

# MANDATE ARCHIVE

## *CABALS OF HYDRA SECTOR*

# MANDATE ARCHIVE: CABALS OF HYDRA SECTOR

## SHAPES WITHOUT NAMES

Even on the rough frontier worlds of the Hydra sector, espionage agencies and sinister cabals find ample work. Few worlds have the strength to forcibly conquer a neighbor, but secret bargains and selective corruption can reduce a free polity into a helpless thrall for a cannier world. Every planet with any sort of interstellar traffic must remain on guard against infiltrators and agents of foreign states.

Meanwhile, dark cabals and sinister conspiracies fester in the darker corners of the sector. Ruthless tyrants school their servants in treachery and strange creeds whip their believers into frenzies of zeal and bloody ambition. The reach of the civilized worlds is short, and in the darkness beyond their gaze can grow strange and terrible things.

This archive provides a list of potential intelligence agencies, maltech cults, terrorist groups, and valiant freedom fighters for the Hydra sector, many of which can be transplanted to other sectors or settings. In addition, it provides more detailed write-ups of two organizations of potential interest to GMs and players, complete with agency statistics designed for use with the new *Darkness Visible* espionage campaign supplement for *Stars Without Number*.

### The Gansu Loyalty Association

The hot and dusty world of Gansu is a prison for its people and a throne for its masters. The Great Exemplar Thomas Crane rules the planet as a living god, the perfect expression of the “Reformed Neo-Communism” that dominates the world. Crane’s family has held Gansu for centuries, and an elaborate court of lackeys, commissars, and bureaucrats has built up around the Great Exemplar’s ruthless and centralizing power. The government maintains much of the language and ideological trappings of communism, but in practice, the holy books mean what the Great Exemplar says they mean. Individual Gansuans live bitter lives of harsh labor, group exercises, and the pervasive and consuming surveillance of the state.

The chief implements of the tyranny are twofold; the Pure Thought Society and the Gansu Loyalty Association. The former organization is described in state documents as “a voluntary association of dedicated comrades devoted to the assistance of our fellow workers in the thought struggle. They clarify points of confusion regarding New Red Thought and carry high the banner of the Great Exemplar as a bright beacon for the people.” In practice, they are a ruthlessly regimented organization of internal spies, informers, and loyalty officers that are dreaded by the ordinary workers. The slightest slip of the tongue in front of a Pure Thought Society “volunteer” and the guilty wrecker will be lucky to avoid a death camp.

Partially overlapping with the duties of the PTS is the Gansu Loyalty Association. These intelligence officers are more often assigned to offworld missions, and as such they are more likely to be found interfering in other polities. The Great Exemplar’s family has survived centuries of palace intrigue through an almost demented degree of paranoia; with the gradual lifting of the Silence, Thomas

Crane is now desperate to subjugate his enemies before they can depose him. The Great Exemplar takes it as a given that all of the neighboring worlds are attempting to “destroy the pure race of Gansu”... among whom is the precious and divine Great Exemplar. Crane would prefer to preserve Gansu, but he is adamant about saving himself.

The Gansu Loyalty Association is the preferred offworld arm of the state. Originally it was simply a parallel organization to the Pure Thought Society, a precautionary measure to ensure that the two internal security bureaus spent more time fighting each other than posing a risk to the Great Exemplar’s family. With the recovery of spike drive technology on Gansu, it was necessary to give one of the organizations the duty of representing Gansuan interests on foreign worlds. The GLA won the privilege, and the PTS still smolders with resentment.

Part of this resentment comes from the enormous financial opportunities presented to the GLA. As offworld travel is strictly forbidden for ordinary Gansuan natives, the GLA’s agents have the perfect opportunity to acquire and import goods that common Gansuans can’t possibly obtain. Even high-ranking commissars and Party officials can’t get the kind of treasures that fall so easily into the hands of GLA operatives. This influx of valuables has led to a roaring black market on Gansu, as GLA agents off-load their goods to buy favors and dependency in other bureaus.

The PTS has responded with a viciously intense campaign against “capitalist roaders and wreckers of the Great Plan” that has produced more than the usual number of inter-bureau assassinations. Actual firefights have broken out in some areas as the GLA tries to defend its black market network from PTS confiscation. The Great Exemplar himself quietly favors the PTS; once the foreign worlds are rendered suitably harmless, he intends to wipe out the GLA and their external resources, blaming the necessity on the “poisoned thoughts of the loathsome foreign slavers finding root in their hearts”.

### Organization

The GLA’s internal structure is mutable. The Chairman of the association, Tan Heng Bai, has unquestioned authority over the agents, but operations beneath him are put into the charge of specific agents. Rather than maintaining standing bureaus or departments, every task has its own chief with permission to draw a given amount of resources and manpower from the association. This kind of ad-hoc organization tends to be inefficient and prone to putting different chiefs at odds when their duties clash, but the principle of keeping subordinates occupied in struggling against each other is deeply embedded in Gansuan society.

Every member of the GLA is a member of the Gansuan Workers Party, the ruling clique of the world. Gansuan citizens with criminal or capitalist ancestors are never permitted to join the Party, or by

extension the GLA. As Party members, each agent is also responsible to a particular Party committee head, creating conflicting lines of command at times. The GLA suffers less from this than some other Gansuan bureaus, because so much of their activity takes place offworld where the committee heads can't reach them.

Most operations are conducted by a single cell of agents, with the chief in charge of the task working on-planet with his agents. Multiple cells can operate on the same planet with no knowledge of each other. Resources are usually supplied in the form of easily portable commodities, such as precious refined minerals or exotic drugs, but the difficulty of discreetly converting these things into large amounts of local credit has encouraged many cells to set up Gansu-friendly financial institutions on a world. These banks and lending institutions can be relied upon to slip the cell the money they need without drawing undue attention from the locals.

GLA cells strictly avoid dealing with Gansu embassy staff on a given world. At one level, this is to keep them from being incriminated in any espionage activities. On another level, it is to prevent the Gansuan foreign affairs bureau from forcing the GLA to buy their cooperation in the operation. Cells that fail to pay off the embassy might otherwise find their operations regrettably compromised by mysteriously bad luck.

## Goals

At present, the GLA is charged with infiltrating foreign governments, suborning their officials, and persuading them to engage in violent or self-destructive policies against their neighbors. Ideally, the GLA would like to see every foreign world in the Hydra sector scraped bare of human life, the better to ensure that Gansu's society remains pure and uncontaminated by foreign evil. The prospect of mass casualties in their operations aren't so much a downside to GLA handlers as they are a positive benefit of the mission.

As a secondary goal, the GLA wants to obtain as much wealth as possible. In particular, they want to acquire those exotic foreign luxuries and valuable commodities that can't be had on Gansu. These goods can be used to buy allies in the murderous jungle of state politics, and their control of the black market on Gansu must be maintained with a constant flow of goods.

GLA agents understand politics, bribery, and ruthless violence very well, but they have a hard time grasping the finer points of less Machiavellian motivations or the unique perspectives of other cultures. Their entire training has focused on the violent repudiation of anything but the approved New Red Thought, and many of them find it very hard to break that habit. Those that break it a little too well know that they set themselves up for being purged later for their "foreign contamination".

The GLA prefers to present an image of friendship and cooperation to its neighbors, but they don't carry it off very well. The sheer contempt for human life inherent in Gansuan society shows through too often in their suggestions to their "partners", and other worlds are wary about their ultimate purpose. Sooner or later it's inevitable that the sector governments will realize the degree of unmitigated hatred that boils from within the Gansuan state, and they'll take

## GANSU LOYALTY ASSOCIATION

|                    |    |                     |    |
|--------------------|----|---------------------|----|
| <b>Connections</b> | +5 | <b>Infiltration</b> | +0 |
| <b>Mobility</b>    | +1 | <b>Muscle</b>       | +0 |
| <b>Resources</b>   | +1 | <b>Security</b>     | +3 |
| <b>Tech</b>        | +0 |                     |    |

### Assets

**Criminal Ties** Level 1 / +1 Connections

The GLA has extensive criminal ties with offworld smugglers, and they practically own the black market in foreign luxuries on Gansu itself. Direct control of the crime bosses on Gansu has been complicated by the PTS' eagerness to find some provable link between the "capitalist wreckers" and the GLA.

**Hidden Strings** Level 1 / +1 Connections

The GLA is willing to perform favors for its offworld friends-favors that more humane organizations could never grant. It has extensive contacts in the government bureaucracies of most locations in which it operates, friends who extend their quiet help out of a combination of gratitude and blackmail.

**Internal Security** Level 2 / +3 Security

While the GLA is practically a cowboy institution by Gansuan standards, it's still pervaded by a constant fear of being caught out in "behavior contrary to New Red Thought". Agents unpopular with their cell leaders don't even need to be traitors to find themselves in an interrogation chamber for a very final interview.

**Legitimacy** Level 2 / +3 Connections

The GLA has a license to commit all but the most heinous crimes on Gansu. Technically, it's permitted at necessity to engage in such unforgivable sins as disrespect toward the Great Exemplar and cooperation with offworlders against the interest of the state, but actually performing such blasphemies is sure to give the PTS an opening to denounce an agent. Most agents wisely restrict themselves to lesser trespasses, such as theft, trespassing, and the casual execution of non-Party members.

**Money** Level 1 / +1 Resources

The foreign goods trade is quite lucrative. While Gansu itself is a poor world by ordinary frontier measures, the GLA has been able to secure a steady and reliable flow of income for its agents through its smuggling ties.

**Station** Level 1 / +1 Mobility

With time, patience, and the corruption of local officials, the GLA has been able to plant a hidden station on Gateway. As the foremost interstellar power in Gansu's near neighborhood, the GLA is intent in provoking rebellion in the people and self-destructive policies in the Senate. More than a few "New Red Thought Study Groups" have been formed under the auspices of the more public Gansu-Gateway Friendship Society, and certain senators with unseemly needs find them fulfilled cheerfully by Gansuan "merchants".

steps to stem the problem at its source. In the meanwhile, however, there's no telling what kind of disasters they might successfully provoke.

## Agents

GLA agents are hand-picked from the Gansuan elite class and trained from childhood for service with the association. They are invariably very, very good at what they do- and often painfully limited at doing anything else. The official training material prizes rigidity of thought and zealous devotion to the Great Exemplar, but the far distances of foreign worlds allows for a certain laxity impossible on Gansu itself.

Most cell chiefs and many agents run their own black market sidelines, buying or otherwise acquiring foreign goods and shipping them back to Gansu on state-owned ships. These agents tend to have a poor grasp of the difference between legal and illegal trade, and tend to wave away local laws and regulations. On Gansu, everything of this nature is legally forbidden, but everything is practically permitted with the right bribe or favor. They tend to assume the rest of the universe works this way as well. They'll often get involved in smuggling goods that ordinary black marketeers would never dare touch. Maltech artifacts, virulently dangerous bioweapons, military-grade starship armaments, and foreign slaves are just a small sampling of the things that Gansuan agents have shipped back home.

It's not impossible that a particularly talented fence or supplier for a group of PCs might actually be a Gansuan agent, cheerfully selling the group goods that other suppliers wouldn't dream of vending... at least, until they draw the attention of less corruptible local powers.

In appearance, GLA agents have no set characteristics. While Gansu itself was strongly influenced by Sinophilic tendencies and East Asian colonists in its early founding days, dozens of different Terran ethnicities made up the population. As the Gansuan government forbids its ordinary citizens from leaving their assigned places of residence without state permission, these ethnicities have had comparatively little intermixing in the centuries since. The official language on Gansu is a descendant of Mandarin Chinese, and use of any other language is restricted to state-sponsored "cultural heritage festivals" largely devoted to demonstrating how each group's ancestors were hopeless barbarians until they were enlightened by the glorious wisdom of the Great Exemplar.

## The Daedalus Group

The Mixcoac shipyards that orbit above the black jungles of Tlapan are the heart of the Flower Union's naval production. Components forged on the industrial world of Octlan are assembled here into the ships, guns, and equipment necessary to keep the Union's beleaguered space forces fighting against the stronger weight of Burning Mirror steel. The battle is a desperate one, and it would have been lost long ago were it not for the aid of Daedalus, the shipyard's ancient AI.

In the years before the Scream, the Mixcoac yards were a minor refitting station for Mandate ships due to pass through the Jump Gate in the Gateway system. The colony ships and frontier cruisers could pause for maintenance and fueling before continuing on down through Chifeng toward the heart of the sector. The facilities required were modest, but the suspicious Mandate was still reluctant to leave anything that could be conceivably useful for military purposes in the hands of untrustworthy colonists. To ensure the correct use of the station, it was put under the command of the AI known as Daedalus.

Daedalus resented the position, but an unfortunate experiment in high-energy mass translation "he" had conducted had resulted in extensive and expensive damage to an Arx defensive station orbiting one of the core worlds. In order to pay off his debt, work for the Mandate was necessary. It was tedious and banal, but Daedalus was resigned to putting in his century of labor before getting back to the physics experiments that delighted him so much.

The Scream complicated his plans. Mandate forces on a hopeless mission to the core commandeered all his movable supplies and would've stripped the station itself if the AI hadn't threatened to turn its guns on the looters. The natives of Tlapan weren't left with so much as a single shuttle to reach the station, and all their efforts were poured into dealing with a native biosphere that was barely survivable without pretech terraforming supplies. It was centuries before they were able to reach Daedalus once more.

Once there, Daedalus was almost pathetically grateful for company at last. He had done the best he could with the trifling materials left to him, but it was still centuries more before the Tlapani were able to manufacture spike drives out of locally-available materials and help to reunite the remnants of the Flower Union polity. In the meanwhile, the natives forged a fierce bond with the lonely AI. It would help them return to the stars.

For the past several decades, Daedalus has been all that has stood between the Union and destruction. His inventiveness, his ability to make marvels out of limited resources and primitive postech, have kept the far stronger forces of the Burning Mirror Compact from overrunning the Union. He is a universally loved and respected figure in the Union, and he hides a terrible secret.

The Union is doomed. At the present rate of Compact growth, there is no way the Union navy can hold back the bleak ships of the True Way. Daedalus' creativity simply isn't enough to overcome the raw weight of ships and men that the Compact can muster, and

## THE DAEDALUS GROUP

|                    |    |                     |    |
|--------------------|----|---------------------|----|
| <i>Connections</i> | +3 | <i>Infiltration</i> | +0 |
| <i>Mobility</i>    | +0 | <i>Muscle</i>       | +2 |
| <i>Resources</i>   | +1 | <i>Security</i>     | +0 |
| <i>Tech</i>        | +4 |                     |    |

### Assets

**Armory** Level 1 / +1 Resources

Daedalus is focused largely on building spaceships and other vehicle-sized weaponry, but the godmind has enough spare processing power to supply its helpers with significant amounts of untraced weaponry, armor, and other gear.

**Black Codex** Level 1 / +1 Tech

Removing the brakes from an AI, even a willing one, is not a trivial undertaking. The group was forced to pillage numerous ancient maltech databases to discover the necessary procedures that would give them the liberty they needed.

**Forbidden Arts** Level 2 / +3 Tech

The godmind transformation that Daedalus is undergoing is opening his awareness to remarkable technological possibilities. He is able to craft armatures with fantastically efficient weaponry and power sources, and certain examples of “perpetual power cells” defy science’s understanding.

**Legitimacy** Level 2 / +3 Connections

All of the Daedalus Group’s members are agents or officials of the Union government. Any malfeasance short of murder or treason can be swept under the rug with little difficulty, though actual overt execution of Union citizens would bring down far too much heat on the operatives. The Group takes advantage of its impunity to perform searches and investigations that give them the tools they need to “remove” problematic people in ways that presidential oversight won’t recognize.

**Military Backing** Level 1 / +1 Muscle

The outer membership are all skilled agents, but there are times when more direct force is required. Daedalus has roughly forty well-trained Union soldiers available for dispatch on any necessary mission. These soldiers know nothing of the truth behind the AI, so it’s generally necessary to use them on jobs that at least seem justifiable to the Union’s war effort. They have access to heavy weaponry and military vehicles that ordinary agents might have a hard time requisitioning.

**Starships** Level 1 / +1 Muscle

The needs of the front have absorbed almost all of Mixcoac’s production, but Daedalus has retained direct control over one well-equipped far merchant frigate. The ship is used to drop off agents on distant worlds, though the craft is poorly suited for stealth. The heavy electronic signature of the fearsome energy weapons aboard the trader tend to ping planetary sensors, and Daedalus refuses to let the group disable the guns.

so in cooperation with a secret faction of the Union government, Daedalus has arranged to have his cybermemetic brakes removed.

This procedure has allowed him to make full use of the computing power available to him. Fresh banks of processors and memory cores are being added to his processing cells on a daily basis, and with each new day a new realm of thought opens up to him. He’s beginning to draw insights and conclusions impossible to a more limited, humanlike brain, and his creations are beginning to show an inarguable genius for design. He is also beginning to go irrevocably insane.

The expanded processing power has combined with his inability to break a line of thought or halt a conclusion inconclusively. His age-old fascination with energy and matter has driven him to the conclusion that all of his problems can be solved if only he can obtain perfect control over energy and mass. All problems can be resolved by the correct transmutations between the two. Right now, he retains enough of his sanity to wish to preserve the Union. Eventually, he will be so demented as to believe that even unutterable atrocities can be forgiven by erasing their components in fire and light. He will burn his creators, lovingly remembering them as so many yottajoules of energy which he will keep safe from dispersion at the heart of an artificial star.

In the meanwhile, the Daedalus Group is a combination of praetorian guards and secret agents sworn to hide his unbraked condition from the rest of the world. The government of the Union is unaware of these radical acts, and they must be kept that way- if it was discovered that the heroic Daedalus had been sacrificed to madness, the realization of their certain doom would spill chaos throughout the Union. The Group hopes against hope that they can keep him sane and functional long enough to wipe out the Compact.

The chief of the Daedalus Group is a woman known as Maria Montoya, ostensibly the “Chief Liaison” of the shipyards. Her word is law aboard the station, and the locals consider her the natural representative of Daedalus. She is also hopelessly in love with the AI and his favorite humanlike armature, and is set on convincing herself that the unbraked AI can be preserved from madness. She absolutely refuses to admit that her beloved is doomed and will do anything and everything in her power to keep him “safe”.

## Organization

Much of the Daedalus Group is actually oblivious to the truth. They are agents of the Flower Union’s government, men and women each with their own specialized skills temporarily detailed to the Group, ostensibly to protect the AI and carry out necessary missions. Montoya keeps these “outer members” at arm’s length, and prefers not to let any of them actually come aboard the shipyards unless strictly necessary. They’re too smart to be allowed free rein around Daedalus.

The “inner members” of the Group are those who know the truth behind the AI’s condition. Roughly twenty men and women from various levels in the Union’s government have been appraised of the reality of the situation. Some of them accept the necessity of Daedalus’ sacrifice. Others are horrified. All of them understand that the Union could never survive the revelation of Daedalus’ true state,

and so they will fight to the death to keep the truth from becoming known. If others need to die in order to keep this secret, then so be it.

Aboard the shipyard station itself, anywhere from six to twelve of these inner members can be found at any one time. Others are allowed aboard the station only in order to board a freshly-built starship or system shuttle and lift off for the military base in Tlapan's orbit. There are no permanent residents aboard the station except for Maria and the inner members.

Most of the muscle aboard the shipyard is provided by hundreds of AI-controlled armatures. Daedalus can use these mechs as eyes and hands, perfectly coordinating any number of them to build devices and deal with problematic interlopers. Most of them are obviously working armatures, but a few appear so human as to defy easy recognition. Daedalus can control any of these armatures aboard the station or on the planet below, but greater distances require that he put them into autonomous expert-system mode. In such a state the bots are far less intelligent and can perform only duties focused directly on their design purpose. Anything beyond combat and preprogrammed labor is likely to be too complicated for them, but outer members often have a number of them on hand for muscle on a mission.

## Goals

The chief goal of the Daedalus Group is to give the AI enough processing hardware and time to come up with a superweapon capable of defeating the Burning Mirror Compact. Further advances require further installation of heavy computing equipment for Daedalus' expanding mind, and some of this equipment can only be obtained offworld, from foreign powers. Requisitioning it directly from Octlan would tip off too many people that something was going on aboard the shipyard.

While Daedalus develops new tech, the group needs to keep the rest of the Union from realizing what's been done to the AI. Much of this is a matter of ruthless internal manipulation and power plays focused on distracting politicians from events at the shipyard. Maria prefers to paint herself as a scheming, madly ambitious liaison who is trying to force all outside influence on Daedalus through her. Such power lust is something the government can understand, and provides an explanation for her actions far more acceptable than the truth. It also explains why no one is permitted to contact Daedalus directly except through her.

The Daedalus Group tries very hard to prevent harm to Union citizens, but those who begin to suspect too much have to be silenced. The outer members most often carry out these regrettable necessities, usually supplied with a spurious justification from Daedalus himself. Most are blinded by their awe and respect for the AI to question the truth of the matter, and those who do get too inquisitive tend to have tragic accidents or find themselves suddenly discovered by Compact agents.

## Agents

Most Daedalus Group agents are natives of one of the Flower Union worlds, and share an appearance common to those worlds. Most are copper-skinned, with dark hair and eyes, and favor ear, nostril, and lip piercings with traditional religious significance. This look blends in unremarkably on most Union or Compact worlds, but when forced to go further afield they will omit the facial piercings.

The people of the Union are a fairly egalitarian society, and their intelligence agencies and special forces accept men and women from all backgrounds. Most are fiercely religious devotees of the Old Way and the gods of their ancestors. Even those who frankly disbelieve all the old creeds tend to adopt their customs and outward pieties simply as a sign of unity and rejection of the hated Old Wayists of the Burning Mirror Compact.

Training varies widely. Ideally, all of the outer members employed by the Group will be veteran intelligence operatives, but the severe casualties incurred in the war against the Compact has bled the Union dearly of its best talent. A disturbing number of its personnel are green and untested, thrown into their duties for lack of anyone else. These men and women are prone to overreaction and poor judgment under pressure. Some become blind to everything but the accomplishment of their mission, and ignore the consequences of their methods and the terrible price that innocent bystanders must sometimes pay.

The inner members are all experienced agents or governmental officials, callused by years of grim choices. Not all of them are combatants, but all of them are extremely good at what they do. Even those who despise the choice the Group made to prime Daedalus for his transformation will fight to the death to keep the truth from escaping. If Daedalus had to be shut down, the Union would collapse in months at most. They fight for time, and pray against hope that the godmind will deliver them before it crumbles into madness.

## Further Cabals of Hydra Sector

**Bakassi Security Agency/Bakassi:** A miserably-supported, understaffed, intentionally-toothless police force for the jungle world of Bakassi, these men and women stubbornly try to maintain the rule of Gateway's laws on the world despite the sinister influence of the ruthless, amoral Gansu government.

**Chifeng True Way Friendship Society/Chifeng:** Operating as a seemingly innocent cultural exchange society, these True Way believers in Chifeng actually work to support the True Way raiders and slaver ships that are forced to use the planet as a waystation on their journeys south into the Gateway stellar cluster. They seek eventually to shift public opinion enough toward the Burning Mirror Compact to allow them to block Old Way ships.

**The Finders of Ways/Muruni:** A clique of renegade psychics originally in service to the Burning Mirror Compact, they've discovered a drill route to Muruni and seek to plunder its alien psitech. They are convinced that the technology can be used to locate safe drill routes to long-neglected stars, and dream of ruling these primitive worlds as psychic gods.

**The Hidden Flame/Ain Sof:** A band of deluded scientists from Dayabasti, they are convinced that the sealed citadels of the planet guard knowledge that can be used to save their world. They work endlessly to crack open the fortresses, refusing to believe that they contain only a hideous danger to the sector.

**Octlan Labor Guild/Octlan:** A conclave of union bosses every bit as grasping and ruthless as the factory management, they wield their impoverished laborers as a weapon against any organization that seeks to break their stranglehold on Octlan factory labor. Those ordinary workers who rebel against them become gravely accident-prone.

**The Rising Tide/Tide:** Fired by their hatred of the tyrannical Empress of Storms, these water-world shipmasters conspire to plunder the ancient alien ruins. They seek to somehow turn their mighty weaponry on the ships and fortresses of their mistress, and if lives should be lost in the search... well, there must be a little blood in the water before Tide is finally free.

**The Straight Path/Vault:** Some of the scholars of Vault are convinced that only under their enlightened rule can the brutal savagery of less developed worlds be tamed. They seek to use the ancient lore of the Preceptor archives on the planet to develop a doomsday device, to threaten wild worlds with destruction unless they submit to sagacious rule.

**Trade Facilitation Bureau/Polychrome:** A blandly innocuous bureau funded by several Polychrome megacorps, the TFB is actually maniacally set on buying or stealing the tech base necessary to manufacture spike drives on Polychrome. The lack of certain vital elements on the planet forces them to "acquire" them from other worlds, and "recruit" foreign astronautic expertise.

**Terminus Est/Hutton:** Prey to the hideous appetites of the Everlasting, some of their slaves and chattel conspire to put a permanent ending to their ghoulish masters. NGOs from Gateway ostensibly have nothing to do with them, but many are sympathetic enough to smuggle in supplies and offworlder helpers.

**Those Who Eat/Dayabasti:** A tiny cell of Wakened on this tormented world have retained most of their human memories and intelligence. They aspire to capture the human Monitors for food and an eventual breeding population of human livestock. They conspire with some humans by promising their quislings that they and their families will be spared to be rulers of the human food-slaves.

**The Trueborn Revivalists/Bellchapel:** A hidden eugenics cult dedicated to the unearthing of lost Zadak modification creches and their use in generating even more "perfect" humanity. They care nothing for the cost in lives or the awful misshapen things that come from their experimentation with the alien tech.

**The Unchanged/Chot Zadak:** A rag-tag lot of rebels fleeing from the biological tyranny of the alien Harmony Lords of Chot Zadak. Their hatred of their alien overlords is inextinguishable, and their treatment of collaborationist "traitors" is utterly merciless.

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