terraformed using techniques far more advanced than those of the Adeptus Mechanicus. These planets were intended for later settlement by Eldar colonists. Few, however, were colonised, instead developing into lush, fertile worlds in the absence of the Eldar. Many of these worlds have been pioneered by early Imperial settlers, who remain ignorant of their world's origins and the bone-like structures that scatter the remoter corners of its surface. Most historic conflict between the Eldar and the Imperium within the sector has taken place on such worlds, and those colonies that still survive on a known maiden world are often heavily reinforced with Imperial Guard regiments to protect it against

the Eldar threat. Understandably, the Ordo Xenos takes a keen interest in such worlds, and often maintains a discreet presence of its own amongst these colonies.

THE WEBWAY

Whilst their craftworlds exist in the material universe and they have great, elegant spaceships at their disposal, the Eldar traverse the galaxy via the webway rather than the Warp, stepping across great distances of space in a fraction of time. The webway is a labyrinthine series of pathways and tunnels that straddles the divide between the real world and the warp, neither truly apart from nor part of either. The webway connects a near-infinite number of points, from the craftworlds themselves to the surface of countless worlds and stranger places still. Some tunnels are large enough to carry entire space fleets, whereas others are barely tall enough to allow passage to a single Eldar. In the Calixis Sector, the surfaces of a handful of worlds hide a webway portal, and others drift in forgotten corners of space, hidden within dust clouds and asteroid belts. The locations of these webway portals are secrets the Eldar will go to nearly any lengths to conceal.

SPIRIT STONES

All Eldar wear a glittering gem or polished stone upon their breast. These items are known as waystones, and are formed out of a psycho-receptive crystal attuned solely to the mind of its owner. The purpose of a waystone is to capture the psychic energy of an Eldar when it is released at the moment of death. Afterwards, it is known as a spirit stone, containing a large part of an Eldar's personality, memories, and sense of self; the stone becomes a repository for the Eldar's soul. Eldar prize spirit stones above all else, and will go to incredible lengths to preserve and recover them. Most of the Eldar activity in the Calixis Sector has involved tracking down and reclaiming lost spirit stones.



THE BLACK LIBRARY

The Inquisition knows of many legends concerning the Black Library—a great place of Eldar knowledge and learning that sits apart from space and time in the deepest parts of the webway. It is said that in all of human history, only a handful of humans—all of them amongst the most trusted members of the Inquisition—have entered the Black Library. None will speak of what he has seen within.

The Black Library is deliberately kept mysterious. Only a handful of humans have ever set foot within it. Whispers and rumours about the Library can be used to generate an air of mystery, clouding the Inquisition's true goals when it comes to dealings with the Eldar. The Black Library is an excellent motivator for drama, either as a goal for the characters to someday reach or as something they must protect at all costs.

ELDAR DIRE AVENGERS

As a race on the brink of extinction, beset on all sides by hostile forces, many Eldar walk the Path of the Warrior and take on the mantle of an Aspect Warrior. Whereas most Eldar who take up arms do so in times of great crisis, those who walk the Path of the Warrior embrace the art of war fully, devoting their every breath to pursuit of military perfection. The Path of the Warrior is complex and long, and it is divided into a number of branches. Each branch is called a Warrior Aspect, for it embodies a different aspect of the Eldar God of War, Khaine. At least one warrior shrine exists on each craftworld, and it is here that the Aspect Warriors practice their art during times of peace.

The most common of Aspect Warriors are the Dire Avengers. Those who attend the shrine of the Dire Avengers are the manifestation of the noble warrior, showing no mercy to their foes and tirelessly devoting themselves to their people. When not at war or embarked upon missions, the Dire Avengers spend much of their time at their warrior shrine, meditating upon battle, studying the tactics and strategies of their ancestors, and practicing their skills at arms. The ritual masks and armour that Aspect Warriors wear set them apart as elite soldiers of their race.

Although they are rarely encountered beyond their craftworld, the Dire Avengers are nonetheless the most commonly encountered Eldar Aspect Warriors, for they are skilled and adaptable troops deployed to deal with any external threats. It is to the Dire Avengers that the Farseers turn to for important missions. When an ancient relic needs to be recovered or an abandoned webway portal needs to be defended, Dire Avengers are often sent to carry out the task. When a colony is discovered upon a maiden world, Dire Avengers are sent to clear the trespassers. On those occasions when a Farseer has need to meet with agents of the Imperium, it is the Dire Avengers that accompany him as guards.

In battle, the Dire Avengers wield the Avenger shuriken catapult, a weapon that fires a burst of razor-sharp discs. In the hands of a Dire Avenger, these weapons are quite deadly, creating a nigh-inescapable storm of shuriken that can cut most foes to ribbons. Dire Avengers are patient and methodical warriors, as furious in attack as they are intractable in defence. They possess an uncanny ability to read the ebb and flow of a battle, in much the same way as a sailor might read the sea, riding its waves and harnessing its power to overwhelm a foe. One moment they might unleash a hail of fire before plunging forwards into the enemy lines, blades drawn, whilst the next they might be falling back, luring their foe into a carefully prepared ambush.

A Dire Avenger stands taller than most Eldar, and their ornate blue armour makes them more impressive without adding bulk. The armour comprises a series of interlocking plates, sturdy yet flexible, allowing a free range of movement without ever leaving the wearer vulnerable to attack. Dire Avengers wear tall, masked helms, adorned with mystical runes and great crests made from the sable of exotic creatures.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Acolytes are sent to investigate the mysterious disappearance of a group of colonists on a recently settled virgin world on the fringes of the Calixis Sector. Upon arrival they find that not only have the colonists vanished, but the colony itself has been methodically dismantled, as though all trace of humans on the world has been removed. The only evidence of any attack are razor-sharp discs scattered about the surrounding forest, suggesting xenos activity. The culprits are a small squad of Dire Avengers sent to cleanse the world of intruders prior to reclamation by the Eldar, for the world is really an Eldar maiden world. The Dire Avengers are still nearby and must be hunted down before they can call in further reinforcements.

An Inquisitor has arranged for an audience with an Eldar seer and wishes the Acolytes to accompany him to the meeting. The meeting doesn't go to plan, as a group of puritanical followers of the Ordo Xenos attack and abduct the seer. The life of the Acolytes and the Inquisitor will be forfeit unless the seer can be rescued, requiring the Acolytes to work alongside one of the Dire Avengers to foil the plots of a fellow Inquisitor.



Dire Avenger Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	52	32	33	⁽¹⁰⁾ 51	38	42	42	32

Move: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 15

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Demolition (Int), Dodge (Ag) +10, Drive (Military Vehicles) (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Xenos) (Int), Medicae (Int), Pilot (Military Craft) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Legend) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Search (Per), Silent Move +10 (Ag).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Las), Catfall, Combat Master, Counter-attack, Deflect Shot, Double Team, Exotic Weapon Training (Avenger Shuriken Catapult, Shuriken

Pistol), Foresight, Heightened Senses (Sight, Sound), Hard Target, Hip Shooting, Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Jaded, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Power), Mighty Shot, Nerves of Steel, Pistol Weapon Training, Quick Draw, Rapid Reaction, Sprint.

Traits: Unnatural Agility (x2)

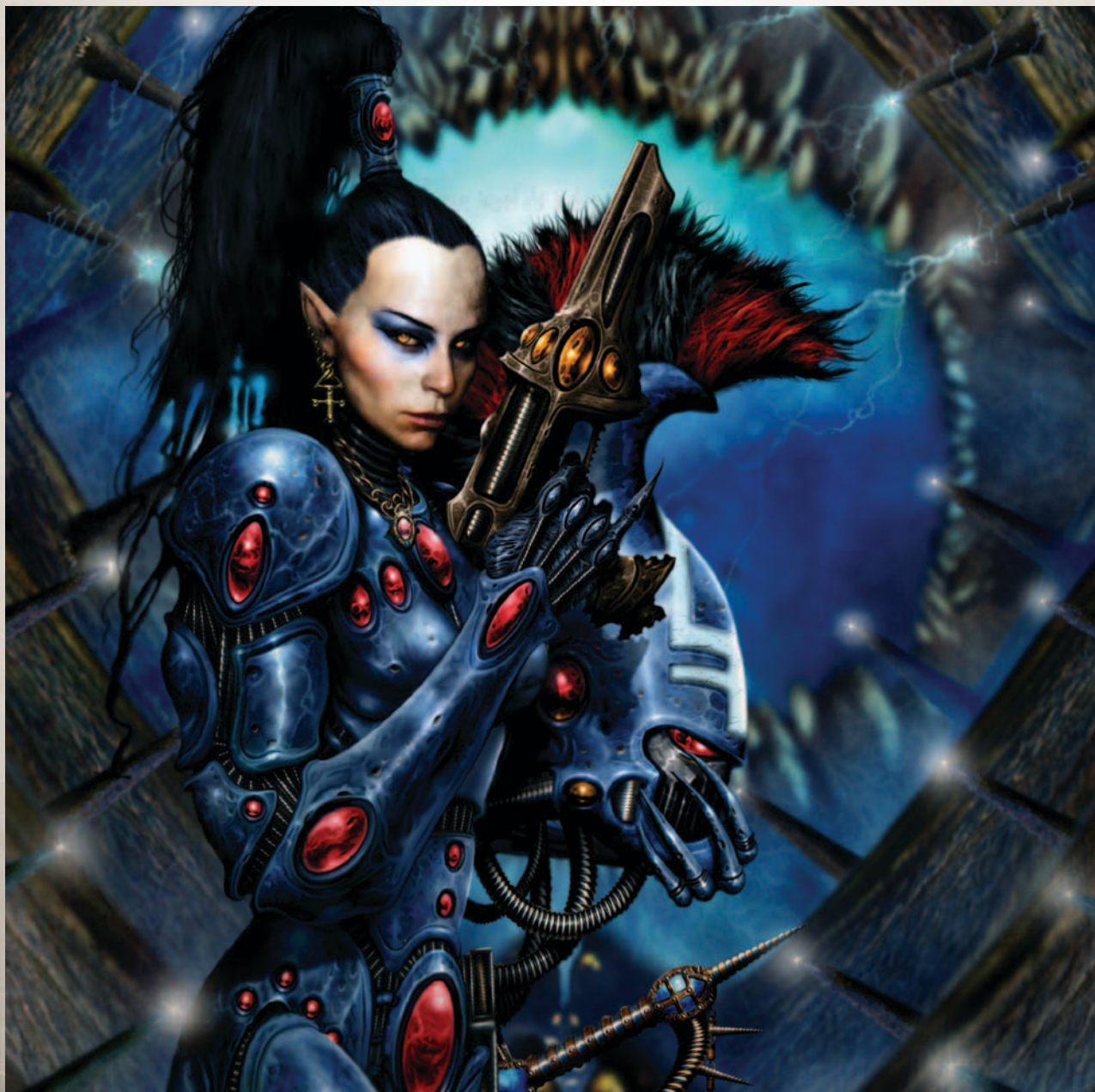
Armour: Gem-studded xenos armour (AP 6 all over)

Weapons: Avenger Shuriken Catapult (80m; S/3/10; 1d10+4 R; Pen 4; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable, Tearing), Shuriken Pistol (20m; S/3/5; 1d10+2; Pen 4; Clip 40; Reload 2Full), best quality mono-knife (1d5+4[†] R; Pen 2).

[†] Includes Strength Bonus

Gear: 2 clips of shuriken catapult ammunition, 2 clips of shuriken pistol ammunition, xenos-craft medikit, waystone gem, scanner, and helm incorporating re-breather, photo-visors and micro-bead.

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.



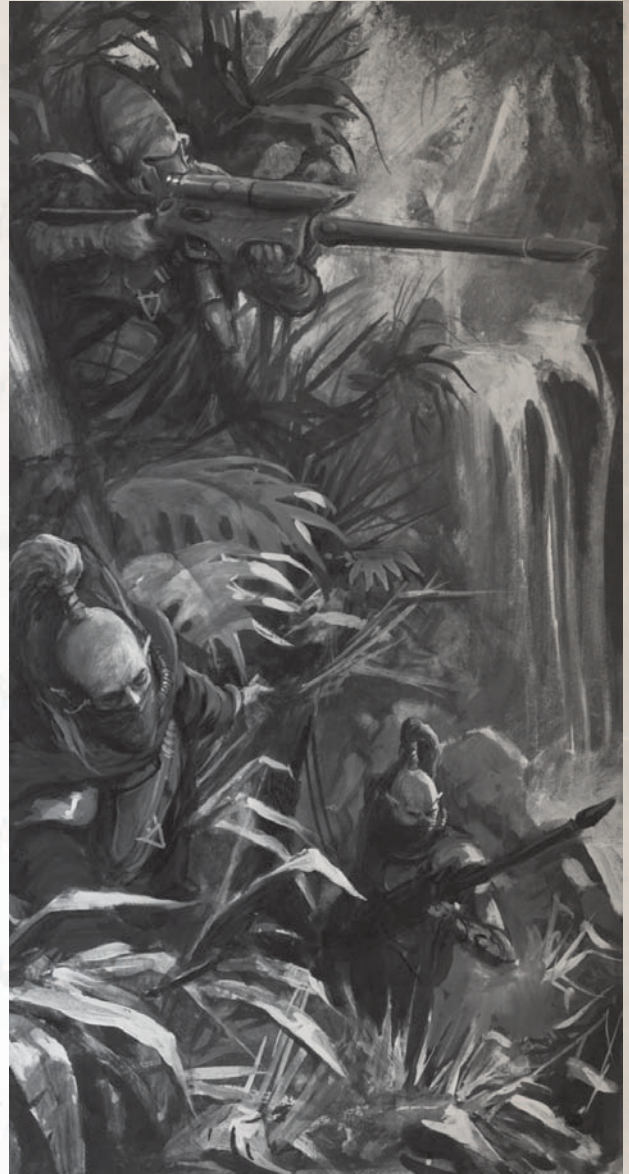
ELDAR RANGERS

Over their long lives, the Eldar master many disciplines, walking a single path at any one time to the exclusion of all else. Whereas most such paths form a key part within their society, there are those paths that take the Eldar far from home. Those Eldar that walk the Path of Wandering are consumed with great curiosity and wanderlust that takes them away from their Craftworlds to travel under strange stars. Those that walk the Path of Wandering are typically young and restless youths who crave satisfaction they cannot achieve amongst their own peoples. Such a temperament is dangerous and, if left unleashed, can quickly lead to the pursuit of dark passions and a descent into debauchery and decadence. These youths are encouraged to leave the craftworld in the hope that experience of the wider world will lead to their ambitions being cooled, their wanderlust being tempered, and their passions tamed.

Such Eldar are known as Rangers. They travel across the galaxy, exploring far-flung worlds and making contact with other races. They roam far from their craftworlds, often tasked with carrying out lengthy and involved missions by the Farseers, tasks which require subtlety and cunning. Whilst abroad in the galaxy, Rangers may be tasked to search for lost maiden worlds, forgotten Exodite colonies, or ruined webway gates. Often such missions can be carried out without ever bringing them into contact with Mankind, such is the cunning and stealth of a Ranger. However, the innate curiosity of these Eldar sometimes leads them to cross paths with the agents of the Imperium. Such contact might be peaceful if the humans remain oblivious to their mysterious visitor's true nature. All too often, however, the contact turns violent, and the Ranger melts back into the shadows, with cleanly killed humans the only evidence he was ever there.

In appearance, an Eldar Ranger looks much like a man—tall and slight, his pale face angular but beautifully proportioned and his ears ending in elegant points. His every motion is smooth and graceful. Those who have seen an Eldar up close speak of an overwhelming and captivating beauty. Eldar Rangers wear inherently practical clothing—travel-worn, comfortable tunics over weatherbeaten armour of thermoplastic mesh, woven as though it were wool. They typically wear finely woven cameleoline hooded cloaks, allowing them to seamlessly blend in with their surroundings. Even the coarsest weave of Eldar cloth makes a fine silk garment seem like sackcloth, the colours and patterns shifting in the light as though ethereal. Eldar camouflage, when noticed, is no different, the subtleties of its patterns transfixing and beautiful.

The fate of most Eldar Rangers is to eventually return home, their wanderlust spent, ready to reintegrate as a productive member of Eldar society. However, there are those who lose themselves along the Path of Wandering. These Rangers are known as Pathfinders, roaming the stars in a form of eternal exile, never resting long in any one place and shunning the comforts of civilisation. Pathfinders are solitary individuals, choosing to remain alone even when in the company of their own kind. Some such individuals eke out an existence amongst other races, most of whom never realise the true



identity of the Pathfinder, while others are content simply to explore the vast emptiness of space.

There is a dark side to the Path of Wandering, however, and not all that become lost on it become Pathfinders. The dark urges that led to the Fall of the Eldar lurk in their hearts still, and only through strict discipline can they be kept under control. Those individuals that walk the Path of Wandering are inherently passionate, and not all find that the path sates such urges. Instead of exploration, those Eldar give themselves up to experience, lust replacing wanderlust and arrogance, and excess triumphing over ambition and discipline. The Path of Damnation is the dark side of the Path of Wandering, and those exiles that find themselves walking it do so knowing that there can never be any way back. They live amongst the lesser races, indulging in excesses that become ever more extreme. Some are content to languish in obscurity, whereas others seek to gather followers about them, lesser creatures upon which the darkest desires of an Eldar's soul can be enacted. It is perhaps fitting, then, that the task of tracking and slaying such depraved Eldar falls to the Pathfinders and Rangers that hold true.



Eldar Ranger Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	55	3I	32	(10) 50	38	54	36	38

Move: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 11

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness +10 (Per), Climb (S), Concealment +20 (Ag), Deceive (Fel), Disguise (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Xenos) (Int), Inquiry (Fel), Navigation (Surface) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Search (Per), Security (Ag), Shadowing (Ag) +10, Silent Move +20 (Ag), Speak Language (Eldar, Low Gothic, High Gothic), Survival +20 (Int), Tracking +20 (Int).

Talents: Arms Master, Basic Weapon Training (Las, Primitive), Catfall, Crack Shot, Deadeye Shot, Exotic Weapons Training (Shuriken Pistol, Ranger Long Rifle), Foresight, Heightened Senses (Sight, Hearing), Jaded, Leap Up, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Marksman, Pistol Weapon Training (Las), Rapid Reaction, Sprint.

Traits: Unnatural Agility (x2).

Armour: Xeno-mesh armour (Body 4, arms 4, legs 4).

Weapons: Ranger long rifle (200m; S/-/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 2; Clip 40; Reload Full; Accurate, Reliable), Shuriken pistol (20m; S/3/5; 1d10+2; Pen 4; Clip 40; Reload 2Full), best quality mono-knife (1d5+4[†] R; Pen 2).

[†] Includes Strength Bonus

Gear: Cameleoline cloak, 2 clips of Ranger Long Rifle ammunition, 2 clips of Shuriken Pistol ammunition, xeno-craft magnoculars, waystone gem, token of a xenos deity.

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.



ADVENTURE SEED

A number of spirit stones belonging to ancient heroes of the Eldar have surfaced during excavations of Fathomsound Mine on Sepheris Secundus. The spirit stones have been mistaken as little more than pretty—albeit fashionable—baubles, and have found their way into the possession of a minor noble at the court of Queen Lachryma III. The discovery of the spirit stones was foretold by the visions of an Eldar Seer, and a group of Eldar Rangers have come to the planet in search of them, moving amongst the shadows in the depths of the mines. Dissent amongst the miners, mysterious deaths in the corridors of the palace, and strange dreams of an ancient civilisation amongst the nobility all point towards xenos activity.

Inquisitional Record 9956FG-X, under the authority of the Tricorn and Lord Inquisitor Anton Zerbe
Datum: Final Transmission Log from the Xeiros XXI monitoring outpost
Thought for the Day: Oppose the Alien at every road, it is your duty.

7.334.763.M41: Nominal function, no anomalies reported.

7.337.763.M41: Anomaly noted, auspex system reporting errors.

Mechanicus representative assigned to perform repair rituals.

3 hours after anomaly's appearance: Further auspex readings indicate presence of xenos vessel in-system.

6 hours after anomaly's appearance: Xenos vessel confirmed. Orbital defences under fire.

8 hours after anomaly's appearance: Vessel confirmed as matching records of Eldar vessels in databanks

[[Code Reference 08099-EX: Twilight's End]]. Orbital defences suffered massive damage, casualties extensive. Groundside spotters report multiple unidentified landing craft within 50 kilometres of main facility.

10 hours after anomaly's appearance: Astropathic distress call sent.

11 hours after anomaly's appearance: All contact lost.

Addendum: Battlefleet Calixis confirms destruction of outpost Xeiros XXI on 355.763.M41, no survivors discovered.

Battlefleet Calixis declared the xenos vessel Twilight's End an Indigo-priority threat in 802.M41. All Imperial vessels passing through the Port Wander checkpoint have been warned about the incident on Xeiros XXI and have been instructed to report any further contact with the xenos ship.



ULTHYR ELLARION

The enigmatic Eldar are rarely seen in the Calixis Sector—these aliens seem to shun the region, though relics and ruins of their civilisation have been discovered on a handful of Calixian worlds. Among the few Eldar who traverse the sector, none are as infamous as the corsair lord Ulthyr Ellarion. Some say he remains in order to recover a special soulstone, precious to him for some personal reason. Others claim that he revels in the thrill of the hunt, and finds Mankind to be most excellent sport.

Battlefleet Calixis has pursued Ellarion’s elusive ship throughout the Drusus Marches for over four centuries. Though he has been brought to battle more than once, the Eldar and his vessel have either triumphed or disengaged in every encounter. Merchant vessels, however, have had even worse luck—over a thousand shipments have been raided by Ellarion’s piratical crew. A figure of some myth and legend, Ulthyr Ellarion keeps no counsel but his own, striking when and where he wishes with seemingly no regard for the Imperial Navy’s orbital defences or patrols.

More than a few Inquisitors of the Ordo Xenos have lost their lives or vanished into the depths of space attempting to confront this alien marauder and end his predations once and for all. A handful of dedicated Radicals, however, seek Ellarion more to learn from him than to slay him, for he has shown he can be bargained with on a number of previous occasions.



Ulthyr Ellarion Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
54	45	33	32	(10) 54	48	42	45	48

Move: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 21

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel), Carouse (T) +20, Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Underworld, War) (Int), Contortionist (Ag), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag)+10, Drive (Military Vehicles) (Ag), Evaluate (Int) +10, Forbidden Lore (The Black Library, Warp, Xenos), Gamble (Int), Inquiry (Fel), Intimidate (S), Medicae (Int), Navigation (Stellar) (Int) +20, Pilot (Military Craft, Spacecraft) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Search (Per), Security (Ag), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move +10 (Ag), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (Eldar, High Gothic, Low Gothic).

Talents: Air of Authority, Assassin Strike, Basic Weapon Training (Las), Blademaster, Catfall, Combat Master, Counter-attack, Decadence, Disarm, Double Team, Exotic Weapons Training (Shuriken Pistol), Foresight, Hard Target, Heightened Senses (Sight, Sound), Hip Shooting, Into the Jaws of Hell, Iron Discipline, Jaded, Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Meditation, Melee Weapon Training (Power, Primitive), Mental Fortress, Mighty Shot, Nerves of Steel, Paranoia, Peer (Underworld), Pistol Weapon Training (Las), Precise Blow, Quick Draw, Rapid Reaction, Sprint, Step Aside, Strong Minded, Sure Strike, Swift Attack, Total Recall, Wall of Steel.



Traits: Unnatural Agility (x2).

Armour: Xeno-mesh armour (Body 6, arms 5, legs 5).

Weapons: Ornate best-quality shuriken pistol (20m; S/3/5; 1d10+2; Pen 4; Clip 40; Reload 2Full), xeno-craft best quality powersword (1d10+9[†] R;Pen 6).

[†] Includes Strength Bonus

Gear: 2 clips of Shuriken Pistol ammunition, 2d10 coins from an unknown culture, 1d5 rare and beautiful jewels, waystone gem, xenos-craft medkit.

Threat Rating: Xenos Majoris.



ADVENTURE SEED

The Acolytes are ordered to voyage on board a merchant ship serving as “bait.” Their Inquisitor wishes to make contact with Ulthyr Ellarion and has tasked the Acolytes with negotiating a meeting time and place. However, the “bait” ship runs into an unforeseen complication, as an Ork freebooter chances across it at the same time. The Acolytes must somehow survive the three-way struggle and make peaceful contact with Ellarion, or else escape to try another day.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 794 M41

I prevailed upon Captain Leomyr of the Battlefleet Calixis to assist me with the completion of this tome. Prior to his disappearance at Sheol VII, the Captain provided much assistance with my work throughout the sector. It pains me that there is no better memorial to the Captain's gallantry than this, an acrimonious piece of our irregular correspondence. I pray that his soul walks in the Emperor's light, but I suspect that Leomyr may yet play a role in the dark days ahead.



QUERY: Sheol VII, Leomyr
+++Retrieving Datum+++
[[Records Restricted]]

+++Inquisitional Override//Galren-B-23+++
+++Override Accepted+++
[[REF: Battlefleet Engagement — The Battle of Sheol, 784.M41//The Entine Prophet//Haarlock's Legacy//
+++All Further Records Expunged+++]]

I know not why you desire my lore of the Eldar. Their ancient and arrogant race is beyond the purview of the Ordo Malleus. The unsettled debt betwixt us, however, compels me to obey. Curse you for making me remember.

Stories about the mysteries of the void are commonplace within the Battlefleet. Some describe the Eldar as a benevolent and reasonable race. Some will claim that a handful of jewels will purchase safe passage, that their revered seers will grant a boon of wondrous visions, or that their worlds are paradises. Like nearly everything else about them, these tales are a lie. Of the Eldar, there is but one of which I may claim direct and firsthand knowledge—a cunning and ruthless corsair, master of the xenos bladeship Twilight's End, a murderer and a pirate. A being to whom I owe my life, to my eternal shame.

His name, as best I can render it in Low Gothic, is Ulthyr Ellarion. I first encountered him during a routine patrol in the Josian Reach, a time many years ago when I was but a young ensign. It was my honour to serve under Captain Marchand aboard the Dauntless-class light cruiser *Argent Herald*. A traitor ship, concealed by some blasphemous artifice of warp-sorcery, ambushed the *Herald* as we emerged from the Emyrean. Dauntless-pattern vessels are a small but tough breed—macrocannons blazed, lances burned with star-hot fury, and by the Emperor, we gave as good as we got.

Nevertheless, it was not long before the *Herald* was crippled, adrift and venting plasma into the void. Like many other systems, the saviour pods were nonfunctional, and the ship's confessor began to consign our souls to Him On Terra. It was then I saw the xenos vessel upon the flickering auspex array, black and sharp like the edge of night. At that moment, I gave the Eldar craft its name. The image shifted and flowed, barely visible from one second to the next—but a glimpse was all I needed to fix its appearance in my memory. It slid smoothly behind the traitor vessel and blew it apart with a perfectly-timed volley of torpedoes.

The alien vessel hailed us on vox to gloat. In a few well-chosen words, the pirate mocked us, made sport of our valour, and humiliated my captain. Ellarion's tongue knew nothing but scorn, disdain, and contempt. Hot tears of rage burned my eyes, but we could do nothing, only endure the alien's condescension. Without his pouncing strike upon the traitor ship, we would have all perished.

I will speak of this no more

-Leomyr



[[The following is an extract from Legends of Iocanthos, translated by Lexographer Matrin.]]

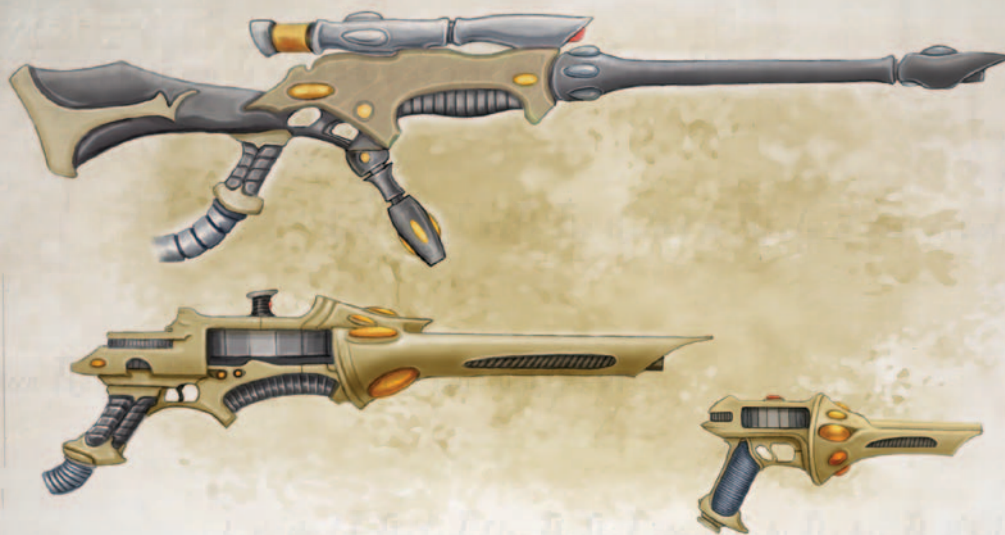
[[Some terms in the Ashleen language proved impossible to translate into Low Gothic.]]

Six by six has the cor'narr passed in the sky, but the Ashleen remember. The Feast of All Battles had come its turn again, and the warriors celebrated our great victory over the outlanders. Our fires were built high to honour the sky-people, and the Death Singer stood ready to perform the irr'attar.

Before the Feast could begin, strangers arrived from nowhere, carried by spirits past the sharp eyes of Ashleen warders at the gates. These strangers were fair of skin, with wicked eyes, pointed ears, and laughter like the tolling of bells. The strangers introduced their leader, the great Ulthyr, and named themselves the Eldar. We made them our guests and included them in our revels, and in return, the Ulthyr's people performed great feats of witchery and skill.

We shared our meat and drink, while the Death Singers told the tale of Ashleen courage. Many grox were butchered, and the revel went on well past the moon's zenith. Our guests were truly tireless, dancing as lithe as serpents in the shadows of the great fire. Sleep claimed me, but in my dreams I saw the Ulthyr, madness in his visage, his blade weaving ribbons of red.

When I awoke, all was silent. The revel done, there should have been sleeping warriors and Ashleen maidens greeting the new day. Only silence greeted my frantic calls for my clan-mates. The Death Singer's hut was empty, her rune-staff vanished. The Ashleen of the rthandr were gone, erased as if they had never been. I mourned for my people, stolen away by the Ulthyr to a place where the revels need never end.



ELDAR EQUIPMENT

Eldar Shuriken Weapons

The ancient Eldar race has little to do with the Calixis Sector, and they are believed to consider it accursed. Save for the occasional privations of their corsairs and a handful of wandering outcasts, they and their potent technology remain little more than a myth for most. Eldar artefacts, as a consequence, are rare and hugely valuable when traded on the sector's black market. Eldar weapons are particularly prized, fetching huge sums from private collectors. Shuriken weaponry is one such type—these guns are graceful dealers of death that use sophisticated gravity accelerators to hurl volleys of miniature razor disks to literally slice their victims apart in seconds.

Shuriken weapons use solid core ammunition which Imperial technology cannot replicate; as a result their ammunition is classed as Very Rare with a base price of 500 Thrones a clip.

Avenger Shuriken Catapult

Synonymous with the Eldar race is the shuriken catapult, as any Guardsman who has faced the xenos and lived can confirm. As is much of their technology, the shuriken catapult is not made so much as grown, from a light substance called wraithbone. When fired, a shuriken catapult unleashes a

hail of razor-sharp monomolecular discs—the eponymous shuriken. Whilst lacking the penetrating power of larger weapons, the sheer volume of firepower a shuriken catapult can unleash—not to mention the devastating effects such a hail can have on a lightly armoured target—more than makes up for it. Dire Avengers carry a modified variant of the shuriken catapult known as the Avenger, which features a longer barrel and inbuilt range-finders, making it dangerous even at extended ranges.

Ranger Long Rifle

The favoured weapon of the Eldar Ranger is the Ranger long rifle, a long-barrelled sniper weapon not dissimilar to the long las used by Imperial snipers. Whereas the long las is an upgrade to the humble lasgun, the Ranger long rifle is a more advanced las-weapon entirely, seemingly custom grown for the user, tailored perfectly to their eyesight and grip. Whereas the artificial crystals used in Imperial las-technology struggles to maintain a focused beam over long distances, the psychically grown crystals used by the Eldar are able to focus a tight beam over a much greater distance, allowing a skilled user to punch through weak points in armour at great distances.

†When used with the Aim action, the penetration of the Ranger long rifle's next shot is doubled to a maximum of 4. If the wielder Aims as a Full Action, the penetration of the rifle's next shot is tripled to a maximum of 6.

TABLE 3-1: ELDAR WEAPONRY

Exotic Weapons	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt	Cost	Availability
Shuriken Pistol	Pistol	20m	S/3/5	1d10+2 R	4	40	2Full	Reliable	1.2kg	5,000	Very Rare
Avenger Shuriken Catapult	Basic	80m	S/3/10	1d10+4 R	6	100	2Full	Reliable, Tearing	2.5kg	9,500	Very Rare
Ranger Long Rifle	Basic	200m	S/--/--	1d10+3 E	2†	40	Full	Accurate, Reliable	2kg	8,500	Very Rare

ENOULIANS

From the time Solomon Haarlock ventured into what would become the Calixis Sector, the Imperium has encountered and eliminated dozens of xenos species. In the uncharted regions beyond the sector's borders, however, alien races still abide, awaiting an opportunity for vengeance. The Enoulians are one such species, and their hatred for the Imperium is strong.

Enoulians are a small-sized race, roughly 1.5 metres in height, with thin bodies and smooth pale yellow skin. Their faces are featureless, with vertically-pupiled eyes and only thin slits for mouth, ears, and nostrils. Though they only wear simple clothing (normally loose fitting hooded smocks, rough shoes, and belts), they are far from technologically ignorant and use sophisticated weapons employing alien sciences. Their bandoliers carry crystalline ammunition for their shard weapons, and Enoulians have learned to utilise other weaponry, both xenos and Imperial, as well. They communicate in high-pitched squeaks and hand gestures, but most are able to speak in broken Gothic.

Calixian scholars theorise that the Enoulians might originate in the Halo Stars, as these xenos are often encountered in the Malfian subsector. Enoulians are often employed as mercenary fighters by heretic and criminal organisations. They react violently to symbols of the Imperium, however, and will never knowingly work for Imperial forces. Only the most strong willed of the race seem to be able to restrain themselves in the presence of the holy Aquila, lest they go into berserker rages.

In combat, Enoulians favour ambushes and ranged attacks, using their shard weaponry as well as throwing knives, but in melee they are formidable due to their deadly whisper lines. Their bodies are nearly frictionless, save for the palms of their hands and soles of their feet, making it difficult to fight them in close combat. They are also known for attacking en masse against opponents, with several ganging up on the unfortunate target in a coordinated assault.

Hiring Enoulians is never certain. They do not accept any standard currencies or precious metals, and instead must be offered a variety of apparently worthless items such as fossilised bones, fragmented rocks, space debris, dead plants, and the like. If the Enoulians favour one of the items, they will accept it and accept the work. If not, they turn away and another offering must be tried at a later date. Analysing the acceptable offerings and trying to predict what will work has become an art form for the criminal underground, with "guaranteed acceptable" items going for high prices on black market. What they do with these items is an even greater mystery, but once accepted, they guard them as fiercely as a Rogue Trader guards his Charter. Most people take the Enoulians as childish given their craving for such baubles, but some in the Ordo Xenos worry whether some hidden pattern to these items could reveal a darker and more threatening purpose.

While the criminal may have difficulties acquiring the service of the Enoulians, the heretical seem more successful of late in employing these aliens. Sightings of Enoulians warbands fighting alongside the forces of the Archenemy



are increasing, and the sizes of the warbands are growing in number. That the alien has been welcomed by the heretic seems more and more certain. Where the Enoulians may have long ago been merely footnotes in mankind's conquest of the Calixis Sector, they are now becoming a dangerous puppet race to be used against the Imperium. Their zealous hatred of the Imperium and its agencies overrides all else, and all signs indicate the races' hatred may cause it to slide into perpetual servitude to Chaos.

Enoulian Warrior Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
33	37	31	29	33	47	38	35	22

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Xenos), Speak Language (Enoulian, Low Gothic).

Talents: Basic Weapons Training (Las, SP), Exotic Weapon Training (Shard Pistol, Shard Rifle, Whisper Line), Hatred

(Imperium), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Nerves of Steel, Orthoproxy, Pistol Training (Las, SP), Thrown Weapon Training (Primitive).

Traits: Natural Weapon (Acid Saliva), Oily Skin^{††}, Toxic, Scrawny.

^{††} **Oily Skin:** Aside from the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet, Enoulians skin is almost totally frictionless. Any attempts they make to break free from a Grapple action gain a +20 bonus, and opponents Grappling them test to see if they cause injury at a -20 penalty.

Armour: Heavy smock & hood (counts as Gang Leathers) (Arms, Body, Legs 1; Primitive).

Weapons: Acid Saliva (3m; S/-/-; 1d5 R; Pen 3), Shard pistol (20m; S/-/-; 1d10+1 R; Pen 1; Clip 100; Reload 2Full; Tearing), Shard rifle (70m; S/3/-; 1d10+2 I; Pen 1; Clip 100; Reload 2Full; Tearing), whisper line (1d10+7[†] R; Pen 4; Flexible, Tearing).

[†] Includes Strength Bonus

Gear: Bandolier, boots, 6 ammunition crystals, food rations and canteen of liquid (both mildly poisonous to humans), medikit (xeno), unknown xeno device (multi-use tool).

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.

SHARD WEAPONS

These weapons are often carried by Enoulians and may be relics of their own lost civilisation. Shard weapons use small crystals as ammunition. When triggered, the weapons force a powerful electrical current through the crystal, causing it to tear off small shards from sheering torsion pressure. Ejected at great velocities, the shards can rip open armour and tear into flesh with ease. The crystals can be used in either weapon, making reloading in combat much easier.

WHISPER LINE

Another sign of the Enoulians' advanced civilisation is their use of nearly monomolecular cords as lariats and garrottes. These lines are deadly in combat, but only the Enoulians seem able to use them without heavily reinforced gloves. The Whisper Line has a maximum range of 1 metre.

TABLE 3-1: ENOULIAN WEAPONRY

Exotic Weapons	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt	Cost	Availability
Shard Pistol	Pistol	20m	S/-/-	1d10+1 R	0	20	Full	Tearing	1kg	2,000	Very Rare
Shard Rifle	Basic	70m	S/3/-	1d10+2 R	0	40	2Full	Tearing	2kg	5,500	Very Rare
Whisper Line	Melee	1m		1d10+1 R	4			Flexible, Tearing	.5kg	4,500	Very Rare

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 770 M41

I am often accused of using whatever forces, no matter the source, to achieve my aims, but even I rightfully shun the alien. The alien cannot be trusted, for who can trust that which has never shared the bond of humanity? Their thoughts are unreadable, and their true motivations unknowable. The Enoulians, for example, would appear simplistic in their aggressive opposition to the Emperor's Will, but who can say if this is their true nature? They appear to be fallen to the role of subjugated race, corrupted and acquiescing to being soldiers for our Foe, but what if they have secret and unfathomable plots beyond this? Do such creatures even have souls that can be damned?

I have lived long and know that rarely is truth as simple as appearance. The Enoulians are alien, and to claim to know the alien is to abandon your humanity. I know they fight against humanity and aid Chaos, and that is enough to know they cannot be allowed to exist. I do not need to know more.

ENSLAVERS

Also known as Psyrens, Krell, Dominators, or Puppeteers, the mysterious Enslavers are possibly one of the greatest threats for not only the Imperium but all living beings. While they live at least part of their lives in the Warp, they have material bodies and can also exist naturally in the material realm. Their very existence is a closely guarded secret, with only a select few knowing what these beings truly represent, and the hideous fate that could befall the Imperium should they overpower mankind.

Descriptions of Enslavers are rare and fragmentary, but most detail a grotesque, sickly pink–brown bulbous body. Tentacles writhe underneath them, assisting in movement as they hover through the air, while grasping mandibles are used to grip their prey.

Inquisitorial Scholars are divided as to whether Enslavers are sentient. While they seem to act in an intelligent manner, they make no attempts to communicate or use tools of any kind. Instead they use psychically controlled slaves to conduct any physical work, and it is this power which gives them their name. Enslaver victims become complete puppets to the alien's will, performing even the most self–destructive or heretical acts without hesitation. While the Enslavers themselves can be felled by regular weapons fire due to their corporeal forms, it is their dominated thralls that often pose a greater threat, for few can bear to kill their comrades even when clearly under alien control.

Enslavers travel on the currents of the Immaterium and are drawn to the psychic emanations of living creatures, especially from unprotected psykers, who they can detect from many light years away. Once a psyker is found, three Enslavers form a dominating mental bond with the target and bring about a sickening transformation. The host is distorted and twisted over a period of days, falling into lethargy and finally becoming a living warp portal, a pulsating arch of ruptured flesh which permits the trio of Enslavers ingress into the material plane. Once Enslavers have appeared on a world, they seek out and transform more psykers so that more and more Enslavers appear, thus often heralding the end of that world.

Enslavers can bind living creatures, including non–psykers, to their will, using them to defend their new masters and attack any who have not been enslaved yet. While some few have resisted or thrown off this awful shackle, most victims are dominated for the remainder of their pitiful lives. Enslaved subjects usually bear no outward appearance of their domination, but after time the lack of proper care and nourishment leave them sick and desiccated, though this could be a side effect of their alien oppression.

Once an Enslaver infestation has begun, it is very hard to stop; soon thousands of the horrific creatures are breaching the Warp, binding millions to their will and dooming the planet. While their presence is still a very rare occurrence in this sector, those worlds which have seen Enslavers appear are now often Exterminatus, as the Holy Ordos have had no other recourse but to unleash unrelenting death on the planet. Only by catching the initial enslavement is there much hope for stopping an Enslaver Plague from claiming a world.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

Directed to investigate a possible rogue psyker, the Acolytes uncover an entire coven of outlaw witches trying to establish a safe haven for their kind. Enslavers have been drawn to this gathering of psykers, and one or more witches are slowly being bonded with and formed into Enslaver Gates. The Acolytes must stop the psykers and keep the gates from forming, and if they fail, Enslavers will gain access to the planet and begin subjugating the inhabitants one by one.

The Inquisitor wishes his Acolytes to look into reports that the Chief Judge of a local Adeptus Arbites force has become lax in his duties, taking too long to recover from an illness and being unable or unwilling to resume work. The Judge has fallen under Enslaver control, due to a recent emergence of low–level psychic abilities, and is slowly transforming into an Enslaver Gate. The Acolytes must not only deal with the local Arbites force which are acting to shelter their much admired commander, but also handle any possible repercussions should they be forced to assassinate the Judge.

Enslaver Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
21	—	26	39	20	51	49	67	03

Move: 2/4/8/12

Wounds: 25

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

Talents: Favoured by the Warp, Psy Rating 6.

Traits: Fear 2, From Beyond, Creature of the Warp†, Hoverer 3, Multiple Arms, Size (Hulking), Strange Physiology, Unnatural Senses (15m), Warp Gate††.

Psychic Powers (Psy Rating 6): All Minor Psychic Powers plus Enslavement††, Mind Scan, Psychic Shriek, Terrify.

†**Creature of the Warp:** Enslavers never invoke Psychic Phenomena.

†† **Warp Gate:** Enslavers need a warp-gate to enter the material universe from the Warp. First, an Enslaver must succeed at a **Very Hard (-30) Psyniscience Test** in order to locate a suitable Psyker upon a single planet. Next, three Enslavers focus their efforts upon this Psyker. One Enslaver

makes a single **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**, assisted by the other two Enslavers. For every degree of success, the target Psyker gains 1 level of Fatigue which cannot be removed. Once the target lapses into permanent unconsciousness, its flesh begins to transform into an Enslaver Gate, mutating over 1d10 rounds until finally forming a stable entryway for three Enslavers to enter the material realm (note that only those three Enslavers can use that Gate, in the case of multiple Gates in play). The Gate has Toughness 40, 20 Wounds, and no Armour for purposes of destruction. Only by total destruction can its use be stopped.

††† **Enslavement:** This psychic power works in the same manner as Dominate, but if successful, the target can only break free with another Opposing Willpower Test at a -20 penalty. Once a target is Enslaved, the Enslaver can then target another living creature each at the beginning of each Round (the GM should keep track of which Enslavers are controlling which Acolytes or NPCs). Issuing orders to those Enslaved is a Half Action for the Enslaver, no matter how many are currently under its control.

Weapons: None.

Armour: None.

Threat Rating: Xenos Terminus.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 780.M41

It is with some trepidation that I write these words, for any knowledge of these hideous beings is cause for termination according to many of my fellow Inquisitors. However, I would rather my Acolytes be prepared for whatever dangers they may face, than be ignorant of such a threat. My psyker colleagues do not wish to speak of the Enslavers, but I must. The Ordo Xenos is aware of the horrible means that Enslavers use to gain a foothold in our realm, and I share their determination to prevent such an event from ever coming to pass. I do not wish to delve into details; all that is necessary to know is that these things present a peril beyond imagining, and must be crushed at all costs wherever sighted.

I can find no accurate records as to the age or the origin of the Enslavers. Ancient scrolls describe them with ovoid or barrel shaped bodies, totally alien in appearance. The more recent legends depict Enslavers in an unholy mockery of human form. Worse yet, some decaying texts speak in riddles of Enslaver Plagues that swept our galaxy long before mankind arose to rightfully conquer it. These same tomes contain prophecies that this plague can rise again. Eternal vigilance and faith in the Emperor are required to prevent such a horror. Let the light of the Golden Throne guide you and preserve you, for to face the Enslavers is your ultimate test.

Destroy these abominations at all costs!



GENESTEALER

Genestealers are four-armed alien predators, armoured in a chitinous exoskeleton and armed with razor-sharp claws that can slice through the thickest armour plate. Genestealers are inimical to all other forms of life, but are sometimes found on space hulks that wander into the Calixis Sector. Space hulks are valuable relics, often containing priceless ancient technology. These infested hulks tumble endlessly through the vastness of space, occasionally inhabited by this alien breed lying patiently in wait and focused only upon slaughter and reproduction. In addition to their powerful ripping claws and taloned hands, Genestealers also possess incredible speed and skill in hand-to-hand combat. They strike blindingly quick and are infamously capable of overcoming nearly any opponent in melee.

Beyond their physical abilities, Genestealers communicate with each other through a form of gestalt psychic intelligence, a “brood telepathy” that links them together and enables the group to act in murderous harmony. Genestealers are also quite intelligent, able to plan and execute cunning ambushes and lay traps for their prey, stealthily using their hardened talons and claws to scuttle out of sight before attacking. These xenos monsters receive their name from their insidious ability to implant their own genetic material into a host

body of another race as their means of reproduction. Those infected also fall under Genestealer mental domination and become willing hosts dedicated to the Genestealer’s cause, breeding abhorrent hybrid forms that eventually produce more purestrain Genestealers. In this manner does the Genestealer propagate its species, and it is for this reason that the Ordo Xenos considers a Genestealer infestation an extremely dangerous threat.

Many a void traveler has run afoul of a Genestealer-infected space hulk adrift between the stars. Such encounters usually end with few survivors. Some leave the space hulk bearing a most unusual cargo, but the efforts of the Imperial Navy and the Inquisition have thankfully kept these incidents under control. Even a single Genestealer can wreak great havoc until it is at last brought to bay and eliminated. Eternal vigilance is the watchword of the Imperial Battlefleets, for while the Genestealer is dreaded and considered incredibly dangerous, it is not the worst denizen that can be found aboard a space hulk.



Genestealer Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
65	—	55	60	⁽¹²⁾ 60	27	56	45	—

Move: 12/24/36/72

Wounds: 16

Skills: Awareness (Int) +10, Climb (S) +10, Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag), Swim (S).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Crushing Blow, Fearless, Genestealer’s Kiss^{††}, Hard Target, Leap Up, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Resistance (Psychic Powers, Cold, Poisons), Step Aside, Swift Attack.

Traits: Dark Sight, From Beyond, Fear 2 (Frightening), Improved Natural Weapon, Multiple Arms, Natural Armour 4 (All), Natural Weapon (Claws), Unnatural Agility (×2), Unnatural Speed.

^{††}**Genestealer’s Kiss:** A Genestealer possesses an ovipositor within its maw that implants the alien’s DNA into its victim, seeding the target’s body with a parasite that will grow and form into a hybrid creature. Over time, a group of hybrids will eventually breed purestrain Genestealers. In this manner, Genestealers often infiltrate a society from within. The full scope of such an infestation is beyond this book, but some basic guidelines are presented here: Once a target has been bitten by a Genestealer, he must succeed at a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or become a host for the Genestealer’s DNA. Once a victim has become a host, the victim cares for the growing hybrid as he would for his own child until the hybrid emerges in a matter of months. A **Very Hard (–30) Medicae Test** can remove the Genestealer’s taint, but doing so requires a week of care in an advanced medicae facility.

Armour: None (All 4).

Weapons: Claws (1d10+7[†] R; Pen 7; Tearing).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: None.

Threat Rating: Xenos Majoris.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Logicians, a cult dedicated to the tech-heresy of progress, have acquired a Genestealer to study, hoping to find a way to use its alien gene-sequence to their own ends. The Acolytes are informed of this plot and track the Logicians down to a remote hollowed-out asteroid station. Automated defences and a few servitors bar the way, but once past these guardians, the Acolytes discover the station to be dead and silent. The Acolytes find several cultist bodies, torn apart in savage combat, but far fewer than were expected. At the heart of the station, the Acolytes must discover what has happened to the remaining cultists and the whereabouts of the Genestealer. The xenos may not have been a captive for long...

The Adeptus Arbites come to the Acolytes' Inquisitor with a request for help—a scummer gang in Volg Hive is growing more and more powerful, and there is little the Judges seem to be able to do about it. The Acolytes are sent to investigate, and they soon discover that the scummer gang has a growing reputation for strangeness. The gangers have waxy, pale skin and seem to congregate in a series of steam tunnels beneath a manufactorum. The Acolytes can sneak inside these tunnels to find that the gang is in thrall to a foul xenos beast—a Genestealer, just beginning to exert its dominion over those it has implanted with its progeny. The gang and their blasphemous ally must be cleansed, or else Volg Hive may suffer at the hands of either an alien infestation or a heavy-handed response from the Ordo Xenos.

The Acolytes are investigating one of the Calixis Sector's Beast Houses when they receive a report from a local Arbiters Precinct House. The Arbiters have arrested a team of hunters as they were trying to smuggle an 'unknown xenos organism' onto the planet. The Arbiters have sealed the organism's cryo-tube in their coded vault. When the Acolytes arrive, they find the Precinct House's personnel slaughtered to a man, but with gunfire, not teeth and claws. Worse, the vault has been opened and the organism gone. A few evidence pics show a frozen creature with four arms, each tipped with razor claws. Now the Acolytes have two problems. The first is that the Arbiters' rapid response teams arriving on the scene are convinced the Acolytes are responsible for the slaughter. The second is that only someone with considerable authority could have opened the vault...

Definition: Alien Predator, Carnivore/
Necrovore, Xenos Majoris.

Explication: A lightning-swift, incredibly strong alien, Genestealers have six limbs and talons that can shear through the toughest hull plating. They are stealthy and cunning, so rely upon your auspex's readings, particularly in close quarters or areas of heavy cover.

Admonition: Drive them back with flamers, and engage with the blessed boltgun. Exterminate them at range, or prepare to sell your life dearly if they close to melee.



FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT: 806.M41

Rarely have I had the...pleasure of working alongside a fellow Inquisitor. Ours is often a lonely existence, surrounded by allies and Acolytes, but ultimately singular in one's authority and responsibility to the Emperor. I have been sought out by Inquisitor Vogen, a bright and curious young man from the Ordo Xenos. Under other circumstances, I feel as if we could have become friends, but the pressures of the task before us have left little time for socialising. Instead, Vogen's presence has brought me nothing but headaches; his Acolytes and mine find time to quarrel and brawl, his methods are completely outside my experience and training, and many times I find myself questioning how the information he brought me is worth all this effort and discord. Vogen's information led us to Captain Raoul Sendethian, a Rogue Trader with a charter both ancient and extremely limited in scope. Sendethian's vessel, the *Pride Ascendant*, had docked at the Sibellus orbital station, and Vogen claimed that this ship had recently made contact with a space hulk out on the edge of Imperial space. Although my fellow Inquisitor objected to my use of vat-psykers, I overrode him—a Rogue Trader's ship was no place to start getting overconfident.

Our caution turned out to be unwarranted: the ship itself was no threat, the captain and crew glassy-eyed and distant. One of Vogen's men, an ex-Guardsman with more than his share of scars, bionic implants, and simmering anger against the foes of Mankind, subdued Captain Sendethian and secured the ship. In the holds, however, we found a prize worth any effort—row upon row of cylinders, frosted and gleaming cryosuspension tanks, all recently used. My vat-psykers whispered moans of distress, clearly upset about the tainted feel to the ship's hold. Something unnatural and cold like the spaces between the stars had been here, lurking, waiting. Captain Sendethian provided us with the details under interrogation. Vogen's methods may be crude and unrefined to my tastes, but I will admit that he gets results. The Rogue Trader and his crew encountered the hulk that Vogen feared, the remains of the *Celestial Paragon*, lost in M32.

Sendethian and his men encountered an infestation there of Xenos predators—vile, six-limbed fiends known as Genestealers. At great cost, the xenos had been lured into the hold and captured, placed in cryostasis, and then delivered to a very wealthy buyer on Scintilla. Millions of thrones had changed hands, a temptation that the impoverished Sendethian could not afford to ignore. The name and description he gave of the buyer matched some of my own investigations into the Beast House, a conspiracy of bloodsport arenas and traffickers in forbidden xenos lifeforms that spanned most of the sector. Vogen, however, was convinced that there was a deeper game being played on Scintilla. He mentioned other names in the Ordo Xenos, Inquisitors of noted reputation and experience, all of whom apparently were in agreement regarding a larger plot. We argued, and in the end, I took my acolytes and left Vogen to his unanswered questions—the Beast House was a quarry I intended to hound before we lost the trail.

After parting ways with Inquisitor Vogen, I bent my full efforts to the task of tracking down these Genestealers. The Beast House is a canny and wealthy opponent, but in the end my acolytes and I cleansed their fighting pits with promethium, bolter, and hellgun. We had been fortunate in that when we had arrived, the Genestealers were not yet fully unleashed—the flamers burned them to cinders in their cells, even as one of my vat-psykers boiled and thrashed at the xenos's psychic death screams. Our victory, however, was incomplete—one cell stood empty, one Genestealer unaccounted for. If the Emperor is merciful, that xenos is long dead, a victim of the Beast House's thirst for gladiatorial combat. In the long hours of the night, I pray it is so.



LICTOR

Lictors roam ahead of Tyranid swarms, seeking out resistance and native lifeforms. It is a scout organism that often heralds the imminent arrival of Tyranids in vast numbers, so it is of little surprise that the Ordo Xenos considers any encounter with a Lictor to be significant. So far, there are no confirmed reports of Lictors operating inside the Calixis Sector. However, there have been rumours and legends that whisper of Lictors that may already have explored the sector's outer reaches.

The Lictor is also known as a Spook or Mantis Stalker by Imperial troops. Imperial Guardsmen are often unnerved by the Lictor's ambush and assassination techniques, their morale plummeting as soldiers are picked off one by one or in small groups. The Lictor prefers to strike from ambush, but it is a powerful creature able to destroy an entire squad on its own if cornered. Highly intelligent, Lictors also possess greatly developed sensory organs, able to detect their prey over a great distance.

This xenos creature is adapted to survive in hostile environments, and is a nearly matchless predator. A stalking Lictor exudes a pheromone trail that draws other Tyranid organisms in its wake. A larger concentration of prey stimulates a stronger pheromone response, and correspondingly

attracts the attention of larger groups of Tyranids. A Lictor possesses a deadly arsenal of bio-weaponry, including mantis-like upper claws, venomous talons, feeder tentacles, and barbed flesh hooks. The Lictor's feeder tentacles are used to lobotomise victims and absorb their genetic data and immediate memories by consuming their brains. The massively powerful upper claws are edged with fractal chitin, and the lower talons feature venom channels containing a deadly haemotoxin.

The flesh hooks are the most unusual of the Lictor's weapons. They are formed out of carbon-based chitin with a monomolecular edge and are attached to lengths of exceptionally tough muscle fibre situated between the ribs. The hooks are fired by a sharp intercostal muscle spasm snaring the Lictor's victims from a distance. The flesh hooks are also sometimes used as grapnels, allowing Lictors to scale vertical surfaces at great speed.

Lictors are covered with tiny chameleonic scales which shift their colour and texture to match the creatures' surroundings. This feature makes Lictors exceedingly difficult to spot except at very close range. The Lictor's body gives off little heat and is capable of remaining completely motionless for days, if necessary, so even energy and motion detection devices are often baffled by the Lictor's preternatural stealth.





Lictor Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
65	—	⁽¹²⁾ 63	60	⁽¹⁰⁾ 50	25	⁽⁸⁾ 45	45	—

Move: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 25

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S) +20, Concealment (Ag) +20, Contortionist (Ag) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Shadowing (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +20, Survival (Int) +20, Swim (S), Tracking (Int) +20

Talents: Ambidextrous, Assassins Strike, Berserk Charge, Blind Fighting, Catfall, Combat Master, Crushing Blow, Furious Assault, Hard Target, Heightened Senses (Sight, Smell, Sound, Taste, Touch), Improved Natural Weapons, Leap Up, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Rapid Reaction, Sprint, Step Aside, Swift Attack.

Traits: Chameleonic Scales^{††}, Darksight, Fear 2, Feeder Tendrils^{†††}, Flesh Hooks^{††††}, Improved Natural Weapons, Multiple Arms, Natural Armour 2, Natural Weapons (Ripping Claws), Quadruped, Size (Enormous), Strange Physiology, Sturdy, Toxic, Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Perception (x2), Unnatural Speed, Unnatural Strength (x2).

Armour: None (Head 2, Arms 2, Body 2, Legs 2).

Weapons: Ripping claws (1d10+14[†] R; Tearing).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

^{††}**Chameleonic Scales:** The Lictor blends in so well with the foliage of its surroundings that it is almost impossible to see. All Awareness tests versus the Lictor suffer a -30 penalty. A Lictor can attempt a Concealment Test as a half action instead of a full action, and may attempt the test even if being observed at the time.

^{†††}**Feeder Tendrils:** This creature gains the Crippling Strike and Sure Strike Talents against enemies belonging to a species that it has previously slain, and confers these Talents to other Tyranids within 10m of it against those same enemies, even if the other Tyranids do not possess the prerequisites for those Talents. It is at the GM's discretion as to what species the Lictor has previously encountered and slain for the purposes of this ability.

^{††††}**Flesh Hooks:** The creature may initiate a grapple with an enemy up to 10m away. With every successful opposed Strength test as part of a Grapple action, the victim is moved 1m plus 1m for each Degree of Success closer to the creature. In addition, the creature gains the Climb Skill (if it did not already have it) and gains a +20 bonus on all Climb Tests.

Weapons: None.

Armour: None.

Threat Rating: Xenos Terminus.





From: Lord Inquisitor Syrell Marque

9356.808.M41

Ordo Xenos
Segmentum Ultima



Thought for the Day: By slaying
the body we may yet save the soul.

I am sending this information as a preventative measure and as a warning. The Eastern Fringe of the Emperor's domain has suffered greatly at the hands of this loathsome breed of xenos known as Tyranids. I hope that the few facts we have learned about how the creatures think and act prior to an invasion will help prepare us for the worst. If we are fortunate, the Segmentum Obscurus will never have to face the terrors even now raging across the Segmentums Ultima and Pacificus.

The Inquisition, however, cannot rely upon fortune, but must place its faith both in the Emperor and in planning. I cannot stress strongly enough that any presence of a Lictor is an indication that a greater force of Tyranids is very likely imminent. Report any contact with a Lictor immediately, and take all possible actions in order to destroy the blasphemous thing forthwith.

Too late, the warning comes too late! The stalkers are already here—my research indicates that one is likely to be found lurking in the forests of Fedrid, and my contacts on Mortressa were most specific. We must react at once! I shall begin writing dispatches to the Imperial Guard and the Adeptus Astartes. Our only chance is to beg for assistance now, and to marshal our forces as best we can. No doubt, my esteemed colleagues of the Tricorn will laugh and point out that I have no proof... but if we wait too long for confirmation, the end will soon follow.

RECOVERED FROM SANCTIONITE PHATRON'S
QUARTERS JUST PRIOR TO HIS EXECUTION,
8/4. M41



ORKS

The Orks are a barbaric and warlike race that infest large portions of the galaxy. In unknown corners of space Ork empires rise and fall, waging war against races unheard of by the Imperium. The Orks are so violent and numerous that, were they ever to combine, they could sweep away the defences of all the other races, painting the galaxy green. Fortunately, their propensity for violence is their undoing, for Orks like to fight amongst themselves as much as against other races, their would-be empires normally devolving into petty squabbling and infighting before they can threaten the denizens of the galaxy. On some occasions, however, a powerful individual rises from amongst the Orks, possessing the strength and intelligence to bully the recalcitrant greenskins into line, concentrating their efforts into attacking other races. On such occasions, a Waaagh! is raised. A Waaagh! is a great invasion of Orks that can decimate entire sectors if given the time to grow in momentum.

Whilst relatively untroubled by the predations of the Orks, the Calixis Sector is not untouched by their presence, for no sector of the galaxy is entirely safe from the green menace. Many worlds, even those thought safe by Imperial authorities, harbour an Ork presence. Typically, these Orks are so barbaric, not to mention few in number, that they rarely come into conflict with the local populace. When detected, the authorities respond with overwhelming force, deploying the PDF in great numbers to stamp them out. The Imperium has learnt to its cost the price of leaving a seemingly harmless xenos infestation unchecked, for the Orks multiply quickly.



There are other worlds where the Orks thrive in greater numbers, feral Orks who wage war amongst one another, riding to battle atop great wild pigs or gigantic, reptilian beasts known as Squiggoths. Such threats are not taken lightly, for Orks evolve quickly, developing from possessing rudimentary technology to a level of crude mastery capable of launching ramshackle spaceships to invade other worlds, all within the space of one or two short generations. Where possible, local Imperial Guard regiments are deployed to cleanse such worlds. This task is not altogether straightforward, for Ork spores can lie dormant in the soil for years until they sprout into new Orks. Ganf Magna is one such world, a densely jungled planet where, despite the best efforts of the Imperial Guard, an Ork infestation seems to erupt every few years.

Larger quantities of Ork invaders sometimes cross over from the neighbouring Scarus Sector, an area of space far more troubled by Orks and a lesson on the folly of letting an infestation go unchecked. Orks cross into Calixian space via space hulks or roks. A space hulk is a huge, floating mass of space debris, typically comprising untold numbers of wrecked spaceships and other cosmic detritus drifting in and out of warp space. As a space hulk drifts near an Ork infested world, crude tractor beams and teleporters are used to seize it long enough for as many Orks as possible to embark. Once aboard, Ork Meks (Orks that have an inborn natural knack for technology) and Weirdboyz—Ork psykers—guide it back into the warp, navigating it into neighbouring systems ripe for plunder and war. Space hulks are often accompanied

by great swarms of orbiting roks—hollowed out asteroids hurled across space, acting as makeshift drop pods and assault shuttles. Also, sometimes such creations enter the sector on their own, propelled by some great mass catapult deep in a neighbouring area of space. Orks have little control over where the roks go, but so long as they smash into an inhabited world (and some Orks survive the impact long enough to fight), they are happy enough.

The appearance of a rok or space hulk is a cause for great alarm to Imperial authorities in the Calixis Sector, warranting the attention of Battlefleet Calixis and the deployment of countless Imperial Guard regiments.

ORK PHYSIOLOGY

An Ork's body contains the genetic traits of both animal and fungal lifeforms. This plant-like nature is responsible for the Ork's incredible physique and toughness. Algae flows through an Ork's blood, breaking down and repairing damaged tissue at an advanced rate. This algae is the reason for the Ork's greenish coloration and freakish durability.

Ork reproduction occurs by dispersing spores that settle and mature over time. When an Ork dies, this triggers a mass release of spores that can develop into dozens of subterranean cocoons. These cocoons then may hatch Gretchin, Squigs, or just simple fungi depending on the surrounding conditions. A good number of these cocoons will mature into fully-grown Orks after a gestation period.

ORK SOCIETY AND CLANS

For Orks, size equals respect and might makes right. These two elements are rooted in the Ork's physiology: natural leaders among their breed grow larger and stronger, enforcing their authority with physical abuse and the volume of his shouting in preference to cunning plans or charisma. These creatures thrive on conflict, and often gather into groups intent on finding the biggest and most violent battle to join in and escalate. These groups centre around a leader, known as a Nob, who forms a mob of his closest and most reliable Ork allies (including many Gretchin hangers-on and sycophants). The biggest and most powerful Nob becomes a Warboss and leads all the mobs in what is known as a Warband. Warbands are sometimes absorbed into larger tribes, and many tribes together often form the massive invasion hosts known as Waaaghs! In addition to this, Orks also have Clans, which embody a philosophy (for want of a better term) among Orks, each Clan emphasising particular elements of Ork culture above others. Orks tend to belong to one or another Clan no matter what Tribe they are in.

TEETH

The basis of Ork economics is teeth (known in the parlance of the alien as "teef"). Not any teeth will do—they must be the sharp tusks grown by Orks and periodically shed by the creatures as they grow. Teeth can be exchanged for almost anything in a crude form of market economics, from a choppa or a shoota to a buggy or bike. And, of course, because Ork

money is grown by Orks, a good spot of fighting is great for shaking loose a few teeth and earning a bit more wealth for the victor.

FREEBOOTERS

Not every Ork belongs to a warband or tribe. Some are misfits from Ork society, Orks who take more of an interest in looting and pillaging than in fighting. Outcasts amongst their own kind, these Flash Gitz and Freebooters are pirates, bandits, and mercenaries of ill-repute, selling their services to the highest bidder whether Ork or human ('umie, to use the Ork's parlance). Violence is always a major part of an Ork's life, no matter how much he may yearn after booty and adventure, and a Freebooter's agreement is fickle, lasting until the money runs out or he gets a fancy for bashing.

Some of the outermost worlds in the Calixis Sector, especially those bordering the Scarus Sector, are plagued by Ork pirates who raid and pillage from time to time, burning colonies to the ground in search of loot. It is rumoured that some colonies have come to secret clandestine agreements with the Freebooters, offering them tribute in return for being left alone. Some Freebooters have become very wealthy from such deals.



ORK BOYZ

The majority of Orks encountered throughout the galaxy are Ork Boyz, the common, foot-slogging warriors that make up the bulk of the greenskin horde. They are neither rulers nor leaders, for that role belongs to the Nobz, but nor are they servants or slaves, for the Gretchin fulfil that role. They exist for one purpose, and one purpose alone—to wage war. Orks care not where war is waged or against whom, and in the absence of a worthy foe, they happily fight amongst themselves.

Ork Boyz are tough, hulking brutes with thick, gnarly green hides. Fully erect they stand somewhere between six and seven feet tall, but most stand hunched over. Their bestial, almost porcine faces have beady little red eyes and a jutting jaw brimming with long tusks. Their skulls are thick, their arms long and ape-like, and their torsos extremely well-muscled. They typically wear battered and worn clothing and armour, cobbled together from whatever scraps they can find, take, or steal, and wield crude weaponry ranging from loud slug-firing pistols to even louder rifles.



Ork Boy Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
37	19	46	(8) 44	30	24	32	26	21

Move: 3/6/12/18

Wounds: 12

Skills: Intimidate (S).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive, SP), Bulging Biceps, Crushing Blow, Furious Assault, Hardy, Iron Jaw, Melee Weapon Training (Chain, Primitive), Pistol Weapon Training (Primitive, SP), Street Fighting, True Grit.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Mob Rule^{††}, Sturdy, Unnatural Toughness (x2).

^{††}**Mob Rule:** All Orks are latently psychic, an ability that increases in strength the more of them there are in one place, bolstering their confidence and courage to near fearless levels when they gather en masse. For every additional Ork within 10m, the Ork's Willpower is increased by +10 to resist the



effects of Fear and Pinning.

Armour: Flak armour (Body 2).

Weapons: Slugga (20m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full; Inaccurate, Unreliable) or Shoota (60m; S/3/10; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Inaccurate, Unreliable), choppa (1d10+5[†] R; Pen 2; Tearing, Unbalanced).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: Shiny bitz, really small squig.

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT:

All of my encounters with Orks have been violent and dangerous. They are beasts, and should be treated as such. That said, they do have some primitive grasp of technology. I had a particularly troublesome run-in with them in 717.M41. We were wrapping up investigations into some native practices on the frontier world of Kulth when we abruptly lost contact with our vessel in orbit. We set about evacuating to the colony's spaceport, but by the time we arrived, the settlement was already engulfed in fighting. Filthy, smoke-belching landing craft and rocket ships brought wave after wave of greenskins to the surface. If we were to escape, we would have to move quickly.

It was hard to move through the streets without encountering an Ork, and each fight was brutal and close. I lost three brave acolytes en route to the spaceport. We reached the landing platform, finding only an Ork rocket ship, fuelled and ready for launch. The rest is a tale for another day...



ORK NOBZ

Orks don't believe in hereditary titles or divine right. Instead they believe that the strong should rule the weak, which invariably means that the biggest, toughest, and most belligerent of greenskins rule the Orks. This makeshift nobility, known as Nobz in the Ork tongue, is an ever-shifting morass of fights and squabbles as the strong constantly try to assert their position against upstart youngsters with an eye on power. The Nobz lead small warbands made up of a few mobs of Orks in the constant battles against one another, although they sometimes come together under a single leader known as a Warboss to wage war on others.

Nobz lead by example, fighting where the fighting is thickest and beating recalcitrant Orks and Grotz to a pulp to spur them into battle. Amongst their own kind, they administer arbitrary punishments, exerting their authority through random beatings and murders. When unleashed upon humans, they are brutal to the extreme, delighting in causing as much destruction with their oversized weapons as possible and toying with opponents until they grow bored and hack their opponents down.



Ork Nob Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
46	19	(8) 49	(8) 47	39	29	34	32	34

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 21

Skills: Command (Fel) +10, Intimidate +10 (S)

Talents: Air of Authority, Basic Weapon Training (Primitive, SP), Bulging Biceps, Crushing Blow, Furious Assault, Hardy, Iron Discipline, Iron Jaw, Lightning Reflexes, Melee Weapon Training (Chain, Primitive, Power), Pistol Weapon Training (Primitive, SP), Street Fighting, True Grit.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Fear 1, Size (Hulking), Mob Rule^{††}, Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2)

††Mob Rule: All Orks are latently psychic, an ability that increases in strength the more of them there are in one place, bolstering their confidence and courage to near fearless levels when they gather en masse. For every additional Ork within 10m, the Ork's Willpower is increased by +10 to resist the effects of Fear and Pinning.

Armour: Flak armour (Body 2).

Weapons: Slugga (20m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full; Inaccurate, Unreliable) or shoota (60m; S/3/10; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Inaccurate, Unreliable), choppa (1d10+9[†] R; Pen 2; Tearing, Unbalanced). Particularly flash Nobz might have snazzguns instead.

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: 2d10 Ork teeth ("Teef"), shiny bitz; some lucky Nobz have a pet Attack Squig.

Threat Rating: Xenos Majoris.



Memoirs of Antonia Vale, Rogue Trader, 787.M40

Whilst trekking through the lower reaches of the Firevale Rainforests, we encountered a warband of Orks from the Blood Axe clan. Normally, I would have fled, but I heard the Blood Axea were unusually predisposed to more human notions of trading and wealth. Sure enough, the Orks indicated we should follow them. We soon met their leader, a Nob named Axehead, for the implement jutting from his thick skull.

I explained that we brought tribute in the form of supplies in exchange for letting my expedition explore further into the jungle unharmed. He explained that he wanted guns and tanks, "like the 'umies use." We bargained for a while, before agreeing the expedition could carry on into the interior of the jungles.



GRETCHIN

Amongst the most numerous of all the greenskins are the sub-race called Gretchin or Grots. Weak-willed, weak-limbed, wretched little creatures, Gretchin serve little purpose amongst other Orks than to be bullied, cajoled, and exploited. They serve their Ork masters with as good grace as they can muster, scuttling about and doing what they are told out of fear and awe.

Gretchin are much smaller than their orkish cousins, standing a little under half their height. In many ways, they are similar to Orks in physiology, if not physique. Their heads are bald and bulging, adorned with wide ears and jaws filled with sharp, pointy teeth rather than huge tusks.

Gretchin have a keen sense of self-preservation. This can take many forms, from hiding and running, to running and hiding. They have a low cunning and are sneaky to the extreme, often reasoning that if they are going to have to stab an enemy, it might as well be in the back.

Any encounter with Orks is likely to include Gretchin too, as these put-upon slaves and servants accompany their masters to war. Gretchin do the carrying, fetching, and guarding whilst their masters get on with the real business of war.



Gretchin Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
18	34	18	19 ⁽²⁾	36	33	37	22	24

Move: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 7

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag), Search (Int), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive, SP), Heightened Senses (Hearing), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Weapon Training (Primitive).

Traits: Mob Rule^{††}, Size (Scrawny), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

^{††}**Mob Rule:** All Gretchin are latently psychic, an ability that increases in strength the more of them there are in one place, bolstering their confidence and courage to near fearless levels when they gather en masse and are supported by their larger cousins. For every Ork within 10m, the Gretchin's Willpower is increased by +10 to resist the effects of Fear and Pinning.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Slugga (20m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full; Inaccurate, Unreliable), sneaky boot knife (1d5+1[†] R; Primitive).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Xenos Minima.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

Grots in the Ducts! After a previous encounter with greenskins, the Acolytes return to their ship and head off to their next assignment. Unbeknownst to them, they have been accompanied by a group of Gretchin intent on mischief, and, at the most inconvenient time possible during their journey, key parts of the ship's systems begin to fail. The Acolytes must hunt down the Gretchin before they do irreparable damage, both to the ship and to the reputation of the Acolytes—after all, nobody wants to be bested by a Gretchin.

Ork raiders have attacked Kulth in force, and are currently slugging it out with the orbital defensive stations above the world. This has given some Gretchin the perfect chance to have their revenge against their bigger, green-skinned masters. They have stolen a fighta-bomba and crash-landed it into a torpedo silo on the planet's surface. They're now enthusiastically 'improving' the torpedo before launching it. This wouldn't be a problem, except that the Gretchins' tinkering is likely to set off the torpedo's massive warhead—and the silo is on the outskirts of a major city. Now the Acolytes have to storm the silo and stop the Gretchin before they have their revenge.

ATTACK SQUIGS

An integral part of the greenskin ecosystem, almost always to be found in large numbers in the same area as the Orks, are the unusual beasts affectionately known as Squigs. There are countless breeds of Squig, so much so that Imperial xenologists have all but given up trying to catalogue them. Some Squigs are used for medicinal purposes, others for the natural oils that they secrete, and most for food. But, the Orks' favourite use for a Squig is setting it on their enemies, and there are no better Squigs for that purpose than the Attack Squig.

The term "Attack Squig" is a catch-all name for various fungal beasts of a hostile nature, all of which are employed by the Orks in a similar fashion to the way a human might make use of a particularly vicious dog. The most infamous of Attack Squigs is the Ravenous Face-Biter, appropriately named for the way in which it tries to bite the faces off of its enemies, ravenously. Other less well known, but no less vicious, varieties include the Drooling Snapjaw and the Pig-eyed Gouger.

An Attack Squig is mostly mouth, which in turn is mostly teeth. Most Squigs are short, fat, stubby creatures, little more than two to three feet in length, propelled along in a mixture of leaps and lurches by two powerful legs. They all, without exception, have ravenous appetites and stomachs that can hold improbable quantities of food.



Attack Squig Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	—	34	22 ⁽⁴⁾	33	10	28	28	—

Move: 3/6/9/24

Wounds: 12

Skills: Awareness +10 (Per), Tracking +10 (Int).

Talents: Furious Assault.

Traits: Bestial, Natural Weapons (Bite), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

Weapons: Bite (1d10+6† R; Primitive, Tearing).

†Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Xenos Minima.



ADVENTURE SEED

Whilst cataloguing flora and fauna native to the jungles of Quarn, renowned xenologist Charas Dunn vanished without a trace. Dunn was a respected peer of the Inquisition and the Ordo Xenos desperately want to get their hands on his latest research, which he had on his person when he disappeared. The Acolytes are sent into the jungle to find him—or his remains—and retrieve the research. Unfortunately, what they find is a jungle swarming with angry Squigs, any one of whom could have the remains of Dunn inside of it.



ORK EQUIPMENT

SLUGGA

The most basic of Ork firearms, the slugga is a short, stubby solid-shot pistol that would be devastating up-close were it not for the inaccuracy of the Ork wielding it. Most sluggas inflict more wounds as crude clubs than they do as ranged weapons.

SHOOTA

Whilst nothing could take the place in an Ork's heart of chopping up an enemy in combat, they do have a great love for loud, noisy weaponry, and nothing so embodies this type of weapon than the shoota. "Shoota" is a catch-all term for a variety of short to mid-range Ork firearms, inevitably capable of at least burst fire, that are cobbled together to launch a hail of bullets when the trigger is pulled with little regard for accuracy or recoil.

SNAZZGUN

The shootiest of shootas are known as snazzguns, weapons favoured by the most ostentatious and obnoxious of Orks, known as Flash Gitz. Snazzguns vary as much in design as shootas, but all are lethal to the extreme. Many Flash Gitz hard-wire their snazzguns to their primitive bionics, incorporating a variety of barrels, scopes and targeting arrays into their gear—not that this necessarily makes them any better shots, but it does make them feel bigger and cleverer as they're shooting.

An individual snazzgun shoots either bolts of energy or shells, but not both. Snazzguns have a random penetration value, for the velocity of their shots varies with every shot. A Snazzgun, just like a Shoota, is inherently Inaccurate. However, when targeting equipment or bionics are used with the snazzgun, it loses the Inaccurate weapon quality instead of gaining any bonuses to hit.



CHOPPA

An unarmed Ork is still a dangerous foe, but it is a rare occasion that an Ork finds himself unarmed. Orks carry a variety of crude weaponry about with them, all referred to as choppas, regardless of whether they actually chop or whether they whir, whiz, crack, slice, smash or crump. Choppas include

TABLE 3-1: ORK WEAPONRY

Exotic Weapons	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt	Cost	Availability
Slugga	Pistol	20m	S/3/–	1d10+4 I	0	18	Full	Inaccurate, Unreliable	2kg	100	†Scarce/Common
Shoota	Basic	60m	S/3/10	1d10+4 I	0	30	Full	Inaccurate, Unreliable	4kg	200	†Scarce/Common
Snazzgun	Basic	100m	S/2/–	2d10 I or E	1d10	20	2Full	Inaccurate, Overheats, Unreliable	7kg	1,500	†Rare/Scarce
Choppa	Melee			1d10+1 R	2			Tearing, Unbalanced	5kg	600	†Scarce/Common

†Ork equipment is technically difficult to get hold of—after all, no right-minded Imperial arms trader would sell xenos technology, no matter how crude. Unofficially, there are parts of the Calixis Sector where it is much more plentiful, especially areas recently attacked by Orks. For this reason, via legitimate routes it counts as scarce, but via black market channels it is common.

For some unknown reason, which even the Orks are not aware of, these weapons is not Unreliable in the hands of an Ork.

short, wicked meat cleavers, large machete-like swords, whirring chainblades that belch great clouds of smoke, and rudimentary power weapons comprising little more than short metal blades wired to battery packs.

MEGA ARMOUR

Mega armour is the thickest and sturdiest of Ork personal protection, and is worn only by the richest (and therefore toughest) Ork Nobz. Its sheer bulk offers a level of protection in excess of power armour, although its great weight leaves the wearer with little in the way of mobility. Mega armour consists of bulky armoured plates welded and riveted onto a hydraulic exoskeleton. The armour is so heavy that great smoke-belching engines are required to power it. Should

they fail, the wearer would be stuck in one place with no way of moving! Mork help a Meganob who should topple over in the heat of battle.

Mega armour adds +30 to the wearer's Strength characteristic and increases his size by one step (so, for example, an average-sized Ork would become hulking). Mega armour requires a constant power supply, provided by onboard generators and engines typically powered by solid fuel of some kind. The armour must be refuelled every 1d5 hours. Without power, the armour ceases to be mobile. Mega Armour is far too bulky to be worn by a human.

Mega-Armour has an AP of 6 for the Head, 10 for the Arms and Legs, and 14 for the Body. It weighs 60kg, and is currently completely unavailable for purchase in the Calixis Sector.



SIMULACRA

There is a foul and frightening breed of xenos hidden away in the crowded warrens of hive cities all over Calixis Sector. Known only by rumour for many centuries, recently one of these beings was dissected after being killed. The autopsy revealed a lifeform capable of changing its shape. Nominally humanoid in appearance, with an almost featureless face, no body hair, and skin so pale as to be translucent, this creature's internal physiology allows it to manipulate its basic form in order to imitate others. With a physiology that renders it both flexible and durable, this new form of xenos seems to be as strong as any human, but somewhat more agile. They have no natural weaponry, instead using human-made arms and armour.

By all accounts, these beings, known as Simulacra, are fully sentient. Able to mimic others well enough so to live unsuspected among humans for extended lengths of time, their true motives are unknown, but no one in the Ordo Xenos feels it's benign. When one considers a Simulacra's feeding habits, it's easy to see why.

In order to imitate someone, a Simulacrum needs to consume that person's brain. Through some unknown means, the Simulacrum ingests the brain whole and more or less intact. This consumption allows the Simulacrum to assume that person's appearance, speak with his voice, and recall his memories. It also allows the Simulacrum to use its victim's skills. However, as the brain is slowly digested (a process that takes roughly four weeks), the Simulacrum's ability to assume the victim's form or use skills degrades. Once the brain is fully digested, the Simulacrum can no longer assume that form or use those skills.

As a Simulacrum eventually loses whatever shape and skills it gained from a devoured brain, it usually tries to hunt down a new victim every week, using any skills gained from any brains it is currently digesting. Simulacrum tend to go after people who it perceives as having useful skills or status. It is suspected this is so the Simulacrum can slowly move its way upwards in a hive, both physically and socially. One can only imagine what a Simulacrum would do if it gained access to the nobility of a hive. Some Inquisitors argue the creature would be able to hide away in a spire, living off members of the lower classes brought to it by unknowing servants. Others suggest it would bring others of its race with it, intending to eliminate the noble house from within, before starting on the hive itself.

The existence of Simulacra seems confined to Calixis Sector, specifically the Malfian Subsector, with its close concentration of hive worlds. Currently, the Ordo Xenos is trying to track down the homeworld of the Simulacra (if there even is one) in order to destroy it. Curiously, there have been reports of beings like the Simulacra from worlds outside of the Malfian Subsector. It's unknown whether these are the same type of creature, or if an entirely different lifeform is being described.



Simulacrum Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	35	35	38	45	30	35	35	40

Move: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 15

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Contortionist (Ag) +20, Dodge (Ag), Shadowing (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +10, Tracking (Int) +10

Talents: Ambidextrous, Basic Weapons Training (Las, Sp), Leap Up, Light Sleeper, Melee Weapons Training (Primitive)
Traits: Dark Sight, Strange Physiology, †You Are What You Eat.

†You Are What You Eat: By consuming the brain of a sentient humanoid, a Simulacrum can outwardly become that humanoid. The process takes 5-10 minutes, depending on the nature of the humanoid (less time for a human or Eldar, more for an Ork). In addition, the Simulacrum gains all of the consumed brain's knowledge, including memories,



languages, and to a certain degree Skills and Talents. The Simulacrum can't utilize Toughness or Willpower-based Skills, and is limited to those Talents one could conceivably be taught (such as any form of Weapon Training or Talents based on Ag, BS, Int, or WS). A Simulacrum must have the proper Prerequisites in order to use any Talents as well.

The Simulacrum's ability to change its shape or use Skills and Talents lessens as the consumed brain is digested. After the first week any Tests involving Skills or Talents possessed by the brain is at -5. After two weeks it's -10, after three weeks it's -15, and after four weeks the Skills and Talents are lost. A successful **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny Test** allows the viewer to perceive the Simulacra as something other than what it appears to be. Such Tests gain no bonus for the first week, +10 the second, +20 the third, and +30 for the fourth and final week. After four weeks the brain is fully digested and the Simulacrum is unable to assume that victim's shape.

Simulacra normally have 2-4 consumed brains in various stages of digestion to draw from, allowing them a certain

degree of flexibility in form and abilities. It's recommended GM's use characters from the Dramatis Personae section of **DARK HERESY** to simplify Skill and Talent selection. Simulacra can consume a maximum number of brains equal to one plus their Toughness Bonus (for a total of 4).

Armour: Any appropriate for its current shape.

Weapons: Any appropriate for its current shape, typically a compact laspistol (15m; S/-/-; 1d10+1 E; Pen 0; Clip 15; Reload Full; Reliable)

Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt wo.901. Mar

In my mind, there is no greater threat to the Imperium than complacency. We must remain eternally vigilant, suspecting peace not as an end to strife but merely a momentary respite while the Adversary directs his attentions anew. Some threats are open and obvious, while others are far more secretive and insidious, and some are so subtle as to remain hidden in plain sight.

Here I speak of the xenos known as Simulacra. I had heard rumours of such creatures for decades, thinking them to be mere myth or a misidentification of other alien lifeforms. Still, the scattered references I uncovered in ancient and decaying texts and scrolls led me to think perhaps there was something to these tales of a xeno able to perfectly assume the form of another. Some time ago one of my cadre, a soldier from the world of Ganf Magna, called such a creature a "fetch" and said they came to call the worthy into the embrace of the Emperor.

Still, I discounted such tales as mere stories, till an invitation was extended to act as a witness to the dissection of a xeno found slain in the depths of Hive Parthenius. Here, now, was the fabled Simulacra, the "fetch" of Ganf Magna legend. Such a seemingly insignificant corpse, but as the procedure progressed, I realised the scope of this new xenos threat. Able to pass as men, they could infiltrate all areas of society. Given time, they could replace planetary governors, work their way into the Imperial Guard and Navy, and even hide within the Inquisition. It is as I have said before: all are suspect, none are to be trusted, and even the most benign of actions should be investigated.

I hope the scope of this threat is only within my mind, for if not...

Recording of Vocal Narration by Magos Biologis Kaltos Melinte on Examination of Xenos Subject GGX-954, 'Simulacra'

Subject GGX-954 has the general appearance of a humanoid, with a physiology consisting of two ambulatory limbs, two manipulatory limbs, and one sensory centre. In height, it is 1.78 metres, while in weight it is 77.1 kilograms. It apparently has little to no distinguishing physiological features, with a distinct lack of external ears or nose. The mouth is almost lipless, while the teeth are mere ridges of hydroxyapatite, inferior in all regards to the teeth of a human. There are no obvious genitalia, and the gender of the specimen is unknown. There is a distinct possibility, based on the perceived life-cycle of the subject, that it has no gender.

The epidermis is very pale, almost white, allowing various combinations of melanin produced by the melanocytes to show through. It is my belief that this feature allows the subject to alter its overall coloration at will. In addition, the epidermis is only loosely attached to the dermis, which in turn only loosely connects to the hypodermis. It is my presumption this looseness allows the specimen to easily alter its shape.

Opening the torso reveals a dispersed skeletal structure. Further examination shows the specimen's bones to be comprised of a mixture of cartilage, collagen, and keratin. This composition makes the skeletal framework both very strong and very pliable, allowing the specimen almost unfettered freedom of movement and flexibility.

Currently, the functions of most of its internal organs are unknown. While I feel I have identified respiratory structures, I see no evidence of a cardiac mass, meaning the subject may not have a single specific heart or that circulatory duties are dispersed through the body.

I now draw attention to the distended tissue mass in the lower thorax. Within are several human brains, each covered in a thick mat of ganglia. Further examination shows the ganglia are linked to the plexus, which in turn connects directly to the subject's neural mass. It is my suspicion that the subject is linking its own nervous system into that of a consumed brain, allowing it to duplicate any learned behaviours of that brain. Obviously, this is how the specimen exhibits the abilities and behaviours of those it wishes to imitate.

Please attend the condition of the four brains. Each one is in the process of digestion, with the oldest having undergone the greatest amount of absorption. It also has the least amount of connected ganglia. Pray attend gracious lords, for this may be a clue to the subject's main weakness and a way we may detect evidence of these xenos when they manifest. While Subject GGX-954 may utilise a consumed brain to its own ends, the neural net decays as the brain is digested. In time, the creature will no longer be able to utilise any information from the brain at all or take or maintain the shape of the being the brain was from.

Of course, I can only presume it will also now feel the need to consume another brain to maintain its covert existence.





FORCES OF CHAOS

USING FORCES OF
CHAOS IN YOUR GAME

•
ASSESSORS OF THE BLACK
TONTINE

•
ASTRAL SPECTRE

•
THE BURNING ONE

•
THE EYE OF THE ABYSS

•
FLAMER OF TZEENTCH

•
FLESH HOUND

•
JUGGERNAUGHT

•
LADY OF THE VOIDS

•
NURGLINGS

•
PRAEDATORIS

•
THE RUINATION OF
IMPERFECT BEAUTY

CHAPTER VI: FORCES OF CHAOS

Beware of the number six. It is a sign of the Archenemy, of the Proudful Sensate.

—Correlator Ejo Xang

Chaos is an insidious force that promises many gifts to its worshippers: power and pleasure, life and death. The Ruinous Powers each embody one of these domains and have many dark designs upon the Calixis Sector. The servants of Chaos are often the main focus of Ordo Malleus Inquisitors, who dedicate their lives to battling the hellish legions of those who fall under the lure of darkness.

The hell-stars of the Hazeroth Abyss are well-named; hateful daemoniac leviathans brood amongst the depths of that blighted region. Daemonhosts spin complicated plots in the Malfian sub-sector, drawing many unsuspecting souls into their designs. The Golgenna Reach has been a haven for the impure, a place where greed, lust, and rage have driven Imperial citizens into blasphemous bargains with the Warp. Across the Calixis sector, the forces of Chaos have cast forth their influence, corrupting and damning those who accept the tainted gifts of the Ruinous Powers.

The presence of Chaos is corrosive and, in the most part, devious and subtle. Agents of the Inquisition are rarely fortunate enough to encounter a straightforward incursion of the warp—all too often daemons and warpspawn operate in a slow and cunning manner until damnation and ruin is all but certain. When the Inquisition must face the forces of Chaos



in open battle, it is often simply too late, with the cleansing fire of Exterminatus the only option. Thus, the Inquisition must be vigilant and thorough, yet must also be shrewd in their judgement and apply discretion in the application of its might; for while the hammer of the Ordo Malleus is an excellent tool, it is not the only weapon in the arsenal.



USING THE FORCES OF CHAOS IN YOUR GAME

This chapter contains creatures that illustrate the main themes of the forces of Chaos. Assessors of the Black Tontine and the Ruination of Imperfect Beauty embody the temptation and damnation that accompany any dealings with the warp. The Alley Reaper and the Burning One both feed upon fear, emphasising Chaos' tendency towards terror and destruction. The corrupting, tainted nature of Chaos is expressed by the Nurglings and the Eye of the Abyss, while the Juggernaut and Flesh Hound represent the warp's lust for bloodshed and mindless violence.

Often, these themes are best worked into a campaign a little at a time, building up from cults towards more evident moral threats. Daemons and more powerful warp-spawned monsters, used sparingly, can provide the climactic moment of confrontation between Inquisitional Agents and slaves to the Ruinous Powers. Just like any Hollywood horror movie, however, the big reveal works better after a sufficient buildup rather than simply placed as opponents to be dispatched at the earliest convenience.

Consider how the forces of Chaos are represented in your game, and utilize the story to help bring those themes to centre stage. Chaos is representative of many, many things besides simple entropy. The agendas of the Chaos Gods are often incomprehensible to human minds, but certain broad concepts and ideas help get the idea across. Tzeentch favours change, mutation, and sorcery, whilst Nurgle's portfolio is focused on death and decay. The attentions of Slaanesh are centered around forbidden pleasures, whilst Khorne seeks to slake his never-ending thirst for blood and slaughter.

Other Chaos powers exist in the Calixis Sector, from the Horned Darkness of Baphomael to the formless shadow of Chyron to the mad plots of the King in Rags and Tatters. Utilising these lesser powers is a good way to shake things up for a group of Acolytes who perhaps have let success lull them into a sense that they understand what it is they are facing; the forces of Chaos should be ever-changing and never the same old thing.

ASSESSORS OF THE BLACK TONTINE

A tontine is a compact of mutual support signed by guild members or brotherhoods. As the pledged die, funds are paid out to the survivors. For the most part, tontines are a tradition of the poor: hive manufactory workers making their marks with bloodied fingerprints. Some pledge what little they have into the hands of usurers and merchant guilders at the signing ceremony; the value of the compact is repaid in the years ahead, one death at a time. Others pledge division of their paltry possessions to compact-brethren upon death.

Black Tontines are the mockery of the Ruinous Powers cast upon this tradition. They are murderous compacts scribed in filth upon human skin, made by the ignorant with daemons for the betterment of sorcerers, their payment counted in souls. In place of Administratum clerks and stacked Thrones, daemonic assessors manifest to bestow powers of the warp upon the compact's authors.

The notorious Black Tontine of the Salsurius Glass Manufactory of outer Tarsus was signed by thousands of heat zone habdwellers in the 5th century M41. Daemonic assessors manifested each day to drag away one screaming soul, payment for the potency of an inner circle of the Glassmaker's Guild. The heretic sorcerers bestowed a few Thrones upon the brother workers of each victim, as though factors for the warp.

A daemon sent to assess a Black Tontine manifests as a dire man-shaped being, its abhorrent true form shadowed beneath a stinking cloak. Its twisted hands bear a great gaff-hook with which to drag victims bodily into the warp. That implement is little needed, for the daemon's gaze and bubbling voice is enough to crush the mind and compel its victims to their deaths.

Daemonic assessors also manifest to defend a compact threatened by the righteous. Attacks upon many signees or the sorcerers who created the tontine will bring forth the vengeance of the warp in this way. If the tontine bears additional terms, forcing signees or sorcerers to break those terms also invites the assessors' wrath. Assessors can be debated—in lawyerly High Gothic—by the foolhardy in



search of loopholes, but this can only buy time. Success or failure has much the same result, with the only difference being the anger of the assessor when it slaughters one foolish enough to act as a proctor to daemons.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

Upon Malfi, tontine compacts of illuminated beauty are an affectation of wealthy guilders, noble scions, and those pretending to such high status. Servitor-skulls bearing tontine documents in dangling silver frames and stasis fields orbit preening figures of note wherever they go. An ambitious sorcerer has come to Malfi clothed as a holy servant of the Emperor, bearing tontines inked upon Holy Terra and said to bring fortune to the deserving. The credulous and greedy are drawn in to their eternal damnation. Remnants of one such Black Tontine comes to the Ordos, and the Acolytes must now locate the sorcerer responsible in a hive of conspiracy and heresy. All they have to go on is the warp-tainted ruin that assessor daemons made of a lesser factor's manse, and half-burned records of the dead man's finances.

The Inquisitor has heard tell of a hidden museum of warp-tainted Black Tontines and believes it to be the property of an outspoken Monodominant foe in the Scintillan Conclave. The Acolytes are tasked with finding this museum amongst the many secret holdings of that Inquisitor and quietly retrieving the damning evidence of secret radicalism. Many possible paths exist, none of which lack for danger and consequences: abducting one of the Monodominant's trusted adepts for interrogation, stealing property compacts from guarded Ordos vaults, or breaking into the Inquisitor's well-defended Hive Sibellus spire manse.



Assessor Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
39	25	35	40 ⁽⁸⁾	30	30	45	40	30

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Skills: Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel) +20, Intimidate (S), Psyniscience (Per), Scholastic Lore (Imperial Law, Philosophy), Secret Tongue (Administratm) (Int), Speak Language (High

Gothic, Low Gothic).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Traits: Daemonic (TB 8), Daemonic Presence, Dark Sight, Fear (2), From Beyond, Natural Weapons (Claws), Warp Instability.

Psychic Powers (Psy Rating 3): Compel.

Daemonic Presence: All creatures within 20 meters suffer a -10 penalty to Willpower Tests.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Claws (1d10+3[†] R; Primitive, Tearing), Long-Gaff (1d10+7[†] R; Unbalanced).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Minoris.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT 3.988.781.M41

Pater Bors Vazliov—to look at him now you would not think he was once a soul gray of habit and nervous before authority, owned by the Myshken Shrine of District Oglef. However, it was he who brought a Black Tontine, reeking of the warp, to his superiors. The cursed parchment of human hide had risen in horror through ascending officials until reaching the Lord-Bishop FedYROV—and thence the Ordo. It was through these officials that I descended in reverse order, seeking the source of the daemonic compact.

The Lord-Bishop argued vigorously for sealing the District Oglef and calling forth the 30 Brother-Generals of the Merov Penal Legion to pump in death gas. This I rejected out of hand. I wished to extinguish this sorcery, not ensure that it crawled away to hide and later return. Thus I returned with Pater Vazliov to District Oglef with the disguised transports of my pledged vat-psykers. Warp-tainted signatories of the Black Tontine in Pater Vazliov's flock were catalogued whilst he preached, their clouded, guilty minds searched for others who might never have set foot within that small shrine. As to the sorcerer, the tontine's originator, he too was found in the minds of the tainted. His hut lay within an abandoned forest of heat-vents in the low district.

Whilst every serf who signed his soul away was enclosed within the shrine, guarded and subject to the recriminations of Vazliov, Adept-militant Enaetus, my vat-psykers, and I went below to slay the heart of this warp-taint.

Living amidst the bones of those he slew for human skin to make parchment, he screamed at the sight of us. The sorcerer called upon daemons, but my hellgun burned bright lines through his wretched form. However, warp-light bloomed and daemonic assessors of the Black Tontine stepped forth even as the sorcerer fell dying. Their very presence drove needles into our minds, and the warp-shimmer beyond them cast the light of madness. Whilst I faced daemonic manifestation below, a warp-taint thickened within the shrine. Pater Vazliov and Savant Kolcamun led those present in terrified prayer for forgiveness, whilst shrine gates rattled and the altar aquila wept molten tears.

The daemons—cloaked and twisted mockeries of Administratum scribe-assessors bearing hooked staves—came because the tontine was broken by my actions. Vile and angry, they desired a partial recompense for the Imperial souls denied them. Shielded by vat-psykers and blessed guns, the souls of my retinue were too costly a proposition for them to undertake. Hissing vile oaths, the beasts impaled the sorcerer and dragged him into the warp. Then it was done. I later learned that the warp-taint faded from the shrine at that very moment. Thereafter began a necessary cleansing: flame-purge, destruction of tontine parchments, and execution of the guilty. Yet, I could not bring myself to extinguish Pater Vazliov, the single honest soul who did his duty by the God-Emperor. Thus, I brought him into my retinue, where he remains to this day.



ASTRAL SPECTRE

In the Imperium, psykers are feared not only for their strange powers but for the untold harm which can and often does arise when they are used carelessly. When the abilities of a psychically active mind are wielded by those weak in faith or will, the psychic energy can congeal with the fabric of the warp to form Astral Spectres. These malevolent shadow creatures attack humans and devour their soul-essence to replenish the psychic energy from which the Spectres were born.

Although Astral Spectres vary greatly in appearance, there are a few common characteristics that all such Spectres share. They are vaguely humanoid creatures composed of patches of semi-translucent shadow, and their presence unnerves all sentient creatures in their vicinity, often causing said creatures to experience psychic phenomena. Without fail, their forms are both vile and horrifying. They possess no solid physical form but wield a variety of psychic powers which allow them to interact with and harm material beings.

Spectres employ the full range of their psychic abilities in carrying out their evil plans. When pressed, Spectres first attempt to manipulate the minds of weaker opponents, causing them to interfere with or even attack their allies. Spectres almost always target Psykers first, as they are far and away the greatest threat to a being of the immaterium. When cornered, they either unleash their psychic powers in an all out attack or attempt to possess one of their antagonists. Spectres are cunning and intelligent and always seek to take a host who is either capable of fighting his way out of the situation or one whose allies will be unwilling to attack him. Though Astral Spectres are far from the most powerful foe one may encounter in the Calixis Sector, they are amongst the most difficult to combat due to their nature as creatures of pure warp energy.

Although Astral Spectres are sustained by a combination of life energy and the warp, they seem to relish causing terror. They are drawn to fear and will expend great effort to cause it. Often, they will even place themselves at risk in order to terrify a victim by appearing before him in their true nightmarish form. What benefit if any they derive from this fear is unknown.

Appearances of Astral Spectres are on the rise in the Calixis Sector. The reasons for this are many and varied. The violence and conflict in places like Tranch lead to a great deal of psychic energy being released when innocents are killed. Perhaps most significantly, the various Ruinous Powers seem to be turning their attention to the Calixis Sector and moving events in a direction intended to cause more chaos and death. One such Astral Spectre appearance involves the Alley Reaper of Gunmetal City.



THE TALE OF THE ALLEY REAPER

In Gunmetal City on Scintilla, dock labourers and munition-menials alike whisper dark legends about a foul spirit that haunts the winding streets after dark. A gaunt figure swathed in tattered black robes and bearing a huge set of industrial shears, the Alley Reaper is said to hunt and slay any worker who fails to meet his weekly quota. Offerings of blood and bullets have been left at crossroads in the poorer districts of Gunmetal City, sacrifices from the superstitious population who seek to avoid being culled by the Reaper's blades. Nevertheless, citizens continue to vanish, week by week, and even the Arbites have been hard pressed to uncover any sign of those who disappear. The Ordo Malleus has taken a slight interest in this phenomenon, as the production rates for Gunmetal City's manufactorums have taken a sharp decline over the last 10 years. One prominent clue is tied to the last tithing of psykers sent to the Black Ships, an event that also took place 10 years prior. It is likely that whatever psychic incident created the Alley Reaper is somehow related.



The Alley Reaper Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	20	35	45 ⁽⁸⁾	45	25	45	50	05

Move: 4/8/12/24**Wounds:** 15**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +20, Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).**Talents:** Exotic Weapon Training (Industrial Shears).**Psychic Powers (Psy Rating 3):** Enhance Phenomena, Inflict Pain, Psychic Blade, Spectral Hands, Telekinesis, Warp Howl, Wither.**Traits:** Daemonic (TB 8), Daemonic Presence, Fear 3, From Beyond, Incorporeal, Possession, The Stuff of Nightmares, Warp Instability.**Armour:** None.**Weapons:** Huge industrial shears (1d10+10[†] R, Tearing, Unbalanced).[†]Includes Strength Bonus.**Threat Rating:** Malleus Minoris.

ADVENTURE SEED

While in transit from one world to another, a fluctuation in the Gellar field floods the Acolytes' ship with raw psychic energy and causes any Psykers amongst the Acolytes to experience a seizure. This flood of energy has combined with the pure stuff of the warp, and now the halls of the vessel are stalked by a wicked Astral Spectre set on the murder of the entire crew. The creature seems to have an instinctive knowledge of the layout of the ship and is singling out critical personnel for death. The Acolytes must track down and destroy this monster before it kills enough of the bridge crew to strand them in deep space forever.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 42,776 M41

"The Alley Reaper is an Astral Spectre, a warp-spawned entity formed out of congealed psychic energy. It haunts the streets of Gunmetal City and has terrorised the inhabitants for over a decade. Adorn your weapons with purity seals and bless each bolter round with holy oils. Psykers and force weapons will be your greatest tools in eradicating the threat of the Alley Reaper, but this foe is more than merely another opponent to be crushed. Its legend has bred fear into the heart of Gunmetal City, and such an idea is not easily rooted out. The Ecclesiarchy would be the best chance to restore hope and faith in the Emperor."

The above is the advice I was given by a senior member of the Ordo Malleus in regards to a terrible curse haunting Gunmetal City on Scintilla. I find such statements to be indicative of the Ordo's lack of perspective. Yes, it is true that the Alley Reaper preys upon the poor and downtrodden, hardly a priority for the Inquisition's mighty resources. Yet, ignoring a minor problem can have disastrous consequences in the future. I feel it would be a grave mistake to simply dismiss such manifestations as the Alley Reaper as a problem for the Ministorum. Instead, I suggest that situations such as the one in Gunmetal City are prime opportunities to test one's Acolytes and determine the quality of their service in the Emperor's Name.

THE BURNING ONE

There are those amongst the Holy Ordo Malleus who take the radical view that the forces of Chaos are too vast and too powerful to oppose with only the might of the Imperium. They believe that they must harness the powers of Chaos, the very thing they seek to undo, to even the sides in the conflict. To that end, they plumb the depths of forbidden knowledge seeking weapons to run back upon the forces of ruin. Chief amongst these weapons are the Daemonhosts, often willing and occasionally unwilling human beings into whom a powerful daemon of the warp is enticed and then bound with powerful wards. The purposes to which these hosts are turned vary, as do the levels of power and degrees of binding, but one thing is constant, they are incalculably dangerous and seek to regain their freedom at every opportunity.

One such escaped Daemonhost, feared throughout the Calixis Sector, is known only as the Burning One. The name of the Acolyte who became the Burning One is lost, as is the name of the daemon who resides within him. What is known is that he was created by the radical Inquisitor Kal Xorn as a way to store vast amounts of forbidden lore without tainting the minds of his personal retinue. Originally thrice bound, as only his mental faculties were required, the Burning One at some point acquired the knowledge of how to break his conditioning despite his inability to break the wards binding him inside his human host. The Daemonhost immediately slew Inquisitor Xorn and several of his retinue whose habits and weaknesses he had studied over a course of years. It is believed that his first victim was a young sanctionite who had been enticed to assist in his escape.

Unlike many Daemonhosts, the Burning One was never intended to participate in physical combat, but rather he was meant to be a stationary repository for information. To that end, the Burning One's host was bound to a crucifix-sized Inquisitorial emblem with chains made of adamantium and psychoactive alloys. When he found a way to break free from his bonds, he shattered many of these chains, warping and desecrating his prison in the process. He carries the remains of his bonds with him to this day, though he is now able to travel in the manner of other Daemonhosts by levitating above the ground and simply flying wherever he wishes. His appearance is that of a wasted and emaciated human man chained to the shattered remains of his original prison with barbed chains. His eyes and mouth are riveted shut with straps of metal to contain the daemonic essence within him. As the Burning One grows closer to escaping his host, his physical form becomes more and more damaged. Flames of red, gold, and blue pour from his many poorly stitched wounds, and pinholes of cutting torch fire burn from the blinding strap over his eyes. For any not already given over to Chaos, the very image of the Burning One is enough to inspire madness and terror.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

A cult that the Acolytes have previously dealt with has resurfaced far more competent and deadly than before. Evidence suggests that they have acquired a powerful mentor or benefactor. Rumours also indicate that their new leader is a powerful sorcerer whose might is growing rapidly. This cult must be rooted out and stopped before it grows beyond control, and the identity of the mysterious benefactor must be revealed. As the Acolytes have already bested this particular cult before, they are deemed best able to deal with it again.

Delving late at night into the mysteries of forbidden lore, one of the Acolytes runs headlong into a mystery well beyond both his knowledge and those texts to which he has access. However, wedged in the pages of a dusty tome, he finds what may just be a solution to his problem. According to a hand-scrawled note, there exists a living repository of forbidden lore more vast than any library of which the Acolyte is aware. Almost certainly if he can but find this being, the solution to his problem will be made clear. It is simply matter of finding this Burning One and convincing him to answer a few questions.



The Burning One Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	25	(10) 56	(10) 54	25	(8) 45	65	54	38

Move: 2/4/8/12

Wounds: 30

Skills: Awareness (Per), Decieve (Fel) +20, Forbidden Lore (Cults, Daemonology, Inquisition, Psykers, Sorcery, Warp) (Int), Psyniscience (Per) +10, Secret Tongue (Administratum) (Int) +20, Speak Language (Dreg Chant, Low Gothic, High Gothic) (Int) +20.

Talents: Foresight, Hard Target.

Traits: Daemonic (TB 8), Fear 4, Flyer 2, From Beyond, Unnatural Intelligence (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), **Warp Stepping.

Psychic Powers (Psy Rating 5): All minor Psychic Powers plus Call Flame, Fire Bolt, Fire Storm, Holocaust, Incinerate, Regenerate, Telekinesis.

† Includes Strength Bonus

****Warp Stepping:** The Burning One can teleport over short distances. It can increase that distance by consuming the souls of its dupes. Normally, the Burning One can teleport up to 10 metres as a Half Action. The Burning One can teleport double that distance for each soul it has consumed in the past year as a Full Action. If the Burning One has consumed more than 100 souls in the past year, he can spend two Rounds in concentration (may take no other actions) and can teleport to any planet within the system. The GM should determine the amount of souls the Burning One currently possesses or roll randomly.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Barbed Chains (1d10+10⁺ R).

Threat Rating: Malleus Extremis.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF FELROTH GELT: 157.775.M41

I have encountered the fell creature known as the Burning One on three occasions. The first time, I had been persuaded by a colleague to view a Daemonhost which he said had been of great assistance to his investigations. Having read the Forbidden Tome of Xorn, I recognised the abomination immediately. However, I was recognised in turn, and in an instant, it fled, hurling flames and curses. Due to the involvement of this daemonhost, several Inquisitorial investigations were compromised beyond recovery. As a result, my colleague was censured and his name stricken from the records of the Ordo.

My second encounter with the creature made me realise that the Burning One's threat goes beyond raw power. I was assisting the Adeptus Arbites on Scintilla, where diligent Arbitrators had uncovered the existence of a pernicious heretical cult. Initially, several members of the cult were captured, but as the investigation went on, the cultists became better at thwarting the Judges, and killed several Arbitrators from clever ambushes. It quickly became clear that the cult was under the guidance of someone intimately familiar with Adeptus Arbites tactics. I called in two squads of kill-troopers from the Black Regiment and set about destroying the cult in a regrettably gratuitous and destructive manner. The assault flushed out several cultists and provided us with clues of the Burning One's presence. However, The Burning One used the distraction and the life energies of the dying cultists to transport himself onto a heretic vessel waiting in orbit, escaping Inquisitorial scrutiny and the Arbitrator's vengeance. The mighty sorcerer we had been expecting to find was only a mildly mutated factory worker whose psychic profile was so low he had been overlooked by the Black Ships. His power had been purely an artifice of the Burning One.

It took years of effort to unravel the circumstances of our third meeting. One night on a tiny world called Faldon Kise, I burst into the inner sanctum of a sorcerer I had been pursuing for over two years only to find him dead at the feet of the Burning One. The ensuing battle cost the life of Vester Mallux, a faithful cleric I had known since the earliest days of my service to the Ordo. The last I ever saw of the foul creature was his mocking, hollow laughter as he vanished. My interrogations revealed that we had blundered into a war between three rival cults dedicated to different daemonic masters. The sorcerer we had been pursuing had attempted to bind the Burning One to his will in order to gain an advantage in the conflict, and the daemonhost had retaliated by engineering the cataclysmic showdown we had inadvertently escalated. It was a humiliating defeat, the sting of which was only blunted by the fact that no less than three Chaos cults had met their end.

I consider the Burning One to be amongst my few but greatest failures as an Inquisitor. One day I will have the power I need to end his threat forever.



THE EYE OF THE ABYSS

Long ago, a mighty daemonic power was torn apart within the warp of Hazeroth. Great warp-storms rolled out from its death, ravaging worlds. One single shred of this huge being, cast far, found salvation from dissolution in a drifting war-vessel lost to the warp. With the passage of time, little remained of the mighty daemon that once was, but its last remnant merged with much that was new—cruelties and knowledge consumed from the dead within the vessel and the fabric and machine spirit of the ship itself. A new daemon lord was born of this union: a lesser, stranger power cast in the form of a warship of the voids.

When the stars are right for sacrifice—when the echoes of ancient daemonic compacts tug at the daemon lord—then the ship and its court of lesser warp-entities fall upon vessels travelling the Hazeroth warp routes. Even if a victim ship manages to exit the warp, the daemon lord will follow the ship into the Materium through the portal so created.

The daemon lord manifests as an Imperial Heavy Cruiser more than five kilometres in length, but so twisted and wrapped about in warp matter as to obscure its pattern. About its hull stride greater entities of the court: cannon-daemons and thick-limbed hurlers 500 metres tall. Beneath their feet clamber thousands of smaller daemons, hundreds of diverse forms engaged in a cackling bacchanalia of violence and debauchery. Massive rune-shaped fields of burning, roiling warp matter provide a source of ammunition for the greater entities to hurl or vomit across the void. Partially formed tendrils of crackling, empowered daemonic flesh extend more than a kilometre from the hull, dissolving at the edges in conflict with the Materium. A bloodshot eyeball 400 metres wide is embedded in the vessel's underhull, replacing the location of the command cathedra secundus.

The daemon lord can manifest in the Materium for barely a few hours, fading all the while, but that is more than long enough to destroy any single Imperial vessel. The raw warp matter cast forth as munitions corrodes hulls, drives ship crews insane, and bubbles forth transient daemonic forms whose every instinct is destruction. Even as decks are torn open to the void by the foaming corrosion of the warp, these manifested munition daemons gleefully murder and destroy.



DAEMONIC AMMUNITION

Long after the daemon lord has forgotten it, one of the most recently manifested munitions drifts through a ruined space hulk left in the voids. It is faded and ghost-like, but still lethal. It is the spirit of a war-device bound within a daemon's form—single-minded, forgetful, and destructive by turns. It is corrosive, dripping, and clawed. It melts and tears when it remembers how to act, which is becoming ever harder as it fades away within the silent wreck.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

The wrecked, frigid hulk of the Amatican Renown drifts in the deep Guytoga voids. It was a victim of the daemon vessel some 20 years past, recorded as lost in Administratum ledgers. The lesser Rogue Trader Basyr Mubarion has found it but has wisely left the ghost-vessel untouched. Tales are told in orbital docks, however, and a much-embellished version of the story finally reaches the Ordos. The Acolytes are dispatched with authority to find Basyr Mubarion, obtain the location of the space hulk, and then gather the vessels and men required to delve within. An assessment must take place: a search for surviving records of auspex, cogitator, and crew that might set to rest any last denial of the fact that daemons haunt the Hazeroth Abyss.

The echoes of the daemon lord are cast far and wide across the Hazeroth Abyss. They surface in cult rituals and forbidden texts—and somewhere is the hint that will lead to locating the daemon vessel and banishing it under massed Battlefleet fire. The Acolytes are sent to the feral worlds of Dwimlicht and terrible Valos Krin, where similar cults sacrifice to “placate daemons of the Night Void that would otherwise devour the Emperor’s sky-ships.” Deep secrets hide beneath these primitive rituals, twisted echoes from a long-buried civilised past. A terrible fate befell these worlds long ago, when warp-storms roiled forth from the death of a mighty daemon—leaving Dwimlicht depopulated and Valos Krin a hellish wasteland. That imprint remains, and with it the secrets of the daemon lord.

Daemonic Ammunition Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	25	50	⁽¹⁰⁾ 50	40	15	40	40	15

Move: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Traits: Daemonic (TB 10), Daemonic Presence, Dark Sight, Fear (3), From Beyond, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Weapons (Claws), ^{††}Of Limited Focus, Size (Hulking), ^{†††}Warp Corrosion, Warp Instability, Warp Weapon.

Daemonic Presence: All creatures within 20 meters suffer a -10 penalty to Willpower Tests.

^{††}**Of Limited Focus:** The daemon becomes confused if living targets retreat from sight. It either corrodes structures until fading

completely or moves in a random direction.

^{†††}**Warp Corrosion:** The daemon consumes its own will to melt the target. On a successful attack, the daemon suffers 1d10 damage and coats the victim in seething warp-matter. In that and the next following Round, the target suffers 1d10 additional damage. Armour is reduced in value by the damage taken from Warp Corrosion until it is gone, eaten away. The victim must succeed in a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** each Round to do anything other than scream in horror and agony. The warp-matter only dissipates when the daemon is banished or slain. The victim suffers 1d5 Corruption points every time he suffers damage from Warp Corrosion.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Claws (1d10+10[†] R; Tearing, Warp Weapon).

[†] Includes Strength Bonus

Threat Rating: Malleus Minoris.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt 3.267.788. Mar

The Mageroth Abyss is occulted, troubled by warp-storm and upheaval. Know that daemons congregate in such darkened voids, where the beacon of the God-Emperor's will shines but dimly, and spill forth from the warp to prey upon voidfarers and forgotten worlds.

Insight has long told me that certain hulks and vanished voidships of Mageroth were the ill work of a single potent daemonic presence, and I have undertaken to bring the God-Emperor's light to bear upon calamities of the tenuous warp-routes about the Abyss. Thus my offices gather reports and coordinate investigations within the benighted voids.

The rediscovered hulk of the Saliophite is the most recent example of such ruinations, warp-poisoned and daemon-ridden—even after years of silence in the deep voids. Battlefleet boarding crews of the Divine Grace were slaughtered to a man, whilst the astropathic choir was roiled by malignancies of the near warp. The Lord-Captain Nebulus destroyed the remnant hulk and left that cursed place.

A single survivor was taken from a saviour pod near the Saliophite's ruin, a tech-adept who bore witness to daemon attackers and yet remained sane. The God-Emperor worked to aid His servants in this way: it was by the tech-adept's testament we learned that a daemon lord haunts the Mageroth warp-routes. It manifests as a war-vessel of the Archenemy, set with a great eye and vile tendrils of warp matter and attended by a daemon court shaped as void-weapons.

What seem to be random acts of destruction in the Mageroth voids cannot in fact be such, for they are carried out by daemonic will in adherence to rites and compacts beyond our knowledge. The imprint of that will upon the Materium is great; the vile being of a daemon lord casts echoes into cultist chants and heretic tomes on a hundred worlds. If we servants of the God-Emperor can but decipher these echoes, and by that pin the daemon court to a place and time within the voids, then no sorcery of the Archenemy would be enough to save it from the destruction of massed Battlefleet broadsides.

FLAMER OF TZEENTCH

The Flamer is a most unusual and deadly daemon of Tzeentch. Aptly named, the Flamer is constantly wreathed in magical multi-hued fire that spurts from its many orifices. The Flamer has a semi-solid conical body that trails off into smoke. The daemon's body features faces and snarling jaws that snap and growl independently of one another, and great spindly arms just out at odd angles, ending in gaping orifices from which flames are constantly issuing forth. The Flamer leaps and bounds about with careless abandon, gaseous and oft-explosive gases propelling it in great arcing jumps from place to place.

The Flamer is so named for its primary weapon, the magical fire of Tzeentch that burns not only flesh and bone, but also space and time, setting reality ablaze as though it were tinder. The touch of Tzeentch's fire might cause searing pain or the sweetest bliss, even though all the while the victim's skin may be bubbling and melting. More often than not, the fire does not burn so much as it warps and mutates, and more than one survivor of a Flamer attack has found himself sprouting an unsightly mutation the next day. Worse still, these flames often appear to be intelligent, dancing about, mimicking victims, shrieking and laughing in mocking tones, and generally causing mischief.

Flamers possess little more than animal cunning, a bestial level of intelligence compared to other daemons. They are instinctual beings, easily controlled and directed—so long as their tasks involve destruction—by more intelligent daemons and psychically attuned individuals.

On certain backwards worlds, the Flamer of Tzeentch is sometimes worshipped as a minor deity or folk spirit in its own right, venerated for its embodiment of flame. Whether Flamers appreciate or even acknowledge worship is unknown. Whilst worship beyond such primitive worlds is unusual, there are cults and individuals who venerate and seek to harness the power of the Flamer. The Flamer is favoured by sorcerers for its destructive potential, and is often unleashed by a cult seeking to cause as much destruction as possible. Flamers are sometimes summoned by sorcerers loyal to the Pilgrims of Hayte or the Menagerie, two cults active in the Calixis Sector.



Flamer of Tzeentch Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
3I	45	4I	46 ⁽⁸⁾	44	20	20	40	10

Move: 8/16/24/48

Wounds: 11

Skills: Awareness (Per), Psyniscience (Per).

Talents: None.

Traits: ††Creature of the Warp, Daemonic (TB 8), Dark Sight, †††Flames of Change, Fear 3, From Beyond, Hoverer, Natural Weapons (Teeth), Strange Physiology, Unnatural Speed, Warp Instability.

Psychic Powers (Psy Rating 3): Burning Fist, Fire Bolt, Fire Storm.

††**Creature of the Warp:** Flamers of Tzeentch never invoke Psychic Phenomena.

†††**Flames of Change:** Any creature wounded by one of the Flamer's psychic attacks must succeed at an **Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test** or gain 1D5 Corruption Points.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Teeth (1d10+4[†] R; Primitive).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Minoris.



ADVENTURE SEED

The Ecclesiarchy has called in some favors with the Inquisition. It seems there's an arsonist burning down church residences with church officials inside. The Inquisitor assigned to the case suspects simple arson, and hands it off to a team of Acolytes. However, the case grows more sinister when the Acolytes investigate. How was the arsonist able to bypass stringent security to set the fires from inside the residences? Who stands to gain most from killing the church officials, all of them mid-level bureaucrats? And why do sanctioned psykers say the interiors of the burned-out buildings stink of the Warp?

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 295.809 Mqr

I first came across the daemon-type oft-designated as a "Flamer of Tzeentch" during the scouring of the Malfian underhive in 926 Mqr. There the Pilgrims of Mayte had summoned such a creature, intent on unleashing it upon the promethium refineries. We drove it back with holy word, hellgun, and righteous bolter fire, though many of us suffered horrific burn scars.

I remember the second time I encountered a Flamer much more clearly... I summoned it, after all. Such a creature is a relatively minor daemon, quite unlike any of the more malignant types of warp-entities, but no less dangerous for it. These creatures appear to be directed solely by instinct, their sole objective being to set alight matter in the physical realm. As per Hurian's Third Text, I prepared a chamber for the ritual. The chamber prepared appropriately, I incanted the ritual phrases as directed, touching a flame to the bitumen and pitch I had smeared within the warding sigils. Nothing happened for a long while, and I wondered whether I had incanted the text incorrectly. Then the bitumen caught alight, burning quickly, almost too quickly, the flames rising higher and beginning to take the form of a most strange creature, all maws and snapping jaws and smoking holes.

The bitumen continued to burn and so did the creature, but as the pitch began to be consumed, the creature became more and more insubstantial with the loss of the physical fuel for its manifestation. I began to search around for more combustible material when suddenly, contrary to Hurian's words, the creature slipped the confines of its binding entirely, leaping from the waning fire to nearby papers, setting the room ablaze! It was all I could do to incant the Rite of Banishment before the whole place went up, and then the room was still, if smouldering, a moment later. Next time, I shall redouble the bindings.

By his own words, he has damned himself.

-M.H.



FLESH HOUNDS OF KHORNE

Few are foolish enough to deliberately offend the Lord of the Skull Throne. On countless worlds across the Calixis Sector, terrified men and women tell stories around glowing campfires or in the dark alleys of dingy hubs about the Blood Lord's ire. To invoke his unquenchable wrath, they whisper, is to invite retribution in the form of his chosen hunters, the dreaded Flesh Hounds.

Flesh Hounds, it is said, are fierce and bestial daemons, with a sinuous, wolf-like form, thick, scaled hides, and a blunt maw full of sharp, shredding teeth. They roam the Immaterium in packs, never resting, always hunting. At times, Khorne summons them to the Skull Throne, as a packmaster might call his dogs. He gives his hounds the scent of the blood of some doomed soul, and unleashes them upon the world.

When on the hunt, Flesh Hounds are untiring and implacable. They hunt in both this world and the Warp, tracking the scent of their quarry through time and space. As the Flesh Hounds draw close, their prey sleeps fitfully, disturbed by the sound of faint and distant howling. Soon, the unfortunate can hear his trackers while awake, always at the edge of his hearing. He catches glimpses of red, sinuous forms out of the corner of his eyes. He may flee in terror, but the Flesh Hounds stalk him patiently, enjoying the hunt. Eventually, they strike, leaping and tearing with their fangs, and crushing limbs between powerful jaws. The lucky ones die then, torn to shreds and devoured. Those less fortunate are dragged, maimed and bleeding, before the Skull Throne. There they answer to the Flesh Hound's master personally.

Khorne is pleased with his pets, and his favour manifests itself in the form of thick, brass and iron collars that seem to grow out of a Flesh Hound's neck. No mere decoration, these studded bands are forged in the heat of the Blood God's wrath, and ward against the psychic witchery Khorne despises. Many psykers have thought themselves powerful enough to fight the Blood God's hunters, only to learn their errors as fangs rend the flesh from their bones.



Flesh Hound Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	—	(8)	(8)	30	15	60	40	09

Move: 7/14/28/56

Wounds: 15

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20.

Talents: Frenzy, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Swift Attack.

Traits: Bestial, ^{††}Blood for the Blood God, ^{†††}Collar of Khorne, Daemonic (TB 8), Dark Sight, Fear 2, From Beyond, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour 4, Natural Weapons (claws and teeth), Quadruped, Size (Hulking), Unnatural Senses (30 Metres), Unnatural Strength (x2), Warp Instability.

^{††}**Blood for the Blood God:** Creatures of Khorne suffer no penalties from gore and blood—all critical hit effects involving gore and blood (such as requiring an Agility test not to fall over) do not apply to creatures of Khorne.

^{†††}**Collar of Khorne:** The Flesh Hound does not suffer extra damage from the Psy Rating of a wielder of a force weapon. In addition, any Psychic Powers used against the Flesh Hound have their Threshold increased by 10. The Flesh Hound's Daemonic trait is not ignored by force weapons unless the wielder succeeds at a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test**.

Armour: None (All 4).

Weapons: Teeth and claws (1d10+10[†] R, Tearing).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Minoris.



ADVENTURE SEED

An Adept of the Imperium has called on the Inquisition for aid. He is pursued, he claims, by enormous Hounds that appear wherever he is and terrorise him. For weeks, they have dogged his trail, attacking and killing, but never attacking him personally. Always, they allow him to escape, though it is obvious they could have taken him at any time. What purpose have the Flesh Hounds for taunting a lowly Adept? It could be some elaborate trap for the Acolytes...

JUGGERNAUT OF KHORNE

Massive daemonic beasts of brass and iron, Juggernauts are nigh-unstoppable brutes covered in metal plates. They crush foes beneath their brazen hooves and can shrug off direct blows from all but the strongest of blows. In combat, the Juggernaut charges headlong into the fray, lashing out with its iron horns. Bulky and slow, Juggernauts use their size and strength to smash into enemy formations, send foes flying with a toss of their huge horns, and flatten entire ranks of mortal soldiers with ease. Stinging return fire bounces without effect from the armoured flanks of a Juggernaut, such pinpricks serving only to antagonize the already-belligerent nature of these rampaging beasts.

Far more massive than any normal steed, Juggernauts resemble a rhinoceros, their hides plated in thick riveted sheets of brass. Its armour is bedecked with spikes and the eye-wrenching symbols of Khorne. The most lethal of all the Blood God's war-mounts, Juggernauts sometimes serve as steeds for powerful mortals favoured by Khorne or particularly bold or battle-hungry Bloodletter daemons.



Juggernaut Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	—	(10) 55	(10) 55	22	15	15	40	15

Move: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20.

Talents: Berserk Charge, Frenzy.

Traits: Bestial, ††Blood for the Blood God, Brutal Charge, Daemonic (TB 10), Dark Sight, Fear 3, From Beyond, †††Furious Impact, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (All 6), Natural Weapons (hooves and horns), Quadruped, Size (Enormous), Unnatural Strength (x2), Warp Instability.

††**Blood for the Blood God:** Creatures of Khorne suffer no penalties from gore and blood—all critical hit effects involving gore and blood (such as requiring an Agility test not to fall over) do not apply to creatures of Khorne.

†††**Furious Impact:** Instead of performing a normal charge, the Juggernaut may instead use Furious Impact. When using Furious Impact, the Juggernaut moves its normal charge distance in a straight line towards a single target. If the Juggernaut engages the target, that target and any targets, friend or foe, within 1 metre of the original target suffer 1d10+10 Impact Damage. The target and any other targets hit by this attack may make a Dodge Reactions as normal to avoid the damage. The Juggernaut does not need to roll to hit in order to use Furious Impact. Furious Impact may only be used once every other Round.

Armour: None (All 6).

Weapons: Horn and Hooves (1d10+10† R).

†Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Majoris.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

A foe that the Acolytes vanquished long ago has returned. Long believed dead, he is now more daemon than man, and he is mounted on a daemonic Juggernaut of Khorne. Worse yet, he is not coming after the Acolytes directly. Instead, he is working his way down a list of the Acolytes' friends, allies, contacts, and informants who helped to defeat him the first time, slaughtering them one by one. If the Acolytes do not find and stop this madman quickly, they will find their hard won system of contacts destroyed and everything that they have built cast down. This time, the threat is personal.

A favorite ghost-story in the quiet ranching community Agri-Station 720-SX on Tsade II is the 'Brass Bull,' a bloodthirsty creature that crushes lone ranchers under its fiery, metal hooves. But it's always been a story...until a ranching camp in the nearby hills is found slaughtered to a man. The victims appear to have been gored and trampled by a bull far larger than any other. As the killings continue and the town descends into panic, a group of Acolytes rides in on a land train. They've come to Agri-Station 720-SX to stop the Brass Bull, and if it's what they think it is, find the creature's master as well.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 175.707. M41

The Juggernaut is a most fell weapon of the Great Enemy. Blood-crazed worshipers of Chaos, already steeped in the skills of killing and war, are enhanced to superhuman levels of violence when mounted upon these daemonic monsters. Only once in my career have I faced a Juggernaut in direct combat. What had been originally believed to be only a particularly violent Chaos cult had been revealed by my Acolytes to be nothing less than an attempt to invade the cemetery world of Prester Myra.

The cemetery world's orbital defences were almost immediately overwhelmed when the assault began, and the defenders had been driven back to only a few bastions of resistance—barricaded strong points held by units of the hastily organised civilian levy. For the first time in my Inquisitorial career, I deployed nearly my entire retinue, leaving in orbit only those with no skill at combat whatsoever. We landed amidst a nightmare of fire and violence, but with our training and superior weaponry, we quickly fought our way to the battlefield. Once there, we learned that the assault was led by a daemonic warrior who rode on the back of a monster. Without much time to concoct a more complex strategy, my closest Acolytes and I began to search for the enemy commander.

The Chaos Champion did not retreat to his hideout as I had predicted. Instead, he marshalled his forces and rode his nightmare mount into the flank of our transport as it was landing. The hull of our small craft was rent open like a tin of combat rations, and we were suddenly faced with a mob of frenzied cultists reinforced by the warp spawned minions of Chaos. One of the most desperate battles of my career had begun. They took no heed of the horrific casualties we inflicted, but the fury of our counterattack gained momentum. At the moment that it appeared the tide would turn in our favour, the Champion of Khorne again charged his Juggernaut into our ranks. It bowled through our forces easily, and I found myself face to snout with the massive daemon beast. I struck with my anointed powersword, but the daemon mount simply roared in my face and prepared to gore me to death with its enormous horn. At that moment, thank the Emperor, Decitus slew the Chaos Champion with his stormtrooper-issue meltagun. Without the presence of its master, the Juggernaut fought ferociously, but crudely. Eventually, the Juggernaut was destroyed by massed heavy weapons fire.

Separately, rider and mount were dangerous enough—together, they formed a terrifying combination.

THE LADY OF THE VOIDS

In spacefarers' tales, the Lady of the Voids is the safe, oblique name given to a type of foul thing that lurks between the stars. They are the voices in the void, the witch-queens of daemons who desire only to sunder vessels and tear the living breath from crewmen's bodies with a kiss. Their call is a siren's song that can send men mad, struggling to open their compartments to space or killing one another with nails and teeth.

The daemons that give rise to these fearsome tales are a nameless Slaaneshi breed that is often part of the vile host that trails any voidship of the Imperium as it travels established warp-routes. Unlike her lesser brethren who can merely follow the ship ineffectually, a Lady can prey upon a moment of weakness by navigator or astropath, using it to pass through the Geller field and enter the vessel.

To view the bursting of an astropath's body and nightmare manifestation of a Lady of the Voids, draped in torn flesh and entrails like a cloak of rags, is enough to break the weak of will. The daemon appears as a merging of several female bodies about a vertical axis—faces, arms, and mouths facing in different directions. Her torso is a hideous mix of woman, crab, and bloated toad, whilst half of her arms end in spiny pincers.

From the first, the Lady's many voices scream and moan in the patterns of the warp. This dreadful warp-song enraptures all who hear it, piercing the ears and numbing weak minds. To the enraptured, the Lady is a beauty to burn the soul—sanity flees as the warp-song melts the mind, and a foaming madness soon results. Some crewmen mutilate themselves; others turn to destroy tech-devices, murder one other, or struggle to open the seal-gates and let in the void. The daemon gleefully sweeps through the vessel at the head of a growing horde of the insane, set upon multiplying the suffering of her puppets in an orgy of destruction and death.

Many vessels have been lost to the Calixian warp in this way. The Inquisition knows of this daemon breed from the few faithful souls to survive: tech-adepts who sealed themselves in insulated enginarium spaces, hardened Battlefleet veterans who banished the daemon by detonating a munitorium vault, and of course, Jagamar Elste.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

The Acolytes are a month into the warp when the vessel's Gellar field flickers, and the Navigator is possessed by the Lady of the Voids. The daemon drives the crew mad with screams and moans of the warp; they throw themselves into vents and machinery, tear at the vessel's structure, and slaughter one other with bare hands and teeth. The Acolytes must act decisively to survive this horror. Can they rally the few remaining faithful to recapture the enginarium amidst the insanity, exit from the warp, and then destroy the daemon itself? Or will they sabotage the ship vox to try to regain control and save as many crewmen as possible from the threat of the warp-song?

The Miracle of Cavarri was lost to the warp decades ago, but its hulk has been discovered orbiting a moonlet of the dark outer voids. The prospectors who found it vanished there, and wild tales have come to the ears of the Ordos. The Acolytes must investigate, and when they do, they find a Lady of the Void trapped within a damaged Gellar field centred upon a part of the hulk, the last effort of doomed tech-adepts. The prospectors are captured by the warp-song and are now insane and savage within a hell-vessel of ravaged corpses and warp-taint. This hulk must all be purged—but first, the acolytes must survive and escape.

From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 3.105.788 M41

I retain Jagamar Elste in the outer circle of my service because he has proven himself armoured against daemons of the void. Learn from his actions, but remember that the God-Emperor's blessed are of all means and demeanours; Elste strives to damn himself more rapidly than his victories can redeem.



Lady of the Voids Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	25	35	(8) 40	32	35	30	40	15

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Traits: Daemonic (TB 8), Enrapturing Warp-song^{††}, Daemonic Presence, Dark Sight, Fear 3, From Beyond, Improved Natural Weapon, Natural Weapon (Claws), Possession, Warp Instability.

Daemonic Presence: All creatures within 20 metres suffer a -10 penalty to Willpower Tests.

††Enrapturing Warp-song: The Lady moans constantly, enrapturing all. All who hear her warp-song directly must succeed in an Opposed Willpower Test or become Stunned for one Round. In each Round spent Stunned whilst hearing the warp-song, a further Opposed Willpower Test must be made: failure leads to rapture and the gain of 1d5 Insanity Points. Anyone who takes appropriate precautions (such as stuffing wax in one's ears) gains a +10 bonus to both Willpower Tests. Once a victim has been Stunned for three consecutive Rounds, he falls under the Lady

WARP-ENRAPTURED

For those who fall under the sway of the Lady of the Void's enrapturing song, modify the standard NPC templates by adding the following where applicable:

Characteristics: Increase Strength and Toughness by +5.

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Fearless, Melee Weapon Training (Unarmed, Primitive).

Traits: [†]Pulled From the Brink.

†Pulled From the Brink: An enraptured victim can be recovered by covering his ears or otherwise removing the sound of the warp-song. He will return to sanity in 1d5 Rounds.

of the Void's control and is now enslaved to her will until pulled from the brink or the Lady is destroyed (see the Warp-Enraptured Sidebar, above).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Claws (1d10+4[†] R; Tearing).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Majoris.

Vox-record // Skull-drone Tricorn-Chamber 54-Omega—563/a17

Subject // Jagamar Elste

Transcriptor // Scribe Onomin // 3.237.795.M41

Long afore I was brought back to the low decks for my sins, I commanded security details upon the Bequest of Holy Terra: we bore shotguns and were black-clad and black of heart, every last one of us. There was an end to that assignment, mind, and this is that tale. Five weeks in the warp toward the Almiarch Candles, and the first I knew of what was to come was whilst hunting deserter scum deep in the vaults 'neath fore-cannon Secundus. The voxset began a fearsome, seductive moaning, honeyed claws plucking at our hearts. Rellis, who carried the vox, bled from his ears before we smashed the thing, and then turned our shotguns on the voxmouth grills of the Secundus cannonvault above. Cannonmen threw fits as though possessed, but we beat it from them with club and shouted prayer to the Emperor.

We rallied to the armoury as a mob of the insane surged from the crossways, carrying the vox-moans with them. Our shotguns and stubbers slew a dozen at a time, yet still the mob ran on. I saw the crew tear flesh with teeth and the faithful turn to warp-maddened killers. Emperor rot me, but I gave the Emperor's mercy to three of my own. We killed hundreds—the dead piled on the deck, but more raged through the forward vaultways—and the warp-sounds never ceased. Those left faithful had plugged their ears or gone deaf from the blessed roar of the guns, but we were too few, damn it all! We pulled back behind the battle core seals whilst still able, joined by tatters of loyal crew from amidships.

How we prayed that the enginarium had prevailed and even then laboured to wrench the Bequest from this horror! But the moaning of the warp seeped through the seals ever louder—the beast that broke aboard was coming for us. My eyes turned upward in the moment...and there, like a gift from the Emperor Himself, hung a boarding squad's plasma-torch, taken from the hulk of the Sanctity. it would serve the Battlefleet one last time! We set a righteous firing line before the main seal, with the legacy of the Sanctity at the centre. Tech-adepts nurtured it as though a swaddled babe, trailing power conduits from all about the core. We led the crew in shouted hymns, the better to drown out sounds that took men's minds. And then we threw the bulkheads open to give the warp-beast the Emperor's welcome!



NURGLINGS

...and the Great Father marks out those who are chosen with the gift of his Nurglings. These servants bear on their multitudinous backs his champions and chosen. They will war for them and nurture them and aid them in spreading the gifts of Father Nurgle to the undeserving and unappreciative Imperium of Man...

—From a fragment of the *Liber Pestilentia*

Nurglings are the lowest servants of Nurgle, the Chaos God of Decay. These diminutive yet corpulent daemons chatter and squabble amongst themselves, seeming to take delight in malicious mischief. These tiny daemons support the followers of their blasphemous deity in battle by swarming over foes, biting and blinding them. Other Nurglings act as chortling servants, bearing champions of decay into combat atop a pestilential palanquin made up of rotted boards.

Quite possibly the most disgusting creatures in existence, Nurglings are covered in horns, pustules, and tumours. These deformities cover every inch of their bodies except for their beady little black eyes and fang-filled oversized mouths. In combat, the Nurglings' two greatest advantages are their overwhelming numbers and the propensity for foes to underestimate them based on their comical appearance and diminutive size. There exists no more horrible fate than to be devoured alive by a filthy living carpet of tiny daemoniac gluttons. Fanatically aggressive and heedless of their own destruction, Nurglings will fling themselves at the enemy in a rolling tide of pestilence.



Nurgling Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	—	10	⁽⁴⁾ 21	25	15	15	40	—

Move: 1/2/4/8

Wounds: 6

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20.

Talents: None.

Traits: Daemonic (TB 4), Fear 1, From Beyond, Improved Natural Weapon, Natural Weapon (Teeth), Size (Scrawny), Warp Instability.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Teeth (1d10+1 R, Toxic); A victim who suffers damage from a Nurgling's bite must pass an Ordinary (+10) Toughness Test or contract a virulent disease (The nature of the disease is at the GM's discretion). A diseased victim loses 1d5 points of Toughness permanently.

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Minima.



Definition: Plague Daemon, Malleus Minima

Explication: Nurglings are deceptively small and weak-looking, but their true nature is anything but humorous. These small daemons gather in large groups and attack without fear, throwing themselves one after the other to overbear larger foes.

Admonition: Area-effect weapons and flamers are effective, as are strongly presented icons of faith by one who truly believes in the Emperor's light. Purge these abominations with grenades and holy flame.



From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 159.678. M11

In my youth, I was often foolish and overconfident, trusting too greatly in my own overestimated importance. It was on the world of Cyrus Vulpa that I first faced up to this personal flaw while in pursuit of the heretic sorcerer Saul Charyn, who had fled there some months in advance of my own investigations. I relied upon the assistance of Stubjack Jayn, a red-haired gun-prophet of Kuth, for my own contacts on Cyrus Vulpa had vanished within weeks of the sorcerer's arrival. I must admit that Jayn was a master of her trade...in less than a month, she had pinpointed Charyn's location to a hab-block that adjoined a Schola Progenium in the capital city of Vaxport.

In my pride, I decided it would be best to capture Charyn alive, and to that end, we waited and watched for another six weeks. Jayn's network of informants kept us apprised of the sorcerer's movements and told us of his strange interest in the Schola Progenium. It wasn't until the Schola's most prominent Drill Abbott turned up missing that I realised my mistake. Jayn, myself, and six of the Black Regiment kill-troopers stormed the Schola compound in the depths of night, and we found an abattoir within, horrors that drove hardened Stubjack Jayn irrevocably insane. The sorcerer had made a mockery of the Schola, turning the nursery into a midden pit where foul Nurglings writhed and giggled in the dark. Charyn had summoned a host of lesser daemons, servants of the Plague God, to act as a rearguard. The foul, decaying things had amused themselves, and the floor was slick with mingled blood and filth.

A score of whispering, sniggering voices chorused a greeting, and then my kill-troopers and I were under attack. Tiny servants of Nurgle, these daemons capered and jeered, cackling with sly japes throughout the battle. Jayn was of no use, her sanity fractured, sobbing brokenly in the corner. With hellgun and flamer we fought them, even as the tiny daemons battled viciously from every corner. Nurglings dropped onto kill-troopers from above, yanked them down into the disease-ridden sludge covering the floor, and swarmed over us outnumbering us at ten-to-one odds. One of the kill-troopers kept his head and triggered a burst of frag grenades to sweep a path clear to the exit. He paid for that bravery with his life, but it enabled us to drag Jayn out of that room and re-group. I choked on self-recrimination and shame for having waited so long, for having given the monster Charyn the one thing he needed most: time. The Schola was purged with fire, and its site reconsecrated with holy wafers and the blessing of a high-ranking Cleric. But the stain of that battle remained on my soul for decades to follow.

This is how I prefer to remember Gelt - steadfast, strong, determined.
His fate should be a lesson to us all.

- P. W.

PRAEDATORIS OF THE STARRY ORDER

The Starry Order is a conspiracy of oblivion cults that spans the Ixianad Sector. Its heretics teach an apocalyptic creed—and for a century its fanatics have turned their eyes to Calixis and the Tyrant Star. Not content to merely preach, they seek to bring an apocalypse crashing down upon all. The worst of these cultists carry degenerate secrets into the Calixis voids, seeking greater sorcery with which to destroy worlds in Empyrean flames.

Upon a blasted xenos world in the 7th century M41, Starry Order archeoexplorators found what came to be known as the Conceit—a concept that is also a key to an ancient and potent pact made between an unknown xenos species and the warp. To know the Conceit is to become visible to the Praedatoris, malign ripples of the warp given form as implacable, invisible hunting beasts. These daemons search relentlessly and slay mercilessly, vanishing only when all who knew the Conceit are dead and torn.

Starry Order seers came to understand the cursed daemon—key, and it became a weapon in their arsenal of vile sorcery. The Conceit presently takes the form of a scroll of High Gothic script and some few diagrams, but it can also be explained verbally. Study or discussion of at least an hour is required to comprehend it, but that is usually longer than any would-be tutor has left to live. A psyker who knows the Conceit can project that understanding into other minds instantly, should his talents lie in that direction.

Once the Conceit is learned, a Praedator will soon come from the warp to slay and rend. The Praedatoris perceive the Materium through portals—any door, archway, or other method used by people to traverse an enclosing wall—and are constrained to materialise at a portal. A new victim of the Conceit is safe for so long as he goes nowhere near a portal of any sort, or remains forever enclosed like the vat-psyker slaves of the Starry Order.

A Praedator appears in the Materium as a series of twisting distortions of the air, with the barest suggestions of a hideous, flowing, amorphous form hidden beneath. Its



invisible protuberances lunge and dismember with fearsome speed and strength. The daemon will not hesitate to slay anyone who comes within reach while it tracks the mind-scent of the Conceit. A Praedator is absolutely silent, even in the midst of tearing apart men and beasts that stand in its path. Very little can destroy it or turn it aside—and even then, another Praedator will emerge from the next portal the victim passes by. There is no escape whilst the Conceit remains known.

My Lord, it became necessary to seal the vaults of assessment against an Empyric manifestation within—the very same you witnessed upon Snowden's World. There were 07 deaths, and the librarium is in terror. I request the seals be made permanent, blessed and warded, and the cultist materials within designated for perpetual entombment. I have learned enough so that it is dear to me in what manner these heretics employ the Empyrean to slay their enemies, and I believe that further assessment of their works is made in dire threat to life and soul of the researcher.

Adept-Savant Albere Byerette

Praedatoris Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	—	40	(8) 40	42	10	55	40	15

Move: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20.

Traits: Daemonic (TB 8), Daemonic Presence, Fear 2, From Beyond, Mercifully Indiscinct^{††}, Natural Weapon (Fangs), Strange Physiology, The Hunt^{†††}, Unnatural Senses (20m), Unnatural Strength (x2), Warp Instability, Warp Weapon.

Daemonic Presence: All Willpower tests are made at a -10 penalty within 20 metres of the daemon.

^{††}**Mercifully Indiscinct:** The daemon appears as an indistinct haze. Attacks against it are made with a -10 penalty unless the attacker is at point-blank range.

^{†††}**The Hunt:** One who studies the Conceit must make a **Challenging (+0) Intelligence Test** once every month. Once the student reaches two Degrees of Success, he has fully grasped the terrible secret of the Conceit, and the Praedatoris will then be on his trail. The student will be sensed by Praedatoris when within 20 metres of a portal (any door, archway, or other method used by people to traverse an enclosing wall). A Praedator will soon materialise through that portal, whether it is open or closed, and begin the hunt.



ADVENTURE SEED

Lexographer Tinde Alois is dead, torn apart in his manse as though by beasts. Now those he has known through his scholarly career are dying too, each soon after receiving a mysterious bundle of papers via the Missive Guilds. There are whispers of the warp, and Lexographer Alois' standing was such that lesser acolytes of the Ordos are soon sent to quiet such rumours. The taint of the warp is indeed present, as are disturbing signs of an association with the Starry Order. Can the Acolytes identify the nature of this threat before yet more Imperial citizens fall victim to the foulest of daemons?

A manifested daemon will relentlessly track the warp-scent left by the Conceit. If somehow foiled or banished, another Praedator will return 1d5 days later, when the victim is again close to a portal. Sealing a portal with pentagrammic wards (see page 120 in **DISCIPLES OF THE DARK GODS**) will prevent any emergence of a Praedatoris daemon. The use of mind-cleansing is also effective.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Fangs (1d10+4[†] R; Primitive, Warp Weapon).

[†]Includes Strength Bonus.

Threat Rating: Malleus Majoris.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT: 3.056.789.M41

The unsanctioned psyker's plasteel vat was broken open and left steaming by lasfire and explosion. The same had slain the master of the heretic monastery, more is the pity; his sundered corpse lay collapsed amidst runes and scrawls of foul ritual. Perhaps if he had lived, we might have discovered the nature of the psyker's assault against Adept Mamin, seemingly too weak to harm him. We might have learned enough of the truth of the sect's compact with the warp to protect Adept Mamin and the Ordo troops he fought beside.

We executed the master in a hall of unseemly xenos shapes, near the centre of the monastery ruins and shielded from the elements by translucent panels that heretic labourers had set above. Adept Mamin prosecuted resisting cultists nearby, the crack of hellgun fire echoing through curving corridors and malformed arches. My own squads swept the surrounding storerooms and quarters whilst Medicus Plere attended the wounded. I recall that I had just noticed a las-burn upon the suspensor projection of my attendant psyker's vat-transport when screams and the cry came across the vox: "Daemon!"

Are we sane, we whose first instinct is to run to oppose the warp made actual? I ran to find a hallway of dismembered bodies, blood, warp-smoke, and a hazed but terrible presence already vanishing back to the warp at the far archway. I have listened to the vox record of Yand Mamin's death many times, seeking to discern anything about nature of the daemon that slew him, a beast we now know as a Praedator.



THE RUINATION OF IMPERFECT BEAUTY

Slaanesh sends ripples of raw sensation across the Calixian Emphyrean. Strange and obsessive daemon breeds crystallise where those ripples meet the psychic ebb and flow of decadent pleasure worlds. One such breed is the Ruination of Imperfect Beauty, named by savants of the Schola Impermissus before their final purge at the hands of the Ordos Calixis.

A Ruination of Imperfect Beauty arose upon the pleasure world Kinog in the early 8th century M41. The sinful of Kinog consorted in illicit pleasure, in the creation of extravagant art, and in ornate conspiracies—it was a pale and sordid reflection of corrupt Malfi, composed at the surface as a floral garden within which courtly love might bloom. Thorough decadence and exacting sin called a Ruination from the warp to complete the blackening of noble souls.

The true form of a Ruination is a bloated, repulsive combination of toad, crab, and corpulent woman, but it rarely manifests itself until its plans reach their conclusion. Even then, it hides behind a delightful, lustful appearance. It is a potent daemon, yet is driven to do no more than quietly build a coven of just six decadents: wastrel artists, lovers, or conspirators. It whispers in their ears, steering their dreams and hopes to the construction of perfect works: the perfect painting, the perfect love, the perfect conspiracy of murder. All of the members and works are interlinked within the coven, and each nearly perfect work is marred by one deep flaw.

The Ruination is pleased by these undertakings and the human emotions—frustration, anger, delight—resulting from them. Perfection is a harsh taskmaster, and the daemon is obsessive in its manipulation and arrangement of lives. In the end, however, when the pattern has run its course, the Ruination must draw its coven together and manifest to destroy it, so as to feed upon their souls and empower itself.

A Ruination has power to lay waste in the Archenemy's unholy name and drive men insane with a glance—but instead, its mad daemoniac nature compels it to cajole, threaten, and bargain as a whisper on the wind. It achieves its aims by manipulative subterfuge and seeps warp-taint into the spires of wealth almost by accident.

Tomes of the Schola Impermissus reveal further secrets of the Ruination breed, scattered between the ramblings of broken minds—if the tomes can be found at all, that is. For example, a Ruination abhors incompetence with the conviction of a zealot. Obviously poor goods or inept artisans can act as a ward, and credible accusations of imperfection can achieve banishment of the daemon.



Definition: Daemon, Malleus Minoris

Explication: The Ruination of Imperfect Beauty (also called the sensate daemon breed of Kinog) is a corruptor of schemers, artists, and artisans. It builds covens of weak men who seek perfection, and empowers itself by the ruin it works upon their souls.

Admonition: The daemon is a whisper upon the air, a taint upon some few amidst the many. Force its manifestation by tearing down its coven, or await its final act of ruination brought upon the weak. There, it might be banished by force of blessed weapons and prayer of the faithful.



Ruinination of Imperfect Beauty Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	25	50	⁽¹⁰⁾ 50	40	50	50	50	40

Move: 4/8/12/24 **Wounds:** 25
Skills: Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel) +20, Charm (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Evaluate (Int) +20, Intimidate (Fel) +20, Scholastic Lore (Philosophy) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Search (Per), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) +20
Traits: Daemonic (TB 10), Daemonic Presence, Desire Beyond Reason⁺⁺⁺⁺, Fear 3, From Beyond, Improved Natural Weapon, Mask of Seduction⁺⁺, Natural Weapon (Claws and Pincers), Scourge of Sensation⁺⁺⁺, Slave to Refinement⁺⁺⁺⁺, Unnatural Strength (x2), Warp Instability.
Daemonic Presence: Lesser disturbing and pleasurable sensations of every variety afflict those near the daemon. All creatures within 20 metres suffer a -10 penalty to Willpower Tests.
⁺⁺**Mask of Seduction:** When the daemon so chooses, it masks its hideous appearance. While clothed by seductive, shifting forms, the Fear 3 effect does not apply.
⁺⁺⁺**Scourge of Sensation:** The daemon unleashes a directed flood of the most terrible visions, torments, and ecstasies. Victims standing in the direction of the daemon's attention must succeed in an Opposed Willpower Test each Round in order to act. With each failed Test, a victim gains 1d5 Insanity Points.
⁺⁺⁺⁺**Desire Beyond Reason:** If the daemon becomes convinced that it is imperfect in its arrangements, it must succeed in a



ADVENTURE SEED

A daemon of the Kinog breed has been banished by the Acolyte's lord Inquisitor. Yet the sixth of the coven of seduced conspirators, a deluded and unrequited lover, escaped death and fled into the mid-hive. She is the last link that binds the daemon to the Materium, and whilst she lives, it may yet manifest once again. The Acolytes must find her and slay her...but what if there are further links, in the form of flawed works left undestroyed? What if slaying her completes the interrupted work of the daemon? The Acolytes must be careful lest they find themselves doing the daemon's bidding.

Hard (-20) Willpower Test. If the test is failed, the Ruination attacks itself and ignores any other enemies for one Round. At the beginning of the next Round, the Ruination may attempt the test again. If it succeeds, the Ruination may act normally.
⁺⁺⁺⁺**Slave to Refinement:** The daemon must make a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** to touch obviously ugly and unseemly constructions, or a poor craftsman, or inept conspirator. It is repelled by that which falls far short of perfection. However, creating too terrible of an appearance risks achieving a perfection of intent, which bodes ill if the daemon realises the game that is being played and views the unseemliness in that way.
Armour: None.
Weapons: Claws and pincers (1d10+10⁺ R; Tearing).
[†]Includes Strength Bonus.
Threat Rating: Malleus Minoris.

Entities of the Empyrean, its tides crystallised into malicious intent, are perverse and inhuman in their aims. How else can we explain the Daemon of Kinog? This manifestation of Empeyric power could have laid waste in the Archonemy's unholy name, yet devoted its attentions upon a mere six wastrel scions. There too, where it could have manifested to burn their immortal souls to ash and make puppets of their flesh for its ends, it instead cajoled, threatened, seduced, and bargained as a whisper on the wind. It waited, seeping its taint into the spires of wealth almost by accident.

My lord Gelt believed he had found guidance from the oft-purged Schola Impermissus—the identity of a breed of daemonkind that thrives upon vicious sensations attending unattainable perfection in artistry and conspiracy. He risked his soul upon his certainty of the beast in shadows, armouring himself with dress and we with blessed weapons and scrolls of banishment.

I prayed for him and the adepts—militant that the God-Emperor protect the certainty of the faithful, and guide all to a beneficent end. Such came to pass this time, and I was grateful that my private doubts were not made real. In the year ahead, I will commend that which we know of this daemon to the vaults, so that when it rises again in corrupt pleasure districts of the Calixis sector, it will be known and defeated.

Adept-Savant Albere Byerette

FROM THE JOURNALS OF INQUISITOR FELROTH GELT: 3.581.719.M41

The stench of incense and viscera poured forth from the shattered portal. I entered alone, sealed within power armour of ill appearance and poor function, each of these aspects a defence in itself greater than the ceramite layers and cleric Albere's carefully inscribed ward sigils. Beyond the portal, the six high-born heretics lay rent, scattered in blood and pieces across the gilded marble like so much spilt wine and meat. Their creations of art and conspiracy lay similarly in ruins beneath smoking censers. The warp-beast that had wrought such intricate destruction lay in its midst, atop piled silk and rare, broken woods. Its aura was potent indeed, scratching at the soulshield erected by my vat-psykers; pain and tongues of pleasure slipped about me, though I knew it made no earnest attempt. The appearance of it shimmered between a spread mass of utter foulness and slim, noble forms of lascivious beauty. The daemon flickered in shape, seeking a reaction, seeking chinks of desire in the armour of the righteous.

"You are too late, Faithful One," it gurgled, then sighed. "Such a resplendent feast their efforts made. I am empowered, and yet so many more are to be had upon this world." All the while it reclined upon the wreckage of the noble suite and contemplated how best to tear me from my unsightly armour—or whether such an act was beneath it.

"Then you have achieved perfection in your aim, fiend?" I asked it.

"Yes. You would not understand the pleasure it brings." It laughed, horribly, and swells of nauseous pinpricks swept me with each new sound. The voxlink brought me quiet sounds of my vat-psykers' distress—for all I felt, they suffered tenfold. But I could not have hurried, even with their lives in the balance.

I stepped forward into the unwelcome sensorium and readied for what might be my end. "I dispute your perfection, for I stand here before you, the will of the God-Emperor incarnate ruining your final configuration. The scene has not ended, and I have smeared the ink. Does that not make you imperfect, fiend?"

The scream was hideous, erupting from a heartbeat of nothingness in which even the daemonic presence was withdrawn. The beast attacked me with such images and sensations—the joy of labour to perfection, the anguish of a perfect work laid waste, the pain of the flaw revealed, the vicious pleasure at being he who destroys it—all repeated in a thousand voices. I cannot but imagine the fate of an unprotected soul. "Now!" I cried through the daemonflood. "Now, in the Emperor's name!" and the militants of my retinue were upon the golden stairs outside, bearing thrice-blessed weapons. I had fallen to my knees and struggled to even raise my hellgun. My bonded psykers babbled and screamed across the vox, their very souls in acid.

The clacking dartguns of Mamin and Balthas pierced the daemon with inscribed wands, whilst the armoured bulk of Kotheme aimed a lascannon draped about with prayer-scripts. The daemon rent itself in inarticulate rage—or perhaps horrified pleasure—and Kotheme fired, vapourising its warp-matter. The entire far wall shattered about the iridescent las-line, a sudden gale bearing masonry and every loose remnant of destruction into the thin spire air beyond. "Inquisitor!" shouted Balthas above the noise, as he helped me from that cursed place against the pull of the gale, but I had not the strength to reply until much later.





ADVERSARIES

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CHAPTER VII: ADVERSARIES

The universe of Dark Heresy is one primarily defined by war. War against supernatural evil. War against alien threats. War against rebellion and anarchy. War against crime and insurrection.

War for the very survival of the human race.

As such, there is little doubt that armed and bloody conflict is likely to be a major part of any Dark Heresy campaign. A Game Master should be prepared to present numerous challenges that take the form of dice-rolling, wound-dealing combat, and a good GM should endeavour to make these combats both interesting and an integral and believable part of the story being told.

One of the elements of the Warhammer 40,000 universe that makes it such a compelling setting is the depth of story to be found there. Yes, very often these stories are resolved and concluded with one or more battles between forces unleashing terrible fury and destructive power; yet what gets them to the battle, and what they are fighting to accomplish, can make the difference between a thrilling and engaging tale and merely an excuse for “just another battle scenario.”

Your players will certainly want and expect a good battle at least some of the time, and many players will be disappointed if they don't get a chance to whack something with a chainsword or brandish a bolter in the face of an enemy at least once a session. However, in that they are playing Dark Heresy, a roleplaying game, they will also rightfully expect these battles to make a certain amount of sense. The players are the starring characters in a movie or a novel, you see, and they expect the writers to come up with good reasons for all this jumping around and wholesale slaughter they wish to engage in.

And that's your job, my good Game Master. You must give them challenging and exciting battles, but you must do so in a way that helps tell a good story and that makes your players feel like they've been up against real foes with real motivations, using real strategies and attempting to achieve real victories.

Should their characters survive (by the Emperor's blessing and will), the players will be immensely grateful for such a fulfilling experience, and they will be ready for the next glorious battle. In the Emperor's name, of course.



THE EVIL YOU KNOW: HERETICUS

“There is no greater enemy to the Imperium than the man who acts against it. Such a traitor shreds the very fibre of our holy existence. Never, ever forget this.”

—Cardinal Richter,
Inquisitor Hierophant of the Ordo Hereticus

Though threats alien and daemonic are of exceeding importance to the Inquisition, the most common foe to be fought in any Dark Heresy campaign is likely to be of human nature. Criminal scum, heretical priests, Chaos-enamoured warriors, and rebellious mutant anarchists are all likely targets for an inquisitorial mission, and all are likely foes to be tracked, charged, and ultimately put down.

Unfortunately, they don't always just fall to their knees and surrender, begging for mercy. Most, knowing they won't receive any mercy, choose to fight. And a desperate man with a weapon is still one of the most dangerous things in the universe...

BUSTING HEADS, TAKING NAMES

“We can do this easy, or we can do this hard. Personally, I much prefer hard.”

—Regulator Tamara Cain, Marshall of the Corrigan Watch

Typically, your team of Acolytes will first encounter human foes in a small number, often over the course of some kind of investigation. It could be that they've tracked some thugs to a bar, or some low-level cultists to their lair. At this stage of things, the Acolytes are probably outnumbered, and possibly even outgunned, but they are far from “in over their heads.”

In fact, this encounter might even go somewhat humorously; using superior skills, panache, and bravado, the Acolytes can make a real show of trashing these enemies. They will probably even want to keep one or two alive for questioning, hoping to use them to track down the larger base of operations or more important operatives in the heretical organisation.

The point of such an encounter is to let the heroes stretch their muscles and get some good action-oriented screen time without too much in the way of failure or disappointment. After all, if they can't handle this small bunch of foes, they're not going to have a lot of confidence in their ability to manage the bigger fish that need frying.

In structuring such a conflict, you as the Game Master need to keep some ideas in mind to help make it fulfil the expectations of the story and the players. These include:

- Using “bottom rung” adversaries; don't open up with anyone that, individually, is a match for any of your player characters.
- Use a decent number, but don't use too many; 1.5 to 2 adversaries per Acolyte for this first fight is probably about right.
- Make them stupid; these are the guys that got caught



ESCALATION IN THREE PARTS

This section presents the basic structure for story arcs dealing with each of the three main types of enemies the Acolytes will face—human heretics, aliens, and daemons—which are the focus of the three Ordos of the Inquisition (Hereticus, Xenos, and Malleus). Each story arc structure is divided into three parts, the beginning, the middle, and the end, and discusses strategies and provides GM advice specific for interaction and conflict at each stage. You can think of the story structure as almost like the three Acts of a classic play...almost.

The first section deals with initial encounters, including potential discovery and the way things are likely to play out in the earliest part of the mission against the type of foe indicated.

The second section gets into the complications of the enemy knowing it is engaged, and stepping up efforts to defend against and ultimately oppose the Inquisition forces being brought to bear.

The third section ramps things up to a final, epic confrontation, bringing to bear the most powerful and capable of the forces the Inquisition must face. This almost always includes some kind of “boss fight,” to borrow popular parlance from computer gaming.

Certainly a Dark Heresy story is likely to—and should—include non-combat challenges, investigations, social interactions, and the like. These will occur early on in greater number than late in the story, typically. As well, there is almost always going to be some kind of “falling action” and epilogue to a good story, which naturally follows after the final battle.

first, so it's fine if they fight like amateurs and make dumb choices. Don't have them swarm one player character (unless he's the one character among the heroes who can take it and likes it that way).

- Don't go lethal too quickly; if it's a bar fight, let it be a bar fight. Only when things get desperate should you have the last of the bad guys start going for real weapons. Hitting a low level cult lair may be a different thing, of course...

- When they do break out the weapons, they probably should be poorly armed and armoured. Again, these are the dregs—the first link in the chain to be followed to the more important opponents.

- If there is a guy in charge, let it be because he's just a little bit stronger, tougher, or smarter.

Even though the Warhammer 40,000 universe is grim and dark, it's still perfectly all right to let your players have some fun with a fight like this. They should walk away from this first encounter with a sense of being skilled enough to be ready for the bigger stuff ahead.

True, they may not really be ready for it, but let them enjoy the moment anyway...



A MATTER OF MINIONS

Many popular game systems in the marketplace offer GMs the option of employing “mook” rules, or rules that are designed to let a group of heroes mow through a horde of lesser opponents in the grand tradition of many action/adventure movies and martial arts epics. Such rules make it possible to stage big and impressive-looking battles that still go fairly quickly. The heroes get to cut a swath through the masses on their way to deal with the much more dangerous threats.

There are certainly times in the Warhammer 40,000 setting where a small group of well-armed, highly-trained, and passionately-motivated soldiers might be faced with what seem to be overwhelming odds.

And there are times when a ragtag band of ill-equipped and oft-deprived Acolytes might well be faced with the same kind of challenge.

If you would like to give them this kind of challenge without taking the untold hours it might otherwise require to handle such a conflict, here are a couple of options you can employ.

SIMPLE MINION RULES

These rules streamline the process for fighting minions. Anyone without a name has a single Wound. Any hit doing any damage at all (after armour and toughness are accounted for) kills the adversary. It can be as simple as a “he’s dead, Jim,” or as messy as a complete cranial inversion.

Any level of Fatigue knocks a minion right out. Any level of Insanity drives him raving mad and screaming away. Poison, stun, etc. all work the same way. Any level of effect instantly becomes the most extreme level and takes the bad guy out of the fight. Using these rules will let the Acolytes blow through a fight against a force that seems numerically overwhelming, and you’ll be able to manage it in relatively short order.

COLOURFUL MINION RULES

These rules make a battle against minions take a little more time than with the Simple Minion rules, but they also make the battle a lot more descriptively interesting.

In the case of any effects other than straight damage, the same rules apply as above. Fatigue knocks the enemies out, Poison sends them gagging and twitching to the floor, and so on.

Instead of a single Wound, however, minions are given 2 Wounds. Any hit past armour and toughness does a single Wound, unless it does more than 10 Wounds. In the case of 10+ Wound hits, go straight to the Critical Effects table that applies. Use the 8 result by default, unless a 9 or 10 is the rightful result.

So, if Ramirez hits a cultist minion with his Stub Revolver and does 13 Wounds to the Body, the result is automatically going to be “Impact Critical Effects — Body, 8”; the minion is going to fall down, pass out, and bleed to death. If Ramirez had managed to do 20 Wounds, well...the cultist would go flying several metres away, and then die messily.

Purists might worry that using these rules will make things go too easily for the heroes. You need to set that aside though and realise the potential for truly magnificent battles where you can pile on the hordes and not spend all night just working through the first round.

And your players will absolutely have a blast playing through these kinds of fights!

THEY BROUGHT FRIENDS

Depending on what the Acolytes are investigating, it may be that they will have two or three fights of the Busting Heads type described above before things get more interesting. They will, however, most assuredly get more interesting. Once the faction or organisation the Inquisitor is targeting becomes aware of the actions of the Acolytes, steps will be taken to oppose the Acolytes in much greater force.

A key question you need to answer at this point is this: will the enemy go on the defensive, preparing to welcome the Acolytes with the resources and firepower it has at its home base, or will it go on the offensive, coming at the Inquisitor’s people pre-emptively with a significant portion of its force?

At the same time, it bears noting that the actions of the Acolytes may well play into this decision. If they are being particularly proactive and direct, the enemy may have no choice but to react to what they are doing. If, however, they are being

cautious or else can’t decide what to do or find the path to act decisively, then it may be that the enemy will seize the moment and launch a strike.

The elimination of the first batch of opponents means the enemy knows the Acolytes have some skill and capacity, so it is a sure bet that whatever they face next will be of higher grade in strength, skill, firepower, and numbers. There will almost certainly be leaders and specialists among the bad guys at this stage who will be a credible threat to the Acolytes. One or two may be on par with, or even a little better than, the Acolytes.

It is not, however, time to bring any major bosses into the mix. At best, an impressive lieutenant might be at the head (or back) of this force; his defeat will mark the end of this stage of the mission almost certainly.

Better tactics will almost certainly be employed this time around. Traps will be set, feints attempted, flanks manoeuvred to, and special weapons employed with some effectiveness. It may be that the foes come in waves, each one a little stronger



than the last. Or perhaps the Acolytes will have to run a serious gauntlet to get to their objective.

If they are unwise and rely too much on sheer luck, the Acolytes may well not make it past this phase of the operation. They are going to have a much greater chance for success if they employ skilled tactics, and perhaps even subterfuge and guile. If they do use good thinking, tactics, and subterfuge, you should feel free to reward this and perhaps let them bypass some or all of this stage of the threat.

After all, they aren't a squad of Space Marines; in place of heavy armour and massive weapons, they have to rely on their wits as much as the good graces of the Emperor to get through these things.

TAKING IT TO THE TOP

While it is true that it may take a very long campaign to get to the true villain of a plot, requiring many journeys across many landscapes and multiple jaunts across the warp, there are always those of ambition and ability who achieve a certain level of authority within any faction. It is these lieutenants, minor bosses, and sect leaders that often pose a very grave threat in the path of the Acolytes out to serve the Emperor's will.

These people don't have the extraordinary power of their greater leaders, but they are far from pushovers. Skilled, talented, well-equipped, and emboldened by a sense of purpose and a wilful quest for even more power, such opponents will stop at nothing and hold no resources back to eliminate the threat of a "pack of Inquisitorial dogs." After all, getting to such a place means they had to do a lot of scrapping and manoeuvring, and

they know others are ready to take their place if they fail.

To make such an encounter memorable and satisfying, it is often incumbent upon you to do some extra work to really set things up. Leaders at this level will almost always want to do battle on their own terms, where they can make the best use of their setting and resources towards their defence. These locations will be fortified, or at least hastily set up in such a way as to put the Acolytes at a disadvantage in the fight.

What's more, there should be at least one or two "booby traps" put into place, to be unleashed by the leader just as the Acolytes think they might have the upper hand. Of course, a smart group should go in looking for such things, perhaps tasking one of their more technical or demolitions-oriented people to find and deactivate (or appropriate) such traps.

This last battle should feature a decent number of minions, all of similar quality to those found in the previous section. There might be one or two "lieutenants" who are in charge of defending key positions, and top-end warriors will be with the main boss, fully prepared to cover and protect him. It may be, even, that the actual person in charge really isn't all that much for a fight; maybe he is just a really effective leader or administrator. In such a case, bet on his bodyguards to be even nastier than usual (if you are using the Minion Rules for these fights, don't apply them to any such bodyguards).

At the end of such a scenario, the Acolytes should have a sense of victory. However, they may also look back at the piles of bodies and realise the sad truth—these were not hordes of aliens or daemons they laid waste to. The blood on their hands is very much human...

THEM OR US: XENOS

“Let there be no mistake in this—we are the Emperor’s chosen. Ours is the right of dominance, and of conquest. Humanity is the Light of Creation. All others are a blight that must be purged. Such is our holy mandate, and let none stand in its way!”

—Grand Pontiff Nicodemus von Kessler

Most of humanity is fully indoctrinated to believe any non-human is an abomination in the eyes of their most holy Emperor, and therefore a grave threat to all of Mankind. The fact that many alien species do, in fact, want to wipe out humans and take Imperial territory conveniently reinforces this widespread belief.

Though much of the Imperial effort against alien threats manifests as direct military confrontations, often leading to full-scale battles and even wars, Inquisitors and their Acolytes are often charged with seeking out new signs of these threats and wiping them out before they get out of hand. In fact, Acolytes can often find themselves in the fascinating, yet unenviable, position of handling a “first encounter” with a new species.

Naturally, most of them are both trained and inclined to shoot first and autopsy the body later...

FIRST ENCOUNTER

“Did you hear that? What was...oh, Throne! Regor? REGOR?! Where’s Regor?”

—Indiko Corum, late Acolyte of the Ordos Xenos

The first time a group of Acolytes encounters an alien threat, it should be a subtle and frightening experience. Fleeting glimpses, rumours of something strange in the shadows, odd tell-tale signs of something biologically different having been in the area. Only the most educated and experienced Acolytes will have a chance of knowing anything about even a well-documented species, mainly because the Imperium goes to such great lengths to control such knowledge.

And it’s almost certain that no Acolyte will have ever actually met any kind of alien being before their career with the Inquisitor they serve.

As such, the first part of a story arc featuring aliens should be fraught with mystery, suspense, and a need to learn more. This situation is where an Adept might shine, looking into historical records and recent reports, scouring for details on just what kind of creature the team might be up against. There are, of course, perils of a very different nature for anyone requesting more information about such a forbidden subject, but such is the life of an Acolyte.

The first actual run-in with an alien species should feature shock and initial terror, as the creature or creatures use their inhuman gifts and talents to great effect and take advantage of the ignorance of their human opponents. Such opponents may or may not have superior technology or physical gifts, but they can certainly create an illusion of such superiority by simply causing as much confusion and chaos in their actions as possible.

Very often, the initial phase of a xeno-based story arc



should be one of surprise, followed by the chase. Ultimately, the Acolytes will likely have to become hunters, armed with knowledge and weaponry to seek out their alien prey.

THEY’RE EVERYWHERE

“I TOLD you we’d need more ammo!”

—Halec Norros,
veteran of the 307th Mortessa Scythewind Regiment

The second stage of an alien arc should feature overwhelming odds and a fight for survival. The aliens have their own sense of manifest destiny, after all, and they are just as keen to expand and hold territory as the faithful of the Imperium. When it becomes clear that the Acolytes represent a very real threat, reinforcements will be brought in, and the bottom will drop out.

Such a conflict is best staged in waves. Even if the Acolytes originally were the aggressors, the classic element “the hunters becoming the hunted” will absolutely come into play here. Before long, they will need to find defensible ground and make a stand as their alien adversaries bring the hammer down on them. A battle of attrition will be at hand, as the Acolytes try to make the most of their limited resources.

At the same time, the aliens are not necessarily suicidal. They won’t want to just die in droves, and a determined resistance will cause them to fall back and regroup. The second and following waves will probably feature new tactics

and new attempts to exploit weaknesses.

Unless you really want this to be the heroic last stand of your players, however, you may want to make sure their characters have some kind of an out. Perhaps they discover a piece of powerful alien technology and the smarter ones of the bunch (a Tech-priest would be the holiest of blessings here) can figure out a way to use it to win the day. Alternatively, just finding a way to escape may be the best option; retreat is not something players like to contemplate, but it may be that you can convince them (or have a superior convince them, shouting over vox links) to get the hell out of there and figure out another way to defeat the enemy.

MANIFEST DESTINY

“This is hallowed ground. Too many of our brothers and sisters have bled on this ground for us to ever consider letting these alien monsters have it. Either we drive them off, or we die trying.”

—Captain Yuri Malthos,
17th Infantry, Koronus Expeditionary Force

Few Inquisitors will ever bow to an alien force. Entire planets have been destroyed to deny them to xenos threats. So it should come as no surprise that a team of Acolytes facing an alien challenge will, ultimately, be expected to find a way to end their menace once and for all.

Most likely at this stage, resolving the crisis will be less about putting a bullet or an energy burst through each and every xeno encountered, and more about finding a way to mass exterminate the lot of them (or at least force them off the planet). While it may sometimes be attractive to take the ultimate way out and eliminate the aliens from orbit, such wanton destruction of the Emperor’s planets is very much a last resort.

So an answer sufficiently violent, but not so devastating to the biosphere may be in order.

Perhaps a bio-agent can be found that will be particularly harmful to the aliens without also killing the human population. Alternatively, it might be that a city’s power source can be used to blow up the local area (killing a few million but saving the rest of the planet).

Or maybe, just maybe, some kind of negotiated settlement can be had. Seeking this solution is a very dangerous game to play, of course. Not only is it likely that any attempt at communication with the alien enemy will simply end in terrible violence, but even if such a dialogue is successful, such actions are most certainly going to come under the scrutiny of the Inquisitor and other Imperial authorities.

However, Acolytes are often given much broader mandates and discretionary powers not afforded to the typical servant of the Imperium, and if some powerful tech can be attained, or peace in a region secured for a time, certain “heretical indiscretions” might well be overlooked in favour of a mission actually being accomplished and a planet saved from alien domination.



MORAL QUANDRIES

In the Imperium of Man, it’s fairly easy for an Acolyte to take the attitude that whatever he is ordered to do must be right with the universe. His role is not to question why.

However, you might well be able to inject a bit of pathos into a tale if the “heretics” the Acolytes are sent to deal with turn out to really be quite nobly motivated. Perhaps their planet is dying, and their rebellion is all about acquiring the food, medicine, and other resources their people need to have a chance to survive. They raid and steal, in open rebellion with the Empire, because the only alternative is to starve to death or die of disease.

They are rebels because they are abandoned—corpses, written off by the Imperial Bureaucracy, that refuse to just die. It would be hard for some Acolytes, coming to understand that truth, to not sympathise in some way with their plight.

Now imagine if someone among these all-too-human rebels knows one of the Acolytes. What if they are related? The dilemma becomes quite sticky indeed.

It may be that you do not wish to step into this territory. The basic assumption is that all that is ordered by the Emperor is right, proper, and undeniable. Your players may wish to work within that simple dictum and put their minds solely to the task of surviving that which they are tasked to do.

However, if you want to really engage them on a new level, this kind of struggle could turn into a truly memorable challenge with long-reaching implications for all of the characters’ stories.

WAR IS HELL: MALLEUS

There is the angst of fighting fellow humans who are a threat to their own people. There is the terror of fighting inscrutable alien enemies who have no mercy and complete loathing of all humanity.

Then there is the absolute horror of fighting the hellish forces of the warp.

The manifest nightmares of humankind’s mythology are alive and well in the 41st millennium, and they come from the very place that the Imperium must rely upon for its vast interstellar presence—the warp. And the beings who call the warp home are every bit as twisted, evil, and dangerous as the ancient myths speak of...and worse.

It is important to note, up front, that you need to play up the horror aspect of daemonic foes to the maximum potential you can inspire. Your players are likely very familiar with this universe and may well tend to think of daemons and Chaos-driven enemies as simply more targets in the environment.

You must strive to teach them better.

WHAT WAS THAT?

“This is the office of Comptroller Galloway! Please help us! The Administratum offices are under attack! I repeat, we are under attack. Something just...appeared in the main vox station. Everyone is screaming...or laughing. I don’t know, but there’s so much blood...”

—Unknown adept, in the last transmission from the Dameri VII Orbital Station

It is said that terror is the fear of the unknown, and that should certainly be the case in the early stage of any encounter with Chaos. In any encounter featuring Daemons, there should be an air of strangeness, discomfort, and surrealism. Things just need to be...off.

As with xeno encounters, it is best to keep daemonic threats off-screen for a time. Let the signs of their presence be detected first. Let second-hand accounts be full of extreme descriptions and hyped-up stories. Let first-hand accounts be full of even worse descriptions and tales of utterly vile depredations. Chaos creatures thrive as much on the fear and loathing they cause as they do upon the actual acts of violence and corruption they commit.

There is madness in everything to do with Chaos, and this should also pervade any such encounters. Corrupted humans will almost always be a part of any Daemonic experience—cultists and desperate followers who embrace the madness for the power to change their lives. Acolytes will be faced with any number of angry, crazed people while constantly worrying that one or more of them may be carrying a real live daemonic entity within.

As things progress, the actual presence of daemons should become more obvious, and the slaughter of tainted humans may well give way to a desperate fight against horrors that are truly beyond the imagining of any rational mind.

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

“The river runs red. The river runs red. The river runs red with blood...torrents of it...”

—Annabel Tarsius, an Acolyte rescued from the Ollivar Incident

It is said that, while terror is the fear of the unknown, horror is the fear of knowing just how bad things really are. At this stage of a Chaos-themed scenario, the Acolytes should be pretty certain about just how bad things have become. Even worse, the daemonic forces involved are probably getting fully ramped up to torment, corrupt, and ultimately destroy their latest “playmates.”

Any psychically-aware members of the Inquisitor’s team will be especially subject to constant temptation and maddening discourse as the daemons try to subvert them to darker things. Yet no one will be safe, and facing the very real possibility of a truly horrible death, the Acolytes may find many temptations for alternatives before them.

The Acolytes will receive offers of power, of course, but even more subtle manipulations may be at work. An apparent innocent in distress may call away a member of the team, only to lure him into a trap away from his teammates. The leader of



a team may be offered a way to save his people...if only he will do a simple little favour before they leave.

You need to make the threat of a terrible and vile end very real for the players for them to truly encounter the horror of what they face. Sure, they will probably still be heroes and stand resolute, but doing so in the face of all these obstacles and attempts at subversion will make their resistance that much more heroic, and any victories achieved that much sweeter.

All the while that temptations and manipulations are at work, the very real physical threat needs to be a constant source of stress and trauma. Zealous hordes of cultists, daemon-bonded psykers, and actual summoned horrors from the warp will bring the kind of vicious destruction and egregious violence that only the most heinous of monstrosities are capable of. Techniques similar to those described in the previous sections are perfectly applicable here; just remember to add the elements or real horror and madness to the mix.

THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS

The final stage of a Chaos-themed scenario should, more than any other type of scenario, take the Acolytes to the very brink. They should be on the edge of death and/or madness, pushed to their limits, and scrambling for some last-ditch way to snag victory from defeat. They were in over their heads when it began; they should be wondering if death wouldn’t be easier by the time they get to this point.

And yet, there still needs to be a way out, a way to pull off victory. For all their power, the forces and creatures of Chaos

are not of this world. They are anathema to that which is of the universe outside of the warp, and the Acolytes represent the universe's attempt to put these interlopers back into their place. It may well be, in fact, that other forces in the universe will find a way to step in and help the Acolytes through.

This is one solution, but it should be sparingly used. Deus ex machina is rarely a satisfying means of resolution in any setting. However, if you can make it so that whatever source of outside help is not so much superior, but a complement to the efforts of the very necessary heroes, it can be a satisfying way to sometimes let the players know that not only the bad guys have help.

At any rate, there is almost certainly some form of central figure among the daemons that has usurped control, and it is this being that the Acolytes will have to muster their resources against primarily. Chaos being what it is, destroying what lies at the centre of a daemonic plot really tends to force it to fall apart.

By exploiting the weaknesses of such creatures, a dedicated and knowledgeable team of Acolytes may well extract a significant victory in such a case. If you are going to set them against daemons, it's probably a good idea to make sure they have at least some access to holy weapons, psyker powers, and other attacks that bypass the otherwise insane Toughness such creatures enjoy. As well, never forget to impose the penalties of Warp Instability in such fights; it can be particularly satisfying for the heroes to sometimes just hang on and do a little damage, forcing the being away through sheer tenacity.

MORE THAN JUST ROLLING DICE

Now that you have some idea of how to approach structuring a series of conflicts featuring the key opponents for your Acolytes, it's time to outline some basic tips and tricks that will help you run smoother, faster, and highly satisfying encounters.

REMEMBER WHO THE HEROES ARE

Dark Heresy is set in a very grim, very dark universe, and the players have very low-powered, bottom-of-the-rung characters to start. It's pretty easy to treat them as nobodies with very little chance for survival, much less glory, at the end of a session.

While this might make for some good non-interactive fiction, or a fine basis to structure a miniatures battle around, it is not likely to be a good attitude to have for a healthy long-term roleplaying campaign. The vast majority of players are going to tire very quickly of being stomped into the ground and crushed under the heel of every entity, friend or foe, they encounter.

While it may be important to showcase the nature of the Imperium and the rest of the universe accurately, it is just as important to allow the players' characters to enjoy the spotlight in their tiny little corner of it all. After all, they were chosen for a reason, elevated by an Inquisitor above the teeming masses to do battle against foes that are considered threats to the very



DEFINING EXPECTATIONS TO SUPPORT HORROR

Chances are, you have some fairly experienced players among your group, any number of whom have either been long-immersed in the Warhammer 40,000 universe or are very familiar with the horror genre of gaming. They will tend towards a fairly blasé attitude about the horrific and terrifying creatures and circumstances they are being asked to deal with.

Please note that it is perfectly acceptable to discuss your expectations for the campaign with your players. This includes it being all right to tell them that, while they as players may have enough knowledge and experience with horror-related gaming, their characters are people who have almost certainly never encountered anything like what they will see or deal with when a daemon is involved.

In other words, it's OK for you to actually tell your players that they should roleplay accordingly and that their characters are very likely to run weak in the knees and lose bowel function temporarily the first time a fellow human's jaw suddenly cracks open twice as wide as it should, blood streaming from his mangled jaws, as a complete inhuman laugh erupts from deep within.

Just as you should strive to learn and accede to at least some of the expectations your players have for your campaign, you should embrace the idea that you can let your players know of your own expectations as well.

fabric of existence. Something sets them apart from the rest, and something gives them the impetus for a destiny greater than the average citizen.

It's important to remember this, and to find opportunities to recognise it once in a while in the game. As well, this means it is perfectly acceptable for you, as the Game Master, to focus less on "beating" the heroes and more on giving them challenging experiences with satisfying and rewarding conclusions.

Such a philosophy does not necessitate your taking things too easy on them, nor does it mean that a character shouldn't die occasionally. Difficult and dangerous challenges, with an occasional loss, makes for much more satisfying conclusions for all concerned.

But if you remember that the Acolytes are the heroes of your story, and more importantly, if you let them be the heroes of the story, you can be assured they are going to have a very enjoyable time and will appreciate your efforts all the more.

THE POWER OF "GO FOR IT!"

Many Game Masters become accustomed to reigning in their players, constantly finding reasons to say "no" to the latest effort to break the rules, exploit a weakness in the rules, or otherwise try to "get one over" on the game. This tug-of-war

can result in a lot of frustration and out-of-game conflict if taken too far.

Worse, it can stifle the creativity of the players, discouraging them from doing anything other than “I move, I shoot, I’m rolling to hit.”

While it is important to prevent players from blatantly perverting the game experience to their individual ends (getting away with things that make the other players feel like the rules don’t even matter anymore), it is just as important to look for opportunities to say “yes” and reward creative thinking.

Gaming is, after all, a creative exercise for all of the participants, not just the GM. As such, most players will gravitate toward games run by Game Masters who really let them stretch their imaginations and figure out cool and interesting ways to resolve a situation.

Imagine the following two conversations:

Cole (a player): “We’re both standing next to this table, right? Is it one of the pedestal types with a central column?”

Harold (a GM): “Uh, yeah, sure.”

Cole: “OK, I want to suddenly lean down on my edge, make the other edge pop up and sling the tools everywhere, and maybe catch him on the chin. That should totally catch him by surprise, right?”

Harold, feverishly flipping through the book, looks for a rule to cover this. “Er...I don’t...No. You don’t have any kind of skill for that, and I don’t really think you’re strong enough.”

Cole: (sighing in resigned frustration) “Fine, I just shoot him.”

Harold: (relieved) “OK, roll to hit.”

...

Cole (a player): “We’re both standing next to this table, right? Is it one of the pedestal types with a central column?”

TJ (a GM): “Yeah, and it’s somewhat wobbly.”

Cole: (smiling) “OK, I want to suddenly lean down on my edge, make the other edge pop up and sling the tools everywhere, and maybe catch him on the chin. That should catch him by

surprise, right?”

TJ: (with laughter) “Sure! I think that will give you like a +20%, and if you hit, some better damage than just your basic attack. Go for it!”

Cole: “Cool! Here goes...”

Now then, which game would you prefer to play in?

Which one do you think your players would prefer?

CINEMATICS

Right along with the “Go For It” Philosophy is the “Because It’s Cool” Mantra. Just look at the artwork! Those big guns, fancy clothes, and bad attitudes are just screaming for action and glory. Those people are meant to do big things involving big explosions and big consequences.

So let your players enjoy the Big Screen Treatment, and let them do things that are beyond mere moving and shooting.

If someone comes up with an idea that might give them an advantage, don’t look for a way to shoot it down. Look for a way to make it happen, and let it be entertaining in its execution. “Because it’s cool” is, quite honestly, a perfectly acceptable reason to allow a player to try something.

Where possible, try to make any dice rolling based on simple factors. For example, basic jumping over a table can be determined by a straight-up Agility Test—and if it’s really only for show, why not toss a substantial bonus onto the roll? Shouldering open a door, gun blazing, can be a simple Strength Test—or you can just say it happens, rather than making the player risk looking foolish, since the move is very likely just a “cool” descriptive element for the scene.

It takes some insight and wisdom to really pull this style of Game Mastering off well; you don’t necessarily want your players getting away with murder, making every action one that is over-the-top and wildly spectacular with no risk. But the game can run both smoothly and with a great deal of style



if you and your players can adopt a collective attitude that encourages cinematic and visually entertaining exploits during combat without making them altogether too complicated to bother with.

LET THE EXPERT HANDLE THIS

Many players will choose to have at least one Skill that is meant to give them a chance to be a little different than everyone else who follows their same career path. While many of these Skills have regular and significant value in almost any game session, it's pretty clear that some of these abilities are on the character sheet as a matter of concept, background, or style.

While it can be kind of a pain to constantly go out of your way to look for ways for your players to exploit their "specialist" Skills, you should always be willing to let them suggest an otherwise unexpected use of such a thing to do "something cool" in a scene.

Acrobatics is a Skill rife with cinematic potential in any combat situation. You should most certainly encourage the acrobatic Acolyte to use this Skill to exude some style and perhaps gain an advantage here and there.

It may be that, during a particularly challenging encounter featuring a bizarre and implacable foe, one of your players decides to try and invoke his Logic Skill to try to find a solution that can give the Acolytes an edge towards victory. While not absolutely implied in the Skill write up, such an attempt could go a long way towards letting that player feel his character's study of Logic has real value to his teammates. It might also be a way to help the group through something they otherwise can't see their way through.

Sleight of Hand, normally best used in non-combat situations, could very well mean the difference between life and death for an Acolyte trying desperately to feint in combat with an enemy and then snatch up a potential weapon, thus giving his teammates and him a chance to escape otherwise certain death at the hands of men who have them in their sights.

When a player comes up with a creative way to employ a Skill to solve a situation, be not only willing to listen, but to say "Go for it!"

PARTIAL SUCCESS

In Dark Heresy, there are the basic "pass/fail" results that apply to most Tests, but there are also Degrees of Success and Degrees of Failure that come into play in fairly specified ways.

Yet, at the end of the day, rolling a 54 when you needed a 53 is very frustrating.

Life is hard in the 41st Millennium. There is a lot of potential for failure and frustration, especially when you consider that it takes a long time before most heroes are even 50% skilled in the areas they are supposed to be expertly trained in. Granted, situational modifiers can apply that increase the odds when a task is considered easier than normal, but honestly, how often is anything easier than expected in this setting?

One idea you might consider to ease the pain of "missed it by that much" is to allow for some degree of Partial Success with non-attack Skill Tests.

In essence, anyone rolling over what they need to succeed, but within the applicable Characteristic Bonus, might be granted some kind of Partial Success. It should by no means be the same as an actually successful Test, but perhaps it can take the sting out of the failure when it comes so close.

Oftentimes, for a Partial Success, it is enough to just describe the action as having almost the intended effect, and thus not making the player feel like his character looked foolish in the attempt. In other circumstances, a Partial Success might well mean the difference between disaster and some fragment of victory for the whole team if the character is able to at least partially accomplish what he meant to do.

In the first example, the dice rolls indicate a failure, but the GM decides that the failure does not make the player character appear foolish:

Adam's Guardsman is trying to shout down a bunch of scum who are rioting in a city during a crisis. His Intimidate is rated at 27. He gives a great speech, causing all the players and even the GM to be very impressed with the roleplaying, so he gets a +20 bonus to his roll.

Sadly, the dice are evil and roll a 49, when all he needed was a 47. His Characteristic Bonus in this case was a 2, however, so the GM doesn't want him to completely look like a fool.

"The sergeant's voice halts the scum in their tracks, and some of them look like they're about to drop their weapons and surrender. Unfortunately, a huge mutant steps out of an alleyway, clearly their leader, and tells them to kill the guardsmen or face his wrath. You impressed them, Adam, but this guy really scares them!"

A second example of the partial success option is presented below:

Andy's Tech-priest is using his Demolition Skill to defuse an explosive device that is set to blow the ship's engine apart, pretty much taking everyone with it. He's already failed two attempts, though not catastrophically, and he's down to his last chance before time runs out.

It's also been a very hard run, and he's out of Fate Points.

His Skill is rated at a 39. He rolls a 41! A failure, yes, but as his Characteristic Bonus in this case is a 3, the GM decides to credit him with a Partial Success. Though unable to stop the explosive from going off, at the last possible second, he's able to keep it from setting off the actual engine core. He goes up in a ball of flame, to be revered by his comrades for saving their lives, and the ship survives with some badly-needed repairs.

"IT WAS A GOOD DEATH."

Your players most likely put a great deal of thought into who their characters are, and they probably care at least somewhat about what happens to their characters. In a universe as dangerous as the Dark Heresy setting, death is a constant companion and a very real potential result any time the dice start rolling and the blood starts flowing.

One of the greatest frustrations ever for a player may not be that his character died, but that his character died like a fool.

In games, success and failure comes down to the dice more often than not. Some dice are rolled, numbers tabulated, and

the final result reported. In this way, a character death can end up being one of the most anticlimactic experiences of all.

“Ah, well, looks like my guy is dead. Give me the book so I can start rolling something else up...”

Honestly, we can do better than that, and we should.

When a character dies, there’s absolutely nothing wrong with taking that moment in time and really giving it focus. Unleash the best of your descriptive skills and paint the picture vividly in the minds of your players. Let everything slow to “bullet time” as you express the nuances of the scene. Make it something every player will remember: “That time Ramirez got axed!”

Even better, try to let the character’s last act have meaning. That may seem impossible, until you look at other media. There are plenty of examples of a character taking a mortal blow, yet managing one last act of defiance or valour before he finally expires. The numbers may say that character is dead, and there’s no stopping that from happening now, but there’s no reason you can’t let his last moment be one of glory, or at least drama and pathos.

Maybe Ramirez gets one last Action, with which he can choose to set off a grenade on himself and the guy who just put an axe through him. Maybe Father Horst, falling off the cliff as his blood runs freely from the bolter wound, snags the Chaos worshipper about to stab Sister Julienne and drags him down to the rocks below. Maybe Gremma the Tech-priest, full of holes and dead on his feet, still manages to punch the last numbers of the security code and open the door so his friends can escape as he falls to the deck.

Can you see how much more satisfying those deaths would be for the players of those characters?

At a bare minimum, you should allow a “dying soliloquy”; the character is dead, yes, but lingers on long enough for one of his companions to come to his side and hear his final words.

If Death must come...let it be a good death.



ABOVE AVERAGE ADVERSARIES

Not every fight will feature a truly spectacular and dangerous major villain, but that doesn’t mean many combats can’t have some kind of leader or above-average foe that catches the Acolytes off guard. It’s often a good idea to make at least one of the “faceless masses” of bad guys more than meets the eye, or make him really stand out in some neat fashion.

Not only does it add flavour to the encounter, but it gives a natural focal point for the fight as the Acolytes mow through the minions in order to get to “that guy.”

Use the following charts to add one or more special adjustments to a stock enemy. One chart deals with inherent abilities and Talents, while the other deals with equipment that might be added to the enemy.

Ignore rolls that simply don’t make sense for the enemy in question, and feel free to roll more than once if you really want to beef one of the opponents up.

Imagine a Dissolute Noble who rolls 97: Soul-bound, and 06, Cortex Implants (Good). Suddenly, a somewhat plain enemy is now greatly different; a brilliant (Unnatural Intelligence), almost fearless mastermind who hides his heresy behind a facade of jovial bonhomie. He is also an excellent candidate for a Dark Pact...and thus, a memorable adversary is born.

TABLE 7-1: ADVERSARY ABILITY UPGRADES

Roll	Result
01-04	+10 WS and BS
05-09	+10 Strength and Toughness
10-14	+10 Intelligence and Willpower
15-19	Fearless Talent
20-24	Lightning Reflexes Talent
25-29	Leap Up Talent
30-34	Iron Jaw Talent
35-39	Blademaster Talent
40-44	Cleanse and Purify Talent
45-49	Combat Master Talent
50-54	Counter-Attack Talent
55-59	Bulging Biceps Talent
60-64	Deflect Shot Talent
65-69	Deadeye Shot Talent
70-74	Berzerk Charge Talent
75-76	Frenzy & Battle Rage Talents
77-78	Die Hard Talent
79-80	Disarm Talent
81-82	Disturbing Voice Talent
83-84	Hip Shooting Talent
85-86	Marksman Talent
87-88	Lightning Attack Talent
89-90	Mighty Shot Talent
91-92	Insanely Faithful Talent
93	Nerves of Steel Talent
94	Precise Blow Talent
95	Rapid Reaction Talent
96	The Stuff of Nightmares Trait
97	Soul-Bound Trait
98	From Beyond Trait
99	One Minor Mutation (see page 334 of DARK HERESY)
00	One Major Mutation (see page 335 of DARK HERESY)

TABLE 7-2: ADVERSARY EQUIPMENT UPGRADES

Roll	Result
01-04	Pet Sabre-wulf
05-09	Cortex Implants (Good)
10-14	Xeno Hides
15-19	Hand Cannon
20-24	Hunting Rifle
25-29	Combat Shotgun
30-34	Guard Flak Armour
35-39	Enforcer Light Carapace
40-44	1d5 Blind Grenades
45-49	Shock Maul
50-54	Electro-Flail
55-59	Cybernetic Senses
60-64	Bionic Locomotion (Good)
65-69	Bionic Respiratory System (Good)
70-74	Bionic Arm (Good)
75-76	Chainsword
77-78	Bolt Pistol
79-80	Boltgun
81-82	Heavy Bolter
83-84	Hand Flamer
85-86	Flamer
87-88	1d5 Hallucinogen Grenades
89-90	Plasma Pistol
91	Plasma Gun
92	Inferno Pistol
93	Web Pistol
94	Needle Pistol
95	Needle Rifle
96	Power Sword
97	Storm Trooper Carapace
98	Auger Arrays (Good)
99	Light Power Armour
00	Power Armour

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