

# BLACK CRUSADE™

## THE TOME OF EXCESS™



A SOURCEBOOK FOR  
FOLLOWERS OF SLAANESH





# BLACK CRUSADE™

## THE TOME OF EXCESS™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM DARKNESS  
OF THE 4<sup>1</sup>ST MILLENIUM



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# INTRODUCTION

*"You believe there are limits to existence. My god shows me otherwise, and in his service I have known realms where indescribable pleasure and pain become as one. Come, let me show you..."*

—Lascivoux the Devourer,  
Sensati Extremis of the Barbed League

All beings require sensation to know their surroundings, but the truly aware realise that life without sensation is worse than death. For those who exist for sensation, the normal limits of life become meaningless in the pursuit of greater and greater stimuli. The caress of silk becomes an obsession with touch, such that the slightest whisper of dust motes is a ganglionic symphony. Appreciation of fine amasec leads from one savoury morsel to another, and on to quests for unspeakable gastronomic appetites requiring entire populations to provide the rendered ingredients. Slowly an ear for a well-tuned violone is no longer enough, and as devotion to auditory experiences grows then only harmonics that shatter reality can suffice. As excesses are breached, nothing can sate these heavier appetites for long, however, and soon nothing exists except the quest for further sensation. Lives such as these are bound, either knowingly or unknowingly, in the service of the Chaos God Slaanesh.

Slaanesh is the personification of excess. In his name, hosts degrade entire worlds with unspeakable rites and warlords seduce systems with honeyed promises of unimaginable essences. His own appearance is beyond limits, existing as both male and female, always the epitome of impossible beauty and desire no matter who gazes upon his form. His followers exist only to seek out new perfections of sensation, and to make themselves perfect to better achieve such sensations. The more perfect the artist, the better he can fully admire unnatural colours that cause eyes to boil and shrivel. Only the finest of assassins can appreciate the tortured gasps of a betrayed noble as the knife slowly twists. None but a devoted master of the blade knows the bliss as flesh slices apart under his exquisite riposte. All these and more are mere steps along a path that requires more and more with each sensory attainment. To know ultimates is to realise there are no ultimates, only increasing tiers of perception and the search of perfection to fully appreciate them. Their frantic journeys can have no end except for that which lays waiting them within the Warp: Slaanesh.

## WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

**THE TOME OF EXCESS** is the third of four books delving into the darkest secrets of the four Chaos powers and their role in the **BLACK CRUSADE** roleplaying game. It is devoted to Slaanesh, the Dark Prince. Brought into life through the fall of the decadent and prideful xenos race known as the Eldar, he is the Lord of Excess, and the pursuit of perfection and sensory gratifications in all things. For his debauched followers across the Screaming Vortex there are no boundaries in experience, and their eagerness to draw others into his worship is equally

limitless. In the pages that follow, Heretics can discover new methods to seduce foes into their service and sway masses into ecstatic slavery, along with new devices and implements to aid them in their journeys beyond sensation.

## CHAPTER I: SLAANESH

This chapter covers the Prince of Pleasure and Pain, youngest of the Chaos Gods who came into existence as the Eldar fell to their own excesses. Slaanesh now acts as that dying race's eternal nemesis, ready to devour their souls with endless torment. From his layered realm within the Warp, each domain a trap for travellers without the will and strength to withstand the unique temptations it offers, he entices mortals across the stars with pleasure unendurable and pain unquenchable. Few can resist his call.

## CHAPTER II: SLAVES TO SENSATION

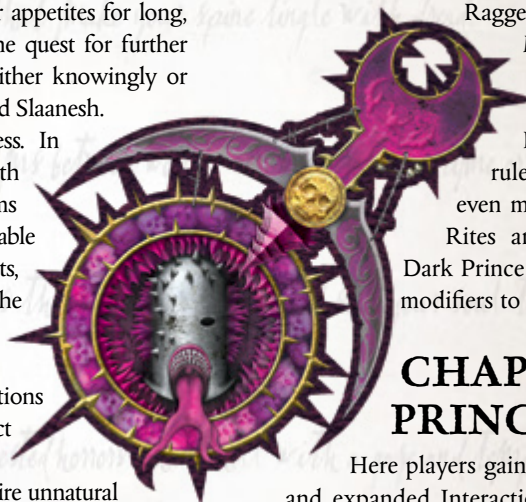
Heretics are offered four new Player Archetypes in this chapter: Noise Marine, Dark Apostle, Pirate Prince of the Ragged Helix, and Flesh Shaper of Melancholia. It also includes new armoury items to offer delights and depravations for both the Heretic and his foes, expanded rules for seducing and controlling even more powerful minions, and new Rites and Rituals for beseeching the Dark Prince for succour, including extended modifiers to aid in such endeavours.

## CHAPTER III: PRINCES OF PAIN

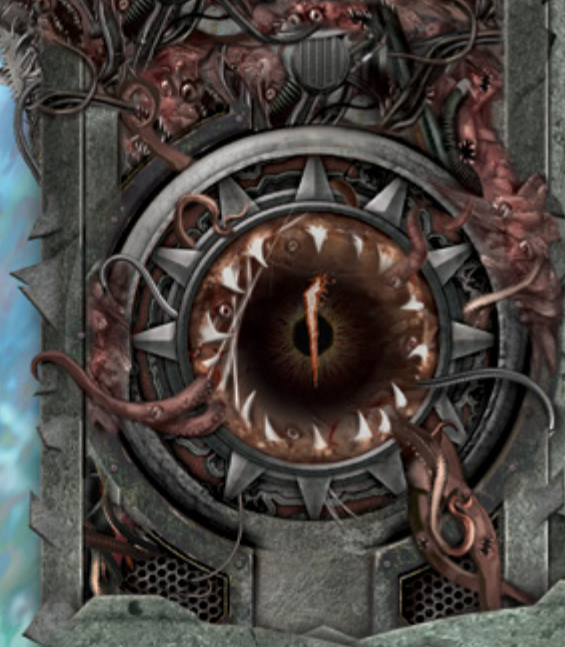
Here players gain new rules for social encounters and expanded Interaction guidelines, so that they can achieve their aims before their enemies know open war has begun. It also includes new rules for utilising, earning, and losing Infamy in their ascent to Daemonhood. This chapter features new destinations within the Screaming Vortex related to Slaanesh and his followers, such as blasphemous Mammon, the Daemon World of Contrition, Malignia's death-jungles, and the Forbidden Portal and its deadly guardians.

## CHAPTER IV: AT THE EDGE

As the Heretics gain in power and infamy, they turn their attentions to gaining the support of the pirate clans of the Ragged Helix to further their quest of escape from the Vortex. This adventure takes them to the pleasure palaces and depraved lords of this asteroid chain, where the players seek out necessary aid to prepare their own Black Crusade against the hated Imperium. Such aid cannot be won with sword and blood, however, and requires enticement and persuasion of a more subtle but no less dangerous approach. Should the players attain the aid of the pirate lord, their goals become one step closer; should they fail, they might remain as slaves in his sensory-dens forever.



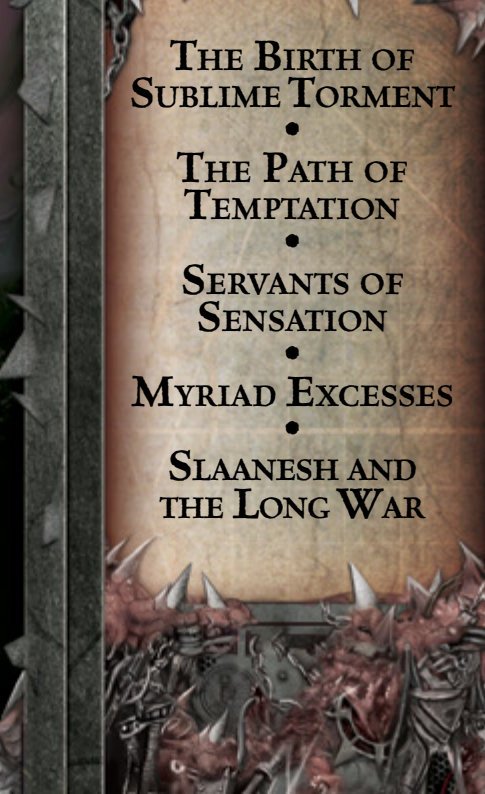




# SLAANESH



- THE BIRTH OF  
SUBLIME TORMENT
- 
- THE PATH OF  
TEMPTATION
- 
- SERVANTS OF  
SENSATION
- 
- MYRIAD EXCESSES
- 
- SLAANESH AND  
THE LONG WAR





# CHAPTER I: SLAANESH

*"Find pleasure in every moment, indulge in every whim. Let lesser races feel the burden of their crude lives. We are beyond such concerns or worries. Every power is ours to use, every sensation ours to experience. We are truly masters of the galaxy, and all others exist only to satisfy our curiosities. We have earned our position of power. Let us forever taste the fruits of such achievement. Time itself is ours to command. We are eternal."*

—Translated Eldar glyphs found amidst the ruins of the Shrine of Celestial Grandeur

Existence for most beings across the galaxy is harsh and merciless. Each hopeless day is dominated by others seeking power, conquest, or mere survival. There is another world, though, beyond the grasp of most mortals. It is the Realm of Chaos, and the foul gods who rule it have plans for the mortals upon whom they cast their acquisitive gazes. Such inhuman plans far outreach those of the small-minded warlords and emperors of the mortal world. For Slaanesh, those plans are filled with temptation, obsession, and delight—all in glorious excess.

## THE BIRTH OF SUBLIME TORMENT

It is said that a civilisation creates its gods in the image of its people. Often these gods are nothing more than inventions of the mind, more placeholders for ideas than actual beings of power and influence. This cannot be said of the Dark Gods of Chaos. As horrifying as they are powerful, the Ruinous Powers are real, a truth made apparent thousands of times each day as their actions manifest in the material world.

These monstrous gods reside in an ever-changing realm of pure Warp energy, where time, distance, and scale have no meaning. It is a place where the whims of gods along with the dreams and nightmares of mortals run together and bring form to the formless. From raw Chaos, creations otherwise unimaginable are routinely given substance. Entire worlds coalesce in an instant. Formless desires that once inhabited only the subconscious of a shattered mind spring into being and consume the body and soul of the broken mortal whose tormented visions gave them life. Then, just as quickly, these worlds and beings dissolve back into the swirling energies from which they came. For most manifested creations, this is the usual nature of existence in the Realm of Chaos.

If the legends are to be believed, there was one being born into the Warp from the depravity and corruption of an entire race. Over thousands and thousands of years, the ancient Eldar, a race with souls of limitless passion and nearly limitless

psychic capabilities, allowed themselves to be consumed with decadence. Because of their powers, passions, and unique connections to the Warp, the disturbances their depravity touched off were singularly dangerous. Even just this vague bit of knowledge is little more than rumour to most inhabitants of the galaxy. Still fewer are privy to the secrets hidden within the shrouded and nearly inaccessible vaults of the Black Library, the ancient repository of Eldar knowledge located deep within the webway. Within these sombre chambers, ancient manuscripts point to an unspeakable event that changed the galaxy forever. From the perverse thoughts, actions, and deeds of the Eldar a new god was born, a very real god that was indeed a reflection of the race that unwittingly gave him life. His violent birth signalled the eventual death of the race.

The tomes of the Black Library say that Slaanesh was born from the uncontrolled and excessive need for sensation that had come to preoccupy every moment of every day for nearly every Eldar. Through the incredibly advanced technology and psychic mastery that the race had developed over the millennia, they passed the days living in unimaginable luxury. They had no need to concern themselves with matters such as daily survival, manual labour, or warding off external threats. Nor did they feel bound by social constraints. They had no need to think of how their actions would affect others, not even within their own families, since there would never be a time when they needed anything from them. Everything was at all times theirs. The passions that burned deeply within their souls were unbound and freely explored to depths that other races could not fathom. A mind freed from all concerns of reciprocation or fear of reprisal is able to turn fully inward and wander into unknown places, seeking previously unconsidered diversions and sensations. When an entire race unshackled its minds in this way, unusually powerful energy was cast into the Warp, and the unnatural essences that reside in the Warp responded.

The darkest moment of Eldar history—the Fall—is chronicled as a cautionary tale, one that the keepers of the Black Library, known as the Black Council, study continually. Their hope is that some path toward a return to ascendance, or at least a way to avoid their ever-looming doom, can be found. The tale says that the vast majority of the members of the ancient Eldar race, unprepared as they were for the god their unbridled passion and perversion had birthed, were consumed in an instant. Their minds, and worse their souls, were connected to Chaos in a way they could not have foreseen. They had become slaves to darkness, and when their new-born master hungered, the souls of a race were forfeit as his sustenance.

## THE ALLURE OF SLAANESH

For most of the remaining Eldar, the birth of Slaanesh and the fall of their civilisation marked a profound change in the course they would take, not only through history, but also as a people. Retreating to their craftworlds, they forged a new way of life, defined by discipline and a determination to fight back against their doom and survive. This resolve was bolstered by fear, which brought the overwhelming majority of those who resisted change in line. Slaanesh was not content with the souls he had harvested in the moment of his birth. He continued to seek out the remaining Eldar, savouring the succulent taste of





each soul he claimed. For a member of a race once so proud and seemingly eternal, the thought of being snuffed out forever to nourish a twisted god was terrifying. That it was a deity of their own creation only served to magnify the horror.

Yet some refused to change. Whether from pride, a sense of defiance, or the simple inability to change, some Eldar continued down a path of excess and sensual indulgence and do so to this day. They live each moment knowing it could be their last, not only in mortal life, but in eternal existence. This heightened feeling of risk, of spending each moment on the edge of a knife, fuels them to indulge in even greater acts of depravity and to push the limits of sensation. They are not, however, the only ones who damn themselves this way.

The powers of Chaos hold sway over so many not because they represent some esoteric concept with rare appeal; no, they are so insidious because they are precisely the opposite. With Khorne, it is the inherent nature of conflict and struggle. For Nurgle, it is the inevitability of death and decay, and to these certainties unto the end. For Tzeentch, it is the ever-changing nature of the universe and the need to feel some measure of control. These are all base instincts, primal parts of the lives of every living thing. Slaanesh is no different. His appeal is grounded in such seemingly innocent ideals—every being's pursuit of happiness and the desire to improve. Very little, if anything, holds more sway over the heart of any mortal, no matter the race, than desire in all its forms. It is universal. All beings want more than they have. They are never content. Where an Imperial Guardsman seeks glory, he finds Slaanesh. Where a Rogue Trader seeks wealth, he finds Slaanesh. Wherever there are desires, at the end of the quest to sate those desires lies Slaanesh, and utter damnation.

## SENSATION WITHOUT LIMITATIONS

*"Well of course my people love me. Only the insane would consider otherwise! Accelerate work on the Grand Hall of Statuary, so all may adore me even when I am not with them."*

—Walash Prixetti, Governor of Prixetti VII

**S**laanesh can see his hand at work across the galaxy in countless ways. The joy a parent feels when a child is born, the pride a commodore feels when his fleet executes a cunning battle plan, the stirring of a lover's heart when in the embrace of a paramour, the heady rush of relief that reminds a soldier how good it feels to be alive after an unexpected skirmish—all of these sensations, on some small level, are pleasing to the Master of Delights. They are not enough. Though the decimation of the Eldar and his pursuit of the remaining few of their race is a source of great joy to Slaanesh, he has much, much grander desires to fulfil.

Every breath is an opportunity to take in a new scent. Each glass raised is a chance to savour a new flavour. On every battlefield, each chainsword blow can elicit a never before heard pain-filled scream. From his glittering palace, the Lord of Excess revels in each new sensation discovered. He guides and directs the inhabitants of the galaxy to push ever onwards





towards new heights of sensation. A god experiences existence on a level far beyond that of which a mortal can ever dare to dream, but that does not mean Slaanesh is content to leave the galaxy to its own devices. He sees the stars, the planets, and indeed the very fabric of reality itself as his plaything, to be poked, prodded, ripped, and tightly bound to his will in order to squeeze out every last sensation there is to enjoy.

Those who choose to serve him emulate him as best as they can, limited as they are by mortal form and mortal imagination. In every corner of the galaxy, worshippers of Slaanesh spend their time inventing new delights and challenging themselves to craft experiences for themselves that no one has ever had before. This can be something as base as eliciting a new reaction to a carnal entwining, or as high minded as creating a master work of art so profound that it brings tears to all who behold it. The truly inspired, though, have much larger stages to play upon. There are so few that have had the pleasure of seeing entire squads of Space Marines evaporate under the fire of a Subjugator Titan. Fewer still are those who have heard a million voices cry out in fear and then nothing but dripping stillness as nucleic-acid bombs dissolved away flesh. Most lack the vision to create scenarios where these delights can be experienced. It is likely not even possible for the greatest excesses to be achieved in the mortal realm. In the Realm of Chaos, however, all things are possible.

## THE PATH OF TEMPTATION

*"I prepared to enter his realm, expecting to encounter guardians who would seek to tear into me with talons and fangs. At the least I assumed I would find bastions to bar my progress. I found none. The land before me was open and pristine. Its fields shimmered like gold and its forests bore fruits of sapphires and emeralds. I took a step into this place and instantly knew I was lost just as surely as if I had been impaled on a debtor's spike."*

—From the heretical tome *The Confessions of Cardinal Wogalta*

**T**he Ruinous Powers each have their own domains within the Realm of Chaos, wherein they plot the downfall of the mortal world and their rise to power over their brothers. Vast armies protect most of these empires from invasion, for not only do the gods constantly try to gain an upper hand on each other, but sometimes mortals are insane enough to attempt intrusion as well.

Slaanesh is unique among his brother-gods. He does not try to keep others out. He invites them in. Through a series of tests, he defends his gleaming palace against assault. Tales such as that of the Heretic Cardinal describe this Palace of Pleasure as sitting at the centre of the Pain Master's empire, surrounded by six other domains arranged in concentric rings. Each ring holds different temptations for those who wander through it, imploring them to succumb to the pleasures it offers.

Temptation is a weapon just as powerful as a chainsword or boltgun. Traps can be sprung to eliminate the weak and dim. The bodies of those who succumb to the myriad temptations of the Dark Prince's realm are consumed by the land itself, or turned into statues that beautify the view for others. The souls of these lost and damned unfortunates feed Slaanesh's insatiable hunger. He invites them in so that they might sustain him and his realm. Those who pass early tests may catch Slaanesh's eye, giving him some amusement for a time as he watches them resist, only to inevitably lose themselves to one seduction or another. Those rare few who make it to the outer walls of the Palace of Pleasure may be graced by a visit from the Lord of Excess himself. None have ever made it into the Palace itself unless Slaanesh wished it, for all who have looked upon his perfection have fallen to their knees and given themselves over, mind, body, and soul, to his Dark Majesty.

## AN EXCESS OF RICHES

The Ecclesiarchy use stories of wayward souls like the Heretic Cardinal to try to warn their servants of the dangers of temptation, drawing from the crazed descriptions of the Dark Prince's domains and minions that are related in such tales. It matters not if these accounts have any basis in real experience or if they are purely mad ravings brought on by fever or drugs. Real or imagined, they are powerful tales for protecting the simpleminded from, among other things, dreams of wealth and the pleasures it can buy.



## BEAUTY IN DARKNESS

It is said that should a mortal catch even a fleeting glimpse of the bodily form of Slaanesh, he would lose all sense of self. All virtue and purity an individual may have once clung to would be cast aside in an instant, replaced by wicked desires for dark and depraved wanton abandon. A mortal thus enthralled would become a willing participant in every act of debauchery the Lord of Pleasure whispered into his ear.

Few would blame a soul so ensnared, for all accounts of Slaanesh describe him as perfection incarnate. Neither male nor female, yet both, the Dark Prince can assume the form most pleasing to his audience, ensuring desire and obedience in an effort to serve Slaanesh.

Most often Slaanesh is portrayed as a youthful male, full of life and with an irresistible allure. This outer beauty masks cruelty and manipulative intent, for Slaanesh is not interested in simple compliments or words of devotion. Worshippers of Slaanesh use promises, guile, beauty, and charm as weapons to get others to do their bidding. They seek to conquer the wills of others in order to further their own goals of exploring sensation, pushing the limits of excess and attaining perfection. These are all ideals of their seductive god, and gods have the power to reach far beyond what a mortal can hope to achieve. Slaanesh is perfect and beautiful, but perfection and beauty are nothing more than tools he employs to bring his darkest, most twisted desires and plans to fruition.

Scholars of the Ruinous Powers collate tales of the impossible realms of Pleasure and Pain, and often describe the first of Slaanesh's treacherous domains as confronting visitors with a spectacle of riches beyond the wildest dreams of even the most avaricious merchants. They tell of trees, grass, and other plants made from living gold. Gentle breezes cause the grass to shimmer like the waters of an ocean under a noon sun. As the wind passes over the blades of grass and through the branches and leaves of the trees, it takes on a voice that beckons all to take as much as they want and more. The mountains that rise up on the horizon reflect a glorious warm light, letting all who see them know that they too are formed from gold. Pathways through the fields are paved with cobblestones not of granite or shale, but of ruby and emerald. At the edges of the paths, loose gemstones and gold nuggets sit, waiting for anyone to pick them up and slip them in a pouch. There is always room for one more glittering stone, one more pebble of gold. Wandering souls ensnared by this domain would do well to recall the legends that say that if those who lined their pockets with these treasures were able to take their eyes off the objects of their desire, they would note that not all they see was shining. Dull bits of bone and other remains are plentiful here as well. These are all that is left of those who filled their pockets, pouches, sleeves, and boots with so much gold that they collapsed under the weight of it. Unwilling or unable to let the riches go, they died where they fell, smiles on their faces despite their impending ends.

When day turns to night and the golden hues are replaced by soft blue, the sky shimmers ceaselessly. The heavens are filled with diamonds that seem as if they could be plucked from their place in the sky if one could but reach just a little further. Indeed, many try to do just that, forgetting themselves as they do, not paying attention to their surroundings. Higher and higher they reach, climbing trees made of pure gold, even leaping from the boughs, only to plummet back to the ground, fracturing skulls and rupturing organs when they crash. The end comes to them then, but it is a joyous one, for in their minds they see only handfuls of glittering jewels. It is a temporary joy, however. In exchange for a fleeting moment of false elation, they forfeit their immortal souls.

## AN EXCESS OF SUSTENANCE

Mad ravings from those who claim to have seen into the beyond say that if an intruder is able to pass through the golden fields without succumbing to greed, he is next confronted with a lake so vast, its shorelines fades to nothing in the distance. The only other land to be seen is a smattering of pale islands, connected to each other by a network of bridges. The finest wine serves as water in this lake but no cups wait to be filled. The bouquet of the wine is strong, pleasant, and enticing. Words from fiery sermons begin to fade in the face of such serenity. Most visitors take very little time before they give up on the idea of cups and fall to their knees to drink directly from the lake. Heads swimming with delightful intoxication, many continue to drink until they slip into the waters and sink below the surface, never to be seen again.

Those who are able to lift their heads from the wine cast their gaze more closely on the islands and see them for what they are—hunched giants holding aloft great tables heaped with extravagant feasts. Exotic fruits, rich breads, and meats of every kind are present. Swimming to these islands is perilous, and many whose senses have become wine-addled sink beneath the waves, joining the countless others who have slipped beneath the carmine liquid. For the ones that make it, the reward is astonishing. Each bite is better than the finest meal they have ever experienced. Each morsel is a decadent delight for the tongue. Faster and faster the wayward consume the food. The voracious eater forces handful after handful down his throat. In his blind need to consume, he does not notice that some of the meat comes from carcasses with an all-too-familiar form. Even if he were to somehow stop forcing food into his own stomach long enough to recognise the fate that awaits him, he could not stop. Given completely over to gluttonous indulgence, the mortal only stops eating when his body fails and he finally collapses into the feast, awaiting the next hungry diner.

*Slaanesh, give me power  
To make my blade red  
And I will make my enemies  
Come to me, against their will.  
Look at me  
Slaanesh!  
Let me please you!*



## AN EXCESS OF BODILY DELIGHTS

There is perhaps no easier way to corrupt a mortal than to appeal to his carnal instincts. Entire Imperial libraries are filled with tales of lurid corruption on one side and manuals with instructions for fighting it on the other. In his heart, a Preacher knows that his congregation is most likely to fall because of the indulgences of lascivious desire than from any other temptation. The Dark Prince surely knows this as well, and it is why the legends say he fills the third ring of his domain with visions, scents, and experiences that overload the mind and body of anyone who makes it this far.

Rich fields of pleasingly textured grasses fill this ring, lit with teasing, golden hues. Soft tents made of spun dreamthreads reflect visions gleaned from the deep subconscious of those who gaze upon them, forming sinuous corridors so narrow that a traveller cannot help but brush up against them and feel their cloying embrace. From one vista to the next, visitors travel through a series of decadent tableaux, each more twisted and inviting than the one before it. The crude flesh dens of the underhives or the elegant shadowed parlours of the spires cannot present anything close to what the Lord of Endless Delights offers. Daemon and mortal bodies entwine until they become one. Forms so beautiful they are difficult to look at lie couchant, beckoning. Resisting is all but impossible.

The sights and sounds of the offered pleasures are sufficient to enthrall most who see and hear them. The assault on the senses does not end with these things, though. The air hangs heavy with an intoxicating musk so rich and pervasive that it penetrates the flesh of all who pass through it, quickening the heart and opening the senses further than thought possible. Thus stimulated, flesh becomes hyper sensitive to even the most gentle breath of air or tender caress. Scents waft from braziers in which smoulder the embers of an incense that triggers memories of amorous encounters of the past.

A mortal in this state is easy prey for the purveyors of delights that surround them. Closing in on their now-willing victims, Daemonettes offer comforts with softly voluptuous flesh, kisses from razor-fanged mouths, and embraces from piercing claws.

## AN EXCESS OF ADORATION

Within the ranks of the militaries of every race, talk of glory is common. Troops are motivated to achieve more than they believe they can by speeches from commanders who exhort the ranks onward to glorious victory. When battles are won, the returning heroes are held high and showered with praise and adoration. This effect on the hero can be profound. More is possible, he thinks. More can be achieved. More glory can be his. Insidiously, this can also lead to fears of letting it all slip away, of failure and derision. In these thoughts, a path to Slaanesh is laid at the feet of the hero.

This path is not restricted to the military. Leaders of government, churches, and cults all seek approval as well. Even fathers want their children to look up to them. The path described in the Heretic Cardinal's confession is crowded with wayward souls—a path that leads to the fourth circle of The Dark Prince's domain.

For each visitor here, the experience is unique, though there are commonalities for many. Massed throngs may greet a soldier, cheering his name and erecting statues in his honour. Planetary governors may see themselves establishing such complete order that they gain control of an entire system. Whatever the scenario presented to him, the victim of these visions finds it incredibly difficult to pull himself out of the dream. Unlike the dreams experienced when a person sleeps, these illusions do nothing to seem impossible. A soldier has seen others elevated and has been trained for acts of glory. Histories are filled with tales of governors who have carved out greater realms among the stars. These and more offer solidity to the visions encountered, drawing the dreamer farther and farther into illusionary depths.

Only self-doubt gnaws at some, and these are the ones who break free. When they do, the dream shatters, revealing, if only for an instant, a vast plain of black soot. Upon it heaps of bones are buried beneath the bodies of millions of others, standing and lying in the burned ashes, still trapped in their individual delusions. The unsettling image flashes by in an instant and the traveller is confronted by the traps of the next circle.

### UNDER HIS SKIN

*The lord sat on a collection of tasselled pillows, utterly spellbound as always. His favourite dancer was at work, her scented candles already burning low after exquisite hours of enticing undulations around his recumbent form. Shalla danced, and each pass had left another piece of silken cloth draped about him. Each length was infused with a mix of sweat and perfume, but it was the texture that made him sigh. It was impossibly soft and flowed like water, yet would catch against flesh in an indescribable way he could not find in anything else. He could only rub each against his skin, knowing and dreading that after she left the material would never feel the same as it did while she danced. He had scoured the hive, raided the oblique markets, implored Rogue Traders, but nothing would compare.*

*Her dance was coming to a close, and he began to weep. He gathered the material around him, seeking to draw all the sensation he could before the completion. She looked at him with eyes that caressed him like her silks. "Ah, my lord, do not cry so," her words cloying and thick. "Shalla has danced for many before you, and knows how to achieve the full embrace of my fabrics." She moved to him, one hand behind her back.*

*"You need to feel it completely. Nothing can exist between you and it." She drew forth a thin, glistening blade and put it in his eager hand. "Peel away the layers, and experience ultimate sensation." She turned and padded away, smiling at the wet, hacking sounds and the low moans that filled the room. Her voice was a whisper. "Another offering for you, my master of tormented desires."*



## AN EXCESS OF ACHIEVEMENT

When the Corpse-god of the Imperium created the Space Marines, legend has that he faced the difficult task of engineering a warrior that was eager to serve him through great deeds of heroism and by achieving the impossible in his name. At the same time, these soldiers needed to be humble enough to realise that victory earned in the name of the Emperor is not personal, that they are simply weapons to be wielded in his hands, unquestioning and obedient. As is known to those who have studied those ancient times, he failed. Legions rebelled, led by prideful Primarchs who questioned the Emperor's plans and thought they could do better. All the while, the Honey-Tongued Master whispered encouragement in their ears, as he does to all visitors to the fifth domain, if the blasphemous tales are to be believed.

What appears to be a grand forest, with dense clusters of majestic trees that house secluded glades is, of course, a trap. The sound baffling effect of the trees puts the mind in an introspective position. The long walk gives it time to wander. The glades are inviting and serene. In the centre of each glade is a perfectly still pool that invites the traveller to sit and reflect upon his thoughts. As he stares into the pool, he recalls his accomplishments and dwells on what more he could achieve. Sitting there lost in thought, the undergrowth of the glade begins to creep in on him. Thorny branches reach toward him. Strangling vines descend from the trees and gently coil around his neck. As he closes his eyes and imagines himself striking down legendary foes, conquering galaxy-spanning civilisations, or negotiating heavily favourable Warrants of Trade, the waters of the pool rise up and take the shape of whatever represents defeat for the dreamer. Sensing something is amiss, the ensnared visitor opens his eyes and is confronted by a vision of shame and defeat just before the branches and vines rip at his flesh and choke the air from his lungs. The sound of his final scream, stifled by a lack of air, is a delight to the Prince of Painful Raptures.

An incredibly small number of travellers resist the temptation to dream and are spared the torment of confronting their failings. They rise, exhausted by their trials, and pass into the sixth and final realm that stands between them and the Palace of Pleasure.

## AN EXCESS OF REPOSE

Life in the 41st Millennium is hard, short, and brutal. For many, each day is a struggle to simply survive to the end of the day. Even races that do not suffer the oppressive yoke of Imperial rule are not without burdens. The Eldar, for example, must ensure that their craftworlds are supplied and ready to repel invaders, all the while haunted by the knowledge of the terrible fate that can await them should their souls fall to the Lord of Pain. Still, bodies need rest. Surely any wanderer who has made it to the last of Slaanesh's defensive rings must be weary, and especially deserving of repose, even if only for a moment.



Upon emerging from the delightful torments of the previous five domains, anyone who could resist the seduction placed before them at this point would surely become legend. Awaiting the beleaguered traveller, say the whispers of those depraved wretches languishing in perfumed palaces and pleasure dens, is a vision of sublime peace. All struggle is surely a thing of the past. All torment a distant memory. Here is a beach of softest sand, warmed by the rays of a golden sun. Gentle breezes push scattered clouds through a perfect azure sky. Music is carried on those same breezes, soothing the spirit. The ground itself rises up and caresses the body of the weary wanderer. Cherubs begin to remove armour plates and burdensome belongings. Coalescing from the salted mists of the waves that break upon the shore, figures with placid features and soothing hands approach and rub tired muscles. The memories of an arduous journey fade into nothingness. Peace is the wanderer's at last.

It is peace eternal if the will is not strong enough to snap consciousness back to reality. Determination sends the placid apparitions screaming back to the seas. Resolve collects displaced armour and other possessions. Herculean effort forces the few strongest invaders to rise up and approach the final destination. The Palace of Pleasure lies ahead, and surely any who could pass through the six trials is prepared for what awaits.





## THE PALACE OF PLEASURE

A determined warrior, Daemon or mortal, who survived the predations of the six circles and their inhabitants would naturally assume that the Palace of Pleasure, Slaanesh's residence and seat of power, would be defended with legions of Daemonettes and Fiends. Surely his Keepers of Secrets would confront any invader that made it to the Dark Prince's abode. Thick walls must surround the grounds and towers of his demesne.

Slaanesh has no need of such defences, however. Any invading force, from a lone Space Marine, to legions of Bloodletters, would find that the only guardians present would be statues of the finest alabaster and perfectly shaped trees. Confused as these warriors might be, nothing could prepare them for the presence of the master of the realm. As the invaders contemplate what they perceive as a lack of defence, the air stills. Unseen choirs sing, and ears weep at the unholy harmonies. A god emerges from his palace. Striding confidently toward the awestruck invaders, the Dark Prince smiles. It is enough to completely disarm any who stand in his presence. They are lost, and they care little of the fact. This, the tales say, is why there are no defensive walls or Daemonic hordes. There is simply no need. Resistance in the face of perfection is not a possibility.

What becomes of those thus ensnared is beyond speculation and more the subject of fevered dreams. Not one soul has trod upon the grounds of the Palace of Pleasure and returned to tell the tale. Scholars of the obscene and decadent debate not only the fate of those who get this far, but even the very structure of the grounds and the palace itself. There being no firsthand accounts, who can say for sure what form the citadel takes? Some say the palace is a single humble dwelling, making the appearance of the Lord of Obsession even more grand in comparison. Other say it is the most opulent structure ever conceived, stretching for miles in every direction, including upward. Most agree that it must be magnificent. A god of excess and perfection must have a domicile to match. If this is correct, then the spires of gold and marble surely ring an inner courtyard wherein statues of exquisite realism are placed. These statues might be the final form of those who succumbed to the disarming allure of Slaanesh. If so, then their faces would bear a countenance of absolute joy. These statues would capture forever the perfect moment of grace that one would surely feel in the presence of perfection.

It may be that the only inhabitant of the Palace of Pleasure is Slaanesh himself. Perhaps no Daemons of any kind are required to embellish his inner sanctum. Or it may be that the palace is filled with life, a den of iniquity where decadence unrivalled is played out eternally. Regardless, it is the seat of power for the Lord of Pleasure, the Master of Painful Delights, the God of Obsession. It is home to Slaanesh.



## SERVANTS OF SENSATION

*"Can we play with him, master? He seems so unhappy. Let us help him smile. Please? Or at least let us carve one on his face when he stops screaming."*

—Azeila, Alluress of Slaanesh

The Master of Excess is a young god, though concepts such as age or duration are difficult to apply to a being who exists outside of linear time. Still, this youth has not impeded his efforts to swell the ranks of his mortal followers and daemonic minions, nor has it limited the numbers who have given themselves over to him completely. The forbidden experiences he offers and the secret desires he grants permission to explore have an appeal that countless billions find irresistible. Mortal followers can never become one with Slaanesh in the same way his Daemons can, still they throw themselves into his arms as willing servants, jealously seeking that which Daemons come by naturally—perfect unity. The eddies of the Warp and the winds that blow across the planets of realspace carry the dark promises of debased joy from the glistening lips of the Lord of Delight to the quivering ears of those all too eager to listen and obey. Repressed mortal souls and enthusiastically lusty Daemons alike hear his perfect voice and yearn to serve him, embracing both pain and pleasure out of the desire to be bound to the service of Slaanesh, and at the same time revel in a freedom previously unknown.

The following vox recordings were uncovered at the crime scene. Voiceprint confirms they are of Kellum Lim, resident of the destroyed manse. Investigation ongoing.

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*Entry D235, H8.05: It continues to vex me. Me, the finest gourmaster the hive has seen! As much as it pains my pallet, I must record the matter for the gastronomes who attempt to follow in my footsteps. It was a normal meal, six courses in solitude to properly capture each of these favourite dishes. This time... ah, I lack the words. It was sublime and overwhelming. It was beyond anything before, though my chefs insist they had followed my standard preparation dictates exactly as always. They are but ratlings, thieves all of them, and know little of proper dining. They must have done something. The tastes... I cannot imagine not experiencing them again. Recreated the courses but to no avail. I am Kellum, master gastronome, and I will prevail! I must... nothing tastes the same since that night. All is bland, no flavour at all. Meals are plebeian and unworthy. I fear I may waste away should I falter. The loss to the hive would be staggering.*





## DAEMONS

It is said that for every dark desire or forbidden craving a mortal has, the Realm of Chaos spawns a Daemon of Slaanesh to capture the twisted thought and give it form. The indulgent decadence of the Eldar race gave rise to the Prince of Chaos, so perhaps this blasphemous idea holds true for his lesser Daemons as well. The veracity of the idea aside, there is reason to fear the terrifying possibility—just barely beyond reach, clawing and scratching at the ever-weakening boundaries between worlds, legions of Daemons await the moment when they can unleash themselves upon the mortal world. Should they do so, and if Daemons are the manifested dreams and nightmares of men, then the reunion between men and the horrors their dreams have spawned is properly dreaded by most, yet yearned for by so many on both sides of the walls of reality.

The daemonic servants of Slaanesh take many forms, from the lowest Daemonettes to each singularly unique Keeper of Secrets, and all of the lasciviously enticing but horrifically deadly variations in between. No matter what the appearance of the Daemon, its malevolent intent remains the same—bring glorious excess in all its forms to a galaxy ready to embrace it.

## KEEPER OF SECRETS

*Lords of Debauchery, Feasters of Pain, Despoilers of the Flesh*

All servants of Slaanesh, if they do nothing else, must seek to push the bounds of excess. This duty to their delicious lord guides every decision, conscious or otherwise, of all those who seek to receive his attention. There are a chosen few among them, though, who must be more. They must inspire others, must lead the armies of Slaanesh in battles both martial and carnal. It is upon the sensuous shoulders of the Keepers of Secrets that these tasks fall.

Each Keeper of Secrets is a unique and incredibly powerful being, second only to Slaanesh himself in terms of influence over the whims of mortals, ability to corrupt, and physical perfection. Some are described as towering twisted bovines, often filling the role of fertility god to primitive cultures. Other legends speak of them as idealised representations of athletic prowess, appealing to those who idolise bodily grace and strength. Sketches from mad visionaries who claim to have visited the Realm of Chaos in dreams frequently render these Daemons as multi-limbed beasts whose arms end in hands and enormous claws and whose bodies bend and twist oddly, presenting curves and ridges that are best not gazed upon for too long. No matter the form of the Keeper of Secrets, each is a deadly foe in combat and an even more dangerous foe in the battle for the soul.

These Daemons know that physical pleasure has its limits. A victim can only be pushed so far before its body becomes numb to the sensations to which it is exposed, be it a lustful caress or the pain of impalement on a claw. It is the ability of a Keeper to find inroads to the soul that makes it the most dangerous of foes. Even in the midst of a fight to the death, a Keeper's foe may find himself straying too close. Thus drawn in, he may fall victim to the whispered promises of otherworldly delights and secrets of pleasures undreamt of that pass from Daemon lip to mortal ear. Intrigued for even an instant, a warrior can find that he has lost the battle and laid down his arms without realisation. Many such are summarily beheaded or eviscerated by the Keeper. The most promising are taken into the tender embrace of the Daemon and brought back to Slaanesh's realm, where they receive attentions of which few mortals ever dream.

Keepers also fill the role of generals of the armies of the Dark Prince. Towering above the slinking and writhing hordes of Daemonettes, Fiends and other lewd beasts, the soft flesh of their seductive forms at odds with their wicked blades and other implements of war, they give pause to enemy aggressors who are both attracted to and repulsed by what they see. The power of their intoxicating beauty has proven a more devastating weapon than artillery barrages or lascannon batteries time and again, ending many battles before they have properly begun.





## DAEMON PRINCES

*Favoured of the Senses, The Chosen Children, Blessed of the Flesh*

The ultimate reward for any mortal follower of one of the Dark Gods of Chaos is to be granted the right to serve for eternity as a Daemon Prince. The accomplishments a mortal must achieve to receive this blessing vary from god to god. For some, the path is straight. A follower of the brutish Khorne, for instance, must slaughter in the Blood God's name, reaping skulls and draining blood until his god takes note. It is simple, direct, and largely the same for all who serve him. For those who wish to enjoy the Lord of Excess's complete embrace, the path to greatness is less clear. Many avenues are open to be explored, many hidden pathways awaiting eager probing by the curious and dedicated devotee. All he must do is select one and find a way to take it to a level of excess so sublime that Slaanesh's attention is drawn.

Once he has his master's eye, he must continue to push, to break through boundaries and limitations. He must amuse the Prince of Pleasure in such a way that he is judged to be not only unique, but worthy of reward, for uniqueness alone is not enough. The Dark Prince touches many mortals in horrifying and cruel ways, warping and twisting them into mindless, unnatural forms. All of the Ruinous Powers are capricious and are as likely as not to lavish mutations upon their followers, but Slaanesh's urges for indulgence make his caress especially

*Entry D238, H2.11: I can barely contain my excitement. My own magnificent mind puzzled it out in my sleep! It was a scent, something I must have also detected during the night, a minuscule thread of what earlier dazzled my senses. My dreams were filled with twisting smoke that curled and embraced. It swirled around me like shadow figures, arms wide and alluring. I now have the direction to follow. Only my masterful senses could have detected such a delicate bouquet and appreciated such a perfect flavour it produced. I must call for aid now though; my sheets have become quite torn. My struggles to solve this mystery must have been strenuous indeed.*

risky. A mortal could achieve greatness worthy of notice, only to be ruined and become a mindless Chaos Spawn because the Dark Prince was in an especially wistful mood. Those that do receive the greatest gift of all, though, realise their goal of immortality and are reborn a Daemon Prince.

It is the nature of Slaanesh, however, that even this great accomplishment is more of a beginning than an end point. The newly transformed Daemon Prince must continue to push the edges of excess, must do more, must be more. If he was rewarded for creating an elixir so sweet to the taste that its mere scent causes people to ingest ceaselessly until they drown in it willingly, he must find a way to entice entire worlds to choose to taint their supplies of drinking water with the deadly concoction. This accomplished, he must go further with his creation, perhaps altering it to leave each victim with a yearning smile on his face. Service is unending and eternal. Failure is as well, for spawndom or worse is always a possible punishment for disappointing Slaanesh, even for a mighty Daemon Prince.

## HERALDS

*Handmaidens of Slaanesh, Bringers of Delight, Silken Thorns of Ecstasy*  
Heralds of Slaanesh are unlike the heralds of other gods. While they do lead packs of lesser Daemonettes into battle at times, their true value to the Lord of Excess is not realised alone on the field of battle. They surround their exquisite prince in his inner sanctums, fulfilling his desires, acting on his every whim, and, perhaps most importantly, acting as his emissaries of worldly delights. They carry his plans to the mortal world, often directly interacting with cults, leading their unholy rituals, planting the seeds of desire and corruption, and gathering tales of new opportunities for the Dark Prince to spread his influence.

When they do join their lesser sisters in excursions of slaughter and warfare, the entire band enters a state of blissful psychic union that pushes their physical bodies beyond normal limits. The Daemonettes and their Herald become a blur of claw, skin, and carnage. With incredible grace, unearthly speed, and unholy clamour, they descend upon their entranced victims, cutting into flesh and fulfilling many a mortal's darkest, final dreams. It is a death that so very few have the pleasure to experience, but the Heralds of Slaanesh are devoted to offering it to as many as they can.



## DAEMONETTES

*Bringers of Joyous Degradation, Harbingers of Endless Delight, Seekers of Decadence*

Seductive. Enticing. Deadly. Perverse. The Daemonhunters of the Ordo Malleus use all of these words and more to warn initiates of the dangers presented when confronting a Daemonette of Slaanesh. Whether encountered on the battlefield or in dreams, a Daemonette is a foe who wins battles with equal parts disarming guise and blissful assault.

Their physical appearance is confounding. At once impossibly twisted and shamefully intriguing, the hermaphroditic form of a Daemonette is both repulsive and nearly impossible for a mortal to turn away from. Their lithe bodies and entreating voices lure wayward souls to lower defences and open up to ravenous, violent consumption from the jaws and jagged claws of the Ladies of Slaanesh. This base allure is not, however, the only temptation Daemonettes have at their disposal. As children of Slaanesh's degenerate dreams, Daemonettes bring all he has to offer to the fore. Not all mortals yield to the temptations of the pleasures of the flesh; some have deeper desires that are only discovered through more deliberate probing of their wills. All Daemonettes are inherent experts in peeling away the defensive walls that shield the desires of men from discovery. If a mortal seeks adoration, these Daemons know the words of seductive guile to speak into his ears to cause him to lower his guard. If that man wants nothing more than to be recognised above his peers, the child of malice knows how to sweetly praise him for his achievements. There is no buried dream, no subdued ambition that a Daemonette cannot uncover and exploit. When it does, the focus of its attention is surely doomed to feel the tender caress of honeyed lips and razored claws.

## FIENDS

*Rams of Slaanesh, Harbingers of Deadly Fragrance, Embodiments of Excessive Delight*

Unsettling as the appearance of a Daemonette may be, nothing can prepare mortal eyes for the vision of horrific beauty that is presented when one of the Dark Prince's Fiends presents itself. With legs a vague blend of equine and avian origin, head both bovine and feline, and trunk both insectoid and disturbingly humanoid, a Fiend is an amalgamation of forms that artfully blends together, shocking and inviting at once.

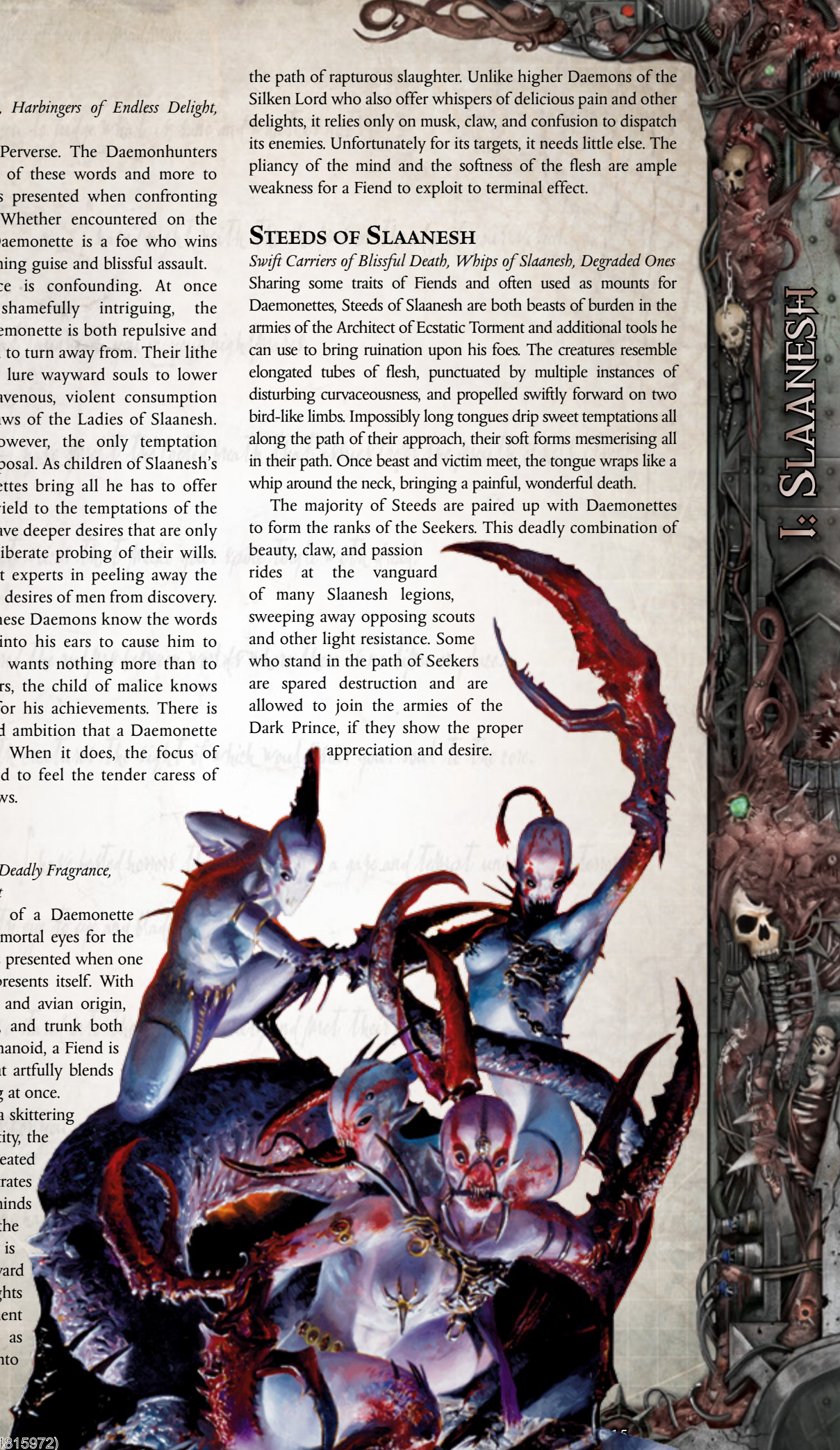
Whether they approach as a skittering horde or as a lone graceful entity, the air ahead of them shifts, permeated by a soporific musk that penetrates deeply in to the bodies and minds of those soon to behold the creatures. Self-preservation is ignored as the Fiend sidles toward waiting playthings. Thoughts of flight in the face of imminent death are put gently aside as brain-addled beings wander into

the path of rapturous slaughter. Unlike higher Daemons of the Silken Lord who also offer whispers of delicious pain and other delights, it relies only on musk, claw, and confusion to dispatch its enemies. Unfortunately for its targets, it needs little else. The pliancy of the mind and the softness of the flesh are ample weakness for a Fiend to exploit to terminal effect.

## STEEDS OF SLAANESH

*Swift Carriers of Blissful Death, Whips of Slaanesh, Degraded Ones*  
Sharing some traits of Fiends and often used as mounts for Daemonettes, Steeds of Slaanesh are both beasts of burden in the armies of the Architect of Ecstatic Torment and additional tools he can use to bring ruination upon his foes. The creatures resemble elongated tubes of flesh, punctuated by multiple instances of disturbing curvaceousness, and propelled swiftly forward on two bird-like limbs. Impossibly long tongues drip sweet temptations all along the path of their approach, their soft forms mesmerising all in their path. Once beast and victim meet, the tongue wraps like a whip around the neck, bringing a painful, wonderful death.

The majority of Steeds are paired up with Daemonettes to form the ranks of the Seekers. This deadly combination of beauty, claw, and passion rides at the vanguard of many Slaanesh legions, sweeping away opposing scouts and other light resistance. Some who stand in the path of Seekers are spared destruction and are allowed to join the armies of the Dark Prince, if they show the proper appreciation and desire.





The remaining steeds fall largely into two groups—those that perform tasks such as herding captives through the courtyards of the Palace of Pleasure for the enjoyment of the Lord of Sadistic Joy, and those that have proven themselves worthy enough to be bound to the Chariots of Slaanesh. The rare Steeds that make up the latter group are special to the Decadent One indeed. Every once in a great while, a Daemonette commits an act of depravity so special that it is noticed by her master. Sometimes such an act is rewarded by elevating the Daemonette within the ranks of Slaanesh's legions, perhaps granting her titles such as Alluress. From the ranks of those thus elevated, a select few are given the right to bring pain to the galaxy from a perch atop a chariot drawn by the very finest Steeds. These razored chariots bring the delights of Slaanesh across the galaxy in swift, slicing death.

## MORTALS

All mortals are inherently weak creatures. Desire is ever present, waiting at every turn to lead them astray. It is a natural thing to want more, to seek better. Mortals of all kinds constantly seek wealth, power, position, pleasure, amusement, peace, comfort, justice—indeed every kind of possession or satisfaction imaginable. Even if all else is repressed, there is the desire for comfortable conformity or unchanging rest, or the drive to pass on something to the next generation, both calls that are almost impossible to resist. Those few who put aside even this most primal of needs still want, even if all they desire is to be strong in the face of temptation. All beings want something, and thus Slaanesh can never be defeated. Even those who fiercely desire his defeat work against themselves and strengthen him through their pursuit of that very aspiration.

Desire itself is enough to send most mortals down the path of ruin that ends in service to the Dark Prince. A soul seeking to garner the favour and enter the service of Slaanesh must go beyond desire, however, and crave excess.

## CHAOS SPACE MARINES

The life of a loyalist Space Marine is the very definition of denial. Denial of lust, denial of wealth, denial of independence—denial of self in all things. Yet even a resolute Space Marine is not without desire. He seeks glory, pride, recognition, promotion, achievement. The devotion of a Space Marine to his Emperor is fervent to a degree most cannot fathom. He speaks litanies to his duty hundreds of times each day. His every thought is consumed with the idea of service. Within the secret corners of such a mind, denial and devotion entwine as strange and dangerous serpents. The conflicting concepts fight for dominance, creating a fertile playground for a god as devious and wicked as Slaanesh. One of the great, though assiduously hidden, shames of the Imperium is the knowledge that through their desire to serve the Emperor in all things, even the greatest defenders of humanity open themselves to the predations of the Ruinous Powers, and in particular Slaanesh. When a hungry god comes calling, even a bastion as strong as the will of a Space Marine is found wanting, leading to defection.



The events of the Horus Heresy saw the single greatest wave of defection away from the Imperium and into the waiting arms of Chaos, with entire Legions, such as the Emperor's Children, transferring their devotion to a new master. Not all allegiances were shifted at just this one time, however, and the seduction continues. The Word Bearers, for example, spread the word of Chaos, bringing new parishioners into the fold with their excessive zeal and obsessive beliefs. Isolated Space Marines cut off from their Emperor by Warp storms have an undeniable need to serve some greater being. Some fall to temptation, give up their denial, and devote themselves to a dark master who allows them to express their excessive devotion in ways they never before knew they could. For a Chaos Space Marine, service to Slaanesh lifts a tremendous burden. Rapturous joy is theirs to experience at the feet of the Dark Prince. He accepts their near-perfect forms into his embrace, improving them with gifts of power and mutation that allow them to express their devotion in even greater ways. It is a cycle that drives some insane, yet some part of their mind revels in the madness, for what is insanity if not the complete unshackling of the mind? Excessive devotion reaps excessive reward, which in turn encourages still greater devotion. It is a sinuous circle without end, turning back upon itself endlessly, bringing Space Marines closer to perfection with each iteration.

*Entry D242, H13.47: Days have passed now attempting to recreate the aroma. The ratlings complain, but that seems all they are good for. Everything I eat tastes like sand, the wines are bathwater. My so-called fellow gourmasters ask of my health. Even they can see my agony. It cannot go on.*



## MUTANTS

Slaanesh has a preference for perfection and for followers who seek perfection in themselves. He rewards lesser beings who sufficiently tickle his fancy with gifts of mutation, the better to twist their forms into ones more pleasing to his languid eyes. In every dark corner of the galaxy there are mutants who committed acts worthy of notice and felt the touch of the Lord of Twisted Desires. A Sister Superior with too great a taste for wine may have sprouted additional mouths and arms to speed the ingestion of the delectable fluid. On some remote battlefield, an over-zealous Commissar who excessively hacked fleeing Guardsmen may find that his sword and flesh become one, enabling him to directly experience the sensation of bodily penetration with each thrusting blade. Those who truly understand the great gifts they have been given embrace their augmented forms, using new limbs and orifices to reach new heights of narcissistic glory. They do not see themselves as the wretched, twisted creatures others might.

Mutation is a common reward, a step on the path to damnation. Ignorant mortals who fear greatness often set upon those who receive such blessings, tearing them to pieces. Some survive and seek out others with similar divinely crafted alterations. They form unnatural clusters or join cults that see their mutations for what they are—ways to establish new paradigms of perfection, and marks of distinction for service given to the Master of Blessed Torment.

## WARBANDS

Not every soldier who is reborn into unholy service to the Dark Gods of Chaos has the luxury of being immediately surrounded with others who share his newfound views on the order of the galaxy. Quite often the inspiration for such a change is a deeply personal experience, not appreciated or shared by those with him at the time of revelation. For instance, a Guardsman can find that the beauty of an iridescent plasma ball so achingly gorgeous to behold that he begins firing his weapon blindly instead of targeting his enemies. This can lead to isolation as the freshly enlightened trooper races toward a new destiny, away from the constraining minds that would command him. In order to be able to indulge in his desires without being slain for his actions, he needs to find others who share his love of his particular art form. In this way and others, new warbands devoted to sensation are formed.

Chaos Space Marines and other mortals who worship Slaanesh travel through the Screaming Vortex and beyond, constantly seeking new ways to satisfy their needs. Though each may have a different way of exploring excess, they know that an alliance of devotees is likely their best chance to pursue each individuals' one particular predilection. It is more than just simple safety in numbers. If one member of a warband is a Noise Marine, whose sonic blaster creates visible walls of sound, and another is a Word Bearer whose



voice could be carried further on those waves, giving it new shape and power, there is reason for both to work together. In this way, warbands dedicated to Slaanesh can at times feel like wandering artists, its members each making use of each other's skills. With their powers and perversions combined in this way, the members are able to stretch their capabilities and achieve entirely new levels of excessive expression.

The sheer delirium these warbands enter into has dark ramifications for the galaxy, and for loyalist Space Marines in particular. Held up against the joy of their newfound freedoms, the oppression of the Corpse-god is even more pronounced. Because of this, warbands often go on some of their most brutal raids against the Emperor's lapdogs when they have just revelled in their greatest elation. Invigorated with the profound pleasures they have experienced, and fuelled with a renewed hatred for the old ways, a warband in such a state inflicts glorious pain in its wake as it tears across worlds.

## PLEASURE CULTS

There are countless ways to come to know the glory of Slaanesh. Some mortals are simply tired of the suffering they experience daily in a merciless, unrelenting galaxy and want some sort of reward for enduring the ceaseless pain. Others enjoy a life of privilege already, but refuse to be satisfied with what they have. There are even those who simply cannot seem to resist certain actions or sensations, from listening to screams of tormented captives in torture chambers, filling their bodies with neuro-stims, or obsessively staring at walls of a particular shade of mauve for hours on end. From the most grand ambitions to the most seemingly innocent desires, anything that causes the slightest pleasure in a mortal is an opening through which the Dark Prince to make his presence and influence felt.

I: SLAANESH





## Last Song

The Inquisitor and his lackeys charged across the ruins towards him, but Balthax had no concerns. He could feel little at all except anticipation, knowing this would be his masterpiece. His followers lay about him, exhausted from the ritual, but he could feel the new power vibrating through him. They had hidden long enough, playing as minstrels across the hab-city whilst they practiced the art. Ortiz had uncovered them, but his appearance would only make the finale even more rewarding.

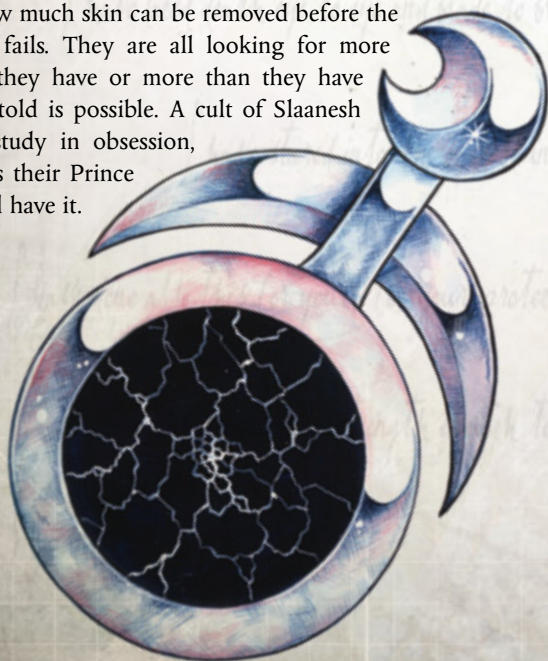
A priest was in front of the mob, his torch shaking as he cried out some tiresome invective. Balthax merely pursed his lips, and blew a kiss at him. His tongue formed obscene shapes as the air screamed like the captives he had spent weeks torturing, and a wave of vibration tore reality as it sped at the priest faster than a lasbolt. Its caress struck like a thunderclap. Eyes wide with fury boiled away, and the priest's body seemed to dissolve into strands of pulsating flesh. The others were blown to the ground, ears bleeding and arms shaking.

Balthax smiled and walked towards them. He could see the surrounding air rippling with new hues, like promethium on water. He hummed a little, each note invoking new emotions and desires within him. He gathered his power to offer another aural blessing, and with each step he could feel claws emerging from the Realm of Blessed Song. Soon he knew the Mistresses of Delight would emerge, and a new song would start.

A clever cult leader knows how to turn pain into desire, loss into blissful catharsis, and greed into satisfaction. Depending on the position the leader enjoys, finding others to recruit into his cause can be simple or extremely difficult. An officer manning a remote outpost with his fellow soldiers, for example, could easily gain followers from amongst the ranks under his command. In exchange for certain favours, he offers easier duties and promotions. On the fringes of the galaxy life is hard, and morals are loose—easy pickings for a skilled manipulator.

Other cults may have a harder time growing and would benefit from direct intervention from one of the Handmaidens of Slaanesh. The cult leader who receives such help always does so with great risk. Slaanesh may grant his boon but demand that the leader send a number of perfectly tortured souls into his realm, or hear the wails of the pleased undulate at a precise pitch for days on end, for instance. Failure to render unto his dark god can bring an eternal existence of hellish pain or, worse, dreaded numbness.

Regardless of where a cult springs up, how it grows, or what the particular fixations it has might be, all cults of Slaanesh have common themes—excess, sensation, and personal perfection. One cult may be trying to find the perfect pitch at which to scream, another seeking the most efficient way to get wine into the bloodstream, and another pushing the limits of how much skin can be removed before the body fails. They are all looking for more than they have or more than they have been told is possible. A cult of Slaanesh is a study in obsession, just as their Prince would have it.



## PIRATES

Pirates exemplify all that is glorious and excessive about life inside a swirling maelstrom of Chaos. They live in the moment, taking what they want without regret, be it loot, lives, or love, and none of it is ever enough. Each day is a new adventure, with new thrills to experience and new pleasures to be had. Ætheric winds fill their senses and indeed their very spirits, giving them an awareness of, and intense connection to, the world around them that few others even know is possible. It is no surprise that Slaanesh often finds ways to facilitate the exploits of pirates, granting them exotic weapons, reality-altering drugs, flamboyant vessels, and other rewards that they can use to pursue their unfettered obsessions.

The arrival of a band of pirates fills those whom they descend upon with a strange mix of dread and anticipation. Their reputations in excessive actions and lustful deeds are grand, but the reality is often beyond even these imaginings. Few, if any, mortals lose themselves so completely in acts of utter self-indulgent madness. One captain may steal an Imperial cruiser and ram it into a planet's ice cap, just to hear the sounds of ice and metal tearing each other apart in an insane concert of destruction. A reaver could burn a world to the crust, only to pluck one sparkling gem that caught his fancy from a still smouldering skeletal brow. Another might detonate a star to provide just the proper mood lighting for a private liaison with his latest obsession. Stories of families being captured and sold into slavery or used up in debased and lascivious festivities dedicated to sinister gods surround many pirates like the thick drippings of their savoury meals. Hollow men remain behind, their bodily shells mere husks after their souls have been plucked and used as fuel for Daemon-gifted raiding ships.

No matter what the stories say, or which are to be believed, such existences are epitomes of excess, and freedoms few others can imagine. Though many burn out in blazes that light the Warp itself, some pirates have gone on to ascend and become legends that spread desperate fear and eagerness alike across the Screaming Vortex.

*Entry D243, H17.34: I have it. The rattlings of course were to blame. They kept the information from me. One of the kitchen servitors, how did they hope to keep it secret? The fresh scarring on its arm, plain as the crystal ceilings above me. It had burned itself against the glassteel searing plate next to the carving boards. I have it. Kellum prevails! Soon, I will capture it again. First, I practice with the rattlings.*



# MYRIAD EXCESSES

*“Mere killing should never be enough. How much more intense is the feeling of inhaling the mist created when you vibrate a foe’s body until he vaporises? How much more completely have you explored all a person can offer you than when you breathe them into yourself, leaving only the memory of them still a part of this world?”*

—Gilliax Soundwarden, Warpsmith  
to the Emperor’s Children

Many of the factions of the Adeptus Ministorum and Adeptus Terra embody restraint and denial of base enjoyments. Knowing that the easiest path to corruption for most Imperial citizens is freedom, they impose harsh rules and ultimately a harsher existence on their people within the Imperium. For the greater good and the defence of all the Emperor has created, they dictate that each moment of a citizen’s waking life be filled with labour, prayer, and punishment. They believe that a mind left to reflect on anything else is liable to wander toward selfish thoughts and desires. To guard against the influence of the Ruinous Powers, this cannot be allowed. There is a risk in this approach to order, for from it Chaos is easily born. The merciless attentions of Adepts, the harsh laws of planetary governors, and other agents of Imperial laws have turned many who would otherwise never have embraced Slaanesh. A mind overwhelmed with hardship and unrelenting burden has no time for thoughts of sin, but when a moment does come, fleeting though it may be, it stands out against the darkness of life as a burning candle of possibility. For many who stray, sin is not an act undertaken for the sake of rebelliousness, but rather as a way to find relief—relief from constant struggle, relief from dogmatic rules, relief from restraint. It is this relief that Slaanesh offers in over-generous amounts.

It is not just the downtrodden people of the Imperium who feel the crush of hardship in a bleak and foreboding galaxy. War is a constant presence across the stars. Limitless numbers of beings compete for limited resources, creating conflict and strife everywhere. There are even men who exist on the fringes of Imperial rule for whom life is little better than if they were fully under its yoke. The harshness of life in the Imperial centre is overwhelming, but it does at least offer a modicum of safety compared to frontier existence. Life is hard and cruel everywhere in the galaxy, and any chance to feel some comfort is very difficult to resist, a fact the Dark Prince exploits to his advantage at every opportunity. A bit of kindness, a moment of joy, is often all it takes to set a soul on the path of damnation.

It is not just a reprieve from suffering that lures so many toward their doom in the wicked embrace of the Lord of Delights. Comfort is but one sensation in a myriad of possibilities. What of those who, like the Eldar of old, have experienced what it means to live a life of luxury? Removed from the harshness of daily torment that so many others suffer with, people with the time and the means often find experimentation appealing. The finest foods, the most exotic incense, musical performances from ancient peoples long extinct—those with the wealth, time, or will to do so can procure all this and more.



Obsession is not the exclusive province of the wealthy or powerful. A mind and body with no access to luxury can take delight in things that more prosperous individuals would never even notice. Something as simple as the sound of wood crackling in a fire, or the sight of drool forming patterns as it soaks into cloth, or even the taste of freshly cut fingernails can be the focus of an obsession. All that is required is a desire for more and a willingness to put aside restraints and limits. Neighbouring homes are made from plenty of wood that can burn, and the people inside them have mouths filled with drool that can be coaxed out, and fingers that have plenty of nails to eat. It is a simple thing to indulge, especially once all attention is given over to the obsession and other regards are ignored.

Regardless of the craving, though, there are limits to how far a mortal can take his obsessions. There are actions and sensations that only a dark mind aided by powerful allies can experience. With the right mutations, fingers can become ethereal tentacles able to pass through the skull and absorb the pleasurable memories of others directly. Given the right ritual devices infused with Warp energy, a bold mortal can distil the fears of a tortured captive and create an exquisite libation not found in even the richest banquet hall. In exchange for as trifling a thing as a soul, a person can be given the power to be able to heal any wound instantly, allowing him to live over and over again through the experience of cutting out his own organs. All these sensations and so very many more are open to those with the desire to embrace obsession through service to the Master of Excess.

I: SLAANESH



## Muse

Harkin slowly walked amongst the bodies. He was new to the Imperial Guard though no stranger to bloodshed; he'd sharply led the Razor Angels for years before being caught in an impressment roundup. There wasn't much left of the Desoleum 457th now though; it looked like someone high above had tired of the slogfest and decided to finish it off with an orbital bombardment. That both sides were caught in it didn't seem to have been a concern.

He'd been having fun though. The thin Eldar xenos were fast, but didn't expect any human to slice like him. In the confusion of smoke and cannonfire, no one noticed him drag his last kill under a ruined tank to slice a little more. That had been what saved him when the blast hit.

The smoke seemed to be clearing, but he wasn't sure what he was seeing as the grey tendrils seemed to disperse into purple filaments. Something was moving, more like dancing, across the crimson mud. Its form was inhuman, even more than the xenos, but he couldn't stop watching as it... no, she, sinuously leapt from one alien body to the next. At each, she made a graceful movement of her huge yet nimble claws, and arterial blood spurted or limbs fell. Her only pause was to pluck off a rounded gem and drop it into her fanged mouth. With each ecstatic swallow, the air around her shimmered like heat off a tank engine. It was the most captivating thing he'd ever seen.

There was a movement at his feet. One of the xenos wasn't so dead after all, and with a mournful howl raised a pistol at the creature. All Harkin had was his combat knife, but it was enough to cut the alien's hand away, and then his head as well. No one could disturb this. He noticed the small stone on the bloody chest, and pulled it away.

She had seen him now and danced towards him. Harkin's blood pulsed in his ears to the beat of her swaying stride. Her eyes were black, yet seemed filled with impossible depths. His blade fell as he breathed in her scent, and all he could think to do was offer her the gem. This close, he could feel the air burn with the heat of her desire as she dropped it into her wide mouth. Then her lips were on his, sharing something even his sharpest kill couldn't match.

When he opened his eyes, everything looked grey. She was gone. The air was clear and flat. The dead were just dead. He could hear tanks approaching and calls to regroup. His blade was still wet with blood, but he must have blacked out during the explosions. Then his he licked his lips and the flavour was there, not as intense but calling to him for more. He grinned, his teeth now just a little sharper, and stalked off towards new prey.

## THE PLEASURES OF THE LORD OF SENSATION

When the Dark Prince tore a hole in reality with his coming, his nascent form knew only hunger and cruelty. He consumed billions of Eldar souls, revelling in their horror as they greeted eternal damnation deep within his form. Quickly he moved on to other torments, not only seeking ways to devour the rest of the race that had given him life, but taking delight in the task. The sensation of consuming those who had created him was a pleasure that few can comprehend. Ever since, he has pushed himself to find new joys to fill the gaps between his soul-meals.

He takes delight in suffering and pain, and basks in the adoration of those he punishes. One such as he is not a simple being, however, and these pleasures can only go so far in sating godly desires. Through his followers, Slaanesh continually experiments with sensation. All beings, both mortal and daemonic, feel pride, want more, seek improvement, or obsess on both material and immaterial longings. The Lord of Excess gives these beings the power to claim what they seek and in so doing allows them to experience the sensation of gratification. The cruel trick the Lord of Excess plays upon all his followers is that along with power, he gives them cravings for more. He gives them addiction to sensation. As they sate themselves and in turn become insatiable, he binds himself to his followers and he feels what they feel. Each boltgun recoil that jars the shoulder of the Chaos Space Marine firing becomes a lover's caress. Each drug-induced dream is shared as a sumptuous meal. Each vile urge of the Dark Prince is, to a tiny degree, passed back to his followers, rewarding them for their obsessive actions and inciting them to greater deeds.

Even the other Dark Gods of Chaos can satisfy the desires of Slaanesh, through the actions of their servants. A Berzerker who kills in the name of Khorne is proud of his achievement and takes satisfaction from his gory deed, and Slaanesh feels that pride and the drive for greater glories. A spy whose actions topple a regime is rewarded for his service to Tzeentch, and delights in his stealth; Slaanesh feels that spark and increases the mortal's need to perfect his abilities. A diseased plague victim that draws strength from Nurgle to survive rests with comfort, and Slaanesh fuels his love of indolence and serenity. In these ways, the actions and sensations of all beings can serve to feed the lustful hungers of the Perfect Prince.

## CHAMPIONS OF THE GOD OF EXCESS

Across the galaxy, billions of souls give themselves over to Slaanesh through corrupt acts of devotion. Men throw themselves upon the altars of degradation or wear the skins of their loved ones in the hope that their lord takes note. For most, this is a futile effort as most acts of depravity and sin are common in a vast galaxy populated with the insane and depraved. It takes much more to attract attention and be noticed by a god of insidious excess, and true artistic achievements of pain and pleasure. To be recognised as the most devoted of wicked souls requires dedication and effort far beyond what most mortals can achieve. Those who can push themselves ever closer to perfect depravity, who can reach the greatest levels of excess, may be recognised as champions within the ranks of the followers of the Lord of Delicious Torments. For the rest, there is no glory, no reward, only common death.

Such recognition comes with a price the chosen are glad to pay. Their souls are forfeit, but the lure of possible immortality makes this price a pittance. To stand at the grand stage with the Lord of Sensation, in a life forever onwards dominated with unquenchable desires, is the one desire fulfilled.



## AN UNEASY BROTHERHOOD

There is no peace in the Realm of Chaos, just as there is none in the mortal world, but an uneasy balance does exist. Unlike the billions of souls that continually wage war for control of resources and for the ascendant domination of their race over all others in the galaxy, the gods of Chaos recognise that a twisted form of cooperation is in their best interest. The brotherhood of Dark Gods is uneasy at best, but it does serve to speed the demise of the mortal realm. Khorne's legions of brutal soldiers are an all-crushing wave that smites its opposition with ferocity and zeal. The Plaguefather and his repulsive hosts continually weaken the foundations of the galaxy, flesh and spirit alike, preventing its defenders from gathering sufficient strength to launch any meaningful counter assault. Tzeentch, the Changer of Ways, sows discord and confusion, pitting brother against brother, often without their knowledge, in his intricate plots. Slaanesh, the Dark Prince, shows mortals what they truly are—selfish, egocentric, petty, weak beings with no way to exercise control or to work toward a good beyond their own indulgent satisfaction. He lays their ineffectiveness bare and reflects the corruption in their hearts back upon them.

He revels in his powers of corruption. At times his satisfaction rouses his brother gods to action against him, for the Lord of Indulgence is not immune to temptation himself. Since the moment of his birth, Slaanesh has taken perverse glee in pushing others, making them give in to their urges. He even intrudes on the influences of the other Ruinous Powers when he sees the opportunity to seduce other mortal followers to his pleased path. This contest for the control over the actions of mortals takes many forms, leading to frustration and testing of the brotherhood. None of the Four, however, is so easily provoked as Khorne is by his youngest sibling. To Khorne, bloodshed and conflict are the sum total of existence, and indolent pleasures are unworthy of attention. To Slaanesh, brutal conflict is simply very minor elements of existence, mere stepping stones on the path to be savoured briefly and then moved past to experience other sensations.

*Entry D263, H19.90: The dinner is about to begin. All of my rivals, all of those who think they are my equal, all in attendance. All safely bound, and quite unconscious. I am no uncouth ganger! What I do must be done, something as perfect as this must be done. I lit the fires and watched them flickering as they consumed the dining hall. I sit in my own room, my dishes before me, the air ducts working perfectly. I can feel the initial touches of the sublime smoke wafting onto my first course. The taste... it is mine again.*

*H22.52: It was not enough. My tears make rivulets down my ashen cheeks. The scent... it calls to me. It needs more from me. It needs to come from me. I now understand fully. I am Kellum, the finest gourmaster of the age, after all. Nothing but the best can ever suffice.*



One day this uneasy brotherhood may break. Should it happen, it is likely the intensely diametrical opposition between these two powers is the cause. Khorne, perhaps, his bloodstained fur bristling with the final insulting innuendo, rises from the Brass Throne, and axe in hand, leads his forces against his hated rival. Slaanesh, raptured that his foe has given into his desires, welcomes delights of the clash that follows. Even if Khorne should throttle the Lord of Pleasure until Slaanesh teeters on the brink of oblivion, the final satisfaction would be the Dark Prince's, for what could surpass the ultimate sensation of a god feeling his own last breath pass through his wicked, smiling lips?





# SLAANESH AND THE LONG WAR

*"Our Father denied us such pleasures. It is only fitting we share them with his deluded followers."*

—Delorial Eum of the Emperor's Children, prior to the Unspeakable Acts at the Shrine of Saint Killian

Perfection is normally an impossible goal to achieve. Life is finite, and there is only so much that can be done through its course. Time pushes ever onward, stealing opportunities and exchanging them for failures and regrets. This is the truth of existence for all creatures in the mortal realm. There are, however, places where the rules that govern reality are suspended, where time can be slowed, stopped, or even reversed. Warp storms such as the Eye of Terror and the Screaming Vortex are such places. Within these treacherous domains, the ancient veterans of the Long War experience time differently than those who fear to enter. Time is theirs to do with as they please. They can spend it honing their skills, plotting vengeance, and practicing their deadly arts—and as it is said, practice makes perfect.

The Emperor's Children and other Space Marines whom the Dark Prince released from the shackles of Imperial dogma have had thousands of years to revel in their freedom. Like all the warriors who fought the Emperor's tyranny, these Chaos Space Marines have a burning hatred of the Emperor and his simple minions smouldering within them. Unlike those others, they have found pleasure in the intensity of this hatred, and this has shown them the value of an existence in the borders between realspace and the Realm of Chaos. There they are free to linger over an emotion, to savour the sensations of the passions they feel. They can expose themselves to delightful torments, immerse themselves in debauched distractions, and experiment with new and gratifying ways to pursue their desire for revenge. Let Khorne be content with simply killing, or Tzeentch with his black schemes. A warrior of Slaanesh has much more interesting things to do to his enemies than merely ending their lives, and within the timeless realms he and his subjects can experience and experiment with them all.



Investigation Log, D281, H8.00:

Initial examination proceeding. The entire wing seems burned away. Two apparent ignition sites detected. The bodies in the first one look long dead, though further dissection will give more exact necronage. None match genome of the resident K/Lim. Partial matches though found with several other personages reported missing.

The other site had lesser damage and signs of recent occupancy, and makeshift firepits that likely allowed the fire to spread. Several smaller corpses also found. The manse was sealed from within, and no signs of exit anywhere or of resident Lim.

There were ragged marks on the walls and ceiling akin to fine chainsword cuts. Unknown glyphs also carved into the soot, thick circles connected to twinned sharp arcs. Pics of these are not scanning properly, so am replicating them on dataslates by hand.

Further auspex work needed here; there is an unfamiliar scent in the air that must be identified.





SLAVES  
TO  
SENSATION

FOR THE GLORY  
OF CHAOS

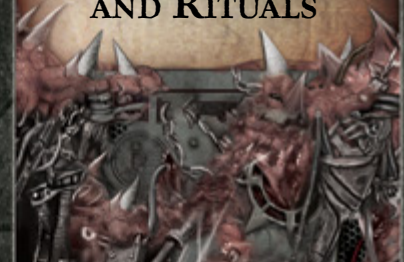
•  
NEW PLAYER  
ARCHETYPES

•  
EXCESSIVE ARMOURY

•  
LIVING MOUNTS

•  
EXPANDED MINIONS

•  
EXPANDED RITES  
AND RITUALS





# CHAPTER II: SLAVES TO SENSATION

*"They dare deny me? Simpletons! They cannot fathom the glorious pleasures my Mistress has in store once the way is prepared!"*

—Guild Trader Horvats deGarce, shortly before the Inversion of Hive Crucious

**O**f all the corrupting influences of the Chaos Gods, few are more insidious than the subtle whispers of Slaanesh. The Prince of Pleasure entices countless mortals into his service with promises of endless indulgence and lavish excess, perverting the hidden cravings of even the most influential and pious of the Emperor's servants. However, obsessive desires and unquenchable thirsts are just as intoxicating to the poor and the downtrodden as to the bored and the powerful.

The path of excess might begin simply as a longing for luxury, a desire to eat more appetising foods, or merely to spend one's days lazing in the shade. From these lowly beginnings, the tendrils of Slaanesh's power slowly and irrevocably worm their way into the hearts and minds of his potential servants, exposing their deepest and darkest desires for him to exploit and corrupt. All too quickly a faithful retainer's craving for the tender sweetmeats and delicacies of his master's table can rapidly consume him until he can think of nothing else. Finally, as the corruption of Slaanesh fully takes hold, the miserable wretch goes to any lengths to satiate his unbearable cravings, even sacrificing his former master to slake his unnatural hunger. As with all of Slaanesh's temptations, each new indulgence exceeds the one before it in breadth and severity, while the sensations and experiences once savoured quickly pale in comparison.

However, the most common desire of Slaanesh's followers is that of perfection. Perfection is the one thing that no creature can achieve no matter how desperately they seek it. For this reason it stands alone as the greatest of all desires, and is foremost in the depraved hearts of the most powerful followers of the Lord of Sensation.

This chapter of **THE TOME OF EXCESS** introduces tales of the decadent Emperor's Children and the fanatic Word Bearers Chaos Space Marine Legions to the denizens of the Screaming Vortex, as well as four new advanced character Archetypes:

- **Noise Marine:** A relentless warrior that revels in the raucous destruction of his sonic weaponry.
- **Dark Apostle:** A charismatic servant of the Ruinous Powers wholly devoted to spreading his profane faith.
- **Pirate Prince of the Ragged Helix:** A raider whose lavish lifestyle fuels his depravity and desire for perfection.
- **Flesh Shaper of Melancholia:** A mad surgeon whose search for sensation has led him to corrupt and twist his own flesh.

Also included are an expanded Armoury, additional Rites and Rituals, and new Minion and Interaction Rules for guiding the unenlightened down the path of perversion. In addition, Heretics can perform diabolical Acts of Glory and inflict insidious Curses upon those who oppose the Servants of Excess.



## A NOTE TO GAME MASTERS

These Archetypes are designed for more advanced players and represent powerful veterans of Chaos. GMs are encouraged to take this information into account before allowing players to use these Archetypes, and players should be aware that GMs may decide to limit the use of these characters. Also, due to the relatively high level of these Archetypes, it's recommended that GMs not grant additional starting experience to players using these characters, lest they have little room to develop outside of character creation.

The advanced Archetypes in this section include illustrations of some of the ways a player can portray each in **BLACK CRUSADE**. Of course, these should be considered guidelines and suggestions, not directives or mandates. If a player comes up with his own backstory and character personalities, he should feel free to work with the GM and explore them to make for a better game.

The Chaos Space Marine veterans introduced in this chapter are roughly equivalent to a beginning Chaos Space Marine character with an additional 3600 experience points. The Human characters are both roughly equivalent to a beginning Human Disciple of Chaos with an additional 4600 experience points. See pages 48 and 50 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook for starting abilities for Chaos Space Marines and Human Heretics.



# FOR THE GLORY OF CHAOS

*"Your whimpering pleas are pathetic. My ears have known songs that have made the air weep sweet blood, such was the bliss. Clearly you need greater encouragement to improve your voice."*

—Draknus Fellbane, Anointed of the Majestic Host

Thousands of years ago, the mighty armies of the Emperor of Mankind embarked on a Great Crusade to unite the galaxy in an unprecedented surge of exploration and conquest. This was a time of great discovery and enlightenment, when legendary heroes strode the battlefields of old and vast swathes of space fell before the Emperor's might.

Yet, there were other forces at work in the galaxy, powerful beings that tempted the hearts and minds of the Emperor's servants and thus began to slowly spread their corruption throughout his armies. Even Horus—greatest among the Emperor's generals—heeded the promises of these Dark Gods and led half the Space Marine Legions against their Emperor in a terrible and bloody civil war. Two of these Legions have since fallen far from the glorious ideals they once embodied, and now their members seek only to further their devious designs. These are the Emperor's Children and the Word Bearers, Traitor Legions whose names are synonymous with vile desecration and devotion to their malevolent patrons.

## THE EMPEROR'S CHILDREN

It is said that, when he first beheld the Emperor and his host, the lost Primarch Fulgrim immediately knelt and offered his sword in unswerving loyalty to the perfect being standing before him. He then joined his father in his grand endeavour and, with the aid of his new-found Legion, set out to conquer all who dared defy the Emperor's sovereignty. Soon the Emperor's Children numbered among the finest of the Imperium's warriors and garnered much honour and praise throughout their many celebrated campaigns.

Fulgrim espoused perfection in all things, and his sons diligently emulated his exacting teachings. Every member of the Emperor's Children was considered a master of his station, and the Legion applied itself to the art of war with unmatched dedication and precision. However, the Legion's relentless pursuit soon became its greatest flaw.

The traitor Horus knew of Fulgrim's ambition and was able to corrupt the honourable Primarch with promises of inhuman perfection in the service of his malevolent gods. Slowly and subtly, the influence of Slaanesh began to prey upon the minds of Fulgrim and his sons, twisting their noble quest into a terrible obsession. From here the corruption of Slaanesh grew until the entire Legion became obsessed not just with perfection, but with indulging every craving and sensation imaginable.

When Horus openly rebelled against the Emperor, the Emperor's Children were amongst the most corrupt and deviant of the Traitor Legions and eagerly fell upon their erstwhile brethren with undisguised glee.

## THE SIEGE OF TERRA

The Emperor's Children are responsible for countless atrocities since their fall to Chaos centuries ago. Yet, of all the dread tales and dark rumours, none compare to the horrors the Legion is believed to have perpetrated during the Siege of Terra. According to legend, the gleeful Traitors unleashed a host of gruesome and sadistic cruelties on the defenceless populace that plumbed undreamt depths of perversion and debauchery and left no doubt as to their true allegiance. For many days and nights, while Loyalist forces fought desperately to hold the Warmaster at bay, the Legion callously subjected the people of Terra to every wanton indulgence their sadistic minds could conceive. As these incessant orgies of destruction and bloodshed increased in brutality, it is even alleged that foul Daemons walked upon sacred Terra and feasted on those unfortunate souls who failed to escape the Legion's rampage.

## A GALAXY OF SENSATIONS

Following the Warmaster's defeat, the Emperor's Children retreated into the Eye of Terror. There the corruption of Chaos further warped their depraved minds and bodies, until their despicable appearance mirrored their debased souls. Of Fulgrim's fate nothing is certain, though the Inquisition is rumoured to maintain a strike force dedicated to responding to rumours concerning the fallen Primarch.

The Emperor's Children are now but shadows of their former glory, and countless centuries of infighting amongst both themselves and their traitor brethren have irreparably shattered any remaining semblance of cohesion. Wholly dedicated to the pursuit of pleasure and excess, members operate alone or in autonomous groups, attacking with unabashed savagery and revelling in the havoc they wreak. This existence of constant indulgence has rendered these ruthless warriors immune to all but the most extreme sensations, and they tirelessly subject themselves to the vilest and most deplorable experiences imaginable. Some dedicate themselves to aural delights and choose to become Noise Marines, servants of Slaanesh whose brains are conditioned to respond only to deafening sound and the frenzied chords of their sonic weaponry.

The Chaos Space Marines of the Emperor's Children eagerly serve any master willing to indulge their appetite for barbarous rites and decadent vices. They pursue such acts with a singular and terrifying intensity, which owes its dark genesis to their many years of rigorous training and self-discipline before their fall. Now unfettered, their repressed urges and super-human physiques offer countless possibilities of unspeakable cruelty and ecstasy in equal measure. The most vicious and imaginative of these warriors often rise to lead their own debased warbands, and the tales of their appalling atrocities and excesses serve as a dire warning to all who encounter them.



Nearly six centuries ago, one such warlord, known as the Dread Carnethras, led the members of this depraved Legion in a sudden frenzy of brutal assaults against Imperial vessels in the Calixis and nearby sectors. The callous ferocity of the attackers overwhelmed entire merchant fleets and left only ruined and desecrated hulks in their wake. However, this carnage would soon pale in comparison to the horrors discovered inside the wrecks themselves.

Though Imperial authorities swiftly and brutally censored the official reports from recovery crews, tales of ritualistic massacre and glorifications of excess that defied comprehension or rationalisation soon began to circulate. Some told of crews murdered in countless ways, each variation more horrifying and prolonged than the last, or of holds stuffed with corpses piled high or bound together awaiting whatever cruelty finally ended their torment.

Yet far darker rumours also surfaced, of ill-fated crews that were not killed but rather incorporated into obscene, floating monuments to their captor's diabolical obsessions. Few of these victims survived their terrifying ordeals, and many took their own lives to escape from their nightmarish memories, or were slain once their rescuers discovered the abhorrent conditions of their subsistence. Instances of madness, heresy, and suicide were rampant among the recovery teams, and the mass execution of crews who uncovered such heretical works became increasingly necessary.

However, this orgy of violence and cruelty ended just as suddenly as it began, and though members of the Emperor's Children continue to launch sporadic raids into the locale of the Calixis Sector, the impetus behind this maniacal flurry of callous excess remains a mystery. Of what became of Carnethras himself, none can say. However, dire prophesies of his inevitable return and subsequent cruelties are rife within the concentric scribbblings of Malodrot the Licentious' forbidden tomes. These feverish visions are wrought in blasphemous sigils that provoke foul shivers of delight and foretell of entire worlds succumbing to ravenous tides of raucous sensation amid the insane cackling of unrepressed elation and animalistic desire.

Still other notorious champions of the Emperor's Children continue to cause havoc within the Vortex and surrounding realms. The reviled Rapturous Voice, a Noise Marine whose inconceivable melodies issue from a massive vox inset between grotesquely distended jaws and ornate pipes that envelop his extravagant armour, has become especially infamous in recent centuries. His discordant harmonies inspire ecstasy, terror, pain and a host of other intense and conflicting emotions, and are unbearably disturbing, yet strangely enthralling, to all who hear them. This intoxicating quality ensnares unwitting listeners, who become his willing slaves and excitedly engage in their erratic master's depraved whims so they may delight in his hypnotic croons.

The influence of the Voice has insidiously spread throughout the Vortex, and many powerful Noise Marines and formidable warlords have heeded his dulcet notes and pledged their heretical souls to his every desire. In combat, these units fight in a euphoric daze, oblivious to the horrors of battle and their own safety as their master's heady music urges them ever onwards towards rapturous annihilation.



## THE WORD BEARERS

The Word Bearers are amongst the most fanatical and devoted servants of Chaos. Wherever they tread, the Legion's members spread their blasphemous beliefs and sow the seeds of rebellion and upheaval, encouraging their followers to cast off the shackles of oppression and rise up against their Imperial masters. Yet, before Horus's treachery pitted brother against brother, the Word Bearers were considered loyal and ardent crusaders who zealously converted all who stood before them to the worship of the Emperor as a god.

The Legion's Primarch was Lorgar, and he was both a mighty warrior and a peerless orator. His impassioned speeches were as powerful a weapon as any the Legion possessed; his words alone converted millions to the Imperial truth. On each planet it brought into compliance, the Legion left cities utterly devoted to the worship of the Emperor and erected great cathedrals and monuments to his eternal glory. Yet subsequent events have cast doubt on this glorious legacy, and it is possible that the Legion secretly planted seeds of treachery and corruption on many of the worlds it liberated.

The Word Bearers are believed to be among the first of the Traitor Legions to submit to Chaos. However, the motivations behind their unholy devotion and the events surrounding the Legion's resulting treachery are now lost to history. Many claim their Primarch's hubris or the beguiling words of Horus led the Legion astray, while others believe that some forbidden truth, or an ancient flaw or heretical practice from



the Legion's past, made their corruption inevitable. There are even those that suggest the Corpse-God himself betrayed the Word Bearers and rejected their undeserved worship, thus prompting the Legion to seek out gods more worthy of their devotion. Whatever the reason for their betrayal, the Legion is now truly damned. The Word Bearers represent the extremes of devotion and belief, and desire nothing less than a galaxy aflame that follows in Chaos as they do.

## BRINGERS OF THE WORD

Lorgar continued to lead his Word Bearers during the apocalyptic events of the Horus Heresy, zealously smashing and burning the Imperium he had once so fanatically championed. However, following the Loyalist victory at the Siege of Terra, the Legion was forced to flee into the Eye of Terror and into the embrace of new gods. There, it is whispered that Lorgar was finally rewarded for his devotion, and the victorious cry of the new Daemon Primarch is said to have echoed throughout the vastness of the Warp.

The Word Bearers still retain much of their original cohesion and are not nearly as fragmented as many of the other Traitor Legions. Their warriors are roughly organised into hosts of varying sizes, each owing its allegiance to a charismatic and powerful champion known as a Dark Apostle. Much like the Chaplains of the Space Marines, Dark Apostles devote their lives to the propagation of their heretical faith, working tirelessly to spread the influence of their malevolent patrons to every corner of the galaxy. The power of these captivating leaders is undeniable, and their words alone have subverted entire regiments of Imperial soldiers and converted entire star systems to the worship of Chaos.

The Word Bearers make extensive use of their cultists in their insidious designs, and frequently incite their followers to rise up in bloody rebellion and join them in their unholy crusade. Once their Imperial adversaries are overthrown, the Legion erects massive monoliths and blasphemous idols dedicated to the Chaos Gods, while both follower and captive alike are forced to aid in the construction and consecration of these abominable structures. The Legion takes particular interest in attacking and desecrating the holy icons of the Ecclesiarchy, often incorporating these sacred works into its heretical monuments.

Word Bearer hosts are rare within the Screaming Vortex, but those who do dwell there pose a constant danger to adjoining sectors. The most prevalent of these forces is under the control of the Dark Apostle Alocer, a fell champion of Chaos whose power is in the ascendant. He is rumoured to lead a host of Word Bearers many hundreds of warriors strong, and it is whispered that he awaits only some unknown circumstance or prophetic sign from his Dark Patrons. When the time is right, he will strike, spreading his unholy devotion to the neighbouring regions in a tide of hatred and blasphemy.

Inquisitorial records first mention Alocer over three hundred years ago, when a lone Dark Apostle commandeered an Imperial Navy Frigate and spread his message of devotion to Chaos across an unknown number of worlds. Supposedly, the Chaos Space Marine surrendered to naval forces and then coerced and manipulated them into his service over the course of their journey through the Warp. Despite the

## RIVALS IN CHAOS

The individual aspirations of the many servants of Chaos may vary greatly from disciple to disciple, and such differences regularly spawn bitter clashes and infighting between competing factions. The secretive, violent, and anarchic nature of such groups only magnifies these hostilities, meaning that the greatest adversary to the devotees of Chaos is often their own traitorous natures.

Such is the case with the forces of the Word Bearers and Alpha Legion in and around the Screaming Vortex. While both Legions use extensive networks of cultists to achieve their objectives, the enigmatic Alpha Legion frequently betray their Word Bearers allies, often sacrificing them as distractions for their own furtive activities. Such deceptions usually result in retaliations and full-scale engagements between hostile warbands of Traitor Space Marines, as warriors from both sides fall upon their Imperial adversaries and each other with equal violence. These and other such instances have soured relations between the two Legions in recent centuries, and their members are often bitter rivals.

valiant boarding action of Inquisitor Jerak of the Ordo Hereticus, the Traitor's body was never recovered, and it was only during the final stages of Commander Cistra's interrogation that the name finally passed his bleeding lips. The entire crew was later executed for Heresy Extremis, and Commander Cistra's name was removed from the hallowed walls of the Bastion of Valour.

Alocer's malevolent influence is widespread, and the Calixian Conclave wages a constant war against the many false churches and secret disciples dedicated to his malevolent cause. When his followers strike, they do so boldly and openly, while each atrocity they commit serves to undermine the power and control of their Imperial adversaries.

One of their most well-known atrocities took place during the March of Cardinal Maxillus Lorn Triumphant, when members of a heretical cult associated with the Church of the Blessed Word infiltrated the ranks of the various attendants. Then, in the middle of Cardinal Lorn's grand sermon, they gathered within the catacombs beneath the Imperial Basilica and, with the help of their diabolical allies, sundered the veil between reality and the Warp.

As the Cardinal brought his sermon to a close, the great wooden doors slammed shut and the air within the cathedral suddenly split asunder as the raw power of the Warp spilled out into the assembled masses. Cardinal Lorn and his retinue were instantly slain and hundreds were trampled to death as the panicking worshippers desperately attempted to escape the ravaging entities that tore into the screaming throngs. The resulting havoc from the Daemons' murderous rampage and the sudden death of the Cardinal and his attendants threw the populace into turmoil. Only the efforts of Inquisitorial agents and the timely intervention of an Adeptus Astartes strike force were able to eventually save the planet from a massive Warp incursion.



# NOISE MARINE

*"Slaughter them all! Let the air ring with the snapping of bone and the squeals of the dying!"*

—Carmine, Auditorix of the Emperor's Children

The Emperor's Children are perhaps the most deprived of the Traitor Legions to venture into the Screaming Vortex. Many journey to this turbulent realm to sample first-hand the unique worlds and vile delights of its denizens, while others harbour unspeakably cruel designs for those wayward souls who fail to escape them. These deranged warriors undertake such despicable pursuits with complete disregard for the Vortex's many dangers and eagerly brave all manner of foes in their unending quest for excessive indulgence.

Though small groups of Emperor's Children are not uncommon when it suits their purposes, lone members of this abhorrent Legion are generally the norm. The most common of these are Noise Marines, whose insane yearning for the deafening clamour of battle leads the slightly saner denizens of the Vortex to avoid dealings with them if at all possible. Chaos Space Marines from other Legions have also attuned themselves to similar auditory excesses, equally as devout in their pursuit of Slaanesh's gift of song and equally as deadly. Often such encounters end violently or—if the victim is particularly unlucky—the Noise Marine might instead take the miserable wretch alive. The destructive power of these fallen Space Marines cannot be denied, and many deem the benefits of harbouring them well worth the risks.

## PLAYING A NOISE MARINE

Noise Marines are perfect hedonists, completely dedicated to pushing their corrupted minds and bodies to the absolute limits of sensation. All have spent centuries enraptured in the throes of Slaanesh's service, and their ceaseless devotions have corrupted their bodies until only the most extreme sensations hold any satisfaction for their pleasure-addled synapses. Now their every thought is bent wholly towards their own self-gratification, and their imaginations incessantly overflow with insane visions of reckless and loathsome indulgences.

Along with the fabled physiology of an Adeptus Astartes, Noise Marines also possess an extraordinary sense of hearing. This auditory acuteness is a blasphemous gift from Slaanesh himself, extending far beyond that of a normal human, and is sensitive enough to distinguish subtle changes in pitch and tone within even the most cacophonous noises. This foul blessing also warps the way their brains interpret aural stimulations, causing them to undergo feelings of intense euphoria and emotion that increase in proportion to

the volume and frequencies of the sounds they experience. Noise Marines relish these sensations above all others and are entirely obsessed with indulging their unique abilities, often subjecting themselves to the most overwhelming and chaotic noises imaginable at the slightest provocation.

The most beloved way for a Noise Marine to indulge this craving for deafening sound is to immerse himself in the frenzied clamour of battle. There, the harsh cacophony of combat and the shrill screams of the dying are like music to a Noise Marine's callous ears, and his mind quickly fills with powerful emotions of unrivalled intensity that rapidly overpower every other concern. However, the deafening roar of the battlefield is still not enough to a Noise Marine, and he adds to the ear-splitting din with devastating blasts from the sonic arsenal for which they are named. Such weapons are frequently incorporated into the Noise Marine's armour, along with other auditory devices, in order to enhance his already substantial destructive and sonic capabilities.

Noise Marines are completely devoted to the Prince of Pleasure, and the unfettered depravity with which they worship their foul patron is infamous among his many followers. Though their brutal attacks rarely leave any survivors, these Traitor Marines occasionally require sacrifices in their unspeakable rituals to





## NOISE MARINE

A Noise Marine must be a Chaos Space Marine.

**Characteristic Bonus:** A Noise Marine gains +5 Perception, +5 Ballistic Skill, 15 Corruption Points, and +9 Infamy.

**Starting Skills:** Awareness +10, Common Lore (any one), Dodge +10, Deceive, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) *or* (Heresy), Intimidate, Interrogation *or* Intimidate +10.

**Starting Talents:** Ancient Warrior, Deadeye Shot, Disturbing Voice *or* Hip Shooting, Exotic Weapon Training (Sonic Blaster), Jaded, Lightning Reflexes, Light Sleeper, Marksman *or* Sharpshooter, Mimic.

**Starting Gear:** Sonic blaster, Legion bolt pistol with 2 magazines, 2 Legion frag grenades, 2 Legion Krak grenades.

**Wounds:** 16+1d5.

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Intoxicating Uproar:** Noise Marines are renowned for their extraordinarily acute hearing and the complete abandonment with which they surrender themselves to the unique ecstasies of their perverse gift. Noise Marines gain a +20 bonus to any Test involving Hearing. In combat, a Noise Marine gains a +2 bonus to Toughness, Fear, and Pinning Tests for every other active participant or point of Horde Magnitude (up to a maximum of 12). However, in order to disengage from combat, a Noise Marine must make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**.

**Dread Wail:** Noise Marines are capable of manipulating the many amplifiers and sonic weapons incorporated into their armour to truly devastating effect thanks to their intimate knowledge of battlefield acoustics. Once per combat encounter, a Noise Marine may spend an Infamy Point to either increase the Damage and Penetration of a sonic weapon he is wielding by an amount equal to his Perception bonus *or* to force everyone within 50m to make a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** to resist the effects of the Noise Marine's choice of either Fear (2), 1d5 levels of Fatigue, or becoming Sunned for 2 rounds. *Noise Marines begin play aligned to Slaanesh.*

appease Slaanesh. Such victims are truly damned, as they are gradually subjected to the full horror and cruel decadence of their captor's insane and debauched imagination.

Fear is simply another sensation to these servants of Slaanesh, and they delight in inflicting pain as much as they enjoy experiencing it. Yet, despite the novelty of death, Noise Marines are in no hurry to partake in it, preferring instead to sample the myriad delights to be found in the service of Chaos. They readily accept the many boons of Slaanesh and eagerly deal with any Daemon or warlord able to offer them a delicious new excess. Many even gaze with undisguised envy upon the seemingly immortal entities who serve Slaanesh and long to experience the limitless freedom these diabolical beings enjoy.

## NOISE MARINES IN THE VORTEX

A Noise Marine in the Screaming Vortex can indulge in a plethora of uniquely vile experiences and sensations in order to assuage his unrelenting yearnings. Yet, of the many temptations that await them within this turbulent realm, the lust for auditory stimulation is the most enticing of all. Whether achieved through pitched battle, arcane devices, or the abilities of one of the Vortex's inhabitants, Noise Marines go to any lengths to attain their desire and are an increasingly common sight among its many denizens.

The following are some examples of the many pursuits a Noise Marine might undertake in his continuous quest for the most extreme excesses.

**Cacophonous Chorus:** Disdaining all thoughts of material gain or honour, these servants of Slaanesh pledge their allegiance to whichever warbands produce the most frenzied clamour before eagerly adding their own destructive notes to the terrible din. This eccentricity often causes the band to change sides multiple times throughout an engagement as the roar of battle ebbs and flows. If the noise is pleasing enough, they might even turn on their would-be allies after the assault has ceased in order to delight once more in the battle's cacophonous fury.

**Xenotronics:** There are many forbidden xenos artefacts and devices within the Screaming Vortex capable of bestowing indescribable sensations on all who dare wield or even look upon them for any length of time. Noise Marines frequently encounter such items in their travels, and many even develop a taste for these exotic delights and inhuman vibrations. Yet their pleasure often turns to obsession as these warriors attempt to contrive ever more imaginative and novel ways of incorporating their discoveries into their ceaseless indulgences. The other inhabitants of the Vortex refer to them as Xenotronics, and their frantic mania can be either a boon or a bane to those who become entangled in their endless passion for additional relics and alien sensations.

**Choir of Aberrance:** These cruel Noise Marines demand tribute in the form of slaves, which they then incorporate into their own horrific glorifications of the Prince of Pleasure. Each captive is fitted with a bizarre array of sonic amplifiers and vox speakers, which cause the recipient great pain and amplify every tortured cry and terrified gasp to skull-shattering heights. Thus prepared, these pitiful creatures accompany their masters into battle, staggering behind their captors in vast processions bound together with golden chains each adorned with savage and delicate hooks. There, the many cries of intolerable agony, encouraged with blows from cruelly barbed and toxic lashes, rise together in screeching and discordant adulation for the many pleasures of Slaanesh.



# DARK APOSTLE

*"From the fires of betrayal. Unto the blood of revenge. We bring the word of Lorgar, the Bearer of the Word."*

—Excerpt from the 341st Book of the *Epistles of Lorgar*

It is only natural that a den of potent heresy and sorcery such as the Screaming Vortex would attract the likes of a Dark Apostle. These treacherous warriors of Chaos stop at nothing to spread their terrible faith, and the Vortex often serves as either a worthy place to gather converts or a pilgrimage on their path of worship. Many journey to all the worlds within the realm, observing the numerous manifestations of Chaos among its foul inhabitants and recruiting those whom they deem most useful for their cause. Consequently, many powerful Warlords seek out these influential champions, drawn from the Word Bearers and other Chaos Space Marine Legions, for both the many blessings they convey and the legions of fanatical followers who hang on their every word.

## PLAYING A DARK APOSTLE

Dark Apostles are the spiritual leaders within many Chaos Space Marine Legions, and are utterly devoted to the Dark Gods and the preservation of the beliefs of their Primarchs and other leaders. Each is thoroughly learned in occult teachings, ritual sacrifice, and the devotions contained in the books of Lorgar and other vile tomes, having painfully etched their forbidden characters into their minds, bodies, and souls through a ghastly array of torturous and barbaric means. This fanatical devotion to the Ruinous Powers defines a Dark Apostle, and all are entirely dedicated to spreading their message of worship and devotion to every corner of the galaxy.

Dark Apostles preach that the feeble and hollow sermons of the Ecclesiarchy are but rote superstition and propaganda compared to the terrible power of Chaos. To demonstrate these unholy claims, they frequently act as direct conduits for their Dark Gods' power in the material realm and bestow blessings of Chaos on their followers, further fuelling their fanaticism and devotion.

To a Dark Apostle, Chaos is an all-powerful pantheon. Many therefore choose to venerate all the Chaos Gods equally, and rarely ally with only one path for very long. When it comes to the particulars of their blasphemous faith, each is bound by his own deranged and arrogant interpretations of the profane writings of Lorgar and other heretical works.

Dark Apostles are skilled orators capable of converting entire cities, Imperial Guard regiments, or planetary populations to their unholy cause with promises of power and recognition from the denizens of the Warp. Through their honeyed words, they establish vast

networks of cultists and false churches, secretly planting the seeds of the Imperium's corruption on every planet they touch. These zealous followers are often incorporated into their master's diabolical designs, and frequently serve as willing slaves or sacrifices to the glory of their new gods.

The Dark Apostles of the Word Bearers, in particular, construct great monuments and monolithic symbols of their blasphemous faith, and dedicate them to their chosen patrons to mark their profane victories. They take perverse delight in incorporating the religious structures of those they conquer into these foul rites, and often go out of their way to desecrate the holy icons of the Ecclesiarchy. The Dark Apostle's legions of followers frequently aid in these endeavours, and just as frequently find themselves sacrificed on the very altars they helped construct.

A Dark Apostle arrayed for combat is an imposing sight, with ancient armour adorned with sigils of his foul allegiance and reams of parchment covered in blasphemous devotions and invocations. Many even tattoo litanies directly onto their flesh or the flayed skins of their opponents in order to enhance their potency and further prove their devotion. During the conflict, they stride across the battlefield exhorting their charges onward while smiting all who stand before them with their Accursed Crozius. However, a Dark Apostle's greatest weapons are always his voice and the strength of his belief, and the hordes of devoted followers in his wake bear testament to the terrible power and influence he wields.



To Chaos Space Marine Dark Apostles, the glorious Ascension to the blessed state of Daemonhood represents the ultimate pinnacle of achievement, and they toil diligently in the hopes that their Dark Gods may one day grant them such a magnificent reward.

Though Dark Apostles frequently ally with powerful Warlords and Champions of the Warp, their true loyalty is to Chaos, and nothing can be allowed to stand in the way of their heretical crusade.



## DARK APOSTLE

A Dark Apostle must be a Chaos Space Marine.

**Characteristic Bonus:** A Dark Apostle gains +5 Fellowship, +5 Willpower, 15 Corruption Points, and +9 Infamy.

**Starting Skills:** Charm, Charm +10 *or* Deceive, Command, Command +10, Common Lore (any one), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, The Book of Lorgar), Forbidden Lore (Heresy) *or* (The Warp), Intimidate *or* Scrutiny, Scholastic Lore (Occult) *or* (Legend).

**Starting Talents:** Air of Authority, Ancient Warrior, Demagogue, Enemy (Ecclesiarchy), Inspire Wrath, Iron Discipline, Unshakeable Will.

**Starting Gear:** Accursed Crozius (non-possessed), Legion bolt pistol with 2 magazines, Unholy Icon, 2 Legion frag grenades.

**Wounds:** 16+1d5.

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Harbinger of Heresy:** Dark Apostles are powerful orators whose words convert entire populations to the worship of Chaos and inspire them to unite and rise up against their Imperial Oppressors. When attempting to use any Interaction Skill to affect multiple targets, a Dark Apostle may affect 10 times the number of targets normally allowed. Further, he may spend an Infamy point to re-roll an Interaction Test and add a Degree of Success to the result. A Dark Apostle may also attempt to convert any NPC target(s), including minions, with a Disposition Modifier of +20 or greater to his own heretical beliefs through an Opposed Charm Test. The Dark Apostle gains +10 on the attempt, and, if successful, he can spend an Infamy Point to mark the target(s) as Faithful. Faithful followers are zealously dedicated to the Dark Apostle's cause as long as their disposition towards him remains positive, giving them a +10 bonus to Opposed Willpower Tests to resist hostile Interaction Skills.

**Dark Devotion:** Dark Apostles dedicate their every victory to the Ruinous Powers and construct nightmarish monoliths and vast icons of devotion to venerate their chosen Gods. A Dark Apostle may spend an Infamy Point to construct and dedicate a monument to the Chaos God of his choice. The size of the monument and the time required to complete its construction is subject to the Dark Apostle's ambitions and the resources available to him, and additional Skill Tests might also be required as the GM sees fit. If the GM decides the resulting preparations are sufficient, the Dark Apostle may grant two Degrees of Success to a single Skill Test involved in a Rite or Ritual performed at the site. In addition, any Rites or Rituals that share an alignment with the monument gain a +30 Ritual Modifier, while those aligned to another God gain a -30 Ritual Modifier. Truly worthy altars can qualify as Glorifying Acts (see page 70) at the GM's discretion.

*Dark Apostles begin play as Unaligned.*

## DARK APOSTLES IN THE VORTEX

A Dark Apostle might cross the galaxy in his unholy crusade to unite humanity beneath the banners of his devotion. Though their exact reasons for seeking out the Screaming Vortex vary, these fanatical champions of Chaos are seldom idle and work tirelessly to advance their blasphemous cause. However, the nature of each Dark Apostle's observances often depends on his own unique and disturbed interpretations of his foul devotional texts, and the methods used to achieve his purposes differ wildly between individuals.

The following are some examples of the many aspects of devotion a Dark Apostle might embody during his activities within the Screaming Vortex.

**Prophet of Destruction:** These Dark Apostles embody fanatical hatred and serve as an example of devotion on the battlefield. Always at the forefront of battle, their fiery zeal fuels their wrath as they reinforce every impassioned phrase with devastating blows from their Crozius maces. To their many followers, the unstoppable rampages of these fearless warriors serve as poignant metaphors for the unrelenting power of the Warp, and they eagerly surge behind their masters in a frenzied tides of religious fervour.

**Voice of Defiance:** A Voice of Defiance thrives on rebellion, and champions his beliefs to the very darkest corners of every realm that refuses his corrupt teachings, forging his followers into a weapon of fanatical resistance in the name of Chaos. Every word that issues from his mouth drips with treachery and malice, and he incessantly urges his followers to martyr themselves in order to prove their sorrow for past transgressions and the depths of their newfound devotion. Once the world is consumed in the fires of anarchy and mayhem, and his debased followers have sacrificed themselves for their heretical beliefs, the Dark Apostle moves on to the next world and begins the process anew.

**Malefic Consul:** Knowledge is power to the servants of Chaos, and a Malefic Consul knows well the power such knowledge has to manipulate the weak and empower the strong. Operating as sinister guides and veiled whisperers, these servants of Chaos use their abilities of coercion to sway the weak and influential, and delight in witnessing their victims unwittingly sowing the seeds of their own doom. These insidious demagogues foster vast networks of informants and confidants to aid in this task, utilising every influence at their considerable disposal to bring about their nefarious ends and only revealing themselves when victory is at hand.



# PIRATE PRINCE OF THE RAGGED HELIX

*"Bring us about! Their death is a delight to be relished, and I intend to whet my thirst before the hour is done."*

—Gorman the Thirsting, Dread Pirate of the Ravenous Throng

**P**irate Princes hail from the treacherous Ragged Helix, a vast chain of asteroids that lies at the bleeding edge of the Inner Ring of the Screaming Vortex. These asteroids vary radically in size and population, and many host mighty fortresses or harbour enormous pirate fleets and ships of war. It is among these and other hazards that these infamous raiders dwell, and the preposterous tales of their extravagances and recklessness are unmatched.

These heretics are true masters of their domains and enjoy unparalleled freedom from all save their own dark desires. Sallying forth from decadent fortresses and personal fiefs, the dread ships of these powerful individuals raid and pillage with reckless impunity. Though frequently at odds with the many warlords of the Screaming Vortex, they occasionally ally with such leaders in order to achieve their own ends. However, the capricious whims of these deviant raiders often guarantee that such alliances are fleeting at best.

## PLAYING A PIRATE PRINCE OF THE RAGGED HELIX

A Pirate Prince of the Ragged Helix is a heretic who has ruthlessly clawed his way to a position of power amongst the many pirates and raiders that reside in the Ragged Helix. With this power also comes wealth and privilege, and Pirate Princes enjoy a level of comfort and freedom far in excess of other raiders within the Screaming Vortex. Their power within their domains is absolute and they

pursue their wildest desires with reckless abandon. However, once they begin sampling the fruits of their power and wealth, such pleasures quickly become relentless obsessions.

Pirate Princes are renowned for their insatiable appetite for new sensations and thrills. Many are willing to go to extreme lengths for equally extreme delights, squandering entire fortunes and risking their holdings for novel experiences and preposterous exploits. Their desire for wealth in order to satiate a desire for excess, which in turn requires more wealth is a never-ending cycle for these aristocratic degenerates and often culminates in a memorable and dramatic end.

Pirate Princes are intimately familiar with the intricacies of life in space, and many have even journeyed on foot across the invisible tethers of the Ragged Helix and navigated its many orbital hazards by sight alone. These experiences give them a natural sense of orbital rotations and trajectories, and their piloting skills are often second to none. Such abilities breed pride and encourage the reckless nature of these insane brigands, leading them to frequently engage in unnecessarily dangerous manoeuvres and perilous courses that sometimes result in disaster.

Each is a survivor of countless naval and boarding actions, and preys upon his victims without honour or mercy. Many lead these bloody attacks from the forefront where they can fully experience the rush and vulnerability of combat, while others delight in the ensuing torture and dismemberment of captives unfortunate

enough to survive the initial attack. The reasons behind a Pirate Prince's choice of victims are his own, but all serve to further indulge these raider's sick and twisted perversions.

One of a Pirate Princes' most valuable assets is his reputation. As such, all are quick to retaliate against any threat to their perceptions of their own perfection, often torturing offenders for days over egregious or imagined insults. They are ferociously proud of their achievements, and routinely seek to outdo each other in brutality, fighting skill, and depravity at every opportunity. Such wicked and indulgent legacies often attract equally callow and debauched followers who willingly engage in any depravity for scraps of their master's opulence and the smallest taste of his excesses.

Pirate Princes frequently worship the Lord of Sensation in order to obtain the lifestyle of everlasting indulgence they so desperately crave. Many Pirate Princes long for the elevation to Daemonhood in return for their devotion, and believe such power would forever immortalise them among the most feared raiders of the Screaming Vortex. Though they frequently ally with powerful warlords, all are fiercely independent and would rather die than forsake their obsessions and freedom.





## PIRATE PRINCE OF THE RAGGED HELIX

A Pirate Prince of the Ragged Helix must be Human.

**Characteristic Bonus:** A Pirate Prince of the Ragged Helix gains +5 Agility, +5 Intelligence, +5 Fellowship, 15 Corruption Points, and +9 Infamy.

**Starting Skills:** Acrobatics, Awareness, Awareness +10, Charm *or* Intimidate, Command, Command +10, Commerce, Common Lore (The Ragged Helix), Deceive, Dodge, Forbidden Lore (Pirates) *or* (The Warp), Logic *or* Scrutiny *or* Sleight of Hand, Navigate (Stellar), Operate (Voidship), Parry, Security *or* Tech Use, Dodge +10 *or* Parry +10 *or* Operate (Voidship) +10.

**Starting Talents:** Air of Authority *or* Sure Strike *or* Deadeye Shot, Ambidextrous *or* Hip Shooting *or* Swift Attack, Betrayer, Cold Hearted, Counter Attack *or* Hotshot Pilot *or* Two-Weapon Wielder, Double Team *or* Disarm, Enemy (Imperial Navy), Excessive Wealth, Jaded, Lightning Reflexes *or* Light Sleeper, Nerves of Steel *or* Iron Discipline, Quick Draw *or* Rapid Reload, Paranoia *or* Rapid Reaction, Weapon Training (Chain, Power, Las, Primary, SP), Weapon Training (Bolt) *or* (Shock).

**Starting Gear:** Best Craftsmanship Bolt pistol *or* Good Craftsmanship plasma pistol, Best Craftsmanship power weapon *or* neural whip, Best Quality Light carapace *or* xenos hides, Good Quality alcohol, obscure, Good Craftsmanship cartograph.

**Wounds:** 10 +1d5.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Maniacal Narcissist:** Pirate Princes are extremely proud and willing to sacrifice everything in their pursuits. Upon character creation, the Heretic must choose Ballistic Skill, Weapon Skill, or Operate (any one) as his speciality. After spending an Infamy Point to gain a +10 bonus on a Test that involves this speciality, but before any additional dice are rolled, he gains an additional +10 on the Test. However, if he fails the Test, he must pass a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** or attempt the Test again (if able). If unable to successfully complete the failed Test, the humiliated Pirate Prince suffers a -10 Willpower penalty until he is able to successfully complete that task (or the end of the session).

**Creatures of Comfort:** Pirate Princes thrive in lavish and opulent comfort, and few can endure being separated from this lifestyle for long. Pirate Princes gain one additional Degree of Success when attempting to acquire goods or services of Good Craftsmanship or better but suffer a -10 Penalty to any Tests made using Poor Craftsmanship goods or services. Also, a Pirate Prince may use his own Voidship instead of acquiring the services of a transport, and receives a +10 Bonus to all Operate (Voidship) Tests while on his ship's bridge. The capabilities of this vessel are reserved for the GM's discretion; however, GMs should always remember that the vessel is the property of a formidable raider.

*Pirate Princes of the Ragged Helix begin play aligned to Slaanesh.*

## PIRATE PRINCES OF THE RAGGED HELIX IN THE VORTEX

Pirate Princes are in their element in the dangerous and chaotic realm of the Screaming Vortex, and their cruel reputations warn of the dangers inherent in attracting their malevolent intentions. Those brave enough to have dealings with them view these reckless marauders as vicious fiends, while their victims rarely live long enough to form any lasting opinion. Though the individual motivations of these depraved heretics are as varied as the Princes themselves, they all share an extreme hunger for extravagance and a desperate craving to indulge their maniacal whims.

The following are some examples of the more infamous Pirate Princes whose exploits have wreaked havoc in the Screaming Vortex and beyond.

**Gore Ravager Barook:** One of the greatest luxuries is the ability to kill indiscriminately and without consequence, and it is this indulgence that the Gore Ravager relishes above all others. He lounges upon the butchered remains of his victims amidst effigies of slaughter, and his chambers of sculpted bone luxuriously upholstered with the flayed skin of his victims keep his conquests fresh in his mind. He is immensely proud of his collection, and is always looking for a new challenge to provide him with another grotesque tapestry.

**Theronsaen the Alluring:** This beautiful raider is rumoured to possess an insatiable penchant for taking captives that rivals even that of the cruel, piratical Eldar. The most miserable of her prisoners die within a few days of their arrival in her pleasure pits, unable to survive the endless acts of ecstasy and agony enacted on their emaciated frames. Those who survive their ordeal are passed through the six sacred chambers were they undergo the sadistic attentions of Theronsaen herself and her vile Painsmiths, before competing for the honour of joining the pirate's degenerate retinue.

**Lord Vitallias:** Many Pirate Princes enjoy dining on delectable delicacies and partaking in lavish banquets, yet few can match the voraciousness of Lord Vitallias. Not content with the limitless bounty of his feasting hall, his harvester fleet relentlessly plies the Vortex in search of exotic morsels and individuals to tease his depraved palate. The horrifically corpulent Pirate Prince relies on a coterie of highly skilled hunters for this task, while the tastiest and most unusual specimens are kept alive in his nurturing holds for years as their flesh is harvested again and again.



# FLESH SHAPER OF MELANCHOLIA

*"Don't worry, I assure you that you will feel absolutely everything."*

—Overheard in the Visceral Theatre  
of Zazeras the Maleficent

**M**elancholia is a bleak and miserable world within the inner ring of the Screaming Vortex. The wretched occupants of this dismal orb subsist in a state of constant misery and privation, and yet, despite their outward appearance, each secretly burns with desires to rival those of Slaanesh's most devoted servants. Among the Evoked of the world live the Flesh Shapers, so named for their mysterious power to mould and warp flesh as easily as a potter might shape soft clay. These individuals occasionally escape their dreary existence in the fabled chariot of their god Shornaal and are notoriously reluctant to speak of the reasons for their selection.

Those who ascend quickly find themselves adrift in a sea of irresistible temptations and unimagined excesses within the realms of the Vortex. Soon, their long-repressed urges and emotions overwhelm them, and the Flesh Shaper begins to indulge in the many cravings long denied him. These devious heretics often find the intoxicating whispers of Slaanesh all too tempting, while their formidable skills make them valued—if rather deranged—assets within the Vortex itself.

## PLAYING A FLESH SHAPER OF MELANCHOLIA

Flesh Shapers are mad ritualists and surgeons who use their talents to pursue the insane indulgences and hedonistic tendencies long denied them on Melancholia. Such fantasies are often so extreme that the Flesh Shapers' most common hindrance in their endeavours is their own physical and sensory capabilities. These physical limitations fill these heretics with self-loathing and contempt, causing them to turn their strange powers of manipulation and surgical skill inward in an effort to rid themselves of such restrictions. This quest for "enhancement" is a Flesh Shaper's chief obsession, and his every action is bent towards crafting a physique perfectly suited for unceasing self-indulgence.

Flesh Shapers are highly skilled in the medical arts, and much of their knowledge results from grisly experiments on their own bodies. They gleefully spend hours testing, teasing, and stimulating exposed tissue in their unending quest for as yet undiscovered ways of producing indescribable sensations. They are callous to pain and perform many surgeries themselves so they can more fully experience and enjoy the transformations enacted on their form. Such alterations frequently become gruesome addictions, and many Flesh Shapers incessantly alter themselves just to experience the exquisite pain of their work. However, a Flesh Shaper's search for perfection is ultimately fruitless, as his twisted imagination continually contrives new and terrifying indulgences and alterations, and thus many die or go mad from their extreme obsessions.

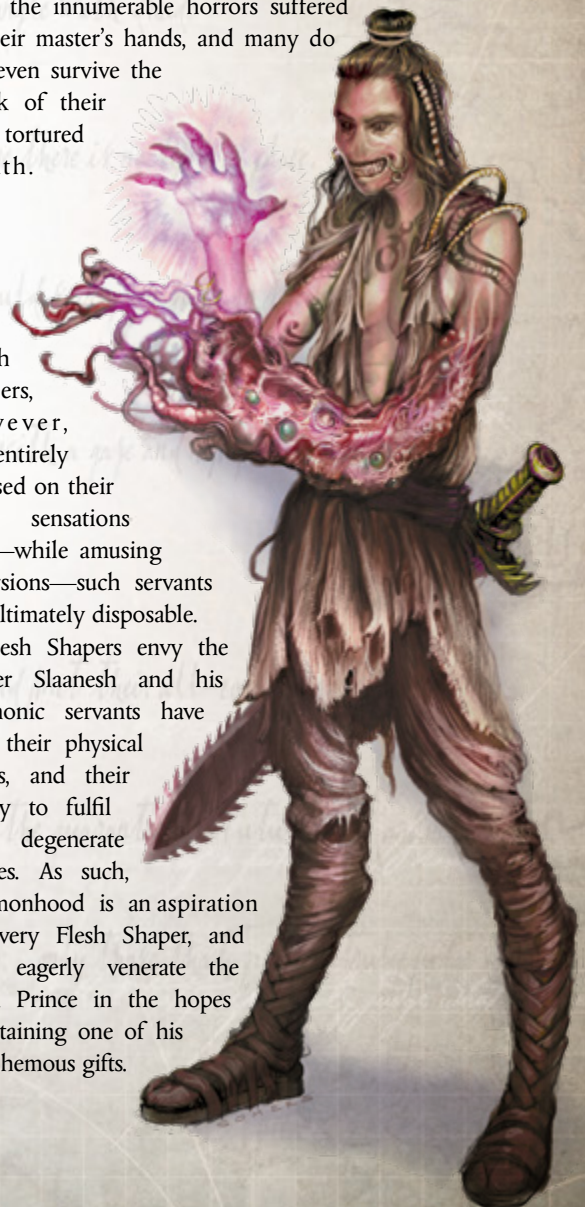
All Flesh Shapers manifest the disturbing ability to radically modify their flesh and the flesh of others via the profane art of Flesh Crafting. This power is unique among the many phenomena within the Vortex, and its origins remain an intriguing mystery to those who pursue such blasphemous studies. Many Flesh Shapers also possess rudimentary knowledge of the occult that they are eager to expand, and they constantly seek new spells and techniques to further alter their misshapen forms.

Other Flesh Shapers instead seek out the fallen servants of the Ommissiah for their knowledge of cybernetics and the intricate surgeries required to incorporate such devices into one's physique. Many eventually alter the sensory inputs of such modifications themselves, twisting them to insane heights and linking nerves and synapses in reckless and unintended ways.

One of a Flesh Shaper's most disturbing traits is his tendency to capture and experiment upon those he encounters. These wretched creatures are referred to as Sculpolytes, and they serve as whimpering canvases upon which to perfect new forms and alterations or as playthings to be offered up to Slaanesh's whims. They are gibbering, wretched beasts, mentally shattered from the innumerable horrors suffered at their master's hands, and many do not even survive the shock of their first tortured breath.

Flesh Shapers, however, are entirely focused on their own sensations and—while amusing diversions—such servants are ultimately disposable.

Flesh Shapers envy the power Slaanesh and his daemonic servants have over their physical forms, and their ability to fulfil their degenerate desires. As such, Daemonhood is an aspiration of every Flesh Shaper, and they eagerly venerate the Dark Prince in the hopes of attaining one of his blasphemous gifts.





## FLESH SHAPER OF MELANCHOLIA

A Flesh Shaper of Melancholia must be Human.

**Characteristic Bonus:** A Flesh Shaper of Melancholia gains +10 Intelligence, +5 Perception, +5 Fellowship, 18 Corruption Points, and +9 Infamy.

**Starting Skills:** Awareness *or* Scrutiny, Charm, Charm +10, Common Lore (Melancholia), Deceive, Deceive +10, Dodge *or* Parry, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Mutants), Forbidden Lore (Heresy) *or* (The Warp), Inquiry *or* Intimidation, Interrogation, Medicae, Tech-Use *or* Medicae +10, Scholastic Lore (Chymistry) *or* (Occult).

**Starting Talents:** Berserk Charge *or* Frenzy, Die Hard, Hardy, Heightened Senses (any two), Jaded, Lesser Minion of Chaos (Sculpulyte), Resistance (Fear) *or* (Poison), Sound Constitution *or* Iron Jaw, Sure Strike, Weapon Training (Las, Primary, SP, Chain), Weapon Training (Shock) *or* (Power).

**Starting Gear:** Best Craftsmanship laspistol *or* autopistol, Good Craftsmanship chainsword *or* power blade, light carapace armour, injector, medi-kit, torture tools.

**Wounds:** 10+1d5.

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Insanely Malleable:** Flesh Shapers are notoriously fond of radically altering their form in order to experience new sensations, survive dangers, or merely enact some fresh terror on their victims. A Flesh Shaper may spend an Infamy Point and pass a **Difficult (-10) Medicae Test** to dramatically alter his physical form. If his is successful, the Flesh Shaper may then select one of the following Traits, plus one additional Trait for every Degree of Success beyond the first on the Medicae Test: Amphibious, Burrower (1), Crawler, Deadly Natural Weapons, Flyer (1), Multiple Arms (1), Natural Armour (1), Quadruped, Sturdy, Unnatural Characteristic (1), Unnatural Senses (1). If the Trait has a value in parentheses after it, then then he can select that Trait multiple times, each time increasing the value by 1 (to a maximum of 4). Every hour after taking on such a form, he must make a **Challenging (+10) Willpower Test** with a cumulative -10 penalty or lose the benefits of the Trait and return to its default form.

**Baleful Sculptor:** The twisted wretches known as Sculpulytes are among the Flesh Shaper's most disturbing creations and often serve as sacrificial, living palettes upon which the mad surgeons practice their deranged art. A Sculpulyte must be humanoid, always counts as seduced, and must select either Monodevotant or Bestial as one of its starting Traits (additional Sculpulytes can be acquired through subsequent applications of Minion Talents). A Flesh Shaper can permanently alter the physical appearance of a Sculpulyte with a **Challenging (+0) Medicae Test**. In addition, a Flesh Shaper counts as having a bonus Psy-Rating of 3 when performing the Rite of Fleshmoulding (see page 54) upon a Sculpulyte and counts his Psychic Strength as Unbound.

*Flesh Shapers of Melancholia begin play aligned to Slaanesh.*

## FLESH SHAPERS OF MELANCHOLIA IN THE VORTEX

Once he emerges from the influence of his home world, a Flesh Shaper is immediately confronted with a host of depraved opportunities for practicing his diabolical arts. The Screaming Vortex offers these deprived individuals an abundant palate from which to draw inspiration for undreamt sensations and ghastly new forms, while its myriad denizens offer a near-limitless source of gruesomely delightful diversions.

The following are some examples of Flesh Shapers whose eccentricities have come to define their endeavours within the Screaming Vortex.

**Synaborites:** Flesh Shapers are intimately familiar with the frailties of their own nervous systems, and many focus all of their efforts on expanding their body's receptors and neurological complexity before bending it to perverse and unnatural purposes. These heretics graft vat-grown, harvested, and sorcerous tissue onto their existing neural systems, weaving synapses into insane patterns and exposing raw nerves to the open air in order to enhance their sensitivity. Their owners use these macabre ganglions as disturbing appendages and extremely potent feelers while perpetually refining and refashioning them into exotic and unsettling new configurations.

**Hortansish:** Many Flesh Shapers maintain collections of particularly noteworthy Sculpulyte creations and unique specimens whose forms they admire. However, the Hortansish take this propensity to a horrible and shocking extreme. So enamoured are they with their creations, they craft from the still-living flesh of captives a pleasure-garden in which to lounge and bask in their work. These vile gardeners delight in sculpting and tending ghastly mockeries of undulating plants and flower-shaped eyestalks whose insane cacophony of colours and sickening textures threaten the sanity of any who behold them.

**Ebullience Lush:** The abundant variety of chemical stimulants, hormones, and neurotransmitters within the Vortex provide many Flesh Shapers boundless amusement as they gleefully harvest and blend them together into hideously potent stimulants. Such intoxicating creations are very rare and frequently require a host of Warp-tainted refinements, hideously brutal surgeries, and numerous other ghastly rites to produce. Such efforts are endlessly pleasurable to a Flesh Shaper, and they readily spend weeks ripping the still pulsating glands from unwilling flesh and painstakingly distilling raw pheromones from hundreds of quivering sensualists. Finally, as their amalgamations swirl and bubble, these ghoulish chæmists shiver with despicable anticipation and eagerly await the opportunity to imbibe their newest unholy creation.



# EXCESSIVE ARMOURY

*"Yes, now slice into his arm. Feel how I run along the bone? See how I flense away his flesh? You can taste his fear in the air, can't you? He's dropped his sword, so now strike his other arm. It will be equally exquisite, trust me."*

—Deii'Sh'thuhl, the Whispering Blade, to its current master

**S**laanesh weapons are usually more esoteric than the crude implements of the other Chaos Gods, and those that call Slaanesh their patron often revel in the pure extremes of combat. Many of these designs stretch the very laws of nature as they drive both their users and victims towards endless forms of torment that defy description. Slaanesh has a far more insidious side as well, and his followers indulge in all manner of narcotics, poisons and other equally extreme concoctions, each one refined to produce the most acute and piercing sensations.

## RANGED WEAPONS

*"Your walls cannot save you! I shall bring them crumbling down with the blissful screams of Slaanesh himself!"*

—Nodath the Faithful

Slaanesh delights in weapons that display levels of finesse and artistry, especially in those that cause pain from afar. Seen as works of art, each one strives to enhance or excite the user whilst eliminating its target in the most vibrant and excessive manner possible.

## MAN-PORTABLE ECTOPLASMA CANNON

Plasma weaponry holds great appeal for followers of the Dark Prince, as there is a visceral thrill when each blast can also burn the user. The truly devout require more, and Ghibelline answered this call with the creation of a modified ectoplasma cannon. Each blast channels Warp energy into bolts powerful enough to reduce a man to cinders. Some energy also bleeds out of the chassis, washing over the user in a boiling, delectable wave.

The man-portable ectoplasma cannon Overheats on a 91+ and also whenever the firer rolls a double on his Ballistic Skill Test. When it overheats, the Heretic must pass a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test**; for every Degree of Failure the Heretic suffers 1d10 temporary Willpower Damage and gains 1 Corruption Point.

### NEW WEAPON QUALITY: OVERCHARGE

A weapon with this Quality may expend three times the regular ammunition usage to gain the Concussive (2), Devastating (2), Overheats (on a roll of 86 or higher instead of 91), and Recharge Qualities. If the weapon already has either the Concussive or Devastating Qualities, then add the two together (eg. a Devastating [3] weapon becomes Devastating [5]).



## SONIC WEAPONS

Many know of the terrifying sonic weapons of the Noise Marines. The designs for these weapons stretch back millennia into the times of myth and legend, but many lesser mortals have attempted to replicate this technology. Numerous forges of Ghibelline and the Ragged Helix produce a number of sound-based weapons that are far removed from the potency of true Traitor Legions weaponry, but are enough to give Slaanesh devotees a chance at experiencing the joyous and discordant pang of a sonic weapon.

All the sonic weapons listed below are Exotic Weapons and assumed to come with a backpack ammo supply, the weight of which is included in the weapon's total weight.

### Ghibelline Shrieking Pistol

The smallest of the non-Legion sonic weapons, the sonic pistol is often found among the pirates of the Ragged Helix where its thrumming blasts of psychosonic energy are enough to dislodge a man from the Helix's limited gravity.

### Ghibelline Howler Rifle

Howler rifles fire intensely focused and accurate blasts of high-pitched sound across great distances. The acoustical onslaught often causes nearby ears to bleed uncontrollably, something its users find addictively relaxing.

When used on Overcharge setting, those within 10 metres of the Heretic (including the firer himself) must take an **Ordinary (+10) Toughness Test** or gain 1 Level of Fatigue for every Degree of Failure on the Test. Devices that block sonic attacks grant their wearers a +10 bonus to the Test.

### Ghibelline Hyperwave Clarion Cannon

A complex weapon from the forges on Ghibelline, this sonic wave cannon can turn bones to jelly, blast apart ferrocrete walls, and liquefy adamantine with its endlessly alternating barrage of sounds oscillating in frequencies faster than matter can withstand.

Due to its solid construction, when the cannon Overheats it inflicts only half of the normal Damage upon its user.



TABLE 2-1: RANGED WEAPONS

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt.	Availability
Man-Portable Ectoplasma Cannon	Heavy	60m	S/-/-	3d10+6 E	8	12	4 Full	Blast (2), Maximal, Overheats	50kg	Extremely Rare
Ghibelline Shrieking Pistol	Pistol	40m	S/-/-	1d10+4E	4	12	Full	Concussive (0), Overcharge	8kg	Rare
Ghibelline Howler Rifle	Basic	90m	S/-/-	2d10 E	4	36	Full	Accurate, Concussive (0), Overcharge	16kg	Rare
Ghibelline Hyperwave Clarion Cannon	Heavy	40m	S/-/-	6d10 E	6	24	6 Full	Concussive (1), Devastating (3), Melta, Overcharge, Overheats, Spray	45kg	Very Rare

## MELEE WEAPONS

*“Yes, that’s it. Come closer. Don’t you want to feel the sting of my lash one last time?”*

—Lady Kallista, Extinguisher of the Drusus Flame

The Prince of Pain’s followers enjoy weapons of the most exacting design, especially those that offer pain close enough to be properly enjoyed. No matter its form, each is a work of dark beauty that allows the user to drink in the delight with each caress of metal on flesh.

The weapons below require one hand to use unless specified otherwise.

### ÆTHÉME BLADE

A weapon popular among assassins and cult leaders, an æthème blade holds various types of poisons or other foul liquids within specially designed channels. A simple press of a small button releases enough to coat the edge of the blade, allowing each slash to bring about more pain than a simple knife ever could.

Æthème blades hold two channels containing poison (or whatever substance the Heretic chooses) for three applications; opening a channel is a Free Action. Æthème blades also grant a +10 bonus to any Rite or Ritual Test that involves sacrifice.

### ACCURSED CROZIUS

Twisted and warped from the pure Crozius Arcanum of Loyalist Space Marine Chaplains into something hideously blasphemous, the Accused Crozius mocks the Imperium with its mere existence. Even worse, some are home to vengeful Daemons that seek not only the violence that surrounds a Dark Apostle, but also the endless supplications of the Apostle’s mortal followers.

An Accursed Crozius is a power maul degraded with foul enhancements, and the wielder gains the Hatred Talent against any foe with whom he is engaged with in Melee. Additionally, any opponents with whom the wielder is engaged with in Melee may not take the Defensive Stance Action. It can also be acquired as a Daemon Weapon with a Willpower of 50 and a Binding Strength of 2. It then has the Accursed, Commanding Presence, and Impervious attributes (see page 198 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook).

### DEII’SHTUHL— THE WHISPERING BLADE

An ancient tale of the Koronus Expanse talks of two reaver captains whose endlessly escalating conflict of countless depravity in Slaanesh’s name drove them both to ruin. Each transformed his raiding fleets into pleasure dens and enticing torture chambers as the captains crafted new perfections of mass sacrifices and wrought cunning devices of exquisite agonies. Both were finally granted Ascension, yet still their rivalry endured. When one crafted a blade hewn from a single glittering turquoise crystal, it was hailed as an impossibly precise work of art. The other Daemon Prince refused to admit he had been finally beaten, and poured his essence into it, intentionally possessing the blade to steal the other’s victory. The blade’s creator, refusing to destroy his work, cast the blade into the Vortex. Now capable only of whispering to those foolish enough to pick him up, the Daemon inside suffers the price of his victory in the silence of his cold crystal prison.

The Whispering Blade is a Daemon Weapon with a Willpower of 66 and a Binding Strength of 2. It has the Bloodlust, Entrancing Aura, Glittering, and Vicious attributes (see page 198 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Any Unaligned or Slaanesh-dedicated Heretic encountering the Whispering Blade must pass an **Opposed Hellish (–60) Willpower Test** to resist taking the weapon, and pass the same Test if they ever wish to discard it. The Daemon within the Whispering Blade’s True Name has six parts, each with six unspeakable syllables. Only the first—*Deii’Shtuhl*—is known throughout the Vortex. A Heretic gains a +10 bonus to Opposed Tests against the blade for each part of the True Name that he knows (to a total bonus of +60 if he knows the entire name). Only unaligned Heretics or those dedicated to Slaanesh can use the Whispering Blade.

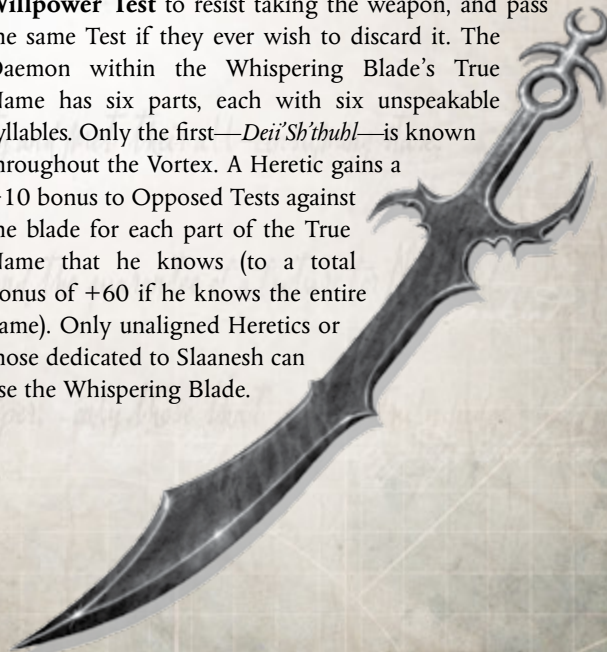




TABLE 2-2: MELEE WEAPONS

Name	Class	Range	Dam	Pen	Special	Wt.	Availability
Æthème Blade	Melee	–	1d5 R	1	Varies with loaded toxins	1kg	Rare
Accursed Crozius	Melee	–	2d10+6 E	7	Balanced, Concussive (0)†, Felling (4), Power Field	16kg	Near Unique
Whispering Blade	Melee	–	1d10+9 E	5	Balanced, Razor Sharp, Tearing	8kg	Unique
Lash of Torment	Melee	6m	1d10+6 R	4	Concussive (2), Flexible, Gyro-Stabilised, Snare (2), Tearing	7kg	Near Unique
Membrane Dagger	Melee	–	1d10 R	4	Crippling (3), Razor Sharp	1kg	Very Rare
Needle of Desire	Melee	–	2d10 R	0	Crippling (6), Toxic (3), Unwieldy	4kg	Near Unique
Thunder Hammer (human)	Melee	–	2d10+8 E	8	Concussive (2), Power Field, Unwieldy	16kg	Extremely Rare
Thunder Hammer (Legion)	Melee	–	2d10+9 E	9	Concussive (3), Power Field, Unwieldy	18kg	Near Unique

†Only when used with two hands.

### LASH OF TORMENT

Made up of lascivious coils and barbed hooks, a Lash of Torment moves with a mind of its own. Any victim that finds himself ensnared amongst the Lash's disturbingly warm tendrils experiences crashing waves of intense pain and fear, a sensation that translates back to the wielder and all nearby in a glorious sharing of agony and bliss.

A Lash of Torment is a Daemon Weapon with a Willpower of 69 and a Binding Strength of 3. It has the Howling, Lashing, and Shrieking attributes. Only those dedicated to Slaanesh may use a Lash of Torment.

### NEEDLE OF DESIRE

A thin, double-ended spike nearly as long as a man's arm, a Needle of Desire is not held in the hand but instead imbedded within the arm of the wielder. There it channels the user's own cursed blood to form toxins so virulent that they utterly overwhelm the senses of anyone stung. Many victims cannot handle the torrents of conflicting emotions and anguish that course through the system, their bodies shutting down as they hang limply upon the needle's point.

A Needle of Desire is a Daemon Weapon with a Willpower of 62 and a Binding Strength of 2. It has the Envenomed, Piercing, Void Chill, and Wounding attributes. A Needle of Desire cannot be Parried. As the Needle is implanted within the Heretic's arm it cannot be dropped or disarmed. Removing the Needle of Desire requires an **Opposed Very Hard (–30) Medicae (Int) Test** against the Daemon's Willpower, with the Heretic suffering 1d5 Damage for every Degree of Failure. Only those with the Mark of Slaanesh may use a Needle of Desire.

TABLE 2-3: SPECIAL AMMUNITION

Name	Can Upgrade	Availability
Glittershells	Assault Shotguns, Legion Shotguns, Shotguns	Extremely Rare†
Scatterscream Rounds	Assault Shotguns, Legion Shotguns, Shotguns	Very Rare

†Rare within the Ragged Helix

### MEMBRANE DAGGER

Expertly crafted, each of these knives is so thin that in the right light it can virtually disappear from view. Made for thrusting rather than slashing or cutting, any wound that a membrane dagger opens is difficult to close and takes a lengthy time to heal.

A membrane dagger requires Exotic Weapon Training (Membrane Dagger). Those that it wounds have a 10% chance of suffering Blood Loss each turn until they receive First Aid. Medicae Tests to heal Damage from a membrane dagger are made with a –20 penalty.

### THUNDER HAMMER

Thunder hammers gain their name and reputation from the concussive blasts sent forth by each shattering blow. Enemies that survive are often sent sprawling, unable to react as their senses recover. Considerably harder to find than other power weapons within the Vortex, human-sized versions are prized possessions, and Legion-sized thunder hammers are enough to send warring factions into a frenzy.



### SPECIAL AMMUNITION

These ammunition shotgun shells are obtained in full clips, and not individually.

#### GLITTERSHELLS

The highly refined version of a sparkling rock found across the Helix, glittershells are designed to drive victims insane. Each fragile round shatters on impact into a kaleidoscope of colours. The chemical dust quickly coats all exposed flesh, and within seconds the victim feels the simultaneous sensations of freezing, burning, numbing terror, and creeping madness.

Glittershells reduce Damage to 1d10, but grant the Hallucinogenic (2) Weapon Quality; against psykers, this is increased to Hallucinogenic (4).



TABLE 2-4: ARMOUR &amp; WEAPON UPGRADES

Name	Upgrade Type	Wt	Availability
Pain Vents	Any non-Exotic ranged weapon	+4 kg	Extremely Rare
Robes of Torment	Any type of armour	+6 kg	Rare
Sonic Shrieker	Power Armour	+1kg	Near Unique
Soul Sight	Any ranged weapon	+1 kg	Extremely Rare

## SCATTERSCREAM ROUNDS

Another attempt by the forges of the Helix to replicate sonic weapons, Scatterscream Rounds are highly modified Screammers. Enhanced through the dark powers of the Helix's Warp Smiths, each round is now something far greater than a simple alarm system. Weapons that use Scatterscream Rounds lose the Scatter Quality, but gain the Blast (2) and Concussive (2) Qualities.

## ARMOUR & WEAPON UPGRADES

Slaanesh's minions constantly strive to achieve newer and more intense sensations. If a weapon can be modified to make more noise, or armour enhanced to heighten the agony of death, then somewhere a twisted Warp Smith within the Vortex is slaving to pave this new path to excess.

### PAIN VENTS

Only the most skilled Warp Smiths know the secrets of Pain Vent construction. They superficially appear as nothing more than endless metallic tubes entwined throughout a weapon like mad serpents. When the weapon fires, the vents wail and scream, their otherworldly sound rippling across the air in a crescendo of agony.

When used, until the start of his next turn the Heretic gains the Fear (1) Trait, Fear (2) if firing Semi-Auto, or Fear (3) if using Full-Auto. If the weapon ever Jams, the Heretic must pass a **Difficult (-10) Perception Test** or become Stunned for 1d5 Rounds.

### ROBES OF TORMENT

Robes of Torment consist of long lengths of leather or chain mail studded with serrated hooks and barbs. Woven through armour, both inside and out, the strands inflict delightful jolts of pain with each hit. What would be torturous agony to others only acts to focus a true follower of the Dark Prince towards greater deeds.

The first time a Slaanesh-dedicated Heretic receives Damage each Round, he suffers +1 additional Damage but gains +10 to the next Test he makes. The user can intentionally cause themselves 1 Damage as a Free Action (ignoring all forms of protection) to gain the benefit. This bonus is lost if not used by the end of the Heretic's next Turn.

## SONIC SHRIEKER

An ancient armour modification to standard power armour that stretches back to the early days of the Imperium, it is rumoured that the sonic shrieker draws its origins from xenos technology.

A Heretic can activate a Sonic Shrieker just after Initiative is rolled but before the first Round. Everyone, friend or foe (excluding the wearer) must pass a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** or treat the first Round of Combat as if they had been Surprised. Equipment that protects against sound-based attacks function as normal. Sonic Shriekers must be fitted to an existing power armour helmet; they draw power from the suit's power cells and require an hour to recharge after each use.

## SOUL SIGHT

The strange and unnatural materials that make up the various islands of the Ragged Helix mean that most traditional scanning methods are useless. Warp Smiths, though, have created ætheric sights that detect souls as bright burning objects in even the blackest nights, making a mockery of concealment.

A Heretic taking a Full Action to Aim when using a soul sight can fire at ensouled targets he cannot see without incurring the usual penalty.

## WARGEAR AND EQUIPMENT

Nothing mundane or dull exists under the influence of Slaanesh. Even the simplest gemstone or the most ordinary prayer book is a work of dark artistry, each a reflection of the eternal perfection that is the Dark Prince.

### BEGUILING GEM

Any warrior foolish enough to take even a passing glance at the Beguiling Gem is instantly assaulted with visions and sensations from every debased vice imaginable. The mental assault is so excruciating that most find themselves unable to look away. Any opponent in melee with a Heretic who has a Beguiling Gem must pass a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** before he can take any Actions during his turn. If he fails, he cannot make any Actions but can make Reactions as normal. Once passed, the character has overcome the Gem and will not suffer its effects again that melee encounter.

### BLASPHEMOUS TEXTS

These items can range from dusty scrolls and bound scrapsheets, to priceless books with vellum or skin pages hinged with elaborate locks. The content, though, determines what worth (or threat) such texts present, from mild cautions about Imperial policy to full-blown heretical screeds, and thus the GM and Heretics should be very clear on the exact contents of these items. Blaspheous Texts grant a +20 bonus to relevant Social Skill Tests such as Intimidation, Charm, and Deception depending on the text and how it is used.



TABLE 2-5: WARGEAR AND EQUIPMENT

Name	Wt	Availability
Beguiling Gem	–	Very Rare
Blasphemous Texts	0.5kg	Scarce
Icon of Silence	6kg	Extremely Rare
Nightmare Choir	12kg	Near Unique
Pendant of Slaanesh	–	Extremely Rare
Rapturous Standard	4kg	Extremely Rare
Ritual Kit	2kg	Scarce
Shrieking Soul	–	Near Unique

### ICON OF SILENCE

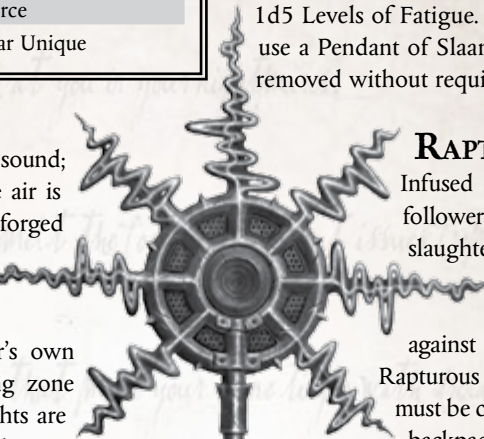
Not all of Slaanesh's followers delight in sound; some seek the perfection of quiet where air is refused vibration. Icons of Silence were forged in the Helix for this purpose, and consist of twisted amplifiers and mutated sound projectors fuelled by a glistening purple liquid and the user's own mental desires. Each creates a disturbing zone of utter auditory void where even thoughts are muffled, becoming faintest of internal whispers.

An Icon of Silence is a large device and must either be carried in one hand or affixed to a sturdy backpack. When activated, all sounds are nullified within a surrounding area equal to the Heretic's WP Bonus x 10m and Damage from sonic weapons is reduced by half. Those not aligned to Slaanesh must pass an **Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test** at the start of each turn or suffer a –10 to all Tests from the unnerving void of sound. The Icon only functions when carried by a character dedicated to Slaanesh, and requires a Half Action to activate or deactivate. The Icon's disturbing nature offers no aid in Stealth Tests, however, as those outside the unnatural zone see vibrant light-ripples as the sounds are violently exterminated.

### NIGHTMARE CHOIR

A strange melding of Warp-spawned technology and arcane Slaanesh lore, the Nightmare Choir is a grotesque assemblage resembling a large collection of pipe organs. Worn on the back with a harness, the leering masks adorning each pipe wail and moan in an utterly discordant manner.

A Heretic may use a Nightmare Choir once per combat as a Full Action. All those not dedicated to Slaanesh within 6d10 metres must immediately take a **Hard (–20) Willpower Test** or become Stunned for one Round per Degree of Failure. The undulating droning also has an energising effect upon its user, allowing him to re-roll for Initiative at the start of any combat round if desired. Only a Heretic dedicated to Slaanesh can use a Nightmare Choir, and he cannot use a Nightmare Choir and a Doom Siren at the same time as neither seem to function when in close proximity to one another.



### RAPTUROUS STANDARD

Infused with the essence of thousands of followers of Slaanesh who died in blissful slaughter, the Rapturous Standard overwhelms nearby allies with feelings of invincibility, steeling their resolve against all opponents. Though forms vary, a Rapturous Standard is often a large banner that must be carried in one hand or affixed to a sturdy backpack. When aloft, all those dedicated to Slaanesh who can draw line of sight to the standard can re-roll all failed Willpower Tests and reduce all Damage received by 1 (to a minimum of 1). A Rapturous Standard only functions when carried by a character dedicated to Slaanesh.

### RITUAL KIT

Many of those who turn their backs on the False Emperor gather strength from the more attentive powers in the Warp. To call on such fickle beings often requires ceremonies that frequently require materials often difficult to find in many situations. These portable kits contain a plethora of useful exotic and profane items, such as carving knives, dried blood, skin parchment, and other blasphemous supplies.

A Ritual Kit grants +20 to Focus Power Tests requiring profane symbols or the like, and a +10 to any Test required as part of a Ritual.

### SHRIEKING SOUL

This rare and special trinket emits the piecing wails of its entrapped souls, such that the wearer is completely absorbed with the emotional waves crashing upon his psyche and ignores even his own injuries. As the Heretic slays new victims, it builds to a cacophonous crescendo that he can unleash as a devastating psychosonic blast.

A Heretic with a Shrieking Soul ignores the effects of Fatigue, Stunning, and all Critical Damage except for those that cause death, limb loss, or blindness. Though he still takes Damage from being on Fire, he can ignore all other penalties it would impose. Each time the Heretic kills an opponent, the gem consumes the victim's soul (should he have one) to a maximum containment of six. The consumed soul-





energy can be released once per session in a Full Action, creating a psychic attack with a radius equal to 1d10 metres for each soul. All those not dedicated to Slaanesh within the shockwave must pass a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** or become Stunned for 1d5 Rounds and suffer 1d10 permanent Willpower Damage. Only a Heretic with the Mark of Slaanesh can use a Shrieking Soul.

## DRUGS AND CONSUMABLES

The subjects of Slaanesh often invest their time in creating an ever-expanding cornucopia of concoctions, always in search for higher states of pure and blissful excess. No mere drug can compare with even the slightest caress of the Dark Prince, though this dissuades none in their quest.

The drugs in this section are Addictive (see page 182 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) unless stated otherwise.

### BARKWEED JUICE (DRUG)

Vast groves of barkweed cover large areas of the Gates of Moment, and the Helwyr tribes use the distilled juice to help perfect their fighting prowess. Outside the Gates, warlords and princes pay ludicrous sums for even the smallest amount.

**Effects:** The Heretic gains Lightning Reflexes, Rapid Reaction, Unnatural Agility (1) and Unnatural Willpower (1) for a number of rounds equal to his base Toughness Bonus.

**Side Effects:** Barkweed Juice is not addictive, but imparts 1d5 temporary Toughness Damage after its effects pass.

### BARRAGE (DRUG)

Barrage enhances the users physical abilities to super-human levels for a short period of time but rapidly causes damage to the strained flesh.

**Effects:** The Heretic gains Unnatural Strength (5) and Unnatural Toughness (5) for a number of rounds equal to his base Toughness Bonus.

**Side Effects:** Once the effect has worn, off the Heretic suffers 1d5 temporary Strength and Toughness Damage and becomes Stunned for 1d5 rounds.

### CURSEWINE

Imbided as part of dark rituals, Cursewine is an insane combination of dangerous chemicals and fine wine. The power of the mixed chemicals and alcohol reportedly grants the favour of the Warp, but the risk is incredibly high.

**Effects:** Cursewine grants a +30 bonus to performing a Curse.

**Side Effects:** Cursewine is extremely poisonous and, when ingested, the Heretic suffers 1d5 Energy Damage with the Toxic (3) Quality, ignoring Armour but not Toughness Bonus.

### FINAL KISS (DRUG)

Distilled from the last gasps of chaste Imperial servants as they are slowly suffocated, Final Kiss has an exquisite bouquet of despair and desperation.

**Effects:** Final Kiss counts as Good Craftsmanship alcohol that never causes drunkenness. It allows the Heretic to re-roll all failed Toughness Tests for a number of hours equal to half his Toughness Bonus.

**Side Effects:** Final Kiss is not addictive.

TABLE 2-6: DRUGS AND CONSUMABLES

Name	Wt	Availability
Barkweed Juice	–	Rare†
Barrage	–	Rare
Cursewine	0.5 kg	Rare
Final Kiss	–	Extremely Rare
Glimmerdust	–	Very Rare
Manic	–	Average
Satrophine	–	Very Rare
Spook	–	Very Rare
Sweetmeats	0.5 kg	Extremely Rare
Sweep	–	Average

†Gates of Moment only, Near Unique elsewhere

### GLIMMERDUST (DRUG)

Cultivated from the nests of Glimmerwings on Q'Sal, this highly addictive drug fortifies the user against the machinations of psykers.

**Effects:** The Heretic gains the Resistance (Psychic Powers) Talent for a number of hours equal to his Willpower Bonus. If the Heretic already has this Talent, he gains a further +10 to Resistance Tests.

**Side Effects:** Whilst under the influence of Glimmerdust, everything appears blindingly bright and more colourful than usual. The Heretic suffers a –30 to all Perception Tests until the drug wears off. Psykers that take this Drug cannot Push their powers until the drug's effects subside.

### MANIC (DRUG)

A favourite of depraved princelings, Manic induces exactly the emotional state its name suggests. Feelings and sensations become exaggerated and uncontrolled as the user feels a sense of boundless energy.

**Effects:** The Heretic adds +30 to any Willpower Tests, ignores Fatigue, and cannot be Stunned or Pinned. These effects last for 3d10 minutes.

**Side Effects:** Once the drug wears off, the Heretic falls unconscious for 1d5 hours unless he can pass a **Hard (-20) Toughness Test**.

### SATROPHINE (DRUG)

Satrophine is a tremendously powerful drug that enhances the user's reflexes, strength, and endurance, but does so at a dire cost. Most users become shells of their former selves, and some believe that the Vortex itself drains the user's soul as they slip deeper and deeper into Satrophine addiction.

**Effects:** The Heretic gains +30 to Agility, Perception, Strength, and Toughness Tests for 1 hour.

**Side Effects:** Heretics addicted to Satrophine do not gain Fatigue from withdrawal. Instead they gain 1d5 Corruption points every day until they take their next dose.



TABLE 2-7: RANDOM PSYCHIC POWERS

Roll	Minor Power
01-06	Compel
07-12	Delude
13-18	Force Bolt
19-24	Glimpse
25-30	Inspire
31-36	Mind Link
37-42	Mind over Matter
43-48	Mind Probe
49-54	Personal Augury
55-60	Precision Telekinesis
61-66	Precognition
67-72	Precognitive Dodge
73-78	Preternatural Awareness
79-84	Telekinetic Shield
85-90	Telekinetic Weapon
91-95	Hellish Blast
96-98	Roll Twice, gaining both Powers
99-100	Pick any one Power and gain 1d10 Corruption Points.

### SPOOK (DRUG)

Spook is one of the more illegal drugs in the Imperium, for it allows the user to temporarily augment or channel that most dangerous of abilities—psychic powers.

**Effects:** The Heretic gains a random power generated from **Table 2-7: Random Psychic Powers**. Heretics without the Psyker Trait manifest the power by passing a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**. Heretics with the Psyker Trait also gain +2 to their Psy-Rating, but must add +25 to any rolls made on the Psychic Phenomena Table. The effects of Spook last for 1d5 hours.

**Side Effects:** Heretics without the Psyker Trait must pass a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** once the drug takes effect or gain 1d5+5 Corruption Points as their mind is exposed to the horrors of the Warp.

### SWEETMEATS

Sweetmeats are made from the harvested progenoid glands of captured loyalist Space Marines, deliberately removed prior to their death. Carefully soaked in rare oils and slowly roasted as the dying Space Marine watches, such delicacies are sometimes seen as insulting to Chaos Space Marine Legions desperate to use them for creating new members, but for true gourmands this is of little concern.

**Effects:** Each morsel consumed quenches a hearty appetite and grants the Regeneration (4) Trait for 1d10 rounds.

**Side Effects:** None.



### SWEEP (DRUG)

Sweep is a bizarre chemical commonly used to cure addiction to other drugs. Ironically, Sweep is itself quite addictive, and dulls the senses of those who consume it.

**Effects:** A single dose of Sweep allows the Heretic to remove any addictions he currently has. Note it does not eliminate any other side effects a drug may impart.

**Side Effects:** The Heretic suffers -10 to all Agility and Perception Tests for 1d5 hours. Sweep addictions are twice as hard to remove than other addictions. Sweep cannot be used to cure an addiction to Sweep.

## MINIONS OF SLAANESH: THE SABOTEURS OF ALCIA

As an alternative to creating a standard Minion, a Heretic dedicated to Slaanesh may select one of the mysterious Alcian Saboteurs to do his bidding. Hidden deep within the Ragged Helix, these enigmatic and clandestine orders of seductive agents are known collectively as the Six Limbs of Alcia. After the death of their founder, Pirate Queen Vonda Alcia, the order divided into six hidden cloisters to better dedicate themselves to their favoured aspect of Slaanesh. They now act only for those who promise the most depraved and thrilling tasks that result in targets suffering the most sublime end imaginable.

A Heretic dedicated to Slaanesh may take an Alcian Saboteur as a Greater Minion of Chaos, choosing the Saboteur's Cloister and modifying the base profile appropriately with additional attributes.

Alcian Saboteur (Base Profile)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	40	35	35	40	45	45	45	45	--

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 12

**Armour:** None

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Common Lore (The Screaming Vortex), Forbidden Lore (Pirates).

**Talents:** Exotic Weapon Training (Any), Resistance (Poisons).

### NPC WEAPON TRAINING, WEAPON DAMAGE, AND INFAMY

In the cases of all NPC profiles, the GM should assume that they are proficient in any weapon they are equipped with and, in general, any weapon an adversary possesses is one he's prepared to use. In addition, all NPC weapon profiles have any damage bonuses from Talents, Strength Bonus, cybernetics, or other augmentations included.

Certain dangerous and powerful NPCs possess Infamy, representing their particularly potent abilities and dread reputations. An NPC with Infamy has Infamy Points equal to his Infamy Bonus, and may be used as if they were Infamy Points at CP Level 2 (21-60 Corruption Points).



### Acedian Cloister

During the schism that split the Six Limbs, the most lissome of Slaanesh's followers formed the Acedian Cloister. Surrendering themselves to the endless sensations of the Warp, these slothful operatives delight in the deadly thrill of summoning all manner of lesser Daemons to do their bidding and the bidding of their masters.

**Skills:** Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Psykers, The Warp) (Int) +20, Scholastic Lore (Numerology, Occult) (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Heightened Senses (All).

**Weapons & Gear:** Æthème blade (Melee; 1d5+3 E; Pen 1; Special), six bottles of cursewine, blasphemous texts, ritual kit, several doses of varying drugs (GM's choice).

**Master Summoners:** Few know the ways to entice lesser Daemons quite like an Acedian. These agents never suffer a penalty greater than -30 when conducting summoning rituals and can re-roll failed Daemonic Mastery Tests when dealing with such lesser Warp entities.

### Avaritian Cloister

As the smallest of all the Cloisters, the Avaritians are always in search of whatever others value the most, and seek to make it their own.

Insatiable desire for excessive material wealth drives each Avaritian, their avarice burning what remains of their souls.

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Agility) +20, Awareness (Per) +20, Inquiry (Fel) +10, Operate (Surface, Aeronautica) (Ag), Security (Int) +20, Sleight of Hand (Ag) +20, Stealth (Ag) +30.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Catfall, Nerves of Steel, Sprint.

**Weapons & Gear:** Compact laspistol (Basic; 15m; S/-/-; 1d10+1 E; Pen 0; Clip 15; Reload Half; Reliable); knives (Melee/Thrown; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), drop harness, multikey, synskin.

### Gulana Cloister

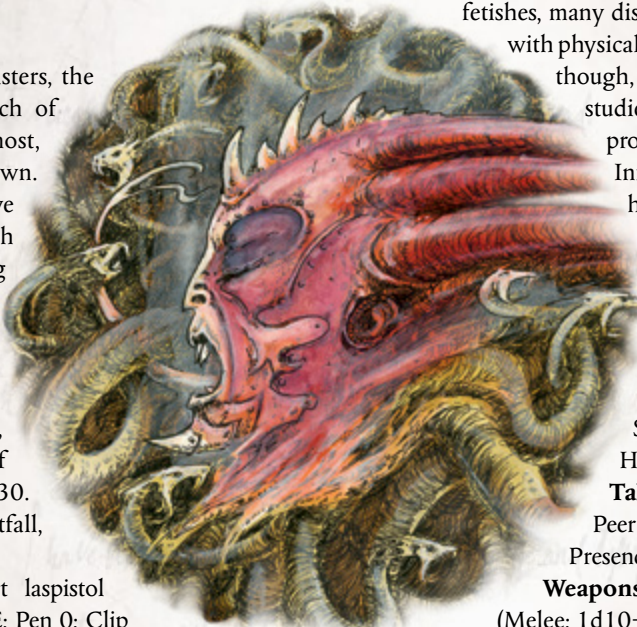
One of the largest cloisters, Gulana often indulge in great, hedonistic feasts. Brokers of information, weapons, drugs, and even souls, there is little they cannot obtain for their masters, though prizing it from their grasping hands is often a subsequent issue.

**Skills:** Commerce (Int) +30, Common Lore (Administratum, Imperium, Tech) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Archeotech, Xenos) (Int), Inquiry (Fel), Scholastic Lore (Chymistry) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +10.

**Talents:** Cold Hearted, Excessive Wealth†, Technical Knock, Total Recall.

**Weapons & Gear:** Knife (Melee/Thrown; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), various cooking utensils and flavourful spices. The GM should also allow the agent to have any allowable Gear items, so long as each is Rare Availability or less, but the agent can never give them to anyone else or allow anyone else to use them.

† They cannot use this themselves, but grant this Talent to their master.



### Invidian Cloister

The agents of the Invidian Cloister truly embody the ambitious aspects of their spiteful mistress, Lady Drusilla. As one of the weaker Cloisters, Invidians obsess over revenge against perceived wrongs in order to restore their proper position above the other cloisters.

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Parry (WS) +10, Stealth (Ag) +10, Survival (Per) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +10.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Assassin Strike, Blademaster, Disarm, Hatred (All), Jaded, Lightning Reflexes, Paranoia, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee), Unremarkable.

**Weapons & Gear:** Power Blade (Melee; 1d10+6 E; Pen 5; Power Field), venom nail, cameleoline cloak, mesh combat cloak, 4 demolition charges, demolition kit.

### Luxillian Cloister

Known for their celebrations of flesh and other unspeakable fetishes, many dismiss this cloister as too obsessed with physical pleasures. The Luxillians believe, though, that only through such excessive studies of the mortal form can proper control over it be achieved. Infiltrators without equal, the honeyed words of a Luxillian can change the outcome of wars and ruin the most noble of men.

**Skills:** Charm (Fel) +30, Command (Fel), Deceive (Fel) +30, Interrogation (WP), Linguistics (High Gothic), Scholastic Lore (Bureaucracy, Heraldry) (Int).

**Talents:** Cold Hearted, Mimic, Peer (Warlords), Polyglot, Radiant Presence.

**Weapons & Gear:** Membrane dagger (Melee; 1d10+3 E; Pen 4; Crippling [3], Razor Sharp), comm leach, disguise kit, forgery kit.

### Hubrian Cloister

Hubrian agents regard themselves as better than other Alicians and most other mortals within the Vortex. Boastful, brash, and headstrong, they fixate on the notion that their glorious exploits might go unrecognised and care little for stealth or subterfuge.

**Skills:** Athletics (S) +10, Common Lore (War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Interrogation (WP) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Medicae (Int), Parry (WS) +10,

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Counter-Attack, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Iron Jaw, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Pity the Weak, Rapid Reaction, Rapid Reload, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Weapons & Gear:** Hubrians only carry the largest and loudest of weapons, viewing such presence as more proof of their impressive nature. The GM should assign the agent a single melee weapon and a single ranged weapon, both of which require two hands to operate and are of Rare Availability or less.



## LIVING MOUNTS

*"Run them down! I want to hear the bones as they crack under our hooves!"*

—Beast-Captain Arwein Ydd

Within the endlessly swirling energy of the Screaming Vortex dwell all manner of foul and twisted creatures. Taming and riding these tainted creatures is a great challenge and a true test of a Heretic's mettle, and numerous would-be tyrants and aspiring warlords have risen (and fallen) on the backs of such terrible beasts.

### RIDING UNTO BATTLE

Riding a living mount requires the Survival Skill. Skill Tests are not needed for routine riding, but whenever the Heretic attempts something particularly challenging he may be required to pass a Riding Test. These Tests can be Standard or Opposed, depending on the situation, and can be modified due to circumstances. If a Heretic ever fails a Riding Test by 3 or more Degrees of Failure, he is automatically thrown from his mount and suffers 1d10 Impact Damage, and +1 Damage for every 5 metres (or part thereof) the mount moved during its last turn. This damage ignores Armour, and the rider automatically falls Prone.

Most Heretics can ride any living mount, as long as he is no larger than the mount's Size Trait; Heretics in Terminator Armour cannot ride due to their cumbersome armour.

### Passengers and Encumbrance

Most mounts are strong creatures capable of carrying more than any average human, and it is common to load mounts with additional equipment and extra passengers. There are limits, though, and an overburdened mount is a liability in combat rather than an asset. Mounts use the standard rules for carrying, lifting, and pushing (see **Table 1-7: Carrying, Lifting, & Pushing** on page 42 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), but ignore the weight of their rider and his equipment in that total (except for weapons classed as Heavy and other bulky objects; the GM has final say).

### MOVEMENT

Mounted riders travel as per the Movement values listed for the mount, and take Environment Tests (see **Table 1-6: Treacherous Environment Agility Modifiers** on page 40 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) with a -20 penalty. A rider cannot Climb, Jump, or Leap whilst mounted, but may attempt Horizontal Leaps of up to the mount's Full Move value if there is room equal to the mount's Full Move value available to gain speed. A rider can swim when riding a mount, but this is limited to fording streams and shallow bodies of water, and the mount and rider must keep their heads above water.

For standard movement, a rider must move at least half of the distance he moved in the preceding Round before making any turn greater than 90 degrees, but may pivot more than once per Round provided he moves the appropriate distance each time. The rider can attempt to turn without moving half the distance moved in the previous turn, and can even make multiple turns during a Round, but must pass a **Challenging (+0) Riding Test** for every additional turn, or any turn made without moving the necessary distance first.

A rider has special Movement Actions that he can take during his Turn:

### Evasive Riding

**Type:** Full Action

**Subtype:** Concentration, Movement

The rider encourages his mount to move erratically, weaving and dodging as it moves and presenting a harder target. He moves at half the mount's Movement Value and must take a **Challenging (+0) Riding Test**. For every Degree of Success, enemies take a -10 penalty on all attacks against the mounted rider until the beginning of the next Turn, but the rider takes the same penalty to his own Ballistic Skill Tests.

### Hit & Run

**Type:** Full Action

**Subtype:** Attack, Melee, Movement

Riders often dash past their enemies at high speed, slashing them as they move past. The attack is quick and brutal, with the operator often leaving his opponent a bloody ruin behind him. Mounted riders can make a Hit & Run Action in place of a regular Charge Action, making a Charge Move and then a **Difficult (-10) Weapon Skill Test**. If he succeeds, the rider scores a single hit with one melee weapon and then moves again up to his Charge Move value directly away from the target. No other combat actions (such as Lightning Attack) can be combined with this Action, and the victim of this attack does not gain a free attack against the rider as he moves away.

### COMBAT

Mounted Riders take Actions as normal during Structured Time. Aside from the two special Actions listed on this page, riders can use most of the standard Actions available to characters on foot unless the manoeuvre would be impossible whilst mounted (with the GM making final determination).

### Attacking while Riding

Riders (and any passengers) use normal Attack Actions with the following notes:

- Any shooting from the mount suffers a -10 if it moved its Half Move value in its previous turn, or -20 if the mount moved its Full Move value (or higher) in its previous turn.
- Mounts can also attack in combat, striking as a Free Action immediately after their rider attacks. Mounts have no Initiative value of their own unless the rider is elsewhere, and whilst ridden their attacks are considered Free Actions.

### Attacking a Mounted Rider

Successful hits against such targets can strike either the mount or the rider depending on the roll to hit: if the roll was doubles, the shot hits the rider or any passengers (determine who is hit randomly). Hits to the rider and/or passengers are always assumed to hit the Body. Attackers can use the Called Shot Action to specifically target the mount, rider, or passengers.





## WOUNDING MOUNTS

Mounts have Toughness Bonus and Wounds (and may have Armour too). They take Damage like any other creature, but all hits count as Body hits and they die when they suffer Damage that equals or exceeds their Wounds. When a mount dies, it moves forward half of the distance moved on its last turn before falling. Any riding the beast must make a **Difficult (-10) Agility Test** or suffer 1d10 Impact Damage that ignores Armour.

## NEW TRAITS FOR MOUNTS

Many beasts have special Traits that indicate special abilities or personality traits. Additional Traits can be found in **THE TOME OF BLOOD**.

- **Bred for War:** The mount ignores the downside of the Bestial Trait, and never has to take a Willpower Test when frightened, startled, or injured. A mount with this Trait cannot have the Skittish Trait.
- **Daemonic:** The mount is a Daemon and has the creature Daemonic Trait (see page 140 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Riding Tests with Daemonic Mounts are always Opposed Tests vs the mount's Willpower, and the mount cannot have the Loyal Trait.
- **Disloyal:** These mounts always have the Unruly Trait and if the rider is thrown, the beast always attacks him before attacking anyone else. A mount with this Trait cannot have the Loyal or Indifferent Trait.
- **Indifferent:** Some riding beasts tend to wander off if not carefully controlled or tied up, and in the heat of battle these creatures are unlikely to stay put if left unattended. If the rider is ever thrown, the mount will act on its own accord (controlled by the GM). A mount with this Trait cannot have the Disloyal or Loyal Trait.

- **Loyal:** Some mounts have a consuming loyalty to their masters, sticking with them to the bitter end. Loyal mounts do not leave their riders, and attack anyone who attempts to bring their rider harm. If the rider is thrown, the mount must stay by the rider's side, acting as a bodyguard. Riders gain a +10 bonus to Riding Tests when attempting to control a mount with this Trait. A mount with this Trait cannot have the Disloyal, Indifferent, or Unruly Trait.
- **Mutated:** The beast is a foul mutant, unique in appearance. The GM assigns it 1d5 Traits from pages 139-144 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, or 1d5 mutations from **Table 9-1 Gifts of the Gods** on page 291 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.
- **Skittish:** The mount is nervous and takes flight easily. If the mount is hit by a weapon with the Concussive or Blast Qualities, or if an explosion occurs within 10 times the mount's Perception Bonus in metres, the rider must take a **Difficult (-10) Riding Test** to maintain control. If the Test is failed, the mount moves as fast as it can directly away from the event that caused it to run, taking the rider with it. A mount with this Trait cannot have the Bred for War Trait.
- **Sumpter:** Strong, broad-backed and heavily muscled, the mount is capable of carrying an inordinate amount of equipment. The mount doubles its carry limit and ignores the effects of Fatigue (other than passing out). A mount with this Trait cannot have the Wiry Trait.
- **Terrain Master:** The mount has large padded feet, widely splayed toes, double-jointed legs, or even a preternatural ability to sense uneven ground, and grants the rider +10 to all Environment Tests.
- **Unruly:** Whenever the mount suffers Damage, its rider must make a **Challenging (+0) Riding Test** or be thrown. Once it has unseated its rider, the mount either flees, or tries to repay the harm that it suffered in the most violent way possible, depending on its personality. Riders suffer an additional -10 penalty to all Riding Tests when riding a mount with this Trait. A mount with this Trait cannot have the Loyal Trait.
- **Wiry:** Thin and sinewy, the mount is built for speed and manoeuvre. The mount does not ignore the weight of its rider (and the rider's equipment) when calculating encumbrance. A mount with this Trait cannot have the Sumpter Trait.

## CREATING NEW MOUNTS

Players and GMs can use appropriate Daemons and other creatures as mounts for Heretics, using the original creature's characteristics as the basis for the mounted version. Some creature Traits such as Phase should be extended to the rider, but the GM should adapt or remove them based on the ongoing story and the exact creature. The rider uses his own Willpower for any such Tests the steed must make, such as for the Bestial or Stampede Traits. New Mount Traits can be added as needed, especially to create Mutant varieties. Finally, the Player should work with the GM to establish the backstory for how these new mounts were found, establish their Availability, how they were broken into service or summoned into being, and other aspects to flesh out their history.



## MOUNT PROFILES

The following are a small selection of some of the twisted and hideous mounts found within the Screaming Vortex.

### Scale-Drakes

These enormous reptiles are the most common form of life found upon the Gates of Moment. Equal parts predator and prey, they stalk the Hunter's Moon in vast herds devouring anything that cannot get away. The Helwyr tribesmen value their meat, aggression, and ferocity as combat mounts.

Scale-Drake (Mount)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	--	62	65	11	18	46	43	10	--

**Movement:** 8/16/24/48

**Wounds:** 43

**Armour:** Mutated Scales (All 3)

**Total TB:** 10

**Skills:** Awareness (Per).

**Talents:** Thunder Charge.

**Traits:** Bestial, Brutal Charge (6), Deadly Natural Weapons, Disloyal, Natural Armour (3), Quadruped, Size (7), Stampede, Sumpter, Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (4), Unruly.

**Weapons:** Jagged jaws (Melee; 1d5+10 R; Pen 6; Tearing), massive claws (Melee; 1d10+10 R; Pen 4; Concussive [1]).

**Availability:** Common within the Gates of Moment. Extremely Rare everywhere else.

### Pryfed Stalker

With six spindly legs, dark purple carapace, and huge compound eyes, Pryfed Stalkers appear almost daemonic even to the jaded denizens of the Vortex. They are as fast as they are disturbing, though, and as deadly as they are fast.

Pryfed Stalker (Mount)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
25	25	40	50	25	10	45	25	--	--

**Movement:** 8/16/24/48

**Wounds:** 14

**Armour:** Chitin Carapace (All 6)

**Total TB:** 5

**Skills:** Acrobatics (S) +10, Awareness (Per).

**Talents:** Catfall, Resistance (Poisons).

**Traits:** Bestial, Dark Sight, Fear (1), Indifferent, Natural Armour (6), Improved Natural Weapons, Mutated, Quadruped, Size (5), Skittish, Terrain Master.

**Weapons:** Barbed mandibles (Melee; 1d10+4 R; Pen 0; Crippling [2]), acidic bile (Basic; 15m; S/-/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 8; Clip -; Reload -; Toxic [4]).

**Availability:** Rare.

### Glimmerclaw

Mostly regarded as a myth by outsiders, the glittering birds of the Ragged Helix continue to haunt (and terrify) the pirates that move between the shifting asteroids. Many claim that the Magisters of the Velklir have tamed a small version of this creature, but larger versions—such as the Glimmerclaw—are a true prize. Many pirate kings have spent their remaining days fixated on the idea of owning such a majestic and elusive creature, their unrelenting obsession driving them to ruin and madness.

Glimmerclaw (Mount)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
35	--	50	40	45	30	45	30	05	--

**Movement:** 10/20/30/60 (Flying)

**Wounds:** 12

**Armour:** Natural Armour (All 4)

**Total TB:** 4

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag), Navigate (Surface, Stellar, Warp) (Int), Stealth (Ag) +10.

**Talents:** Berserk Charge, Fearless, Leap Up, Psychic Amplifier†, Rapid Reaction.

**Traits:** Dark Sight, From Beyond, Flyer (10), Improved Natural Weapons, Indifferent, Natural Armour (4), Size (5), Unnatural Agility (4), Unnatural Perception (4), Unnatural Senses (200m), Wiry.

**Weapons:** Serrated beak (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 4; Tearing).

**Availability:** Extremely Rare within the Ragged Helix; Near Unique everywhere else.

†**Psychic Amplifier:** Glimmerclaws have a natural ability to channel small amounts of psychic energy through their multi-coloured wings. Whenever the Glimmerclaw's rider Pushes a psychic power whilst mounted, he can add +1 to his Psy-Rating.

### Spine-Hounds

Devilish, large creatures found throughout the Vortex, Spine-Hounds voraciously hunt in tight-knit family groups. They also form close bonds with their new master after being broken and sold in beast-markets on many worlds.

Spine-Hound (Mount)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
35	--	50	37	45	12	46	15	--	--

**Movement:** 10/20/30/60

**Wounds:** 12

**Armour:** Jutting Spines (All 1)

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10.

**Talents:** Hard Target.

**Traits:** Bestial, Loyal, Mutated†, Natural Armour (1), Natural Weapons, Quadruped, Size (5), Terrain Master.

**Weapons:** Claws (Melee; 1d10+5 I; Pen 2; Primitive [6], Tearing).

**Availability:** Scarce.

†*There are many sub-types of Spine-Hound. At the GM's discretion, a Spine-Hound can have the Mutated Trait.*



# EXPANDED MINIONS

*"I worship the gods, and by their favour, I am worshipped in turn."*

—Havastien the Beautiful

To launch a Black Crusade, Heretics must acquire truly substantial resources, not the least of which are followers. There is a distinction, however, between the masses of faceless soldiers, mercenaries, and servants that a Heretic may amass, and his Minions. Minions, as explained in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, are close and trusted companions—at least as trusted as any follower of the Dark Gods can allow. The three Minion of Chaos Talents and accompanying rules presented in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook include a variety of options, allowing players to create a staggering array of Minions with varying levels of power. The following pages introduce new options and rules for Minions, granting even greater versatility. These rules also allow for more powerful Minions, the likes of which accompany the truly great Champions of Chaos, and GMs should consider which options are appropriate for their campaign. As always, the GM must give final approval for any Minion.

Of all the servants of Chaos, it is perhaps those dedicated to Slaanesh who are most likely to surround themselves with a court of dedicated servants, whether simply to feed the Heretic's ego, or to aid him in pursuing the debauched pleasures to be found in the Screaming Vortex. As a disciple of the Prince of Excess draws closer to perfection, it is only proper that lesser creatures flock to him, latching themselves to his rising star.

## MINION CREATION

The **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook includes flexible rules that allow players to create a wide variety of Minions. These rules expand the options available to players, and provide alternatives for certain elements of the Minion creation process. As always, players should work with their GM when creating Minions, as some GMs may wish for all players to use the same process when creating Minions, or otherwise limit certain options.

## ACQUIRING MINIONS

Minions come in a staggering variety of forms, from simple mercenaries to ancient xenos constructs. Minions are likely to have a great impact on a campaign, whether by saving a Heretic's life in combat (possibly more than once) or granting the Heretics an "in" with a particular group. The part a Minion plays in the campaign can depend greatly on how the Minion comes into the Heretic's service. There is likely a great difference between the Heretic's attitude toward a mere hired lasgun and toward the sorcerously reanimated corpse of a former ally.

When a player selects one of the Minion of Chaos Talents, it is certainly acceptable for the Minion to simply "show up" between sessions, with a suitable explanation for its arrival. However, the acquisition of a new Minion is a great opportunity for roleplaying, which has the potential to enhance



the experience of all the players. For the most part, Minions are not likely to simply spring into existence at a Heretic's whim—although, stranger things have happened in the Screaming Vortex. Often, a Heretic must seek out a potential Minion, and possibly complete some task. For instance, the deadly pit-frights of Korlos only serve a master who has bested them in single combat. Likewise, a Heretek wishing to construct a unique Combat Servitor must obtain not only the mechanical parts, but also a biological specimen with sufficient muscle mass. There is no shortage of animosity between the varying beings of the Screaming Vortex, and the presence of certain Minions may be undesirable for other Heretics in the group; this tension allows a great opportunity for roleplaying.

## RANDOM CHARACTERISTICS

The default method of character creation in **BLACK CRUSADE** requires players to determine the Characteristics of their Heretic by rolling a number of d10s and adding a modifier. Some players and GMs may prefer to use a similar method to determine the Characteristics of Minions, rather than the standard method of distributing points. Minions created under the method outlined on page 135 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook are likely to have relatively high values in two or three Characteristics deemed important to their main purpose, with minimal values for their other Characteristics. Some players may prefer a more "organic" method to determine a Minion's Dark God-given abilities. No matter how much a mercenary swordsman may neglect



## MINION INTERACTIONS

Minions are much more than faceless, nameless hirelings, and as such, they deserve to be involved in many of the Heretics' interactions with each other and with NPCs. Since Minions are under a player's direct control, it may seem safe to assume that the controlling player should roleplay the Minions, but this is not necessarily the case and it may be appropriate sometimes for the GM to portray a Minion. In some instances, this may depend on the nature of the Minion and how it came to be in the character's service. For instance, a resentful Daemonhost may frequently mutter curses and impugn the Heretic, while a devout follower would be quite the opposite. Ultimately, the player and GM should work together to determine how the Minion is portrayed in their games, and by whom. Some players may wish to focus completely on portraying their own character, while others may be perfectly happy to play both sides of a conversation with their Minion! Often, the best approach is a combination of methods, perhaps having the GM portray the Minion during conversations and such, while the player also describes the Minion's actions and attitudes, as needed.

his mind in pursuit of his skill-at-arms, he is unlikely to have Intelligence 01—barring a very unfortunate mutation of the mind! In addition, the standard method of point-assignment works very well for players who have a firm idea of their Minion in mind, but some players may prefer to generate Characteristics randomly, which may provide inspiration. If the GM agrees (or insists), players may generate Minion Characteristics randomly, as shown below. This method is likely to result in higher characteristics overall, but also in a more even, natural distribution. This is offset by the fact that players do not have the opportunity to “optimise” their Minions' Characteristics using this method.

To generate Characteristics, roll 2d10 for each Characteristic, and add 10 to the result on each for Lesser Minions, 15 for Minions, and 20 for Greater Minions. Before rolling, the player can choose up to two Characteristics and apply a +5 to those scores. For each Characteristic that gains this bonus, the player must choose another Characteristic to suffer a corresponding -5 penalty.

## HORDE MINIONS

A Heretic with the Horde Minion of Chaos Talent (see page 52) can create a Horde Minion. Horde Minions are created in the same manner as Lesser Minions of Chaos, either using the standard method presented in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook or the alternative random characteristics method from page 47. Rather than generating a Wounds value, however, the Minion is given a Magnitude equal to one half of the Heretic's Infamy. This represents the higher numbers of followers that an especially infamous Heretic can attract, and possibly the higher quality attracted, as well. Though a Horde represents a number of individuals, it is treated in game terms as a single character, and likewise counts as a single Minion toward the Heretic's limit.

If a Heretic's Infamy changes during the course of a session, the Magnitude of his Horde Minion is adjusted to reflect the change, subject to the GM's discretion. An increase in Infamy and corresponding increase in Magnitude does not necessarily represent additional individuals joining the Horde, though it certainly could if the Heretics are in a populated area. It could just as readily represent an increase in the morale of the Heretic's followers, or even a blessing from the gods. If the GM determines an immediate change would be inappropriate for the circumstances, he may wish to defer the adjustment to Magnitude until a fitting opportunity, such as when the Heretics return to their base of operations to gather more servants, or stage a ritual to bind additional souls to the Heretic's will, or simply until the end of the session.

Horde Minions follow all the rules for Hordes on page 348 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, but additionally require certain considerations that do not typically apply to Minions. For instance, should the Heretics procure a ride on a shuttlecraft with a capacity for a dozen or so passengers, it may be hard to fit a Magnitude 35 Horde of bloodthirsty cultists. Likewise, it may prove extremely difficult to covertly infiltrate an Imperial settlement with a pack of vicious xenos beasts in tow. Players and GMs should therefore consider these potential complications when introducing Horde Minions into a campaign.

In the case of Hordes consisting of sentient beings, it is a good idea to nominate either a leader or representative member of the Horde to act as its “face” when interacting with characters or accepting orders from the Heretic. This representative member of the Horde may have a distinct personality and appearance, but is not treated as a separate character. Typically, this individual is assumed to survive any damage to the Horde's Magnitude, though that does not preclude non-fatal injuries.

## Horde Minions and Damage

A Horde's Magnitude is an abstraction of its durability and power, including factors such as the number of individuals, their morale and training, and their capacity to endure injury. Consequently, the reduction of a Horde's Magnitude due to damage sustained in combat does not represent the deaths of individuals on a one-for-one basis, but rather the reduction of the Horde's ability due to injuries, fatalities, and loss of morale. Due to the abstract nature of Magnitude damage, Horde Minions “heal” in a very different way to normal characters.

In the aftermath of a fight, characters can attempt to restore a Horde's Magnitude in two ways, as both the bodies and spirit of the Horde can be treated. Once one of these methods has been successfully used to restore one or more points of Magnitude, it cannot be used again until the Horde's Magnitude has been changed through some other manner, such as further damage or the introduction of new members. Regardless of the methods used, a Horde's Magnitude cannot be raised above its normal value.

A character with the *Medicae* Skill may perform first aid on the injured members of the Horde. Because this requires the treatment of numerous individuals, the time required for the Test must be left to the GM's discretion. However, it generally should take no less than one minute, and is simply too involved a process to be completed in the midst of combat.



The character makes a **Challenging (+0) Medicae Test**. A successful Test restores Magnitude equal to the character's Intelligence Bonus, +1 for every two Degrees of Success.

Unlike physical injuries, the morale and spirit of the Horde can only be significantly improved through the actions of the owning Heretic. The Horde's master attempts a **Challenging (+0) Command, Charm, Deceive, or Intimidate Test**. A successful Test restores an amount of Magnitude equal to the character's Infamy Bonus, +1 for every Degree of Success, up to the Horde's starting Magnitude. This represents the Heretic rallying the troops with apostate hymns, offering sweet inducements, cracking a whip menacingly, or convincing them that things are not as bad as they look.

Hordes do not recover Magnitude over time in the way characters heal Damage. However, a Horde's Magnitude is restored during appropriate periods of downtime, in much the same way as an increase in Magnitude due to a rise in the Heretic's Infamy.

## EXPANDED MINION TRAITS

With the permission of the GM, the following Traits may be available when creating Minions, in addition to those listed on page 137 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

### Lesser

Fanatic, Parasite, Sycophant

### Normal

Fanatic, Incorporeal, Monodevotant, Mutant (1), Parasite, Sycophant

### Greater

Fanatic, Incorporeal, Monodevotant, Mutant (1-3), Parasite, Phase†, Sycophant  
 †The Phase Trait counts as two Traits against the Minion's total.

## NEW TRAITS

The following new Traits apply only to Minions; they are not appropriate for Heretics or other kinds of NPCs. These Traits are available for Minions during creation, as listed on page 47.

### Fanatic

The Minion is fanatically devoted to its master, and would gladly sacrifice its own life to preserve him. Once per combat, after an attack successfully hits its master but before Damage is rolled, the Minion may use a Reaction and move up to its Half Move rate to interpose itself, suffering the Damage in the Heretic's place.

## Monodevotant

The Minion is hopelessly addicted to something the Heretic can offer. This could be anything, from a certain chem, to the blood of Daemons, to souls. As a result, the Minion is willing to do anything to keep its master's favour, including risk its life. Likewise, the Minion goes to any lengths to avoid disappointing its master, obsessively pursuing any given task. The Minion may re-roll failed Loyalty Tests. However, should the Heretic be unable to supply the Minion with its desire, after a number of days equal to 1d10 + the Minion's Willpower Bonus, the Minion suffers a -10 penalty to all Characteristics due to withdrawal. This penalty increases by a further -5 each subsequent day, until the addict's thirst is slaked. If this state of affairs continues too long, the GM may rule that the Minion abandons the character, succumbs to madness, or even dies, depending on the nature of the addiction.

## Mutant (X)

The Minion is touched by Chaos, whether through service to the Dark Gods or unchecked exposure to the twisting influence of the Warp. The Minion gains one random result from the Gift of the Gods table on page 291 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. With the GM's permission, the player may instead select a result that is fitting for his Minion. Some Minions are almost unrecognisable as their original selves, so corrupted are they. The value noted in parentheses indicates the Minion gains a number of Gifts of the Gods equal to the Trait's value.

## Parasite

The Minion is able to attach itself to a host organism and influence its behaviour. This ability is evinced by certain xenos creatures for which it is a necessity of their life cycle, but it might also be evinced by bizarre cyber-constructs of Forge Castir, or even stranger entities. Usually, a parasitic creature is much smaller than potential host organisms, no more than Size (2). Depending on the nature and size of a particular Minion, the GM may deem it necessary to modify this Talent to better reflect the functions of a specific creature. In order to attach itself to, or enter the body of, a host, known as infection, the parasite must come into physical contact. Infecting the host organism takes 1d5 Rounds, +1 for each Armour Point on the location through which the parasite is attempting to enter, to represent either the Minion burrowing through armour or searching for a weak point or opening. If the intended host is aware of the parasite at any point during this process, he may attempt to stop it, most likely by either attacking it or pulling it off.





## OPTIONAL RULE: EARNING EXPERIENCE

While below the level of Player Characters, Superior Minions are nonetheless a cut above other Minions and many NPCs the Heretics may encounter. These formidable creatures increase in ability as they learn from their experiences or simply get bigger and stronger. As an optional rule, GMs may wish to grant Experience Points to Superior Minions as a reward for play and the successful completion of Compacts, just as he does for the Heretics. If he does so, the amount of xp Superior Minions earn should always be less than that earned by the Heretics, and it is recommended that Minions earn no more than 50% of the xp gained by the owning Heretic, with 25% being sufficient in most circumstances.

This xp should only be granted if the Minion played a significant role in the game session or the completion of the Compact. Note that this xp does not reduce the amount the Heretic gains and, unless the GM rules otherwise, this xp is not passed on to the Heretic's next Superior Minion should the current one be replaced.

Any successful attacks against the parasite, by the potential host, or by another character, inflict half Damage against the host, and any attacks that fail by one degree or less strike the host instead. The parasite can be pulled free before it has fully attached to or entered the host, with an Opposed Strength Test. If the parasite fails, it is removed from the host, who suffers 1d5 Damage, not reduced by Toughness Bonus. Once infected, the host must pass a **Hard (-20) Toughness Test** or succumb to the parasite's influence, which may range from subtle changes to behaviour to outright control, depending on the nature of the parasite. Infection is insidious, and the parasite must be removed, probably with the aid of a surgeon or flesh adept, before the host's behaviour can return to normal.

### Sycophant

This Minion has an innate tendency to latch on to more powerful individuals and is loyal almost to the point of absurdity. Minions with this trait are likely to perceive every word from their master's mouth as divinely inspired wisdom, and his every act as pure genius. Heretics of a particularly vain nature are likely to appreciate this behaviour, while others may find it infuriating. Nevertheless, the commitment these Minions show is beyond question.

A Minion with the Sycophant Trait increases its Loyalty by +15. In addition, such is the sycophantic Minion's lavish and unceasing praise of its master, that the Heretic removes Fellowship Damage at twice the normal rate.

## SUPERIOR MINIONS

Minions, typically, are a cut above the assorted hirelings, mercenaries, and servants whom a Heretic may enlist. Nevertheless, Minions have their limitations, notably the fact that they cannot improve their abilities past the levels permitted by the Greater Minion of Chaos Talent. Eventually, even a Greater Minion may outlive its utility as a Heretic grows in power, for the greatest servants of Chaos are nothing if not fickle masters. The Superior Minion of Chaos Talent (see page 52) grants the Heretic a powerful Minion whose abilities can improve over time, reflecting the Heretic's own advancement. A Superior Minion may represent a particularly skilled or favoured servant, a dangerous ally, or even an almost-trusted partner. Unlike other Minions, Superior Minions can improve their Characteristics, Skills, and Talents. Superior Minions are unique in that they can obtain and spend Experience Points in much the same way as Heretics.

When a player first selects the Superior Minion of Chaos Talent, he creates the Superior Minion following the same process as if he were creating a Greater Minion, either using the standard rules in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook or the variant rules presented in this chapter. A Superior Minion counts toward the limit on the number of Minions the Heretic can have. Unlike other Minion of Chaos Talents, the Superior Minion of Chaos Talent cannot be taken multiple times; a Heretic may only have a single Superior Minion at a time. Superior Minions have a Loyalty value just as other Minions, which is tested against under the same circumstances. As powerful as they may be, Superior Minions follow all the normal rules for Minions, with the exceptions noted below.

Each time the Heretic gains the Minion Improvement Talent, when creating the Superior Minion or at a later time, his Superior Minion gains 500 xp to spend. A Superior Minion's xp total may never exceed 50% of the controlling Heretic's xp; any excess Experience Points, from any source, are lost.

### ADVANCING SUPERIOR MINIONS

Superior Minions generally gain xp when a Heretic purchases the Minion Improvement Talent, and perhaps as a reward for game play (see the **Earning Experience** sidebar on this page). Regardless of the source, Minions may spend xp in the same manner as Heretics, with a few clarifications and additional limitations. Like Heretics, Superior Minions may purchase Characteristic Advancements at the Simple, Intermediate, Trained, and Expert levels, as well as Skills and Talents. Also like Heretics, the Experience cost for an Advancement is determined by the Minion's Alignment and that of the Characteristic, Skill, or Talent in question. Superior Minions may not purchase Infamy Advancements; their own reputation and favour in the eyes of the Gods is inextricably bound to that of their master.

### Superior Minions and Alignment

When created, a Superior Minion's Alignment is the same as the controlling Heretic; e.g., an Unaligned Heretic's Superior Minion is Unaligned. Any time a Heretic checks his Alignment (usually after gaining 10 Corruption Points), the Superior Minion must also check its Alignment. If the Superior Minion's Alignment



changes to that of a god only Allied to the Heretic's own patron (excluding Unaligned), the Heretic reduces his Infamy by 1d5, representing a loss of face in the eyes of his god's other followers, and perhaps the god itself. If the Superior Minion's Alignment changes to that of an Opposed god, the Minion leaves the Heretic's service and the Heretic reduces his Infamy by 1d5+5. The specifics of how the Minion departs are up to the GM, and could range from stealing a vehicle in the dark of night to making an attempt on the Heretic's life. Tracking down and taking revenge on a treacherous former Minion could form the basis for an adventure, or even a Compact, allowing the Heretic to regain some of the Infamy he lost in the first place!

Normally, Skills and Talents selected when a Superior Minion is created do not count towards Alignment. With the GM's permission, however, a player may choose for his Minion's starting Talents and Skills to count toward Alignment, in which case the decision must be made when the Minion is created and all Skill and Talents thereafter count towards Alignment. This option cannot be chosen if the Minion's Skills and Talents would result in it being Aligned to a god Opposed to the Heretic's own.

Certain Superior Minions are, by their very nature, bound to a particular Chaos god, as is the case with Daemons. When created, the GM may deem that a Superior Minion is permanently Aligned to a specific Chaos god, or permanently Unaligned. In this case, the Minion's Alignment cannot be Opposed to the Heretic's, and will always determine the xp cost for Advancements. Such a Minion cannot purchase an Advancement Aligned to another god if it would surpass the number of Advancements Aligned to its own patron.

### Marks of Chaos

With the GM's permission, a Superior Minion who meets the requirements (20 Advances along a single path of Devotion) may be eligible to receive a Mark of Chaos, with all the benefits entailed. Unlike Heretics, the Mark of Chaos is not free, and the Minion must spend 500 xp to obtain it.

### REPLACING SUPERIOR MINIONS

As is the case with other Minions, a Heretic may replace a Superior Minion who has been killed or otherwise left the Heretic's service at an appropriate point, such as the downtime between adventures; although when dealing with such an important Minion, GMs and players may wish to incorporate the introduction of the Superior Minion into play, or even as a focal point of a session. When creating a replacement Superior Minion, the Minion has an amount of xp available to spend based on the value of the Heretic's Minion Improvement Talent, if he has selected it more than once.

To lose a Superior Minion represents a major blow to a Heretic's resources, and a potential opportunity for his enemies. Should a Superior Minion die in combat or otherwise perish in the course of his service to the Heretic, the Heretic loses 1d5 Infamy. This penalty may be waived if circumstances warrant, at the GM's discretion. For instance, the GM may decide that a Heretic does not lose any Infamy after sacrificing his Minion as part of a major Ritual in the name of his god.

## I'LL SIT THIS ONE OUT

It may come to pass that a Heretic is injured so severely that he cannot participate in the group's activities, whether because he would slow them down or because he's on the verge of death. In situations like these, Minions provide a convenient way to keep a player involved in the game, even as his character recuperates "off screen." If circumstances warrant a player using one or more of his Minions as a temporary substitute for his Heretic, the GM may wish to ignore the need for Loyalty Tests for at least one Minion, so as not to exclude the player based on a single dice roll.

## USING MINIONS

Minions fulfil many functions in **BLACK CRUSADE**, from defending a Heretic in combat to providing a ready source of human sacrifices. While some of the rules for player characters are not applicable to Minions, at the same time, Minions spend much more time actively engaged in the story than most NPCs, and must face all the same situations that confront the Heretics.

### FEAR AND INSANITY

The Screaming Vortex is home to innumerable terrifying sights and mind-shattering phenomena. Like the Heretics whom they serve, the majority of Minions are not affected by such experiences as an ordinary human might be, and indeed are likely to be a source of terror and madness for others. Some Minions are immune to the effects of Fear due to a Talent or Trait they possess. At the GM's discretion, some Minions of an unnatural or incomprehensible nature, or those with the Fear Trait, may be unaffected by Fear. Other Minions are affected by Fear as either a "normal" character or as a Heretic, at the GM's discretion. However, Minions may substitute their Loyalty for Willpower when taking a Fear Test, representing the fact that Minions are often more frightened of their masters than much else. When making a Fear Test using Loyalty, the Test is modified both by any Talents or Traits that affect Loyalty and by any that affect Fear Tests.

Normally, Minions are not affected by Disorders, but may be at the GM's discretion. This adds yet another consideration which players and the GM must track, but is also a great opportunity for groups who enjoy such detail in regard to Minions, and the additional opportunities for role playing. Disorders are most appropriate for Superior Minions, who already require a deal more bookkeeping and attention than other Minions.

### CORRUPTION

Ordinarily, Minions do not acquire Corruption Points. Like NPCs, most Minions are liable to be simply consumed or transformed into a disgusting Chaos Spawn when exposed to the pure power of the Warp—they are not fit to tread the Path to Glory. If exposed to a major source of Corruption, such as travel through the Warp unprotected or possession by a daemon, the GM may bestow on a Minion the Mutant Trait (see page 49), with an accompanying random Gift of the Gods. Depending on the cause of the mutation, a Minion may be given a chance to avoid its fate with a Characteristic Test, most likely based on Toughness or Willpower.



## NEW TALENTS

The new Talents presented here introduce additional options and abilities for Heretics with Minions. These Talents are acquired in the same manner as those presented in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. Players should check with their GM before selecting any of the following Talents.

### ADDICTRIX

**Tier:** 3

**Prerequisite:** Fellowship 50, Charm +10

**Alignment:** Slaanesh

The Heretic is a master of seduction and manipulation, and has ways of securing power over those who succumb to his wiles. The Heretic may attempt to seduce an NPC into his service, and ensure continued service by making the NPC dependent on something only the Heretic can offer. First, the Heretic must defeat the chosen NPC in a social confrontation as described on page 60. Should the Heretic succeed, he can take advantage of his victim's demoralised state and introduce him to whatever addicting substance the Heretic offers. The NPC becomes a Minion of the Heretic, retaining their profile and gear, and gaining a Loyalty value and the Monodevotant Trait.

This Talent is not effective on NPCs with a higher Infamy than the Heretic or the Touched by the Fates Trait, or NPCs categorised as Masters. Other NPCs may also be unaffected at the GM's discretion, such as those with the From Beyond or Machine Traits. The Heretic may only have a single seduced Minion in his service, but may discard him at any time by cutting off his supply—although the NPC may cause problems for the Heretic once he has recovered his senses! The seduced Minion does not count toward the character's limit. The GM and player should work together to determine the Minion's addiction, though it does not necessarily need to be the same substance every time—some Heretics have much to offer.

### BELOVED LEADER

**Tier:** 1

**Prerequisite:** Charm, Fellowship 40

**Alignment:** Slaanesh

Whether due to brainwashing, charisma, hypno-doctrination, or even a blessing from Slaanesh himself, this Heretic's Minions are devoutly loyal. This Heretic's Minions are extraordinarily dedicated to completing tasks to his satisfaction, whether through fear of punishment or a desire to please. The character increases the Loyalty of all his Minions by +10.

### HORDE MINION OF CHAOS

**Tier:** 3

**Prerequisite:** Fellowship 45, Infamy 50

**Alignment:** Unaligned

Through various means, the character has acquired a veritable Horde of servants. Though individually insignificant, when drawn together by the personal magnetism and dread reputation of the Heretic, these creatures pose a formidable threat. Horde

*Cast down the idols! Destroy the temples! Slay the priests! Show these fools that they worship nothing more than a rotting corpse!*

—Dark Apostle Harzhan of the Word Bearers

Minions come in a variety of forms, such as crazed cultists, swarms of daemonic beetles, or misshapen clones of the Heretic. Whatever form they take, these creatures are together treated as a single Horde (see page 349 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Rules for Horde Minions can be found on page 48. This Talent may be taken more than once, each time adding another Horde Minion to the character's retinue.

### LORD OF CHAOS

**Tier:** 3

**Prerequisite:** Fellowship 40, Infamy 60, Air of Authority

**Alignment:** Unaligned

Through dint of his fearsome reputation, prophesied destiny, or even a daemonic pact, the character can attract—and keep—a considerably larger retinue than his peers. The character may have a number of Minions equal to one and a half times his Fellowship Bonus, rounded down.

### MINION IMPROVEMENT

**Tier:** 2

**Prerequisite:** Superior Minion of Chaos

**Alignment:** Unaligned

The Heretic's Superior Minion gains 500 xp to spend on Advancements, as detailed on page 50. This Talent may be selected any number of times, but the Superior Minion's total xp can never exceed 50% of the Heretic's total. Note additional purchases on the Heretic's character sheet as Minion Improvement (X), where X is the number of times the Talent has been purchased.

### SUPERIOR MINION OF CHAOS

**Tier:** 3

**Prerequisite:** Fellowship 55, Infamy 60

**Alignment:** Unaligned

Through various means, the character has acquired a Superior Minion. Such a Minion may be almost as powerful as the character, and is capable of improving as its abilities are tested in the pursuit of the character's dark designs. The character must be wary, for such creatures may be loath to accept orders. For details on creating a Superior Minion, see page 50.

### TYRANT

**Tier:** 2

**Prerequisite:** Any Minion of Chaos Talent, Fellowship 35

**Alignment:** Unaligned

The Heretic ensures Loyalty through a fearful reputation and the actions to back it up. The base Loyalty of the Heretic's Minions is equal to the Heretic's Infamy, rather than his Fellowship. This value can be modified by Traits and Talents as usual.



# EXPANDED RITES AND RITUALS

*"May his eyes see only enemies, may his mind know only fear, and may his soul see nothing but the oblivion of torment that awaits it!"*

—Master Vrouk, High-Elicitor of the Fourteen Seals

The Rites and Rituals presented in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook give a general overview of how both the GM and players can construct rituals to suit their own needs, the consequences of failure, and a number of example rituals used to summon the more iconic Chaos Daemons.

This section contains several examples of Rites and Rituals that can be used for a myriad of dark designs, such as how to summon the dregs of the Warp, how to mould flesh, and a range of new Curses to directly affect the minds, bodies, and souls of those that would stand in Slaanesh's way. Heretics can also expand Rites and Rituals through Dark Patronage and the use of Sacred Numbers, and use the expanded list of Ritual Modifiers and a simple generator for creating Daemonic True Names to strengthen their profane ceremonies.

## NEW RITES AND RITUALS

The Rites and Rituals listed below follow the same format as the rules from the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook (see pages 228 and 229), but have more specific uses than simply summoning the Daemon of a specific Chaos God. A GM can insert these Rites and Rituals into an ongoing campaign as obstacles, or at the start of an adventure as part of a Compact. As always, it is up to the GM to determine both how difficult a Ritual is and whether the Ritual is possible in the first place (for example, a cell of Slaanesh cultists might find it virtually impossible to call upon Nurgle for aid).

### CHOKING DARKNESS (CURSE)

The Heretic calls upon the Gods of Chaos to manifest their victim's inner darkness as an impenetrable shroud of gloom. Once afflicted, the cursed victim wanders, nearly blind, as his own unspeakable acts cause him to lose sight of everything he ever strived to achieve.

**Requirements:** This Curse only works on targets with Corruption. It has no effect upon the pure or sanctified (Grey Knights, Sisters of Battle, etc.). The Heretic must have comprehensive knowledge of their target's most heinous acts, a list of which they speak aloud to the Chaos Gods as they beseech their power. The Heretic conducting the Curse must pass either a **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Heresy) Test** or a **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (The Warp) Test**, modified by **Table 2–8: Expanded Ritual Modifiers** and the Calling a Curse modifiers.

**Effects:** If successful, the Curse's target gains the Blinded and Deafened conditions (see page 257 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). The target may attempt to temporarily relieve the effects of the Curse by passing a **Hard (–20) Willpower Test**. If successful, the Blinded and Deafened effects stop for a number of rounds equal to the target's Corruption Bonus plus one additional round for each Degree of Success after the first.

**Strength in Darkness:** Whilst this is an easy Curse to learn and cast, its effects are also quite limited. Choking Darkness wears off by itself after a number of days equal to the target's Corruption Bonus.

### DARK MIRROR (CURSE)

The Heretic calls upon Slaanesh to punish his enemies by turning their own deeds back on them. As the afflicted wounds his foes, so too does his own flesh tear. As the afflicted burns the masses, so too does his own skin erupt into flames. The more pain he brings, the more he receives.

**Requirements:** The Heretic must conduct a small secluded ritual in which something belonging to their target is destroyed in full view of a representation of the target. This representation might be a holopict of the target, a wax effigy, or a painting done in his blood. After destroying the object, the Heretic sets the representation of the target on fire and consumes the ashes. The ritual must be conducted alone, and requires a **Very Hard (–30) Forbidden Lore (The Warp) Test** or a **Very Hard (–30) Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test**, modified by **Table 2–8: Expanded Ritual Modifiers** and the Calling a Curse modifiers. Only Heretics dedicated to Slaanesh may speak this Curse.

**Effects:** If successful, whenever the Curse's target causes any Damage, he must pass a **Difficult (–10) Willpower Test** or immediately suffer 1d5 Damage that ignores Armour, Force Fields, and Toughness. If the target's attack killed his victim, the Test is **Very Hard (–30)**.

**Bloodline Curse:** The Heretic may attempt to Curse his enemy's entire bloodline so that all who follow suffer the same torture. To do this, the object the Heretic destroys must be something highly significant to his target—his favourite weapon, most trusted servant, a trinket that he annihilated 10,000 souls to obtain—or something similar, and the Heretic must take the **Forbidden Lore (The Warp) Test** or **Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test** twice. Both Tests must pass, and if either one fails, then the Heretic is subject to the Reap What You Have Sown rule as normal.

### ENDLESS TERROR (CURSE)

The Heretic calls upon the Gods of Chaos to unsettle the mind of his enemy, to visit terrors upon him, and to leave him cold and cowering before the might of the Warp. A foe whose mind is cursed sees every moment of every day as an endless nightmare, and when rest finally arrives borne of paranoid exhaustion, sleep is light and disturbed, as the dark visions reach into his very dreams.

**Requirements:** The Heretic must learn something of their target's fears. This could be anything from a figure or entity that genuinely terrifies the target, someone from their past, something they fear losing, or even an irrational phobia. Once known, the Heretic conducting the Curse must pass either a **Hard (–20) Forbidden Lore (The Warp) Test** or a **Hard (–20) Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test**, modified by **Table 2–8: Expanded Ritual Modifiers** and the Calling a Curse modifiers.

**Effects:** If successful, the Curse's target treats all living things as if they had the Fear (1) Trait (or increases their Fear Rating by 1 if they already possessed one). Due to the target's disrupted



## CURSES

Curses are a new type of Ritual that go beyond asking for favour or summoning some hellish nightmare from the Warp. They allow Heretics to direct the attention of the Warp down upon a specific target. Calling down a Curse is a risky pursuit, and when done incorrectly they can backfire catastrophically. The following rules apply to all Curses:

### LEARNING THE WORDS

Simply wishing woe and bad-tidings upon his foes is never enough, and so the Heretic must know the specific Curse he wishes to inflict. GM's should treat all Curses as Elite Advances, and are free to add an xp cost to any Curse, although this is not required. The Heretic should obtain Curses as part of his journey, both by whom he encounters as well as through role-play and investigation.

### CALLING A CURSE

Before a Heretic can call a Curse, he must have a target in mind. The target must be a specific person or entity, and the Heretic must have a strong idea of whom the target is, where he is, and a good reason for calling the Curse (the GM has final say on whether the reason is good enough). Finally, as Curses are intimate acts of personal hatred, the Heretic's association with the target determines the base Difficulty Level:

- The Heretic has never met or seen his target (-60).
- The Heretic has seen and/or been in the presence of his target (-50).
- The Heretic has spoken with his target at least once (-40).
- The Heretic has had a number of minor dealings with his target (-30).
- The Heretic and his target know one another (-20).
- The Heretic and his target have had numerous dealings over several years (-10).
- The Heretic and his target have known one another for many years (+0).

Each Curse has its own base Difficulty Rating, so the Heretic must combine both difficulties (along with any other relevant modifiers) before taking any Tests. Targets afflicted by a Curse cannot suffer the effects of a new Curse until the first Curse ends.

### CURING A CURSE

Curses are lasting and unless stated otherwise the effects do not dissipate on their own. The afflicted must enact a Counter-Curse in order to end a Curse's effects. To cure a Curse, the afflicted must enact the same Curse placed upon him, but with himself as the target rather than someone else. The victim must know the specific Curse before attempting to counteract it. Successfully completing the Counter-Curse cures the afflicted of its effects. Failure means the Curse continues.

### REAP WHAT YOU HAVE SOWN

When a Heretic fails to enact a Curse, do not roll on **Table 6-6: The Contempt of the Warp** on page 227 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. Instead the effects of the Curse now apply to the Heretic (or Heretics if the Curse involved multiple players) for a number of weeks equal to the Heretic's Willpower Bonus, plus one day for each Degree of Failure on the Test. Heretics that fail to enact a Curse cannot reattempt the failed Curse until their Infamy has risen by at least 1 point.

sleep patterns, recovering from Fatigue takes four times as long as it normally would. Fearless adversaries remain unaffected by Fear, but still suffer the penalties associated with Fatigue.

**Bloodline Curse:** The Heretic may attempt to Curse his enemy's entire bloodline so that all who follow suffer the same endless horrors. To do this, the Heretic must take the **Forbidden Lore (The Warp) Test** or **Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test** twice, and both Tests must pass. If either one fails, then the Heretic is subject to the Reap What You Have Sown rule as normal, but the Curse's effects cover not only himself, but also all Heretics within his Compact.

## RITE OF FLESHMOULDING

Rightly feared for their gruesome skin-changing talents, the twisted Flesh Shapers of Melancholia hold greater power than just their expert understanding of physical artistry. More than demented surgeons overcome with the need to cause pain, each Flesh Shaper forms a kind of commune with the Warp, its power working through their blades and other cruel implements to ensure that their vile operations form an exquisite and excruciating ritual.

**Requirements:** The Rite of Fleshmoulding requires a subject and one or more donors, none of whom need to be willing participants. The Heretic must ensure that the "operating theatre" doubles as a shrine to Slaanesh; this could involve burning various types of conflicting incense and potent narcotics, defiling the air with extremely loud and discordant music, or even cutting both himself and the other participants six times before each stage of the surgery. The Heretic must pass either a **Very Hard (-30) Medicae (Int) Test** or **Difficult (-10) Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test**, modified by **Table 2-8: Expanded Ritual Modifiers**. Actual Flesh Shapers gain a +10 bonus when conducting the Rite; if the subject is unwilling, this is doubled.

**Effects:** The Flesh Shaper grants one of the following Traits to the subject: Amphibious, Blind, Burrower (X), Crawler, Dark Sight, Fear (X), Deadly Natural Weapons, Flyer (X), Machine (X), Multiple Arms (X), Natural Armour (X), Quadruped, Regeneration (X), Size (X), Sturdy, Toxic (X) or Unnatural Characteristic (X). For each Degree of Success after the first, the Flesh Shaper may increase the value of any Trait listed with an 'X' by 1 (to a maximum of 6). Each donor sacrificed adds an additional Trait (to a maximum of 6).



**Duration:** The Rite takes six hours to perform, plus one additional hour for every Degree of Failure on the Test. The modifications inflicted upon the subject are permanent.

**Cost:** If successful, the subject must spend 1d10 days minus his Willpower Bonus recovering. Regardless of the outcome of the rite, the donors do not survive.

**The Price of Failure:** If the rite failed, the Flesh Shaper must roll 1d10 on **Table 7–20: Rending Critical Effects—Body** (see page 254, **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), adding +1 for each Degree of Failure after the first, and immediately apply the result to the subject.

## RITUAL OF LOATHING

The Warp is an endless ocean, and within its currents and flows there exist a multitude of vile entities that call no one Chaos God their patron. These loathsome, formless, craven, and vindictive creatures are possessed of limited intelligence but boundless hunger. Careless servants of the Chaos Gods often attempt to summon these hideous abominations in the hope of directing their eternally ravenous nature towards the enemy, but Lesser Daemons are very hard to control, especially in large numbers.

**Requirements:** The Ritual of Loathing is a ritual the Heretics might turn to out of desperation, as it allows them to summon the lowest of the low, the very dregs of the Warp—Furies, Ebon Geists,

Unclean Spirits, Nether Swarms, and other incarnate lesser Daemons. These gibbering hordes are plentiful, and can be summoned from even the most basic Chaos shrine and with limited preparation, but every Heretic must be aware that the more they summon, the more uncontrollable they become. The Heretic conducting the ritual must pass a **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test**, modified by **Table 2–8: Expanded Ritual Modifiers**. The Heretic must also pass a **Routine (+20) Daemonic Mastery Test** to control the Daemons, with a –10 penalty for every additional Daemon summoned after the first.

**Effects:** A single Lesser Daemon, such as a Fury, Nether Swarm, or Charnel Daemon appears at the centre of the summoning area. One additional Daemon of the same type appears for every additional Degree of Success on the **Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test**. The amount of Daemons summoned by this ritual cannot exceed the Heretic's Willpower Bonus.

**Duration:** The Lesser Daemon or Daemons remain corporeal for 1d5 rounds, plus one additional round for every additional lesser Daemon summoned after the first. This duration may be extended further by areas where the veil between reality and the Warp is thin, or if the Daemons slay enough living creatures to empower them further. At the GM's discretion, the Lesser Daemons may be summoned for a specific task, in which case they remain corporeal long enough to accomplish the task. The GM may also wish to merge the summoned Lesser Daemons into a single Horde of Lesser Daemons, with each Lesser Daemon adding 5 to the Magnitude of the Horde.

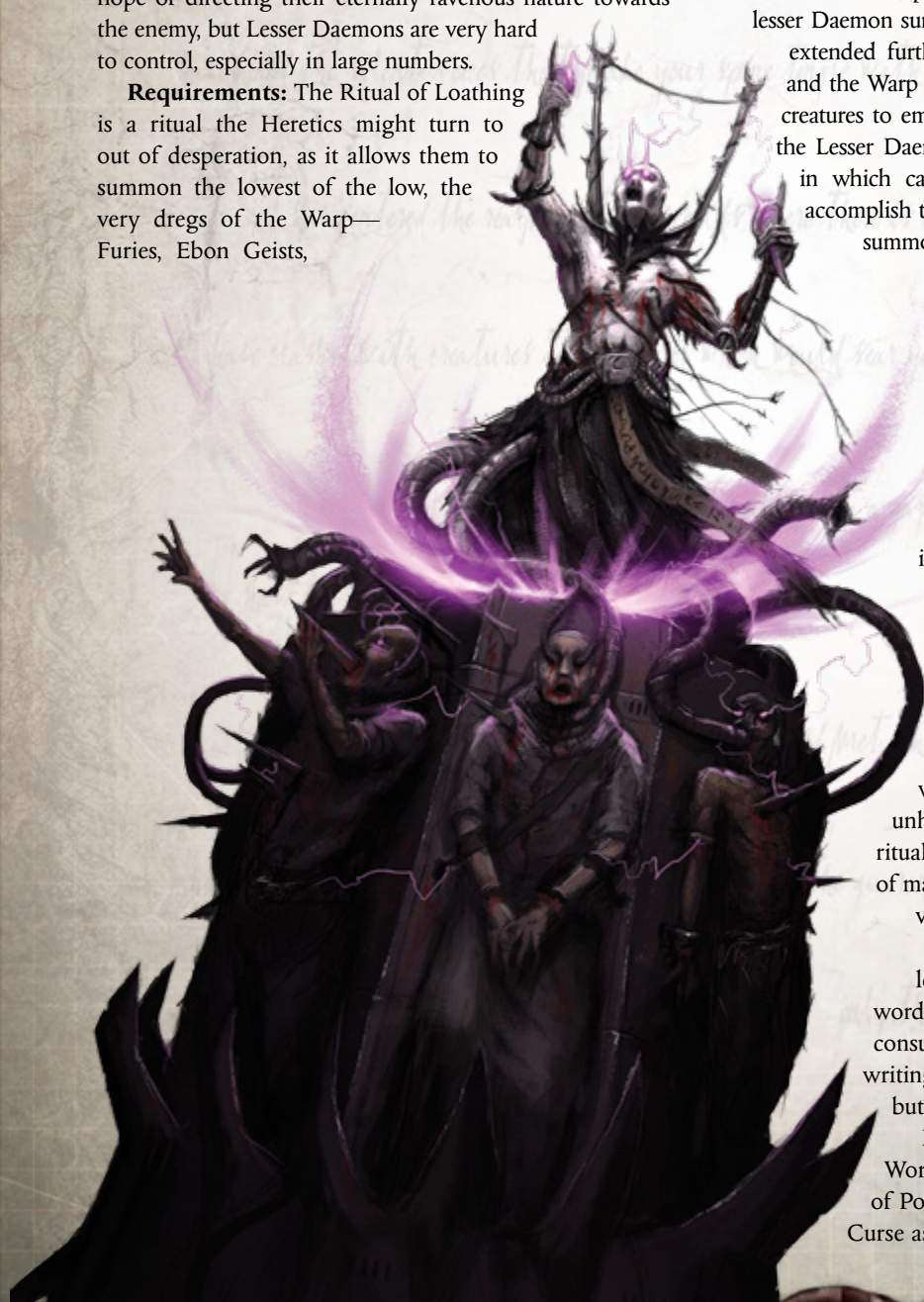
**Cost:** Whether successful or not, the ritual causes an immediate roll on the Psychic Phenomena table (see page 210, **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) with a +10 modifier for every additional Lesser Daemon summoned after the first.

**The Price of Failure:** Failure results in a Test for The Contempt of the Warp (see page 227 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), modified by +10 for every Degree of Failure after the first.

## WORDS OF POWER (CURSE)

Throughout the Vortex, there are many words known to hold tremendous and unholy power. Used in complex and intricate rituals, these mighty words bring forth all manner of maladies and afflictions upon their unfortunate victims. Heretics must take considerable care to prepare themselves mentally, as while learning a Word of Power is easy, learning the word's own ritual is extremely taxing and time consuming. The ritual must be memorised, as writing any of it down would rob it of its potency, but the results are always worth the effort.

**Requirements:** Before a Heretic uses the Word of Power, he must learn both the Word of Power he wishes to use as well as the specific Curse associated with it. The former is often trivial,





but the latter requires extensive efforts such as a Compact or through **Linguistics**, **Logic**, and **Scholastic Lore (Cryptology/Occult) Tests**. Once the Heretic has selected the Word of Power he wishes to use and learned the complete ritual, he must recite the entire Curse from memory. This requires two successful **Very Hard (-30) Forbidden Lore (Heresy) Test** or a **Very Hard (-30) Linguistics (Low Gothic) Test**, modified by **Table 2-8: Expanded Ritual Modifiers** and the Calling a Curse modifiers. If the Heretic has either Trade (Linguist) or Trade (Remembrancer) then these Tests are **Challenging (+0)**.

**Effects:** If successful, the Curse's target suffers an effect determined by the Word of Power the Heretic chose. Below is a selection of words, though GMs and players are encouraged to create new ones as well.

- **Bane:** Each time the victim takes Damage, there is a 10% chance the attack gains the Crippling (X) Quality, where X is equal to the victim's Corruption Bonus. If the attack already has the Crippling Quality, the effects are cumulative.
- **Banish:** The victim gains the Warp Instability Trait. If the victim has the Warp Instability Trait, then all Willpower Tests associated with this Trait become Hard (-20).
- **Benumb (Slaanesh):** The victim halves their Agility and Perception (rounding up).
- **Bewilder:** When attempting or defending against Awareness, Charm, Command, Commerce, Deceive, Intimidate, Logic, or Scrutiny Tests, the victim suffers an additional -20 penalty.
- **Bind:** If the victim has the Psyker Trait, this reduces his Psy-Rating by an amount equal to his Willpower Bonus (to a minimum of 1).
- **Blaze (Tzeentch):** Each time the victim takes Damage there is a 10% chance the attack gains the Flame Quality. If the attack already had the Flame Quality, the Agility Test becomes Very Hard (-30).
- **Bleed (Khorne):** Each time the victim takes Damage, there is a 10% chance the attack causes Blood Loss.
- **Blight (Nurgle):** Each time the victim takes Damage, there is a 10% chance the attack gains the Toxic (X) Quality, where X is equal to the victim's Corruption Bonus. If the attack has the Toxic Quality, the effects are cumulative.



## EXPANDED RITES & RITUALS TABLE

The existing Rituals from the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE** Rulebook, as well as those from any other **BLACK CRUSADE** expansion, may use the new Expanded Ritual Modifiers Table if the GM wishes.

## DARK PATRONAGE

Bargaining with the Dark Gods is a risky proposition as the four gods and their daemonic minions see themselves as inherently superior to mortals. Some Heretics actively seek the patronage of particularly powerful Warp entities as the rewards for such pacts are often quite high as long as the Heretic submits to the Daemon's requests and avoids angering his new patron.

Gaining Dark Patronage is usually done via proxy, that is to say a daemonic entity powerful enough to grant tangible benefits to the Heretics. How the Heretics gain such patronage can vary and should be as unique as the Daemon. Compacts to obtain the patronage are an excellent method, and particularly impressive feats dedicated to a Daemon can also draw attention. The GM may even allow the Heretics to start a campaign already under the influence of Dark Patronage, though perhaps at a lower level due to the group's inexperience. Dark Patronage does not require a specific alignment, although receiving Patronage from an opposed Daemonic entity should require excessive acts of devotion and supplication before the Heretics prove their worth.

Dark Patronage offers a number of rewards, with the GM is free to add or modify them depending on the nature of the patronage, the Daemon in question and the Chaos god it follows, how it was obtained, and the Heretics themselves.

- The Heretics gain 1d10 Corruption and 1d10 Infamy.
- NPCs aligned with the same Chaos god have a base Disposition one level higher than normal.
- When attempting to obtain items from NPCs or organisations aligned with the same Chaos god, the Acquisition Tests are always one step easier.
- Rites and Rituals that relate specifically to their patron Daemon or are aligned with its Chaos God gain a +30 modifier (this is included on **Table 2-8: Expanded Ritual Modifiers**).
- The Heretics gain a single re-roll that they can use each time they roll for Gifts of the Gods. The Heretic must accept the second result even if worse than the first.

Obtaining Dark Patronage is not without its risks. Those opposed to the alignment of the Patron Daemon often despise the Heretics, and the GM should apply the reverse of several of the above effects when dealing with these groups or individuals. If a Heretic is Dedicated to a Chaos God opposed to the Patron Daemon, he loses all the benefits of his Dedication. If that Heretic also bore a Mark of Chaos, he loses the Mark's benefits and must reduce his Infamy by 1d10 immediately.



TABLE 2-8: EXPANDED RITUAL MODIFIERS

Modifier	Condition (combine any applicable modifiers to arrive at the net modifier)
+30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The enactor knows the Daemon's True Name.</li> <li>The enactor has the Mark of the Daemon's patron god.</li> <li>The enactor is a Dark Apostle aligned with the correct Chaos God.</li> <li>The enactor has gained Dark Patronage from a Chaos God or Daemon aligned correctly with the ritual that is to be attempted.</li> <li>"The Stars are Right"—auspicious circumstances.</li> <li>The enactor has sworn allegiance to the Daemon's master or cause, or is devoted to the Daemon's patron god.</li> </ul>
+20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The enactor has the Psyker Trait and Psy-Rating 7 or higher.</li> <li>The veil between reality and the Warp has been greatly weakened.</li> <li>Is correctly using Sacred Numbers as part of the ritual.</li> <li>The ritual follows the "Rule of Sympathy."</li> <li>The Daemon has been provided with a suitable sacrifice to partake upon its arrival.</li> <li>The enactor has an Æthème Blade or Rituals Kit.</li> </ul>
+10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The enactor has an artefact specifically related or linked to the Daemon or ritual.</li> <li>The enactor has the Psyker Trait and a Psy-Rating between 4 and 6.</li> <li>The veil between reality and the Warp has been weakened.</li> <li>The enactor knows part of the Daemon's True Name.</li> </ul>
+0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The enactor knows the Daemon's allegiance and kind.</li> <li>The enactor has little knowledge of what he is attempting to do.</li> </ul>
-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The veil between reality and the Warp is strong.</li> <li>The ritual is being conducted on hallowed/sanctified ground, or antagonistic individuals of faith (Sisters of Battle, Ecclesiarchy Priests, Grey Knights, Space Marine Chaplains, etc.) are present.</li> <li>The enactor has sworn allegiance to a master that the Daemon is not also in service to, or is Dedicated to a patron god opposed to the Daemon.</li> </ul>
-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ritual is taking place within an active Gellar Field.</li> <li>The enactor only knows the steps to most of the ritual.</li> <li>Is incorrectly using Sacred Numbers as part of the ritual, or is using Sacred Numbers of an opposed Chaos God.</li> <li>The enactor only knows part of the ritual, or some of the information he has about the ritual is inaccurate or just false.</li> <li>The enactor is a Dark Apostle not aligned with the correct Chaos God.</li> <li>If the enactor is an amateur with no true appreciation for what it is they are attempting to do.</li> </ul>
-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The enactor does not actually know what he is doing, has been tricked into performing a ritual he knows nothing about, or is an unwilling participant in the ritual.</li> <li>The enactor has recently summoned/commanded/aligned himself with Daemons or agents of an opposing allegiance.</li> <li>The enactor has gained Dark Patronage from a Chaos God or Daemon aligned in opposition with the ritual that is to be attempted.</li> </ul>

## SACRED NUMBERS

For reasons unknown to the minds of mere mortals, the subjects of numerology and Daemonology go hand in hand. Each of the four Chaos Gods hold a peculiar and unexplainable fixation with a particular number, and the followers of each Chaos power often find greater favour when they act in accordance with this number. For most, the effect is limited, but those that desire the favour of the Ruinous Powers would do well to observe the Sacred Numbers of Chaos!

Each Chaos God has a Sacred Number, the effects of which are described below:

### Tzeentch

**Sacred Number:** 9 (and multiples of 9)

**Effect:** Any Heretic with 9 more Tzeentch-dedicated advances than any other type of advance treats his Willpower Bonus as one higher for the purposes of Opposed Willpower Tests related to Psychic Powers. Correctly using the number 9 in any Rite or Ritual dedicated to Tzeentch grants a +20 bonus to all relevant Tests.

### Khorne

**Sacred Number:** 8 (and multiples of 8)

**Effect:** Any Heretic with 8 more Khorne-dedicated advances than any other type of advance treats his Weapon Skill Bonus as one higher for the purposes of multiple hits in melee. Correctly using the number 8 in any Rite or Ritual dedicated to Khorne grants a +20 bonus to all relevant Tests.

### Slaanesh

**Sacred Number:** 6 (and multiples of 6)

**Effect:** Any Heretic with 6 more Slaanesh-dedicated advances than any other type of advance treats his Perception Bonus as one higher for Tests relating to the five senses. Correctly using the number 6 in any Rite or Ritual dedicated to Slaanesh grants a +20 bonus to all relevant Tests.

### Nurgle

**Sacred Number:** 7 (and multiples of 7)

**Effect:** Any Heretic with 7 more Nurgle-dedicated advances than any other type of advance treats his Toughness Bonus as one higher for the purposes of resisting toxins and poisons. Correctly using the number 7 in any Rite or Ritual dedicated to Nurgle grants a +20 bonus to all relevant Tests.





## TRUE NAMES

Though mortals might know a Daemon by its name, very few realise these are but common labels that have no real meaning or power. The wisest know that all Daemons have True Names, which are perhaps the greatest secret a Daemon can hold. Daemons guard their True Names closely, as anyone who knows a Daemon's True Name—or even a part of it—holds power over it, and there is nothing a Daemon hates or fears more than being under the command of a mere mortal.

## OBTAINING TRUE NAMES

Learning a Daemon's True Name should never be easy. Heretics seeking a True Name must do so in a similar manner to researching new Rituals and Curses, and can be the basis of a Compact, but the GM should ensure that the difficulties and obstacles in their path are greater than normal. If a Daemon learns of their quest, it can send its own agents to stop them or even attack them directly, and this can add a new element to any **Black Crusade** campaign.

Knowing a True Name can aid in performing rituals and gaining Dark Patronage, for the Daemon can refuse little from the Heretics. Knowing a True Name also grants a +30 bonus to all Daemonic Mastery Tests, or +10 if the Heretics know only part of the True Name. GMs are encouraged to expand or modify these rules as best fits their adventure plans and the Heretics involved.

## GENERATING TRUE NAMES

**Table 2-9: True Name Elements** allows GMs to quickly generate True Names for any Daemon. A True Name's length is up to the GM but usually the more powerful the Daemon, the longer and more elaborate the name. Each roll on the table generates a syllable or sound within the name, and the GM is encouraged to roll as many times as he likes. The GM can generate the True Name in accordance with Sacred Numbers, with lesser, standard, and beast Daemons gaining a number of syllables or sounds equal to the sacred number, Heralds gain +1d5 more than standard Daemons, and Daemon Princes and Greater Daemons gain +1d10 more than Heralds.

Once generated, the GM may arrange the syllables and sounds however he wants, including adding punctuation to separate out sounds if required.

### EXAMPLE

*The GM decides to give an eight syllabled name to a Greater Daemon of Slaanesh. After rolling, the GM has G'G, AR, UL, HL, II, UL, RH and AN. Together this creates **G'g'arulhliulrhan**, but the GM could change it, perhaps to **Rhug'guari'ihlulan**, the Keeper of Secrets.*

TABLE 2-9: TRUE NAME ELEMENTS

		Second Roll (d10)									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
First Roll (d10)	1	A	COG	FL	LL	SS	CC	KED	NEF	SIV	WU
	2	ER	KW	PP	Z	AA	DA	ZRE	ZUL	LO	DRA
	3	FOL	MM	SH	ABL	DE	G'G	QZ	SY	NE	N'Y
	4	N'N	TH	AE	X	GZ	O	TR	ECH	GA	N'
	5	THL	AK	DH	HH	OA	TL	EG	OH	MI	KI
	6	AN	DU	HL	EO	U	AO	TOL	ITH	SO	EN
	7	E	I	O'O	UL	AR	EE	N'O	AL	UP	OTH
	8	II	OW	UU	BH	OE	IL	S'	EL	RW	T'
	9	RH	Y	IO	EU	IR	PH	DAK	KA	DIS	H'B
	10	YY	CH	FF	KS	Q'	ZH	ZIR	TRO	GY	MC





# PRINCES OF PAIN



SOCIAL  
ENCOUNTERS

•

EXPANDED  
INFAMY RULES

•

REALMS BEYOND  
SENSATION

•

DARK ELДАР

•

DAEMONS OF  
SLAANESH





# CHAPTER III: PRINCES OF PAIN

*"I find your dishes tedious. My tastes demand more; improve your offerings or find yourself on the menu."*

—Salacion Tal, Epicuriarch of the Purple Graces

It is perhaps not to be unexpected that a region of space so named for the wailing of the damned would attract those devoted to the worship of the God of Sensation. For a true follower of Slaanesh, these screams are, of course, a cacophony of delight, a rapturous symphony of taloned nails along the fragile glass of reality. The Screaming Vortex offers much to those who live only to sate their endless desires, and across its Warp-infested space there are many delights for those ready to appreciate them properly.

Not only are the delights plentiful, but they are also more exquisite here as well. Sensations within the Vortex feel even more extreme than elsewhere in a galaxy filled with the dross and mundane. Blade edges feel sharper as they run along the flesh, leaving scarlet filaments that almost glow in melancholy darkness. Morsels explode with flavour with each bite that rends flesh from bone. Senses roam beyond the body almost like predatory animals. It is a realm where there are no limits to the extremes of sensation, or so many who follow the Prince of Pleasure believe. In the Screaming Vortex, belief is more crucial than mere facts, especially to those seeking to sate their impossible desires.

In this chapter, Heretics can find new methods in fuelling their desires. Using new rules for Social Encounters and Interactions, they can dominate and conquer their foes through the use of rapier-sharp wits and overwhelming forensic powers. They also find new heinous methods for gaining Infamy such as Glorious Acts, the better to increase their personal renown throughout the Vortex.

It also reveals new locations for the Heretics to explore and master. These worlds of sensation are filled with enticing threats, tempting rewards, and minions ready to be seduced into service. Jealous Ghibelline is filled with all manner of extravagant Daemon Engines. Enraged Helbrutes and other beasts roam the Gates of Moment, stranded on a world that refuses to exist merely in only one location at a time. Melancholia's insane Flesh Shapers pervert each other and themselves into greater and greater atrocities of form. Terrible beasts infest the death world of Malignia, but far more dangerous are the elegantly cruel xenos who hunt there for sport or worse. From the asteroid archipelagos of the Ragged Helix come the raiding Pirate Princes, whose outlandish behaviours are only exceeded by their fearsome appetites. The Forbidden Portal contains perhaps the greatest threats, as the gaudy but dread guardians who emerge from the mysterious dimensional gate there are unmatched in their skills at combating Chaos. Such concerns are petty to a true slave to sensation, as this is but one more experience to be savoured, one more opportunity to hone oneself into perfection.

# SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

*"Why should I deign to acknowledge you, a former lackey of a shrivelled corpse who comes begging to my master because of some pathetic tantrum? No, you are nothing to me, as insignificant as a raindrop in a storm."*

—Prince Darcentile VI, Paragon of Slaanesh

Conflict is key in any drama. It is the same for roleplaying games like **BLACK CRUSADE**. Without adversity, Heretics would rampage through any plot the Game Master came up with, making for a sterile and unpleasant experience. Many view conflict as combat—the physical act of fighting and shooting—and in most cases this is true. Conflict, however, can be far more than physical combat. Every interaction, whether it is between the Heretics in the Compact or the many NPCs they encounter, is a potential conflict. In this scenario words, body language, and status are the weapons and can be as devastating as a shell from a bolter.

Those dedicated to the Chaos Gods Slaanesh and Tzeentch excel in these situations, where the goal is not to slay the foe, but to seduce, persuade, deceive, or manipulate the target into performing an even greater deed—whether knowingly or not—in service to the Ruinous Powers.

What follows are a set of rules bringing these situations to the fore and allowing those Heretics with a flair and skill set for grandstanding to shine. While in theory a Heretic can complete a Social Conflict as a series of mechanical dice-based tests—and there are some basic rules for this style of interacting in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook—the following encourages players to bring their wit, fast talking, and debating skills to the table. This can create a rewarding experience, easily as fulfilling as ripping the head from another dogmatic minion of the Corpse-Emperor.

This section describes Social Conflicts, and also explains how Heretics can use the system for far more than just one-on-one conflicts. Great orators have swayed whole nations to go to war in the past; an accomplished Heretic of Slaanesh, Tzeentch, and to a lesser extent, the other Powers, should have the ability to persuade crowds to rebel, topple governments, and turn entire populations from worship of the False Emperor, all without even swinging a chainsword in anger. Once a character can do any of this, then he is truly on the path to becoming a Heretic who is feared or revered throughout the Screaming Vortex and beyond.

## WHAT IS A SOCIAL CONFLICT?

A Social Conflict is a situation where two or more protagonists become locked in a verbal encounter in which there are consequences for whoever triumphs as well as the participant who loses. It can take many forms, from an organised debate to an impromptu argument, a discussion at a banquet table with veiled threats and subtle insults being passed around along with the condiments, a ritualistic sparring session where





invectives are traded instead of physical blows, a conclave where two proponents wish to run a forthcoming operation in very different ways, a court of peers judging a defendant to decide his guilt, a jovial contest to find the lewdest member of the group, bartering for the services of a Chaos Sorcerer against a rival equally desperate to employ the psyker, manipulating a planetary official by leveraging his pride into signing a contract, or even a character calling out the Arch-Heretic in front of his followers to make a play for power. All these examples and much more besides could be classed as a Social Conflict and benefit from the following rules.

In a physical combat, it is relatively easy to decide who the victors and losers are; normally within the brutal exchanges of **BLACK CRUSADE** it is the party still standing. However, things are not so clean cut in a Social Conflict. The loser may not acquire physical injury—although this is possible in certain situations—but there are inevitable repercussions, certainly a loss of standing and stature amongst the loser's peers and superiors, but there is also the mental state to take into consideration. The loser will be temporarily confounded, his beliefs may be shaken, the encounter may well have placed him in certain jeopardy, or he might be left reeling from the verbal assault. In any case, his mental defences will be momentarily weakened, his resolution drained and so will be suggestible and easier to manipulate than normal. As well as the personal price for losing a Social Conflict,

## SOCIAL OPPOSITION

In a Social Conflict, the default test is an Opposed Characteristic Test using Fellowship. This is because Fellowship represents, in the broadest sense, how a Heretic interacts with others. However, some characters may be more specialised in this arena and are better at intimidating, deceiving, charming, or coaxing an opponent.

To represent this, the Game Master can allow a character to use an Interaction Skill-based test instead of the nominal Fellowship Characteristic. The actual skill used depends on how the player performed in the previous Verbal Contact phase; if he was charming and eloquent, then he could use the Charm Skill for example, assuming he has it. Alternatively, if he barked orders, expecting them to be obeyed with nary a glance at his opponent, then the Command Skill could be more suitable, or even the Intimidate Skill. In summary, how the player (or NPC) reacts and performs in the Verbal Contact phase determines which Skill he can use in the following Opposed Test.

Additionally, any Talents or Traits associated with these Skills can also be used if relevant. Talents such as Air of Authority, Cold Hearted, Disturbing Voice, Polygot, Mimic, and Pity the Weak all have an effect during a Social Conflict. Even Traits such as Fear or the Stuff of Nightmares can have an impact during the encounter should the GM allow. New Talents and Traits useful in Social Conflicts are covered in more detail later on page 63.

there are also the contextual consequences the Game Master needs to take into account. This could be no more than a loss of face, but if the Heretic is bargaining for his life, or petitioning a powerful and hostile Chaos Lord for aid, then the aftermath will be far more dramatic. In this way, a Social Conflict acts as a trigger for unlocking even greater tension and peril within the game. Game Masters should use it as a tool in that regard, playing through the system is an exciting and fulfilling experience, but the outcome can be equally spectacular if the stakes are high enough.

## ENTERING INTO A SOCIAL CONFLICT

Before detailing how a Social Conflict works, the Game Master must decide when the game shifts into a Social Conflict. This is entirely at the GM's discretion; there are no hard and fast rules and, just like physical combat, in most cases it is obvious when the game is ripe for Social Conflict. If there is doubt, the Game Master should ask himself the following few questions:

- Is the conflict likely to be a sustained encounter?
- Are there spectators present?
- Will the outcome place the Heretics in peril or gain them a boon?
- Is the encounter a pivotal moment within the adventure?

If the answer is yes to any of the above, then a Social Conflict is more than justified.



## OPTIONAL NEW RULE: OVERAWE

Infamy is reputation. It is a powerful metaphorical force that cannot easily be ignored. If Abaddon the Despoiler, leader of the 13th Black Crusade and battle-brother to Horus himself, strode into a chamber flanked by his Chosen bodyguard, it is almost inconceivable that a lowly Heretic would call him out, or flat out insult him. That is the power of a high Infamy score. Attacking such a being in a social context should feel as intimidating, and an uphill struggle.

Game Masters can replicate this type of situation at the start of a Social Conflict using Overawe. Under this rule, the Heretic with the lower Infamy score must immediately make a Willpower Test to enter into a Social Conflict with his opponent. The test is modified with a penalty equal to ten times the difference of the Infamy Bonus between the two Characters.

If the Heretic passes the test, he has overcome the raw presence of his foe and can engage in the Social Conflict as normal. However, if the character fails the test, then his own Infamy pool is immediately reduced by half and he must lose 1d5 Willpower, as if he'd lost the first round of the Social Conflict. All Characteristic losses are in context of the following Social Conflict and are not permanent.

Should the Heretic find himself in this position, then he may voluntarily withdraw from the social encounter before it begins. His would-be opponent is simply too formidable for the character, and he rethinks verbal conflict before entering into something he would struggle to recover from, let alone triumph over.

## SOCIAL CONFLICT RULES

The following sequence describes how a Social Conflict works in **BLACK CRUSADE**. To start with, it details the most basic and likely scenario—that of a single player character engaging in a Social Conflict with a formidable NPC. There are also expanded rules to incorporate much larger conflicts, with paired or entire Compact based attacks against rival groups or gaining the will of large crowds.

In a social confrontation, the participants' Willpower, Fellowship, Infamy, and occasionally, Perception characteristics are used. The base system is as follows:

**Willpower** determines how many “rounds” a confrontation lasts. In an abstract way, it reflects a participant's health. Every time a player or NPC loses a round his Willpower is diminished. Once all Willpower is lost, then the participant is effectively beaten. He may not be physically harmed, but his resolve to continue the confrontation has gone, and he becomes very suggestible.

**Fellowship** is a measure of how well the participant is at verbal sparring, debating, or in winning over an aggressive audience. A Heretic who sits back and relies on mechanical dice rolling to do the talking is at a considerable disadvantage. Heretics with quick minds, who are able to improvise with cutting rejoinders and their own dazzling wit, can overcome a foe who relies solely on his superior Fellowship Characteristic.

**Infamy** carries much figurative weight in a Social Conflict. Bystanders are much more likely to listen to a participant with a higher Infamy, as he is more imposing with a greater reputation. An opponent with less Infamy can be easier to intimidate and cowed in front of his peers. In a Social Conflict, Infamy is a resource that a player can use strategically to ensure victory over his adversary. In some instances, a participant (normally an NPC) will not have any Infamy. In these situations the GM should temporarily assign Infamy to the participant on the basis of the forthcoming encounter. The Game Master can use **Table 9-12: Example Infamy Scores** on page 307 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook to gauge likely Infamy levels.

**Perception** is used during the conflict at the Game Master's discretion to note how the opponent is fairing in the ongoing verbal and mental exchange. The more Willpower an adversary loses, the more the physical effects show and this, in turn, can be used to further the advantage. For example, a Successful Perception test allows the player to note that his opponent is sweating profusely on his forehead, or that his left cheek has involuntarily started to tick as he fails to deal with another acerbic remark.

The Characteristics outlined are utilised in the following way during a Social Conflict. Note that the sequence assumes two participants, a Heretic vs. an NPC (a Player vs. the Game Master). Their are rules for expanding this later in the chapter.

**1. Note Values:** Once the GM has designated the participants are in a Social Conflict, the player and GM note down their character's respective current Willpower and Infamy values.

**2. Bid Infamy:** In a Social Conflict, the participants' Infamy level temporarily acts as a bidding reserve. The more Infamy is bid, the more devastating a metaphorical blow one could do to the opponent. However, if your foe comes out on top, a Heretic may have bet his reputation badly. Both participants secretly bid an amount of Infamy. This is effectively “spent” and is taken from their Infamy reserve for the duration of the confrontation.

**3. Verbal Contact:** The players (or GM) now have a chance to directly influence the scene. The participant with the highest Fellowship has the choice of going first or second (in following rounds, the victor of the previous Fellowship test gets the choice). The participant then gets a chance to say something regarding the issue at hand, or, most likely, a withering put down or insult about his opponent. The second participant will get to respond in a similar fashion. The length and subjects of these diatribes depends entirely on the context of the scene. However, a good rule of thumb is to keep each participant's contribution to the equivalent of a short paragraph (about 5–10 seconds of actual speech), as this keeps the combat short and snappy.

**4. Determine the Victor:** The Game Master will now decide who has performed the best. He is judging not just on inherent wit, but how in-character each contribution was (note that in many cases, the GM is judging his own input. Of course, most Game Masters are beyond reproach but there are alternative methods to judging the best contributions—see the **Best in Round** sidebar on page 63). The winner receives a +20 modifier to the following test.



## BEST IN ROUND

Stage 4 of a Social Conflict is a very subjective part of the sequence. The GM needs to judge the contribution of both participants in the previous stage (Verbal Contact) and decide which was the best, rewarding the winner with a crucial bonus. Here the GM's decisions and actions are above reproach. However, in the majority of Social Conflicts the GM will be playing one of the participants. To some, it may seem odd or jarring that the GM is the final arbitrator of the best rejoinder, when he himself is a participant. Should the group feel another method is needed then below are some options:

**Blind Vote:** All non-participating players vote for one of the participants on a folded piece of paper, and the character with the most votes wins. Do not assume the Heretics simply vote for their fellow players, for good roleplayers should reward the finest insults and wittiest retorts whoever makes them. Also, as this is **BLACK CRUSADE**, the players should never act as a self-sacrificing, cohesive unit. Heretics have their own selfish agendas, and in the spirit of the game can certainly use an anonymous opportunity such as this to further their own causes above their "fellow" players.

**Noise-gauge:** A more instantaneous and instinctual method is to have the non-participating players give their response as jeers, cheers, applause, or whatever natural reaction is the group consensus. The spectators must wait until the contribution is finished and then make their noise of appreciation or derision. The other participant then makes his contribution and players will respond once more. Whichever side got the greatest or loudest response is the winner and gains the bonus for the following Fellowship Test. This is a quicker and simpler method than the Blind Vote but also lacks a way for players to deliberately vote against their peer.

**A Third Party:** Another method relies on someone else, who isn't a player or the GM, and is happy to take an impartial stance and witness the entire Social Conflict in an unbiased fashion. In Stage 4 he chooses which participant gave the best contribution. This method can work at gaming clubs, conventions, or anywhere there are fellow gamers who are not necessarily playing in the campaign. A Social Conflict played out in this situation can actually gather quite a crowd as onlookers take in and enjoy the players' verbal sparring. Participants will need to have their wit well and truly sharpened. If there is a crowd, they can potentially act as a Noise-gauge as well.

No matter which method used to judge the contributions, it is important to note that everyone should be having a good time. All insults, verbal attacks, and threats must be in character and in context of the game. This system is not about starting real arguments, but aiding in conquering the galaxy!

**5. Fellowship Test:** The participants must then take an Opposed Fellowship test. If both participants fail, then this round has ended in stalemate. Either all parties feel they have (rightly or wrongly) gained the upper hand, or the spectators have failed to come to a consensus on who was winning in that round. Any bid Infamy is lost and play repeats from Stage 2. In this instance of an Opposed Test, if the number of Degrees of Successes is tied, then the participant with the highest bid Infamy wins instead of the usual situation where a party with the highest Characteristic bonus wins.

**6. Lose Willpower:** Assuming there is a victor, then the losing participant removes 1d5 Willpower from his total. Any Infamy the victor bid is then revealed (if it has not already come into play) and this is added to the lost Willpower total. Infamy that the loser bid is lost.

**7. Physical Manifestation:** If the losing participant takes more than 10 Willpower in a single round, then some physical manifestation of that mental blow shows (sweat, ticks, squirming, stuttering, etc). If the GM thinks it appropriate, a Successful Perception test allows the rival to spot the participant's discomfort. In the following round, if this information is deftly used by the winning participant in the Verbal Contact stage, then he gains a +30 modifier instead of the +20 bonus should he win the phase.

**8. Victory or Defeat:** The Social Conflict continues using stages 2 through 7 until one party loses all of his Willpower. The remaining participant is considered the winner. The triumphant Heretic immediately regains all lost Characteristic values, bringing him back to normal levels. The losing party recuperates half his Infamy and Willpower as well. The rest returns at a rate the GM decides. A nominal rate is five

points per hour, but this is at the GM's discretion and can be exploited for full narrative effect; for example, the loser now has a much weaker Willpower for the next few hours and so is easier to manipulate or far more suggestible.

## TALENTS AND TRAITS

Just like other tests in **BLACK CRUSADE**, some Skills, Talents, and Traits can affect Social Conflicts. Skills have already been mentioned, in that a character can use a Skill instead of his Fellowship for the Opposed Test if appropriate, and the player's performance in the Verbal Contact stage is commensurate to a Skill in his repertoire. However, Talents and some Traits can have variable possible effects in a Social Conflict. **Table 3-1: Social Conflict Talents** presents the Talents that have a direct effect in a Social Conflict. Talents in *italics* are new and described below.

### TALENT DESCRIPTIONS

The following entries taken from **Table 3-1: Social Conflict Talents** on page 64 describe how a Talent works specific to a Social Conflict.

#### Air of Authority

**Tier:** 1

**Prerequisite:** Fellowship 30

The character was born to command; bystanders and opponents cannot help but take note of what he is saying. In addition to the normal benefits, when making a Command Skill Test in a Social Conflict add a +10 bonus in addition to any other modifiers.



TABLE 3-1: SOCIAL CONFLICT TALENTS

Talent Name	Prerequisite	Benefit in Social Conflict
Air of Authority	Fel 30	+10 when using Command
Cold Hearted	—	Opposed Charm tests incur +20
Dark Oratory	Fel 40	Double Infamy reserve against crowds
Demagogue	Air of Authority	d10 Willpower against multiple foes
Disturbing Voice	—	+10 when using Intimidate
Eloquent	Fel 30, Charm or Inquiry	On Successful Opposed Test, keep spent Infamy
Implied Threat	Fel 35	Additional d5 Willpower loss for every Degree of Success
Inspire Wrath	Air of Authority	+10 to allies' Infamy reserve
Mimic	—	d10 Willpower loss
Nerves of Steel	—	+20 against Intimidate
Peer	Fel 30	+20 to Infamy reserve
Pity the Weak	S 35, WP 35	Bonuses to Command and Intimidate
Polygot	Int 40, Fel 30	+20 when in a Social Conflict in a different language
Unremarkable	—	+20 to Deceive; lose half Infamy Reserve

**Cold Hearted**

**Tier: 1**

**Prerequisite: None**

The character is devoid of sentiment and is seldom swayed by the emotions of others. In addition to the normal benefits (especially that Seduction Tests automatically fail against him), when in a Social Conflict any attempt to Charm the character gives him a +20 to the Opposed Test in addition to any other modifiers.

**Dark Oratory**

**Tier: 2**

**Prerequisite: Fellowship 40**

The character is a natural rabble-rouser with a talent for enthralling and swaying crowds to his cause. When in a Social Conflict against a crowd the character doubles his Infamy reserve for this encounter only.

**Demagogue**

**Tier: 3**

**Prerequisite: Air of Authority**

The character can influence large audiences. In addition to the normal benefits, when in a Social Conflict against more than one opponent, including crowds, the character saps 1d10 instead of 1d5 Willpower against all foes if he used Charm or Intimidate in the Opposed Test.

**Disturbing Voice**

**Tier: 1**

**Prerequisite: None**

The character's voice has a particularly baleful quality. In addition to the normal benefits, in a Social Conflict this character will get +10 to the Opposed Test if he uses the Intimidate Skill. Using any other Skill or Fellowship incurs a -10 modifier.

**Eloquent**

**Tier: 2**

**Prerequisite: Fellowship 30, Charm and/or Inquiry**

The character has a flair for words and language, able to sway and bamboozle an opponent in a riot of syntax. In a Social Conflict, if the character uses Charm or Inquiry in the Opposed Test then any spent Infamy from that round is returned back into the reserve as long as he Successfully made the test. Note that he does not have to win the Opposed Test, but must have successfully beaten the target number to keep the spent Infamy.

**Implied Threat**

**Tier: 2**

**Prerequisite: Fellowship 35**

The character is adroit at loading seemingly innocuous phrases with threats, dark promises, or insults. In a Social Conflict, if the character wins the Opposed Test, for every extra Degree of Success the character wins by, the loser takes an additional 1d5 Willpower loss for the round. Note that for this Talent to take effect, the character's contribution in the Verbal Contact stage needs to contain at least one veiled threat or loaded phrase.

**Inspire Wrath**

**Tier: 2**

**Prerequisite: Air of Authority**

The character can inspire hatred in others. In addition to the normal benefits, in a Social Conflict this character gives all other Heretics on the same side an additional 10 Infamy into their reserves for this encounter only.



## STICKS AND STONES, CHAINWORDS AND GRENADES

In general, Heretics are a violent lot; some are crude and unsubtle, and lack the intelligence and finesse to engage in verbal sparring. Others simply prefer to talk with their fists and smoking gun barrels. Sometimes, the insults and barbed comments enrage the opponent to violence no matter the scenario. In some situations, such as at a victory feast, this is rare. In other instances it can be inevitable (for example, a victory feast where the losers are also present). There are two ways a Game Master can deal with this.

It might be that the verbal combat acts as a prelude to the unavoidable violence to come. The opponents are perhaps engaged in a ritualistic round of boasting and insults before the physical violence takes place. In these cases, the victor of the Social Conflict gets a bonus at the start of the actual combat; the loser could be counted as being Surprised when the action starts, for example. A similar situation could be when the Heretics are having words and trading threats with their nemeses before the climactic fight. Again, the winner of the Social Conflict should be rewarded or the loser penalised during the initial round of combat.

The second method or situation is when a character is being baited. As insults and rejoinders fly his way, he finds his rage building out of control until he must attack, no matter the etiquette or social constraints of the situation. To represent this, or if the Game Master feels there is a Heretic who must act in a violent manner no matter the setting, he can enforce a Willpower Test that must be made by the character or characters (if both sides are susceptible) at the end of each round during the Social Conflict. If the character passes the test, he remains in the encounter. If he fails, then rage has replaced reason and the Heretic leaps to deal with his opponent in a more physical way with weapons or fists.

Note that here the character is testing on his temporary Willpower—the score that the Social Conflict is affecting. This means that as this Characteristic is depleted, he is more likely to put away his words and draw his weapons as insults and insinuations start to hit their mark. Characters dedicated to Khorne are always ready to resort to raw violence, and so make all Willpower Tests in this context with an additional –10 penalty.

Once combat has been engaged in this way, then the Heretic who initiated it automatically wins the Initiative for the first round. In subsequent rounds of combat normal initiative order resumes. His opponent, the one who remained in the social encounter, automatically starts the combat in a Defensive Stance action.

Whilst the combat is ongoing, and in the aftermath, Game Masters are encouraged to think of other suitable penalties for the character who has broken the social norms and entered into physical combat. The type and seriousness of the chastisement all depends on the context of the scene but could range from tortured incarceration to the gaining of Corruption and even the loss (or perhaps the reward!) of Infamy.

### Mimic

**Tier: 1**

**Prerequisite: None**

The character is a gifted impersonator. In addition to the normal benefits and stipulations, in a Social Conflict if this character mimics his foe to ridicule and disparage in the Verbal Contact stage, then the opponent loses 1d10 rather than 1d5 Willpower should the character win the round.

### Nerves of Steel

**Tier: 2**

**Prerequisite: None**

The character remains calm and impervious to intimidating behaviour. In addition to the normal benefits, in a Social Conflict the character gains +20 in the Opposed Test if his opponent uses the Intimidate Skill.

### Peer

**Tier: 1**

**Prerequisite: Fellowship 30**

The character has specialist knowledge when it comes to a certain group or organisation. In addition to the normal benefits, in a Social Conflict involving a member of the group the character has ties with, he gains an additional 20 to his Infamy reserve for this encounter only.

### Pity the Weak

**Tier: 1**

**Prerequisite: Strength 35, Willpower 35**

The character despises those weaker than him. All benefits and penalties as described in the Talent's original entry apply in a Social Conflict.

### Polygot

**Tier: 1**

**Prerequisite: Intelligence 40, Fellowship 30**

The character has an innate ability with unknown languages. In addition to the normal benefits, in a Social Conflict the character gains +20 to all Opposed Tests when going against an opponent who is speaking in a different language.

### Unremarkable

**Tier: 1**

**Prerequisite: None**

The character's face does not stick in people's memories, and few would consider conversation, let alone verbal sparring, with such a bland countenance. In addition to the normal benefits, in a Social Conflict the character gains +20 in addition to any other modifiers when he is using the Deceive Skill in the Opposed Test. However, a character with this Talent must halve his Infamy reserve before the Social Conflict begins.



## TRAITS

Traits usually represent an innate or physical aspect of a character, and the majority of Traits have a limited impact in a Social Conflict. However, some Traits undeniably influence a social encounter, especially if that Trait describes a character's unusual physical aspect or countenance. Bestial, Daemonic, Fear, From Beyond, Incorporeal, Multiple Arms, Size, Stuff of Nightmares, and Swarm are all Traits that could have an impact. This is not an exhaustive list though; if the GM thinks another Trait can affect a social encounter, then it should also qualify for the following rule.

A character with such Traits can have a positive, neutral, or negative effect in the forthcoming encounter at the GM's discretion. This depends on the context; a Heretic who causes Fear is a boon when attempting to cow or intimidate an opponent, for example, but can be a hindrance when trying to charm or assuage a target. The GM should summarise if a character's Traits give the Heretic an overall positive, negative, or neutral contribution. A modifier is then awarded: +10 for a positive effect, -10 for a negative connotation, and +0 for neutral. This is used along with the other modifiers in the Opposed Fellowship or Skill tests.

A Heretic's Traits can affect a Social Conflict even if he is not the primary contributor. A character who is providing Assistance or part of a Compact, group, or crowd Social Conflict can have his Traits taken into account as described above.

## A SOCIAL CONFLICT IN ACTION

The following is an extended example to illustrate a Social Conflict between the Heretics and a powerful NPC. It takes place in the Palace of Knives, a lavish mansion at the heart of a great Fief within the Ragged Helix. The domain is ruled by Sorgerile the Thief of Blades, a powerful Pirate Prince renowned throughout the Helix for holding the most decadent parties. For Sorgerile, raiding is a necessary evil, something he must do to fund his lavish lifestyle, allowing him to hold the most lascivious social gatherings. His events are exclusive and invites are highly sought after. For the vainglorious Pirate Princes, to be on or off the guest list is a stain or boost to their notoriety. Aspiring Pirate Princes who receive an invite see it as a tacit acknowledgement by their peers. On the other hand, Pirate Princes who are off the guest list suddenly find themselves out of favour, their standing withered and shrunken.

In this way Sorgerile has become disproportionately powerful, with the ability to make or break the careers and reputations of Pirate Princes and their retainers, by the simple act of inviting them—or not—to one of his gatherings. It is a role Sorgerile revels in, but it is not just himself who has a vested interest at these gatherings. Beyond the fake smiles, the guests are all playing a subtle and quite deadly game; the stakes here are wealth, prestige, and power. An attendee politely asking another about a recent voyage is after far more than the actual answer; it is a question loaded with meaning—the enquirer can be gauging for weak points in a ship's defences, the size of his haul, or how many crew the answer leaves to guard his Fief in his absence. The goal in fending off such questions is to keep a semblance of



insincere politeness, giving away nothing, and even turning an answer into an advantage—to glean information, or retort with some kind of status-sapping put down.

It is into this deadly shark pit that the Heretics have been sent, here to highlight the Social Conflict rules as well as offer some general social interaction tips for **BLACK CRUSADE**.

The Heretics have a Compact to locate an infernal tome stolen by Black Sirius, a Pirate Prince with a burgeoning reputation. To draw weapons and fight for the answer in the crowded mansion is simply out of the question. The Heretics must work together using subtlety and social skills to glean the tome's location.

First the group must locate Black Sirius, who is already revelling within the demesne. The Heretics leveraged their Infamy to gain invitations, but the bodyguards at the door—purple-skinned humanoids with serpent-like tongues—view them with suspicion. They let the Heretics into the party, but are not forthcoming with any useful information.

A servant carrying a tray of drinks is equally unwilling to pass on news. The Khornate Heretic tries to Intimidate the serf, but is at a -20 penalty due to his nature. The Heretic fails by one Degree and the servant is not cowed; he has catered at many of Sorgerile's revelries and is used to the behaviour of the nefarious guests. Before the servant can extradite himself, Toradrill, an Apostate dedicated to Slaanesh, attempts to Charm the information out of the serf. The GM explains that the Khornate character's bungled Intimidation attempt has lessened his chances, and the servant is also getting edgy, after spending more than enough time with the group—there are other guests



to be serviced, after all. The GM says the Charm Test has become Arduous (-40) to entice the information out of the servant. However, if the player controlling Toradrill enacts his opening lines, giving the GM the gist of his plans to convince the serf, then the test's difficulty can be reduced to -10. In the guise of Toradrill, the player explains that the serf should ignore the gruff Heretic of Khorne, who has no appreciation for the art of serving the needs of many, and that staying on hand and unnoticed, and yet being able to fathom the motives of the guests is a wondrous skill—and the things the serf must know from overhearing, in a galaxy where knowledge is everything!

The Charm test works with 2 Degrees of Success. The servant covertly explains that Sorgerile is entertaining Black Sirius personally on the mezzanine, two floors up via the nearby crystal stairways.

The Compact makes their way to the upper levels of the party, inveigling themselves into areas of the mansion their status would normally prohibit through bribery, charm, and persuasion. Eventually they come upon Black Sirius; he sits on a large divan surrounded by sycophants, nonchalantly picking moan-fruits from a bowl balanced on the flattened head of a crouching slave. Sirius is in the midst of recounting an exploit from a recent raid to the fawning audience when the Heretics approach. He breaks from his story, looks up, and in a fluid motion drops a still lamenting morsel into his mouth. "And who might you be? You must all be terribly important to interrupt my tale," he enquires with a derisive tone.

The NPC, Sirius, has challenged the Heretics' status and reputation. He also has something the Heretics need. Physical combat is not a practical option at this time given the many guards and well-armed guests, and a simple Interaction Test would not be sufficient. The scene is set for a Social Conflict. The Heretics must win over the spectators, and berate or assuage the location of the infernal tome out of Sirius.

Toradrill steps forward to represent the Heretics. He has Perception 44, Willpower 34, Fellowship 48, and Infamy 29. Black Sirius has Perception 47, Willpower 41, Fellowship 57, and Infamy 44. On Characteristics alone, Sirius has the edge, but a Social Conflict is more than just a set of probabilities.

Before the Social Conflict can begin, Sirius attempts to Overawe Toradrill. The difference in Infamy Bonus is 2 so Toradrill takes a Willpower Test at -20. Should Toradrill lose the test, he will have his Infamy halved for the following encounter and must immediately lose 1d5 Willpower. However, Slaanesh must be smiling on his champion as Toradrill passes the test on a roll of 11.

After noting down Infamy and Willpower scores, the first round begins in earnest. The GM secretly bids 12 from Sirius' Infamy reserve. Toradrill bids a more conservative 7 from his Infamy. The Game Master, controlling the participant with the highest Fellowship, has the choice of going first or second in the Verbal Contact stage; he lets the player go first. The player, as Toradrill, responds to Sirius' earlier retort: "Please don't stop your account on our behalf, I've always had a good ear for fiction!" There are gasps from the crowd, both in game, and from around the gaming table. It is a response that certainly has gotten the Pirate Prince's attention. "Not fiction, but a legend in the making," corrects Sirius. "Maybe they'll tell stories about you one day, although they'll be footnotes at best." This is an

assured retort, however, the GM, despite playing the role of the Pirate Prince, thinks Toradrill's opening attack is the strongest. The next stage in the round is an Opposed Fellowship Test. Toradrill gains a +20 bonus for winning the Verbal Contact stage. The dice are rolled and Sirius fails his test. The player rolls 59; normally a failure but with the bonus becomes a Success. The Player wins the round. Sirius has lost all the Infamy he bid and also rolls a massive 5 to determine how much Willpower he loses. This, added to the Infamy bid by Toradrill, means that Sirius loses 12 Willpower in total, taking his tally down to 29. Because Sirius has lost more than 10 Willpower in the round, the GM allows Toradrill to make a Perception test. The player only just succeeds, and so notices beads of sweat on Sirius' brow. Had Toradrill passed with more Degrees of Success, the GM could have also related that Sirius' eye is beginning to slightly twitch.

The round begins afresh. Both note down their Infamy bids; Toradrill sticks with 7, while Sirius gambles on a massive 15, hoping a win in this round can dramatically turn his fortunes. This time Toradrill decides who goes first in the Verbal Contact stage due to his triumphant performance in the previous round. The player elects to go first and capitalise on the information he has just gleaned. "I see you're in a sweat, I do hope I haven't caught you in a lie. We want information after all, and we need to know your intelligence is reliable." It is a blatant verbal attack. It is a risky strategy, using brutal honesty to knock the foe off-kilter. The GM quickly takes stock and then speaks out. "Perspiration is only natural. With conversation this boring, the body has to find something else to do." The GM is certainly keeping the player on his toes. He is unsure who got the better of whom in that round and so quickly asks the group for a consensus. They agree that it is close but Toradrill's forthright statement just edges it. The Opposed Fellowship Test is now performed. Because the player incorporated what he had learned from the Perception Test in his verbal jibe he gets a +30 bonus. Both participants successfully make the test, but Toradrill wins by 2 Degrees of Success. The Pirate Prince loses another 9 points of Willpower leaving him with 20 left. He is still good for a few more rounds, although he is rapidly losing Infamy and with it, the ability to influence the encounter in his favour.

As the rounds continue, Black Sirius makes a comeback but nothing to compare to the knock-out blows the player scored in his two opening salvos. In the end, Toradrill wins the Social Conflict. He immediately recovers all lost Infamy and Willpower. Sirius regains half of his totals and so, although physically unharmed, looks a shadow of his former self. With only half of his Willpower, his sycophants start to silently drift away, sensing the situation is about to get ugly. The Heretic of Khorne, his patience tried to the limit, leans forward heavily and successfully Intimidates the Pirate Prince, whose temporary lack of Willpower makes him an easier target than at the start. His earlier confidence gone, Sirius gives up the location of the infernal tome to the Heretics.

Just when the players believe things are going their way, however, their information gathering is suddenly halted. "What is this, and what have you done to my guest of honour?" The Heretics turn to see Sorgerile flanked by four of his snake-tongued bodyguards, all with howler rifles trained on them and covering Sirius. The time for talking has ended and the time for fighting has begun as the Heretics reach for their own weapons...



## INCREASING THE SCOPE

The rules as detailed so far have assumed Social Conflict and interactions happen on a one-to-one basis, but this is far from always the case. There are many occasions when Heretics must engage with more than a single foe. In the course of trying to achieve Compacts and other objectives, they are sometimes called upon to turn hostile crowds to their cause, subvert entire organisations, or even bind a Sector Lord and his retinue to their collective will through persuasion, intimidation, or threats.

The following allows for building on the previous rules to increase the scope of social encounters. The Interaction rules on page 276 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook are also a good starting point and can often cope with scenarios brought up here. However, the rules below are more ideal for players and GMs looking for a more in-depth and lengthy experience for dealing with larger groups.

### HERETICS VS. HERETICS

A Social Conflict that is dealing with multiple participants on both sides is a distinct possibility. There are several ways for a Game Master to run this situation. Firstly, he can pair up opponents, and then run them as a series of Social Conflicts. It is rare to get an even match-up so one participant may have to deal with two or more opponents; this is covered in the **Two or More vs. One** sidebar on this page.

The other method is to establish a Compound Social Conflict. In this situation, the encounter is divided into the two opposing groups. Both sides add their entire Willpower and Infamy together. This creates each groups' Infamy reserve and Willpower level. A Social Conflict then continues as described above using the collected Infamy and Willpower scores, with a few additional exceptions. At the start of every round, each group nominates a single speaker; it is this character who performs in the Verbal Contact stage. The group can choose a new speaker at the start of every round, or the same speaker can stay in the role. When making the Opposed Fellowship or Skill Test, a speaker can have Assistance as described on page 38 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. The losing side must lose 1d10+10 Willpower in addition to the equal amount of Infamy the victorious side bid. On conclusion of the Social Conflict, each member of the losing side individually regains only half of his Willpower and Infamy back. The remainder returns at five points per half hour, a much faster rate than normal as the group has shared the burden of the loss and is more resilient than a single combatant. The winning group has their Characteristics immediately restored back to previous levels as normal.

### CROWD CONTROL

Heretics can find themselves encountering large groups, and not just armies or enemy factions intent on killing them. Hab-slaves on their way to the pits, galley-dregs labouring in the depths of a cruiser, lost colonists who have forgotten the Imperium, even a xenos race staring in wonder at the alien players—all can be useful tools if turned to the Heretic's cause. Riots, rebellions, and regicides have happened throughout history and often it has been a few charismatic and opportunistic individuals that have sparked the flames of such "liberty."

## TWO OR MORE VS. ONE

There are situations where a single character may find himself entering into a Social Conflict against a larger group. First, it is important to define the active participants. A Social Conflict often takes place before an audience of vested spectators, such as minions and serfs, or gawkers. These are not active participants—an audience does not get onstage with the actor.

Assuming the scenario is truly an uneven one, with a lone character in a Social Conflict with a group containing two or more participants, then the following guidelines should be used. The larger group must nominate a speaker; unlike in a Compound Social Conflict, the speaker cannot change. In effect, the rest of the Social Conflict is between these two participants, and should be treated as such in regard to Willpower, Infamy reserves, etc. However, the speaker of the larger group gets the advantage of being able to seek and receive Assistance from his partners exactly as described on page 38 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

Learning to control and manipulate the mob is a useful ability to have, for a crowd that is hostile to the Heretics is clearly more difficult to influence than an ambivalent one. The larger the crowd, however, the more intransigent it is. The GM can use a variant of the Social Conflict rules to indicate how successful the players are in swaying a crowd, but note that a crowd is a different entity to a rival group (which is covered earlier). A crowd is a more passive entity, although if angered, a mob can quickly turn violent against the Heretics.

Before the Heretics can tackle the crowd, the Game Master must define it through two questions:

- How large is the crowd?
- What is the crowd's Disposition?

The size of the crowd determines its collective Willpower. The crowd's Disposition decides the Disposition modifier. See **Table 3-2: Size of Crowd** and **3-3: Crowd Disposition** to determine these levels.

Once a crowd has been defined, the Heretics can try and sway it to their cause. This is performed similarly to a Social Conflict, with some key differences. First, if a Compact is talking to a crowd, then the group must select a speaker. The speaker can receive Assistance from his fellow Heretics as normal. The speaker must note down his Infamy reserve and Willpower as usual. He can attempt to Overawe the audience; to do this the GM assumes the crowd has Infamy equal to its Collective Willpower. A crowd successfully Overawed loses 1d10+10 Willpower instead of the usual d5.

The speaker can now bid Infamy from his reserve. In the Verbal Contact stage the player performs his contribution. Unlike a normal Social Conflict, there is no direct opponent, the player is speaking to the crowd so must make a rousing or terrifying speech to affect the mob before him. The GM rates the contribution, and awards an appropriate modifier ranging from +20 for a good contribution to -20 for one that would not please the audience. The speaker must now take a Fellowship test (or a Skill-based test depending on



## DEFINING GROUPS

A Compound Social Conflict may well be engaging with rival Heretics groups in a verbal sparring match. This is just one of a thousand possible scenarios however. The rival group could be a Planetary Governor and his governmental lackeys who are wavering on their loyalty to Terra, a group of renegade Guardsmen not sure whether to take arms or join the Heretics against a now-hated Imperium or a deviant sect ignorant to the Heretics' goals. For players seeking roleplaying challenges, all the above and countless more offer fascinating encounters.

how the player performed), bearing in mind the cumulative modifiers for the Crowd Disposition, Assistance, Talents, hecklers, supporters, and any award or penalty from the verbal contribution. If the test is passed, then the crowd loses d5 Willpower plus the amount equal to any bid Infamy. If the test is failed, then the Heretic must lose d5 Willpower, plus the amount equal to his bid Infamy. Note in a failed test, Infamy is not lost as normal but is used to sap the Heretic's own Willpower; this represents the Heretic becoming deflated and anxious as his attempts to rouse the audience fall on deaf ears. Rounds continue in this way until either the crowd or the Heretic has lost all Willpower.

If the Heretic wins, then the crowd can be swayed. It is now willing to do a single simple task under the Heretic's direction, such as begin rioting or march upon their sovereign's palace, but is unable to take more complex direction such as executing an elaborate battle plan, as the Heretics are dealing with a fragile group mentality. If the Heretic loses, then he suffers the normal penalties for failing in a Social Conflict and the crowd turns hostile; the group needs an exit strategy or must resort to more brutal methods to get what they want. If at any point the speaker rolls a natural 100, then the crowd immediately turns aggressive and sets about the Heretic and his comrades. Treat the crowd as a Horde attack of Magnitude equal to their current Willpower; hopefully, the Heretics have prepared for such a contingency.

TABLE 3-2: SIZE OF CROWD

Crowd Number	Collective Willpower
0-10	10
11-50	20
51-100	30
101-300	40
301-1000	50
1001-2000	60
2001-5000	70
5001-10,000	80
10,001+	90



TABLE 3-3: CROWD DISPOSITION

Crowd Descriptor	Difficulty	Modifier
Accepting	Ordinary	+10
Ambivalent	Challenging	+0
Antagonistic	Difficult	-10
Hostile	Hard	-20

## HECKLERS AND SUPPORTERS

An optional rule when swaying crowds is to allow for hecklers and supporters. To do this, note the Degrees of Success or Failure when making a Fellowship or Skill Test. Every Degree of Failure represents a heckler in the crowd, jeering the speaker, and counts as a -10 penalty in the following test in the next round only. Every Degree of Success represents a supporter, a member of the crowd that embraces the Heretics' cause. Every supporter gives the player a +10 modifier in the following Fellowship or Skill test in the next round only.



# EXPANDED INFAMY RULES

*"They have named suns after me, raised monuments to my greatness on a hundred worlds, carved my sigil into mountain ranges, and the mere mention of my name will start an exodus. And yet, you claim to have not heard of me?"*

—Mograior, Dark Apostle of the Word Bearers

Infamy is a vital characteristic in **BLACK CRUSADE**. In the broadest sense, it is a measure of a Heretic's standing amongst his peers and enemies, and a snapshot of his legendary (or not) status. Abaddon the Despoiler's Infamy is off the scale, while a hab-worker who has recently fallen from the Emperor's light certainly does not warrant the attention of the Dark Powers. The Heretics fighting in the Screaming Vortex belong somewhere between these two great extremes.

The following rules introduce additional ways to use Infamy for personal gain, power, and spreading the taint of the Ruinous Powers. This section includes Glorifying Acts, the most depraved and all-consuming dedications to the Chaos Gods. There are also details on using Infamy to seduce others to their cause, as well as offering a wealth of extra services and objects a player can acquire with his Infamy, ensuring a character has all the accoutrements of power expected of an infamous Heretic.

## GLORIFYING ACTS

Heretics usually gain Infamy through purchasing it via experience points, as a reward for achieving Compact objectives, or by worshiping and gaining the notice of the Chaos Gods. A Heretic who dedicates an act so wanton and depraved in worship, though, may just draw the eye of a Ruinous Power—even if it is but for the briefest of moments. These Glorifying Acts can often be detrimental to the group's goals, however. There is little reward sneaking into a Mechanicum forge, for example, if the Heretic dedicated to Khorne then loudly slays all the security servitors and creates a huge altar from their blood-soaked bones. To the capricious Chaos Gods, though, it matters not. All efforts—whether it is the greater objective of the Compact or a single Heretic's Glorifying Act—serves the purpose of spreading corruption.

The following are optional rules to be used at the Game Master's discretion. If the GM believes using a Glorifying Act endangers and unbalances his carefully laid out plans, then he should feel free not to use the rules on that occasion. However, one of the unique aspects of **BLACK CRUSADE** is how these largely selfish and individualistic characters work together. Glorifying Acts are another way to pull at the seams of the group, fostering internal and external conflict. A Heretic who places his own desires before that of the group is also giving into his desires, and thus these acts are worthy of attention in a tome devoted to Slaanesh.



To perform a Glorifying Act, a Heretic must be dedicated to one of the Chaos Gods. Only those who have declared their devotion to one of the Four Powers can be blessed in this manner.

The following tables describe a Glorifying Act, the Corruption Points accrued, and Infamy rewarded for completing it. Some, just like Talents, may have a Prerequisite—meaning that a certain Skill, Talent, or a Characteristic threshold needs to be attained before the Glorifying Act is performed. In theory, a Heretic could still execute the profane act without the prerequisite, but the Ruinous Powers would simply not take notice and so no Infamy is rewarded, although Corruption should still be gained.

## INFAMY EXCESS

The one area Game Masters do not necessarily want the Heretics to overindulge in is Infamy. If a player was so inclined, he could simply try and work down the list attempting to execute one Glorifying Act after another and artificially boost his Infamy. The fickle Ruinous Powers can become bored with excessive acts done out of self-aggrandisement, however, as these are rewards for players who act and think in significantly despicable ways that reflect their character's devotion to his Chaos. A Heretic therefore cannot repeat the same Glorifying Act or gain more than 5 Infamy from these actions in a single session unless the GM specifically decides otherwise.



TABLE 3-4: GLORIFYING ACTS OF KHORNE

Glorifying Act	Prerequisite	Corruption	
		Points	Infamy
A Tail of Skulls	—	2 CP	1 Infamy
A Bloody Altar	—	2 CP	2 Infamy
Spine Ripper	Sure Strike	2 CP	1 Infamy
One Less Witch	—	1 CP	2 Infamy
No Plan Should Survive the Enemy	Frenzy	2 CP	3 Infamy

**A Tail of Skulls**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 2 CP, 1 Infamy

The Heretic must fashion a chain of eight skulls and wear them openly about his person at all times. The skulls must be from victims he has slain himself. Infamy and Corruption are rewarded on the addition of the eighth skull to the chain.

**A Bloody Altar**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 2 CP, 2 Infamy

Directly in the aftermath of a Combat, the Heretic must fashion an altar to Khorne by piling the bodies of the dead to form Khorne's Mark upon the ground. There needs to be at least eight bodies, two of which the Heretic must have slain himself. The altar takes at least twenty minutes of narrative time to fashion.

**Spine Ripper**

**Prerequisite:** Sure Strike

**Reward:** 2 CP, 1 Infamy

The Heretic must rip the spine and skull from a still-living victim, hold it aloft, and shout out as loudly as possible "Blood for the Blood God!" The skull and spine must be intact and undamaged in any way.

**One Less Witch**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 1 CP, 2 Infamy

The Heretic must single-handedly slay a Psyker. The Psyker or Sorcerer must have a Psy Rating of 5 or above for Khorne to notice and Infamy be rewarded.

**No Plan Should Survive the Enemy**

**Prerequisite:** Frenzy

**Reward:** 2 CP, 3 Infamy

When facing or approaching an enemy, the Heretic must charge and attack, screaming his own name and loud exhortations to Khorne while running directly at the enemy no matter the consequences. Khorne only takes notice if this is an unexpected act that leaves comrades and the enemy in disarray. The GM should only offer rewards for this act if the Compact had come up with a complex and subtle plan, which is effectively left in tatters due to the action of the Heretic.

TABLE 3-5: GLORIFYING ACTS OF TZEENTCH

Glorifying Act	Prerequisite	Corruption	
		Points	Infamy
Reality Bleeds	—	3 CP	1 Infamy
Sewing Discord	Deceive	1 CP	2 Infamy
Frame the Fool	—	2 CP	2-3 Infamy
Disrupt the Ritual	—	2 CP	3 Infamy
Served His Use	Logic	3 CP	2 Infamy

**Reality Bleeds**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 3 CP, 1 Infamy

The Heretic must deliberately try and access **Table 6-2: Psychic Phenomena** (see page 210 of the **BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook**) twice in a row. Note that there are no guarantees to accessing this table, but by pushing the bounds of his power, the Heretic can increase his chances.

**Sowing Discord**

**Prerequisite:** Deceive

**Reward:** 1 CP, 2 Infamy

The Heretic fools or manipulates a Warlord or high-ranking member of a rival organisation into lying to his closest advisors against his will. This can be achieved via black mail, deception, or outright falsehood.

**Frame the Fool**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 2 CP, 2-3 Infamy

The Heretic must dispose of a close relative, friend, or business partner of the intended target, and then leave the body so that mutual friends or associates discover it. The Heretic must then fabricate and mislead the target's peers into believing he is the suspect. 2 Infamy is rewarded for this. However, if the target is unjustly executed because of the murder, then the Heretic gains 3 Infamy.

**Disrupt the Ritual**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 2 CP, 3 Infamy

The Heretic must disrupt or interrupt the ritual of a rival Chaos God or the Emperor. This must be a deliberate act of sabotage. Tzeentch only takes notice if the ritual is broken at the most opportune time to cause the greatest devastation and havoc.

**Served His Use**

**Prerequisite:** Logic

**Reward:** 3 CP, 2 Infamy

The Heretic must slay a being in thrall to the character. The thrall, whether a willing servant or one that has been coerced, must perform its required task and then be led to believe the hold the Heretic has is relinquished. At this point, the Heretic must devote the thrall's soul to Tzeentch.



TABLE 3-6: GLORIFYING ACTS OF NURGLE

Glorifying Act	Prerequisite	Corruption	
		Points	Infamy
Start the Plague	—	2 CP	2 Infamy
Foster Famine	—	2 CP	1 Infamy
Celebrate the Swarm	—	1 CP	1-2 Infamy
Nurgle's Incubator	T 40	3 CP	4 Infamy
Unleash the Buboes	Master Chirurgeon	3 CP	3 Infamy

**Start the Plague**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 2 CP, 2 Infamy

The Heretic must infect a single victim with a virulent plague, one of Nurgle's blessings. He must then transfer the victim to another area to infect this population. Infecting a being and leaving him in his natural habitat is not enough; if the victim is then moved to another planet, so he infects the native population there, then Father Nurgle takes notice.

**Foster Famine**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 2 CP, 1 Infamy

The Heretic must destroy a large body or amount of foodstuffs. This could be a grain store amidst a starving populace, a massive plantation of vital crops, or poisoning a huge body of drinking water on a desert world. The amount must be significant for Nurgle to take notice, it needs to affect at least an entire city's worth of mortals, but the larger the population the better.

**Celebrate the Swarm**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 1 CP, 1-2 Infamy

The Heretic must create or smuggle in a large swarm of creatures to appear in a crowded and public place. The swarm could consist of vermin, insects, or any others that causes panic in large numbers. The swarm must be released at the most opportune time to create the greatest discord.

**Nurgle's Incubator**

**Prerequisite:** Toughness 40

**Reward:** 3 CP, 4 Infamy

The Heretic must become host to a terrible parasitic creature of Nurgle. The nature of the creature is up to the GM and player; it could be a nest of fist-sized flies, fluke-like creatures living in pustules upon the Heretic's neck, or something equally foul. The gestation period must be at least one month, in that time the Heretic should make frequent Toughness Tests or suffer ill effects at the GM's discretion for failing to appreciate Father Nurgle's blessings.



**Unleash the Buboes**

**Prerequisite:** Master Chirurgeon

**Reward:** 3 CP, 3 Infamy

The Heretic must devise a terrible virus or plague to be unleashed on an unsuspecting population. The creation of this disease can be of any origin, or it could be stolen or coerced from a third party. Nurgle only blesses his follower if he secretly infects one of his fellow Compact members with the new disease, which should require serious medicae attention to remedy.

TABLE 3-7: GLORIFYING ACTS OF SLAANESH

Glorifying Act	Prerequisite	Corruption	
		Points	Infamy
Burning the Saint	—	2 CP	2-3 Infamy
Seducing the Weak	—	3 CP	2 Infamy
Desire to Kill	Cold Hearted	2 CP	1+ Infamy
Your Greatest Desire	Fel 40	2 CP	1-3 Infamy
Kiss of the Dark Prince	Charm	2 CP	4 Infamy

**Burning the Saint**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 2 CP, 2-3 Infamy

The Heretic must publicly execute an avatar of a rival god (such as the Emperor, or either of the three other Ruinous Powers), and then make sure that all present know this was through the machinations of an agent of Slaanesh. For example, if a Champion of Nurgle was immolated in a crowded plaza, and then the flames were to go on and fashion the Mark of Slaanesh, that might gain the Dark Prince's attention.

**Seducing the Weak**

**Prerequisite:** None

**Reward:** 3 CP, 2 Infamy

The Heretic must seduce and form a relationship with the victim. Once the victim has revealed his or her darkest secret, then the secret must be revealed to all who would be affected by its revelation. Once exposed, the victim is slain publicly in a humiliating manner.

**Desire to Kill**

**Prerequisite:** Cold Hearted

**Reward:** 2 CP, 1+ Infamy

The Heretic must foster and encourage a coterie of exotic killers. The victims may start innocent, or deep down already have the desire to take lives. The Heretic must guide and encourage and witness the victim's first kill, and then persuade his protégé onto the next. Slaanesh only rewards the Heretic for developing assassins beyond mere murderous thugs, however. The victim must slay two mortals before the Heretic is rewarded with a point of Infamy, and each death must reflect the excesses of Slaanesh in some manner. This could be force-feeding an ascetic preacher until intestinal rupturing occurs, or blinding a famous pilot with plasma flares until his skull boils, or bombard a violone master with sounds such that his skull ruptures. The Heretic receives 1 Infamy for each devoted assassin he "creates."





### Your Greatest Desire

**Prerequisite:** Fellowship 40

**Reward:** 2 CP, 1 or 3 Infamy

The Heretic must select a target and then fulfill that mortal's greatest desires, no matter what the vice is. Only when the target is at his most euphoric can his soul be harvested for Slaanesh. The GM must gauge when the target is slain: if the Heretic does it too early or late, then he gains only 1 Infamy. To get 3 Infamy, the target must be taken at the pinnacle of his ecstasy.

### Kiss of the Dark Prince

**Prerequisite:** Charm

**Reward:** 2 CP, 4 Infamy

The Heretic must convert six mortals loyal to the False-Emperor to the worship of Slaanesh. These six must be brought together and then forced to fight to the death. Only when the lone survivor is branded with the Mark of Slaanesh does the Heretic receive his reward.

## CREATING NEW ACTS

The following lists are not finite and GMs and players should feel free to create their own Glorifying Acts. These should never become so easy and commonplace as to unbalance the game. Glorifying Acts should always primarily be a way to encourage characters to act in a thematic way, not a fast route to Infamy.

## THE ART OF SEDUCTION

As indescribably powerful as the Chaos Gods are, they always need mortal followers to worship them. Fortunately for the Ruinous Powers, there are many mortals who dedicate their souls to Chaos, from insignificant drudges who are mere pawns to be controlled by their superiors, to true Champions of Chaos—dread paragons of their Dark Masters.

Recruiting these peons and followers should be an arduous task, but the nature of mankind, and indeed other races, means that some mortals are easier to corrupt than others. Needless to say, mortals difficult to seduce are more highly valued than those who sacrifice their souls without a second thought. Most prized of all are mortals who have already dedicated themselves to a different master, be it the Emperor or another Ruinous Power. Of all the Chaos Gods, it is Slaanesh who revels in stealing the Champions of others the most. His followers excel at tempting and seducing worshipers from another power. As a Heretic, one of the player's constant duties is to bring others into the Chaos fold, and if they have embraced one of the Ruinous Powers, then convert them to his own alignment.

### SEDUCTION TESTS

Seducing someone, especially a follower of a rival Chaos God, is no easy task. It is not something that can be achieved instantly. A character attempting to seduce another also needs plenty of Infamy at his disposal. Infamy is key as in this respect it represents a character's reputation—if a Heretic has gained notoriety as a Champion of Khorne, then he is not going to willingly sacrifice it.

A Seduction Test is actually a series of Opposed Skill Tests which are heavily modified to represent the many different factors involved. For ease of reference, the character or NPC that is being seduced is referred to as the target. To start, the seducing character needs to determine which Skill he is using to test on. This depends on the Chaos God the seducer represents, and also affirms the approach he most likely takes in tempting the target to the Ruinous Power. Use **Table 3-8: Seduction Test Skill** to see which Skill a Heretic tests on. If the seducer does not have the relevant Skill, then he cannot perform the test as seduction is obviously not his forté. The target always tests using his Willpower.

The Heretic now has to determine how many Skill Tests are required to seduce the target, which is equal to the target's Willpower Bonus. Only one test may be attempted per day (or session), though the tests do not have to be consecutive (they could be days apart narratively speaking). The Heretic must win the final Opposed Test to Successfully seduce the target. The previous tests have an effect on the difficulty of the final one, depending on if they were Successful or not.

TABLE 3-8: SEDUCTION TEST SKILL

Seducer's Alignment	Skill needed to test on
Khorne	Command
Tzeentch	Logic
Nurgle	Intimidate
Slaanesh	Charm
Unaligned	Fellowship Characteristic



## WHEN TO USE A SEDUCTION TEST

A Seduction Test should be used when a Heretic is trying to lure a character away from something the target holds dear, is morally essential, or is fundamental to the target's state of being. In many cases this is his devotion to a loved one or to a God, Chaos or otherwise. There are, though, many other things and agendas which motivate an NPC or player character that can form the basis of long-term seduction. For example, it could be access to a Librarium of forbidden tomes, devotion to an Inquisitorial master, or a bond to a prized Machine Spirit. Seduction is a tool used to sway targets against normal behaviour or morals to follow the path the seducer lays out for them, and Slaanesh delights each time a mortal is twisted so.

Obviously, trivial matters should not be the basis of a Seduction Test; simple actions such as talking up the spirits vendor for a free drink in a Q'Sal tavern should only require a Charm Test.

Next is to work out the Infamy modifier. Compare the Infamy scores of the seducer and the target; the difference is the modifier applied to the seducer's Skill Test. If the target has the higher Infamy, then it is a negative penalty. If the target has a lower Infamy, then it is a positive bonus. For example, if the Heretic has an Infamy of 48 and the target has an Infamy of 34, this leads to a +14 modifier.

The next modifier depends on how many tests in the sequence have happened. The Heretic gets +10 for every previously winning test, and -10 for every previous test the target has won. Finally, if the Heretic is dedicated to Slaanesh he gets a +20 modifier. Note that all modifiers are applied to the seducer's role. The target is making a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**, and the result is used to repel the seducer's effort in the Opposed Test.

If the seducer wins the final Opposed Test in the sequence, then the target has been successfully seduced. The consequences need to be worked out with the GM, but such is the achievement that the seducer is rewarded with 4 Infamy. If it is a player character that has been seduced, then 5 Infamy is rewarded instead. If the test is failed, then the target refuses to be tempted away, and gains 2 Infamy for remaining steadfast. The GM can decide if there are other consequences as well, such as loss of minions or modifiers to a current Compact.

Note that some Talents, such as Cold Hearted, can negate Seduction attempts, and some races such as Orks might be normally resistant to this method of influence. Even in such situations, the GM may decide that suitable and well roleplayed approaches might even work on such individuals, though this should be carefully worked out in advance and properly framed.

## SEDUCTION AND SLAANESH

The Dark Prince rejoices in subtle tactics, manipulations through vices and, above all, turning Heretics and Champions away from their patron deity to embrace Slaanesh. The Glorifying Acts of Slaanesh touch upon this, but a Game Master should feel free to reward a Heretic for acting in a way that would particularly please his master, no matter what the situation. A Heretic taking the difficult role of agent provocateur, a temptress, or vice-dealer when there are other, easier methods to achieve the same objective should be rewarded with a modest Infamy bonus. This could be awarded as an extra dividend when a group receives its reward after completing a Compact, but should be no more than 1 or 2 Infamy Points. By the same token, a Heretic of Slaanesh acting in a way not compliant with the values of the Dark Prince should be dealt loss of Infamy or extra Corruption.

The undisputed masters of seduction though are the followers of Slaanesh, and all characters dedicated to Slaanesh gain a +20 Modifier when making a Seduction Test. Followers of Khorne have little appetite for any combat that does not involve blood and chainaxes, and so suffer a -10 penalty on these tests.

### Seduction Test Summary

- Target's Willpower Bonus number determines how many Opposed Skill Tests are in the sequence.
- Determine which skill the seducer is using; the target uses his Willpower.
- All modifiers are applied to seducer's dice rolls.
- Compare Infamy levels; the difference is the modifier to the seducer's roll.
- Previous Seduction Tests in the sequence add a +10 modifier for every one the seducer has won, and a -10 modifier for every test the seducer has failed.
- If the seducer is dedicated to Slaanesh, he gains an additional +20 modifier. If he is dedicated to Khorne, he suffers a -10 modifier.
- Determine the final, collated modifier and both parties make an Opposed Test as described on page 37 of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE Rulebook**.
- If this was the final test in the sequence and the seducer won the test, then the target has been successfully seduced. If not, the target has rebuffed the seducer's advances.
- Seducer gains 4 Infamy for Successfully seducing an NPC, 5 Infamy for seducing a player character.
- The target gains 2 Infamy Points for repelling a seduction attempt, and the seducer loses the same amount.





## SEDUCING FELLOW HERETICS

In theory, when using the rules for Seduction Tests any character has the potential to be seduced and lured away from his current embrace to serve a new Power, or to radically change his behaviour and allegiances. Bear in mind this is no easy task, with numerous Opposed Skill Tests required over several gaming sessions, and the player who has been targeted can simply reject the whole notion. If he has crafted his Heretic in a specific way, then he may not be too happy at the thought of being forced to worship a rival Chaos God if the dice do not go his way. In this situation, the Game Master should be firmly involved, and if the player of the target character does not wish to be challenged in this respect then a moratorium on seducing the Heretic should be set.

Alternatively, if the GM judges that the target player is aware of the attempt, possibly through a failed Seduction Test or successful Scrutiny Test, the target can respond to the honeyed words with the roar of a chainsword or some other physical threat to the unwanted action. A GM can also declare that all Seduction attempts must be played out openly, so ensure the players can participate more fully in the activity. The Game Master's decision is final in these matters, though some degree of infighting within the group should always be expected given the nature of the players and the game.

However, what can be more interesting is if a player of a target character is willing to become the subject of a potential seduction and defection from one Chaos God to another. The players, working with the Game Master, could easily come up with an interesting sub-plot about how and why the Heretic is being tempted away from his original master. Use of the Seduction Tests has plot triggers and dramatic points in the game, depending on the results of each test. Should the seduction be successful, then this creates a very interesting dynamic within the Compact. This can change the Compact's objectives and relationships both internally and externally, and make for interesting new gaming experiences.

### Placing the Seduction in Context

The mechanics of a Seduction Test could make it sound quite a dry procedure, a series of modified dice rolls. What is far more important than the rules is the context and narrative that surrounds the test. The seduction might take place over several days in narrative sense, but the test should only be triggered when the Heretic is in the right context. This could be a moment of weakness for the target character, or an opportunity for the seducer to whisper something meaningful into the target character's ear. The story, and character's reactions in and around the aftermath of the tests, makes the seduction far more organic than rolling dice alone.

## EXAMPLE

*Korach the Silent is trying to seduce his fellow Heretic, Gulivar Trex, to Slaanesh. It has been a slow and steady process; Korach has been working on Trex's weakness for gambling and Obscura to gradually lure Trex away from his current patron, Nurgle, into the comforting arms of the Dark Prince. Trex is on his way to his favourite gambling hall, and Korach feels this is an excellent opportunity to continue his conquest.*

*Trex has a Willpower of 37, so there are three tests needed in the sequence (determined by his Willpower Bonus), of which this test is the second. Korach is testing on his Charm; he has a Fellowship of 44. To get the base modifier, the parties work out the difference in Infamy. Trex has the higher Infamy of 49, compared to Korach's Infamy of 33, giving Korach a -16 modifier. There has been one previous test that Korach won which gives him +10, and a running total of -6. Finally, as a Champion of Slaanesh, Korach gets +20 to all Seduction Tests, giving him a total modifier of +14. This means Korach's target roll is 58 or lower. He rolls 47, to get two Degrees of Success. Trex rolls 67, and fails the test. Korach wins the test, and brings Trex closer to Slaanesh. Trex happily takes Korach's gift of more Obscura, and Korach teaches Trex an unfamiliar but addictive lyrical prayer-chant for luck as they enter the gambling den.*

## INEAMOUS ACQUISITIONS

The worlds of the Screaming Vortex have no common currency, and a Heretic must trade on his reputation to get what he needs. This can be a harsh way of life for those who have little-to-no Infamy but the powerful have few concerns as a truly infamous Heretic should be able to acquire all the trappings of power his status demands. The following section has a new suggestions for services and equipment a Heretic with enough Infamy to leverage can use to not only look suitably impressive, but can also have a narrative application in the game.

Acquiring these items and services works exactly as described on pages 305-308 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. The following list gives the Availability modifier and, where appropriate, the craftsmanship of the object or service. Unlike other acquired items objects such as weapons or armour, there are no specifics in how these items and services work in the game. Instead, they are primarily narrative tools and status symbols that help to develop the Heretic and his Path to Glory. The Game Master should use these to shape plot arcs, and arrive at a suitable rule or test modifier if the item or service is to have a direct impact on the game.

### Abaddon's Approval

**Availability:** Unique

**Craftmanship:** Best

The Heretic has received a message in the form of vox-cast, blood-locked parchment, dream manifestation, or through more arcane methods that the Warmaster of Chaos has heard of the Heretic's exploits and approves. Every additional Degree of Success made on the Acquisition Test gauges how much notice the leader of the greatest **BLACK CRUSADES** has taken in the character. Of course, having Abaddon's eye, even from far across the galaxy, is not necessarily advantageous, especially if the Heretic fails or disappoints.



### Asteroid Stronghold

**Availability:** Rare

**Craftmanship:** Good (but can be increased to Best at GM's discretion)

The Heretic has claimed a stronghold on an asteroid, most likely within the Ragged Helix. The stronghold is either sunk into the asteroid's crust as an underground complex, or is a forbidding building sitting on the surface. The basic structure consists of one level consisting of two linked chambers. For every additional Degree of Success made on the Acquisition Test, the stronghold gains another level.

### Coterie of Sycophants

**Availability:** Scarce

**Craftmanship:** Common

The Heretic has gained a coterie of simpering minions to flank and herald his arrival at an important meeting, feast, or conclave. The creatures, though, are useless in combat or for any practical duties. The coterie has 3d5 members, and for every additional Degree of Success made on the Acquisition Test the group grows by 1d5.

### Arch-Weapon of a Corrupted Magos

**Availability:** Unique

**Craftmanship:** Good

The Heretic has captured or acquired a deadly experimental weapon of an insane Tech-Priest formerly of Forge Polix. The player and GM should jointly decide on the weapon's function, power systems, size, and other specifics including its reputation across the Vortex. Initially, the doomsday weapon is believed devastating enough to affect an entire planetary continent, but for every additional Degree of Success made on the Acquisition Test, the scale is increased to affect multiple continents, hemispheres, the entire planet, then its system. Threatening to use such a device could easily be more effective than actually attempting to fire it, for no one knows if it can work or not.

### Fief in the Ragged Helix

**Availability:** Very Rare

**Craftmanship:** Common

The Fief comprises the asteroid and two atmospheric bridges. For every additional Degree of Success made on the Acquisition Test, the Fief grows by another asteroid and another two atmospheric bridges. An atmospheric bridge connects each island-asteroid in the Fief. The Heretic must already own an Asteroid Stronghold to attempt acquisition of this item.

### Personal Sigil

**Availability:** Average

**Craftmanship:** Common

The Heretic has commissioned a unique sigil or mark to be put on banners, etched onto his ship, branded onto his minions, and otherwise displayed for all to witness and tremble. He can now indicate to all his glorious victories on the smoking ruins and broken lords he leaves in his wake across the Vortex.

### Quelled Population

**Availability:** Varies

**Craftmanship:** Good

The Heretic acquires a populace awaiting his arrival planetside, all on bended knee in awe of his presence and terrified by his reputation. To quell a small population about the size of a town, the availability modifier is Average. A large town is Scarce, a small city Rare, a large city Very Rare, a whole region Extremely Rare, a continent Near-Unique, and an entire planet Unique.

### Ravaged Astropath

**Availability:** Rare

**Craftmanship:** Common

The Heretic has captured or come across an Imperial Astropath, clearly on the verge of death. Through means uniquely his own, the Heretic is able to convince the wretch to send a single message across the void to elsewhere in the galaxy, although there is no guarantee the message reaches its intended destination. For every additional Degree of Success made on the Acquisition Test, the Heretic can send a further message before the Astropath finally expires from the means of persuasion.

### Services of a Chaos Titan

**Availability:** Extremely Rare

**Craftmanship:** Best

The Heretic has contracted the services of a Chaos Warhound Titan for a full cycle. For every additional Degree of Success made on the Acquisition Test, another Warhound joins (two Degrees of Success can be exchanged for a single Chaos Reaver Titan).

### Skull of an Imperial Saint

**Availability:** Rare

**Craftmanship:** Best

The Heretic has acquired the skull of an Imperial relic, which he can desecrate as he sees fit. Those still loyal to the Imperium tremble in fear when they see the Heretic blithely wearing it as a talisman or hovering beside him as a corrupted servo-skull.







## REALMS BEYOND SENSATION

*"It failed to amuse me."*

—Kallow the Tame, after ordering the destruction of Brendine II

Though all of the Ruinous Powers claim the Screaming Vortex as their own personal fiefdom, it is Slaanesh who perhaps can best justify this boast. There are certainly more tales that connect the creation of this twisted realm to that of the Pleasure Lord, and thus probably more who believe them to be true than any of the other origin myths. In this Warp-infested location, belief defines reality, so it is entirely possible that now the origin is tied to the downfall of the decadent and prideful Eldar, no matter what once happened. One day, the rise of other beliefs might change its origin to another tale, which would be as true then as the current one is now. Such is the insane nature of the Screaming Vortex.

To journey across the Vortex is to see this madness reflected in the excesses and hedonistic pursuits that drive mortals and Daemons alike. Here entire planets are devoted to the pleasures offered through unshackled desires in Slaanesh's name, either shouted in glorious, ecstatic exclamations or whispered in honeyed, seductive tones. Ships drift across shoals of nebulae like beautiful flowers floating on oiled waters, filled with indolent voyagers entirely consumed with fully assimilating the perfumed breezes wafting in arterial paths across the redolent chambers. Asteroids are hollowed and unhallowed as devotees

too depraved for their home systems fully indulge desperate, unquenchable appetites. In the bulging tips of towering crystal spires, nobles luxuriate in fabrics laced with nerve-induction weave, shivering with bottomless lasciviousness with each caress of silk on flesh. Fresh worlds also emerge from the Warp-loam churning at the centre of the Vortex to hurl far through the anteciduals, each a garish comet streaking bewitching ribbons across the void. Though newly born, tempting flora and savoury fauna eternally inhabit these lands, ready to beguile and ensnare at the whims of the Prince of Chaos.

Even on those places devoted to other gods, Slaanesh can insinuate himself. All beings desire something, and where there is desire, there is Slaanesh. Desire for power, for knowledge, for conquest, for life eternal—all these and more drive Heretics, but once the drive becomes the goal itself, then their lives belong to Slaanesh. Once a Heretic fully embraces his desire, it becomes enflamed until there is nothing but overwhelming cravings, and thus does Slaanesh seduce another to his insatiable cause.

Desire itself can also provide methods to move across the realm. In a place where emotional intensities can warp space itself, horrific appetites can distort reality like wax before a flame. Certain locations have become so permeated with debaucheries and excesses that they seep through the void into far-off reaches, linking space with barbed tethers made of longing and lust. Some who have devoted their sanity to mapping out the Vortex claim to have divined the very weft and warp that defines its unnatural texture, and assert these pink and purple threads twist and turn as desires drive them. Few hold this as useful truth, but it is only a matter of enough desiring this to be the truth to make it so.



## CONTRITION

*"Never have I beheld such... wonders! I will do valuable work here."*

—Scythius the Vile, formerly Inquisitor Dircotis, Ordo [Redacted]

Deep in the Lower Vortex, beyond the violence and bloodshed of Crucible, lies the labyrinthine city world of Contrition. Home to the unceasing urges of its daemonic inhabitants, few mortals ever set foot upon this world, and of the few that do, none do so willingly. Contrition is in many ways a world trapped in a war, but unlike most wars, this conflict is not fought with swords or guns. Instead, the battles that rage through the streets and ring in the plazas and courts are fought with honeyed promises, cunning deceptions, and callous seductions. It is a war perfectly suited to Slaanesh and his Daemons.

### THE GREAT CITY

Contrition is a world unlike any other in the Vortex, as its surface is covered with one gigantic city not unlike an Imperial hive but on a planetary scale. But where hive-cities are functional and industrious, Contrition serves no purpose that mortal minds can fathom.

The architecture of the city follows no recognisable pattern, with streets and buildings varying wildly from one to the next. Mighty stone fortresses, replete with towers and battlements, stand next to crumbling ruins that, in turn, surround rotting, miasmal gardens. Great towers of living crystal float majestically above beauteous palaces of pure, white marble, each festooned with delicate razor-sharp blades. Even the streets themselves exist solely to baffle and mislead, as wide boulevards give way to narrow cobbled lanes or abruptly end in solid walls. Grand plazas stand in the midst of forbidding, crenellated towers with no apparent entrances or exits, and endless stairs reach up toward crowded balconies only to end suddenly at doors that were not there before.

No reason lies behind this mind-wrenching metropolis save the ramblings of the insane or the hushed whispers of myth. However, one constant the inhabitants of the Vortex are sure of is the unending conflict that consumes the world. The Ruinous Powers wage a ceaseless war for control of the world, each seeking to tear down the city it has conquered and rebuild it in a form more pleasing to the victor. Huge swathes are trapped in tendrils of flux, with no one power truly holding ascendancy. Here, little more than ever-shifting rubble and ruin exists as each god's forces attempts to assert control and drive the others out.

Although all four Powers have a presence on Contrition, it is Slaanesh that currently holds the most influence. His soaring, serpentine palaces and halls dominate much of the city, and swiftly moving Chariots and Hellflayers maintain his borders. Within this grand domain, a visitor finds epic and terrifying vistas of sinuous, beguiling charm. Scattered across Contrition are the infamous Flensing Chambers, crimson-soaked buildings that are part theatre, part butchers shop. Slaanesh's favoured continually drag mortal captives to these chambers to entertain and feed his Daemonic host. Within the dripping walls, a victim finds all manner of terrible pleasures at the claws of his captors, as his skin is peeled inch by excruciatingly wonderful inch from his body.

In one particular endeavour that the Dark Prince's host currently favour, groups of Daemonettes carry the freshest captives to the roof of a Flensing Chamber. The Daemons then impale their chosen subjects on barbed hooks attached to great silver chains, and cast the wailing, bleeding forms off the roof to plummet toward the ground below. The unfortunate victims then sway back and forth as twitching pendulums, the blades worked into the walls of the Chamber slicing and piercing their flesh with each swing. Once the subjects have ceased swinging, the Daemonette whose work is considered the most artistic can expect to receive great social renown, particularly if the victim still lives at the end.

The Sensoriums are another construct the hosts of Slaanesh favour. These strange buildings resemble great concert halls, with elaborately raised stages and orchestra pits. Before any great ritual or revel takes place within the areas they control, the daemonic inhabitants come here to praise Slaanesh and beg his favour. Scores of slaves and captives are led out onto the stage and forced to perform elaborate and often impossible ballets while their senses are bombarded by all manner of outlandish stimuli. Rapidly flashing lights of indescribable colour, curious piping music and bombastic, discordant explosions of sound, even barrages of exquisitely flavoured liquids, all pummel the dancers. Daemons scatter broken crystals and caltrops of teeth under foot, and fragrant powders and incenses are burned. All the while the Daemonettes cavort with their dance partners, leading the mortals in ever greater acts of debauchery, or striking them down with graceful swipes of their crab-like claws. Recently it has become fashionable amongst the attendants to subject their "guests" to insidious narcotics that induce synaesthesia, confusing the user's senses so that one can hear a colour or smell a sound. When the pavane finally reaches its conclusion, those mortal participants that still live are turned out onto the streets, their bodies broken and their minds forever shattered.

Amongst the twisting and maze-like streets of the city one structure stands above all others: the Great Feasting Hall. The white marble of the massive building has carmine veins of an unknown mineral that seem to writhe and pulse with an unholy life. Within the Hall is a single cavernous chamber, its cyclopean dimensions often too much for a mortal's mind to comprehend. Multitudes of slaves often stand awestruck or scream wildly on exposure to the impossible proportions, clawing at their eyes for blessed blindness. Crowded within this massive room are hundreds of tables upon which lie every conceivable foodstuff. Great piles of meat lie steaming on huge serving platters, and whole carcasses of unrecognisable beasts slowly turn on spit roasts. Scores of slaves, their mouths sewn shut by elegant stitches of burning silver thread, carry gigantic trays of fruits and vegetables across the length of the Hall. Enormous mounds of sweetmeats and delicate pastries sit on ostentatious trolleys ready for insatiably ravenous Daemons to pluck and consume. Everywhere wine flows, blood is spilled, and the air sings with the sounds of revelry. Throughout the hall, the Daemons of Slaanesh stalk, feasting and gossiping. The Daemonettes boast and preen, ever eager to inflate their reputations. Here and there Fiends torment the slaves, mesmerising with their soporific musk before swiftly impaling the mortals on vicious stingers or dragging them off to dark corners for far more terrible purposes. Gargantuan





columns support the Gallery of Creations, which towers high over the excesses below. Here, the Daemons of Slaanesh display their latest and greatest works. Some are masterpieces of the literal sort, wrought in paints and inks or less definable fluids. Others are more visceral, subjects taken from the Flensing Chambers or twitching, pulpy sacks of flesh that once were men. Some simply cannot be defined, existing outside of any sense of mortal perception or morality.

As Slaanesh has risen into ascendancy on Contrition, much has passed into an uneasy peace. The Daemon Princes and Keepers of Secrets that rule in the Lord of Sensation's name have established an elaborate and complex social system to rule. The crux of this government is prestige; in order to gain this power a Daemon must be seen to be more extreme or artistic than its peers, all in ways incomprehensible and utterly beyond a mortal mind. It is not simply enough to have slaves, for any Daemon can enslave a mortal. The Daemons of Contrition must entrap souls with elaborate promises of untold pleasures or addiction to sensations that cannot be found elsewhere in the galaxy. A mortal who willingly swears an oath to a Daemon is worth far more prestige than one that is merely forced into servitude, but the myriad levels and manners of each oath flavours the degree of prestige. Similarly, these Daemons refrain from simple killing, when the thrill of a carefully worded snub or the rush of a vicious scene of social disaster shows so much more refinement. Many Daemonettes have become consummate masters of verbal barbs and scathing retorts, sharp enough to draw blood and tear flesh with each utterance, and delight in intricate waltzes of insult and counter-insult.

This behaviour has led to dozens of cliques forming, as like minded creatures band together for mutual support and admiration. These bands are transitory at best; often members will fall out, turning on each other because of some slight, whether real or imagined. Nothing causes allies to desert quicker, though, than failing to impress at an important ritual or task. This web of social backstabbing and betrayal has begun to spread across the world, and the minions of Slaanesh have caught many Daemons of the three other Powers in salacious games, entrapping them with unspeakable thrills and promises of further entertainment. The Daemons of Slaanesh see this as all part of the Endless Dance and little thought, if any, is given to actual plans. All that matters to these creatures of excess is the next experience, be it the callous joy of a rival brought low or the stinging pain of loss.

### THE MISTRESS OF SPITE

Squatting at the epicentre of the madness like a monstrous toad is a single Daemon Prince of Slaanesh—the Mistress of Spite, a singular Daemon even on a world of Daemons. Her body is swollen with great rolls of fat, far greater than any humanoid form should contain. Huge clumps of blubber hang loosely from her limbs and even her thick, bloated legs cannot support her impossible weight. She languidly reclines on a great chariot pulled by six packs of six Steeds of Slaanesh. Her face is a curious mix of androgynous features and still inspires lustful thoughts in all who behold her, much to their disgust. Three sets of curved horns sprout from her head and a third arm grows from her shoulders, ending in a

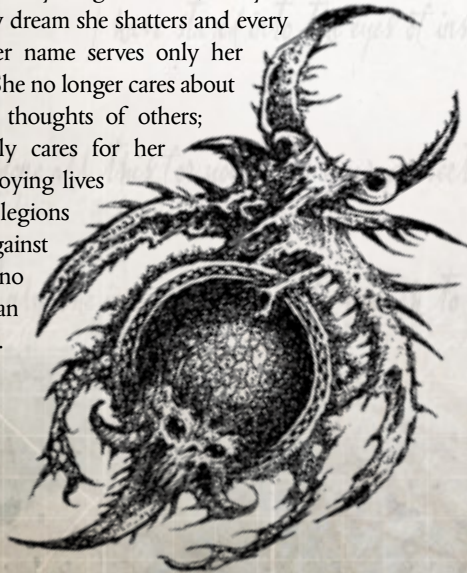


vast, pincer-like claw. Across each of her forearms is a long slit, slick with moisture and hiding a long, extendable spur of polished bone. Particularly beloved foes are impaled on these spurs, gazing longingly into the Mistress' eyes as they die shuddering and moaning in ecstatic pain.

The inhabitants of the Great City whisper that the Mistress was once the mortal consort of N'Kari, first and greatest of Slaanesh's Keepers within the Vortex, and that she grew into her new form as she laboured to Daemonhood, performing acts of gastronomical heights that emptied entire worlds. No sooner had the daemonic birth scream of her Ascension faded into Warp-ripples than N'Kari tired of her and discarded her for another plaything. Heartbroken, her pain crystallised to fill the void within her and she swore to share this pain with every other living creature, first in the Vortex and then the rest of the galaxy. Now she dwells on Contrition, her whole existence bent toward inflicting her loss on others. Spreading suffering has become her own desire and these grow with each expiring scream she hears, driving her to replicate that one perfect moment of agony when N'Kari cast her aside.

She is particularly drawn to the emotional pain of heartbreak and betrayal, and has become a master of the social warfare that rules Contrition. Every Daemon on the world both hates and adores her, willing to do anything to please her so that they do not become the next victim of her attention. She, in turn, is all too willing to use this devotion to further her own ends, propelling these sycophants into acts of greater and greater depravity and feeding off the sensations they supply. Her desires now consume her, guiding her to snuff out millions of lives, both Daemon and mortal, in her pursuits. She stages elaborate carnivals, feasts, and rituals involving countless participants. As the sensations of these events build to colossal levels, she drinks them in, consuming all. Gorging herself on the pain and pleasure, the joy and despair, the consumed emotions transfigure into new excesses of flesh rolling on her recumbent form.

At first the Mistress of Spite did all this so that N'Kari would notice her again and take her, once more, as his consort. When she realised that would never happen she began to plot his downfall hoping that if she could amass enough power she could cast him down and replace him, but even that has become a secondary concern now. At present, the Mistress is so enraptured with her power that everything she does, every life she snuffs out, every dream she shatters and every tear shed in her name serves only her private desires. She no longer cares about revenge or the thoughts of others; instead she only cares for her fulfilment, destroying lives and turning legions of Daemons against one another for no reason other than her gratification.



## FIENDS OF SLAANESH

Nightmarish creatures dredged from the worst kind of drug-addled dream, Fiends of Slaanesh serve as the Dark Prince's hunting hounds. They seek out his enemies and run down those that escape him, and are eminently suited to their task.

A hideous and bizarre amalgamation of reptile, insect, and man, a Fiend's body is long and slender, segmented and yet disturbingly serpentine. The lithe and sinuous body is sheathed in fine, scintillating scales that glisten and shift as it moves. Four slim legs, each ending in a distressingly human-looking foot, support the Fiend, allowing it to move incredibly quickly, scuttling and prancing with uncanny grace. The head is long and narrow, with two large, saucer-like multi-faceted eyes. The creature's long, slim tongue emerges constantly from its small mouth to taste the air. Coated in deadly anaesthetic poison, a single caress from the tongue can paralyse, leaving the victim helpless against the Fiend's predations.

A Fiend possesses lethal pincer-like claws at the end of both of its shapely arms. Those fighting one of these Daemons should be more wary of the dripping stinger at the tip of the beast's flickering tail though, as the poison it injects can reduce a foe to bubbling flesh in seconds.

When Fiends go on the hunt, they call to one another in a haunting, discordant song. This call is partly psychic, causing terrible distraction for mortals unlucky enough to hear it. Terrible headaches, blurred vision, and, in more extreme cases, bleeding ears and burst eyeballs can follow. For those unable to resist this deadly siren call, a slow, lingering death at the Fiend's claws is soon to follow.

Fiend of Slaanesh (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
48	--	52	44	57	12	56	34	06	--

**Movement:** 16/32/48/96

**Wounds:** 22

**Armour:** None

**Total TB:** 7

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag) +10, Psyniscience (Per).

**Talents:** Hard Target, Heightened Senses (All), Swift Attack.

**Traits:** Daemonic (3), Dark Sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear 2, From Beyond, Quadruped, Size (5), Unnatural Agility (2), Warp Instability.

**Weapons:** Pincer claw (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 3; Razor Sharp), tail stinger (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 0; Toxic [4]), tongue lash (Melee; 1d5+5 I; Pen 0; Flexible, Snare [3], Toxic [2]).

**Disruptive Song:** The constant, atonal dirge the Fiend emits causes pain and confusion in anyone fighting it. Any characters engaged in close combat with a Fiend must pass a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** (-20 if he is a Psyker) every turn or suffer a penalty of -10 to all attacks directed at the Fiend.

**Soporific Musk:** The hypnotic scents a Fiend emits can entrance and captivate its foes. Dodge and Parry Tests made against a Fiend's attacks suffer a -10 penalty.

**Daemonic Presence:** All enemies within 10 metres of a Fiend suffer a -10 penalty to Willpower tests.



## STEEDS OF SLAANESH

Far beyond the realms of realspace, deep within the ever-shifting tides and eddies of the Warp, lie the Realms of Chaos, personal domains of the Ruinous Powers. Amongst the many territories that make up Slaanesh's personal fief are vast golden fields, great meadows of alien beauty that rise into smooth hills or plunge into perfect valleys. Amongst these verdant fields live the Steeds of Slaanesh.

These steeds, like many Daemons of the Prince of Pleasure, are unnerving in their beauty. Perversely lissom and sinuous, their bodies are slim and long, resembling a great serpent with two athletic legs and a long, balancing tail. A Steed of Slaanesh is capable of great speed and agility, able to leap extraordinary distances and change direction in an instant. Their heads are narrow and tubular, with a round almost jaw-less mouth. Similar to Fiends, Steeds possess long, flickering tongues capable of detecting scents and complex tastes. The favoured of Slaanesh claim a steed can even taste a mortal's desires and are capable of tracking their longings for thousands of miles. These tongues can stretch extraordinary lengths and, when angered, a Steed can ensnare a foe in his coils, leaving him helpless to avoid the Steed's raking, clawed feet. Although their expressive eyes glimmer with an untold cleverness, Steeds are unintelligent beasts, impelled only by the base urges of the Lord of All Pleasures.

Often a Daemonette, or rarer a mortal, may attempt to secure one as her mount. After creeping into the sacred grasslands a Daemonette seeks to distract a Steed with a song or other performance, allowing her to draw close enough to throw a delicate chain of rune-encrusted precious metals around its neck. Once ensnared, a Daemonette must work quickly to mount and assuage the steed for, once riled, the anger of these beasts is a danger as great as their disturbing allure. After successfully calming her chosen steed, the jubilant Daemonette leaves the Golden Fields, forever bound to her Steed. The two are now one, together referred to as a Seeker of Slaanesh. Over time, the Daemonette will decorate her Steed with votive offerings of worship and affection, personal trophies of skilled hunts, and pleasures long remembered.

Steed of Slaanesh (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	--	35	32	67	04	22	33	II	--

**Movement:** 26/52/78/156

**Armour:** None

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Athletics (S) +20, Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag) +10, Psyniscience (Per).

**Talents:** Assassin Strike, Hard Target, Heightened Senses (smell, taste), Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Preternatural Speed, Step Aside.

**Traits:** Bestial, Bred for War, Daemonic (3), Deadly Natural Weapons (claws), Fear 2, From Beyond, Indifferent, Size (5), Terrain Master, Unnatural Agility (6), Warp Instability.

**Weapons:** Claws (Melee; 1d10+3; Pen 2; Razor Sharp), Tongue (Melee; 1d5+3 I; Pen 0; Flexible Snare [3]).

**Wounds:** 16

**Total TB:** 6

**Swift as the Wind:** Possessing the speed of desire and the urgency of need, a Steed of Slaanesh is capable of incredible swiftness. A Steed of Slaanesh's Movement rate is double that of normal, before adding any Talents.

**Daemonic Presence:** All enemies within 10 metres of a Steed of Slaanesh suffer a -10 penalty to Willpower tests.

**Steeds as Daemonic Mounts:** Seekers of Slaanesh consist of a Daemonette (see page 353 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) riding a Steed of Slaanesh, and use the Mounted Combat rules (see page 44). Mortals, including Player Characters, can also ride a Steed. First the Steed must be summoned and made ready. This can be done using a suitable dark action, such as the Rite of Wild Fury combined with the Ritual of Breaking from **THE TOME OF FATE**, or Acquired with an Availability of Near Unique. The latter requires the rider to first succeed in a Daemonic Mastery Test (see page 229 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Failure has the Mount attacking the would-be rider. In addition, each time the Mount is wounded, another test must be passed or the Mount will attempt to throw the rider. Daemonettes bond completely with their mounts and never need to take these tests.

## KEEPER OF SECRETS

The mightiest of Slaanesh's daemonic cohort, the Keeper of Secrets is a titanic foe. Wreathed in beguiling sorcery and possessed of a delightfully hideous countenance, it is the desires of Slaanesh given form. Legend has it that each can hear anything said anywhere, and no whispered words or furtive conversations are safe from their ears, though what they do with such secrets is itself a secret.

No two of these beings is truly alike, born as they are from the ever-shifting mood of the Dark Prince, although all share similar characteristics. Each is gigantic in stature, equalling the size of most tanks, and all feature six limbs. Four heavily muscled arms, two of which terminate in monstrous pincer-like claws and two shapely legs ending in animal hoofs. Often the faces of each Keeper vary the most, some resemble great bulls or other animals, complete with sharply curved horns. Others are twisted, leering mixtures of male and female that repulse and arouse in equal measure. They stride into battle bedecked in all manner of curious finery, diaphanous silks and multi-coloured robes of aching beauty, or tight-fitting suits of shiny leather, fixed in place with perfect silver hooks and rings pierced in the Daemon's very flesh.

To a Keeper of Secrets, every emotion is beloved. Every sensation savoured, revelled in, and then exquisitely passed on to their victims. Nothing is sacred or sacrosanct; these Daemons enjoy nothing more than the corruption of purity, the debasement of innocence or the inversion of nobility. Fear and terror are sustenance to them, as are hope and despair, joy and dread. A Keeper of Secrets indulges in all of these, swelling with energy as each new sensation is encountered, fed upon, and then cast aside.

In battle, these Daemons are swirling artists of destruction, their terrible claws able to rip open a tank or reduce a power-armoured Space Marine to a beatific spray of blood and entrails. They dance amongst their foes, favouring whomever they please with a deadly caress and ever feeding on the rage and lust they inspire.



Keeper of Secrets (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
8I	44	65 <sup>14</sup>	66 <sup>16</sup>	72 <sup>14</sup>	70	63	75	8I	50

**Movement:** 17/34/51/102  
**Armour:** None  
**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int) +10, Inquiry (Int) +10, Intimidate (WP) +10, Linguistics (Int) (All known languages) +20, Logic, Parry (Ag) +10, Psyniscience (Per) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +20.  
**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Assassin Strike, Combat Master, Counter Attack, Crippling Strike, Hard Target, Heightened Senses (All), Leap Up, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Precise Blow, Preternatural Speed, Sure Strike, Swift Attack.  
**Traits:** Daemonic (5), Deadly Natural Weapons (claws), Fear (4), From Beyond, Multiple Arms (4), Psyker, Size (7), The Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Agility (7), Unnatural Strength (8), Unnatural Toughness (5), Warp Instability.  
**Weapons:** Ætherblade (Melee, 2d10+16 R, Pen 8, Unwieldy, Warp Weapon), claws (Melee; 2d10+14 R; Pen 6; Crippling [6], Razor Sharp, Tearing).  
**Aura of Acquiescence:** The Keeper of Secrets has a powerful aura of compulsion, drawing enemies into its trap of desire. As a free action once per turn, the Keeper may make an Opposed Willpower Test with one enemy within 25 metres. If the Keeper succeeds, it gains complete control over the character until the end of the character's next turn, when he can attempt a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** to break free of the Keeper's control. If he does so, he may act normally on his following turn. The Keeper can direct any controlled characters as a Half Action; this power can affect multiple characters, but each requires a Half Action to direct.  
**Daemonic Presence:** All enemies within 10 metres of A Keeper of Secrets suffer a -20 penalty to Willpower.  
**Favoured of Slaanesh:** A Keeper of Secrets may use any Slaanesh Psychic Power and passes the Focus test automatically with 1d5 Degrees of Success. He counts as having a Psy Rating of 6.  
**Soporific Musk:** The beguiling scent and spellbinding appearance of the Keeper of Secrets slows it victims' actions, leaving them easy prey for its sweeping claws. Dodge and Parry tests made against attacks from the Keeper suffer a -20 penalty.

**Wounds:** 190  
**Total TB:** 16



## NEW RULES: CHARIOTS

- Chariots have several special rules apart from the normal rules from living mounts (see page 44):
- Chariots travel using the Movement values listed for Structured Time. For Narrative Time when travelling long distances, they have a Cruising Speed.
  - Riders can always engage any foes attacking in melee combat, but mounts can only attack if foes are directly in front of them.
  - Chariots use Armour and Structural Integrity to track their status. Like personal body armour, chariots have Armour Points that reduce Damage from accident or attack. Much like a Heretic's Wounds, any Damage the chariot's Armour does not absorb is subtracted from its Structural Integrity. The chariot is damaged, and this loss is permanent unless repaired (see below). Once a chariot has taken an amount of Damage equal to its Structural Integrity, it is destroyed.
  - Heretics can make a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use or Trade (Armourer) Test** to repair a damaged chariot (restoring 1 Structural Integrity, plus 2 additional Structural Integrity per Degree of Success), although this sort of maintenance often takes hours. Destroyed chariots can be repaired as well, but the Test is **Arduous (-40)** instead and can only be attempted once.
  - If half of the mounts are slain, the Tactical Speed for the Chariot is halved, rounding down. As long as at least one mount lives, the Chariot benefits from its all normal Skills, Talents, and Traits for movement.

## SEEKER CHARIOTS OF SLAANESH

Chariots of Slaanesh exult in the spreading of both pain and pleasure. Crafted from gleaming metals and overly-adorned with intricately disturbing decorations, Seeker Chariots rejoice in Slaanesh's nature of excess.

Each chariot is covered in hooked blades, razor sharp spikes, and slicing edges. These blades are honed to an edge so sharp that legend says they cut not just flesh and bone, but the victim's soul as well. The rear axle and wheels of the Chariot also hold yet more scythe-like blades and anyone caught in their path is quickly reduced to a gory spray. The wounds it inflicts cause unimaginable suffering as flesh is severed and nerves are stimulated beyond pain. Many victims that survive claim to have been paralysed by the sensations of their wounds, and say that despite the raw agony of their injuries, they felt the disturbing tickle of seeping pleasure that goaded them to continue fighting so they could experience that terrible joy again.

On Contrition, the Seeker Chariots patrol the borders of Slaanesh's domains, racing along the wide boulevards and narrow, twisting lanes at terrible speeds. Chariot crews feed on the sensations such swiftness generates in their hyper-aware senses. Addicted to the glory of speed, the thrill that knowing a single mistake can smash the Chariot to pieces is as delicious as the terror of their fleeing victims.



Many Exalted Daemons and Daemon Princes use these chariots for personal transport, where the speed and agility is as prized as the capacity for inflicting beautiful pain. Raised up on the chariot frame, the rider is also far more recognisable and these Daemons bask in the adoration, hate, and jealousy such status inspires in their lesser brethren.

Seeker Chariots use the rules for Mounted Combat (see page 44). A Chariot is crewed by two Daemonettes (see page 353 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) and drawn by two Steeds of Slaanesh (see page 81). The information given below represents the Chariot only; for the crew and Mounts, use the appropriate creature entry.

**Tactical Speed:** 26/52/78/156

**Cruising Speed:** 140kph

**Structural Integrity:** 17

**Armour:** 6

**Availability:** Unique.

**Traits:** Size (6), Terrain Master.

**Scything Blades:** A Seeker Chariot is covered in blades, hooks, and sharp edges, and when it makes a Charge or Hit & Run action its target must pass a **Hard (-20) Agility Test** or suffer 1d10+5 Rending Damage.

**Unsurpassed Grace:** The agility of these war machines and their crew is so great they can preform seemingly impossible manoeuvres. When a Seeker Chariot performs a Hit & Run Action, both the Daemonette crew and the Mounts may make a single attack against the target.

## HELLFLAYER

These devastating and rightly feared machines of war are a common sight in the streets of Contrition and other worlds where Slaanesh seeks to extend his presence. Similar in appearance to the Seeker Chariots, a Hellflayer is a terrifying wall of rotating blades, drawn along by two Steeds of Slaanesh and guided into battle by a crew of three Daemonettes.

Used as a weapon of terror and mass destruction by Slaanesh's minions, the Hellflayer is now a mainstay in the armies of the Dark Prince, but this was not always the case.

In ages past, the Hellflayers were used to grind and chop up the fields of corpses that remained after a battle within Slaanesh's realm. The chaotic and flawed appearance of these fields offended Slaanesh's quest for absolute perfection, and so the Hellflayers were employed to remove these blemishes. Of course, this act was devoid of any real sensation or stimulation and so being assigned to ride a Hellflayer was seen as something of a punishment by the Daemonettes of Slaanesh's court. Soon, those Handmaidens responsible for the Hellflayers began to tire of their duty and sought a more stirring use for their talents.

One Hellflayer crew decided to flout Slaanesh's will and brought their machine to battle. The headstrong Daemonettes charged the Hellflayer into the packed ranks of the enemy, creating unspeakable carnage as the spinning blades tore

through the foe. As the ensorcelled blades pierced flesh and severed limbs, the crew gorged on the pain and suffering they caused for each of the Daemonettes had bound their essence to silvered steel. Waves of ecstasy washed over the Daemons as they felt each slice and every cut. This rapture drove them to ever greater acts of violence, lost in the ocean of screams and carved flesh. Their battle lust became so great they easily broke the enemy and carried the day for their god.

When the battle ended, Slaanesh's wrath was great indeed for none of the Ruinous Powers suffers insubordination. However, he was also greatly pleased by the ruin the Hellflayer had brought and declared that from then on to ride a Hellflayer would be a position of pride and great status, the first to engage the foe and the last to leave the battle. As for the first Hellflayer crew, little is known but legends speak of Slaanesh transforming them into living statues, stripped of the ability to feel but forever forced to watch what had been taken from them.

Hellflayers use the rules for Mounted Combat (see page 44). A Hellflayer is crewed by two Daemonettes (see page 353 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) and an Exalted Alluress (a Daemonette with +10 Weapon Skill, Strength, and Agility) A Hellflayer is pulled by two Steeds of Slaanesh (see page 81). The information given below represents the Hellflayer only, for the crew and Mounts use the appropriate creature entry.

**Tactical Speed:** 26/52/78/156

**Cruising Speed:** 140kph

**Structural Integrity:** 17

**Armour:** 6

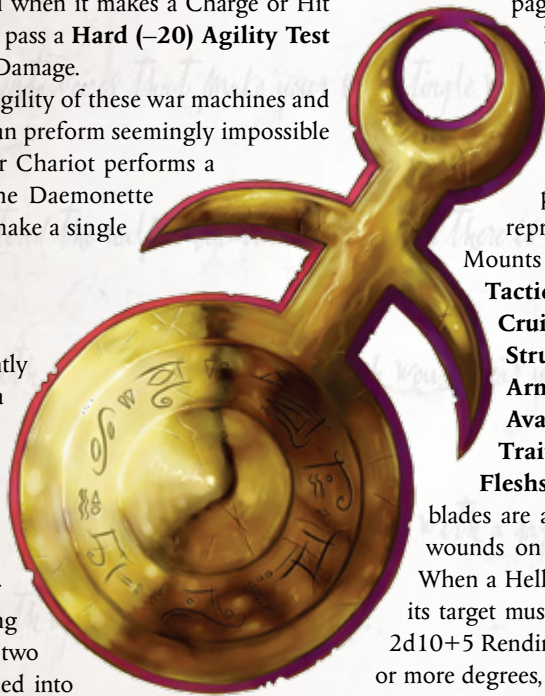
**Availability:** Unique.

**Traits:** Size (6).

**Fleshshredder:** A Hellflayer's giant rotating blades are almost impossible to avoid and cause awful wounds on those unlucky enough to be hit by them. When a Hellflayer makes a Charge or Hit & Run action, its target must pass a **Hard (-20) Agility Test** or suffer 2d10+5 Rending Damage. If the target fails this test by four or more degrees, he becomes trapped against the body of the Hellflayer and will continue to take the above damage until he can successfully escape. In order to escape from being trapped by a Hellflayer, the victim must pass either a **Difficult (-10) Strength** or **Agility Test**.

**Soulscent:** The Daemonette crew are empowered by the carnage a Hellflayer wreaks, becoming faster and more deadly with every cut. If a Hellflayer inflicts at least one wound from its Fleshshredder special rule, the Daemonette crew gain the Lightning Attack talent for the rest of the turn and all of the next. If a Hellflayer inflicts 10 or more wounds in a single turn from its Fleshshredder special rule, the crew gain the Lighting Attack talent and may re-roll any missed attacks for the rest of the turn and all of the next.

**Unsurpassed Grace:** The agility of these war machines and their crew is so great they can preform seemingly impossible manoeuvres. When a Hellflayer performs a Hit & Run Action, both the Daemonette crew and the Mounts may make a single attack against the target.





## GHIBELLINE

*"You ask if it is enough? It is never enough!"*

—Beneus III

Pulled with its twin world Guelph from the Halo Stars at the birth of the Vortex, Ghibelline is a beautiful planet strewn with the waste of unnecessary fighting. Across the Seventh Antecidual from neighbouring Q'Sal and the reputed resting grounds of the Kasserkratch from Guelph, this forge planet boasts the most ornate engines of war in the Gloaming Worlds. Though other planets such as the War Moons of Talax claim that the products of the Libertine Council are inferior, many within the Vortex desiring to gain the edge on the battlefield keep them in high demand.

### SEPARATED AT BIRTH, APART BY CHOICE

Ghibelline once shared a system with its twin planet Guelph and a single family dynasty, the Meinloka Clan, governed both planets. Lord and Lady Meinloka ruled the worlds, though often split apart by the duties of their station. During the birth of the Screaming Vortex, the family was separated, with Lord Meinloka stranded on Guelph and his Lady on Ghibelline. Torn apart by the force of Slaanesh's initial gasp, Guelph was cast further into the Vortex, shedding much of the energy that it took from its sun. Ghibelline, while also captured in the new whirlpool, was more fortunate, moving more slowly and retaining the heat of its portion.

The two planets are now totally separate and distinct where once they shared a joint future, consumed with rivalry. Though there is much to dispute in each planet's version of the events that drove them apart, Ghibelline contends that Lord Meinloka chose a new wife on Guelph over his old one, rendering her hopeful search for him an empty promise. Neither side, however, disputes that the end result of their warring is a mutual distrust and open enmity between their people. The Meinloka Clan, once a single royal family, is now two distinct factions: the Libertine Council on Ghibelline and the Court of the Pit-Lord on Guelph. They share little in common now save resentment and hostility that has led to many battles that neither side could win. Centuries of such conflict has left a permanent state of simmering non-aggression, though few would call it peace.

With open war now rare, Ghibelline has rebuilt its greatness, re-establishing itself as a powerful mercantile and political power in its own right. Separated into five semi-autonomous city-states, the Meinloka family members rule over the billions of inhabitants with a silken touch. Their subjects carry out their lives in a state of perpetual joy and content, though this has little to do with the skill of their rulers.

The masses are implanted with a sensory implant tied directly to their ruling Meinloka member. As the noble feels extreme emotion, it is passed to their subjects at a lesser level. Over millennia, filters for negative emotions were added and improved so that now only the pleasurable emotions reach the populace. The resulting happiness and devotion to the ruling family is unmatched across the Vortex, as Ghibellines glow from pure joy and eagerly strive to ensure those who rule the city-states as well as their Emperor, collectively known as the Libertine Council, are always as happy as possible. The Libertine Council in turn makes sure that their subjects experience only the finest of emotions, surely greater than mere currencies or other physical rewards.

## THE LIBERTINE COUNCIL

The Libertine Council is made up of descendants of the original Meinloka Clan, meaning that the well-being of the planet is tied up in the wants and needs of a single family. In most cases this would not be cause for concern, but the Meinloka bloodline is highly paranoid, and obsessed with the new. Technologies, fashions, foods, experiences—only the fresh and current can sate the desires of the entire bloodline. Every new toy, bauble, experience, or activity they experience brings pleasure, if only for the moment until the new becomes boring and more is needed. Their insatiable need for all that is previously unheard of has driven them to feats of absurd expenditure and danger, even declarations of war.

The current Emperor is Beneus IV, the 216th direct descendent of the Empress. The eldest of the Council members by several decades, he has grown the Grand Game to become the major cultural event of the Gloaming Worlds. The inclusion of other worlds in their planet's celebration is hardly one of pure neighbourly love and admiration, however. The Emperor has crafted the event to act as an effective way to gather what is not already his with the least amount of actual effort. Ideas, technologies, and stimuli of all types fill the streets of all five Kingdoms during the Grand Game, and the Council uses this time to seed its operatives within the servants, concubines, and slaves of their rivals. The Meinloka family, above all other things, covets that which it does not already have. If what is sought is not freely given, then more devious and licentious plans are made to obtain it.

The Council has become rightfully infamous for stealing, co-opting, and seducing secrets rather than spending the time and effort to actually develop new techniques and ideas. Beneus and his kin also direct a vast network of operatives throughout the planets in the Vortex as well. Ghibelline is forever jealous of the wonders of other worlds, and forever eager to possess them to feed its unending hunger for the new and different.

Council Agent (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
34	38	34	34	42	36	42	3I	4I	10

**Move:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 15

**Armour:** Mesh coat (Arms, Body, Legs 4)

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Charm (Fel), Commerce (Int), Common Lore (Screaming Vortex) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +10, Inquiry (Int), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Surface) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scrutiny (Per), Stealth (Ag), Tech-Use (Int).

**Talents:** Disarm, Jaded, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee & Ranged), Unremarkable.

**Traits:** None.

**Gear:** Best Quality clothing, dataslate, micro-bead, 2 clips ammo.

**Weapons:** Power knife (Melee; 1d10+6 E; Pen 5; Power Field), hand cannon (Pistol; 35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip: 5; Rld 2 Full).





## THE ISLES OF GNOSI

The most remote of the original six kingdoms, Gnosi is now a gutted husk of its former glory. Once one of the most advanced experimental forges on the planet, it was also the home to the most secure goals, where the Pit-Lord himself was imprisoned after the initial war with Guelph. All that is left now are broken spires and torn foundations. Much was scorched black during the horrific conflict, but have now grown over with ornate flowers and cloying vines. Below the surface, stories of hidden strongholds, profane research, and unholy rituals echo out from the undersea caverns and surrounding reefs, calling out to the unwary to plumb their depths for untold power. Haunted echoes, phantom energy spikes, hulking mechanical creatures, and reported sightings of ancient Gnosian vessels stoke the Libertine Council's fears that something there desires to return and exact revenge. This does little to dissuade agents from Guelph and foreign warlords from attempting to probe the murky waters surrounding the islands or the caves that go beneath the waves. Though some faded Gnosian relics and weapons exist as reminders of the past, many more are believed to remain among the islands, always drawing the unwary into vaults never to leave.

## THE GRAND GAME

Once every six years, the Eternal Kingdoms host a spectacle known as the Grand Game. Though its origins come out of the planet's civil war and the destruction of Gnosi, the current celebration dwarfs anything done at the time of the original event. At its inception, the Grand Game was a chance for the best warriors to prove their nation's worth and capture the missing vote of the lost Kingdom for the following six years.

It takes place in huge arenas large enough to hold entire populations, with the previous winner hosting the event. To better enjoy the combat, the arenas are ensorcelled to transmit whatever the warriors experience to the viewing throngs. Hundreds of Grand Games passed this way, but the masses began to tire of mortal emotions and Daemon Engines were introduced. As their engine inflicts damage, watchers feel the rush of the kill, smell the burning Daemon flesh, and feel the agonising death-throes, savouring sensations incomprehensible to mortal minds. These extreme emotions provide safe outlets to populations carefully shielded from anything but permitted feelings, with levels of pain and exhilaration to exhaust even the most passionate.

If this is not enough, there is even more. The Game launches a celebration in which the entire planet becomes a giant revel that can last for months. Streets everywhere are lined with food, drink, substances, and experiences that titillate the senses and overwhelm sensibilities. Homes are opened, and nothing is forbidden.

For many, the sensory input is so overwhelming and alien that they are rendered catatonic. At its end, the population of Ghibelline usually spends several weeks in recovery, many going through withdrawal-like symptoms after being inundated with stimuli. Nevertheless, as soon as it is complete the populace cannot wait for the next one, knowing that no other experience can equal the excess of the Grand Game.

## DAEMON ENGINES

Daemon Engines are a bizarre and frightening hybrid of mechanical ingenuity and arcane impossibility. Incorporating the pulsating rage of a Daemon requires strong bindings, powerful enticements or coercions, and terrible sacrifices. Each construct acts as both prison and new body for the Daemon, bound into service but given a corporeal form that it would otherwise struggle to maintain. The Libertine Council specialises in seducing and enticing Daemons to enter willingly into their constructs. Using a combination of hedonistic endeavours and sacrificial offerings, the forges of the Eternal Kingdoms create engines not only deadly on the fields of battle, but beautiful and terrible to behold. Many delight in the combat of the Game, but some escape to roam the dead islands of Gnosi. The forges of Ghibelline are, however, far from the only ones who manufacture such creations, as many warlords lust for their own Daemon entities to have in their own armies.



## DAEMON ENGINE TRAITS

**Daemon Engine (X):** The creature is a hybrid of Daemon and machine, fusing technology and sorcery in a way that is both seamless and horrifying. The visual impact of these entities strikes fear into friend and foe alike and provides it additional protection against standard armaments. The Daemon Engine has the combined effects of From Beyond and The Stuff of Nightmares and is therefore immune to Fear, Pinning, Stunning, Insanity, Poison, and Disease. Psychic Powers that affect the mind cannot control the Engine as it is bound to the sorcerous runes holding the construct together. In addition, Daemon Engines gain a Toughness Bonus equal to the number in parentheses, which, like the Daemonic Trait, can be negated by force weapons, holy/sanctified weapons, or Direct Damage psychic powers.

**Daemonforge:** Once per encounter, the Daemon Engine can re-roll a Damage roll in its entirety. Any of the re-rolled dice that come up a 9 or 10 also inflicts 1d5 Wounds on the Daemon Engine.

## SLAANESHI DAEMON ENGINE TRAITS

**Sensory Overload:** The Daemon Engine is geared with foul devices to overwhelm their enemy's senses; strobe lights, dirge casters, even waves of pheromones all act to disorient and confound enemy combatants. Unless the enemy has the From Beyond or Machine Traits, enemies attempting to attack the engine must first make a **Hard (-20) Perception Test**; failure means it is Stunned for the turn from the stimuli barrage.

**Soporific Musk:** An unearthly pleasant scent surrounds the engine, protecting it from melee combat. Any living target wishing to engage the Daemon Engine in melee combat must make a **Difficult (-10) Toughness Test** or suffer the effects of **Table 5-1: Hallucinogenic Effects** on page 150 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. Any creature immune to mind control is immune to this effect.

**Whispers of Delusion:** Slaanesh seeks conversion to his cause and makes promises of greatness in exchange for slavish devotion. As the Engine moves, audible whispers of such lies can be heard in its wake. Any creature within 30m of the Daemon Engine must make a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** or take 1d10 Corruption Points and be unable to act as they are swept away in delusions of their own grandeur.

TABLE 3-9: DAEMON ENGINE CRITICAL HIT CHART

Damage Points	Result
1-3	<b>Distracting Blow</b> —The Daemon is momentarily annoyed at actually being touched by the weapons of its enemies that it requires a <b>Challenging (+0) Willpower Test</b> to not engage the source of that attack in its next attack. If it was already focused on this target, then it will move with all haste to fully engage the target with any and all weapons at its disposal.
4-6	<b>Ablative Strike</b> —The attack strips layers of armour off the engine as well as some of the protective runes. Reduce the armour by 1d10 points. In addition, any future critical hits receive a bonus of +2 on this chart. This is a cumulative bonus should multiple Ablative Strikes hit the Daemon Engine. Roll a 1d10. On a roll of 9 or 10, any shielding ability (Sensory Overload, for example) is sufficiently ruined and no longer provides protection.
7-8	<b>Weapon Damaged</b> —Randomly select a weapon on the engine. That weapon bears the brunt of the attack and takes the full effects of the blow. While not quite as resilient as Titan weapons, the Daemon will try to preserve its integrity. Roll 1d10, and on a roll of 7 or more, the weapon can be used the next round. On a roll of anything less, the weapon is inoperable until repaired outside of the battle.
9	<b>Penetrating Hit</b> —A powerful attack breaches the construct's structure and allows the Daemon to taste the material world directly. Reduce the armour by 1d10 points and roll an additional 2d10 points of damage. The attack also breached the hull in some capacity; roll a further 1d10. On a roll of 9 or 10, the Daemon Engine suffers a Daemon Unbound! Result.
10+	<b>Daemon Unbound!</b> —The attack is strong enough or well-placed enough that the bindings are completely undone and the construct is unable to contain the Daemon within. For all game purposes, the engine vaporises as the Daemon manifests fully in the material world. The sudden release of Warp energy causes an explosion with a 2d10 x10 metre radius, leaving a crater in its place. Anyone caught within the blast radius suffers 5d10+10 E damage bypassing Armour (unless warded against psychic abilities). Reduce the Damage by 2 points for every full 10 metres the target is away from the exploding engine. Alternatively, at the GM's discretion, the blast damage can be reduced to 2d10+5 E and the Daemon can manifest, freed from its shackles. It may offer the players thanks or engage them in combat, depending on the alignment of the Daemon, the players and NPCs involved, and the adventure.





## HELDRAKE

Quite possibly the most offensive melding of Space Marine and Daemon, the Heldrake is a perfect flying engine of destruction. Hanging like bats on the underside of Legion vessels, these huge predators detach upon reaching orbit, swooping down to rend any potential threats in the air before turning on other targets. Though a raptorian Daemon largely controls it, inside the Heldrake are the last foetal remnants of the former pilot, who can do nothing more than scream in horror at what he has become, voicing the unearthly howls that come from the beast's mouth.

Heldrake (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
48	33	55	62	38	31	47	42	--	--

**Move:** 18/36/54/108 (6/12/18/36)

**Wounds:** 48

**Armour:** Machine (12 All)

**Total TB:** 12

**Skills:** None.

**Talents:** None.

**Traits:** Daemonforge, Daemon Engine (6), Flyer (18), Hoverer (6), Machine (12), Size (8).

**Weapons:** Hades autocannon (Heavy; 300m; 3/6/12; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Devastating [4], Storm) *or* baleflamer (Heavy; 45m; S/-/-; 2d10+3 E; Pen 6; Bathed in Fire†, Devastating [3], Flame, Spray), talons (Melee; 2d10+10 R; Pen 4; Razor Sharp, Tearing), wings (Melee; 3d10+5 R; Pen 6, Devastating [7], Meteoric Descent††).

†**Bathed in Fire:** Dodge Tests taken to avoid attacks from a Baleflamer suffer a -20 penalty.

††**Meteoric Descent:** If the Heldrake has moved as a flyer in the previous round, it can charge an opponent and ram, relying on the edges of its wings to slay its foes. Roll the attack as normal with any Dodge attempts made with a -10 penalty. This can only be done if the Heldrake is not engaged in melee combat in the current or the previous round. When this is done, the Heldrake gains the benefits of the Hard Target Talent but cannot fire any ranged weaponry.

All Daemon Engines have the following restrictions:

- Daemon Engines use a living creature profile as they are sentient.
- All Daemon Engines have the Daemon Engine Trait (see page 86).
- Any bound crew members cannot be targeted as they are technically part of the construct.
- They must be Size (7) or larger.

Should the engine receive any Critical Damage, the extent of the injury is not only in the systems needing repair, but also in the other binding mechanisms which hold the Daemon in place. As the bindings unravel, the Daemon is able to taste the material world on its own again and it becomes more active in trying to escape. Should the Daemon break entirely free and compromise the integrity of the engine itself, any creature in the Daemon's path is likely to face a Daemonic Entity of significant power head-on. If a Daemon Engine takes Critical Damage, consult **Table 3-9: Daemon Engine Critical Hit Chart** on page 86 to see the extent of the damage to the internal systems.

Unless otherwise stated as belonging to a specific Chaos Power, Daemon Engines can be aligned with any of the four Chaos Gods and can then take any of the Traits listed for that God. Traits for Tzeentch and Khorne are found in **THE TOME OF FATE** and **THE TOME OF BLOOD**, respectively.





## DECIMATOR

The Decimator is a hulking monstrosity made of ancient human and xenos technology infused with the taint of the Warp. Unlike Space Marine Dreadnoughts, Decimators are empty of even the vestiges of the living. Housed instead is a Daemon wishing nothing less than the rending of its enemies and the destruction of their works. Though rare within the Vortex, their numbers are growing. Warlords and other champions of the Dark Gods portend that this is a sign that their time is ascendant and strive to enlist these fell machines to their legions.

### Decimator (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
38	38	54 <sup>8</sup>	60 <sup>14</sup>	30	32	42	37	--	--

**Move:** 6/12/18/36

**Wounds:** 48

**Armour:** Machine (22 All)

**Total TB:** 14

**Skills:** Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (WP) +10.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Bulging Biceps, Fearless, Hip Shooting, Marksman, Quick Draw, Target Selection, Two Weapon Wielder (Ballistic & Melee).

**Traits:** Auto-Stabilised, Daemon Engine (8), Fear (2), Machine (22), Size (7), Sturdy, Touched by the Fates (2), Unnatural Strength (3).

**Weapon arms (choose any two):** Siege claw (Melee; 2d10+8 R; Pen 7; Linebreaker†, Power Field, Tearing) with built-in heavy flamer (Heavy; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Clip 10; 2 Full; Flame, Spray), butcher cannon (Heavy; 300m; S/3/-; 3d10+8 I; Pen 4; Clip 30; 1 Full; Devastating [2], Proven [3], Reliable), soul burner petard (Heavy; 80m; S/-/-; 2d10+8 R; Pen 3; Clip 6; 2 Full; Blast [8], Concussive [2]), storm laser (Heavy; 300m; -/-/6; 2d10+10 E; Pen 5; Clip 60; 2 Full; Proven [2]).

†**Linebreaker:** If the Decimator breaches a wall or other fortification, the heavy flammers built into its claws automatically fire. Enemies within 4 metres of the breach take an automatic heavy flamer hit with no ability to Dodge as the area is saturated with burning promethium.

## SOUL GRINDER

Soul Grinders are true personifications of the term Daemon Engine, a literal melding of the machine and the daemonic. Daemons fight across the ash plains outside the Forge of Souls, competing for the chance to become fused into the metal forms, where they can exist longer on the material realms. Looking like a Warp-spawned centaur, they share a common chassis with the mechanical Defiler, but incorporate the fleshy upper torso of a powerful Daemon. The visual presence of the Daemon presents the fearful visage of wrathful gods while harvester cannons and giant claws remove any obstacles in their path.



### Soul Grinder (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
36	36	63 <sup>9</sup>	50 <sup>12</sup>	34	35	43	39	17	--

**Move:** 14/24/42/84

**Wounds:** 52

**Armour:** Machine (20 All)

**Total TB:** 12

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

**Talents:** Ambidexterous, Crushing Blow, Fearless, Independent Targeting, Iron Jaw, Swift Attack, Two Weapon Wielder (Ballistic & Melee).

**Traits:** Daemon Engine (7), Fear (3), Machine (20), Quadruped, Size (8), Unnatural Strength (3).

**Weapons:** Daemon claw/blade (Melee; 2d10+10 R; Pen 4; Razor Sharp), mechanical claw (Melee; 2d10+12 R; Pen 6; Tearing, Unwieldy), harvester cannon (Heavy; 180m; 3/6/12; 1d10+6 I; Pen 2; Devastating [3]), mawcannon gout fire (Heavy; 45m; S/-/-; 2d10 I; Pen 3; Devastating [3], Spray, Toxic), mawcannon spittle fire (Heavy; 210m; S/-/-; 2d10+5 X; Pen 5; Blast [4], Devastating [4], Recharge, Toxic).



## HEMSK AV'LYD

Rumoured to be one of the original warlords of the Screaming Vortex, HemsK Av'Lyd represents the epitome of the quest for greatness. Legends of his prowess in battle and victories over breeds of xenos dot hundreds of worlds, but all of them recount his love of instilling fear in his enemies before destroying them outright. He made a point of being as close to his enemies, even going so far as to allow himself to be captured, just so he could taste the change in his foes as the trap sprung and they knew they were lost. For HemsK, it was the most divine pleasure and he was rumoured to have sung as he waded through his foes, even after his Ascension to Daemon Prince. Unlike many other Daemons, he embraced the opportunity become a Daemon Engine, all the better to share his unique pleasures and tortures with even greater audiences.

HemsK appears more a walking alabaster sculpture than a war engine. He has a rotating, two-faced head with one side showing a closed helmet and the other a screaming face. Each of his four arms hold slim blades licked with deep magenta fire, and each is sinuously articulated and flexible. Only through the screaming face does HemsK speak. Constantly emanating a droning hum made of subsonic waves, he wades in closely to his foes' lines to watch and feel the tangible signs of fear. The sound of rapid heartbeats, the smell of emptying bladders and bowels, the sight of troops fleeing in panic, all of these things play like a symphony through the sensors of HemsK's daemonic form. Any who can withstand his song he favours with his closed helmet, testing their mettle though even fewer survive this other face.

HemsK Av'Lyd (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
54	36	52	48	68	49	53	68	42	39

**Move:** 10/20/30/60

**Wounds:** 54

**Armour:** Machine (30 All)

**Total TB:** 16

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Heresy, The Warp) (Int), Parry (Ag) +20.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Ancient Warrior, Blade Dancer, Blademaster, Blind Fighting, Combat Master, Hard Target, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Killing Strike, Never Die, Preternatural Speed, Rapid Reaction, Sprint, Step Aside, Sturdy, Two Weapon Wielder (Melee), Whirlwind of Death.

**Traits:** Allure of Slaanesh, Daemon Engine (12), Fear (3), Machine (30), Multiple Arms (4), Sensory Overload, Size (8), Unnatural Strength (4).

**Weapons:** Blades of HemsK (Melee; 2d10+9; Pen 6; Balanced, Razor Sharp), HemsK's Voice (Heavy; 50m; S/- /-; 2d10+5 E; Pen 5; Rld -; Clip -; Concussive [2], Devastating [3], Felling [4], Recharge, Spray).

## SUBJUGATOR

When Imperial battle titans walk on a planet, their humanoid forms make them seem like giants of legend striding to do battle in the heavens. It is a stark contrast to see the Subjugator darting across a battlefield akin to a nimble predator seeking its next meal. A monstrous combination of the Steeds and Fiends of the Prince of Pleasure, this two-legged sprinting beast is as deadly as it is graceful. Though its sleeker lines and lighter frame would seemingly make it an easy kill, it is a durable machine, capable of dealing damage to both armour and softer targets alike, and then darting away. Its Tormentor Cannon is capable of turning entire regiments of troops into rows of twitching, groaning bodies absorbed in their own ecstasy, while its hellslider claws are powerful enough to break heavy armour apart like broiled crustaceans. Outside of the Grand Game, they are sometimes sighted in singular battle with the equally graceful scout titans of the dying Eldar craftworlds, each seeming to forgo all other objectives to engage the other to the death. Many theorise that some ancient, personal rivalry drives these combats, perhaps an echo of the Great Fall.

Subjugator (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
44	45	54	48	65	40	51	66	--	--

**Move:** 11/22/33/66

**Wounds:** 108

**Armour:** Machine (26 All)

**Total TB:** 16

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag).

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Blade Dancer, Hard Target, Sprint, Step Aside; Two Weapon Wielder (Melee).

**Traits:** Daemon Engine (12), Machine (26), Size (9), Soporific Musk, Unnatural Strength (6), Whispers of Delusion.

**Weapons:** Hellslider claws (Melee; 3d10+11 R; Pen 4; Razor Sharp, Tearing), tormentor cannon (Heavy; 180m; S/5/10; 2d10+6 E; Pen 2; Clip -; Proven [3], Recharge, Reliable, Throes of Anguish†).

†**Throes of Anguish:** Anyone taking Damage must make a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** or submit willingly to the painful caress of the Dark Prince. Those who fail the Test suffer 1d5 levels of Fatigue and 1d5+2 Corruption points as the combination of ecstasy and shame assail the psyche.





## MALIGNIA

*"It is easy for the unenlightened to overlook the true beauty of Malignia. With allure beside grotesquery, bliss beside sorrow, delight beside disappointment, the planet is a tapestry of sensation and excess. The brutality of its threats is merely spice to those with the eyes to see."*

—Sevestar Nool, Adept of the Fleshly Orb

A sphere of deepest malachite, the planet Malignia rivals the beauty of any world in the galaxy. Glowing in its quiet majesty, it hangs upon the very edge of the Screaming Vortex, which provides a backdrop of disorder behind the ephemeral beauty of the planet. Malignia beckons all manner of heretics to her ripe surface. It gleams as an emerald in the crown of the Gloaming Worlds, seeming to promise a cool, refreshing respite from the grim toil and grimy effort of life within the Vortex. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Beneath the lush canopy-spanning jungles and forests crouches a most intriguingly lethal biosphere. Not a step may be taken but the unwary traveller takes his life into his hands. Not a moment breathing in the heady perfumes of the most glorious flowers but the foolish and incautious trusts his survival to the most fickle of gods. Every inch of this beautiful planet has been shaped to tease and tantalise the senses, and to challenge visitors beyond the endurance of all but the strongest and most jaded.

Throughout the Screaming Vortex theories abound as to how such a lethal collection could have been brought together on such a singular, lovely planet. Although no proof has ever been found to confirm or refute even the wildest of claims, there is hardly a Heretic calling the Vortex home that does not harbour his or her own cherished theory as to the nature of Malignia and the diabolical intelligence that seems to lurk behind the existence and placement of every scrap of genetic material that lurks there.

The most common theory says that Malignia is simply the result of the mad whim of the Ruinous Powers. This grey and listless supposition states that the bloodthirst of Khorne, the convoluted designs of Tzeentch, the sweet decay of Nurgle, and the rapturous aesthetic of Slaanesh collided with the rampant Immaterium of the Screaming Vortex to form this highly improbable jewel.

The more paranoid among the denizens of the Vortex suppose that the planet was once the private preserve of a great Daemon Prince or Champion of Slaanesh, whose infernal focus upon the planet shaped it into the deadly yet beautiful trap that it is today. The idea that a single entity, mortal or immortal, might shape the entire biosphere of a planet to ensnare the unwary or the jaded seems to enjoy a wide appeal, for many a quest to Malignia has been launched to discover the identity of this phantom Daemon.

There are as many theories on the purpose of this shaping as there are Heretics with the inclination to wonder. The most hedonistic Heretics can see no greater goal than the pure ambition of personal pleasure. Others see within the patterns of allure and death the work of a mad genius designing a most demanding and rigorous hunting preserve. And the most suspicious of these disquisitive apostates see Malignia as a single massive trap, designed specifically to lure some puissant rival or desirable victim into the embrace of sensation unto death



itself. No single figure in the history of the Vortex has ever been identified as the great draughtsman of Malignia, although many have tried to claim the credit, or attribute it to one great warlord of antiquity or another. The most probable candidate, however, is the powerful warlord Sikari the Vile, who several centuries ago made the planet his personal demesne.

### THE TALES OF THE VILE ONE

Legends state that Sikari rose to power within the Vortex many hundreds of years ago. From the folklore of his rise it is clear that he felt a strong affinity with the Prince of Pleasure, as his legend is told in part within the six hundred and sixty six stanzas of the celebrated Q'Sal poet Phaegen D'urs' epic poem *Child of Esthesis*.

The poem sings of the great warlord's visit to the benighted water world of Furia, where his armies crushed a series of equatorial shanty fortresses merely to coax one of the great Furia Leviathans to the surface. With thousands of minions singing his glories, he leapt from his warship to ride upon its back across the World Ocean until the beast finally collapsed from exhaustion. Other stanzas talk of Sikari's first foray to the enigmatic Flaming Tomb, tantalised by the concept of an entire planet that presented itself as a single enormous puzzle lock. The poem speaks in nothing but convoluted metaphor of these adventures, however.

The latter stanzas tell of a growing passion for the floating arenas of Kurse. Many tales refer to a time when the victories grew stale, and the acquisition of power had become the worst form of banal distraction, causing Sikari to turn more and



more to the immediate satisfaction and sensations of personal combat. He turned to the bloodworld of Kurse to fill this new hunger, where he is still remembered among the warriors and the spectators alike for his talents in choreographing each bout as an improvised devotional to the Dark Prince. It is thought that during his time on Kurse he became the Vile, and also where he made the acquaintance of the foul Dark Eldar, xenos artists who could truly appreciate his skills and sense of style. Although the *Child of Esthesis* makes no mention of these cruel aliens, whispers abound of unholy alliances sealed in blood and a wide array of bacchanalian rituals that, it is supposed, connect the legends of the great warlord to these enigmatic xenos to this very day.

At the height of his power, the stories say that Sikari directed his followers to the planet Malignia, where his warbands descended upon the planet and purged all other sentients from its surface. At his command, a palace of such grandeur and presumptuous scope that the entire Vortex stood in awe soon arose from the jungles.

It is said that both forges of the Hollows, unbeknownst to each other, contributed to the inner workings of this massive edifice. The Sorcerers of Q'Sal are also rumoured to have supplied knowledge and expertise to the crafting of the palace. The darkest tales and rumours claim that Sikari had saved the bodies of every creature he had ever bested, held in stasis for this very project. These stygian legends say that the bones of these vanquished foes were melted down and then somehow coaxed upwards into the smooth, flowing, beautiful, and yet slightly disturbing lines of the pleasure palace Gratifax.

Many dark whispers speak of xenos influence during the raising of Gratifax, although no proof has ever been found to support such rumours. What is clear is that the palace, graceful and delicate with its tall thin towers and spiralled minarets, is clearly crafted from some ivory-like material that now defies all attempts to scratch or harm it in any way. Despite the fine appearance of the palace's architecture, the walls have withstood countless assaults over time, and very few Heretics have breached them to sample the unnervingly eager hospitality of those who reside within.

As the palace of Gratifax itself was being finished, the surrounding forests were lashed and brutalised into a semblance of domestication. Ferocious, bloodthirsty plants and animals were incorporated into the landscape to provide a beautiful vista from the wide windows of the palace while occupying an integral place in the deliberate and layered defences of the warlord's residence. Such was the fierce efficiency of these native life forms that Sikari took to using them to train his own warriors and security personnel.

Integrated into the defensive structural design of the palace was a vast array of void shields, ancient beyond measure, pulled from the guts of vanquished battleships from half a dozen worlds. Through some strange sorcery, the generators and engines driving these shields were tied indelibly into the life-essence of the palace's living guardians, such that they cannot fail while the palace is defended. These shields rendered the palace, the grounds, and the surrounding countryside nearly impervious to assault from above while not obstructing the views from the palace into

## THE PATHS OF SENSATION

To walk through the forests of Malignia without protection is to court a harsh cacophony of scents that batters the mind. Any Heretic on the surface of Malignia lacking basic respiratory protection is subject to any of a number of local olfactory assaults that duplicate the effects of a wide range of narcotics and other drugs.

Unprotected Characters exposed to the enticing aromas of Malignia must make an immediate **Challenging (+0) Perception Test** or roll 1d10 on the table below. For every Degree of Failure (or Success, if the Renegade is in fact courting such sensations), add +1 to the result. These act as if the character took a dose of the drug below, and although this does not result in addiction, any future Test to avoid Addition to these substances will suffer a -10 Penalty.

The effects of the drugs can be found in the **BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook** and the **Armoury** section of this book.

TABLE 3-10: MALIGNIA FLORA EFFECTS

D10 Result:	Effect:
1-2	Obscura
3-4	Satrophine
5-6	Manic
7-8	Glimmerdust
9	Final Kiss
10+	Spook

the bedlam of the Vortex overhead. Guarding the walls and halls of Gratifax itself were legions of automated defence emplacements mounting everything from ancient Imperial siege defences to the most esoteric and arcane of arms. In most instances, mindless creatures man these emplacements, akin in many ways to the lobotomised automatons of Imperial technology, except that these servants are rumoured to have been the fallen enemies of Sikari, twisted and broken in the chambers beneath Gratifax until they begged to be stripped of their humanity and socketed into the mechanisms of their tormentor's defences.

The final line of defence for Sikari the Vile, and his most lasting contribution to the lore of the Screaming Vortex, was the coterie of concubine-witches that rumours say still haunt the empty halls of the vast palace. Wraithlike beings of seemingly unsurpassed, ephemeral beauty, these creatures are supposed to be trapped for all eternity to wander throughout Gratifax. If the tales can be believed, a concubine-witch can only know freedom from the hellish prison of its own body when it receives the caress of a willing suitor. Each appears to possess attributes of both sexes or neither, depending on the viewer, but always alarmingly alluring to all they encounter. The darkest whispers say that, beneath clever illusion, the concubine-witch's true visage is terrible to behold, twisted through hideous psycho-surgery and ritual, face flensed away, massive, thick shunts sunk directly into its brain to tap natural powers, its own sensory organs ground down so as to not distract them from this newly-awakened Warp sense.



The full extent of the gifts these concubines received for their pain and suffering is unknown. However, it is often speculated that they must have some ability to cloud the minds of those they approach, and thus hide their true, hideous appearance until such time as they can make their attack, or attempt to seduce them into offering the caress that can free them from their torment. Considering that Sikari the Vile has been missing for many hundreds of years now, and yet the concubine-witches seem still to man the parapets and guard his gates, it is clear that for any other gifts that may offset their condition, Sikari was able to convey the questionable legacy of immortality upon them.

The most exquisite element of the concubine-witches' plight is that, according to the legends, they willingly allowed themselves to be victimised in this way, such was their immense love for Sikari and the power he wielded. Each witch was allowed to keep full memories of this fact in their altered state, motivated through compulsions beyond denial to protect the warlord and all he held dear even as they railed against the silence of their own minds, immersed in an eternity of regret.

Sikari disappeared after a final expedition to the Flaming Tomb. It is assumed his initial failure there had resulted in an exquisite emotional torture for decades that he could bear no longer. Leaving behind nearly all of his treasures, Sikari the Vile vanished into legend. Now the pleasure palace Gratifax occupies its own unique niche within the ecosystem of lure and trap that personify Malignia. Countless warlords and sorcerers have descended upon the planet in an attempt to claim the treasure for their own. No records indicate anyone has succeeded.

Concubine-Witch (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
32	40	37	36	33	40	37	45	20	08

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Ferosilks and chains (2 All)

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag).

**Talents:** Catfall, Combat Master, Furious Assault, Lightning Reflexes, Mimic, Psy-Rating (3), Two Weapon Wielder.

**Weapons:** Veil of pain (Melee; 3m; 1d10+4 R; Pen 0; Crippling [2], Flexible, Toxic [1]), vicious claws (Melee; 1d10+3 R; Pen 1; Toxic [2]).

**Gear:** Willowy silks and weapon-jewellery.

**Psychic Power:** Delude.

**Wounds:** 12

**Total TB:** 3

### CREATURES OF MALIGNIA

The life forms of Malignia seem to have been designed for their unconventional beauty as well as for their lethality. There is an obscene aesthetic behind the mosaic of creatures, plants, and terrain that speaks of some higher power or intelligence bending the entire planet to its nefarious will, and many powerful beings come to Malignia for the sheer sensory overload that its multi-level biosphere can offer.

The planet presents a veritable kaleidoscope of deaths to the unwary. From creatures that mimic their prey down to the very pheromones they exude, to predators that feed on the raw stuff of sentient emotion, sucking their victims dry of every last drop of feeling before abandoning their withered husks on the forest floor, few other planets provide such a lethal gamut.

One of the most frightening and insidious entities to haunt the forest shadows is the Creeping Death, a form of mould or fungus that turns everything it touches into a perfectly rendered onyx-like statue. The process, however, takes many years, and the victim is completely aware the entire time, experiencing the horrific pain of its own slow death. One nerve at a time, the body dies, leaving behind a lifeless statue to commemorate its own foolishness. Only a single drop or flake is enough to infect almost any living organism, and the cellular infestation occurs so quickly that not even complete removal of the initially infected limb can save them.

Those infected are almost immediately overcome with a wave of crushing hopelessness as they realise their ultimate fate, but the Creeping Death does not let them succumb to this despair. Through a little-understood empathic link, the fungus drives the prey to survive, often forcing them into a gluttonous frenzy and rewarding such behaviour with rapturous feedback. Once the host dies, the Creeping Death itself dies, and so most who fall victim to this blight are generally captured and isolated, or merely killed if those capturing them have no taste for the finer sensations of life.

The Creeping Death makes for a favoured form of assassination within the Screaming Vortex, although almost always frowned upon by others in the vicinity due to the virulent nature of the organism. Rumours speak of some depraved souls, so far gone down the paths of excess that their jaded minds can conceive of no greater experience than to witness the physical pain and helplessness of their own imminent, lingering death.

### Bloated Sabre Lion

Haunting the rivers and swamplands of Malignia are the creatures considered to be one of the planet's dominant predators, the Bloated Sabre Lion. The creature's bulk is vast, yet easily concealed when hidden amidst the reeds and shore flowers of the small rivers that abound across the planet. The massive, swollen body of the creature is entirely hairless, its skin soft and pink as a maiden's cheek, which tends to have a disconcerting effect on many who have been forced to confront the beasts.

Although often slow and methodical, the Bloated Sabre Lion is incredibly fast when striking prey from its hidden wallows, attacking with claws the size of sword blades and a mouth full of razor fangs that have been known to pierce the heaviest ceramite armour. Despite the healthy shading of its flesh, it is extremely difficult to spot the Sabre Lion in its own habitat, and the creature, most often hunting from cover, usually strikes with the advantage of surprise. Many storied warriors, coming to Malignia to prove their worth, have been found wanting against this unprepossessing river dweller.



Bloated Sabre Lion (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
38	--	6 <sup>10</sup>	5 <sup>10</sup>	18	18	4 <sup>1</sup>	15	15	--

**Movement:** 8/16/24/48  
**Armour:** Thick hide (4 All)  
**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Stealth (Ag) +30.  
**Talents:** Crushing Blow, Heightened Senses +20, Lightning Reflexes, Preternatural Speed, Thunder Charge, Two Weapon Wielder.  
**Traits:** Bestial, Brutal Charge, Deady Natural Weapons, Natural Armour, Quadruped, Size (6), Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (5).  
**Weapons:** Claws (Melee; 1d10+10 R; Pen 4; Razor Sharp), jaws (Melee; 1d10+10 R; Pen 6; Razor Sharp, Toxic [4]).

**Shade Mauler**

An apex predator throughout most of Malignia, the Shade Mauler's dusky skin and wispy fur serve to mask its outline in the murky twilight of its chosen hunting grounds. It is thought to be some form of native primate, and its opposable thumbs and prehensile fingers, each ending in a dagger-sized claw, are formidable weapons against all but the most heavily armoured opponent.

The Shade Mauler is more than a mere predator, however. As one of the many creatures on Malignia who feeds, at least in part, on the emotional effluvia of its prey, the creature often stalks its chosen victim through the shadows for miles, making constant low noises indicating its presence, but not enough for its quarry to attack. The unease thus caused from the constant taunting not only serves to diminish the chosen victim's ability to fight when the time comes, but also seems to somehow feed the creature as well.

Shade Mauler (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
50	20	4 <sup>8</sup>	4 <sup>8</sup>	43	25	35	21	15	--

**Movement:** 4/8/12/21  
**Armour:** Thick hide (2 All)  
**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Stealth (Ag) +30.  
**Talents:** Double Team, Swift Attack, Two Weapon Wielder.  
**Traits:** Deadly Natural Weapons, Natural Armour, Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (4).  
**Weapons:** Teeth and claws (Melee; 1d10+6 R; Pen 2; Crippling, Rending).  
**It Senses Your Fear:** For each fifteen minutes that a Shade Mauler shadows him, a character must take a **Challenging (+0) Perception Test**. Each time this is failed, all Tests taken until the next Perception Test suffer a Penalty equal to the Degrees of Failure multiplied by ten (including the next Perception Test). The Shade Mauler heals a number of wounds equal to the same Degree of Failure, up to its normal maximum Wounds characteristic.

**Haemodryad**

Easily one of the strangest creatures on the verdant planet of Malignia is the Haemodryad. Intelligent in a diabolical way, these small, ravenous creatures make their homes in the rotted boles of dead trees in the deepest sections of the great forests. It is a most repulsive creature, taking the form of a large, pulsing brain carried along on spindly spider legs and with a whip-like, segmented tail bearing a vicious poisoned stinger.

The Haemodryad has no sensory organs of its own, depending instead on the senses of all sentient creatures in the vicinity including those of its prey. The creature reaches out with psychic tendrils that connect it with all life forces present, tapping into their nervous systems to use their own senses to perceive its surroundings.

Its chosen weapon on the hunt is its ability to craft incredibly enriched illusions in the mind of its prey. The creature reaches into the mind of its victim and weaves an image that offers the quarry its heart's desire. These images are as diverse as the creatures the Haemodryad preys upon, from shapely beings of attractive forms, to an epic discovery lying discarded upon the forest floor. As the prey stands swaying in a daze, the Haemodryad begins to siphon off its life essence, sucking the vital energies from the creature's mind and aging it in a rapid orgy of anima consumption.

Haemodryad (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
42	15	33	30	21	47	19	61	15	--

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12  
**Armour:** None  
**Skills:** Charm (Fel) +40, Deceive (Fel) +40, Stealth (Ag) +30.  
**Talents:** Hard Target, Strong Minded.  
**Traits:** Crawler, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (1), Toxic (2), Unnatural Senses (20).  
**Weapons:** Poisoned Barbs (Melee; 1d10+3 I; Pen 2; Toxic [4], Tearing).

**A Feast of Essence:** When the Haemodryad attacks its victim, the character must take an Opposed Willpower Test. If the character wins, there is no effect. If the Haemodryad wins, the character is incapable of taking any actions until its next turn, during which it must pass an Opposed Willpower Test with a penalty equal to the Degrees of Failure of the last test. For each full Round the character is stunned in this way, it loses a total of 1d5 points from a Characteristics the player chooses. This loss is temporary, but for each 10 points of Toughness lost, the character will lose one Wound as well.





## Faetopiary

Faetopiary is found only in the verge territory between Sikari's palace and the greater world forest of the planet. This border region where the somewhat domesticated landscape and the natural lethality of the planet merge is particularly deadly, and the Faetopiary is a primary reason for this.

Presenting initially as a bushy plant ranging in size from weedy to immense, Faetopiary appears as beautifully sculpted topiary taking on any of an infinite number of pleasing shapes. However, when a suitable target presents itself, the plant springs to life with wildly violent abandon.

Tethered to the ground with umbilicus-vines, the plant's range is limited but usually it can move far enough to pounce upon an unwary trespasser and savage them with vicious thorn-claws and barbed spine-teeth. The verge of the grounds of Gratifax are littered with the bones of creatures who believed they had successfully penetrated to a safe zone, only to be brutally murdered by the very bushes of the garden.

Faetopiary (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
33	--	36 <sup>6</sup>	51 <sup>8</sup>	38	15	42	20	15	--

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Thick, gnarled bark (5 All)

**Skills:** Dodge (Ag) +10, Stealth (Ag) +30.

**Talents:** Lightning Attack, Rapid Reaction, True Grit, Two Weapon Wielder.

**Traits:** Deadly Natural Weapons, Natural Armour, Multiple Arms (4), Regeneration (4), Size (Varies), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (3), Unnatural Toughness (3).

**Weapons:** Thorns and branches (Melee; 1d10+10 R; Pen 4; Crippling [2], Razor Sharp, Toxic [4]).

**Child of the Earth:** The Faetopiary cannot move further than 2d10 metres away from its initial location. If the umbilicus-vine is cut, the creature fights with the Frenzy Skill until the end of the Encounter, but then dies within 1d5 hours.

## DARK ELДАР

Ever since Sikari made the acquaintance of the Dark Eldar in the pits of Kurse, these strange alien hunters have been known to descend upon Malignia for their own enigmatic purposes. Perhaps they are hunting for their own sport or to test their prowess, or perhaps they are actually trapping and capturing the creatures of the planet for their own fey purposes. In living memory, all Dark Eldar sighted on the planet's surface are raiders from the Nexus of Shadows, perched as it is so close to the Screaming Vortex.

There are many theories as to why the Dark Eldar of the Nexus of Shadows choose to brave the surface of Malignia, from some arcane compact with the disappeared Sikari to far more pedestrian motivations, at least for a malicious and spiteful race.

One trait many Dark Eldar seem to own in abundance is a never-ending drive to test themselves against a worthy adversary. From the warriors who voluntarily enter the pits of Kurse to the shrieking murderers who form the vanguard of

most Dark Eldar war parties, the thirst for recognition in the face of personal combat is palpable in the inscrutable eyes of many of these murderous xenos.



Coupled with the desire for thrilling combat is the desire to tempt the fate that has claimed so many of their kin over the millennia, and bait the Great Enemy in his own lair. Their first step from the Nexus is often seen as an embarkation upon a path of self-destruction with Slaanesh looming ever in the background, ready to claim his toll in ancient souls. The fact that Malignia has been touched for eons by Slaanesh, and was then consecrated in act and will by the great warlord Sikari the Vile centuries ago, makes the planet the perfect training ground for those wishing to skirt the very edge of oblivion, look down into the abyss, and cast their spite into the face of the Prince of Pleasure.

Known for providing deadly creatures for the fighting pits of Kurse, and rumoured to take even more terrible monsters for their own arenas in the Nexus, these xenos have a long history of capturing lethal beasts and bending them to their dark will.

Those warbands who have met the Dark Eldar in open battle know that creatures trained as battle surrogates often accompany them into combat. From twisted mutant great cats to flocks of vicious avians, the Dark Eldar have been known to train almost any form of lethal fauna to their violent whim.

Aside from the great spectacle combats of the arenas, these aliens have been known to take even the smallest violent specimens and twist them into weapons of assassination. As the approved form of upward mobility in their own society,



these xenos have perfected the art of eliminating social peers and superiors with all manner of weapons and poisons. But for many Dark Eldar Archons, the favoured form of executing one's enemies is through the judicious application of strange and interesting animals from the far corners of the galaxy, often chosen for the spectacular results of their varied forms of assault.

Possibly the most common rationale for the attempted domestication of dangerous beasts from different worlds among the Dark Eldar, and the Dark Eldar of the Nexus of Shadows in particular, is as the use of household pets. Chosen as much for their beautiful aspect as for their amusingly violent and deadly tendencies, creatures chosen to adorn the domiciles of the most powerful and important personages of Dark Eldar society often also serve as a last line of defence in the face of treacherous attack. There is nothing more amusing to a jaded Dark Eldar lord than the sight of an enemy, on the verge of victory, suddenly torn apart by the resident house feline.

Aside from the great, violent animals often captured and broken to the Dark Eldar will, rumours speak of those among the Dark Eldar Haemonculi serving the coven of the Sutured Helix, visiting Malignia for their own torturous purposes.

One of the most insidious creatures of Malignia often used by the Haemonculi of the Sutured Helix is the Oculovyrm. A tiny parasite roughly the length of a nail freshly pulled from a victim's smallest finger, the Oculovyrm burrows into the brain of the chosen victim and taps into their optic nerves, unleashing the full spectrum of light and energy directly to their brain, often driving the subject insane through the painfully intense sensation of visual over-stimulation.

A personal favourite of the Dark Eldar is a plant known to them as Fibrous Tribulation. A small moss-like organism, once placed upon the bare flesh of a subject, this plant immediately sends wire-like tendrils into the meat, rooting deep and attaching to any nearby nerve clusters. Once the attachment is complete, the plant transmits any sensations recorded by its purple-tinged mossy surface into the nervous system of its host one hundred fold. The Tribulation spreads over time, eventually covering the entire host with what appears, from any distance, as fine purple fur. Once a subject is completely covered in the Fibrous Tribulation, the slightest breeze can throw them into paroxysms of joy or pain depending on the temperature. The Dark Eldar will often introduce the Tribulation to a subject before torture, or to those victims sent early into gladiatorial arenas to warm up the crowd. Some have even been known to place the plant upon their own flesh, despite the obvious hazards. The only way to remove Fibrous Tribulation is to burn it completely from the host. Most do not survive the procedure.

The various types of Dark Eldar that have been discovered or glimpsed upon the surface of Malignia are most often from the Cult of the Withered Blade, and range from the Beastmasters that come to capture animals, to the Wyches that come to train or test their expertise. The occasional Bloodbride may travel here to savour the base terrors it offers. There are even dark whispers that Anyalra, Succubus of the Cult of the Withered Blade, occasionally ventures to Malignia herself to further her quest for perfection in the face of the many beasts and other hostile threats the planet offers.

Despite their connection with Sikari the Vile, the Dark Eldar never appear near Gratifax, giving the shields, weapon emplacements, and concubine-witches a wide berth. Some take this as tacit proof of a compact between the great warlord and the deadly xenos. Others of a more suspicious persuasion assume the Dark Eldar are merely biding their time, waiting for others to blunder their way through the defences so they may dance in through the blasted doors, attack the invading Heretics in their moment of glory, and simply take whatever treasures they wish from the cooling hands of the dead. One thing is sure, however; no one who has ever asked any of the Dark Eldar the reason for their reluctance has reported any response other than a cruel, flashing blade.

## BEASTMASTER HUNTERS OF THE WITHERED BLADE

Beastmasters are those remote members of the Wych Cult responsible for capturing the fantastical creatures that make their way into the arenas and warbands of the Dark Eldar, and breaking them to the will of their new masters. Although in battle they often are seen riding the dreaded skyboards of the xenos shock troops, when on the hunt within the jungles these solitary beings prefer the stability and surety of their own two feet.

Beastmasters are often drawn to their trade through personalities who prefer to dominate lesser beings and take greater than average joy in inflicting pain and discomfort in others. Because of these tendencies, most Beastmasters equip themselves with weapons more likely to stun or shock than to kill or injure. Bearing weapons such as the cruel agoniser or a whip-thin xenos shock maul, Beastmasters take great joy in bringing pain to their adversaries or their quarry alike.

Beastmaster Hunter (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
46	40	40	38	49	36	42	35	41	--

**Movement:** 7/14/21/42

**Wounds:** 12

**Armour:** Wychsuit (All 4)

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Dark Eldar), (Nexus of Shadows) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +20, Medicae (Int), Survival (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Catfall, Combat Master, Disturbing Voice, Hard Target, Iron Jaw, Jaded, Lightning Reflexes, Pity the Weak, Sprint, Sure Strike, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder, Unarmed Warrior.

**Traits:** Dark Sight, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Sturdy, Unnatural Agility (3).

**Weapons:** Agoniser (Melee; 3m; 1d10+7 R; Pen 6; Flexible, Shocking Tearing), splinter pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/3/5; 1d10+2 R; Pen 3; Clip 40; Reload 2 Full; Toxic [4]).

**Gear:** Dominar's Mask†, 2 doses of Slaughter and 2 doses of Rose, 2 weapon clips.

†**Dominar's Mask:** The wearer of a Dominar's Mask can re-roll failed Intimidate and Survival (Wrangling) Tests.



## Wyches of the Cult of the Withered Blade

The gladiatorial masters of the Wych Cults are experts at nearly every form of personal combat, and the Wyches of the Cult of the Withered Blade are no exception. Following the predilections of their Succubus Anyalra, they strive for utter perfection in everything that they do, often travelling to Malignia to test themselves against the deadly planet. Training to the point of exhaustion every day, in the arena their every move is purposeful and bold. They make no strike without having a riposte at the ready, launch no riposte that does not kiss flesh, and make no wound without knowing exactly what effect it has on their opponent and the combat as a whole.

Wyches of the Cult of the Withered Blade, more than any other Dark Eldar encountered within the Screaming Vortex, take great pride in the artistry of the kill. They wield their weapons with an inventive precision that quite often leaves spectators in awe of their prowess and its results. They pride themselves not on showy, bloody deaths, but rather on the infliction of many minor wounds, sapping the opponent of strength and will, only to bring the bout to an abrupt and violent conclusion with a sudden burst of speed and the finality of a severed artery or vein. The opponent, dead minutes before his brain stops, is left in wonderment and despair as he bleeds out through neat, exact wounds only wide enough and only deep enough to let death in.

### Wych (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
48	42	38	32	51	34	48	30	46	--

**Movement:** 8/16/24/48

**Armour:** Wychsuit (All 4)

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Dark Eldar), (Nexus of Shadows) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +20, Medicae (Int), Parry (WS) +20.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Catfall, Combat Master, Furious Assault, Hard Target, Jaded, Lightning Reflexes, Pity the Weak, Precise Blow, Rapid Reaction, Sprint, Sure Strike, Step Aside, Swift Attack, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder, Unarmed Master.

**Traits:** Dark Sight, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Unnatural Agility (3).

**Wounds:** 14

**Total TB:** 3



**Weapons:** Poisoned Arena Blade (Melee; 1d10+3 R; Pen 3; Crippling [2], Razor Sharp, Toxic [4]), splinter pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/3/5; 1d10+2 R; Pen 3; Clip 40; Reload 2 Full; Toxic [4]).

Some high-ranking Wyches may replace either their blade or pistol or both with the following weapons: shardnet (Melee; 2m; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0; Flexible, Snare [3]) and impaler (Melee; 2m; 1d10+3 R; Pen 3; Proven [4], Tearing), a pair of hydra gauntlets† (Melee; 1d10+3 R; Pen 2; Razor Sharp, Toxic [2]), or a razor flail (Melee; 3m; 1d10+3 R; Pen 4; Flexible, Razor Sharp, Crippling [4]), or an agoniser (Melee; 3m; 1d10+7 R; Pen 6; Flexible, Shocking, Tearing).

**Gear:** 2 doses of Frenzon and 2 doses of Slaughter, 2 weapon clips. †A Wych wielding a pair of hydra gauntlets gains the Lightning Attack Talent.



## EXILES OF THE NEXUS

The vast majority of Dark Eldar found within the Screaming Vortex operate from the Nexus of Shadows, a dark and forbidding artificial world these vicious xenos have dominated for hundreds of years. For more information about this terrible realm and the foul creatures within, see **ROGUE TRADER** adventure supplement **THE SOUL REAVER**.



# MAMMON

*"You have not tasted perversity until you have visited Mammon, and witnessed first hand the glorious, unquestioned faith with which its inhabitants strive to prove their worth... there is no better proof of the Corpse-God's impotence than these poor wretches, ever-striving in his name, who are driven to live, fight, and die for generations, never to know reward or relief. It truly is exquisite."*

—Belia Dustari, Violatrix of Estaba

From orbit, the planet Mammon appears to be a dun-coloured, lifeless rock marred with huge, circular scars of craters, some of which stretch across entire continents. This is not due to natural occurrences, but instead the work of its natives. War dominates life on Mammon, and has for as long as living memory within the Screaming Vortex. Ancient wars heated the planet very nearly beyond human endurance, boiling off the oceans, killing most plant-life, and leaving instead a barren desert that stretches from pole to pole and all the way around the girdle of the world. What water remains is polluted beyond use from forge run-offs to become foetid morasses of effluvia and concentrated poisons.

Two factions have battled their way across the planet for thousands upon thousands of years, knowing only warfare and strife, with no interruption to the violence and the acrimony. They are bitter rivals made even more violent and intractable through the iron will of complete righteous indignation and unshakeable faith. For upon the cursed world of Mammon the cruellest of all celestial caprices is being played out in bloody earnest every day.

Both of the tattered coalitions roaring back and forth across the blasted surface of Mammon truly believes itself to be the true servants of the God-Emperor on Earth, while the other faction is seen to be the perfidious minions of the Ruinous Powers, whose ascendance keeps the world in thrall. Each and every soldier on the planet, from the highest ranking general to the youngest raw recruit, truly believes, to the very marrow of their bones, that they fight on the side of righteousness. In a region where belief defines reality, their absolute belief has become a power of its own and is the source of both fascination and amusement throughout the Vortex.

## THE WAR WITHOUT END

The war is a ceaseless quest to prove themselves the True Disciples of He Who Sits On Terra. Harping demagogues dominate both factions, and extort their people to greater and greater feats of violence and depravity against the enemy. Both firmly believe that only through the utter eradication of the other can they prove they are worthy of salvation. All live for that glorious moment when the last infidel is put to the blood-drenched sword, and the Emperor finally descends unto them and takes them bodily back to Terra. There, they believe they will be rewarded with all manner of foods and other pleasures that have been eternally denied to them upon the ravaged world of their parturition.

Through millennia of warfare, nearly everything has been destroyed upon Mammon. Not even vague records speak of a time when the cities and monuments that now lie broken and scattered upon the sands of the planet were first created. The hordes of the true believers live in the blasted-out shells of former glory, often finding the only shelter from acid rain

and toxic clouds of ancient bio-weapons in the warped and rusted remains of vehicles they no longer have the ability to maintain or use. Villages are seeded in sheltered valleys all over the planet, where the few true-born children are raised in an atmosphere of pure faith, hatred, and fear of the dreaded Other. There is no such thing as a non-combatant upon Mammon, for the Emperor wishes only for them to spill the blood of their enemies onto the sand of this crucible of faith.

For that is the framework upon which hangs every living soul's life struggle. Each person on Mammon is judged upon the depth and conviction of their faith in the distant Emperor only through the pain and suffering they are able to inflict upon the vile apostates. Every moment of every day is spent trying to please the cardinals-militant through their devotion and blind acceptance of what passes for the Imperial Creed on this hellish, benighted world. There is no value assigned to any person, no matter their age or ability, that does not directly catenate to the death or punishment of the heathen foe.

What little treasure is left on the planet after countless ages of strife and warfare is collected in ramshackle cities constructed from the blasted ruins of ancient days. Tottering towers guard shaky walls of rubble and debris as central keeps, the tallest structures in the cities, are thrown together to house the dented, dulled wealth of former empires. These treasures are no longer seen as valuable in their own right, but rather as a means of keeping track of the sanctity of one's faction. Those with the most gold or other treasures, seized from the enemy and kept from them through any means possible, are seen to be in the ascendant in the eyes of the Emperor and thus have struggled that much closer to the gates of heavenly Terra.

Life upon the degenerate world of Mammon is a brutal struggle for survival against not only the hated foe, but against the very planet itself, as the dun orb has suffered such great indignities of warfare that only within the twisted realities of a Warp rift might any life cling to it at all.

Food is scraped from the blasted landscape in the form of foul weeds, dry mosses, and the emaciated bodies of scavenging rodents. In the extreme conditions that dominate much of the planet, the holy warriors are forced to eat their own dead, denying even unto death any form of glory or dignity that might be recognised by the wider galaxy. The soldiers of Mammon do not fight for glory in death, but for the return of the Emperor and the salvation of future generations, and thus even the raw materials of the dead are seen as merely fodder for the eternal struggle. Such is the depth of their faith that they live, breathe, and die not for their own glory, but for the glory of descendants yet unborn, smiled upon by the distant Emperor in future days the current warrior generations cannot hope to feel themselves.

The clothing worn by the righteous warriors of Mammon is fit to cause the most stoic Heretic to chuckle beneath an upraised claw. Ancient synthetic fabrics, tattered and worn from centuries of use, are embellished with crude, hand-made fetishes and decorations that attempt to mimic the regalia of the true Imperial Creed. Having nothing but the debased efforts of previous generations, however, the original source of inspiration for these tokens can barely be ascertained from the maladroit efforts of contemporary artisans.



### III: PRINCES OF PAIN



Reproduction upon Mammon is one of the greatest mysteries to those intrigued by life there. A small number of natural children are born to the true believers of both sides each year, but hardly enough to feed the ravenous needs of their eternal holy wars. No regulated attempt has ever been made to ascertain where future generations are produced, but many theories have been bandied about. Some believe that each faction has discovered ancient cloning facilities beneath the ruins of Mammon's lost glory, and use these debased factoria to create poor copies of themselves to carry out the fight. Others opine that the gods themselves seed the planet with fresh fanatics, dropping them unnoticed into single-minded mobs too absorbed in their own hatred to even notice. A few more fanciful theories speak of the spontaneous creation of human simulacra springing forth from the utter rancour that pervades the planet.

The one constant of life on Mammon is unquestioning faith. These fanatical warriors wage their holy wars with only the most rough-hewn melee weapons such as clubs and spears crafted from rusty rebar or support material pulled from the ruins. Almost all warfare upon Mammon takes the form of large, unruly mobs with makeshift weapons rushing across the blasted landscape at each other screaming their bastardised psalms and litanies in cracked and broken voices, their overpowering faith radiating from their crazed faces in waves. However, occasionally a cardinal-militant dares the shame and ignominy of dealing with the vile Vortex-dwellers to purchase weapons with some of his hoarded cache, such is his frustration with the bloody status quo. Despite the inevitably inferior quality of even these off-world weapons,

they are invariably prized given the low quality of local weaponry. As such, these prizes are only entrusted into the hands of the most lauded champions, and entire wars have been fought to reclaim a single, poor-quality laspistol lost when the champion who bore it into battle fell.

Glory, that most ephemeral of rewards, is often promised to those who fall in the Emperor's name on Mammon, but the never-ending warfare allows for no time to bury the dead with any sort of ceremony no matter how high they have risen. From the lowliest child-soldier or the highest cardinal-militant, all are merely cast aside when they fall. No monuments are raised in their honour, no reminders of their deeds or sacrifices remain. The dead, if they are not eaten to nourish the next wave, are simply churned underfoot by the next assault of the next battle in the next war.

The depths and scope of the faith of Mammon is of never-ending fascination to their celestial neighbours. Mammon is treasured as a living work of art dedicated to the sheer power of human faith as well as the abasement of the Emperor's loyal slaves. There are many theories as to the identity of the artistic genius who could have conceived of such a magnum opus, and many wonder at a mind capable of creating a situation like that upon Mammon and how it could be maintained in the face of an eternity of hatred and bloodshed without let.

There is much speculation as to what power might have brought about the situation on Mammon among the enthusiasts who look to the planet as an ever evolving work of performance art. Some speak of Daemon Princes or even the direct intervention of the Dark Gods themselves, given



the incredibly complex nature of the farce playing out upon the demented denizens of the benighted planet. By far, the majority of the contemplation upon this most glorious work of craftsmanship and ingenuity pertains to the loyalty of the powers behind the eternal dance of violence.

One of the most common theories ascribes the bloody handed god Khorne to the paragon of violence playing out eternally across the planet. Others see Mammon as a vast experiment of the Architect of Fate, allowing Tzeentch to watch how the puppets of the Corpse God might operate under intolerable stress. Some claim that only Grandfather Nurgle would be able to orchestrate such a foetid swamp of spiritual, societal, and material decay. The most common power attributed to this artistic triumph, however, is that most theatrical of entities, the Prince of Sensation himself. The skill to drive an entire planet to the very edge of devotional ecstasy, mindless worship, and beyond, to plumb the very depths of perfect faith, could only be the provenance of Slaanesh.

Whatever the initial source of the planet's grand vision, the contemporary reality of Mammon's fate is a much more pressing topic of speculation among the most high-ranking heretics in the Screaming Vortex. A favourite theory, spoken only in hushed whispers, tells of the dreaded Word Bearers and their never-ending quest to find new excesses in devotion and faith as well as to humiliate the believers of the Emperor. These ancient warriors and their hatred for all proponents of the corpse-god is well known, as is their never-sated desire to push the boundaries of faith to their most bloody and crazed extremes. Many speculate that the Word Bearers use the population of Mammon as a recruiting ground for their slaving cult armies, converting the screaming faithful into bloodthirsty killers wild with abandoned ideals and destroyed faith.

Many heretics cannot envision a more loyal follower than a true zealot for the Imperial cause who has had the caul painfully torn from their eyes. Based upon the truism that there is no fanatic so ardent as the convert, many descend to the planet's surface with the sole purpose of selecting out the most powerful warriors, capturing them, and forcing them to realise the error of their lives by revealing the empirical truth of the planet's position. When confronted with this bleakest of truths, most of the warriors of Mammon experience a mental break, immediately reduced to blubbling, mindless husks with no hope of recall.

A rare few, however, will emerge from the dissonance of this break filled with a furious anger and a righteous ardour to strike out at the Emperor who left their people to languish in animal misery for millennia. These men and women, creatures of nearly pure faith all their lives, have reattached this singular focus upon their new masters and will serve them with all of the mindless loyalty and devotion they had spent their lives squandering upon the corpse-god. It is the existence of these devoted followers that many point to as proof that Mammon is a massive, global laboratory of the Word Bearers, allowing them to manipulate faith and belief with the finesse of a race of maestros.

## CONVERSION OF THE BEATII

VOX RECORDING, SUBJECT LOT: 2606

**Interrogator:** Please be silent ...

**Lot 2606:** Die, slaves to the Dark Powers! The Emperor defends! The Emperor preserves!

**Interrogator:** Excellent. Please be silent ...

**Lot 2606:** You will burn beneath His righteous gaze for eternity! He will –

<<gasps, moans, panting breaths>>

**Interrogator:** What do you see on the screen before you?

<<sobs>>

**Interrogator:** What do you see in the black night, my friends?

**Lot 2606:** That is not our night... What is that ugly stone in the black?

**Interrogator:** That is Mammon. A world forever consigned to the hell of the Warp. Your world.

<<louder sobs, moans, unintelligible speech>>

**Interrogator:** All your lives you have toiled in obscurity. The universe cares nothing for your efforts. The Emperor is dead and knows nothing of you.

**Lot 2606:** No ... NO ... NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO ...

**Interrogator:** Watch. Watch the bloodshed, watch the murder. Is that your army? Are those your people? Or are those the enemy? Can you tell them apart?

<<moaning and panting, sobbing and cries of wordless denial>>

**Interrogator:** There is no difference between you and the men you have spent your life destroying. No difference at all.

**Lot 2606:** Not true ... Blasphemers! ... It cannot be true ... Heretics! ...

**Interrogator:** But that is the cruellest aspect of truth, my friends: it cares nothing for your own petty regard. What is, is.

**Lot 2606:** No ... You lie! Minion of darkness, get thee gone, spawn of darkness! We will not gaahhhhhhhhhhhh ...

**Interrogator:** Your faith is ... impressive. But there is no denial of the truths before you.

**Lot 2606:** No ... you ... this ... cannot ... be ...

**Interrogator:** Look into the screen. See the bloodshed. See the horror. Know that the Emperor is dead and his crumbling realm knows not of you.

**Lot 2606:** <<panting, moaning>> His light ... his light ... his light ... <<tired sobbing>>

**Interrogator:** Now get up.

<<the distinct sound of a mass pain enducer being fired>>

**Interrogator:** Can you hear me?

**Lot 2606:** His light ... light ... never ...

<<a series of sharp reports, screaming, the moaning ends abruptly>>

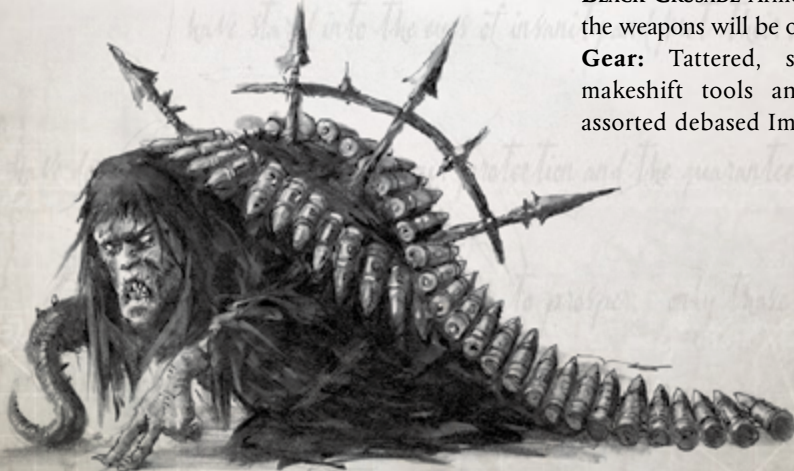
**Interrogator:** Clear these away, bring in Lot 2607.



Heretics travel from all over the Screaming Vortex to experience first-hand the debasement of the "Imperial Faithful." These true believers are seen as the epitome of conviction and credence. Oftentimes warlords seeking to train their bands land on the planet to teach their followers the dangers of facing zealous opponents, others will come to the blasted world seeking to recruit these holy warriors to their cause, often constructing elaborate deceptions to fool the natives into thinking they are working with fellow warriors in the cause of righteousness.

Occasionally, in the cause of amusement, a powerful warlord, sorcerer, or some other heretic will unleash upon the people of Mammon a terrible weapon, often granting some champion of one faction or the other a Daemon Weapon or some other powerful relic of the Dark Gods, with the promise that it can tilt the eternal balance and their faction will emerge victorious. Of course, these cruel promises always fall to nothing, causing a great deal of pain and anguish on both sides, and bringing about the fall of the chosen champion. Usually, the relics and weapons used in this way are then recovered. Sometimes, however, such is the violence and the mayhem that ensues that the relic is lost and the heretic must abandon it to the vagaries of fate. It is through events such as this that it is rumoured that the treasure troves of many of the cardinals-militant contain items of untold power without even knowing of their existence.

The darkest consequence of the ever-evolving pageantry of Mammon, however, is a constant low-grade fear that exists in the hearts and minds of those fascinated with the planet. Occasionally events begin to unfold, either on the planet or elsewhere within the Vortex, and rumours surface that the Emperor has taken a hand upon Mammon, that the constant torture of these lost souls has finally caught his attention. His ire raised, he has moved to descend upon the planet in all of his righteous fury to smite those responsible and take these loyal souls into himself for eternity. These rumours are almost always met with mirth, but there is always an undertone of anxiety as well. If belief defines reality in the Vortex, surely such absolute belief in his return must eventually become truth, and if so, what reckoning would he bring but utter destruction to those who degraded his subjects so?



### Acceptor of Mammon (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
38	25	32	31	35	33	38	32	31	--

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 9

**Armour:** Scavenged Armour (3 All)

**Total TB:** 5

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Interrogation (WP), Street Fighting (WS), Survival (Per) +10.

**Talents:** Cold Hearted, Double Team, Frenzy, Jaded, Swift Attack, Unarmed Warrior.

**Traits:** Unnatural Toughness (2).

**Weapons:** Primitive and/or improvised hand weapons (Melee; 1d5+3; Pen 0; Scavenged). Some can also be armed with an array of Average or Common melee weapons, all of which will have the Scavenged Downgrade.

**Gear:** Tattered, scavenged clothing, makeshift tools and weapons, coveted brass fetishes, assorted debased Imperial icons.

### Demagogue of Mammon (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
42	35	39	38	41	36	40	35	34	--

**Movement:** 4/8/12/21

**Wounds:** 12

**Armour:** Scavenged Plate Mail (4 All).

**Total TB:** 6

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Command (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Interrogation (WP) +10, Intimidate (WP) +10, Street Fighting (WS), Survival (Per) +20.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Berserk Charge, Cold Hearted, Demagogue, Disturbing Voice, Frenzy, Inspire Wrath, Jaded, Peer (True Believers of Mammon), Swift Attack, Unarmed Warrior.

**Traits:** Unnatural Toughness (3), Unnatural Willpower (4).

**Weapons:** Primitive and/or improvised hand weapons (1d5+3, Pen 0, Scavenged). Select Demagogues can be armed with an array of more advanced weapons chosen from any BLACK CRUSADE Armoury, but in almost every instance of this, the weapons will be of Poor Craftsmanship.

**Gear:** Tattered, scavenged clothing and vestments, makeshift tools and weapons, coveted brass fetishes, assorted debased Imperial icons.



# MELANCHOLIA

*“As bleak as the hopes on Melancholia.”*

—Ancient Reaver saying

Believed to have once been a fertile planet capable of sustaining abundant life, Melancholia now stands as a reminder of the unkindness of Fate. Though most natives believe its earliest inhabitants were cast down by their patron deity for being too prideful, most who travel there wonder why any gods would bother with such a wretched place. Such visitors point to the ruined cities, and claim that the ancient Melancholics did this to themselves and are looking for a convenient excuse. Unsurprising, there are few visitors to the planet. Regardless of how or why the civilisation on the planet fell, there is no doubt that those living on Melancholia have little more than a life filled with desolation and misery. Should more know of the terrible appetites its natives possess, just awaiting the proper tinder-strike, there would likely be even fewer.

Dotting the landscape, predominantly around the mountain regions of the planet, lie ruins of amazing stone cities. Vast towering spires that once thrust out of the basalt rock face like reaching arms are now nothing more than mounds of broken masonry and dusty rubble. The rumours of divine wrath as the reason for this devastation only play to the fears of the population, but even the most learned visitors to the surface have commented that there is something odd about the rock itself—that it is almost recalcitrant in nature and unwilling to be stacked or used as a building material. Attempts to use it or the ores it contains to build anything of substance invariably fall apart within hours of completion.

No matter where the location on the planet's surface, the climate is cold, wet, and unpleasant. Rain falls constantly and winds blow it in all directions. While on any other planet this would make a giant swamp, the ground is unnaturally spongy and capable of being dug into by hand. In some places, the land absorbs the moisture and disappears, maintaining a dust-like consistency. Regardless of how much moisture seems to be retained, it always seems to be just enough for the tubers and grubs that comprise the main food sources for the people there. Though these are always found in abundance, there is little joy to be had from eating them.

Communities are large yurt gatherings. Most are made of skins of the small animals patch-worked together and often in need of repair. Little more than basic existence happens here: food gathering and eating, repairing the yurts, and sleep. There is no art, no music, no dance—nothing but the daily drudgery of living another day. Melancholics barely interact with each other unless it is necessary for their basic survival. At the root of all of this dreariness is the belief that their benefactor deity, Shornaal, has deemed them unworthy of more. As a symbol of this, a stone with the curse etched into it sits at the centre of every community. This aspect of Slaanesh, as well as the Melancholics' divergent worship of him, is unlike any other seen in the Vortex.



It is perhaps inaccurate to call the religion of Melancholia “worship,” however, for worship denotes actual involvement and reverence in a spiritual practice. The people have no such thing. Anchored firmly in the shame of the Curse of Stone, Melancholics exude a palpable emotional malaise, making even the strongest off-worlders feel distinctly uncomfortable. Though they do not speak of it in the villages, those who have managed to escape the planet say that it is merely the vengeful aspect of Shornaal as they knew him before they left.

Most do not leave, however, and suffer their lot. When a member of the community defies this and emotes openly, he willingly goes or is brought to the stone containing the curse, touches it, and walks into the wilderness as penance. For the majority of people, this only lasts barely a day as the rain and wind induce a numbing cold that robs people of any desire save to return to the relative dry of the yurts. Those who are clearly in the throes of a much larger emotional outburst could spend days outside the township and might never return. Scavenging parties routinely bring back the belongings of those found, leaving the bodies to decompose in the wastes. Rumours of Daemons stealing those never seen again abound in the townships, but are seldom heard save in whispers and fevered dreams.



## THE CURSE OF STONE

*Never again will stone do your bidding  
For the price of your pride is misery.  
Its beauty and protection I take away from you  
And leave you wind and rain in its place.  
Should your pride be shared again,  
My wrath will be evoked  
And my minions will return,  
Leaving nothing behind.  
But should you climb the walls of your misery  
And find the Path of Stars.  
Invoke my name,  
I will embrace you in the heavens.*

## THE EVOKED

Though not Daemons, there is a second community living outside the townships that is rarely seen. They wear elaborate leathers and outsized clothing to both ward off and to more fully appreciate the sour weather, and are often mistaken for inhuman beasts. They live in the mountain-based ruins of some of the once proud stone cities, free from the biting wind and driving rain. They are the Evoked, and maintain that the hope of redemption lies within the curse itself, and have begun reclaiming their inherent nature. Made up of those exiled and their progeny, they tend their own food in underground gardens and look to transcendence through the intensities of emotional life.

Reclaiming one's emotions is not easy, as the apathetic nature of Melancholia's culture and the intense inner scrutiny ingrained since birth are both extremely powerful. The Evoked, while understanding the harshness of it, immerse all new members in intense sensory stimuli. Those learning the skills of the Flesh Shapers use these untouched souls as their first test subjects, melding and moulding tissue like soft clay. In one common practice, strands of flesh are stripped and replaced on other areas of their bodies, enabling trainees to learn the basics of flesh-stitching. Anaesthesia is unheard of among the enclaves, as pain is too useful. The agony of this initiation resonates deeply across the group, causing members to tear their own flesh apart or to slide into total catatonia for a time.

The violent responses are immediately celebrated and soon the majority of the community is swept up in the brawling. Though occasionally there are fatalities, most only come out with textured scars, vivid memories of blood streaming from open wounds, and memorable cracks of breaking bones. Soon after, the experienced Flesh Shapers and their trainees tend to those still living in unique manners, and there is a large feast filled with intoxicating libations and hallucinogenic derivatives of specially cultivated fungi. Cloying scents of spices and incense fill the air, and the constant fevered thrumming of drums allows all to indulge all of their senses fully. At the centre of the revelry lie those rendered catatonic by the initial symphony of pain. Surrounded by the rest of the enclave, the non-responsive are physically coaxed back to the realm of feeling through sensuous caresses and delicate breaths.

A mysterious leader who seems to command the Evoked leads the performance-ceremony, where the sensation of touch, the sickening sweet and spiced smells in the air, and the pulsating rhythm is maintained until the last of the sleepers awakens. The true revels then begin, as all are ready to participate fully to raise their senses and emotions to impossible heights. Though these tales have only come from those who have escaped the world, they commonly relate that such arousals last many weeks, without pause for rest or repose. There is no sensation forbidden, no sin untouched. At some hidden signal, it ends abruptly as the group, sated for the moment, screams out as one to Shornaal, yearning for him to bring them to the heavens. Their piercing cries echo on the dreary winds outside, all the way back to those huddled in the yurts, perhaps igniting within one a small ember of passion.





**Evoked Member (Troop)**

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
27	28	34	37	34	34	30	30	40	--

**Move:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 14

**Armour:** Xenos hides (Arms, Head, Legs 2)

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Deceive (Fel), Medicae (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int) +10, Stealth (Ag) +10, Survival (Per) +10.

**Talents:** Heightened Senses (All).

**Weapons:** Stub rifle (Basic; 120m, S/- /- ; 1d10+3 I; Pen 1; Clip 5; Full; Accurate), chain dagger (Melee; 1d10+1 R; Pen 2; Tearing).

**Gear:** Backpack, combi-tool, filtration plugs, 2 doses of Rose, 3 clips of rifle ammo, enclosed animal skin suit with built in rebreather.

**Flesh Shaper Protégé (Elite)**

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
34	35	34	38	39	35	39	45	40	--

**Move:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 13

**Armour:** Flak cloak (Arms, Head, Legs 2)

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Charm (Fel), Common Lore (Melancholia) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Forbidden Lore (Heresy) (Int), Linguistics (Int) +10, Medicae (Int), Navigation (Surface) (Int) +10, Parry (Int).

**Weapons:** Stub rifle (Basic; 120m, S/- /- ; 1d10+3 I; Pen 1; Clip 5; Half; Accurate), chain dagger (Melee; 1d10+4 R; Pen 2; Tearing).

**Gear:** Enclosed animal skin suit with built-in rebreather, 2 clips rifle ammo, 2 doses of Rose.

**DEKAUL AND THE PATH OF STARS**

The Path of Stars, named after the verse in the Curse of Stone, is a loose track the Evoked use to determine whether it is time to rejoin Shornaal. In its most rudimentary form, it allows those further along the path to guide the newer members through the roughest parts of early re-sensitisation. Markers for individual experiences, group rituals, and spiritual revelations are all tracked to show progress. As each of these indicators is noted, it is celebrated, often with the entire community. Many of the Flesh Shapers speak of this process highly, and claim it is an essential part of



their new lives. While each group performs this differently, they all feature intensive revelry and debauched celebration. Only when they have ascended the Path far enough can they hope to achieve the prize of rejoining Shornaal in the stars. Those that leave this desolate world very seldom return, for they know how little Melancholia holds for them. Those few that do are revered as local demigods, as their experiences are seen as transcendent and unfathomable to those who are still in the ruins. These Celestial Pilgrims represent the epitome of DeKaul's teachings and all of the Evoked, regardless of which enclave they are in, strive to follow in their footsteps.

At the centre of the Evoked is a single charismatic leader named DeKaul. Seen only as a masked speaker and spiritual guide, he travels between the different groups of Evoked, teaching the ways of Shornaal, gauging progress, and encouraging or admonishing groups to do more in their deity's name. Unlike other members of the Evoked, DeKaul travels without the aid of the waterproofed skins the others wear. Those who have travelled with him as he leaves have noted that he almost seems to shine from within, a fact that adds to his legendary character and binds all the scattered groups to him. His touch is said to heal, wound, or induce delicious joy in the recipient. Any who have been graced with a private audience are his most devout followers and form an inner circle at each enclave. It is he who announces the arrival of Shornaal's chariot and selects who will ascend to meet it.

The times of ascendancy are rife with favours of all kinds being granted, both to DeKaul and his inner circle, for all of those who follow him strive to leave Melancholia and rejoin their god.

Those who have managed to escape the planet have spoken little of it, but have alternately laughed maniacally or wept uncontrollably as they remember their individual experiences. The Flesh Shapers appear to play a strong role in the ascendancy, with the chosen travellers altered physically in ways even the most experienced of Shapers cannot replicate. DeKaul himself takes part in every enclave's ascendancy ritual, often placing the final change on each of those fated to leave: his own personal sigil effectively marking them as his.

Those that leave the planet with DeKaul are soon left on new worlds with new masters, or sold to crew raiders across the Vortex. Their tears flow for many days, but those that prosper remember their lessons and continue their path, waiting for DeKaul to return. Until then, there is a new galaxy awaiting them, filled with new sensations to savour and new experiences to indulge, now that their senses have been opened.



## DEKAUL

DeKaul is the defacto spiritual leader of the Evoked. Though there is no hierarchy imposed on them, they all naturally turn to his innate charm and wisdom. He is, however, much more than an enlightened follower of Shornaal. A skilled biomancer and telekine, he has taken it upon himself to become the greatest warlord to emerge from the Vortex. By liberating the denizens of Melancholia, he believes he can stealthily create an army of the most depraved followers of Slaanesh, all of whom will loyally wait for him until he is ready to begin his march. Using the Path of Stars and his connections in the pirate clans, specifically Pseudanor the Liberator, to seed his minions throughout the Vortex, DeKaul is able to lay the groundwork for his master plan, a move into the Jericho Reach as the new Supreme Warlord. With such a force ready on a hundred worlds, all awaiting his command, he might possibly achieve his desire.

DeKaul (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
46	42	47	38	52	53	51	45	62	48

**Move:** 5/10/15/30

**Armour:** Flak (Body, Arms, Legs 4)

**Skills:** Athletics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel) +30, Command (Fel) +20, Commerce (Int) +10, Common Lore (All) (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (All) (Int) +10, Medicae (Int) +30, Navigate (Surface) (Int) +10, Operate (Surface, Voidship) (Int) +10, Parry (Ag) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +30, Stealth (Ag) +20, Survival (Per) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Blademaster, Blind Fighting, Combat Master, Counter Attack, Disarm, Hard Target, Heightened Senses (All), Infused Knowledge, Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Master Surgeon, Orthoproxy, Psy Rating (6), Quick Draw, Radiant Presence, Resistance (Psychic Techniques), Sprint, Step Aside, Strong Minded, Two-Weapon Wielder (Ballistic and Melee), Unarmed Warrior, Warp Conduit, Warp Sense, Whirlwind of Death.

**Traits:** Psyker.

**Psychic Powers:** Acquiescence, Ecstatic Oblivion, Precision Telekinesis, Telekinetic Shield, Telekinetic Weapon, Warptime.

**Weapons:** Hand cannon (Pistol; 35m; S/- /- ; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; 2 Full).

**Gear:** Mask with built-in rebreather and preysense goggles, four clips of barbed rounds, five doses of Rose.

**Wounds:** 19

**Total TB:** 3



## REMOVING CHARACTERS FROM MELANCHOLIA

Those from Melancholia have a reputation for being the most bloodthirsty and hedonistic of Slaanesh's followers. Coming from a world so environmentally oppressive has them start out their lives mired in a stagnant emotional pool. Moving out of that, however, has some very interesting consequences for role playing. Listed here are some guidelines that GMs can use for NPCs (and PCs) in their games.

NPCs recently taken from the planet or removed from a village are at the beginning stages of the process. By and large they will be very withdrawn and unresponsive to what is happening around them, only performing tasks that allow for basic survival and remaining almost catatonic. As they are engaged with new stimuli and are kept removed from the surface of Melancholia, they start to engage. Again, initial forays will be along the lines of basic needs, but they begin making social interactions. They are not feral, only repressed, and so use common speech and basic mannerisms.

As they grapple with the new sensations, recovering natives of this forsaken world become increasingly unstable as they have no sense of how to manage their emotions effectively. Outbursts of all types, including violent ones, could be commonplace with massive erratic mood swings also happening frequently. This should be encouraged, as it makes the NPCs from Melancholia very unpredictable and also very adept at disrupting the plans of any would-be warlord.

PCs are a different matter, however. When dealing with PCs from Melancholia, a baseline of emotional equilibrium has probably been established earlier. Therefore, it is appropriate to assign penalties or bonuses depending on the social interactions the PC has had in the past and the intensity of the situation he is in during the session.

For example, an attempt to resist a tantalising food that the PC knows is drugged would require a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test**. Similarly, a seduction attempt from someone very exotic, very attractive, but also known to be very dangerous against an inexperienced PC could only be swayed through a **Very Hard (-30) Willpower Test**.

As a PC experiences more things, these penalties may dwindle to nothing or may be replaced by a desire to move to extremes. These are in-game decisions and predominantly a roleplaying situation, one that works best organically based on player and GM interaction. Those from Melancholia can make for fascinating NPCs and PCs alike though as they explore their new emotions and sensations, and should offer excellent opportunities for roleplaying.



# THE GATES OF MOMENT

*"Watch the skies, the ground at your feet, and even the very air around you. But do not trust your eyes! Nothing here is as it seems, and we must remain vigilant and blind to the lures of Chaos if we are to close these Gates once and for all!"*

—Final recorded words of Inquisitor Marwin Vermillious of the Ordo [Redacted]

A boiling mass of unholy danger, the Screaming Vortex holds many unknown terrors. Scores of worlds trapped within the Vortex's iron grasp have grown to dark legend, from worlds with atmospheres so poisonous that they melt the hardest metals, to worlds where entire populations wither on their feet as they stare endlessly at seas of standing mirrors, powerless to look away from their own reflections. Most learn how to avoid such hazards, but there is one world that haunts all who see it appear in their skies—a moon that brings nothing but death and misery to all who fall under its gloomy shadow. Known as the Gates of Moment, this shifting planetoid has brought ruin to dozens of worlds not just within the Vortex, but across the entire galaxy.

## DISTANT SKIES

Unlike most Vortex worlds, many Imperial organisations know of the Gates of Moment. None of these groups know the moon's origins, but due to its infrequent and violent appearances, scattered records exist of the planetoid's structure and relative size. Although contradictory in many places, most of these reports agree that the Gates of Moment appears as little more than a large barren moon. Deep crevasses tear across the moon's surface, and dark patches of low-lying scrubland cover it like lichen on ancient bark. Its wispy atmosphere sends curls of pink-grey clouds streaking across its surface like thin fingers clutching at a globe. The moon has only one obvious feature: a massive and almost perfectly circular area of ice and snow that seems to radiate energy.

The surface is where the horror of the Gates lies. Anyone foolish enough to seek refuge on it is likely to be trapped there forever, as the skies they leave behind turn to something completely different. Each step across the barren surface can transform the sky above from one impossible vista to another, and even from one time to another. A crew may land upon the moon's surface only to lose the world they came from, the sky above them devoid of anything but distant stars, or perhaps filled with a different planet altogether. Some leave the calm of the Calixis Sector only to find themselves staring up at the blood-red malevolence of the Hadex Anomaly in the far distant Jericho Reach. Others, half-mad from decades captive upon the moon, swear that they walked for years across its surface witnessing everything from the creation of the Eye of Terror, to worlds engulfed by Tyranid fleets, and even a mighty war in the skies of Holy Terra. More disturbing are the reports that contradict one another yet are still true. Several records exist within the Calixis, Lithesh, Aquila, and Ixaniad Sectors of the moon's sudden appearance in the skies of several worlds simultaneously. The reports speak of large invading forces repelled, the moon vanishing soon after whilst others talk of how the Gates hung in orbit for weeks, endless streams of foes grinding away at



planetary defences until the moon simply faded from existence. Some even tell of how the moon never left, and how it waits in the shadows of other worlds for the right time to strike again.

Within the Vortex, the Gates is a bad omen—a hunter's moon that stalks the void of space—and many try fruitlessly to predict the moon's movements. Few civilised Vortex worlds have not felt the moon's malevolent touch, and none can say how many other worlds have fallen to the moon's twisted denizens. More peculiar, though, is how the Magisters of Q'Sal perceive the moon. The sorcery-drenched world has never seen the Gates enter its sky, and when pressed on the subject the Magisters respond with nothing but laughter.

## PLAINS OF TORMENT

From orbit, the Gates of Moment appears drab and unremarkable, but the surface is far from dull. No journey across its seemingly endless plains ever stays the same for long, and there are all manner of natural horrors and lingering treasures for the careless and ruthless to find.

### Ashen Pits

Stretched between each knotted expanse of barkweed thickets lie the vast ash plains. Coloured the same pink-grey as the hunter's moon's translucent clouds, the ash is light and clogs machinery easily. When breathed, in it has a slight narcotic effect, subtly enhancing a person's senses and filling their heads with the sweetest aromas. The ash hides a deadly secret as it covers many of the caves and crevasses that scar



the moon's surface. The pits are never very deep, but many who fall in and scramble to the surface find the sky above them different from what it was moments ago. Some emerge from a pit only to find their companions long dead, or that they have appeared several days, if not years, before they ever arrived. And some never emerge at all, as it is within these pits that dreaded Warp Talons make their home.

### Thorny Wastes

The barkweed groves that cover enormous stretches of the moon's surface are one of the few living things that thrives within the cloying ash. Extremely tough plants that glow faintly and emit a constant buzzing noise, they snake through the ground forming tangled masses of thorns and spines that many within the Helwyr tribes fashion into barbed whips and basic clothing. The juice of the barkweed holds another special significance for the Helwyr, and they value this sour, spicy liquid as it focuses their minds and strengthens their resolve, something they need for the Great Hunts. So potent is the juice that it is one of the most sought-after narcotics within the Vortex. It is exceptionally rare however, as many who attempt to harvest the coarse plant find themselves unable to leave the moon, and the few phials that do make it off the surface fetch astronomical prices.

### Frozen Plains

Easily the largest and most obvious feature of the hunter's moon is the great icy wasteland that dominates roughly an eighth of its surface. Pure white and almost completely flat, the frozen plains reflect the light of many different stars, yet it never melts or shrinks. Frozen skeletons and the remains of lone Helbrutes stud its entire breadth, acting as grim wards to all who would brave the journey across, but all who eke out an existence upon the hunter's moon must eventually come to the plains as it is one of the few sources of water. Those that travel the frozen plains face death at any moment, and the unnatural stillness and unchanging landscape is enough to crack the psyche of even the bravest hunter. Some travellers trek for days only to find their own footprints ahead of them, or encounter the remnants of a corpse that bears a striking similarity to their own features.

Worse still are the Frostwyrms, the real terrors of the frozen plains. All Helwyr tribes have tales of the day the Frostwyrms first arrived, appearing all over the frozen plains on the day when the heavens burned the angry red of the Hadex Anomaly. The stories speak of a bolt of energy that shot from the mind-shredding redness of the Hadex and lanced into the surface of the moon. Within days, the remnants of fleeing tribes brought tales of monstrous glowing creatures—their forms described as reptilian or insectoid, or disturbing combinations of both—and how the beasts would emerge from the solid ground to take their prey, and vanish back into the ice as quickly as they arrived. No one knows the truth of these stories, as some claim to have been there the day it happened, whereas others say it happened thousands of years ago. The Frostwyrms rarely leave their icy home, for which the Helwyr give thanks to their pale gods, and are a danger only to those that wish to know the secrets that exist at the heart of the wintry desert.

## THE RED MONK

Despite their solitary and wandering existence, the Helwyr tribes share many legends. One enduring story is that of the Red Monk, and those that recount the tales do so with dread-filled voices. Encountered only on the days when dozens of foreign stars split the skies, the Red Monk appears on the horizon and moves with a determined stride. He bears no mark or sigil beyond a golden hourglass etched into his vermilion robes, and as they billow around him all nearby creatures act in opposition to their desires. The Helwyr tell of fearless Scale-Drake herds that flee at the sight of him, how crazed Helbrutes calm unnaturally in his presence, and of titanic battles between the Monk and enormous Frostwyrms that take place far from the Frozen Wastes. As the years pass, the tribes add more examples of the Red Monk's power to the legend, but each tale ends with the same warning: run.

Some speculate that the truth of the frozen plains lies at its centre, where many claim to have seen the remains of a vast, cracked voidship of the hated Imperium. As the tales go, the huge craft sits broken upon the world's surface, split in two and lifeless inside a shallow crater, and several recount symbols of the sixfold-cursed Inquisition, hourglasses, and other icons upon its frosted hull. The same crazed individuals claim there were days when the vessel sat inert, but on other days the lights on every deck would burn with an intense fury it is said. The largest of the Frostwyrms make their home here, coiled around the rear of the cruiser as if drawing energy from the still flickering engines. To enter the ship is to face certain death, but there are tribesmen who swear that riches beyond compare lie within its freezing hull.

### The Gleaming Lake

The hunter's moon has one other major feature, a dazzling lake that weaves its way through several glowing groves of barkweed. Those that glimpse the lake in the distance find themselves unable to look away, as it glints and shimmers with such an intense brightness that even the blind perceive its radiance. With each step closer, weary travellers hear the voices of innocent youths beckoning them forward. Those that turn away remain touched by the lake, unable to clear its brightness from their vision like a man who has stared too long at his burning sun. Those who march on reach an odd calm, as the sound of lapping waves overtakes the beguiling voices. However, the gleaming lake holds no water, and those that reach its shores find something beyond imagination.

All who come to the lake find what they yearn for most. Gold, jewels, weapons, food, long-dead friends, helpless adversaries, rare wine, scented candles, rare books—the list is as endless as the whims and desires of mortals. Any who immerse themselves within this perfect bounty find their senses utterly overcome with feelings of satisfaction. The experience is akin to the most potent of drugs, and the greedy or weak-willed spend days or even weeks entranced, sating their every desire until their physical senses give up from the experience.



As a test of will, some bands of Helwyr tribesmen stand at the lake's edge, challenging their ability to resist the blissful delights. Most give into their basest passions though, their delirious laughter echoing up to the multitude of skies above.

However, nothing found within the lake can ever leave its shores. Once removed, their desired possessions disintegrate into pale, crystalline ash as the faintest sounds of laughter fill the air. Some proudly display warded stasis chambers and boast that they still have small trinkets taken from the lake, but as opening the chamber would destroy the contents, none can truly speak to the reality of these claims. Still, these stasis chambers form the focal points for a number of the Vortex's Slaanesh cults, their members shaking uncontrollably as the temptation to open the chamber for even the most fleeting glance haunts every waking moment of their lives.

## PREDATOR AND PREY

The reality of the Gates of Moment's lethal environment and limited resources means that every man, beast, and machine lives an insane life fixated on the idea of surviving, even for just a moment more. To most of the Gates' denizens, sanity is a safe-haven of the foolish and a sign that they know nothing of the world at their feet or the ever-shifting skies above their heads.

## Helwyr Tribesman

Over the millennia, tens of thousands of disparate groups—traders, pirates, slaves, and even xenos—have found themselves at the mercy of the Gates. Trapped on its surface with only two options—live or die—many choose to form loose nomadic collectives. Commonly referred to as the Helwyr, these insular groups keep nothing of their past and wander the wastes in search of anything that might keep them alive for another day. They exist at the very edge of sanity, their senses frayed from years of consuming barkweed juice, and subsist on whatever meat and water they can find. The tribes take any opportunity to hunt, even hunting other tribes, as all Helwyr know that if they are not the predator, then they are definitely the prey.

The Helwyr's reputation within the Vortex extends beyond the surface of their moon, as they trade in what might be the most exotic (and deadly) commodity the Vortex has to offer—Helbrutes. Roving packs of these transplanted and trapped monstrosities cause death wherever they tread. Over time, the Helwyr learned how to ensnare and subdue Helbrutes, often from the backs of enslaved Scale-Drakes. Their successes draw bands of Chaos warlords to the Gates in the hopes of trading food and supplies in exchange for the Helwyr's enraged captives.

Unfortunately for the Helwyr, their expertise and reputation comes at a dire cost, as all Helwyr answer to the Warp Talons. The Warp Talons never speak, but their ability to leave and return at will means that they dominate the skies. Silently, the twisted Chaos Marines often take captured Helbrutes, sometimes leaving supplies and weapons, sometimes only leaving terrified corpses in their wake. The Warp Talons take what they want, and vanish back into their subterranean lairs, only to be seen again when the Helwyr next wish to trade, or when a Great Hunt starts.

## Helwyr Tribesman (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	45	35	35	40	35	45	55	25	--

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 12

**Armour:** Helwyr Carapace (5)

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Screaming Vortex, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag) +10, Navigate (Surface) (Int) +20, Survival (Per) +30.

**Talents:** Die Hard, Hardy, Helbrute Hunter†, Jaded, Light Sleeper, Paranoia, Target Selection.

**Weapons:** Barkweed whip (Melee; 1d10+6 R; Pen 2; Crippling [2], Primitive [7], Tearing), razor rifle (Basic; 80m; S/-/-; 2d10 R; Pen 4; Clip 16; Reload Full; Crippling [2], Razor Sharp, Shocking, Tearing).

**Gear:** Dust cloak (low-quality clothing), Helwyr carapace (incorporates a rebreather), various tools, 10 doses of Barkweed Juice, 2 weapon clips.

†**Helbrute Hunter:** Well versed in the art of fighting Helbrutes, Helwyr tribesmen weave in an out of combat in a way that easily disorients the insane machines. Helwyr tribesmen do not Test for Fear against them, and may re-roll any Dodge Tests made against Helbrute attacks whilst on foot. Against Helbrutes, the tribesman's razor rifle rolls 2d10 Agility Damage rather than standard Damage, reduced by the Helbrute's Willpower Bonus. Helbrutes reduced to 0 Agility are not destroyed, but are instead ensnared and captured by the tribesman.

**Riding Beasts:** Any Helwyr Tribesmen can ride a colossal Scale-Drake. See page 46 for details.

## Frostwurm

Neither reptile nor insect, Frostwyrms would easily dominate all life upon the Gates if not for their odd refusal to venture beyond their icy domain. Known to grow to monumental sizes, there is virtually no defence against a Frostwurm attack as they possess the unnatural ability to pass through solid matter. Any who venture into the frozen wastes rarely return, as there is precious little warning when a Frostwurm attacks. For a brief moment, the cold expanse grows slightly colder, and a split second later a writhing snake-like mass of claws and teeth bursts from the undisturbed surface to hungrily grasp at whatever it can before descending back into the ground. Nevertheless, rumours persist of an elite cadre of Helwyr that ride Frostwyrms, the phasing ability of these hideous creatures somehow transferring to the men on their backs.





**Frostwurm (Elite)**

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
58	--	65	35	60 <sup>12</sup>	25	60 <sup>10</sup>	25	05	--

**Movement:** 7/14/21/42  
**Wounds:** 38  
**Armour:** Armoured Exoskeleton (6)  
**Total TB:** 3  
**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20.  
**Talents:** Fearless, Hard Target, Lightning Reflexes, Preternatural Speed, Resistance (Cold), Swift Attack.  
**Traits:** Bestial, Crawler, Fear (2), Deadly Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (6), Phase, Size (6), Terrain Master, Unnatural Agility (6), Unnatural Perception (4), Unruly.  
**Weapons:** Claws (Melee; 1d10+6 R; Pen 6; Razor Sharp, Tearing), frozen breath (Basic; 15m; S/-/-; 2d10 E; Pen 4; Clip —; Reload —; Crippling [4], Spray).  
**Ghostly Mounts:** Frostwurms can be taken as mounts with an Availability of Near Unique. So long as they are riding the beast, characters also gain the Phase Trait.

**Helbrute**

How the Gates of Moment became home to so many Helbrutes is a mystery. Caged beasts of unrelenting fury, Helbrutes usually march to war under the banners of the Chaos Legions, but here these hulking monsters run wild, killing everything they see. Although once proud and noble Space Marine Dreadnoughts, all Helbrutes despise their existence and yearn for the time when they could still directly experience the thrill of a fresh kill and savour the taste of victory. They gather in small packs and wander erratically across the moon's surface, free from the Legions that would enslave them, and ready to destroy any who challenge them.

**Helbrute (Master)**

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
50	40	70 <sup>14</sup>	60 <sup>12</sup>	40	30	35	50	05	--

**Movement:** 6/12/18/36  
**Wounds:** 32  
**Armour:** Machine (20)  
**Total TB:** 10  
**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Intimidate (S).  
**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Berserk Charge, Combat Master, Crazy (see below), Crushing Blow, Die Hard, Disturbing Voice, Fearless, Independent Targeting, Thunder Charge, Two-Weapon Wilder (Ballistic, Melee), War Cry.  
**Traits:** Ammunition Shortage (see below), Auto-Stabilised, Dark-Sight, Fear (2), Machine (20), Size (6), Sturdy, Undying, Unnatural Strength (7), Unnatural Toughness (6).  
**Weapons:** Two power fists (Melee; 2d10+30 E; Pen 9; Power Field, Unwieldy), each of which can contain either a heavy flamer (Heavy; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+12 E; Pen 6; Clip 15; Rld 2 Full; Flame, Spray) or combi-bolter (Basic; 80m; S/3/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 32; Rld 2 Full; Tearing, Twin-linked). Either power fist may be replaced with one of the following; Missile launcher with frag and krak missiles (Heavy; 300m; S/-/-; —; Pen —; Clip 12; Reload 4 Full;), multi-melta (Heavy;



60m; S/-/-; 2d10+16 E; Pen 12; Clip 36; Reload 2 Full; Blast [1], Melta), plasma cannon (Heavy; 150m; S/-/-; 2d10+12 E; Pen 10; Clip 48; Reload 5 Full; Blast [3], Maximal, Overheats), power scourge† (Melee; 1d10+26 E; Pen 6; Flexible, Power Field, Tearing, Unwieldy), reaper autocannon (Heavy; 300m; S/4/-; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Clip 120; Reload 2 Full; Reliable, Twin-Linked), thunder hammer (Melee; 2d10+25 E; Pen 9; Concussive [4], Power Field, Unwieldy), twin-linked heavy bolter (Heavy; 150m; -/-/6; 1d10+12 X; Pen 5; Clip 180; Reload Full; Tearing), twin-linked lascannon (Heavy; 300m; S/-/-; 5d10+10 E; Pen 10; Clip 15; Reload 2 Full; Proven [3]).  
**Crazy:** Completely unstable, Helbrutes respond to threats with ever-increasing levels of violence. When a Helbrute suffers Damage, it must take a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** as a Free Action at the start of its next Turn, modified by -10 for every 5 full points of Damage it received since its last Round. If successful, it may act normally during its next Turn. If the Test is failed and there are enemies within the Helbrute's Charge Move distance it automatically enters a Frenzied state and must declare a Charge Action against the nearest adversary. If no foes are within the Helbrute's Charge range, it stays stationary and as a Full Action fires all its ranged weapons twice at the closest target, friend or foe.  
**Ammunition Shortage:** Helbrutes trapped on the Gates usually are low on ammunition, having consumed their reserves long ago. When encountered here, they have a maximum of 1d5+1 shots remaining for any weapons with a Rate of Fire of 1. For weapons with higher Rates of Fire, use the maximum Rate of Fire and double the number.

† Grants the Lightning Attack Talent, but only when using this weapon.



## Warp Talons

Spoken of in hushed whispers, the Warp Talon packs that live just under the moon's surface are the subjects of much fear and reverence. Each Warp Talon millennia ago began as a Space Marine, but as the obsession with speed and the pursuit of prey overtook their lives, they eventually gave in to the pure excess of the Warp. Now corrupted beyond even their darkest dreams, Warp Talons act as harbingers of doom across the Vortex and beyond. Their grotesque claws are sharp enough to rend holes in reality, and they can appear almost anywhere without warning. They even seem to feed off their victim's fear, and spend a seeming eternity taunting their prey before making the final killing stroke. Huntsmen without compare and addicted to the thrill of the chase, they embody the hunter's moon as much as it embodies them.

Although they never speak—and many do not think they can—Warp Talons drive the Great Hunts. When the time is right and the sky above the Gates shifts to a new location, lone Warp Talons appear before the scattered Helwyr tribes. The tribesmen ready their weapons, and within seconds the Warp Talons take them from the moon's surface to whatever slaughter awaits. Once sated by the thrills and sensations of war, the armoured predators return to the surface of their moon, most of the surviving Helwyr returning with them. The reasons why the fallen Space Marines bring the tribesmen are unknown; some propose the Warp Talons are breeding the greatest tribesmen to become superior prey one day later. Some of the tribesmen use these rare moments to attempt escape from the Gates. Most fail, for while the Warp Talons seem to welcome others to share in the thrill of the hunt, they do not like it when their playthings try to run away.

Warp Talon (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
55	35	60	40	40	40	50	45	05	--

**Movement:** 8/16/24/48

**Armour:** Power armour (8; Body 10)

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (War) (Int), Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, The Horus Heresy and the Long War, The Warp) (Int), Intimidate (S), Navigate (Surface, Stellar, Warp) (Int), Operate (Aeronautica) +30, Parry (WS) +20, Survival (Per).

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Assassin Strike, Blademaster, Counter Attack, Die Hard, Double Team, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Hotshot Pilot, Leap Up, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reaction, Raptor, Resistance (Cold, Psychic Powers), Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee), Warpflame Strike†, Whirlwind of Death.

**Traits:** Daemonic (2), Fear (1), Unnatural Agility (3), Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (4).

**Weapons:** Two lightning claws (Melee; 1d10+16 E; Pen 8; Power Field, Proven [4], Special†).

**Gear:** Jump pack, warped power armour (incorporating bio-monitors and injectors, enhanced ceramite plating, osmotic gill life sustainer and spikes).

**Wounds:** 22

**Total TB:** 10



†**Warpflame Strike:** Warp Talons often enter combat via rents torn through reality. As they appear, a blinding flash bursts out, disabling their opponents and leaving them helpless. When Warp Talons ambush their adversaries, all characters within 10 metres must take a **Very Hard (-30) Agility Test** or suffer the effects of a Photon Flash (see **BLACK CRUSADE CORE Rulebook** page 160) and count as Surprised. The Warp-based nature of this flash renders all standard methods of eye protection useless.

†See **BLACK CRUSADE CORE Rulebook** page 163 for more details.

### THE CALIXIAN MASSACRES

In the wake of the War of Brass, the Calixis Sector suffered another blow as the Gates of Moment appeared in a dozen skies across the Sector. From Cindar to Hesiod's Wake it hung ominously in the sky for six days and nights. Raucous Pleasure cults rose up, and packs of Warp Talons appeared across the sector, sowing terror and goading the cults into acts of dark debasement that shattered entire cultures. Millions perished, and when the Gates finally faded away it left the people of the Calixis Sector nothing but fear, sorrow and a reminder of the Warp's untamed fury.



## THE FORBIDDEN PORTAL

*"The price of your transgressions is high indeed.  
I am here to collect payment."*

—Vaiuri M'atua, Harlequin Shadowseer

Out beyond the Gloaming Worlds, near the edge of the Screaming Vortex itself, is a barren, lifeless world. Its name is lost and precious few would even bother to acknowledge its existence were it not for one feature: the Forbidden Portal.

The Portal itself stands at the centre of a featureless plain along the world's equator, set into the side of a great mountain that rises up from the ground. The peak is not native to the planet, made from a stone not found anywhere else in the Vortex, its existence and how it came to be on this world just one of the unexplained mysteries the Portal presents. Wrought from a curious material that none recognise, the Forbidden Portal has defied all attempts at explanation. Countless theories about its nature and history exist but as to the truth, none can say.

One story tells that once a great city existed on the planet, ruled over by a mighty Daemon Prince. The Prince made war in his patron's name and was rewarded well, but soon began to grow jealous of his god and sought to supplant him. For his insolence, the god scoured the planet clean, removing all traces of the Daemon's existence and sealed him in a great tomb of stone. As a final insult, the god cast the tomb back down onto the planet the Daemon had once ruled, forever cursing him to look out over all that was now brought to dust.

Still other fables suggest that the world is in fact not one, but many planets fused together by the birth of the Screaming Vortex, and that the Portal does not conceal any great secret, or even opens at all. It is simply the result of multiple locations being overlaid and forced together by the power of Chaos.

Wiser minds have deduced that the craftsmanship employed to build such a thing resembles that of a race long dead and vanished from the galaxy. These more erudite investigators have also noted that the Portal itself appears to have been grown, rather than built; the odd materials used in its construction appearing very much like bone or some other organic matter. The truth is still far beyond their grasp, but Q'Sal scholars have discovered the Portal responds to psychic stimuli, though to what end is still beyond them. These same scholars suspect that the Portal might be linked in some way to the webway, the labyrinthine network of tunnels and locations that exists between realspace and the Warp. If this is true, gaining entrance to it would be a substantial boon to any champion with the wit or strength to succeed.

A final theory is that the Forbidden Portal is actually a powerful doorway to the Realms of Chaos, a physical link between this world and the abode of the gods. Only a true champion of Chaos can open it, ripping the Portal asunder with his will alone. On that day, the Long War will come to an end as the Ruinous Powers and their armies stride forth to exterminate the galaxy, snuffing out all life. After these Final Days, nothing will remain save the husks of dead planets, the faded glow of corpse stars, and the victory screams of the daemonic hosts.



These tales and countless others have been the cause of many fruitless expeditions to the Forbidden Portal. Desperate warlords and scheming sorcerers have led their warbands in search of the truth behind these wild fancies and sought to claim whatever prize lies behind the great sealed door. None have been successful. Korgoth the Bloody-Handed, Champion of Khorne, once led an army millions strong against the Forbidden Portal, intent on ripping it open. He and his chosen spent days expending their might against it to no avail. His army soon tired of the fruitless endeavour and proceeded to tear itself apart in a frenzy of violence, much to Khorne's approval. Cyanith Flameborn, Sorcerer Lord of the Thousand Sons, conducted another infamous attempt to plumb the Portal's secrets. His cabal of acolytes, seers, and witches spent decades studying the Portal, learning all they could about its composition and qualities. Cyanith himself led a ritual that lasted a thousand and one days, designed to psychically pierce the Portal's structure and ease the doors open. What became of Cyanith and his followers is not known, for they simply vanished mere moments before the ritual was to finally end.

What is known about this cryptic and fascinating edifice is that on occasion it has opened all by itself, allowing strangely garbed warriors to emerge. These warriors have proven to be sworn enemies of all who follow Chaos and are a bane on the Screaming Vortex. Their acrobatic fighting



style and deadly weapons have claimed the lives of thousands and show no sign of slowing. Where they come from and how they seem to operate the Forbidden Portal is unknown, but their coming heralds a time of destruction and death for all who would follow the Ruinous Powers.

The inscrutable warriors that pass through the Forbidden Portal to make war on the Screaming Vortex are none other than the Eldar Harlequins. Defenders of the Eldar race and enemies to Chaos, the Harlequins have appeared in the Screaming Vortex for their own reasons.

The Laughing God has perhaps granted some knowledge of how to use the Forbidden Portal to the Harlequins. Now they use it as an occasional base and point of egress into the Screaming Vortex. Believing perhaps that the forces of Chaos will never learn its secrets, the Harlequins are seemingly content to leave the Forbidden Portal as it is. Some of their number argue the risk is too great, and there is too much they do not know about the Portal's true potential. These cautious ones recommend sealing the Portal for good, lest some unforeseen tragedy befall them during its use. Until their tasks within the Vortex are complete, however, the Harlequins continue to use this mystery to prey upon and confound their foes.

## HARLEQUINS

When Slaanesh was birthed out of the catastrophe known as the Fall, billions of Eldar souls were consumed. Still millions of others were bound to his existence and can only stave off his predations by sealing their souls inside spiritstones or feeding on the pain of others. The consequences of their excesses has doomed an entire race. But not every Eldar was cursed that day; some were protected, hidden away by a clever trickster god. These fateful Eldar have become the Harlequins, warriors of the Laughing God and sworn enemies of Slaanesh, known to the Eldar as *She Who Thirsts*.

Exactly how the Laughing God was able to shield the Harlequins from Slaanesh's ceaseless cravings is a mystery. Legend has it that only two of the Eldar gods remained after that cataclysmic event: Kaela Mensha Khaine, the wrathful war god, who survived by sheer martial prowess, and the Laughing God, who fled during Khaine's confrontation with *She Who Thirsts* and hid in the Webway. The Harlequins claim that he hides there still, mocking the Chaos Gods with his laughter and emerging, now and again, to strike at them. Of all the weapons at his disposal, the Laughing God's favoured method of revenge is turning his Harlequins loose upon the minions of Chaos.

The Harlequins are peerless warriors, each easily a match for all but the mightiest of Chaos champions. Their supernal grace and blistering speed make them impossible to pin down, and their skill at arms and deadly weaponry reaps a terrible toll upon their chosen foe. In battle, the Harlequins are formed into small squads called Troupes, each comprising only a handful of warriors. Within each Troupe appear a number of roles, including the Troupe Leader, the Shadowseer who provides psychic support, and the Death Jester, a heavy weapons expert. Troupes are akin to familial groups, equal parts social assembly and military unit.

When engaging an enemy force, Harlequins seek to close the distance to their opponents as swiftly as possible, relying on their agility and bewildering holo-suits to stay alive. Once within reach of their victims, Harlequins enter a captivating, but altogether deadly, dance. Aided by their gravity-defying flip belts, they leap and somersault around their foes, never staying put long enough to be attacked and always keeping just out of reach of their enemies. Their graceful, acrobatic movements serve not only to protect them, but to force errors in their opposition's defences as well. Once an enemy warrior has overcommitted to a wild swing, or stumbled while trying to keep a Harlequin in sight, they strike. Equipped with deadly short-ranged pistols, elegant power-sheathed blades, and the legendary Harlequin's Kiss, they make short work of all they encounter, leaving only corpses in their wake. The Kiss, in particular, is a rightly feared weapon. Consisting of a sharpened tube mounted on the back of a Harlequin's arm, the Kiss is punched into an enemy before being triggered. In a matter of seconds, coils of mono-filament wire burst from the tip of the Kiss, shredding the victim's insides and turning solid flesh into a liquefied morass.

Their arrivals are as inscrutable as their appearance. All Harlequin Troupes are intimately familiar with the webway, using that network to travel between worlds and stage their attacks with impunity. Often a Harlequin Troupe allies with a military force already engaged in a conflict. Sometimes they approach a commander offering their services, if allowed to perform certain deeds after the battle is won. Other times they simply appear on the battlefield, slaying indiscriminately, or abducting certain individuals and vanishing just as abruptly.

Not all visitations from a Harlequin Troupe result in battle, for the Troupes play a pivotal role in Eldar society. Theirs is the task of remembrance and warning. They often arrive at Eldar craftworlds to perform dark morality plays and elaborate dances. These performances seek to remind the Eldar of their history and to warn against repeating the sins of the past. In particular, the *Dance Without End*, the story of the Fall and the birthing of *She Who Thirsts*, teaches that the Eldar race must never forget the price they have paid for their youthful follies. Each Harlequin plays a specific role in these dances, often losing their own personalities to that of the role they play. The Harlequins do not see this as a loss of self, but rather rejoice in the immersion it brings, forever celebrating the meaning such a bond can bring.

The appearances of Harlequin Troupes is a poorly understood phenomenon. Their seemingly random movements throughout the Screaming Vortex sometimes hint of a grander plan, but it is too baffling for a mortal mind to comprehend. Whatever ultimate goal the Harlequins are working toward, if indeed such a thing exists, is purely a matter of conjecture, but it is a subject that has obsessed many across the fallen region. Even those who seek martial perfection and always hunt for new foes to test themselves against know the shudder of fear upon hearing word of a Troupe visitation.

Some scholars on Q'Sal believe the Harlequins' actions are linked to an ancient tale found only in the Black Library at the centre of the webway. This tale, called the *Lost God's Lament*, tells that one craftworld in particular suffered a hellish fate during the Fall.



## THE LOST GOD'S LAMENT

Its name has now passed into myth, but this now-lost craftworld's desperate flight from the horrors of the Dark Prince's birth was cut short. The expanding Eye of Terror soon overcame the vessel, and the craftworld was drawn inside the Warp and pulled into billions of pieces. Each piece was scattered across the length and breadth of the galaxy, the millions of Eldar on board were fused with their vessel, each screaming soul bound within a small fragment of the now obliterated craftworld. As the Warp storms raged, many of these pieces were drawn inside the Screaming Vortex and plunged into the myriad worlds that existed there.

Although much of the tale is shrouded in allegory, those who have read it believe that within the Screaming Vortex are countless Eldar souls, trapped in excruciating pain and unable to escape their fate. But, perhaps more importantly, they believe that the essence of the lost craftworld's Avatar lies trapped there too. Each craftworld carries an Avatar, a living embodiment of Kaela Mensha Khaine and the beating heart of the vessel and its populace. After tens of thousands of years, it is unlikely the lost Avatar could be roused from its endless slumber if found, but the tales say that Harlequin Shadowseers believe most fervently that the attempt must be made, if for no other reason than to ensure the Avatar is not corrupted by the powers of Chaos. Should such a thing happen, the results would be unthinkable for the dying race, though many Heretics within the Vortex would delight in such an occurrence.

Amongst these Shadowseers, one in particular is perhaps the most impassioned in her pursuit of the Lost God. Her name is Vaiuri M'atua, and she has become one of the most feared and hated figures known in the Screaming Vortex. Guided by her almost fanatical devotion to recovering the Lost God, she has led her Troupe on raid after raid against the Screaming Vortex. Her tactics vary as wildly as her targets, from daring incursions against heavily fortified strongholds to steal some obscure artefact to all-out assaults on tiny Heretic settlements that leave none alive. She has become a figure of myth, spoken of only in hushed whispers by fearful heretics and scholars. They credit her with all manner of supernatural powers and call her the Wraith, claiming she can step through solid walls and pluck out souls like petals from a flower.

### VAIURI M'ATUA

This Harlequin Shadowseer has become a nightmare to all who serve the Ruinous Powers within the Screaming Vortex. Her mission brings her into constant conflict with petty warlords and weak-willed sorcerers, and legend has that she has never been defeated. As her reputation grows, the more powerful denizens of the Vortex have placed numerous bounties on her head, offering great rewards to the warrior who can fell her. Most are too afraid to attempt such a feat, and of those that have tried, none have returned.

Vaiuri's tactics vary little from those of her companions. She excels at sowing confusion amongst the enemy ranks, breaking their coordination and shattering their morale with her devastating Psychic Powers and hallucinogenic grenades. She often strikes from concealment, erupting from a webway portal to overwhelm her foes in a flurry of disorder and lethal strikes from her Witchblade, then vanishing before a counter-attack can be organised.

Of her true plans, none can say for, she tells no one besides her Troupe and they follow her without question. Amongst her own people it is rumoured she has even spoken with the mysterious and deadly Solitaires, enlisting their aid for some, as yet, unknown purpose.

Vaiuri M'atua (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
66	51	45	42	60	58	63	69	65	47

**Movement:** 10/20/30/60

**Wounds:** 29

**Armour:** Xenos Mesh (3 All)

**Total TB:** 4

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +30, Athletics (S) +20, Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +30, Forbidden Lore (Black Library, Daemonology) (Int) +20, Parry (WS) +30, Psyniscience (Per) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Sleight of Hand (Ag) +20, Stealth (Ag) +30.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Blade Dancer, Blademaster, Combat Master, Hard Target, Hatred (Daemons and Heretics aligned on the path of Slaanesh), Leap Up, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Psy Rating 8, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Sure Strike, Step Aside, Swift Attack, Touched by the Fates (6), Two-Weapon Wielder (Ranged, Melee).

**Traits:** Fear 2†, Unnatural Agility (+4).

**Weapons:** Shuriken pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/3/5; 1d10+2 R; Pen 4; Clip 40; Reload 2 Full; Razor Sharp; Reliable), Witchblade (Melee; 1d10+14 R; Pen 8; Balanced; Force; Power Field), 4 Creidann (Thrown; 12M; S/-/-; Pen 0; Clip 1; Blast [5], Hallucinogenic [4]).

**Psychic Powers:** Vaiuri is a potent Psyker and knows all the powers for a Shadowseer as described on page 372 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

**Gear:** Flip belt, holo-suit, 4 weapon clips.

**Flip Belt:** The flip belt allows the user to manipulate gravity, moving with astounding grace. The user ignores penalties for Difficult Terrain and can re-roll failed Dodge Tests.

**Herald of the Laughing God:** Vaiuri has successfully found several pieces of the ill-fated Craftworld lost within the Screaming Vortex and rescued the souls trapped within. These souls are now bound to the Laughing God and Vaiuri, providing her a potent psychic weapon. Once per encounter, as a Full Action, Vaiuri can unleash the souls bound to her, causing them to strike out at her enemies. When she does this, all enemies within 30 meters must pass a **Very Hard (-30) Willpower test** or suffer 2d10+2 energy damage



ignoring Armour and Toughness Bonus. Any character who suffers one or more Wounds from this effect is Stunned for 1 Round and suffers a -10 penalty to Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, and Agility for the remainder of the combat encounter.

**Holo-suit:** The holo-suit generates multiple images of the user. This is treated as a Force Field with a Protective Rating of 35 that never Overloads.

†*Vaiuri's Fear Trait only affects those enemies in melee with Vaiuri and does not affect them if for some reason they cannot see her (blinded, smoke grenades, etc.).*

## TROUPE MASTER

Leader in the Dance, Avatar of the Laughing God: a Harlequin Troupe Master is all these things and more. At their simplest, a Troupe Master is the commander of a Harlequin Troupe, as much as they have such leaders. It is he that decides where the Troupe goes next, what dances are performed, and what messages they deliver. If the Shadowseers are the heart and soul of a Troupe, the Troupe Master is its mind and cunning.

When performing, a Troupe Master invariably plays the story's hero or major protagonist. In the Dance Without End, the Troupe Master takes the role of the Laughing God himself, striving against She Who Thirsts and thwarting the newly birthed god's unceasing hunger. Other times a Troupe Master is an emissary for the Troupe, meeting with Craftworld Farseers, Archons of the Dark Eldar, Corsair Princes, or representatives of the Eldar Exodites.

In battle, these mighty warriors are a blue of motion, their holo-suits projecting a constant barrage of illusion. They weave between their foes, never stopping and striking with effortless grace. Wherever a Troupe Master steps, his enemies fall, grasping at bloody stumps where limbs used to be or gurgling through choked mouthfuls of blood as a carefully placed shot tears open their throats. No foe can match him, as he flows around clumsy counter-attacks and vaults athletically away from one enemy only to strike down the next.



**Traits:** Unnatural Agility (4).

**Weapons:** Fusion pistol (Pistol; 10m; S/-/-; 2d10+10 E; Pen 12; Clip 3; Reload 1 Full; Melta, Reliable) *or* shuriken pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/3/5; 1d10+2 R; Pen 4; Clip 40; Reload 2 Full; Razor Sharp; Reliable), harlequin power sword (Melee; 1d10+10 E; Pen 6; Balanced; Power Field) *or* Harlequin's Kiss (Melee; 1d10+8 R; Pen 10; Tearing).

**Gear:** Flip belt, holo-suit, 4 weapon clips.

**Dance of Death:** The unimaginable agility of a Troupe Master allows him great mobility on the battlefield. Whenever a Troupe Master successfully dodges an attack, he may make a Disengage Action as a Free Action. If he ends this move within 3 metres of an enemy, he gains a +20 bonus to Melee Attacks against that foe until the end of his next Turn.

**Flip Belt:** The flip belt allows the user to manipulate gravity, moving with astounding grace. The user ignores penalties for Difficult Terrain and can re-roll failed Dodge Tests.

**Holo-suit:** The holo-suit generates multiple images of the user. This is treated as a Force Field with a Protective Rating of 35 that never Overloads.

Troupe Master (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
71	50	42	44	61	59	57	60	67	--

**Movement:** 10/20/30/60

**Armour:** Xenos Mesh (3 All)

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +30, Athletics (S) +20, Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Black Library, Daemonology) (Int) +10, Parry (WS) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Sleight of Hand (Ag) +20, Stealth (Ag) +20.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Blade Dancer, Blademaster, Combat Master, Deadeye Shot, Hard Target, Leap Up, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Precise Blow, Rapid Reload, Sharpshooter, Sidearm, Sure Strike, Step Aside, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Ranged, Melee).

**Wounds:** 30

**Total TB:** 4





## DEATH JESTER

These sinister Harlequins dress in sombre blacks and purples decorated with skulls, bones, and the trappings of the grave. As such, Death Jesters are a macabre and fearful sight.

Death Jesters act as the heavy support for a Harlequin Troupe, carrying the lethal and rightly feared shrieker cannon into battle. This devastating weapon is similar to the more common Eldar shuriken cannon, but uses bio-explosive ammunition. These unique shuriken are infused with deadly toxins that drive a victim mad with agony. If the initial wound does not kill the target, the toxins cause his flesh to split apart and explode with dreadful effect. Many denizens of the Screaming Vortex have come to hate and dread the distinctive whine of these weapons at work.

Out of battle, the Death Jesters often keep to themselves, and their pitiless sense of humour and mocking laughter is deeply unsettling. In a performance, Death Jesters often play their namesake, striking down the unwary or the foolish and reminding all that none shall be spared the reaper's uncaring attention.

### Death Jester (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
57	61	45	40	58	42	58	59	30	--

**Movement:** 8/16/24/48

**Wounds:** 28

**Armour:** Xenos Mesh (3 All)

**Total TB:** 4

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +30, Athletics (S) +20, Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel), Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int), Parry (WS) +20, Scrutiny (Per), Sleight of Hand (Ag) +10, Stealth (Ag) +20.

**Talents:** Bulging Biceps, Combat Master, Crack Shot, Deadeye Shot, Hard Target, Hip Shooting, Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Marksmen, Mighty Shot, Rapid Reload, Sharpshooter, Sidearm, Step Aside, Swift Attack, Target Selection, Two-Weapon Wielder (Ranged, Melee), Unarmed Warrior, Unarmed Master.

**Traits:** Fear (1), Unnatural Agility (3).

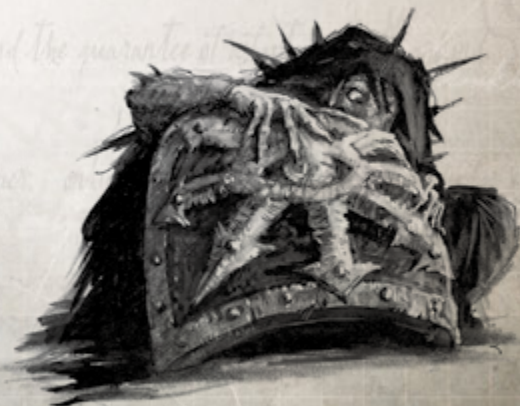
**Weapons:** Shrieker cannon (Heavy; 100m; - /3/10; 2d10 R; Pen 4; Clip 60; Reload 2 Full; Bio-Explosive†; Razor Sharp; Reliable; Toxic [3]), shuriken pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/3/5; 1d10+2 R; Pen 4; Clip 40; Reload 2 Full; Razor Sharp; Reliable), harlequin blade (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 0)

**Gear:** Flip belt, holo-suit, 4 weapon clips.

**Flip Belt:** The flip belt allows the user to manipulate gravity, moving with astounding grace. The user ignores penalties for Difficult Terrain and can re-roll failed Dodge Tests.

**Holo-suit:** The holo-suit generates multiple images of the user. This is treated as a Force Field with a Protective Rating of 35 that never Overloads.

†A character who suffers one or more wounds from the Toxic quality of the shrieker cannon has been subject to the virulent gene-toxins within the cannon's ammunition. Every turn the character must pass a **Difficult (-10) Toughness Test** or suffer an additional 1d10 Wounds with no reduction for Armour or Toughness Bonus. If a character takes Critical damage because of this toxin, immediately roll 1d5+5 and consult **Table 7-12: Explosive Critical Effects - Body** (see page 250 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) and apply the result. A successful **Hard (-20) Medicine Test** stops further toxin effects, but does not repair any of the damage already done from both from the initial weapon strike and toxin result.





## THE ISLANDS OF THE RAGGED HELIX

*"Of course you may pass through my realm. Take all the time you wish, I just need a small token as compensation. Shall we say your left eye?"*

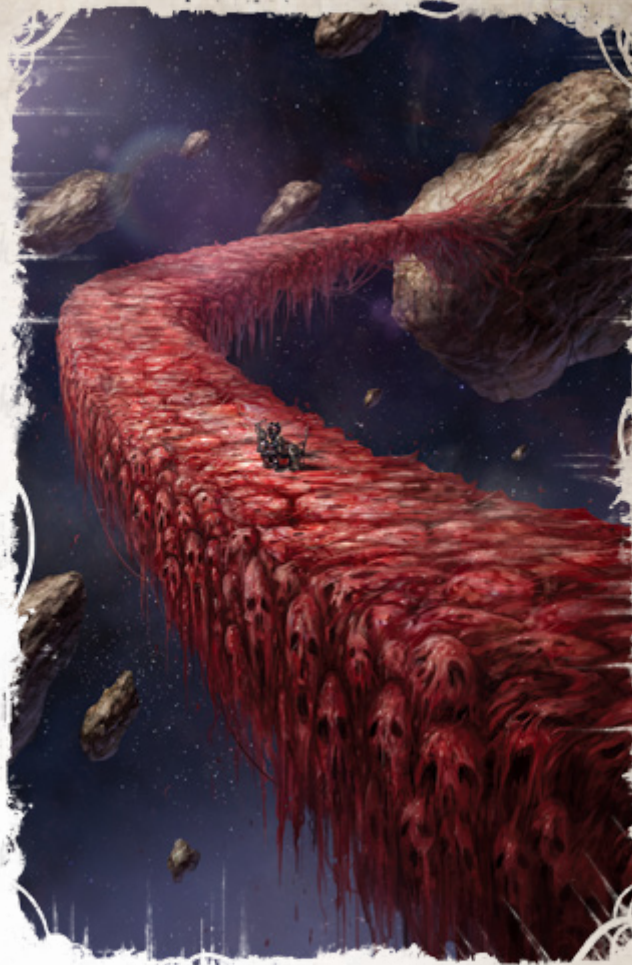
—Beledran Rouge, Pirate Prince of the Ragged Helix

In the space between the Gloaming Worlds and the Inner Ring, flanked by the planets Aphexis and Messia, is the Ragged Helix. This cluster of asteroids hangs in the æther, impossibly chained together with slithers of atmosphere and ribbons of gravity. Whether the force that keeps the asteroids together is a naturally occurring phenomenon, the design of some dark agency, or the result of xenos artifice, no one truly knows.

The Ragged Helix covers a vast area stretching for millions of leagues in every direction. Each rock, which can vary in size from a planetoid to a stepping stone, is linked to the next by a tendril of atmosphere. These create invisible bridges that span the void, allowing mortals to step from one asteroid to another. While some of these wild islands of rock are mere metres apart, others cover a far greater expanse, forcing brave or foolish travellers to walk between the islands held aloft in space, and never entirely sure if they will reach the next link in the chain.

There are a few scholars and dark adepts who see the Ragged Helix as a galactic marvel and a thing of pure beauty, while others see only death. For one thing is certain, the Ragged Helix—like anywhere within the Screaming Vortex—is an incredibly dangerous place. The unwary and ignorant must measure their life spans in minutes should they be foolish enough to find themselves upon one of the islands. Some of the hazards are environmental; while each asteroid boasts an atmosphere, only a minority are breathable. The bridges that link the asteroids are also extremely perilous, for some spans do not actually connect to another asteroid and so deposit the unwary into the cold void.

Despite these elements, they are a minor hazard when compared to the Ragged Helix's many denizens. For a thousand generations or more, the Ragged Helix has been the home to some of the Screaming Vortex's most notorious residents. The Helix is large and there are more asteroids within its bounds than anyone could ever count, and yet there are only a finite number of the larger islands that have suitable atmospheres. These are the most desirable areas within the Helix, and are centres of great conflict. Many host mighty fortresses owned by demented Hereteks, who burrow deep within the rocks for their profane experiments, as well as hosting the workshops and armouries of industry. These corrupted Tech-Priests do a brisk trade, arming much of the Screaming Vortex. Due to the ready supply of weapons and arms, their strongholds are a natural staging point for an aspiring warlord's conquest. In such times, the asteroid-smithies are surrounded with interstellar craft and dread barges of war. While some ships are anchored by psychic tethers or more advanced technology, other cling crudely attach to the floating fortresses with great rune-inscribed iron chains. As the asteroids rotate—for no island within the Helix is ever truly stationary—so too do the warships, following the planetoid along its languid trajectory.



For this reason, the fallen Magos lay claim to many, although not all, of the largest planetoids on the outskirts of the Ragged Helix. There are some Hereteks who have ventured deeper into the Ragged Helix, but they are the exceptions. For, without doubt, the interior of the archipelago belongs to the Pirate Princes.

The Pirate Princes of the Ragged Helix are the most infamous raiders of the Screaming Vortex. Creating havoc in their wake, the Pirate Princes take whatever they wish and destroy anything else, oft-times out of pure spite. They are rightly feared throughout the Screaming Vortex and beyond, known as capricious and merciless hunters. Yet, while the Pirate Princes range far across the Vortex, it is the Ragged Helix they call home, and where they return once they are sated and their ship's hold is full.

Any Pirate Prince worth his reputation has carved out a domain within the Ragged Helix to call his—or her—own. These areas are known colloquially as the Fiefs. The realms vary in size and, in most cases, the larger the Fief, the more powerful and infamous the Pirate Prince who controls it. Some Fiefs cover a single asteroid, while others might only spread across a sliver of a planetoid, willingly or not sharing it with a neighbour. The largest Fiefs encompass several asteroids within the Ragged Helix, the domain linked together by atmospheric bridges. In these Fiefs, the bridges are jealously guarded by the Prince's warband, to ensure he retains control over the whole region. In some cases, the Pirate Prince might deign to let travellers pass through the Fief, the tolls for



crossing the tethers from one island to the next ranging from the exorbitant to the utterly outlandish. The toll could be anything from the tears of a beloved, ecstatic memories of a kill, or the colour of one's eyes.

But it is not just the size of the Fief that defines a Prince's realm. The domains are as eclectic and bizarre as the pirates themselves. A few Fiefs are simply barren areas with a stronghold either built onto or into the asteroid, but there are many more that directly reflect a Prince's personality. This is partly due to the design aesthetics and choices made by the realm's ruler. However, in many cases it is as if the Ragged Helix itself lends a hand. The islands begin to warp and shift to better mirror the sovereign's desires, whims, and persona. This makes asteroids of an established Fief even more perilous than normal as the islands themselves become as capricious and cruel.

There are many Pirate Princes, and each is as individualistic and domineering as the next. Thus the Fiefs are extremely diverse in character. While truces and pacts between the Princes are not unheard of, these are fleeting, for the one thing a Prince hates more than regular prey is his fellow pirates. This means that the Ragged Helix is a metaphorical tinderbox, where only a mere spark is ever needed to bring the archipelago to war. The Fiefs themselves become the battlegrounds, and the keys to victory are the bridges that span the space between to link the islands. To choke a Fief, an oppressor needs to control all bridges that connect the besieged domain to the rest of the Helix. If this happens, then it is only a matter of time before the realm is taken and its sovereign slain. Sometimes, the Prince returns to find his own Fief lost and with it, his power base and status. In these cases, he might become an exile with his crew or simply be murdered by one of them, and so another Pirate Prince rises to try his luck amongst the most dangerous of peers.

### THE FIEF OF BELEDRAN ROUGE

In a cadre of cruel beings, Beledran is known as one of the cruellest. A Pirate Prince at least six centuries old, Beledran has been a scourge of the Screaming Vortex for most of his life. Despite his advanced age, Beledran remains extremely handsome; the only blemish on his exquisite face is the mark of his patron, Slaanesh, upon his perfect cheek.

Even as Beledran's victims look up in awe at his beatific visage, most know that they face a cruel and painful end, as he is known to many by his other title, one that leaves little to the imagination: the Red Flayer. Beledran wears the epithet with pride because his raids are rarely for mineral wealth or other valuables; it is the flesh of the living that he desires.

What the Pirate Prince does with the grisly matter he collects is a mystery to many. Only to those who have visited his Fief does it become clear. For Beledran is an artist; a creator of perverse and ecstatic beauty—and his chosen medium is the flesh and skin of his victims.

His Fief comprises three asteroids—a large planetoid and two smaller satellites. While the landscape on all three isles is littered with his work—sculptures large and small made out of flesh and treated to prevent the rigours of Nurgle and ensure they exist for eternity—there is a certain order and thought that has gone into their placement. Rouge, as a follower of Slaanesh, is ever the perfectionist. Beledran's demesne is located on the largest asteroid. It is a grand house with an immaculate garden, where plants and trees impossibly thrive despite the absence of a sun. In amongst the garden and inside the house are Rouge's favourite artistic endeavours; these are normally of a more intimate nature.

One of the smaller satellites has been named the Menagerie, home to the Pirate Prince's largest works. The flesh here has been shaped and carved into nightmarish creatures that Beledran claims to have encountered.

The final asteroid is known as the Stage, for his work does not stop at single subjects. This island is home to great dioramas concocted from flesh. There are scenes of war and carnage from the Great Heresy, the Macharius Crusade, the Sabbat Worlds, and more. Perhaps surprisingly, many of these dioramas show the subjects of the Imperium in a flattering light. On the few occasions this has been brought up with Beledran, he has simply smiled a languid smile and stated that it was the act of carnage and destruction that pulled him to the scene, not who was victorious on the actual day. How he even knows about such events that have happened long ago in places light years away is another mystery that surrounds Rouge.

Of all these artistic wonders, the greatest of the Pirate Prince's work is still to be completed. The tethers that link the asteroids are not visible to the naked eye, and so to cross a great expanse is an unnerving experience. Beledran has never liked this aspect of the Ragged Helix, not because he finds it unsettling—he has walked the Helix for six hundred years—more that it does not suit his aesthetic sensibilities. To remedy this, Beledran has started what he has called his "greatest work," whereby vast bridges of flesh and bone span the voids in his Fief. A rigid structure between two floating islands would never endure, and so Rouge has imbued his constructs with the arcane. The services of K'ralzx the Mage-Wright were purchased to make the impossible, possible. So far the Q'Sal Sorcerer's spell has proven successful, allowing Beledran to bridge the spans. The side effect has been to recall the spirits of those slaughtered to create the structure, manifesting in the bridge as screaming, elongated faces. The Pirate Prince looked upon this new development as a boon, and was reported as saying that it added a whole new emotional depth to the work.

So far the Menagerie has been connected to the demesne, and Rouge has already started on the second bridge. Of course, such staggering constructs require an immense amount of raw material; an unfortunate consequence for anyone who crosses Beledran Rouge's path.



## THE FIEF OF LISHKAR DELPHUES

The Pirate Princess Lishkar Delphues is a terrifying individual to encounter. She is an intimidating figure not only in stature but appearance as well.

Even when young, Lishkar was afflicted with a split personality. Lishkar would tell her guardians in the Schola Progenium that she was visited at night by a spiteful old crone. This mysterious stranger claimed that one day, they would be one.

Decades later, when she pledged her allegiance to the Ruinous Powers in desperation to alleviate her plight, it was Slaanesh that answered her plea. A Keeper of Secrets came to her, promising that she would be a powerful leader and that many would tremble at her very name but first she would have to bring her true selves to the fore. With that, the Keeper of Secrets struck out its forefinger and with a single razor-sharp nail sliced down her face.

To look upon Lishkar now is to see the two personalities melded as one. Her face is split in two vertically down the centre by a sinuous red scar, the legacy of the Greater Daemon. One side of her face is beautiful; she would be stunning if whole. The other side is hideous, a horrible crone with weeping eyes. Both sides of Lishkar's personality are incredibly cruel and domineering, each trying to outdo and better the other in everything. To be captured by Lishkar is an unfortunate fate, as both sides suggest and then implement terrible tortures, the split personalities trying to beat the other in the most agonising way.

The rare instances when Lishkar does speak with one voice are in the heat of battle, during which one or the other personality surrenders dominance. The Crone is said to favour caution and careful planning, and excels at leading the Pirate's quarry into deadly traps, while the Girl is more headstrong, preferring strength of force over cunning.

Unsurprisingly, Delphues' Fief reflects her double personality. The domain consists of two large asteroids; one is known as the Girl's Haven and the other is called the Crone's Lair.

Both islands have been turned into grand residences. Each mirrors the look and feel of the owning personality. In the Crone's halls, the decor is cold but broken up by strange and unsettling paintings. Upon the walls are giant canvases showing dual scenes: one in which the subjects are feasting or in provocative acts, with the following painting showing the same subjects in torturous and excruciatingly painful poses. An ornate, colossal chandelier hangs from the ceiling in the central audience chamber. Each of the thousand delicate, hanging crystals that makes up a part of the chandelier is said to contain the essence of one of Lishkar's countless victims.

Directly below the chandelier, and equal in circumference, is a massive pit that burrows deep down into the asteroid. No one knows what is in the pit; even her the members of her retinue are unsure. One thing is certain, something resides within, for every so often otherworldly howls of frustration can be heard echoing out of the hole. One theory is that Lishkar has imprisoned the Greater Daemon that split her in twain, and when the crystal chandelier is full of the Crone's captured spirits, it will be cut from the ceiling to fall into the pit, crushing its prisoner, the resulting act finally separating Lishkar into two distinct beings. Of course, this is all supposition, legend, and hear-say.

Across the atmospheric bridge lies the Girl's Haven. On this island everything is far brighter, and more immediate. While the Crone's side of Lishkar's personality has a preference for slaying those she has captured, the Girl sees them as slaves to be worked hard, toiling within the interior of her asteroid, hollowing it out as she hunts for a rare mineral said to have great restorative properties. Not all captives are sent into the mines below the Haven. There are those she calls "The Handsome Ones." If Lishkar sets eyes on a slave—male or female—and sees an attraction there, she orders that favoured person sent to the tower, a pinnacle-like structure that caps the Girl's Haven. Once imprisoned in the tower, none have ever returned. Lishkar visits the tower every few days when she is in residence. What happens on these occasions none can say, only that when Lishkar returns she is clearly rejuvenated.

## THE FIEF OF CRAVELLE GURLSH

The corpulent form of the Pirate Prince known as Cravelle Gurlsh is both vile and horrifying to behold. Never seen without some food in his mouth or hand, Gurlsh's raids focus on material goods. The crews and passengers of his quarry are inconsequential.

Rather than kill them, Cravelle lets the crew go. However, having emptied the target craft of all valuable and usable material, he makes a point of destroying any kind of propulsion the ship has, leaving it a listing wreck and the passengers stranded. That they then suffer slow and painful deaths due to thirst, starvation, and the predations of the strong over the weak is of great comfort to Cravelle, as these are deaths that Slaanesh cherishes.

To the Prince of Chaos, the deprivation of sensations can be as fulfilling as overindulging in them. That the victims of a such kindness are rarely grateful has always been a bit of mystery to this Pirate Prince.





His ship, *The Jilted*, is a hulking, ugly, monstrosity of a void craft. The ship is incredibly slow and, in most cases, his targets could outrun him. And yet, Gurlsh is a prolific raider. It seems the more the prey flees and strives to get away, the closer *The Jilted* gets. How Cravelle manages this is not clear. Can *The Jilted* open pocket gateways to skim along the Warp and rapidly close the distance? Is Cravelle simply blessed by the Dark Prince, who would no doubt enjoy the irony of the slow and dignified always capturing the hasty? Only the dead and Cravelle know for certain. Whatever the reason, when *The Jilted* returns to the Ragged Helix, its holds are always full. The Fief of Cravelle Gurlsh is a ring of asteroids in which his bloated ship rests, anchored in the centre when it's not raiding.

The floating islands of Gurlsh's domain are modest in size when compared to the domains of other Pirate Princes of note. However, with six asteroids under his control, attacking or attempting to siege Cravelle's Fief is a daunting prospect. As well as linking to the next island in Gurlsh's chain, each asteroid has a secondary bridge leading to another part of the Helix. To seal off the Fief from the outside would be an all but impossible task. As such, despite the boundless avarice and ambition of the other Pirate Princes, none has ever attempted an all-out assault upon Gurlsh's lair. This is despite the fact that the realm is rich in valuable resources—the results of the Pirate Prince's long and successful career.

Cravelle is a copious hoarder; mountains of food stuffs rot on at least two of his islands. Gold, gems, and other baubles are piled high on another, while weapons of exotic and xenos origin gather dust in another part of his domain. Cravelle has no real use for such things, and simply collects them from an insatiable, obsessive need—a gift from Slaanesh. To take anything from Gurlsh, no matter that he has no real need of it, would be a terrible mistake. Despite being a Pirate Prince of the Ragged Helix with a fearsome reputation to match, Cravelle Gurlsh is rarely roused to anger. And yet, any petty act of theft against his property—no matter that he has stolen it himself, one of the odd times when Gurlsh does fail to see the irony—triggers a great rage. Woe betide the thief if he is caught, for nothing, not the Emperor, nor even Slaanesh himself, can save the perpetrator from Cravelle's vengeance.

## THE HALLS OF DIONAEA

Cravelle Gurlsh, Beledran Rouge, and Lishkar Delphues are but three of the Pirate Princes that inhabit the Ragged Helix. There are many more within the Helix and most—if they have proven worthy enough—have a Fief that is as strange, bizarre, and dangerous as their ruler.

But not all islands within the interior of the archipelago are under the dominion of one of the Pirate Princes. At the heart of the Ragged Helix lies a planetoid that has been called many things in its past, but is currently known as the Halls of Dionaea. It is one of the larger asteroids in the entire archipelago, the interior of which is riddled with passages and chambers through to the very core.

Many might envision large empty passages and caves of hewn rock, but this image could not be further from the truth. The exterior does appear as a barren planetoid, but the large, yearning cave-like entrance reveals the inside of the Dionaea to be richly adorned. Opulence is everywhere within, and beatific statues cast their eyes upon

the teeming number of patrons who visit. Great friezes dominate the walls, and intricate mosaics of deplorable images criss-cross vast floors when they are not laid with luxurious carpets with intricate patterns weaved into the pile. Such patterns cannot be looked upon for too long, for it is said that strange visions and temporary madness plague those that follow the weave too closely.

The Hall's visitors are legion. The Pirate Princes rarely work alone, and have large crews and retinues at their disposal; some are indentured workers and slaves, but most are loyal to their Pirate Prince, desiring to share in his glory and wealth. It is these, as well as daring visitors from outside the Ragged Helix, who journey to the Dionaea and partake its countless delights. For the Halls are a veritable pleasure palace; its many chambers cater to every vice imaginable. There are whole districts for gambling, cavernous avenues set aside for prostitution, where any deviancy is fulfilled, and great markets in which exotic wares are traded and the finest food, drinks, and narcotics are sampled.





The Dionaea, sometimes also known as the Honeycomb, is staffed and administered by a strange androgynous race. They are slim with elfin faces and an ink-like patina that shimmers and moves across their skin. The patina reacts to the creature's environment, forming into pleasing or mesmerising patterns in response to external factors such as the moods of the Dionaea's clientele. The xenos are not known to exist anywhere outside of the Dionaea; there is certainly no known mention of them in any ancient infovault or Imperial dataslate. Their only seeming desire is to please the Honeycomb's visitors. They are gracious and welcoming, using their pleasing, shifting colours to placate the guests, and are impossible to provoke to anger—as many have tried, especially those who have lost at the gambling tables. The Administrators, as they have become known, are extremely non-confrontational; they mutter apologies, offer complimentary drinks, and alter their skin patterns into soothing configuration and other physical comforts to placate antagonists. However, should this fail, then the statuary awakes.

The countless statues within the Halls all work as part of the magnificent decor. They can be found in many forms, from grand hounds and rampant lions to depictions of famous Pirate Princes of the past and angelic figures. The majority of the time they remain as still as stone. Should the Administrators or the property of the Dionaea come under direct and sustained threat, then the nearby statuary activate. Moving in a seamless and efficient manner, the statues close in on the perpetrators and eject them out of the area. If the instigator becomes even more agitated and violent, the statues will react with equal force, although they are almost inevitably stronger and kill with ruthless efficiency. Usually, the animation of the statues is enough to placate the individual or group of rabble-rousers, who are then escorted to the exit. Afterwards, the statues return to their former places and positions without a glance at any other visitor or Administrator to continue their silent vigil.

While not necessarily a secret, the Dionaea's unique statuary is not a well known feature. Regulars to the Halls learn early on to not cause too much trouble, but newcomers often only see the supplicating Administrators and so feel

empowered and unduly entitled, especially if they belong to the retinue of a reputable Pirate Prince. Regulars have become attuned to the frequent spectacle and get a sense of perverse joy watching the naive perpetrators dealing with the emotionless, silent, and terrifying vision of the statuary bearing down on them. It certainly always attracts many gawkers from nearby gambling tables.

The statues are not invincible, but it takes a being of exceptional strength to do more than chip rock or dint bronze. There are a few instances where a statue has been destroyed in the course of its duties, not necessarily by brute strength alone, but sometimes if the target of the statue's ire has broken the covenant preventing weapons within the Halls. Those foolish enough to openly brandish even so much as an autopistol do not normally see the statuary move, just a fleeting shadow before their hands are crushed and necks broken.

Due to the Honeycomb's unique status, and its subtle defences, it has become the de facto location for the Pirate Princes to meet. It is neutral ground, unclaimed by any Fief, making it an ideal meeting place should the Princes deign to convene face-to-face. This is where pacts are made, or allegiances changed and plans are instigated to slay common rivals or to invade a Fief. The Administrators serve such important personages with the reverence their notoriety dictates, ensuring that private quarters are organised so the meeting can take place away from prying eyes, and that goblets are always full and platters are well stocked with morsels of food and sweat treats.

The Pirate Princes, like the other denizens of the Ragged Helix, use the Dionaea for their own nefarious purposes, and so give little thought to why it is there.

No one has noticed—or if some have, those individuals rarely care—that roughly six percent of the Dionaea's many visitors never leave. They become lost in the labyrinthine passages, for the deeper they go, the less the corridors resemble the opulent higher levels, and begin to look and feel organic. Passages take on a pinkish tinge, with blue veins as the walls visibly pulse. For—if the maddest, most insane of the Helix's denizens are to be believed—at the centre of the asteroid resides a tentacled monstrosity, a creature of Slaanesh's creation that psychically feeds off the desires of the Hall's





patrons. Intangible sustenance is never quite enough, however. The curse or boon that Slaanesh has gifted his pet is that to power the elfin organic puppets, and the arcane constructs that mete out the Honeycomb's justice above, the creature must also feed on the flesh of its patrons. And so it does, funnelling a small but significant percentage of the visitors into its fleshy passages, which lead directly to one of its many, dripping maws. Legends claim that the victims, their emotional extremes dampened through the actions of the creature's puppets above, last many long weeks until their sensory capabilities are finally exhausted and their sated flesh is consumed.

### PIRATE PRINCE SENESCHAL

Seneschals and other high-ranking members of a Pirate Prince's retinue are typical of the clientèle the Heretics might encounter in the Dionaea. The title varies depending on how the Prince organises his retinue. He could be known as First Mate, Favoured One, Officer of the Abyss, Seneschal, or any such epithet. In any case, he is sure to be a member of the Pirate Prince's Inner Circle, if not his closest advisor, and likely holder of his greatest secrets.

Pirate Prince Seneschal (Elite)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
4I	38	4I	4I	40	35	30	38	40	I 2	

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 15

**Armour:** Light carapace (5 All)

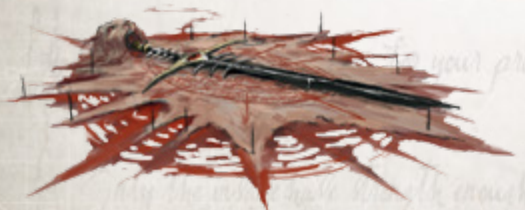
**Total TB:** 4

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Commerce (Int) +10, Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag), Interrogation (WP), Intimidation (S).

**Talents:** Disarm, Hip Shooting, Nerves of Steel, Takedown.

**Weapons:** Inferno pistol (Pistol; 10m; S/-/-; 2d10+10 E; Pen 12, Clip 3; Melta), power rapier with duellist's grip (Melee; 1d10+6 E; Pen 3; Balanced, Power Field). Each seneschal carries his own unique weapons, and so these can be exchanged for similar weapons as desired.

**Gear:** A Seneschal's gear is highly individualised, but all of it is at least of Good Craftmanship. He also likely has some form of narcotics. Obscura is one common option, but there are a wide variety of other, more exotic flavours from the Screaming Vortex that he might possess.



### STATUARY OF DIONAEA

The sinister statues of the Halls are arcane constructs powered by an unknown force. Their role seemingly is to keep the peace within the Halls of Dionaea, ensuring its patrons can pursue their lusts and desires without fear of danger or reprisal, though many wonder if the imposed calm merely ensures that repressed urges become even more powerful once unleashed.

Statuary of Dionaea (Elite)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
35	--	6 45	9 58	45	I 5	35	I 5	I 0	--	

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 30

**Armour:** Stone construction (All 6)

**Total TB:** 9

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Parry (WS), Stealth (Ag).

**Talents:** Cold Hearted, Disarm, Swift Attack, True Grit, Unarmed Warrior.

**Traits:** Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (1), Machine (6), Undying, Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (4), Sturdy.

**Weapons:** Stone Fists (Melee; 1d10+6 I; Pen 0; Concussive, Felling [2]).

**Gear:** None.

### GAMING IN THE DIONAEA

The Dionaea presents players and the Game Master with an interesting dichotomy to the rest of the Ragged Helix. Here is a place where Heretics can encounter many NPCs in a social context rather than a simple hostile confrontation. It is a great place to instigate a Social Conflict, with plenty of spectators about to appraise the conflict allowing players to increase their standing and Infamy amongst the denizens of the Helix. It is also a good place for GM's to introduce leads and where a Heretic can restock his inventory—or lose it all through gambling!

There are plenty of adventure hooks within the Halls that can be used or ignored as the Game Master sees fit; whether it is sinister statues, mysterious xenos servants, chasing a fellow patron or group through the crowded passages, or even escaping the hunger of a tentacled monstrosity!

The assorted clientele of the Dionaea can be represented using any of the Heretic profiles from pages 360-363 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.





## AT THE EDGE



**KNEEL BEFORE  
PSEUDANOR**  
•  
**THE SIX DELIGHTS  
OF SLAANESH**  
•  
**CONFRONTATION!**  
•  
**CONSEQUENCES**  
•  
**NPC AND  
ADVERSARY INDEX**





# CHAPTER IV: AT THE EDGE

*"The only death one should dread is the death of sensation,  
for with it dies all desire."*

—Verse 6, Chapter 6, *The Book of Carpathius*

**A**t the Edge is a **BLACK CRUSADE** adventure that plunges the Heretics into the court of one of the decadent pirate princes of the Ragged Helix. Those Heretics used to achieving their goals through violence or strategy are likely to find the hedonistic excesses of the court a far greater challenge than they can possibly imagine. In order to progress as champions of Chaos, the Heretics must prove that they are able to master the most extreme of pursuits and not fall prey to the glimmers of the Prince of Pleasure. Countless souls are entrapped within the six circles of Slaanesh's vices, but only those able to master and overcome, instead of resist and escape, those vices are truly worthy of treading the Path to Glory.

The Heretics have come to the attention of one of the most powerful and degenerate pirate princes of the Ragged Helix—Prince Pseudanor the Liberator. This grand epicure's self-gifted epithet is doubly applicable, for while he has liberated countless cargoes from the groaning holds of his preys' star ships, his true passion is the unleashing of excess to the glory of Slaanesh. Pseudanor's very being compels him to test and challenge others, to liberate them from their own, self-imposed limitations. Most prove too weak to master the Six Delights of Slaanesh and are consumed by their ordeal. Others prove the equal of Pseudanor's games, and these he must destroy lest they become his rivals. A select few prove such masters of the vices of Slaanesh that Pseudanor recognises them as equals, or perhaps even as superiors. These he ensures regard him as an ally, at least until he finds some way of defeating them and proving that he and he alone is worthy of the favours of the Prince of Chaos.

It is into the court of Pseudanor the Liberator, a court seething with excess and cruel intrigue, that the Heretics are plunged in **At the Edge**. Should they survive the Liberator's trials, they can forge a powerful alliance with which to continue their journey along the Path to Glory. Should they fail, then death might seem a deliverance compared to the eternity of servitude that awaits.



# THE GM'S BRIEF

**T**his section of **At the Edge** provides the Game Master with a summary of the story so far and an overview of the adventure's plot. Using this information, the GM can provide as much or as little detail as he feels the players need in order to get started, and plunge them straight into the decadence and intrigue.

Before reading this section, it is recommended that the Game Master familiarises himself with the Ragged Helix. This setting is introduced in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook and further, more specific details of its locations and the characters that live in them are provided on pages 115-120. **At the Edge** takes place in the fief of one of the numerous pirate princes of the Ragged Helix, extensive details of which are provided in this chapter.

## THE STORY THUS FAR

The pirate princes of the Ragged Helix are engaged in a ceaseless battle for power and influence. When the pirate prince Pseudanor the Liberator learns of the coming of a new group—the Heretics—to the Ragged Helix, he seeks to be the first to test them in order to learn whether these would-be champions are potential rivals, patrons, or slaves. The Liberator's realm is one of unrestrained decadence in which each of the six delights of Slaanesh is pursued to the utmost. Pseudanor himself has long ago mastered each of the vices, yet the Heretics have yet to learn the true scope of Slaanesh's power. Only by proving themselves masters of gluttony, greed, ambition, debauchery, hubris, and surrender may the Heretics survive the Liberator's wanton trials. Should they prove themselves still greater epicures than he, then they may earn such glory that he will seek their favour.

By proving themselves in the Liberator's challenge, the Heretics can expect to earn themselves a formidable ally, one with knowledge of the treacherous tides of the Screaming Vortex. Armed with such information, the Heretics can expect to be able to continue their rise to glory and perhaps to penetrate the inner regions of the Screaming Vortex.

In addition, Games Masters might use this adventure as a means of escalating the campaign. The Path to Glory invariably steers those who tread it towards the launching of a **BLACK CRUSADE**, and such a huge and ambitious undertaking is only possible by uniting and dominating as many of the fractious powers of the Screaming Vortex as possible. The Ragged Helix offers a route towards the inner regions of the Screaming Vortex, where true power is to be found, and so the Heretics might very well come to the Court of the Liberator in search of that route. By proving themselves worthy, the Liberator may well provide that information and allow the campaign to ascend to an entirely new level.

## ADVENTURE PLOT

The adventure presents the players with a number of challenges, while leaving it up to them and the Game Master to determine exactly how each of these challenges is met. The adventure can be played as a very open and freeform series of related, key events, or as a much more structured narrative, depending on which approach best suits the group.





**At the Edge** begins with the Heretics arriving at the realm of Pseudanor the Liberator. Having been summoned to his court or having sought an audience there, the Heretics are challenged to prove their worthiness to tread the Path to Glory and to seek the patronage of the Prince of Chaos. Exactly how the Heretics choose to overcome each of the challenges is left up to them to decide. The players might concoct some truly outré scheme to prove themselves the most gluttonous gourmands in the entire Screaming Vortex, perhaps consuming the most potent of concoctions without becoming insensible, for example. Should the players need a little prompting or the Game Master require a more solid foundation, however, the adventure provides plenty of ideas as well as some specific suggestions on ways each challenge can be met. Six NPC courtiers are detailed, each of them an exemplar of one of the Six Delights of Slaanesh, allowing the GM to take a direct hand in events through these characters' actions.

Having completed, or at least survived, each of the Trials of the Liberator, the Heretics return to the court of Pseudanor to hear his judgement on their efforts. There is a twist in the tale, however, one which the more canny of Heretics might have deduced throughout the trials. The trials are revealed to be nothing more than an amusement for the Liberator and his debauched court, a revelation that the Heretics are unlikely to receive well. How they react to this grave insult depends very much on how the Heretics fared in the trials themselves. If they are truly worthy, they will have amassed sufficient favour to turn the tables on the Liberator and to gain power over him and all of his fief.

As will become apparent as the GM reads through the adventure, **At the Edge** explores a number of the themes presented throughout **THE TOME OF EXCESS**. It focuses on the mastering of extremes. Those truly dedicated to Slaanesh are able to push themselves to any edge and to experience any sensation, reaching, and indeed looking over, the precipice without being sucked down into its fathomless depths.

The Heretics' objective in **At the Edge** is to prove themselves not only the masters of sensation and experience, but to show that they are superior to Pseudanor the Liberator in all of the vices for which Slaanesh is known. Only by steeping their very souls in sin and degradation may the Heretics earn the blessings of the Prince of Chaos and progress further in their **BLACK CRUSADE**.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

**At the Edge** can be played as a one-off adventure, or as part of an ongoing campaign of interlinked games. If the Heretics have arrived at the Ragged Helix from elsewhere, the events of previous games might have some bearing on those that take place in **At the Edge**, just as the events that play out in this adventure might have far-reaching consequences on future adventures.

The events of the adventure are assumed to begin at the moment the Heretics arrive in the Ragged Helix, and in particular at the fief of Pseudanor the Liberator. Depending on the type of game the Game Master is running, no more set-up than this might be needed. However, it is generally more satisfying to place any adventure within an overall narrative story arc. The Game Master might like to consider foreshadowing the coming events during the preceding adventure. Perhaps the Heretics learn of Pseudanor's wanton acts of piracy during an encounter with one of his victims, or word of the extremes to which he pushes himself and his followers reaches them in other ways. Such hints need not be overt, but can serve to pique the Heretics' interest in what amounts to a very different type of encounter entirely.

When setting up the adventure, the Game Master might like to consider whether any of the Heretics are native to the Ragged Helix or have at least visited it before. Chapter II presents a number of new character types, and if one or more of these is represented in the group, then that alone might present a good way of leading the Heretics into the story. In addition, should a player have lost his character in an earlier adventure, the replacement could be a native of the Ragged Helix, providing a great way of tying in the introduction of a new adventure with the arrival of a new Player Character. This is especially useful when the established characters are all of a higher Rank than the new one, as it allows the new character to enjoy some time in the limelight right from the start.

As with any adventure, the events of **At the Edge** might form part of a Compact, as described on page 269 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

**At the Edge** could be tied into the events that transpire during **False Prophets**, the introductory adventure presented in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. In particular, the narrative could be linked to the person of Captain Theofus Kreeli, who might now be active in the Ragged Helix and at least partly responsible for the Heretics travelling there.





Lastly, **At the Edge** is the third adventure to be published in the series of **BLACK CRUSADE** supplements that began with the **TOME OF FATE** and continued with the **TOME OF BLOOD**. Taken as a whole, these adventures present the Heretics with the opportunity to seek the blessings of each of the Ruinous Powers in turn, though there is no requirement for them all to be played one after the other or in any particular order. Because of the order in which these supplements have been published, however, it is possible that the Heretics might have gained quite a range of advances, Skills, and Talents by the time **At the Edge** is played, and so the Game Master may have to adjust some of the details of the challenges to account for this. The adventure is broadly pitched at mid-level Player Characters, but because it focuses on Interaction Challenges and Social Confrontations rather than combat, a different range of abilities, some of which may not yet have been fully explored in the campaign, come into play. If, as is entirely possible, **At the Edge** is being played by a group of characters less advanced along the Path to Glory, then this should not be much of an issue, though Game Masters might consider making some of the Challenges and Confrontations a little easier on them if necessary.

## GM GUIDANCE:

### THE BIGGER PICTURE

**At the Edge** represents the third adventure focused upon the themes of a specific one of the four Chaos Gods. Game Masters might like to keep in mind the overall mission of any band of Heretics—the launching of a full-scale **BLACK CRUSADE**. The ultimate aim of **At the Edge** is to garner power and influence amongst the notorious pirate princes of the Ragged Helix, for they would surely represent a potent force if they could ever be united under a single banner. Though a fully-fledged **BLACK CRUSADE** might still be some way off, the Heretics should never forget that those who tread the Path to Glory must commit themselves to reaching their destination or falling by the wayside in the attempt.

### DRESS FOR EXCESS

**At the Edge** is very much focused on the themes presented in this book, namely excess and extremes of experience in a soul-shattering range of different forms. Because it focuses on Interaction type challenges, it is entirely possible to play through the entire adventure without a single shot being fired. Player Characters loaded up with guns and highly martial in nature will enjoy few, if any, advantages, allowing those of a less-combat-oriented nature to take the limelight. **At the Edge** might appear at first to be tailored to a group of Heretics wholly or partially devoted to the Prince of Chaos, but this does not mean that Heretics of all sorts of different loyalties and outlooks should not be able to take part. Indeed, the involvement of characters of wildly divergent approaches is to be encouraged, if for no other reason than because the nature of Chaos encourages competition in all things. Players should be encouraged to consider how their characters might react to situations where their natural instinct is to shoot first and ask questions later. These tensions can provide all manner of additional gaming opportunities, and make the adventure all the more engaging and memorable.

If the Game Master wishes, he can use the following secondary objectives to provide those dedicated to a power other than Slaanesh with some specific secondary missions and motivations.

Because a Heretic dedicated to another power might find himself at a disadvantage at various points in the adventure, it is only fair he should have some means of righting the balance. The following provides a number of optional, personal goals Player Characters might like to pursue, along with the rewards for attaining them. Players and Game Masters are, of course, encouraged to invent further goals and motivations as befits the Player Characters and the ongoing campaign narrative.

In addition to the secondary objectives listed in this section, the Game Master might like to consider counting some or all of these deeds as Glorifying Acts as presented in Part 3.



## CHARACTERS DEDICATED TO TZEENTCH

Those dedicated to the Changer of the Ways revel in the seeding of strategies and the reaping of long-term ruses. For such as them, the masterful manipulation of fate is at once a means and an end, and so the instant gratification of those dedicated to Slaanesh is often anathema to them. The servants of Tzeentch might even be tempted to deny themselves and those around them the pleasures spread out before them, or to weave them into an intricate plot that less subtle minds fail to perceive.

**Personal Goal:** The fief of the Liberator is a seething cauldron of unfettered gratification. A Heretic dedicated to Tzeentch who can convince his compatriots to master one or more of the Six Delights of Slaanesh (detailed later) by way of the performance of any sort of Ritual earns an additional 100 Experience Points. Note that the player must not reveal this reward to the rest of the group, but must convince them such a Ritual must be performed instead.

## CHARACTERS DEDICATED TO KHORNE

Khorne is the great rival of Slaanesh, for where the Blood God seeks the explosive gratification of a foe slaughtered, the Prince of Chaos is wont to prolong the misery of the fallen and to revel in an eternity of domination. Where the servants of Khorne make overt signs of power, those of Slaanesh care only for their own experiences, caring nothing for those of anyone else. When confronted with the wholesale works of the Prince of Chaos, those dedicated to the Blood God are likely to be driven to bring all his rival's works crashing down in an orgy of violence, brutally ending sensations and experiences that might otherwise have been prolonged for centuries.

**Personal Goal:** Should a Heretic dedicated to Khorne be chosen to represent the group in one of the trials of the Six Delights of Slaanesh, that character earns an additional 100 Experience Points if he wins the challenge by violent means. Sadly for the group, doing so causes Pseudanor to declare that trial lost, regardless of the actual outcome, but the Player Character still earns his bonus regardless.

## CHARACTERS DEDICATED TO NURGLE

To servants of Slaanesh, experience is a needle plunged directly into an eye. To them, the blessings of Nurgle are cold and stifling and damned never to attain their peak before being reduced to slurry. To those dedicated to Nurgle, Slaanesh's blessings are but fleeting and infertile things that serve no greater purpose at all.

**Personal Goal:** A Heretic dedicated to Nurgle earns an additional 100 Experience if he can infect an NPC with Nurgle's Rot during one or more of the trials of the Six Delights of Slaanesh. Doing so proves that, unlike the gifts of the Prince of Pleasure, those of the Father of Plagues are eternal and enduring.

# PART I: KNEEL BEFORE PSEUDANOR

At the beginning of *At the Edge*, the Heretics arrive at the court of Pseudanor the Liberator and are introduced to some of its inhabitants and hazards. There are several ways in which the Heretics might arrive at the fief of the Liberator and it may or not be important to the Game Master to keep this in mind, especially should the group need to make a hasty exit later on. One way for them to travel there is in a vessel they themselves either own or have chartered, in which case the arrival point might be the Primary Docking Mouth described below. Another way would be to travel from one island to the next using the impossible void-spanning bridges for which the Ragged Helix is well known, crossing into the fief via one of the points shown on the map (see page 143). Of course, given the nature of the Screaming Vortex and the Heretics themselves, other means of arriving at the fief of the Liberator might come into play. Perhaps the Heretics make use of some arcane portal or example of forbidden technology or employ some manner of pact or ritual to transport them from one part of the vortex to the next. In such cases, the Game Master should determine a point on the map and have the Heretics begin there. This could be a busy location and cause numerous guards to come running as soon as the intrusion is detected, or it might be a quiet corner of the fief, calling for the Heretics to travel across several bridges and to allowing them to insinuate themselves in to the pirate hordes should they wish. The choice is left up to the GM and depends very much on the sort of encounter he has in mind.

Exactly what occurs upon the Heretics' arrival at the fief of the Liberator depends on several factors. The most important of these is the type of game the Game Master intends to run. It might be, for example, that the Heretics are greeted with suspicion or disdain. They might be treated as interlopers or invaders and challenged by every pirate they encounter. Alternatively, the followers of the Liberator might be so distracted by their own pursuits that they all but ignore the Heretics, allowing the Player Characters to explore the setting as much or as little as the players and the GM wish. The Heretics, though, must sooner or later find themselves in the Court of the Liberator. This could come about as a direct consequence of an encounter, or the Liberator's officers learning of the arrival of the Heretics and ordering them brought before their master to account for themselves. Equally, the Heretics might decide to present themselves at the court directly, in which case the action can proceed to the events described in the second part of the adventure as soon as the Game Master is ready.



## THE FIEF OF THE LIBERATOR

Pseudanor the Liberator is lord of a cluster of islands within the Ragged Helix. His realm consists of a handful of very large asteroids (each the size of a major island or small continent on a planet) and dozens of lesser bodies. The greatest of these void-bound rocks are connected to their neighbours by impossible bridges, so that a traveller could step across the lethal void without suffering any ill effects at all, if he is fortunate at least. The form and nature of these arcane bridges appears to vary greatly, partly with the perceptions of the traveller and partly with the capricious whim of Chaos. A handful of these bridges lead off to neighbouring realms, making them important links in the labyrinthine web that connects the countless islands of the Ragged Helix.

Each of the larger islands of the Liberator's realm is host to sprawling palaces of unspeakable depravity and decadence. Glittering domes cleave to the pale rock, the vast glass panels fogged with condensation, so vigorous are the sins enacted within. Delicate spires thrust proudly into the void, penetrating reality itself and casting the flickering light of Slaanesh's dark delights so that all within the Ragged Helix might know the glory of the Prince of Chaos. The lesser islands are far from untouched by Pseudanor's taint, for many are host to secluded havens of debauchery, the private sanctuaries of the Liberator's favoured underlings and their own favoured paramours or victims.

Despite its primary purpose, the realm of the Liberator is host to more prosaic facilities. Countless numbers of the smaller islands house formidable defence platforms and sensitive detection clusters, many of them wrought into obscenely suggestive shapes. The largest of the islands is host to a docking facility at which voidships up to light cruiser displacement can dock and undergo refitting and rearming. Of greater utility are the vast treasure chambers hewn into the virgin rock of the islands, each of which groans with bounties plundered from across the Screaming Vortex and possibly beyond. Because some of Pseudanor's liberated booty takes the form of living beings, the larger of his islands are also host to sprawling networks of tunnels, dungeons, and holding cells. At times these are swollen to capacity with captives and slaves begging for the ultimate release of death—at others they are eerily silent, their erstwhile inmates having given all to the glory of the Prince of Chaos.

Spread-eagled at the centre of this tainted realm lies the Palace of the Liberated. A vast construction of clustered glass domes and glittering needle-spires sprawled over a vast area of marble smooth rock, the palace heaves and groans with the sins of the Liberator when he is in residence, and waits in anguished apprehension while he is abroad. The palace's endless passageways are lined with an incongruous mixture of high art and lowly filth. Paintings, sculptures, and other objets d'art line the corridors, some of them purloined from the residences of the highest ranked leaders within and beyond the Screaming Vortex. Littering the stained carpets, however, is to be seen the detritus of eternal debauchery, including the instruments of exquisite torture and often the objects of that torture themselves, lying quivering and spent until next they are called upon to answer their master's capricious urges.

### THE MAP

At the **Edge** includes a map of the Fief of the Liberator (to be found on page 143). The Game Master can assign locations on it as desired, and use it to keep track of the Heretics' position within the fief if it becomes relevant. It can be especially useful for determining how many bridges the Heretics must cross when travelling from one part to the next, for doing so is a hazardous trial in itself that should not be approached lightly.

At the very core of the Palace of the Liberated is to be found the throne room of Pseudanor himself. Capped by a glass dome said to be wrought from the crystallised tears of his countless lovers, the throne room is host to the most extreme and inventive of the Liberator's celebrations. Before the Liberator's throne, his followers take part in every trial and extreme imaginable, testing one another to and beyond the limits of experience and endurance. Those who shrivel from the enacting or enduring of such deeds are lucky to be killed on the spot by the enraged celebrants. More likely they are dragged away to be sacrificed to the dark glory of Slaanesh, a fate that might be prolonged for days or, in some cases, years.

Overlooking this carnal court is the throne of Pseudanor, a magnificent construction of flesh and bone combined with precious metals and gems and upholstered with the most exotic of fabric and skin. The Liberator himself sits atop his throne when resident in the palace, contenting himself to preside over the debaucheries enacted in his name. The only times he leaves his throne are when he departs to reave the space lanes of the Screaming Vortex or when he spies some new experience he wishes to partake in, some rare morsel of depravity he has yet to sample in the name of Slaanesh.

## PRINCE PSEUDANOR THE LIBERATOR

Of the life of the degenerate epicure known to his followers and to his prey alike as the Liberator (though both for very different reasons), nothing is known for sure. Some say that he was spawned somewhere beyond the Screaming Vortex and came to it already dedicated to spreading the fell wonders of the Prince of Chaos. Others claim that he has always been present, seeding depravity and infamy and that he predates many of the more well-known and overtly powerful warlords. In truth, either or both tales could be true—such is the fickle nature of Chaos. Certainly, Pseudanor the Liberator has inhabited the Ragged Helix for as long as any living mortal can recall, and has become something of a primal force in the region. He is one of the most extreme examples of his type—a buccaneer of incautious prey and a connoisseur of vice. In general, the two facets are inextricably linked, for Pseudanor regards anything he desires as his to take, and any who resist as his sworn enemies. Having taken what he wants, the Liberator tests it, twists it, and ultimately drains it before casting it aside in search of the next morsel of degradation. All this and worse is the fate of those that fall under his lascivious gaze.



In appearance, Pseudanor is neither wholly male nor female, instead displaying facets of both genders and of several others. Depending on his moods, his apparent gender might appear to alter. Whilst reaving the stars, his countenance is grizzled and determined, and while closing on his cornered prey, wanton and lascivious. To the truly devoted of Slaanesh, gender is entirely irrelevant, though most suppose Pseudanor at least began life as a man and so most continue to refer to him as such.

Pseudanor presents a figure of riotous decadence combined with capricious cruelty. He wears sumptuous clothes wrought from fabrics using arcane or unnatural weaves, his body adorned with jewellery and fetishes of every imaginable sort. Despite the apparent grandeur of his raiment, Pseudanor's clothes are invariably crumpled and stained. Only upon the commencement of some grand adventure or celebration does the Liberator appear to his followers in unsullied garb, and even then, they are invariably reduced to dirty rags by the abuse that follows.

## THE LIBERATOR'S COURT

Beneath the glittering dome of the Liberator's throne room are to be found hundreds of ensnared souls, the majority having no inkling of their damnation. Most have come to the court willingly, imagining themselves the equals to the excesses perpetrated before Pseudanor's throne. Others have come not of their own free will, but, having been dragged there protesting their innocence and purity, have learned the unfettered splendour of Slaanesh. A few refuse to turn, but these are regarded with pity rather than anger, their denial of the Prince of Chaos something to be cured rather than punished. Every type of being is to be found before the throne, and every excess imaginable is committed by them. Some are strutting epicures boastful of the excesses they have committed, and intend to commit, in the name of Slaanesh, but these are in fact often the lesser of the Liberator's servants, their boasts little more than shallow bluster. There are mutants and aliens aplenty in the court, and often it is impossible to tell the difference. There are performers by the dozen, though few display their skills for the appreciation of the crowd, but rather to push themselves to death-defying extremes of movement and poise. Imbibers of every concoction imaginable are to be found there too, more often than not prostrate upon the floor or shrivelled and catatonic in the shadows. In those few open spaces not strewn with writhing bodies, all manner of gladiators compete or practise their skills, pushing their bodies beyond all limits. Others feast upon victuals plundered from every corner of the Screaming Vortex, sampling food and drink that would overwhelm the systems of lesser mortals and spell certain death. When the celebrants reach particular heights of degradation, the air itself shimmers with the energies of the Empyrean and their ranks are swollen still further by the Daemons of Slaanesh. Daemonettes and other forms stalk the writhing court, gifting favoured revellers with delicate caresses as likely to induce exquisite death as terminal pleasure.

Amongst this unclean throng are to be found several individuals who exceed even their peers in depravity. These six favoured courtiers are each considered the masters of one of the Six Delights of Slaanesh, though none amongst them can hope to rival their master Pseudanor the Liberator in the favour of the Prince of Chaos.



### PLUKUS, THE AVARITE

Plukus serves as Pseudanor's chief factor, an appointment that allows him to indulge the passion that has long since consumed his wrinkled soul. Plukus desires riches and wealth in all its forms, from abstract currency to priceless gems and ingots of precious metal. Throughout his lifetime, he has amassed a staggering reserve of personal wealth, but was lured to the court of the Liberator by the promise of amassing still more. His own riches secreted in what he imagines to be the most secure chambers deep within the floating islands of the Liberator's realm, Plukus spends his days counting his infernal master's instead, and dreaming of the day when he take possession of it. Pseudanor regards it as a supreme jest that Plukus is doomed to salivate over his proxy riches, plotting in what he believes to be secrecy of the day it will all be his. Of course, the Liberator knows every profane little secret of every one of his followers, so Plukus will never have the opportunity to move against his master.

Plukus spends a great deal of time in the treasure chambers deep within the asteroids of his master's realm, endlessly counting and recounting the millions of coins, gems, and other treasures held there. When not doing so, he is invariably to be found near the Liberator's side, advising him on matters relating to his hoard and ways in which it might be engorged still further. Pseudanor has no interest in conventional schemes to generate wealth, seeing such things as the preserve of Tzeentch, but he knows the value of making a statement and uses his wealth to do so, often to the chagrin of the miserly Plukus.



## CREOS, THE GLUTTONITE

Creos is a truly vile specimen to look upon, his form a quivering mass of blubber too large to be adorned by any garb other than a bib intended to catch the numerous morsels of food that fall as they are shovelled into his cavernous mouth. Creos is possessed of such a fearsome appetite that he is compelled to eat every waking minute. His tastes range from the delicate to the obscene, and it is said that if no actual food is within arms reach he grabs the nearest living creature in order to feast of their flesh. It is fortunate for the other courtiers that Creos is all but immobile and unable to pursue such prey, though he has been known to consume the forms of those revellers foolish enough to have collapsed from exhaustion or over consumption within his reach.

Creos relies upon the services of the hundreds of slaves that attend the Palace of the Liberated, for without their attentions he would starve within days or else drown in his own filth. On occasion, the court's excesses have proved so all consuming that all such slaves have been expended in the revels and Creos has come perilously close to death. Some claim that once he was forced to feast upon his own fat to survive until more attendants came, a deed he enjoyed and encourages his peers to try, if only once.

Other members of the court often wonder what Creos' limits might be and take steps to find out. It has become something of a favourite pastime to present Creos with the most unusual edibles in an effort to discover if there is any substance he rejects. So far, Creos' limits remain undetermined and he has consumed vast quantities of foodstuffs, much of it highly poisonous to lesser beings and some of it screaming its defiance even as it vanished down his gullet. It is said that Creos once consumed one of Pseudanor's rivals in an especially vivid form of execution that was pivotal in the Liberator's ascent to power amongst the pirate princes of the Ragged Helix.

## SIVIA, THE CARNALITE

Sivia is a being whose passions are so all-consuming that she is rarely seen beyond her extensive suite of bedchambers and private dungeons deep beneath the Palace of the Liberated. Sivia is mistress of the excesses of the flesh and it is said that few can meet her gaze and if ordered to attend her resist the command. In a supreme example of the fickleness of Chaos, Sivia appears not as some ravening siren but as a being of outward purity and innocence, albeit one garbed in diaphanous exoticism and dusted with mind-altering musk. Such an appearance is known to be an especial allurements to other followers of Slaanesh, who upon seeing such a pure countenance desire nothing more than to defile and corrupt it. She is supremely graceful and superficially feminine, though it is presumed that such a narrow definition of gender is entirely insufficient to describe her true form. In truth, none ordered to attend her bedchambers have ever returned alive to tell the tale, except perhaps Pseudanor the Liberator, or so the whispered legends of his court suggest.

Behind Sivia's delicate features and languid eyes there rages a soul more hungry for corruption and transgression than even the most imaginatively blasphemous of those dedicated to Slaanesh could possibly imagine. Her gaze constantly sweeps her surroundings in search of beings with whom she might share her sins, and upon identifying her victims a single gesture or glance is invariably sufficient to cause them to drop to their knees in abject supplication. What heights of ecstasy such blessed victims experience before their remains are ejected from Sivia's chambers must remain a mystery, until she meets her match and it is she who is expended to the glory of the Prince of Chaos.

## TYMARCH, THE PARAMITE

Tymarch appears as a robed and hooded counsellor, his head bowed in eternal genuflection and his voice disturbingly reassuring as he utters honeyed words of advice and encouragement. Tymarch is an unsurpassed master of flattery and his is the gift to propel others to incredible heights of power and achievement. In truth, Tymarch's friendly encouragement is entirely hollow, intended not to aggrandise those who seek his counsel, but to fulfil his own cruel amusement. Tymarch is regarded as a fickle manipulator who delights in inducing others to suicidal acts for nothing more than the amusement of his master and the court. Many an endeavour or entertainment has begun with a single, seemingly innocuous word or suggestion uttered by Tymarch, and entire worlds have burned as a result.

As great as his ability to overly flatter and sycophantically counsel might be, Tymarch's skill at belittling the object of his attentions is greater still. Having goaded his target to deeds of utter degradation, self-aggrandisement, or folly, Tymarch takes supreme fulfilment in exposing and mocking his target in such a way that death must surely be the only possible release. All this he does for the amusement of his master and he appears to enjoy *carte blanche* licence to use his prodigious abilities on any and all members of the court. Indeed, the only being Tymarch dare not attempt to build up and knock down in this manner is Pseudanor himself, for such an attempt would lead only to Tymarch's prolonged, messy, and extremely painful death.

## PHAETONI, THE VAINGLORIOUS

Where Tymarch is adept at goading a guileless victim to enact his own downfall, the courtier known as Phaetoni is concerned with personally enacting such deeds himself. Phaetoni seeks to degrade and shame his victims using any and all methods at his disposal. Confronted with a proud warrior, Phaetoni seeks to strike him down and extract pathetic, mewling pleas for mercy. Upon meeting a learned scholar, Phaetoni seeks to contradict his knowledge and, if he cannot, to burn his tomes to ashes. Whatever the source of the victim's pride, Phaetoni takes his pleasure from proving it entirely without value, and there are no depths to which he will not descend to do so.



It is not uncommon for Phaetoni to be accompanied by a gaggle of his victims, shackled and bound and forced to wait upon his every whim. It is rare for the same captive to be seen twice, though none know their ultimate fate. Throughout their brief sentence, these victims are forced to scrape and grovel at Phaetoni's feet and to carry out his every order. He appears to enjoy debasing the most puissant exemplars of the virtues mortals adhere to, from the strongest, proudest, most beautiful, or the most learned and forcing them to abase themselves upon the ground before him.

Pseudanor the Liberator finds Phaetoni's displays of shame and degradation most amusing, but he always ensures that his courtier does not get ideas above his station. On numerous occasions, Phaetoni has been forced to abase himself before the Liberator's throne having debased some other mortal himself. Such reminders of the proper order of things are often necessary to maintain some semblance of order in the glorious anarchy of the Liberator's court. Of course, this is a fine balance and one that only a truly dedicated servant of the Ruinous Powers could perceive. To anyone else, the court appears an insane, raucous, and utterly debauched place where nothing so much as the passions of the courtiers rule.

## SOMNI, THE INDOLITE

The courtier known as Somni presents something of an enigma, to her peers and to her master, and certainly to any that come before the court of the Liberator. She appears as a reveller eternally in the grip of blissful repose, her passions having been spent in whatever excesses the court unleashed the night before. She lies dishevelled and exhausted upon a pile of discarded and crumpled sheets, cushions, and clothes, her eyes open just enough to regard her surroundings with a distracted and unfocused gaze, and her lissom form entirely at rest. Those who lie down beside Somni are lost forever, for to do so is to share her indolency. It is to breathe in the cloying scent of her skin and to rest one's head upon her soft belly for eternity. Such a fate might appear a welcome one, especially when compared to the numerous other hideous and painful ends a soul can meet within the Palace of the Liberated. In truth, it is perhaps the most horrible, for to join Somni in her eternal rest is to be trapped in a state of semi-conscious tristesse for all eternity, aware and yet unable to react to the damnation that surges all about.

It is said that Somni is the most voracious of all the predatory creatures who dwell within the Palace of the Liberated, and that she has something of the daemonic about her. Certainly, none can recall when first she appeared within the court and none who have witnessed the extremes that appear to have drained her so have lived to recount them.



## LOCATIONS

The key locations the Heretics might find themselves exploring are detailed here, and the Game Master is encouraged to expand upon these as well as draw upon other material presented in this book should it be necessary.

### PRIMARY DOCKING MOUTH

The first location the Heretics are likely to encounter, the primary dock of the Liberator's fief takes the form of a gaping cavern, its groin-vaulted ceiling lost to a haze of exotic fumes. The dock is able to accommodate numerous light vessels, a handful of frigates, or a single light cruiser, any of which must enter its vast space with great care lest it consume them entirely. Having entered the dock, the vessel is sheathed within a glittering anchor beam and countless sucker-ended umbilical cords attach themselves to its airlocks and valves.

The types of encounters the Heretics might experience in and around the Primary Docking Mouth include challenges by surly or inebriated pirates, confrontations with corrupt (or more corrupt) minor officials and similar low-level challenges. They could also experience the hazards of a working space dock facility, including the danger of sudden decompression or contamination, perils all too common when those responsible for maintenance are often more concerned with the exploration of excess. To the true servant of the Lord of Dark Delights, even these seemingly mundane perils offer their own unique opportunities to experience





new sensations. To some, the cold touch of the void, the caress of flame in zero gravity, or the feeling of a vital organ being sucked out of the body by the most efficacious orifice is something that simply cannot be resisted.

### DENS OF INIQUITY

Many of the spaces hewn into the rock of the asteroids of the Liberator's fief are turned over to the enactment of numerous sins and vices. There are scant few areas the Heretics might find themselves in where some blasphemy is not being committed, regardless of the actual intended use of the space. Cargo holds might find themselves pressed into service as gladiatorial fighting pits ringed with baying spectators, while command galleries might make ideal performance spaces for the countless exhibitionists drawn to serve in the cohorts of the Liberator. Some areas might be carpeted with exhausted revellers, forcing the Heretics to pick their way cautiously through intertwined limbs unless they wish to awaken the sleepers from their refractory slumber.

Encounters in these areas could foreshadow the trials the Heretics are to face later on when they must master the Six Delights of Slaanesh. They might be challenged to all manner of contests by inebriated pirate scum, but the Game Master should be cautious about making these more weighty than the challenges to come.

### TREASURE CHAMBERS

Deep within the asteroids of the Liberator's fief is to be found countless chambers stuffed full of the bounty he has forcibly taken from his victims throughout a career of larceny and piracy. In truth, Pseudanor places very little value upon the objects themselves, for his pleasure is in the act of taking, the riches merely a token of that act. Nevertheless, Pseudanor guards his riches jealously for he knows that others covet them. The countless chambers are guarded by a cadre of pirate scum acting as guards who have been surgically altered so as to rob them of the desire to steal his riches in a manner that could be likened to a eunuch tasked with guarding his master's harem.

While the majority of the treasure chambers within the asteroids of the Liberator's realm are host to a range of fairly conventional treasures, rumours persist that there are numerous smaller, secret chambers scattered across the islands. These are said to contain the more unusual treasures, which take a range of forms. Some are said to be stasis chambers within which are imprisoned especially valuable hostages or rivals, while others might contain ravening Daemons, carnivorous predators, ancient technology, or strains of lethal life-eater viruses. If such rumours are true, then Pseudanor keeps the location of, and access to, such places to himself, even his closest followers kept guessing as to the truth.



Should the Heretics find themselves in the Treasure Chambers for any reason, encounters should be limited to challenges regarding their right to be there and subsequent attempts to eject them. The Game Master could introduce Plukus, one of the Liberator's courtiers described later on, in this area as it is one he is frequently found stalking.

## DEFENCES

Pseudanor's followers may pass much of their time in sin and degradation, but his realm is far from defenceless. The majority of the drifting islands are host to a staggering range of void defences, ranging from macro-batteries to lance turrets, and multiple missile launchers to torpedo clusters. These defences are manned by a cadre of pirates who take supreme pleasure in warfare, and it is only by the ceaseless efforts of the whip-armed overseers that they are restrained from engaging any vessel that passes through their sights, friend or foe.

The fief's defences are manned by a myriad of decadent psychopaths, and these should form the basis of any encounters the Heretics become involved with in the vicinity. The pirates like nothing more than the opportunity to test their skills to the extreme, whether wielding a macro cannon or a shotgun and need little excuse to bring either to bear.

The bulk of the Liberator's ground-based forces are concentrated on those asteroid-islands linked to those outside of his fief by way of the void-bridges. These defences take the form of garrisons and strongholds housing many hundreds of the strongest and toughest pirate scum in his hordes. Because none can be entirely certain when a neighbouring pirate prince might attempt an invasion, these troops are kept permanently awake and alert by way of combat drugs and neural stimulators connected directly to their central nervous systems.

## BRIDGES IN THE VOID

The fiefs of the pirate princes are notorious for their drifting island-asteroids and for the impossible bridges that link them. The bridges here take a staggering range of forms, for it amuses the Liberator to disrupt the traveller's perception and to test his willingness to cross. Thus, the form of any given bridge is a product of the traveller's soul, given temporary substance so that Pseudanor and his followers might witness them. Bold travellers, blessed in the eyes of whichever Chaos God they dedicate themselves to, might find solid stone or steel beneath their feet, while those less certain might find ramshackle or fragile matter instead. Travellers whose minds are shattered by the madness of Chaos find themselves traversing bridges of writhing tendrils or coiling smoke, or tongues slick with other-worldly saliva. Those travellers cursed by the powers of one god or another might find their way made perilous or entirely impossible, forcing them to risk all in crossing from one island to the next, or to remain trapped, and possibly forced to enter the Liberator's service.



Aside from the comings and goings of the populace of the fief of the Liberator, the Heretics could in theory encounter almost any denizen of the Screaming Vortex upon the bridges. The Game Master should feel free to use the Adversaries chapter of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook and to have the Heretics encounter any NPC he feels like having them meet. Some might be lowly travellers without the means to cross the void any other way, while others might be mighty champions engaged upon their own, sometimes unknowable quests. Some might challenge the Heretics while others might seek to trade, whether in wealth, goods, information, or favours.

## Crossing the Bridges of the Ragged Helix

In most instances, Heretics should be allowed to cross the bridges without undue difficulty, but the Game Master might like to spice things up every now and then by introducing an element of risk. Whenever the Heretics seek to cross a bridge, have each of them make an Infamy Test. Those who pass the test perceive the bridge as a solid structure across which they can travel without danger. Those that fail should suffer some degree of peril or inconvenience, a few possibilities for which are presented here:

- The Heretic must make a Fear Test, modified by  $-10$  for each Degree of Failure the Infamy Test was failed by.
- The Heretic could receive a number of Corruption Points equal to the Degrees of Failure by which he failed the Infamy Test.
- The Heretic might be subject to a randomly determined Disorder until the next bridge is crossed.
- The Heretic might be forced to fight an enemy only he can see, the Game Master choosing or randomly determining a suitable Adversary.
- The Heretic could be plucked away into the surging Empyrean and dumped somewhere else entirely. This could be another asteroid-island within the fief of the Liberator or one in the domains of another pirate prince entirely. The end point could even be somewhere else completely, depending on how drastic the Game Master wishes the consequence of failure to be.



# PART II: THE SIX DELIGHTS OF SLAANESH

In the main part of **At the Edge**, the Heretics come before the court of Pseudanor the Liberator and must prove themselves in the eyes of the ravenous pirate prince and his followers. The action begins with the Liberator challenging the Heretics to face six trials, each of which will prove them masters of one of the Six Delights of Slaanesh, or see them fall in the attempt.

The exact circumstances leading to the arrival of the Heretics at the court of the Liberator depend on how they came to his fief and whether any of the optional encounters presented earlier were used. Regardless of how and why the Heretics come to the court, when they do, read aloud or paraphrase the following description:

*As you enter the court of the Liberator, you are assailed by a thousand exotic scents, your eyes dazzled by more colours than should by rights exist. The strains of discordant, yet enrapturing music draw you in and your mouth waters with the blasphemous tastes that drift upon the air. As you advance, your skin tingles to the caresses of unseen lovers, promising blissful oblivion within.*

*The court is attended by a cohort of followers, each of them engaged in one or several of a myriad of degraded sins. The courtiers fall silent as they catch sight of you, eyes gleaming with lust, amusement, or hunger.*

*Dominating the throne room is the seat of Pseudanor the Liberator himself, a gleaming structure of precious metal, gems, and flesh fused together and making a mockery of all art ever created. Seated upon the throne is the Liberator himself, a being of indeterminate gender yet radiant presence, garbed in the showy, if dishevelled finery so beloved of the pirate princes of the Ragged Helix.*

*"Ah," the Liberator addresses you. "Our guests have arrived."*

*As sycophants and slaves proffer platters of exotic treats, Pseudanor fixes you with a withering stare.*

*"You enter my fief seeking power, that much is made clear to me. Well, my friends, that power is mine to offer, but you must prove yourselves worthy of the gift. Show me you are master of the Six Delights of the Lord of All Delights, and all you desire shall be yours."*

*"Fail, and know oblivion. What say you?"*

Should they accept his challenge, the Heretics are entering into a Compact, as described in the Game Master chapter of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE** Rulebook. The Compact is automatically Dedicated to Slaanesh and the Primary Objective is to master each of the Six Delights of Slaanesh. Secondary Objectives can take the form of those already discussed and, in addition to these, the players and GM could add more of their own invention. The Scale of the Compact is set at Undertaking, largely because it should not involve the mustering of a large amount of resources. Which Complications enter play is left up to the Game Master to choose or determine randomly. The potential rewards to be gained from completing the Compact are discussed in the Game Master chapter of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE** Rulebook, and a number of additional consequences are to be found at the end of this adventure.

Some potential complications include:

- Being judged by Pseudanor or any of his servants to be holding back in any way. There really is no excuse for the Heretics not to completely submerge themselves in sensation, and any sign of unwillingness is sure to cause them trouble.
- Showing any hint of a moral code. Such things are for the weakling subjects of the Corpse Emperor of the Imperium.
- Letting dedication to any of the Ruinous Powers other than Slaanesh turn the Heretics from the immediate sensations on offer in the Liberator's fief. Those displaying especially powerful devotion to the other powers are sure to gain special attentions from the Liberator's servants, an element that the Game Master can have great fun pursuing.
- Overtly using the gifts or rewards of any Ruinous Power other than Slaanesh is also likely to cause problems. Exactly how much depends on the Heretics' actions.

## MASTERING THE SIX DELIGHTS OF SLAANESH

Having received the Liberator's challenge, the Heretics are free to accept or reject it, and to pursue it in any way they deem appropriate. Note that the Six Delights of Slaanesh should be mastered in the order presented here, the reason being that they reflect the structure of the otherworldly defences that surround Slaanesh's Palace of Pleasure. Despite the anarchic nature of Chaos, there are rules to be followed should the Heretics wish to prove themselves the masters of their desires. The Game Master should require a **Difficult (-10) Scholastic Lore (Occult) Skill Test** to reveal this fact. Should the trials be approached in any order other than that presented here, there should be a price to pay later on, such as each Heretic incurring a 1d10 loss in Infamy.

### SETTING

It is perfectly possible and acceptable for some or all of the trials to be conducted in the setting of the Liberator's throne room. Having the events take place there means that the larger-than-life character of the pirate prince can really come into play as he oversees and comments on events. He may celebrate an especially impressive victory or mock a particularly poor performance, interacting with the Player Characters so far as the GM wishes. The trials do not have to take place in the throne room, of course, and some should occur in the various Dens, Treasure Chambers, and other locations throughout the asteroid archipelago. They should also take some time, each perhaps occurring on different days. This also allows the Heretics time between tests to gain information, seduce new allies to their side, explore the area for advantages, and perform other actions to strengthen their hand. Some of the trials could conceivably take the Player Characters far and wide elsewhere across the Helix or beyond. Should this happen, the Game Master might like to have the Liberator accompany the Heretics, ostensibly to ensure fair play, but in reality for his own entertainment. Whenever the pirate prince is present, the Game Master should ensure he dominates the scene and very much sets the tone for any encounter, for he is sure to steal the limelight wherever he goes.



## CHAMPIONS OF CHAOS

In each of the Six Delights, one of the Player Characters is nominated to serve as the group's champion or representative. It is this individual who takes all of the risks and who earns all of the glory, and it allows the players to use the character most skilled for the trial at hand. The Game Master should ensure that no Player Character avoids such duty and that each performs his fair share of the trials, having Pseudanor intervene to insist a particular PC takes part in a particular trial if needed. Likewise, the Heretics should not be allowed to let Minions or other NPCs undertake the trials on their behalf, for to even speak of such a thing would be to risk being ejected from the fief of the Liberator in abject shame.

## SUCCESS AND FAILURE

As the trials progress, the Game Master should keep track of how well, or how badly, the Heretics are performing. The Player Characters either succeed or fail in each trial, but it is left to the GM to determine their success in each, a judgement that he should keep secret until the final verdict is delivered. In many cases, the result of any given trial is perfectly obvious—if it involves a Social Confrontation, the Heretic wins the trial by winning the confrontation. In other cases, the Heretics might find themselves exposed to injury or even death, in which case success or failure should be a simple enough matter for the Game Master to adjudicate. In a few instances, the GM might have to decide on whether the Heretics have succeeded or failed on the basis of how the players themselves have approached the task and good roleplaying. Note that having undertaken a task, the Heretics cannot attempt it again, regardless of the outcome. The GM should also modify the Liberator's response as needed; these assume successful results so if the Heretics fail (especially should they fail in an amusing manner), his words should reflect the outcome.

## THE DELIGHT OF AVIDITY

The first of the Six Delights is greed. They must prove themselves willing to risk all in the pursuit of wealth, treasure, or other material objects. But greed can take other forms too, such as the desire to amass every last example of the work of a particular artist, or the hides of a particular beast. It could take the form of amassing followers, minions, or slaves, the act of denying these to potential rivals being as important as any status to be gained.

To master the Delight of Avidity, the Heretics must prove that there are no ends to which they are not prepared to go in order to amass the object of their desire. The players should, of course, be free to invent and imagine any means of doing so they can, but here are some suggestions.

## All or Nothing

For many of those dedicated to the Prince of Chaos, the thrill to be had on the turn of chance is the most exquisite experience imaginable. To risk all one has amassed over a lifetime far longer than any other mortal's on the throw of a die, the turn of a card, or the spilling of a drop of blood is the very height of sensation. The longer the individual has served Chaos, the greater his personal wealth is likely to be,



and so the risk and commensurate pleasure greater still. There are those that spend decades, even centuries of subjective time building entire empires, with the ultimate goal of staking all of their achievements on a single game of chance. Such competitions are rarely held in seclusion, and for many gamblers the thrill is heightened to extraordinary levels by the presence of a large audience of witnesses.

Should the players decide to stake all they have in an effort to prove themselves the masters of this particular delight, the Game Master could allow them to challenge a member of the Liberator's court to an all-or-nothing game of chance held before Pseudanor's entire retinue. The Liberator's factor, Plukus, should be employed to assay the value of the Heretics' stake, which need not take the form of material wealth alone. It might be the colour of his eyes, the memory of his finest kill, or the loyalty of his favoured minion. The GM should then arrive at a "value" for the item, representing the Influence to be won or lost in the game. Then, a member of the court is found who can lay claim to an equal amount, although this individual may not be as willing to part with it as are the Heretics and may be "volunteered" into doing so by Plukus or other members of the court. A great crowd gathers in the throne room and Pseudanor himself watches on with detached, yet amused interest. The reluctant rival is ushered forward and Plukus presents the means by which the trial is to be settled. The nature of the game is to be a simple throw of dice, a mechanic that allows the players to engage in exactly the same game their alter egos are undertaking.



## THE HALLS OF DIONAEA

The descriptions of how the Six Delights of Slaanesh might be mastered have all been described in terms relating to the Fief of the Liberator and the characters and locations to be found within it. Should the Game Master and players wish, however, the action could be taken further afield, in particular to the location called the Hall of Dionaea, detailed on page 118. The Halls would make an ideal venue for many of the trials and challenges already described to take place, and instead of using the six NPC courtiers already described, the Game Master could invent ones according to his own tastes and perhaps taking into account the history of the Heretics themselves. It could prove especially entertaining to pit the Heretics against characters they have encountered in earlier stages of the campaign, perhaps using the opportunity to settle some old scores. If this option is taken, the GM may have to alter or ignore the read aloud text presented alongside each of the Six Delights, or have any accompanying dialogue spoken by a denizen of the Halls instead. Another point that makes the Halls of Dionaea an entertaining location for some or all of the Six Sins to be mastered is of course the dark secret that resides at its core. Whether or not the Game Master wishes to reveal this horror now, or keep it for some future point in the campaign is up to him, depending on how much time and how much weight he wishes to commit to **At the Edge**.

To decide the victor, the players nominate one of their number to represent them. This individual rolls a die, as does the Game Master. Both rolls have added to them the character's Infamy Bonus, (if they have one) and the party that rolls highest is the victor, taking the spoils already staked. If the player loses, he gains a number of Corruption Points equal to his Infamy Bonus. The game need not end there, however, for the loser might yet have more to stake in a potentially desperate and costly effort to avoid defeat. If the players have lost, they might agree to stake something still more valuable, and once more, this need not be material wealth, it could just as easily be a service, a promise, or ultimately, their own souls. As before, Plukus assays the value of that staked, and if the GM agrees, the contest continues until one side or another accepts defeat or can stake no more.

Note that the Heretics are encouraged to cheat in any way they can conceive, and the Game Master should be amenable to the use of Psychic Powers, Rewards, or anything the players can think up to manipulate the rolls. If the players are allowed to do this, then it only follows that their opponent should too, and the GM might also like to consider how the onlookers react if their subterfuge is discovered. As fickle servants of Slaanesh, they are as likely to be impressed by such deeds as they are to be mortally offended.

## Grand Larceny

Another means the Heretics might use to prove themselves masters of Avidity is to commit such an act of piracy that even Pseudanor the Liberator is impressed. This is especially suitable to the setting of the Ragged Helix and could lead to one or more entire sessions, during which the Heretics seek out an especially valuable target and risk all to make it theirs. The Heretics might commit this act against one of the other pirate princes of the Ragged Helix (several of whom are described in Chapter III) or they might seek out softer, though probably poorer, targets. This method would be especially appropriate if one of the Player Characters is an Apostate and was a Rogue Trader in his former existence.

The details of the Grand Larceny are left up to the Game Master to work out, for this passage of the adventure could form a brief aside or a detailed encounter all on its own.

## Mastering the Delight of Avidity

If and when this stage of the trial is passed, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The court of the Liberator gathers about you, a hundred and more pairs of eyes boring into your very souls with unabashed jealousy writ large upon every face.*

*"A satisfying opening," the Liberator purrs. "Pray, continue..."*

## THE DELIGHT OF GLUTTONY

Gluttony is the drive to consume, taken to the most obscene of extremes. This desire might be directed towards either quality or quantity, or indeed both. Some gluttons are so driven by their nature they cannot go a minute without eating something, and may care very little for exactly what it is that passes their lips. Others are the most refined of gourmands, seeking the rarest of substances to sample. For others still, it is some intoxicating quality of the substances they are imbibing, driving them to try ever more powerful foods, drinks, and drugs. Whichever is the case, the glutton is driven by this desire to consume and cannot rest while in the grip of that desire.

As with the other elements of the trial, the players should be encouraged to imagine ways in which they can prove their mettle. If they or the Game Master need a little help, Creos the Gluttonite (see page 128) is on hand to set an example.

## A Matter of Quantity

One way for the Heretics to test themselves is to engage in a challenge to eat or drink as much as possible. This could take the form of a direct challenge by Creos should the Game Master wish to present it as such, or should one of the Heretics take it upon himself to challenge the Gluttonite, he certainly accepts. Thus, the challenge could take place in the court of the Liberator with the entire household in attendance, should this be desired.





This challenge is carried out by way of a series of Toughness Tests, taken by the Heretic nominated by the group to represent them. The first test is Trivial (+60), with subsequent attempts gaining a –10 penalty until the contest is declared over or the Heretic expires in the attempt. Each test represents the Heretic shovelling a serving of food or drink into his mouth and attempting to hold it down. The exact nature of the substances being consumed is left up to the Game Master to imagine and describe, but could range from exotic foods imported from all over the Screaming Vortex or beyond to quite disgusting material no sane being would ever consider eating. It could equally take the form of something very different indeed, such as a lake of bile, a barrel of fuel oil, a pressured tank full of liquefied gas, a sword blade, or even a living courtier (who will, of course, have to be subdued first).

Every time a Toughness Test is failed, the Heretic runs the risk of sustaining physical and potentially lethal injury. Roll 1d10 and subtract the character's Toughness Bonus from the result. Look up the result on **Table 7–20: Rending Critical Effects—Body** on page 254 of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE Rulebook** and apply the result described there, ignoring any result lower than 1. Keep in mind that this is no mundane eating contest, but one in which quite staggering amounts of food is being consumed, so the potentially bizarre effects could very well represent the character being ripped bodily in half by the sheer amount consumed, or some of the still-living morsel fighting their way back up his gullet.

These tests are continued so long as the Heretic is able to keep going—it doesn't matter if they are passed or failed, merely that the Heretic keeps at it. The Heretic wins by surviving until the final **Hellish (–60) Toughness Test** is made.

If the trial is being carried out as a contest against Creos (or indeed anyone else), then the Heretic and the NPC take turns taking shovelling food into their mouths and taking Toughness Tests. In this case, the tests can continue past –60, until one character is rendered insensible (or indeed dead) by the effort and the other is declared the winner.

### A Matter of Quality

Instead of seeking to consume as much as possible, the Heretics might prefer to seek out especially rare or unusual food or drink to consume. Such things should be as exotic as the players can imagine, and may involve a quest to locate them. This option is provided to allow the players to stretch their imaginations, but could include sampling powders made of ground Eldar spiritstones, supping on the venom of beasts thought long extinct, or any number of similar trials, the more outrageous the better. Success or failure in such a trial could come down to a simple Opposed Charm Test taken against Pseudanor the Liberator, modified by a number determined by the Game Master depending on how imaginative the players have proved themselves to be in choosing the substance to be imbibed.

### Intoxication

A lot of entertainment can be had in seeing how much damage a Heretic is willing to risk to prove himself able to imbibe the most toxic of substances. The Game Master should encourage the players to imagine what substance they might decide to use, or he could have an NPC such as Creos suggest something suitably vile. The trial could be determined using the same system presented above in **A Matter of Quantity**, but using something other than the Rending Damage chart to determine injury. Consequences of a failed Toughness Test could range from temporary Fear and Insanity effects, Disorders, Fatigue, or even impromptu Mutations, all of which are described in the Game Master chapter of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE Rulebook**. Whatever the result, it is up to Pseudanor the Liberator to determine victory or failure.

### Mastering the Delight of Gluttony

If and when this stage of the trial is passed, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The courtiers of the Liberator look upon you with evident respect, scores of them drooling with hunger while others appear sick with admiration. Pseudanor himself retains his casual stance, yet now his eyes are alight with interest as they regard you with something approaching respect.*

*"Interesting," he demurs. "Now the fun can start..."*



## THE DELIGHT OF CARNALITY

Carnality is the pursuit of physicality and in game terms can take a wide range of forms. It need not take the form of the expression of lust in the traditional sense; indeed, those dedicated to Slaanesh invariably ascend to far darker passions and regard lowly pursuit of bodily pleasures as more than a little *passé*. This challenge could involve the display of incredible endurance, the demonstration of preternatural acrobatic ability, beauty so bewitching it literally blinds those that witness it, being able to withstand (and indeed take pleasure from) pain that would render a normal mortal insensible, or anything else that can be imagined. Such things are best handled “off camera” in an abstract manner, though the set-up and aftermath can certainly make for entertaining roleplaying.

In order to prove themselves the masters of the Delight of Carnality, the Heretics must nominate one of their number to undertake a trial combining imagination, stamina, and sheer athletic ability. The Heretic takes a series of Characteristic Tests, choosing from Strength, Toughness, Agility, Willpower, and Fellowship. The first test is at Trivial (+60) and each subsequent test gains a –10 penalty until the final test (Hellish) is made. The consequences of a failed test depend on which Characteristic was used to test against, determined as follows:

- A failed Strength Test results in the character losing 1d10 Infamy Points.
- A failed Toughness Test results in the character gaining a level of Fatigue.
- A failed Agility Test results in the character sustaining 1d10 Impact Damage to a randomly determined body part (with no reduction for Armour).
- A failed Willpower Test results in the character having to make a Fear 1 (Disturbing) Test.
- A failed Fellowship Test results in the character gaining a randomly determined Slaanesh Disorder (regardless of which of the Ruinous Powers he is dedicated to) which lasts for the remainder of the adventure. Disorders can be found on page 279 of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE** Rulebook.

Each test can possibly take one or more hours, with the entire trial lasting long through the night and into the next day. Having made all Tests, the character emerges to rejoin his fellow Heretics, no doubt somewhat dishevelled but glad to be alive. The mere fact of his survival is evidence that he is indeed a master of the Delight of Carnality.

A variation of this part of the trial is to make it a contest against the notorious Sivia (see page 128). In this case, each Characteristic Test is Opposed, the competition continuing until one character is unable to continue and the other emerges as the victor.



## GM GUIDANCE

The specifics of this particular Delight are deliberately left up to the Game Master and his players to define and it should be noted that, while lust and the sins of the flesh might be considered offensive in the Imperium, to those dedicated to Slaanesh they are but one aspect of a wide range of pursuits and one they have expended long ago. Depending on their group, Game Masters should feel free to restrict this challenge to displays of acrobatic ability, dancing, speed, and the like; these can not only better suit the nature of the group, but also better confound Heretics perhaps eager for lower pursuits of the flesh!

## Mastering the Delight of Carnality

If and when this stage of the trial is passed, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Now the courtiers regard you with unabashed admiration, eyes alight with lust.*

*“Impressive,” Pseudanor says, before ushering on the next trial.*

## THE DELIGHT OF PARAMOUNTCY

Those consumed by the Delight of Paramountcy seek power over others. They might desire vast legions to fight on their behalf or to manipulate those in power from behind the scenes. They derive power from the influence they wield, and satisfaction from seeing others driven to enact their orders. Some, such as the courtier Tymarch (see page 128) enjoy more than anything else the act of revealing to those they have power over just how total that power actually is, revelling in the sensation of another rendered impotent.

In order to master this Delight, the Heretics must demonstrate their ability to influence others. This is a perfect use for the Social Interaction rules presented in Chapter III. As ever, the players should be encouraged to choose the target of the trial. Possible targets might include sections of the Liberator’s pirate horde, specific courtiers, Tymarch, or even Pseudanor himself. The Game Master should consult the rules given in Chapter III and proceed accordingly, taking his cue from the players themselves.

Whoever they choose to conduct this trial against, the contest should be presented in as dramatic a manner as possible. For example, demonstrating power over a horde of several hundred degenerate pirates should take place somewhere appropriate, such as the floor of the Primary Docking Mouth, especially if the Heretics have their own vessel and this is held suspended overhead. A confrontation with Tymarch might take place in the Liberator’s throne room, surrounded by a throng of expectant courtiers and looked down upon by Pseudanor himself. A contest against the Liberator, should the Heretics be so bold as to attempt such a thing, might take place before the throne or in front of the entire pirate horde, every one of them bawling obscenities at those that dare challenge their lord.



## Mastering the Delight of Paramountcy

If and when this stage of the trial is passed, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The trial of Paramountcy won, the courtiers look upon you with fear, their expressions betraying that they at once lust to be dominated by you, and fear the consequences of that fate.*

*Eying you with newfound respect mingled with ill-concealed suspicion, the Liberator leans back in his throne before announcing the next trial you must undertake.*

## THE DELIGHT OF VAINGLORY

Vainglory is the Delight of all-consuming pride, of narcissism and hubris. In some it is manifested as self regard swollen beyond all proportion, and in others in the desire to belittle and shame all lesser beings. Hubris is perhaps the universal flaw of all that dedicate themselves to Chaos, for each and every one harbours the belief that they alone are strong enough to avoid the fate that befalls so many. None believe that *he* might end up a mewling, flailing Spawn of Chaos at the end of his journey along the Path to Glory. Proving themselves masters of vainglory should prove an interesting challenge for the players, and one they should approach with some trepidation. Indeed, as a Game Master, it is one of the more difficult challenges to moderate, but that in itself should be seen as an obstacle to be overcome.

One way is to follow the example of the courtier Phaetoni, and perhaps even to enter into a contest with him. This individual manifests the Delight of Hubris in his desire to belittle others, in so doing proving his own superiority. If the players have difficulty thinking of a way to master this sin, the Game Master could have Phaetoni verbally attack them in an effort to prove that they are entirely unworthy to stand in the Court of the Liberator. This confrontation should make use of the Social Confrontation rules already mentioned, the exact form depending on the players. They might need to prove themselves in any manner of ways and the loser will be shamed and degraded before the other Heretics, the court, and, of course, Pseudanor himself.

There are other ways the Heretics could prove themselves masters of excessive hubris. As with so many of these trials, the challenge lies not in resisting the effects of the sin, but in mastering them without being consumed, something countless deluded fools have attempted. Demonstrating unshakable self-regard in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary might be another possible route, with the Heretics risking everything they have, and will ever have, in displays of power and pomp. This might include facing enemies they have precious little chance of defeating, or more likely committing hordes of their Minions to do so, even should they all die for the glory of the Heretics.

## Mastering the Delight of Vainglory

If and when this stage of the trial is passed, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Now the court of the Liberator falls into stunned silence and Pseudanor's eyes narrow as he looks down upon you from his throne.*

*"The last trial," he snaps imperiously, his nostrils flaring with ill-concealed anger, "will prove the matter once and for all."*

## THE DELIGHT OF INDOLENCY

The last of the Six Delights of Slaanesh is harder still than the fifth, to define as well as to overcome. Indolency is the desire to set aside all responsibility and effort and to surrender entirely to an eternity of apathy. That is the illusion, at least—the reality is very different indeed. In truth, there can be no rest or comfort for those that dedicate themselves to Chaos, for the Warp is ever in motion, churning with the eternal unreal energy of an entire dimension of spirit and imagination. To surrender to the illusion of rest is to willingly cast one's soul adrift on the churning currents of the Sea of Souls, and to be dragged down into the dark, stifling depths. There, the damned soul remains caught at the moment of oblivion, aware and unable to react to a surrender that endures throughout eternity.

Perhaps the best way for the Heretics to prove themselves masters of this Delight is for them to wander as close to the edge of the abyss as possible without being pulled down into its all-enveloping depths. They might do this in any number of ways, but all require them to surrender themselves to some influence which most mortals would imagine to offer the ultimate in satisfaction. They might, for example, sink into blissful oblivion whilst listening to the strains of some impossibly puissant musical arrangement, or relax into a restful fugue induced by some powerful intoxicant. They might lose themselves in the embrace of the most accomplished of lovers, or lay down in a landscape of impossible beauty, gusts of perfumed breeze lulling them into eternal sleep. Whichever is the case, the Heretics must reach the very point of no return and defy fate itself to resist damnation.

As with the other delights, the players should be encouraged to imagine ways in which they might prove themselves truly blessed in the eyes of Slaanesh. One simple way of doing so is to use an NPC, such as Somni (see page 129), to offer them one blissful state after another in an effort to make them lay down forever and accept contented damnation. The previously mentioned Seduction, and also the Social Confrontation rules, can be used for this challenge too, with the NPC weaving an impossibly alluring veil of temptation, which the Player Character chosen to serve as the Heretics' champion must at once revel in, and resist.



## Mastering the Delight of Indolency

If and when this stage of the trial is passed, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The entire court of the Liberator now stands in silence, the courtiers at once stunned and filled with admiration by the events they have witnessed. Pseudanor himself stands, casts a dark glance your way, and strides from the throne room.*

*"The master shall return," a courtier announces. "And he shall cast his judgement upon you."*

## SEDUCTION

As an alternative to the mechanics used in the trials presented, the Game Master could allow the Heretics to subvert the Liberator's court by using the Seduction rules presented on page 73. Instead of competing against a named courtier, the Heretics' champion must turn the individual using the rules presented. Doing so counts as mastering the sin in question and passing the associated trial.

# PART III: CONFRONTATION!

Only when the Heretics have attempted each of the Six Delights of Slaanesh (whether or not they succeed in each), are they ready to submit to the judgement of Pseudanor the Liberator. Should the pirate prince judge the Heretics his equal, he may offer them an alliance, and in so doing greatly bolster their power amongst the warlords of the Screaming Vortex. Should they be revealed as weak and unworthy, they are likely to be laughed from his court and from the Ragged Helix, their chances of ever gaining the power they crave set back immeasurably. In truth, the vast majority of those foolish enough to be entrapped by the Liberator's trials are subject to this grand jest, so few come anywhere near to equally him in damnation. Should they have proved themselves the Liberator's superior, he is moved to act against them now, before they are able to usurp his position as one of the most decadent and depraved servants of Lord of Dark Delights.

There are three possible endings to **At the Edge**, depending on how many of the Six Delights of Slaanesh the Heretics mastered. Whichever is to be used, the Heretics are to receive the Liberator's judgement in his throne room in the Palace of the Liberated, attended by a vast throng of courtiers. To set the scene, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Pseudanor the Liberator sits upon his throne bedecked in the most outrageous of finery. About his feet lounge his favoured concubines and pets, regarding you with detached languor. Every one of the Liberator's courtiers are in attendance, each adorned in their finest raiment.*

*At an unheard and unseen command from their liege, the courtiers fall silent, all eyes wide with adoration of the Liberator.*

## ENDING 1: BE GONE!

If the Heretics failed all of the trials, or passed only one or two, they have demonstrated that they are of no threat to Pseudanor's power in the Ragged Helix. In so doing, they have provided the pirate prince and his decadent court with an entertaining spectacle as they attempted to prove themselves worthy. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*A cruel grin twisting his leering features, Pseudanor passes his judgement. "A grand entertainment indeed. I thank you for indulging our delights and allowing us to pass the hours with some splendid dalliances. I imagine your dull wits might have trouble interpreting recent events, so let me make myself clear. This has all been a grand jest, and you, my dullard visitors, are the punchline."*

*"Now," he says as the courtiers erupt in tittering, nervous laughter. "What little amusement you can offer is over. Be gone from my court, weaklings!"*

Exactly how the Player Characters react to the revelation that they have been manipulated and made sport of for the amusement of the Liberator depends very much on them. They might attempt to exact immediate revenge by challenging the pirate prince to a duel, or they might try to fight their way clear. The only chance they have of grasping hollow victory from the jaws of ignominious defeat is to engage the Liberator in some manner of confrontation. This could take the form of a brutal fight or a Social Confrontation using the rules presented in Chapter III. However, this option should only be allowed if the players themselves come up with it—by now, they have had plenty of opportunity to prove themselves and the Game Master should avoid stepping in to save them from themselves if he can help it.

Should a physical confrontation ensue, the Liberator is perfectly willing to engage one of the Heretics in one-on-one combat and he orders his underlings to keep out of it, to start off with at least. Should the other Heretics interfere or (Warp forefend!) should it look like he might be losing, the pirate prince sets his pride aside and orders his pirate scum to take them down. The remainder of the encounter is likely to take the form of a hasty fighting withdrawal, unless the Liberator is killed in a single blow, in which case use the guidelines given in Ending 3 to conclude matters.



If this ending is used, the Game Master should be careful that the adventure does not end in what feels like an anticlimax. Certainly, the Heretics have lost in the conventional sense, but that does not mean the session has to end at that point or that there is no opportunity for some highly engaging roleplaying. Indeed, should things go badly against them, the Heretics are likely to find themselves fighting an enraged horde of pirate scum, and so a substantial combat and/or chase might ensue. The climax of this phase might only come about as the Heretics reach their vessel (if they arrived in one) or use one of the void bridges to pass out of the Liberator's fief. Even then, they might very well plot their return, perhaps mustering support amongst the neighbouring princes. Chapter III has additional details on some of the other powers within the Ragged Helix, any number of whom might be convinced to aid the Player Characters in taking revenge on Pseudanor.



## ENDING 2: ENTENTE!

Should the Heretics master three or four of the Six Delights of Slaanesh, they prove themselves sufficiently blessed in the eyes of the Prince of Chaos that Pseudanor is willing to make common cause with them, but not so powerful as to present a threat to his own position. In many ways, this is the most desirable outcome of the Liberator's challenge, for the pirate prince as well as for the Heretics. The reward for their demonstration of favour is a promise from Pseudanor that, when the time comes, his fleet rallies to their cause, so long as the endeavour is pleasing to his patron, Slaanesh. But first, the Heretics are treated to a display of outrageous decadence as they are named the guests of honour in a feast to be held in their names. With a flourish, the Liberator orders his servants to bring food and wine of every imaginable kind, the entire court erupting with celebration. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*"My friends!" the Liberator addresses you with a sudden explosion of expressive bonhomie. "Clearly, you are beings truly blessed by our lord of Pleasures! Clearly, we all shall become great friends indeed. Serfs! Bring food, bring wine, for this night we celebrate an alliance!"*

*At his words, the courtiers scrape, bow, and genuflect all about, making shallow obeisance to you. Others scatter towards side doors, and soon great piles of food and enormous flagons of rich, dark liquid are carried out.*

*"Yes," he continues, his arms spread wide. "I see grand experiences to come! When you need me, I shall be there!"*

The celebrations may or may not be played out in game terms, but suffice it to say that by their end the Heretics have witnessed the true decadence of the servants of the Prince of Chaos. Of course, they may not be able to remember much of the night's festivities, but that is entirely another story.

What the Heretics do recall of the evening, however, is the fact that the Liberator pledges the use of his fleet and his forces should the Player Characters' Path to Glory lead them to launching a full-scale Black Crusade. Indeed, Pseudanor delights in recounting tales of past endeavours he has taken part in, his relish to fight at the Heretics' side growing ever more evident and expressive the more the celebrations continue. At the last, he confides in them that the decadence of his court is growing thin to him, and he has been looking for alternatives, extremes to pursue for some time. An invasion of the hated Imperium would serve as such a distraction and offer all manner of hitherto unimagined sensations.



## ENDING 3: PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE!

Should the Heretics display such perverse decadence and degradation that they prove themselves masters of the Six Delights of Slaanesh by passing five or all six of the trials, they have inadvertently created a problem for themselves. Pseudanor cannot possibly allow such puissant degenerates to gain power, and realises that he must put a stop to their rise immediately. There is a twist, however, in that making his move, Pseudanor presents the Heretics with an opportunity to defeat him, potentially gaining enormous power and infamy in the process. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*"You have proved yourself something of an undesired experience," the Liberator purrs. "I'm afraid I cannot allow that to continue."*

*As the crowds surrounding him throw off their dazzling raiments to reveal armour and weaponry, the Liberator leans forward on his throne.*

*"You'll find the Lord of Dark Delights is a jealous master..."*

The Liberator immediately orders his pirates to attack the Heretics. Unless the players display any inkling of the imminent betrayal, the Heretics are Surprised at the beginning of the combat. The Heretics are attacked first by a Horde of Pirate Scum (see page 142) with a Magnitude of 30, and then by a Horde of Liberated Courtiers (see page 142). If the Heretics do not engage him first, the Liberator joins the fight a round after the courtiers (he seems to enjoy the spectacle of his own followers dying for him), charging the Heretic that presents the greatest threat. After that, all bets are off and it is left up to the Game Master to determine how many more pirates are drawn to the throne room, but the final battle should certainly present the Heretics with a serious challenge.

## DEATH OF THE LIBERATOR

Should Pseudanor the Liberator be slain at any point during the climax of the adventure, the Heretics might imagine themselves to have won a great victory. In truth, this is far from the case. The pirate prince's fief is held together by no more than the strength of his will and the promise of ever more booty, and with the Liberator gone both vanish with him. The entire fief collapses in anarchy and ruin as bitter rivalries held in check by the distractions offered in service to the Liberator explode in violence. The most decadent of the Liberator's servants seek immediate power while the remainder fall upon one another in an orgy of violence or else lose their nerve and flee the now unfettered cauldron of violence the fief becomes.

Furthermore, the Liberator's power over his fief proves to have been so total and literal that with him gone, the asteroid-islands begin to drift apart from one another. As they do so, the bridges connecting them crumble to ashes that drift away on the unknowable tides at play within the Screaming Vortex. The delicate crystal domes of Pseudanor's palaces shatter and the spires break into shattered fragments.

Caught in such a situation, the Heretics have no option but to fight their way clear, though in so doing they should be afforded the opportunity to gain something from their efforts. They might desire a side trip to one of the Liberator's treasure vaults, or capture groups of slaves, or simply to pry as many precious gems from his disturbing throne before running for their lives. They can try to use various means to seduce or sway members of the court to their side, especially if the Heretics had been attempting Seductions during the adventure, but the riotous nature of the asteroid's collapse should impose penalties of at least -20 on any attempts.

## CONSEQUENCES

Depending on which of the possible endings the Heretics' deeds brought them to, the fief of the Liberator is either a staunch ally in their rise to power, a pit of bitter memories, or else it lies in ashes following Pseudanor's death.

In addition to any experience points the GM should award using the abstract or detailed methods (see page 266 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), the adventure offers specific rewards and consequences based on their actions within the Liberators' asteroid domains.

Should the Heretics end the adventure able to count Pseudanor the Liberator as their ally, each of them gains the Peer (Pirates of the Ragged Helix) Talent. The Game Master should factor the alliance in to future adventures where the Heretics might be able to call on their ally for aid, but they should be warned against doing so lightly. Should the GM wish, he can allow the Heretics to call upon the aid of Pseudanor's vessels, perhaps to carry them from one world to the next or to extract them from trouble, by way of a **Challenging (+0) Infamy Test**. To squander the favours of an ally such as Pseudanor is folly indeed, and likely to cause a drastic reversal in fortune.

If the Heretics left the fief of the Liberator having been shamed by their lack of mastery of the Six Delights of Slaanesh, they gain the Enemy (Pirates of the Ragged Helix) Talent. This represents the loss of face they have suffered by their disgrace at Pseudanor's hands, causing other pirates to loath them or regard them with mocking indifference. Each Heretic should make a **Challenging (+0) Infamy Test**, and if this is failed gain a number of Corruption Points equal to the Degrees of Failure, representing the general loss of favour in the eyes of the Ruinous Powers.

If the adventure ended with the fief of the Liberator in ruins following his death, word of the Heretics' deeds spreads far and wide. In the future, whenever the Heretics encounter a pirate in the Screaming Vortex, the Game Master should roll a d10. On 1-3 the NPC has heard of them and approves of their deeds, and so any Interaction Skill Tests enjoy a +20 bonus in the PC's favour. On a roll of 4-7 the NPC is indifferent to them. On a roll of 8-10 the NPC regards them as a threat and they suffer a -20 penalty on all Interaction Skill Tests when dealing with him. In any case, the upheaval feeds the Ruinous Powers, and so each Heretic gains a bonus of d10 Infamy points.



# NPC APPENDIX

The following is an Appendix of notable NPCs and Adversaries featured in **At the Edge**. GMs are encouraged to add other NPCs depending on the desired length of the adventure in their own games.

## PIRATE PRINCE PSEUDANOR THE LIBERATOR

A full description of the pirate prince Pseudanor the Liberator can be found on page 126.

Pirate Prince Pseudanor (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
65	62	60	45	51	50	58	53	60	80

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Armour:** Body, Arms, Legs 4

**Skills:** Athletics (S) +20, Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Commerce (Int) +20, Common Lore (Int) (Imperial Navy), Common Lore (Int) (Screaming Vortex) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Int) (Pirates) +20, Inquiry (Fel) +10, Interrogation (Will) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Navigate (Int) (Stellar), Operate (Int) (Voidship) +10, Parry (WS) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Catfall, Disarm, Heightened Senses, Jaded, Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Pity the Weak, Radiant Presence, Betrayer, Combat Master, Counter Attack, Rapid Reaction, Whirlwind of Death, Fearless, Unholy Devotion.

**Armour:** Mesh-woven ship-master's coat.

**Weapons:** Power flensing blade (Melee; 1d10+11 R; Pen 3; Balanced, Power Field, Razor Sharp), custom hand cannon (Pistol; 35m; S/-/-; 1d10+5 I; Pen 2; Clip 6; Reload 1).

**Gear:** Showy, if often soiled clothing and numerous items of gaudy personal wealth, 2 amputator shell clips, 2 barbed shell clips, 2 man-stopper shell clips.

**The Throne of Flesh:** The Liberator's throne is more than a simple seat of power. The beings sacrificed to create the throne are, to some degree at least, still alive and they are bound to the service of their decadent master. The souls and twisted bodies of the unfortunate beings are used to protect the Liberator, their life energies protecting him from even the most grievous harm. In addition to his listed Wounds, the Liberator has an extra 30 Wounds granted by the arcane and blasphemous powers of the Throne of Flesh. So long as he is in his throne room, any attacks against Pseudanor result in these 30 Wounds being depleted instead of his. In addition, any secondary effects such as Stunning, Poisoning, etc., are ignored when factored against the throne's Wounds. Only once the throne's Wounds are depleted are attacks resolved in the normal way.

**Wounds:** 75

**Total TB:** 4

## PLUKUS, THE AVARITE

A full description of Plukus can be found on page 127.

Plukus (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
25	25	25	37	26	42	26	20	18	30

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Armour:** None

**Skills:** Commerce (Fel) +20, Inquiry (Int) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +20.

**Weapons:** Plukus carries a device which appears to be a simple communicator, but is in fact a doom siren (Basic; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+12 E; Pen 9; Clip -; Rld -; Spray).

**Gear:** Formal robes, quills, numerous scrolls and ledgers.

**Wounds:** 12

**Total TB:** 3

## CREOS, THE GLUTTONITE

A full description of Creos can be found on page 128.

Creos (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
12	14	22	52	09	32	30	20	18	32

**Movement:** 1/2/3/4

**Armour:** 3 (All)

**Talents:** Heightened Senses (Taste), Resistance (Poisons), Unnatural Toughness (5).

**Traits:** Natural Armour (blubber) (3), Sturdy.

**Weapons:** Any unarmed attacks caused by Creos count as Toxic (2) due to the concentrated toxins and other substances that ooze from his skin.

**Gear:** Soiled bib, numerous morsels secreted in various folds of fat for emergency use.

**Wounds:** 22

**Total TB:** 10

## SIVIA, THE CARNALITE

A full description of Sivia can be found on page 128.

Sivia (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
18	22	30	30	33	32	34	38	71	35

**Movement:** 9/18/27/54

**Armour:** None

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag), Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +10, Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20.

**Talents:** Cold Hearted, Heightened Senses (Touch), Radiant Presence.

**Wounds:** 12

**Total TB:** 6



**Traits:** Unnatural Toughness (3), Unnatural Strength (6), Unnatural Agility (6),

**Weapons:** Sivia's nails are coated in a Hallucinogenic (3) poison.

**Gear:** Extensive priceless body jewellery.

## TYMARCH, THE PARAMITE

A full description of Tymarch can be found on page 128.

Tymarch (Elite)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
28	31	23	36	28	34	29	60	29	27	

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Armour:** None

**Skills:** Command (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Interrogation (Will) +20, Intimidate (Will) +20, Scrutiny (Per).

**Talents:** Inspire Wrath, Pity the Weak.

**Weapons:** Tymarch bears a concealed electro-flail (Melee; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Flexible, Shocking).

**Gear:** Sumptuous robes of shimmering gold.

**Wounds:** 10

**Total TB:** 3

## PHAETONI, THE VAINGLORIOUS

A full description of Phaetoni can be found on page 128.

Phaetoni (Elite)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
42	38	30	28	28	31	28	26	19	26	

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Armour:** None

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

**Talents:** Takedown, Unarmed Warrior.

**Weapons:** Phaetoni carries what appears to be a sword of purely ceremonial design, its basket hilt chased with gold and engraved with many fine sigils. The blade is in fact a powerful weapon created for him by a long-dead sorcerer, and is counted as a Flensing Blade (Melee; 1d10+8 R; Pen 3; Balanced, Razor Sharp).

**Gear:** (Unidentifiable) military dress uniform and a chest full of unique and disturbing medals.

**Wounds:** 15

**Total TB:** 2



## SOMNI, THE INDOLITE

A full description of Somni can be found on page 129.

Somni (Elite)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
10	10	12	13	20	38	17	51	49	28	

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Armour:** None

**Skills:** None.

**Talents:** Light Sleeper.

**Traits:** Resistance (Poisons).

**Weapons:** Axon Razor (Melee; 1d5+1 R; Pen 4; Crippling [5], Razor Sharp).

**Gear:** None.

**Wounds:** 8

**Total TB:** 1

## LIBERATED COURTIER

These numerous decadents litter the floor of the court of the Liberator and other parts of his fief. Should the Game Master need profiles for such low-level courtiers and sycophants, use the Administratum Adept from page 363 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. Their gear consists of dishevelled robes covered with a variety of unknown and unusual substances, plus assorted feathers, needles, firesticks, and other implements of pain and pleasure.

## LIBERATED PIRATE SCUM

This profile can be used to represent the type of degenerate pirate scum drawn to serve in the crews of Pseudanor's vessels. They are as fond of bloodshed as they are of booty, but are just as likely to be encountered drunk and insensible as willing and able to fight. As with the Liberated Courtier, these scum might present a challenge in sufficient numbers, in which case the Game Master can count them as a Horde with the requisite Magnitude.

Pirate Scum (Troop)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
28	24	28	31	27	22	31	24	22	--	

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Armour:** Flak Vest (3 Chest)

**Skills:** None.

**Talents:** Horde (depending on circumstances).

**Weapons:** Stub automatic (Pistol; 30m; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0, S/3/-, Clip 9, Reload Full) or cutoff shotgun (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 6; Reload Full; Scatter, Unreliable), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+4 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing).

**Gear:** 2 spare clips, low grade pressure suit, various tools.

**Wounds:** 9

**Total TB:** 3



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IV: AT THE EDGE



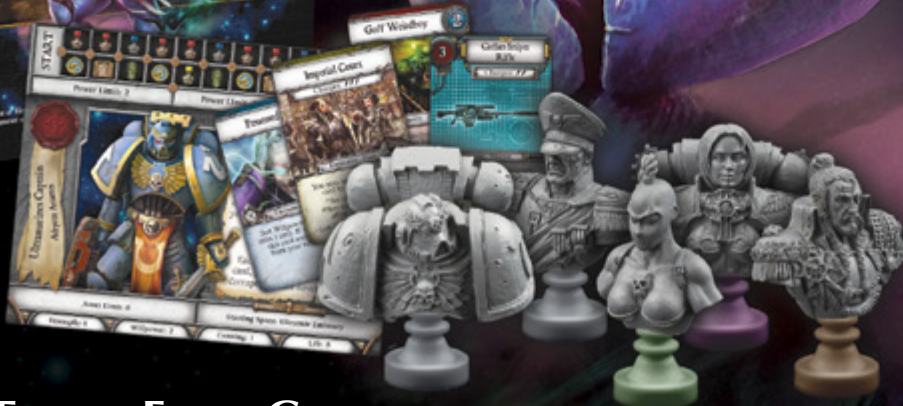
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