



# DARK HERESY™

FORGOTTEN GODS

AN ADVENTURE IN THE  
41<sup>ST</sup> MILLENNIUM

**WARHAMMER®**  
40,000  
**ROLEPLAY**







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Valatine Lewin was good. Few knew of her, but those who did ensured she always had work. She had been Faceless many times before, smuggling Eldar trinkets, silver devices of unknown origin, and even fresh Ork teef from battles along the Stygies Cluster. The Faceless Trade never ended; the voracious appetite for the outré and forbidden meant that there would always be people like her to whet it.

Holthane had set up the job: a pickup and delivery. Lewin wasn't told the name of the final buyer, but that wasn't unusual. The pickup was at a forgotten asteroid at Port Aquila. If it had a name, it had been lost long ago, along with its entry in the Administratum records. Now it was just another rock drifting amongst the millions that surrounded Diomedea Stella. In its hollowed-out interior, exposed stone revealed massive carvings that cast looming shadows in the arc-candle lighting. It reminded Lewin somehow of entering an old, abandoned temple.

The meet went smooth. Lewin and her people had darkened their voidsuit visors. Likewise, the drop men wore bodysuits that left no skin exposed, their faces obscured by filter masks and wide goggles. With harsh motions, as if unused to the grav-plating below their feet, they opened a series of worn cases to display the collection. No one asked where the dozens of small, rune-encrusted items came from. Questions weren't part of the deal.

Lewin pushed her own case across the bare deckplating. One of the bodysuits swiftly spun it around, and then opened it with a glittering, crystalline device. She had no idea what was inside, but the contents illuminated the bodysuits' angular forms with a soft, emerald glow. They seemed satisfied, so she motioned for her people to continue the transaction.

Each artefact was removed from its container, then carefully wrapped in thin, supple leather and packed into the small padded chest Holthane had provided. Even through her heavy gloves, she could feel the texture of each item prickling her skin and remaining behind like a phantom weight. She'd had worse though, and knew better than to let others know that she could feel or see such things. Valatine Lewin had known oddsight all her life, but had kept it carefully hidden and herself always on the move to avoid interest. She had seen what happened to those who didn't.

Nobody said anything, which is exactly how she liked it. Each party took their cargo and left.

Lewin strode past her destination, a side glance confirming the correct habroom number. A few doors away, she paused to check for any tails. Kappex Orbital was huge, dwarfing some of the lesser Desoleum hives far below it, and filled with people. This far into its depths, though, the passageways became rusted and deserted. She pretended to study a battered slate while cornerwatching for anyone. Eyeteeth, there had been enough problems on the job between the deaths and the worsening oddsight, and she wanted this final handoff to smoothly end it.

The first visions had started when their vessel departed Aquila. Oddsight had surrounded her; she could see gigantic structures, bigger than the cathedrals from her childhood. Nonhuman shapes lived in the structures, worshipping deities so powerful that reality bled. And they were all...old. Ancient. Stars had ignited and died since then. She often had to push hard to get these to fade away.

Nothing could be seen now but shadows of something rat-like scuttling away at the end of the hall. Satisfied, she pulled up the rolled layers of featureless synthskin along her neck to form

her false face and held a small metallic disc to the door's scanner. There was a long delay, and just before Lewin began to seriously worry, the heavy door slid apart in a grinding moan.

It was a barren room with a single table. A lone figure stood inside, face and body thoroughly shrouded in dark crimson robes. Mechadendrites writhed behind him, twitching like impatient serpents. Her eyes couldn't stay on the odd sigils he wore, jerking her sight away as her hand would retreat from a venting plasma line. She could feel his name like a scent drifting into her brain, a smell of fresh burns mixed with rotted ploid fruit: Halbrel. A dangerous name, one she was sure was not hers to know.

"Ah," he said evenly, inhumanly. "Your presence is welcome." He paused, as if completing a calculation, then continued. "I was told to expect others as well, however."

Lewin had to bark out a harsh laugh at that, muffled by the layers of synthskin. "Just me. Nobody else made it." She didn't elaborate how they had died. Few of the deaths had been as easy as an Arbitrator shotgun blast, something they all knew to expect.

Jorgal was the first; he had been staring at the chest during the entire transit, then after they dropped at Desoleum simply pulled out his hand cannon and ate the barrel. Two more had survived a shootout only to fall under the unstoppable tracks of an industrial loader. Last was Danerish, her strong proper hand, the hardest man she knew. They had been navigating the orbital's bowels when he began crying softly, then dropped and vomited up a shower of bone fragments and blood. There hadn't been anything left of his face she could recognise. The rounded bone shards looked familiar, though, like a memory of something that hadn't happened yet. That had left her alone to finish the job.

"I see." Lewin had no response to that, and simply placed the chest on the hullmetal table. Halbrel flashed a wrist-electrode over the clasp, which obediently opened. Lewin tried not to watch Halbrel examine his purchases. One of his hands was a metal claw, each needle-like finger perfectly mimicking natural motion. The other was human, but moved with the jerky, imprecise motions of a puppet. She wasn't sure which was the more disturbing.

Lewin turned away and tried to relax, but his name kept tearing at her mind. "It's all there," she said. One hand near her compact bolt pistol, she watched his blurred reflection in the metal wall. Finally he closed the chest, and she slowly exhaled.

Halbrel spoke, calm as before. "This concludes our business. You may depart." Lewin turned back to face him, then stood very still. A new oddsight overlaid him, something monstrous, pale and tall and bound in smoking chains, its face leering and twisted. She slowly backed out of the room, not daring to speak or look away.

Once the door closed behind her, she could finally breathe again. It helped to think of the payment: an assortment of digital weapons, several clips of bolt shells, an archaeotech auspex, and other riches. Very nice, especially since it was all hers now. Push off some debts, buy a few treats, take some rest. She certainly needed rest; eyeteeth, she deserved some after this. Maybe then get some work with Gholsken Hresk; she'd heard the Trade Sable might be hiring below. Scuttle was that he was involved with double-deals, selling Faceless items with his proper then using his sinister to steal them back and re-sell them elsewhere for staggering profit. That sounded good. She straightened a bit and walked with more purpose down the passageway. Things were looking up.

Behind her, the oddsight flowed in her path as invisible, shimmering waves in the air. It smiled, also eager for the future.



# INTRODUCTION

*“A terror once banished from memory stirs again on a world of bones.”*

–Ta’l Krynn, Desoleum Soothsayer

**F**ORGOTTEN GODS forms the third act of a thematic trilogy of adventures, following *Dark Pursuits* from the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook** and then *Desolation of the Dead* from the **DARK HERESY GAME MASTER’S KIT**, although neither scenario is required to play. In this adventure, the Acolytes pursue heresies from the shadowy habways of Hive Desoleum to the solemn, bone-strewn shrine world of Thaur. There, they begin to uncover the dark secrets behind a series of corrupted xenos relics being trafficked throughout the Askellon Sector.

Each chapter includes Game Master guidance for experience points and other rewards for the PCs, based on their actions and successes in that part of the adventure. As it is very possible that not all Acolytes will survive each encounter, either falling to horrible wounds or even more horrible corruption, each chapter also includes suggestions for replacement characters should players wish to create new ones based on local settings and organisations. This allows for new Acolytes to join the warband in a more fluid manner, along with specialised abilities and knowledge that could be invaluable in prosecuting current investigations. **FORGOTTEN GODS** includes sidebars with new character creation options that players can use for fashioning such Acolytes along these lines.

Along with the main adventure, **FORGOTTEN GODS** also contains adventure seeds and other suggestions for future investigations. This allows the GM to run linked adventures that call upon the activities and clues uncovered during this adventure, and thus create a more expansive campaign of associated heresies ranging even wider across the Askellon Sector.

**FORGOTTEN GODS** is broken into three chapters:

## CHAPTER I: STANDING IN THE SHADOW

On intelligence from a contact in Hive Desoleum, the Acolytes track a group of smugglers carrying dangerous xenos artefacts through the harsh wastes outside the hive to its main spaceport. When they discover that the smuggling ring extends well beyond the planet, and is in fact dedicated to smuggling these relics back to their point of origin, a shrine world called Thaur, they must board the voidship carrying the artefacts to that planet.

## CHAPTER II: TO THE WORLD OF BONE

The Acolytes continue their investigation aboard the ship and must deal with its captain, a powerful Rogue Trader who can both help and hinder their efforts to find the smuggled relics. They soon discover a cult dedicated to the strange xenos artefacts, which plots to capture the vessel once it exits the Warp and use the lives of those aboard as a mass sacrifice to reawaken their sleeping alien god. The Acolytes must defend the ship and thwart this scheme as the vessel arrives on Thaur.

## CHAPTER III: NIGHTMARES REMEMBERED

As they arrive on Thaur, the Acolytes are intercepted by Lord Pyre, the world’s planetary governor. After winning his support (or escaping his custody), they must make their way to the ceremony to resurrect the alien god, which is taking place beneath a massive prayer service for an Imperial saint. Once they infiltrate the cult and enter the catacombs of Thaur, the Acolytes discover that the supposed alien god is in fact a powerful Daemon with a strange link to the smuggled alien relics. They must ultimately disrupt the ritual to banish the Daemon before it can fully manifest, saving the world of Thaur from being plunged back into the darkness that swallowed its former inhabitants.







## CHAPTER I: STANDING IN THE SHADOW

This opening chapter finds the Acolytes in Hive Desoleum, one of the major population centres of the Askellon Sector and a familiar location for those who have played the adventures *Dark Pursuits* from Chapter XIII of the *DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook* and *Desolation of the Dead* from the *DARK HERESY GAME MASTER'S KIT*. The adventure begins with a bizarre crime scene in a lower hive area that calls for the attention of the Acolytes. This offers a new lead on the traffic in tainted xenos artefacts plaguing the gigantic hive city, a concern that has vexed their Inquisitor for some time.

This first part of *FORGOTTEN GODS* is primarily investigative. However, there are numerous opportunities for violence if the Acolytes choose such routes. Acolytes with more subtle skills can successfully navigate the events with only minimal bloodshed. Ideally, the members of the warband use a mix of these approaches to achieve the best results.

Because of this chapter's investigative and open-ended nature, there are many possible avenues to success for the Acolytes as they pursue their quarry. Game Masters should remain open to whatever ideas and plans the players can come up with, and should be prepared to reorder the adventure's events if the Player Characters' actions make it necessary.

### CHAPTER OVERVIEW

*"Some will sell their very souls if they receive enough coin. But, to return to the topic at hand, how much were you offering for this delivery?"*

—Gholsken Hresk, Sable Trader

The adventure begins in Hive Desoleum, with the Acolytes investigating the scene of a violent altercation at the request of Sanctionary Oath-Captain Kaytian Nils. The scene is marked by several strange factors that led her to reach out to the Acolytes. Confirming the Oath-Captain's fears that something unnatural and heretical is at work, the Acolytes follow the trail of a group of smugglers from the scene and discover that these smugglers are indeed involved with the corrupt xenos artefacts that have been poisoning the hive. These smugglers are in fact not importing them to the city, as others in the Faceless Trade in proscribed items have done, but transporting them off-world. In order to discover the truth, the Acolytes must follow the smugglers onto a ship bound for an unknown destination.

The crime scene that the Acolytes find themselves investigating is the aftermath of a deadly encounter between smugglers of the Trade Sable and cultists of the Callers of Sorrow. The latter is an expansive cult, with many dozens of sub-cults called "Strains" throughout the hive. Its true numbers are unknown, and at any



moment the Strains are involved in numerous unholy plots. It was a cult member named Ferrue Fayne who first came into possession of a strange and ancient relic of unknown but clearly xenos origins, with which he boosted his existing psychic powers. Drawing on the unholy resonance of the xenos artefact, Ferrue was able to raise the very dead to serve him. If the Acolytes have already been through the events of *Desolation of the Dead* in the **DARK HERESY GAME MASTER'S KIT**, then Ferrue Fayne is most likely himself dead, his corpse dissolving in the depths of the sump. However, word spread quickly of Ferrue's explosive ascent within the cult and the reasons behind it.

Soon other would-be leaders and sorcerers within the Callers of Sorrow began seeking out similar xenos artefacts, which the smugglers of the Trade Sable were all too happy to provide. The malevolent work of the Trade Sable, one of the largest groups working the Faceless Trade in forbidden artefacts, should be quite familiar to players of the adventure *Dark Pursuits* in the **DARK HERESY CORE RULEBOOK**. These smugglers sell to whomever can pay, and they have no more qualms about dealing with the twisted cultists of the Callers of Sorrow than they do with the jilted nobility of the Apex. Even seemingly innocuous artefacts of xenos origin fetch a high price and have become one of the most lucrative commodities for the Trade Sable in Hive Desoleum.

As ever, heretics are quick to betray their allies when it seems expedient. Certain factions of the Trade Sable have worked for some time with a cult known as the Children of the Inheritance, based on the fabled Cemetery Planet of Thaur (though it is important that the Acolytes do not learn this until the events of the second chapter). In fact, this is the same cult that employed the services of the arch-heretek Somnius Halbrel in the events of *Dark Pursuits*. The Children of the Inheritance value these artefacts not just for their power, as the Callers of Sorrow do, but as a central object of devotion within their heretical belief system (for more on the beliefs of the Children of the Inheritance, see page 112). The Inheritors, as they are sometimes known, are willing to pay almost any price for these objects. Thus, a number of enterprising Sable Traders, collaborating with the Inheritors, decided to retake artefacts from the Callers of Sorrow, by force if necessary. The adventure begins in the aftermath of one such incident. This is not the first deadly encounter between the Traders and the Callers of Sorrow, but it is the first to come to the attention of the authorities, as the others have occurred in the darkest and most forlorn stretches of the hive.

A handful of Sable Traders escaped the carnage and are working their way through the hive, carrying with them the artefacts taken from the Callers of Sorrow, even as the Acolytes investigate the scene of the skirmish. After some investigation, the Acolytes pick up the trail and eventually catch up to the smugglers, either fighting them or following them into the wastes surrounding Hive Desoleum. Eventually, the Acolytes discover a smuggler camp, where Sable Traders and cultists of the Children of the Inheritance are preparing to take their stockpile of artefacts off-world. Again, the Acolytes can choose to take up arms against the smugglers, or to remain inconspicuous and follow them. In either case, the path leads to a vessel preparing to disembark. In order to discover the smugglers' destination, the Acolytes must board the ship and leave Desoleum behind.

## HIVE DESOLEUM

The gigantic edifice of Hive Desoleum is one of the oldest and most important hive cities in all of the Askellon Sector, and a location that is already familiar to players of *Dark Pursuits* or *Desolation of the Dead*. In fact, **FORGOTTEN GODS** has many additional connections to these prior adventures that the Game Master can choose to explore if applicable, though the players should not realise the full extent of these ties straight away. Hive Desoleum is described in detail in **Chapter X: The Askellon Sector** and **Chapter XIII: Dark Pursuits** of the **DARK HERESY CORE RULEBOOK** and the **DARK HERESY GAME MASTER'S KIT**; the latter also includes additional information on a particular area of lower Hive Desoleum connected to these events, the Gallowsway. The GM can find information on methods of transportation within the hive in the *Travel in Hive Desoleum* sidebar on page 330 of the **DARK HERESY CORE RULEBOOK**.

### HOME WORLD: HIVE DESOLEUM

Players can adopt Hive Desoleum as their home world when creating a new Acolyte, especially as a replacement character while adventuring in that location. Characters from Hive Desoleum follow the standard hive world rules (see page 38 of the **DARK HERESY CORE RULEBOOK**), but with the following new Home World Bonus instead of the usual one:

#### HOME WORLD BONUS

*The Sacredness of Oaths:* Desoleum's main hive exists in a tangled system of involute oaths, and for its denizens this has become an ingrained part of their mentality. If he gives his oathbond word, a character from this world gains a +10 bonus to Willpower-based tests involved in fulfilling that oath. If he ever goes back on his oathgiven word, however, he gains 1d5 Insanity Points.

## THE TRADE SABLE

The Trade Sable is an organisation of smugglers and their ilk who dealer in the forbidden, from dismal texts to xenos relics. These goods are far more than simply illegal; they are heretical and accursed. Sable Traders, therefore, are a merciless and wicked lot, perfectly content to see worlds engulfed in the fires of perdition, so long as they receive their payment. The events of **FORGOTTEN GODS** concern themselves specifically with the trade of ancient xenos artefacts unearthed beneath the countless cemeteries on Thaur. For years, these objects have trickled out from Thaur to be dispersed across the sector. In particular, the dissolute nobles and heretical covens of Desoleum have frequently acquired these artefacts, as the massive amounts of interstellar commerce between the two worlds make it a prime hub for smuggling.



While its activities require members to operate throughout Askellon, the Trade Sable is based on Desoleum, which acts as a hub for nearly all of its business. It is one of many groups involved in the sector's so-called Faceless Trade—a loosely-affiliated network of smuggling organisations who move proscribed objects such as xenos devices and Warp-tainted artefacts. The Faceless Trade is a step beyond smugglers of arms, chems, or other wares that contravene Imperial law—it deals in the objects that damn souls and bring entire worlds crashing down in heresy.

More information about the Trade Sable and its involvement with the xenos artefacts can be found in **Chapter XIII: Dark Pursuits** of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**.

## THE CALLERS OF SORROW

The Callers of Sorrow is a large cult endemic to Hive Desoleum. The followers of this malefic group are sworn to the service of the Dark Gods, in particular the Chaos power known in forbidden texts as Nurgle, the Lord of Decay. The cult is divided into self-sustaining cells, known as “Strains.” The events of **FORGOTTEN GODS** are concerned with the Mournful Song Strain led by Tormus Fayne, based out of a downhive area known as the Gallowsway. Tormus is one of three brothers who are the hereditary masters of one of the Mortuarian Houses of the Gallowsway—macabre facilities where the bodies of the dead are rendered down to their component parts. This region, rife with death and decay, is fertile ground for the Callers of Sorrow. Tormus's younger brother Ferrue, seeking to usurp his elder brother's position as Preceptor of the Strain, came into possession of a mysterious xenos artefact, which amplified his own sorcerous abilities and granted him the very ability to raise the dead as mindless automatons. Whether or not Ferrue is still amongst the living, knowledge of his practice has spread throughout the Strain, which seeks further xenos artefacts to enhance their Warp-spawned powers.

More information about the Callers of Sorrow can be found in **Chapter XII: NPCs and Adversaries** in the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**, and in the adventure **Desolation of the Dead** in the **DARK HERESY GAME MASTER'S KIT**.

## IN THE NAME OF THE IMMORTAL EMPEROR...

**FORGOTTEN GODS** assumes that the Player Characters comprise a warband operating under orders from an Inquisitor. However, it is possible that the warband is in fact led by a Player Character Inquisitor. In this case, the GM might wish to make certain adjustments to the adventure to reflect the presence of an Inquisitor within the warband. Though an Inquisitor holds ultimate power, the realities of Imperial power structures and the burden of his duty should be enough to deter him from the most extreme actions. Often, all it takes is for the GM to ask “Are you sure that's what you want to do?” to sway a player away from a decision that abuses his power or could derail the adventure.

## (UN)FAMILIAR FACES

The events of this chapter involve several NPCs from the prior **DARK HERESY** adventures **Dark Pursuits** and **Desolation of the Dead**. If players have already completed those adventures, there is a chance that these NPCs are no longer amongst the living, or are on hostile terms with the Acolytes. The former case requires the GM to substitute replacement NPCs, in effect reassigning the role played by the deceased. Recommendations for such replacement NPCs can be found where needed in the adventure, and profiles for the NPCs are located at the end of the chapter.

The latter case is both simpler and more difficult to deal with. If the Acolytes have made a complete enemy of an NPC, it might be necessary to introduce a new character to fulfil that role, just as if the NPC were dead. However, in less extreme cases, the GM must simply keep in mind how previous encounters have gone, and portray the NPC's attitudes accordingly. Specific guidance is given in adventure as appropriate, but generally the NPCs are assisting the Acolytes for reasons of necessity, duty, or personal gain, any of which can trump some degree of animosity.

## TYING IT TOGETHER

**FORGOTTEN GODS** continues many of the threads introduced in the previous adventures **Dark Pursuits** and **Desolation of the Dead**. It is not necessary to play these before beginning **FORGOTTEN GODS**, but it is likely to increase everyone's enjoyment. The moment of recognition when a familiar name is spoken or when a player makes the mental connection between events is exciting and helps to strengthen the impact of the adventure's events. On a more concrete level, if the Acolytes have access to the xenos artefacts from these earlier adventures, they can actually use them to help track the smugglers during Chapter I, or even to infiltrate the heretics' ranks.

It is also possible to play these adventures “out of order”—that is, in a series other than **Dark Pursuits**, followed by **Desolation of the Dead**, followed by **FORGOTTEN GODS**. This requires some additional adjustment and work on the GM's part, but the adventures are independent enough that it should not produce many problems. A few of the notable differences would be the handling of the Daemonhost Suvfaeras' different guises in **Dark Pursuits** and **FORGOTTEN GODS**, as well as the involvement of the arch-heretek Somnius Halbrel and his missive found in **Chapter II: To the World of Bone** (see page 102). The latter assumes Halbrel has concluded his business with the cult (which takes place in **Dark Pursuits**, and thus would need modification).

There are many other, smaller, ways for the GM to interweave the events of the three adventures. If running the adventures in an order other than the default, it is a particularly good idea for the GM to take notes where necessary, so that he can modify events and NPC attitudes accordingly. The default attitudes and actions of the NPCs will doubtless require adjustments in this situation.



## CRIME SCENE

*“Throne, but I hate to say this. We need to contact them.”*

—Oath-Captain Kaytian Nils

The chapter begins with the Acolytes receiving a tip from Oath-Captain Kaytian Nils of the Sanctionaries. If the Acolytes have previously been through the events of *Desolation of the Dead*, they have already met Nils, who contacts them directly. If not, the Acolytes’ Inquisitor becomes aware of the situation, from Nils directly or possibly from his other contacts amongst the Sanctionaries, depending on the particular methods that the Inquisitor employs. In any case, the news the Oath-Captain brings is decidedly worthy of the Acolytes’ attention, which their Inquisitor can confirm should they contact him prior to acting on the information.

If the Acolytes have previously met Oath-Captain Nils, she comes to them directly; read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*A short time ago, Oath-Captain Kaytian Nils of the Sanctionaries approached you with news of a disturbing crime. “I thought you would want to know about this. I don’t know who else to go to,” she said as she offered a data-slate with pics showing a number of bodies splayed on the ground in pools of blood. “One of my patrolmen found the scene early this morning, just off the Gallowsway. He thought it was just the aftermath of a gang fight at first, but the bodies didn’t match any known gang. When I got there, something about it instantly reminded me of the last time. Then I found this.” Nils held up a plastek bag containing a small fragment of perfectly black material, so dark it seems to absorb, or obliterate, the light around it. “It’s just like the necklace from Charnel House 17, isn’t it?” She is right, the object is clearly inhuman in origin.*

Nils begins with a Confident Personality and a Disposition of 75; see page 42 for her complete profile. If she previously encountered the Acolytes during the events of *Desolation of the Dead*, then she is grateful for their assistance, but also wary regarding the trouble their presence can bring. Depending on how their previous interactions went, she might approach them quite grudgingly, as a last resort. In this case, the Game Master should modify this scene to take into account her attitude. If things went truly poorly last time, the GM could have the Acolytes informed of the situation by their Inquisitor or another existing contact. To drive home the impact they had, the GM can add details such as describing the way Nils’s face falls when she sees them arrive at the crime scene unbidden.

If Nils is not already known to the Acolytes, they can instead receive a briefing from their Inquisitor. Depending on their Inquisitor’s style of communications, this briefing could take any number of forms, and GMs are encouraged to tailor the experience to better reflect the peculiarities and persona of the Inquisitor.

### CASUALTIES OF THE SHADOW WAR

If Oath-Captain Nils is dead or otherwise unavailable due to the events of *Desolation of the Dead*, the GM should substitute the newly promoted Oath-Captain Baltazar Wei. Wei uses the same profile as Oath-Captain Nils, but the GM should play up his unfamiliarity with the Acolytes (either as a positive or negative effect) as he did not participate in their earlier shared adventure with Nils.



## BODIES AND QUESTIONS

The adventure begins in earnest with the Acolytes arriving at the scene of the crime. If the GM wishes, he can have Nils answer any questions the Acolytes might have en route. Once they arrive at the scene, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*After a journey into the depths of the hive, you finally reach the forlorn area known as the Gallowsway, the region of Oath-Captain Nils' jurisdiction. As you arrive at a three-storey structure, its exterior plascrete and steel walls discoloured with centuries of grime, Oath-Captain Nils puts on a respirator mask and recommends doing the same, before pushing open the rust-streaked doors. The spacious chamber beyond is piled high with junk, and the ceiling sags in several places. Nine pools of congealed blood arrayed about the room and the fresh las-burns and bullet holes scarring the wall speak to the recent violence. The air is thick with the smell of blood and an overpowering scent of decay. Several Sanctionaries move about the room, taking pics and speaking in hushed tones.*

The original purpose of the building is lost to time, but it appears to be used currently, or at least most recently, as a storage warehouse. The only identifier on the building is a well-worn sign above the entrance, on which "H-11" is written. There are some additional words, but they are completely illegible and all but worn away. The structure is primarily made up of a single large chamber, approximately 80 metres long by 30 metres wide. It is three storeys high, but the stairs leading to the upper floor walkway have long since collapsed, and it is unreachable. A small portion of the lower two floors is separated into an office, the armour-glass partition so streaked with grime and corrosion as to be opaque. In addition to the double doors through which the Acolytes enter, there is another door and a large loading ramp set in the opposite wall. A flight of rickety metal stairs leads to a catwalk that runs the perimeter of the middle floor, missing grating in several places. A single window on that floor has been boarded up. Several vents and pipes open to the upper two storeys. The rear door exits onto a gantry walkway scored by recent las-shots and bullet impacts. The heavy folding door of the loading ramp opens to a sheer drop into the depths of the hive.

There are a number of crates and small shipping containers arranged in stacks about the room. Most of these are ancient, as shown by the rotten wood and rusted-through metal. A few are more recent, and inspection reveals that these have been forced open and ransacked.

Despite the fact that the crime scene is only a few hours old, there is a heavy reek of decay in the air, and numerous large, hairy flies buzzing around the building. The Acolytes might search for a reason behind this, but none can be found. The Sanctionaries present have also spent time searching for additional corpses that might explain the odour, but to no avail.

Sanctionary Ghenner Kleyne (see page 43) was first on the scene, and took the event for a gang fight, a common-enough event throughout the lower hive. Upon the Acolytes' arrival, Oath-Captain Nils calls him over and introduces him to the Acolytes. Kleyne's reaction depends on how they are introduced: he is nervous about speaking to Acolytes of an Inquisitor, but

## NEED TO KNOW BASIS

Depending on how events unfolded in *Desolation of the Dead*, Oath-Captain Nils might or might not know the PCs' true identities as Acolytes of an Inquisitor. In addition to determining the degree of deference she shows toward them, this could also affect how readily she provides information and resources. Ultimately, she should trust the Acolytes, at least in a professional capacity, and do everything reasonable to assist them. If, however, Nils has never met the Acolytes before and does not know their true authority, she is less forthcoming. If Nils did not summon the Acolytes, reduce her starting Disposition by 10. Even if she comes to understand that the Acolytes represent forces greater than herself, Nils cannot help but resent the imposition on her work. Similarly, if the Acolytes caused major problems for Nils last time she saw them, the GM should reduce her starting Disposition by a further 10 or more, depending on the severity of the problems. Conversely, if the Acolytes proved capable and provided Nils with assistance in the past, the GM should increase her starting Disposition by 10 or more.

otherwise his reaction depends on the authority of the Acolytes' cover story. Kleyne discovered the scene during a routine patrol, when he heard sounds of gunfire. By the time he reached the source, the fight was over and only corpses were left. Kleyne is an honourable-enough sort, as far as Sanctionaries go, with a Submissive Personality towards his superiors (possibly including the Acolytes, depending on how Nils interacts with them) and a Disposition of 65. He is not above taking a bribe, but down in the Gallowsway, far from Consortium interests, the Sanctionaries tend to be more honest.

What happens next is up to the Acolytes. Oath-Captain Nils and Sanctionary Kleyne are available to answer any questions to the best of their abilities. The bodies were removed before Nils arrived and identified the highly unusual nature of the situation. She or Kleyne can take the Acolytes to the mortuary if they wish to view the bodies. The Acolytes are free to investigate the scene however they wish, and GMs should be open to whatever approaches the players come up with. Other than realising the gravity of the heresy at play, it is important that the Acolytes grasp that one or more of the perpetrators escaped the showdown alive, and that following the survivors is the best way to unravel the heresy. The Acolytes can discover several clues while examining the crime scene as described on the following pages.

## ALIEN KEYS

If any of the Acolytes are carrying a xenos artefact such as the mummified hand or black orb from *Dark Pursuits*, or Ferrue Fayne's artefact from *Desolation of the Dead*, the object reacts to the lingering traces of the artefacts which the smugglers took from the warehouse. These reactions are subtle, and unless the Acolytes think to examine the artefacts in their possession, call for an **Challenging (+0) Awareness test** to determine if the Acolytes notice. If the desiccated alien hand is present, it twitches slightly,



## THE GALLOWSWAY

The Gallowsway is forlorn and decrepit area near the very bottom of Desoleum City, one of the lowest levels considered part of the hive proper before the darkness of the underhive regions begin. The citizens of the Gallowsway live without hope, just as they live without much in the way of wealth, food, or even steady light. The Gallowsway is known for the Mortuarius Factorums, grisly facilities that process the countless dead of Hive Desoleum. In a city of untold billions, these macabre industries are necessary to ensure the city does not succumb to decay and disease. Despite their vital function, they receive little in the way of support from the hive's rulers high in the Apex.

As such, the facilities are barely functional, and the surrounding areas are rife with failing machinery, inoperable lumen fixtures, and collapsing gantries and corridors. A noxious fog rises up from below, suffusing the area and reducing visibility. The worst part about being in the Gallowsway, though, is the rain. Though its intensity increases based on activity above, liquid ceaselessly drips down onto the residents of the Gallowsway from the upper levels; a filthy liquid combining effluent, toxic by-products, and simple grime. The constant drainage coats the area in a greasy, foul-smelling slime. Though there is no immediate danger from this liquid, an observer cannot help but wonder if the miasma contributes to the almost universally sickly nature of the Gallowsway residents.

For more information on the Gallowsway, see the adventure *Desolation of the Dead* in the DARK HERESY GAME MASTER'S KIT.

the twitching becoming more pronounced in the presence of a particular crate. The lid of this crate was clearly forcibly pried off recently and the crate's contents removed, save for the layers of padding left inside. As the Acolytes might correctly surmise from this, the hand reacts in the presence of related xenos artefacts, a hypothesis which they can confirm by holding the hand close to the fragment Oath-Captain Nils retrieved from the scene. Other similar xenos relics begin to vibrate either in the presence of other artefacts, or the artefacts' lingering signature, producing a humming sound eerily reminiscent of a swarm of locusts. These reactions can also assist in tracking the surviving smugglers, who are carrying a number of artefacts taken from the Callers of Sorrow as explained under *Following the Trail* on page 13.

### THE PSYKER'S SENSE

A psyker Acolyte can make a **Difficult (-10) Psyniscience test** to sense a lingering psychic echo. There is something unsettling about the psychic residue, which is disturbingly alien. If he scores three or more degrees of success, the psyker is not only confident that the lingering psychic residue is non-human in origin, but additionally senses faintly the presence of Chaos. A character without a psy rating can attempt a **Very Hard (-30) Awareness test**; if he succeeds, he gets an uneasy feeling of *deja vu* and the hairs on his neck stand on end.

## SOMETHING MISSING

Several crates have clearly been broken into recently, and their contents emptied; any Acolyte examining them notices this automatically. It is impossible to ascertain what the contents were, but a large amount of plastek-foam shipping material indicates that they are fragile in nature. A **Routine (+20) Logic test** can also tell from the bloody handprints within the crates that at least one person must have lived through the combat, taking items with him as he left the scene.

### ADDITIONAL CLUES

There are also more mundane clues that the Acolytes can find. If an Acolyte examines the exterior gantry behind the building, call for a **Routine (+20) Awareness test**. If he succeeds, the character finds a small amount of fresh blood on the metal grating of the walkway. If he achieves two or more degrees of success on the test, the character notices several blood spots on another gantry below, left behind when a wounded smuggler leapt down. The Acolytes can follow this trail of blood, at least for a short way.

Amongst the centuries of grime and refuse in the warehouse, keen-eyed Acolytes might notice small scuffs of fresh dirt. Acolytes examining the floor of the warehouse should make an **Challenging (+0) Awareness test**. If a character succeeds, he finds a fresh boot print crusted with thin sand that is unlike anything found in the muddy Gallowsway. In fact, the dirt was tracked in from the wastes surrounding Hive Desoleum, indicating that someone involved in the scuffle has been coming and going from the hive. The fine silicate nature of the material marks it out as coming from the surrounding wastes, which an Acolyte who passes an **Ordinary (+10) Logic test** determines. Acolytes with previous experience in the hive (possibly from the earlier adventures here) gain a +10 bonus on the test. Further checking outside and a successful **Ordinary (+10) Awareness test** uncovers additional tracks moving away from the warehouse, clearly indicating at least one survivor.

Acolytes might decide to seek out witnesses to question. Indeed, this tactic can prove fruitful. However, no witnesses are currently in the vicinity or have come forward to the Sanctionaries, so even finding them takes some legwork in itself, and is covered under *Following the Trail* on page 13.

### PICKING UP THE TRAIL

Once the Acolytes finish examining the crime scene, they should have several potential leads to follow—a trail of blood, dirty prints, or the invisible trail of Warp emanations, in addition to the damaged crates and missing contents. They can gain additional clues by examining the corpses at the mortuary, but if the Acolytes decide that time is of the essence, they can set off straight away in pursuit—see *Following the Trail* on page 13. If the Acolytes do not have a clear idea as to their next step, Oath-Captain Nils suggests examining the bodies. She also points out the clearly ransacked crates and mentions that her Sanctionaries did not remove any such items except the personal effects of the dead.

It should be clear to the Acolytes that at least one person survived the fight, and that this person can provide answers. It should also be clear that xenos artefacts were a factor in the fight. If the Acolytes decide to contact their Inquisitor, he can tell them that the trade of xenos materials in Hive Desoleum is a dire problem, and tracing the artefacts here should be their top priority.



## THE MORTUARIUM

When the Acolytes arrive at the scene of the fight between the cultists and the smugglers, the Sanctionaries have already taken away the corpses. If the Acolytes request it, Oath-Captain Nils can take them to the mortuary, where the bodies are awaiting autopsy. The mortuary is a cold—though less than completely sterile—facility located beneath the precinct house. Sanctionary-Medicae Scarun Tomas is in charge of the mortuary, assisted by several poorly maintained servitors. Harsh, bright glow-globes illuminate the room, and drains are set in the floor at numerous spots. The mortuary is equipped to store more than a hundred corpses at a time and is usually over capacity. This is despite the fact that only “questionable” deaths are routed to it; dead gangers and dregs typically go straight to the Mortuarian Houses of the Gallowsway for processing. Sanctionary-Medicae Tomas is preparing to begin the autopsy when the Acolytes arrive, setting out various wicked-looking blades, saws, and clamps on a tray, while wearing a blood-stained, white smock. He has also prepared a vox-corder to record his observations. The first body is laid out on a cold steel table which has been tarnished by years of use, with permanent dark stains surrounding the drains on the floor beneath. Three additional bodies sit on gurneys, covered by tarps and awaiting their turn, with the other five in cold storage.

### THE AUTOPSY

This encounter offers a wonderful opportunity for Acolytes knowledgeable in medicae matters to really shine. In fact, a skilled Acolyte could very well spot details that the Sanctionary-Medicae overlooks. If one of the Acolytes wishes to participate in the autopsy, the Sanctionary-Medicae can be convinced with a **Routine (+20) Charm test** (though, depending on the situation, other skills such as Command, Intimidate, or Deceive could also be used). An Acolyte participating in the autopsy should attempt an **Ordinary (+10) Medicae test**. If successful, the Acolyte is able to detect physical details at roughly the same time as Sanctionary-Medicae Tomas does; with two or more degrees of success the Acolyte notices them before Tomas. Even if none of the Acolytes are participating “hands-on” in the autopsy, any character observing can attempt a **Difficult (-10) Medicae test**. If he succeeds, the character also notices details in the same manner as above. If desired, an Acolyte can voice his observations or perhaps correct the Sanctionary-Medicae, thereby frustrating Tomas.

The corpses have been stripped and their possessions stashed prior to the Acolytes arrival. If they request it, the Sanctionary-Medicae (or any other Sanctionary present) can have the possessions retrieved. Of the nine corpses, four had been wearing tattered and filthy robes and two were wearing typical downhive workers’ garb; these were members of the Callers of Sorrow cult, including the corpse readied for autopsy. Three other corpses have odd facial scars, light armour, and rugged clothing; these were Sable Trade smugglers. The cultists had the following possessions: one rusty cleaver, three stub revolvers, two autoguns, several grisly trophies including a shrunken human head, several sheets of filth-smear parchment written with unholy prayers, and a rusted iron talisman depicting three circles in a triangular formation. A character can attempt an **Easy (+30) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test** to identify this as the symbol of the Chaos God Nurgle.

## SANCTIONARY-MEDICAE SCARUN TOMAS

Sanctionary-Medicae Scarun Tomas is certainly competent at his job, but also weary, having seen the same chainsword and las wounds countless times. He is quick to look for the typical causes of death and close his report so that he can get to the next body, for the queue is endless. He long ago gave up the idea that his work has any real meaning, for few murders are solved this far from the lights of the Apex. However, if the Sanctionary-Medicae has any inkling of the power the Acolytes represent, he performs to the best of his ability. If he actually realises that the PCs represent an Inquisitor, he becomes quite nervous; this could even cause him to make mistakes, if the GM sees fit.

The smugglers had the following gear: two laspistols, one autopistol, two lasguns, a shotgun, rebreathers, three sets of (now badly damaged) flak armour, and a portable vox. The vox is still keyed to the frequency the smugglers were using; the smugglers that survived the encounter are still operating on that frequency, and the Acolytes can use this to help track them down. All the bodies were carrying some amount of petty cash in Guild Scrip, Hive Desoleum’s currency for offworlders, while one of the cultists had several coins scrimshawed from bone. These coins are the currency of the shrine world of Thaur, though the Acolytes are unlikely to recognise this unless any of them have been to Thaur. An Acolyte who has not previously visited that planet requires a **Hard (-20) Common Lore (Askellon Sector) test** to correctly identify the origin of the bone chips; those who have recognise them with no test needed. In the case of the weapons, it was not clear to which person some of the weapons belonged; however, the cultists’ weapons are poorly maintained in comparison to the smugglers, and marked with obvious tarnish and rust.

Before beginning the autopsy, Tomas dons a respirator and goggles, offering the same to the Acolytes. Immediately upon pulling back the shroud to reveal the corpse, Tomas notes that the degree of the body’s decay is inconsistent with the elapsed time since death, pointing out several facets of advanced putrefaction. Acolytes with any ranks in the Medicae skill can see this as well, without a test required. The apparent cause of death is readily identifiable as burnt las-wounds in the corpse’s chest. Also of note is a strange set of disturbing growths on the corpse’s upper torso, consisting of three rounded buboes in a triangular formation similar to the talisman described above.

As Tomas concludes his initial observations, he picks up an auto-saw and begins to open the body’s chest cavity. Immediately upon slicing into the dead cultist’s flesh, a host of wriggling maggots spill out, prompting the Sanctionary-Medicae to jump in surprise. Before Tomas can recover his wits, the corpse’s eyes open and it bolts upright, immediately attacking the closest person—most likely the Sanctionary-Medicae. All characters who witness the sight of the maggot-filled corpse springing to life must test against **Fear (1)**. To represent the “corpse,” use the Necrophage profile on page 408 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**. The mutant



begins unarmed, but grabs a heavy blade from the instrument table during its first turn (with the same effect as the cleaver in the Necrophage profile). Everyone other than the Necrophage suffers from Surprise during the first round of combat, unless they pass the Fear test above with three or more degrees of success. Tomas quickly retreats away, but if needed he can be represented by the Citizen NPC profile on page 392 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook with Rank 3 (+20) in the **Medicae** skill.

If desired, the GM can substitute some other horrific occurrence instead of the risen dead to best match his players. These could be a small Nurgling or corpse-crawler swarm emerging when the dead cultist's chest is opened, the body bursting in a shower of toxic gore, or the open chest revealing a booby-trapped device that must be disarmed quickly.

After the threat is ended, Sanctionary-Medicae Tomas (assuming he is still alive) refuses to continue with the autopsies, unless an Acolyte convinces him by passing a **Challenging (+0)**

**Charm** or **Intimidate** test (though other Social skills could be used if appropriate). The Sanctionary-Medicae is particularly susceptible to shows of authority, and **Intimidate** tests gain a +10 bonus. If the Acolytes wish to look over the other corpses, two

additional ones also show signs of advanced decay like that of the mutant. Should the Acolytes wisely decide to burn the rotted bodies, the Sanctionary-Medicae says something about a violation of protocol, but makes no serious effort to dissuade them. However, these corpses (and the others) are truly dead, and do not pose any direct threat.

Autopsies on the remaining bodies are not nearly as exciting, and it is unlikely Acolytes will want to remain for the duration. If Oath-Captain Nils is present, she can suggest that they begin their search, and that Sanctionary-Medicae Tomas can contact them if he discovers anything of interest. Examining the additional bodies does reveal one important clue, however. Two of the dead cultists feature ragged wounds consistent with those caused by a bolter. An Acolyte with a military or combat-oriented background or a Peer talent with such an organisation can identify the wounds as such with an **Easy (+30) Awareness** or **Medicae** test. If no Acolyte attempts or succeeds at this test, Sanctionary-Medicae Tomas makes the deduction, further commenting that bolt wounds are a rare sight in his work. No bolt weapons or shells were found at the scene, indicating that the person wielding it escaped alive.

## FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

*"I ain't seen no-one. Less'n maybe you could part with some obscura?"*

—“Sharp” Raytes, Gallowsway native

Having determined that one or more suspects escaped the carnage in the warehouse, possibly with tainted xenos artefacts in hand, the Acolytes' next goal is clearly to track down these remaining heretics.

Depending on what avenues of approach the Acolytes took in examining the crime scene and their success with skill tests, the Acolytes should have several potential leads to follow. What follows is information on several possible leads; however, the Acolytes might come up with different strategies, or decide to follow up on seemingly innocuous details. GMs should attempt work with whatever the players come up with in order to keep the game moving and exciting. If the Acolytes try an unexpected approach, take a moment to consider its feasibility.

This is not to say that things should be too easy, and if the players insist on a course of action with no potential for success, GMs should not feel compelled to stretch the bounds of reason to make sure the next clue falls into the Acolytes' lap. However, even if the Acolytes go wildly off-course, there are ways to keep the adventure's plot moving.



The simplest is to have the Acolytes attacked by a group of cultists of the Callers of Sorrow (see **Unexpected Callers** on page 19). Similarly, if the Acolytes' investigation seems to be going nowhere, that is the perfect time for Vornas Crimson to appear and offer his services, particularly if they have previously met him in the events of **Desolation of the Dead**.

Ultimately, after one or more of the following encounters, and potentially one or more encounter of the GM's creation based on the actions of the players, the Acolytes should catch up to the Sable Traders as they board a massive and ancient lifter platform, bound for the hive's ground level and the wastes beyond.

Depending on the group's preferred play style and the abilities of the Acolytes, as well as the GM's preference, this part of the adventure could consume a great deal of play time, or act as a mere bridge to the next scenes. The adventure is written with the assumption that this portion takes only several hours of in-game time, but it could be extended much longer if the Acolytes take a methodical approach. In this case, the GM simply delays further events, specifically the departure of the *Oath Unspoken* (the starship bound for Thaur), until such time as the Acolytes reach the proper stage in the adventure. Of course, the players should not know this; regardless of how long it takes them to reach the *Oath Unspoken*, they should feel that they arrived not a moment too soon. If the warband slants toward investigative skills, they could spend a great deal of time interviewing witnesses, combing over evidence, or other tasks. On the other hand, if the Acolytes' abilities weigh more toward combat, they might spend time cracking down on the local gangs to get answers.

The following are some of the most obvious or effective methods the Acolytes could employ for following and gathering information on their quarry, as well as ways the GM can provide clues as needed. Of course, perhaps the most effective means of tracking the smugglers is to utilise multiple, complementary methods. In this case, the GM should apply appropriate bonuses to tests for which the Acolytes draw on existing leads. The primary approaches can be summarised as follows:

- The Acolytes can follow the physical trail left by the smugglers, consisting of dirty boot prints and spatters of blood (see **Tracks in the Rain** on this page).
- If the Acolytes possess one of the xenos artefacts, including the one recovered by Nils, they can use their artefacts' reactions to gauge proximity to the other artefacts and to follow the trail of their psychic spoor (see **Unholy Resonance** on this page).
- Technologically-inclined and equipped Acolytes can monitor the smugglers' vox usage to assist in tracking them (see **Vox Whispers**, on page 15).
- Though usually tight-lipped, the residents of the Gallowsway can offer information to convincing Acolytes (refer to **See No Evil**, on page 15).
- Whether they choose to heed his advice or not, the Acolytes encounter a mysterious downhive denizen who can point them in the right direction (see **The Dreg Who Knew Too Much**, on page 17).
- Another possible source of information comes in the form of Vornas Crimson, the leader of the Red Wake gang (see **The King of Blades**, on page 18).

## TRACKS IN THE RAIN

During their examination of the crime scene, the Acolytes might have discovered the trail of blood or dirty boot prints leading away from the building. Following either of these physical trails is difficult due to the oily "rain" that ceaselessly drips down on the Gallowsway from above. Even within the immediate vicinity of the warehouse, the trails are inconsistent and difficult to detect. Following a trail requires an **Ordinary (+10) Survival test**; success allows a character to follow the broken tracks for about 50 metres. The more time has elapsed since the fight, the more the rain has washed away what small trail there was to begin with. Thus, for every additional two hours since the Acolytes first arrived on the scene of the crime, the Acolytes suffer a cumulative  $-10$  penalty on this test. Following the trail is not a straightforward process, as even early on there is some distance between one blood droplet or scuff of dirt and the next, forcing a tracker to move slowly and deliberately, frequently doubling back to pick the trail up after losing it. For purposes of travel speed, this effectively counts as difficult terrain and thus halves a character's normal Movement (see page 246 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**).

## UNHOLY RESONANCE

The xenos artefacts originating on Thaur share a deep connection, drawn together by the invisible skeins of the Warp and reacting visibly in the presence of one another. This is easier for the Acolytes to discover if they already possess one or more artefacts from the earlier adventures. However, even if they did encounter related artefacts previously, it does not necessarily follow that they currently have the objects in their possession, or kept them at all. Particularly for those Acolytes of a more puritanical bent, the obvious thing to do with such artefacts is simply to destroy them. If the Acolytes did choose to leave the artefacts intact, or were unable to destroy them, they might be in a secure—and inconvenient—location. However, if the Acolytes do possess one or more of the artefacts, including the fragment that Oath-Captain Nils recovered from the scene, they can use the connection between the artefacts to track those in the possession of the fleeing smugglers. Doing so is laborious work, requiring a great deal of patience; an Acolyte must move slowly, carefully observing the artefact's reactions. If the effect intensifies, he is on the right track, and must continue moving to see if the reaction increases, subsides, or remains constant. Thus, the Acolytes are better served by using this method in conjunction with another, referencing their artefact to confirm that they are on the right track.

If the Acolytes do choose to use this approach as their primary method of tracking, the GM should call for occasional tests, with degrees of success determining if the Acolytes progress swiftly or waste a great deal of time with constant ineffectual course corrections. There are a few possibilities for which skill to use, depending on how the players describe their approach. It is even possible that Acolytes might trade off, each using a different method and corresponding skill. The Acolytes could use **Navigate** to stay on course, **Logic** to determine the most likely location, **Psyniscience** to detect the artefacts, or another appropriate skill at the GM's discretion. The base difficulty for such a test is **Ordinary (+10)**, and the Acolytes suffer a cumulative  $-10$  penalty to the test



## HOW NOT TO BE SEEN

The Acolytes are pursuing armed and dangerous heretics through this section of the adventure, and, though they might not know it, Jarrik Tyrnel, leader of the escaped smugglers, becomes dangerous and unpredictable if he realises the Acolytes are after him. If the Acolytes are able to catch up to the smugglers, they might wish to follow them covertly, rather than force a confrontation at that time. This is a good strategy, as following Tyrnel will eventually lead the Acolytes to the smuggler's rendezvous. However, it is likely that not all of the Acolytes possess ranks in the Stealth skill. Acolytes who are unable to follow covertly might feel the need to hang back so as to avoid compromising the group, leaving them excluded. Conversely, if the GM does not call for Stealth tests, it could leave players who invested in such abilities feeling slighted. In order to keep all the players involved, while not depriving stealthy Acolytes of their opportunity to show off, the GM could allow the character or characters with ranks in Stealth to direct the other Acolytes. In effect, an Acolyte with Stealth hides both himself and one or more fellow Acolytes with a successful skill test.

Testing in this manner uses an Acolyte's Intelligence, as it is more about careful planning and direction than quick reflexes or situational awareness. The GM should determine the test's base difficulty as normal, and apply a -10 penalty for each additional character the Acolyte is attempting to conceal. If the character fails the test due to this additional penalty (in other words, his result would have been a success were he only attempting to hide himself), then, at his discretion, the

GM might rule that the Acolyte succeeds in concealing himself, but his directions are not enough to help his fellow Acolytes hide successfully.

for every two hours that have passed since another artefact was in the Acolyte's current location, as the psychic echoes fade with time. If using an artefact in conjunction with traditional methods of tracking, a character gains a +10 bonus to **Navigate** tests.

The Game Master can also handle this approach in a purely narrative manner. For instance, as the Acolytes follow a physical trail or the words of witnesses, they can consult an artefact to ensure it is showing a reaction. The GM can simply tell them, answering questions such as "is it humming louder than it was back at the smelt-haven?" to help them know if they are growing "warmer" or "colder," or he can use this additional tool as a bonus to other skill tests.

## VOX WHISPERS

Another method the Acolytes can use to ensure they are on the right track is to monitor the smugglers' vox. The Sable Traders occasionally attempt to contact their compatriots outside the hive by vox to report on their status, although the intervening barrier of the hive itself makes this extremely difficult. If the Acolytes possess a comm leech, then they have just the right tool for the job.

However, if the Acolytes took possession of the vox recovered from the dead smugglers, or simply made a note of the frequency to which it was set, they could attempt to contact the smugglers directly. Should the Acolytes attempt to pose as allies, the interference caused by the hive structures could actually work to their advantage, granting a +10 bonus to tests attempting to deceive the smugglers. See the **Unintended Consequences** sidebar on page 20 for information on the smugglers and how they might react to contact from the Acolytes.

Even if the warband does not seek to contact the smugglers directly, an Acolyte with a sophisticated understanding of the Ommissiah's ways can use a vox to "ping" the smugglers, thereby determining very roughly what sort of range they are at with a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use** test. On the first attempt, all the character can discover is whether or not the smugglers are within vox range (approximately 100 km for most models), however the intervening hive infrastructure reduces this significantly. The exact amount varies from one place to another due to the variances in the ancient hive's construction, but even in the best locations the range is reduced by at least one quarter of the maximum. On subsequent successes, however, the Acolyte can determine if the smugglers are closer or further away than at last transmission, helping the warband to stay on course.

## SEE NO EVIL

The Acolytes might wish to seek out witnesses to the fight or its aftermath, and this is certainly a legitimate approach. No witnesses have come forward in the aftermath of the event, so it is up to the Acolytes to find them. The inhabitants of the Gallowsway and surrounding environs know better than to intrude into matters that are not their concern, and this philosophy extends to crimes, including violence and murder. Most denizens of the region are aware of the numerous gangs that from time to time pass through their shanty-like hovels. Knowledge of cults, such as those within the Callers of Sorrow, is less widespread. Imperial citizens are taught from birth to refrain from asking questions, and so tend to look at their feet and simply ignore the mysterious goings-on around them. They are also taught to report signs of unorthodox behaviour and heresy, but such desires often take second place to that of survival. Ultimately, what this means is that very few inhabitants of the Gallowsway are likely to even know of the cult's existence, unless they are directly involved in the Callers of Sorrow themselves. They might have heard rumours and whispers, which they most likely try to place out of mind, lest such knowledge lead to their own downfall.

Even in a desolate place like the Gallowsway, Hive Desoleum is crowded. Between street dregs, workers passing by, and nearby habs, hundreds or more citizens were close enough to hear sounds of gunfire or to see suspects fleeing the scene. Most assumed that what they heard or witnessed was just another gang fight, and therefore was none of their business; reporting it to the Sanctionaries could only mean trouble for themselves and their kin. However, such an event provides a spot of excitement in an otherwise bleak day like so many others, so it becomes the talk of the day in obscura dens and taverns. Acolytes who hit the streets to pick up rumours are sure to find some, though whether they are accurate is another question.



Acolytes who decide to inquire amongst the locals while incognito should make an **Ordinary (+10) Inquiry test**. The information an Acolyte receives is based on his degrees of success on the test; consult **Table 1-1: Gallowsway Rumours** on this page for the results. The Game Master should feel free to subvert the table's results if the Acolytes score many degrees of failure instead, and offer misinformation or outright lies as desired. If the Acolytes have previously been active in this area or cause a spectacle of any sort, the GM should also secretly make a **Subtlety test** for the warband. If the test is failed then, despite their attempts to remain inconspicuous, the locals recognise the Acolytes as snooping outsiders; any social interaction tests suffer a -10 penalty. Though the Acolytes may think they are investigating secretly, the inhabitants begin to treat the likely unaware Acolytes as if they were operating openly and pass on actual facts rather than rumours (see **The Direct Approach**).

## THE DIRECT APPROACH

The Acolytes could decide, with good reason, that they do not have time for the subtle approach to fact-finding. If they directly confront potential witnesses demanding information, they can certainly save some time, but could tip off the remaining smugglers to their pursuit. There are a number of methods Acolytes could take, from intimidation to invoking the authority of the Inquisition. In any approach, the information gained is much the same. Asking directly is actually more difficult than eavesdropping on tavern conversations, however, as the locals are fearful of incurring a gang's wrath by talking to outsiders. Therefore, any social interaction tests suffer a -10 penalty. The following can be provided by first- or second-hand witnesses to the day's events, each degree of success earning one fact:

- Four men were seen fleeing the scene in a hurry moving west, weapons in hand and hauling some loaded-down packs.
- A few days earlier, men had been seen moving crates into the warehouse.
- The men who left the scene were definitely not locals.
- The warehouse is in the territory of a "gang" called the "Mournful Song."

**Table 1-1: Gallowsway Rumours**

DEGREES OF SUCCESS	RESULTS (CUMULATIVE)
1	<i>"Did you hear? Gang fight this morning right off o' the Gallowsway. Just more bodies for the Mortuarian Houses, I s'pose."</i>
2	<i>"My friend Ervine was right near it, he saw a couple o' men in long coats running west, watching behind them like they were afraid of being followed."</i>
3	<i>"I heard one of the dead was poor old Johnas. No one had seen him in weeks, and then there he was, dead. It's right strange, his family were almost relieved to hear that he had joined a gang."</i>
4	<i>"A very similar thing happened last week, not far from here. I was sent to pick up the bodies and tote them to the House of Compassion. The damndest thing though, the bodies were like they had been dead for many days. I'm no medicae, but I spend enough time around the dead to know how long it takes a body to rot."</i>
5+	<i>"Don't tell anyone, but it weren't real gangs at all, but those sump worshipping Songers fighting some group of off world smugglers. I even heard servants of the Inquisition might be involved now, Emperor save us."</i>

If the Acolytes achieve additional degrees of success on the test, they can obtain additional information, such as details of the suspects' clothing, or the precise time that they passed by a witness, who happened to be checking a chrono at the time.

If the PCs fail a test by three degrees or more, they might have attracted attention. Make a **Subtlety test**; on a failure, the Acolytes are soon approached by representatives of either the Callers or one of the local gangs, depending on what kind of questions they were asking. See **Unexpected Callers** on page 19.





## CUTTING A DEAL

The Acolytes could gain information through an encounter with a narco-dealer named Carnos Llewelyn, meeting him primarily by two means. If the Acolytes are not operating openly, the GM should make a **Subtlety test**. If successful, the narco-dealer approaches the Acolytes on the streets of Desoleum to offer his merchandise. Depending on the Acolytes' appearance, the GM can apply a modifier to the test; if they have the look of downhive rabble or scum, add between a +10 to +20 bonus to the test. Conversely, if the Acolytes present a noble, pious, or militant appearance, the GM should apply up to a -30 penalty to the test; Llewelyn has not gotten as far as he has by offering his services recklessly. Barring unusual circumstances depriving them of sufficient oathcog levels or Guild Scrip, the Acolytes can obtain up to 1d5+1 doses of obscura, slaughter, and stumm, and up to 1d5-1 doses of frenzon. No Requisition test is necessary.

If the GM wishes, he can allow the Acolytes to make a test with appropriate Availability modifiers from **Table 5-15: Drugs & Consumables** on page 173 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook** to acquire additional drugs. In this case, the test does not necessarily represent them exerting their Influence over Llewelyn, but is a convenient game mechanic to determine if the narco-dealer happens to be carrying what they want, or can obtain it for them in a reasonable amount of time.

If they fail their Subtlety test, the Acolytes could instead be directed to reach out to Carnos Llewelyn by another hive dweller, based on their inquiries. Those familiar with Llewelyn know he is almost as good a source of information as he is for drugs.

While drugs might be appealing to some Acolytes, the real importance of Carnos Llewelyn's presence in this adventure is the information he can offer. Llewelyn has authority over a number of lesser narco-dealers spread out throughout Insuratti territory in the lower hive, who act as his eyes and ears. In fact, Llewelyn directly encountered the Sable Traders just shortly before meeting the Acolytes. If the Acolytes ask the right questions—including asking about wounded individuals, outsiders, or armed men carrying heavy packs—or describe the smugglers in any other way based on what they already know, Llewelyn might be willing to tell them about the five men who approached him to purchase stumms. Llewelyn is not in the habit of opening his mouth without gaining something in return, so Acolytes must succeed on an appropriate Interaction skill test. Attempts at intimidation, charm, and bribery are all potential approaches.

If the Acolytes succeed, Llewelyn describes his encounter with five men, clearly non-hivers judging from their suntanned skin. All of them wore light body armour and were armed, including one with a bolt pistol—such a rare weapon really caught Llewelyn's attention. Two of them were wounded, one seemingly badly. Additionally, the non-wounded men were all carrying full packs and satchels. If an Acolyte achieves three or more degrees of success on an Interaction skill test, Llewelyn also mentions that the men asked him about the location of Lift-Plat Delta 3-9-9, seemingly to confirm they were headed in the right direction. The lift platform is about a half-day's march west from the Gallowsway, and located near to the hive's outer skin.

## CARNOS LLEWELYN, NARCO-DEALER

Carnos Llewelyn is a lifetime downhiver with illusions of grandeur. Despite his modest position as a crime-vassal to the Insurrati criminal organisation, Llewelyn envisions himself as a big-time, sophisticated criminal. He puts on a show of faux-cultured manners, which only impresses the lowest of downhivers. Llewelyn can be of some assistance to the Acolytes, but he serves only his own greed and ambition, and does nothing unless he thinks he can profit by it in some way. If things go smoothly, he could be a potential contact for the Acolytes in future missions, so long as their scruples allow. If needed, Llewelyn can be represented by a Desoleum Bondless Dealer from page 386 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**.

## THE DREG WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

This encounter can be inserted at any point in the Acolyte's pursuit of the smugglers. A dreg catches the Acolytes' attention, perhaps by coughing or rattling the scrip-coins in his crude wooden bowl. Despite his appearance as a dreg of the hive, astute Acolytes notice that the man does not share the downtrodden bearing of the innumerable other dregs they have passed on the streets. The GM can either offer this observation, or require a **Difficult (-10) Awareness test**. If the Acolytes offer a coin or other item, the dreg nods his recognition. Regardless, as soon as the Acolytes go to leave, the dreg speaks in a coarse—but surprisingly strong—tone of voice, either saying "You are going in the wrong direction" or "Your course is true," depending on whether or not the Acolytes are indeed correctly following the smugglers' trail. The dreg is correct, in either case, but of course the Acolytes cannot know this.

If pressed for a name, the dreg identifies himself as "Krumb" (see page 43). A successful **Opposed Challenging (+0) Scrutiny test** against Krumb's **Deceive** skill reveals that he is withholding his true name. He should be a mystery to the Acolytes, and regardless of what approaches they try, they should not be able to ascertain much information about him. Their interactions should also give them the impression that he knows who they are, but again, they are unable to discover how. The GM can use him in a variety of ways, most probably as the Acolyte to an Inquisitor, possibly the warband's own master. Krumb could even be an Inquisitor himself, or an Arbitrator posing undercover to monitor the Acolytes. He adopts a **Submissive Personality**, with a **Disposition** of 80.

Krumb knows much more than he possibly should; he knows about the mortal conflict between the smugglers and the cult, and that the Acolytes are hunting the survivors. He also knows about the involvement of the xenos artefacts. Krumb even knows that the smugglers' intended destination is Lift-Plat Delta-3-9-9 (see page 20). He would prefer for the Acolytes to discover this on their own, though, and only reveals this if they are truly floundering (of course, he realises they are also unlikely to believe him).



Krumb extends whatever support he can, but he requests that the Acolytes take a small unadorned ring with them when they leave, and deposit it on a specific landing pad at Port Gyre. The ring yields none of its secrets to the Acolytes no matter what they attempt, and should they abandon it or keep it, nothing will happen to them—for the time being. The exact nature of this ring, and the consequences for keeping it or discarding it are left to the Game Master's discretion.

## USING KRUMB

Because the mysterious “dreg” can play a role in future adventures, the GM should ensure that Krumb's identity remains hidden from the Acolytes and that he survives the adventure. If the Acolytes resort to violence in an attempt to pry information from him, Krumb uses a blind, haywire, or stun grenade (perhaps all three in a triplet grouping) to delay and distract the Acolytes while he escapes. Krumb's

Touched by the Fates trait can assist to ensure that he both lives and that the Acolytes do not gain too much information.

## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: THE KING OF BLADES

This encounter depends very much on how events unfolded in *Desolation of the Dead*, should the players have participated in that adventure. It can still be used if the players have not completed it, in which case they and Vornas Crimson are both quantities unknown to the other. However, if the Acolytes are operating openly or have shown a low level of tolerance for criminal elements and behaviours, it might seem far-fetched for Crimson to approach them. The GM must use his discretion, but this encounter is not necessary for successful completion of the adventure, and he can leave it out if it seems inappropriate for his players.

Vornas Crimson is the leader of a Fleshcutters gang called the Red Walk. While he is an irredeemable psychopath and sadist, Crimson is much savvier than most gangers, and can make for a valuable ally. If the Acolytes previously encountered Crimson in *Desolation of the Dead*, then his attitude and behaviour toward them is heavily coloured by their previous interactions. If the Acolytes impressed Vornas with their shows of strength and savagery, they can approach him from a position of respect on top of the advantage they can offer him right now. If things did not go so smoothly between them, but the Acolytes helped to save the town of Gantry and the Red Walk gang from the Blessed Flesh Strain of the Callers of Sorrow, then he sees them as erstwhile allies, or perhaps as tools he can wield against his enemies. Acolytes who previously met Crimson could seek him out, instead, either due to the Callers of Sorrow connection or simply because he is someone with knowledge of the hive who has certain resources at his disposal. In dealings, he has a Confident Personality and a Disposition of 35. Vornas Crimson's complete profile can be found on page 44.

The Red Walk's war with the cultists has continued even after Ferrue Fayne's death. Though Crimson knows that the cult involves itself in dark matters that even he would never touch, for the most part he views it not unlike any other rival gang. He does not stand for their presence on his turf, and he strikes at their operations where possible. How the Callers of Sorrow view him, Crimson cannot say. Whether he realises it or not, it is very possible that even now the Callers are gathering their dark arts to strike back in full force against the Red Walk for its actions against the Blessed Flesh. Crimson and his gangers are masters at inflicting pain with a blade, and even the hardy cultists captured earlier are not beyond their skill. Under torture that could shock even a hardened Inquisitorial interrogator, cultists have revealed to Vornas that individuals who they believe to be smugglers have been striking at the cult's stockpiles of xenos artefacts and taking them off-world for purposes unknown. Vornas might mention that the information seems a bit too convenient, almost as if someone wanted it to be known, for the captured cultists yielded these stories disappointingly quickly.

If the Acolytes did not already know it, after speaking with Vornas Crimson they should grasp that one of the two groups involved in the warehouse massacre is an offshoot from the Callers of Sorrow. It is possible this is the first time they have heard of the Callers; some Acolytes might think to switch gears at this point and go after the cult, rather than continuing their pursuit of the smugglers. Should they contact their Inquisitor, he tells them that the priority is to follow the smugglers and the trail of the xenos artefacts. If the Acolytes make a decision on their own, or if their Inquisitor is unreachable for some reason, it is important that they continue in their pursuit of the Sable Traders; dealing with the Callers of Sorrow is beyond the scope of this adventure. The GM can point out to the players that if they ignore it, the smugglers' trail might go cold.

If the players seem unsure of what to do, the GM could recommend skill tests, such as Logic or Inquiry, to help determine the best course of action. Reasons to continue after the smugglers include the fact that whatever object or objects they now possess were important to the cult (and thus in themselves were surely dangerous), and the time-sensitive nature of the pursuit. Vornas Crimson also provides a stable link to the cult, allowing the Acolyte's to stage that investigation at any time, whereas a singular promising lead on the smuggling of xenos artefacts is threatening to slip through their fingers if they tarry.

## CASUALTIES OF THE SHADOW WAR

If Vornas Crimson is dead or otherwise unavailable after the events of *Desolation of the Dead*, the GM should substitute his replacement in the Red Walk leadership, Doran Kaltro. Kaltro uses the same profile as a Red Walk lieutenant, but wields the bolt pistol and power sword of his predecessor. See page 44 for more on Kaltro.



## BAD BLOOD

It is, of course, possible that the Acolytes and Red Walk became bitter enemies in the course of *Desolation of the Dead*. In this case, the GM can still use the character of Vornas Crimson to deliver the above-mentioned information, albeit in more dramatic fashion. Depending on how the investigation has gone thus far, the GM could make a **Subtlety test** for the warband to determine if Vornas learns of their presence. Or, if he thinks it better for the game and story, he can simply decide that Crimson's spies and contacts pass on the information. It is even possible that Vornas has one or more Sanctionaries on his payroll.

At an appropriate point in the PC's investigation, preferably while they are in an isolated or sparsely populated area, Vornas and a group of Red Walkers appear, surrounding the Acolytes if possible. The group consists of Vornas and one of his lieutenants (page 44), plus one Red Walk Ganger (page 45) or Heavy (page 45) per Acolyte. The GM can add extra gangers for a more formidable challenge using the rules from page 382 of the *DARK HERESY Core Rulebook*. Vornas is too prideful for a proper ambush, and takes the time to taunt and threaten the Acolytes rather than immediately launching an assault. This banter can go on for as long as Crimson and the players have barbs to trade, but once the fight begins in earnest the Red Walk hold nothing back. As soon as the talking is over, the gangers rush the Acolytes from all directions in order to bring their blades to bear. For the most part, the gangers relish fighting dirty, and use their superior numbers to their advantage. However, if an Acolyte insults Vornas Crimson's skills or courage, Crimson attempts to fight that character in single combat. Needless to say, if that Acolyte or any other tries to shoot Vornas, this forfeits the duel.

After the battle, at least one ganger should survive for the Acolytes to interrogate—possibly the King of Blades himself, especially if the GM wishes to keep him alive as a recurring NPC.



## WHERE ARE THE SMUGGLERS?

It is important for the GM to have an idea of where the smugglers are during this portion of the adventure. The adventure assumes that the Acolytes find the smugglers at the lifter-platform, but this does not necessarily have to be the case. Ultimately, the Acolytes should either follow the smugglers to their camp in the Wastes, or fight them and discover the whereabouts of the camp through interrogation or a map. If the Acolytes are particularly clever or successful, the GM should allow them to catch up the smugglers earlier than expected, in which case the GM should determine the exact location based on his own discretion and the search timeline. Conversely, if the Acolytes dither or fare poorly on skill tests, they might still be following the trail once the smugglers are out of the hive, in which case the GM should ensure that there are enough clues to keep the Acolytes informed at least until they reach the edge of the hive. In fact, following the smugglers through the wastes could be even easier. Because the smugglers are not taking the time to erase their tracks, the Acolytes can simply follow their footprints in the ash—at least until a storm obliterates all evidence of their passing.

## UNEXPECTED CALLERS

The Strain engaged in a struggle with Vornas Crimson is also the same one that is the primary target for the Sable Traders. It is the Mournful Song, one of the primary operations Tormus personally oversees. Beset by enemies, Tormus hopes to turn them against each other. He has at least some knowledge of the Acolytes if they were responsible for slaying his brother Ferrue in the events of *Desolation of the Dead*.

Tormus does not hold any particular animosity for this; in fact, they did him something of a favour by halting his younger brother's ambitions to replace him as leader of the Strain. Tormus hopes the Acolytes can perform another such favour by removing the Sable Traders who have been such a thorn in his side. It is for this reason that Tormus has both held back his full power in his war with Vornas Crimson, and purposefully fed Crimson the information about the Trade Sable. Tormus hopes that the Acolytes will be in contact with Crimson and act on this intelligence. Of course, Tormus holds no illusions about the danger the Acolytes pose, and plans to deal with them should they succeed in halting the smugglers.



Not all of the cultists are privy to his plots and strategies, however. One such group, ignorant of their master's plans, seeks vengeance for Ferrue Fayne's demise. Once the Acolytes' investigation is well underway, the GM should make a **Subtlety test**. If the warband fails this test, it indicates that the cultists have learned of the Acolytes' presence in the vicinity of the Gallowsway, and they move to strike at them. At an appropriate point during the Acolytes' investigation between major encounters, these cultists attempt to ambush the Acolytes. The group consists of two Strain Infectors and one Strain Initiate per PC (see pages 406-407 of the **DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook**), a number that the GM can adjust to fit his Acolytes' combat ability using the threat threshold rules.

The cultists attempt to set an ambush, intending to launch a surprise assault on the PCs as they pass through an otherwise empty stretch of tunnel. The cultists conceal themselves amidst debris and behind pipes until the Acolytes approach. Each Acolyte should make an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Awareness test** against the cultists' **Stealth**, rolling once for the entire group of cultists. The cultists have specifically chosen a particularly dark area, where only a few sputtering chemical lanterns provide illumination. This grants them a +20 bonus to their **Stealth** test; however, if any of the players voice the observation, in or out of character, that this would be an ideal place for an ambush, provide that Acolyte a +10 bonus to his **Awareness** test. Any Acolytes who fail the **Opposed** test are **Surprised** during the first round of combat.

## UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

This raid did not go as smoothly for the smugglers as previous ones did; the cultists were expecting them and put up a hard fight. With some of their own dead or wounded, the Sable Traders are on edge, an effect that increases greatly if they realise they have attracted the Sanctionaries' attention, and reaches untenable levels should they have an inkling that Acolytes of an Inquisitor are pursuing them. Once the Acolytes have made progress in their investigation, and thus potentially impacted their **Subtlety** rating, the GM should make a **Subtlety test** for the warband. If this test fails, the smugglers are aware of the Acolytes' pursuit, and become more reckless in their desperation to escape.

The exact response should depend on the circumstances of the Acolytes' activities and the number of degrees of failure. For instance, a single degree could indicate the smugglers might suspect that someone is after them, and hasten their own speed to avoid pursuit. On a failure by three or more degrees, the GM could determine that the smugglers have heard that their pursuers are Acolytes of an Inquisitor. In their fear and urgency to escape retribution, the smugglers respond with violence to any perceived obstacle toward their escape, shooting down officials and bystanders who get in their way. Having a trail of bodies to follow could actually make the Acolytes' job easier, but at what cost? If the Acolytes realise the reason for the smugglers' actions, they might feel some responsibility for the needless deaths. Then again, as long as they catch the heretics, they might feel the collateral damage is more than justified.

## LIFT-PLAT DELTA 3-9-9

Unless their actions dictate otherwise, the Acolytes catch up to the smugglers at Lift-Plat Delta 3-9-9, one of many such platforms used to traverse the hive vertically. When the Acolytes arrive at the location, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*Up ahead, a vast opening leads upward into the hive. An ancient and faded placard announces that this is Lift-Plat Delta 3-9-9. Massive girders frame the line of ascent for the lift platform itself, which is currently nowhere to be seen, presumably parked at a higher landing. An ancient and bewildering array of chains, pulleys, and hydro-pneumatic extenders stand by, ready to provide motivation to the lift platform, and decades of prayer parchment and purity seals plaster the mechanical works of the lift, which glisten with sacred machine oils. Currently, a trio of servitors are performing routine maintenance, one of whom is clambering high amidst the tangle of cables and chains in its spider-like chassis. At ground level, one of the servitors announces in a loud monotone voice, "This conveyance is undergoing the appointed maintenance rites and observances; thou shalt not utilise the conveyance until maintenance is completed in approximately nine hundred seconds. This conveyance is undergoing the appointed maintenance rites and observances; thou shalt not utilise the conveyance until maintenance is completed in approximately eight-hundred and ninety seconds," repeating the warning over and over.*

The lift consists of a platform approximately twenty metres by fifteen, with one-metre-high safety railings on its short ends only. A bulky console mounted in one corner of the platform allows occupants to activate its ascent or descent. It is not intended to stop between levels, and arresting its vertical movement requires a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use test**. The lift-plat moves between the characters' current position close to the Gallowsway (three very long levels below ground) to five levels high above ground, for a total of eight landings, although the landing one below surface level is sealed off without explanation. The lift-plat itself is currently at the level above, and it takes almost a full two minutes to arrive once summoned, due in part to its less-than-impressive speed and in part to the intervening distance, which is considerable. When the smugglers (or Acolytes) move to depress the lift-summoning rune, the servitor again makes its proclamation that the lift is out of service, fixing its dead gaze on the person in question. However, the servitor does not take any actions to physically stop someone from activating the lift, even as it continues to repeat this message.

When the Acolytes come into view of the lift, approximately 50 metres ahead, the smugglers are just reaching the lift-plat landing. The smugglers ignore the servitor's message and summon the lift, then scan for signs of trouble as they await the lift's arrival. Jarrik Tynel impatiently jams his finger against the summoning rune repeatedly. This does nothing to hasten the lift-plat's descent. If the smugglers are particularly on-edge due to the knowledge that the Acolytes are pursuing them, one of them shoots the servitor to silence its repeating message.

In addition to Tynel (see page 53), the group includes two Trade Sable Smugglers and two Trade Sable Adherents. One of the Smugglers is clutching his left arm to his chest, while one of the Adherents is pale with a growing crimson stain on his tunic.



If the PCs choose to continue following the smugglers without revealing their presence, they can conceal themselves and wait until the smugglers ascend using the lift. This approach does cost a good deal of time, though, due to the lift's slow speed. The smugglers are wary for signs of pursuers, and at least once during the wait for the lift, the GM should roll an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Awareness test** for the smugglers against the **Stealth** of the Acolytes. Acolytes could attempt to approach the smugglers and calmly board the lift alongside them. In order for this plan to have any hope of success, the Acolytes must have been extraordinarily subtle up to this point. If the smugglers have any suspicion that they are being followed, they refuse to share the lift and draw their weapons if the would-be passengers press the point. Of course, the Acolytes could decide to attack the smugglers or order them to surrender. Tyrnel has no thought of surrendering and chooses to fight to the death, although this is not necessarily true of the other smugglers. If the players do not immediately decide on a course of action, ratchet up the tension by describing the sounds of machinery and the sight of the platform slowly lowering from the darkness above. See page 53 for the Trade Sable Adherent profile, and use the Skulker profile from page 388 of the **DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook** for the Trade Sable Smugglers.

If the Acolytes slay all of the smugglers, they can learn of their intended destination from a rough, hand-drawn map that Tyrnel was carrying, which shows a path through the wastes outside the hive, to a destination point some distance out. In addition, the smugglers' packs contain a small collection of xenos artefacts, six in all. Three of them are simply small shards of stone. While their strange, cold, and damp feel, and the barely visible markings set them out as alien, these are almost completely inert, and must be directly touched to another xenos artefact before that second artefact shows any kind of reaction.

Of the other three objects, one is a small, locked box lined with lead and engraved with bizarre sigils. The smugglers do not have the key, and a **Hard (-20) Security test** is needed to pick the lock. Inside is part of what appears to be a xenos jawbone with numerous wicked-looking fangs. Another object is a black orb approximately eight centimetres in diameter. The orb's surface is almost entirely engraved with smooth, undulating lines half of a centimetre deep. The final object is a tube of armour-glass, sealed with wax and a plasteel mechanism. The mechanism includes a catch which must be released before the lid can be unscrewed, but it is not locked. Inside the tube is viscous, purple liquid with tiny, luminescent dots suspended in it. The orb and the jawbone are largely inscrutable, but an Acolyte can make a **Difficult (-10) Logic test** to determine that the luminescent dots within the liquid are the same material as the stone artefacts, almost as if they had been processed in some way as part of whatever created this vile fluid. If any character touches the liquid directly, he immediately suffers 1 Corruption point.

These latter two artefacts react strongly in the presence of other tainted items; in fact, the Acolytes could notice the reactions even before opening the smugglers' satchels. The orb produces a discordant whistling noise, like wind passing through trees of breaking bone. The liquid churns rapidly, producing shapes of malevolent visages that are disturbing to look upon. The jawbone itself does not produce any obvious effect, but other artefacts react strongly to its presence. Different smugglers carried each of these major artefacts, perhaps to reduce the effects of close proximity.

It takes just over five minutes for the lift-plat to reach ground level. As the platform arrives it reveals a massive corridor, 50 metres across and 20 high. Thirty metres ahead, a massive gateway opens to the wastes beyond the hive. Streaming in, even the light of Desoleum's clouded sun is almost blinding after the darkness of the hive. In the opposite direction, approximately fifteen metres from the lift, the corridor opens up into one of Desoleum's primary traffic arteries, choked with people and vehicles. The smugglers' destination is not within the hive, but the wastes beyond. As soon as they arrive (assuming the Acolytes did not stop them first), the smugglers begin pushing their way through the crowd of pilgrims, workers, traders, and servitors toward the gate.

## THE ARTEFACTS

For most people, touching or even gazing upon the xenos artefacts produces feeling of unease. These vary from person to person, but include nausea, dizziness, anxiety, and even stranger effects, such as black-outs and minor auditory or visual hallucinations. In the case of the more potent relics, prolonged contact can produce intense visions of ancient and impossible alien vistas, enough to shatter the sanity of most. The longer one remains in close contact with such an artefact, the more frequent, powerful, and longer-lasting these visions become. Soon, these visions spill over into the person's nightmares, even when the artefact is nowhere nearby. All of these effects are magnified tenfold for psykers.

Acolytes exposed to Lans Guljian's dark orb in **Dark Pursuits** are probably familiar with these effects. For others, it could come as an unwelcome surprise. In either case, it is a stark reminder of the danger posed by these artefacts, though the Acolytes could not possibly realise the true extent of the threat at this time.

Once one of the Acolytes has carried any of these items for a few hours—even if it is stored in a pack—the character experiences a brief but incredibly vivid vision. Like a waking dream, he sees impossible scenes of a vast and barren alien landscape studded with cyclopean obelisks. In game terms, the experience requires any Acolyte involved to test against **Fear (1)**. For increased effect, have this occur at an inopportune time, such as while questioning an NPC or even when engaged in combat. This experience repeats at irregular intervals, perhaps hours or days apart. Handing the orb over to another Acolyte is not enough to end the visions, which continue so long as the character remains in regular proximity to the artefact.

When a psyker first comes into close proximity with any of these artefacts, he must attempt a **Routine (+20) Psyniscience test**; if he is touching the artefact, it becomes **Easy (+30)**. If he succeeds, he senses the stink of the Warp clinging to the object. If the psyker has training in the **Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)** skill, he automatically realises a daemonic presence lingering around the artefact, but that there is something else, too, which he cannot identify. If the psyker succeeds with three or more degrees of success on the test, he immediately experiences a vision as described above.



## SECURITAS STATION LAMBDA-XC-19

As with all of the official entrances or exits to the ancient hive, the access to this doorway features a security checkpoint station garrisoned by units of Sanctionaries. Securitas Station Lambda-XC-19 features a small gatehouse with room and enough supplies for five personnel. The heavily armoured gatehouse includes a battlement, and there is usually a Sanctionary posted atop it with a heavy stubber. From inside the gatehouse, a mechanism operates the massive blast shutter that can be lowered to seal off the tunnel mouth. When activated, warning klaxons blare and yellow lights strobe. The shutter is usually lowered only when a severe storm threatens, and it takes almost a full minute for it to fall into place.

The smugglers' falsified papers and oath-cogs would usually be enough to get them through the gate, but because of the commotion caused by their run-in with the cultists, the checkpoint is operating at a heightened level of security. The smugglers might or might not be aware that their latest job got the Sanctionaries' attention. A simple way to determine this is to roll a **Challenging (+0) Awareness test** for the leader of the smugglers, Jarrik Tyrnel. Alternatively, if the GM prefers for this to hinge on the PCs' actions, make a **Subtlety test** for the Acolytes. If the warband fails, it indicates that Tyrnel not only knows the Sanctionaries were tipped off, but also that someone is following him. If the test is failed by three or more degrees, Tyrnel knows that Acolytes of an Inquisitor are after him, which makes him extremely desperate and prone to reckless violence. In this latter case, Tyrnel approaches the checkpoint with his men and opens fire immediately on the Sanctionaries. If Tyrnel does not know of the Inquisition involvement but does know either that he is being followed or that the Sanctionaries are investigating, he attempts to sneak through the checkpoint, but first establishes an action plan with his group should any trouble arise. If Tyrnel thinks the Sanctionaries are suspicious, he quickly throws a hallucinogen grenade to sow confusion while he and his men don their respirators and open fire, intending to shoot their way to freedom.

If the Acolytes are closely trailing the smugglers when this happens, they could rush to get involved. If they are further behind, they might come upon the aftermath—three dead Sanctionaries, one wounded, and one recovering from the hallucinogen effects, curled up and sobbing on the floor of the gatehouse. If the Acolytes have already dealt with the smugglers at the lift-platform, they will be the ones passing through the checkpoint, which is unlikely to be a problem unless they are trying to operate under the Sanctionaries' radar.

## INTO THE WASTES

*"Some of the local laws require a convicted perpetrator to be banished from the hive and made to wander the wastes. It's one of the more fitting methods of execution that I've come across."*

—Judge Kelvin Osirus, Adeptus Arbiters, Desoleum Precinct

Having tracked down the smugglers, the Acolytes either continue to follow them, or learn of their intended destination through interrogation or the map carried by Jarrik Tyrnel. In either case, the investigation now takes the warband into the wastes surrounding Hive Desoleum. The smugglers' intended destination is a camp some distance from the hive. It is maintained by the Trade Sable to facilitate their operations on Desoleum without subjecting themselves to the scrutiny of the hive authorities. The wastes of Desoleum are largely lawless, and operating from this area allows the smugglers to stay completely anonymous until such time as their work requires them to re-enter the hive. Further, conducting their goods to the camp before returning to Port Gyre further insulates them against discovery, making their trail that much more difficult to follow. Indeed, if the Acolytes had not pursued the smugglers so closely there is a good chance the smugglers would have all but disappeared upon leaving the hive—as was their intent.

Whether the Acolytes are continuing to pursue the smugglers or following their map, it takes a not-inconsiderable time to reach the camp—at least several hours—during which they must contend with numerous hazards and encounters both dangerous and simply unexpected. The wastes of Desoleum are aptly named, for they are harsh and inimical to life. Yet, these environs are also surprisingly populous with traders, mendicants, fugitives, and raiders. The PCs encounter a selection of these individuals on their way to the camp, and might be delayed at best or left as sun-bleached skeletons drying in the desert at worst. If the Acolytes are actively pursuing the smugglers, such delays are a serious problem. In the arid wastes, a trail can vanish in the wind in minutes, leaving even the best trackers confounded.

After overcoming these obstacles, the Acolytes eventually reach the smugglers' camp, situated atop a roiling lake of acid. Again, the PCs must decide whether to observe and follow their enemies, or visit harsh retribution upon them without delay.

These encounters are partially modular; the Acolytes can avoid some by being clever, and the GM might choose not to use others at his discretion. Depending on the players' actions and the GM's judgement, some can be avoided or simply left out. If the GM and players prefer, this section can be handled narratively, becoming a simple affair to follow the smugglers. On the other hand, if the players are enjoying the excitement and challenge of the wastes, this section of the adventure could encompass a great deal of play time. The GM could even place the smugglers' camp further from the hive, requiring a longer journey of several days to reach. This situation could require the Acolytes to ration food and drink, and set up nightly encampments, complete with watch shifts to ensure they are not caught unawares by nomad raiders or wild animals. Before making such a decision, the GM should consider the fitness and health of the Acolyte. After all, even after they engage any foes here, they must still contend with the smuggler encampments—the greatest challenge yet.



Depending on the Acolytes' actions and the GM's preference, the PCs could find themselves in the middle of a live-fire exercise by the Desoleum Involute Cadres, a deadly glass storm, under attack by ravaging nomads, or even as dinner for a voracious wasteland predator. The Acolytes could also meet with delay in the form of a mysterious wandering merchant. Finally, when all seems lost, the Acolytes might find help in the form of a devout missionary of the Ecclesiarchy.

## THE WASTES OF DESOLEUM

Outside of the three main hives of Desoleum (Primus, Jarvin, and Suzzum) and a number of smaller hives and manufactorum complexes, the surface of Desoleum is dominated by vast deserts and caustic chemical seas. While these environs are often simply referred to as the wastes for ease of reference, this in fact encompasses most of the planet's surface, and so to think of it as a single region is folly. Though certain characteristics are constant throughout most of Desoleum's surface, such as a distinct lack of obvious plant life, even these have exceptions. Moreover, features vary widely, from flat and barren plains of glass to mountainous regions to deserts of drifting silicate ash dunes. The surrounding area immediately to the north of Hive Desoleum, where the Acolytes now find themselves, is a desert region. Some particularly large dunes as well as scattered xenos ruins and other constructs obscure the horizon. There are no paved or otherwise constructed roadways, but the sand has been packed flat along well-travelled passages over the millennia. Travel is easiest along these makeshift roads, but it is certainly not without its hazards.

Many regions of Desoleum's wastes are home to nomads, who often make a habit of attacking travellers for pillage. Victims who find themselves enslaved should thank the Emperor, for water is a precious commodity in the wastes, and bodily fluids are some of the most valuable treasures taken from travellers. The wastes are hostile to life, and so the nomads are bred exceedingly tough. Minor mutations are not uncommon, perhaps due to exposure to the chemical oceans or the aeons-old irradiated glass. Those who develop particularly heinous mutations, however, are usually banished from their clans. To survive independently in the wastes is all but impossible, so it is not surprising that these mutants band together. Having known extreme hardship even by the standards of the wasters, these groups are skilled and ruthless. They almost always take a dim view of non-mutants, who can expect little mercy should they cross paths.

Travellers must also contend with natural hazards, or at least as natural as one could expect from a world so utterly shaped by the actions of its inhabitants.

## PROCURING TRANSPORTATION

Just beyond the gateway to the hive is a sprawling array of vehicle bays and stables. Some of these are owned by private interests, others are for official hive business only. Jarrik Tyrnell and his group had stowed a vehicle in one of these bays to use on their trip back to the smugglers' camp. If Tyrnell is still alive and the Acolytes are following him, the PCs are likely to want a vehicle of their own. Even if the Acolytes are no longer actively pursuing the smugglers, they might decide to obtain a vehicle to expedite their own journey to the camp.

## SURVIVING THE WASTES

The Desoleum wastes are not conducive to human life, and if the Acolytes spend more than a few hours outside the hive, they are certain to suffer for it if not adequately prepared. Characters can remain in the wastes without issue for a number of hours equal to their Toughness Bonus. If a character is wearing truly inappropriate garb, such as something that either exposes a great deal of skin or leaves little room for ventilation, halve this time. If the Acolytes travel in a vehicle with a fully enclosed roof, add an additional hour.

After this time has passed, a character must pass an **Ordinary (+10) Survival test** each hour or suffer a number of levels of Fatigue equal to the degrees of failure. The final difficulty of the test depends on how well-equipped the character is for survival in the wastes. Wearing ill-suited clothing or, conversely, heavy armour should impose a penalty of -10 to -20, whereas appropriate garb and some sort of shelter should add a bonus of +10 to +30. If the Acolytes do not possess any water or other provisions, these tests suffer an additional -20 penalty.

This is a good decision, as travelling the wastes on foot is an exhausting endeavour. A vehicle provides shelter and speed, at least as long as it remains operational in the trying clime. Tyrnell and the smugglers depart in a Viator desert crawler (see page 54). There are a few ways for the Acolytes to acquire their own transport. For Acolytes trying to remain inconspicuous, they can likely acquire a vehicle in one of these bays with few questions asked, through surreptitious payment or subtle threats. Bays operated by Consortium interests tend to require a great deal more paperwork, and require identification for the customer. Purchasing or renting a basic vehicle calls for an **Ordinary (+10) Requisition test**; this gains a vehicle equivalent to a standard Hectin autocarriage (see page 190 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**). To avoid wasting time, some Acolytes could choose to commandeer or steal a vehicle. Invoking their authority in order to take a vehicle requires a **Challenging (+0) Influence test**, but depresses the warband's Subtlety by the same number of degrees of success on the test. This can gain them a Viator conveniently ready to go; should the Acolytes search it, they automatically find a survival kit containing provisions and water to sustain the warband for three days. The ease of taking a vehicle without the proper key, access code, or ident-cog depends on its sophistication. A Viator crawler is activated by a physical lock-and-key ignition, a simple mechanism, and it can be hot-wired with either a **Difficult (-10) Security test** or an **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use test**.

If the Acolytes are not confident in their ability to operate a vehicle or simply want to free up their own attention for weightier matters, a pilot is available in the form of "Captain" D'layne Travers. If the Acolytes inquire as to a driver for hire, Travers comes highly recommended for his track record, though with warnings of his personal eccentricities. Alternatively, he could approach the Acolytes while they are surveying their options and possibly gathering provisions and water for the desert travel.



Travers has a Clever Personality and a Disposition of 65 when dealing with prospective clients; his complete profile is on page 46. One of Travers' favourite approaches is to wait until potential customers stop to look at his gaudy and outlandishly customised vehicle, the *Sand Lynx*, at which point he approaches them gregariously, praising their appreciation for his vehicle and noting its speed and other fine traits. Indeed, the heavily-modified black-and-yellow Hectin autocarriage (see page 46) does have a reputation for speed and reliability throughout the surrounding environs; this can be discovered via an **Ordinary (+10) Inquiry** test from asking others in this area.

## THE GUIDE

After the Acolytes have spent some time exploring the garages and shopping around—assuming they did not immediately steal a vehicle and give chase—a man with a weather-creased face and wearing protective garb approaches them. Lano, as he introduces himself, is a native of the “open lands,” or what a hive-dweller would call a wastelander, or waster. The Acolytes might hesitate to trust him, and it is true that most waste-dwellers are hostile to outsiders, seeing them primarily as a source of plunder and slaves. There are some wasters who truly harbour no ill-will, and hire themselves as guides to travellers in good faith. Lano just does not happen to be one of those good-hearted types, however. Should the Acolytes hire Lano on as a guide, he intends to lead them directly into an ambush. If Lano is present, his treachery is revealed when Frohrn the Slayer makes his attack (see **Raiders** on page 27). Until that time, however, Lano tries to make himself useful and gain the Acolytes' trust. In fact, he comes across as fawning and overeager to please. He can offer useful advice to survive the dangers of the wastes—after all, he wants the Acolytes to survive long enough to deliver them into Frohrn's hands.

Lano uses the profile for a Gwydrae Nomad (see page 50), though this connection should be a secret to the Acolytes. He has a Submissive Personality and an initial Disposition of 55. It is ultimately up to the Acolytes whether or not to hire Lano's services. The later encounter with Frohrn occurs either way (although the players should of course not know that), but the Acolytes are more likely to be caught by surprise if everything goes according to Lano's plan. Acolytes, of course, can see through at least some of Lano's lies with an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Scrutiny** test against his **Deceive** skill.

If the Acolytes do not meet Lano prior to embarking on their journey, the GM could also have them come across him at some point during their travels, at which point he offers his services. If the Acolytes have already run afoul of the hazards of the wastes, Lano can offer both his sympathy and aid, proving his usefulness.

## HIGH SPEED CHASES

It is possible the players might be fast enough to directly chase the smugglers across the wastelands outside of the hive. Although combat rules could be used to represent such high speed chases and pursuits, they do not accurately portray the tension and excitement of driving such as this, or manoeuvring through a treacherous underhive roadway to cut off a group of heretics, or trying to shoot down a traitor's shuttle before it can drop a payload of virus bombs on a crowded regimental mustering ground. If desired, the following rules can be used for high speed vehicular chases. Note that should the Acolytes capture the smugglers in such a chase, the GM will need to modify how the warband discovers and arrives at the camp (see page 30).

High-speed chases can be represented by a series of opposed Operate tests. When the chase begins, the GM determines how many metres separate the pursuer and the pursued. Then the two players roll opposed Operate tests (depending on the vehicles involved). If the pursuer wins, he decreases the distance between the vehicles by 10 metres for every degree of success he scored. If the pursued wins, he increases the distance by the same amount (10 metres for each degree of success). This continues at the beginning of each round until the distance between the vehicles drops to zero or increases to 300 metres. If the pursuer catches up, the two sides make another Opposed Operate test. If the pursuer wins, he forces his quarry to pull over and stop. If the pursued wins, he increases the distance as defined above.

Faster vehicles add a bonus to this test. Compare the Cruising Speeds of the vehicles, and for every full 10 kph the faster vehicle has over the slower vehicle, that vehicle's driver gains a +10 bonus to his Operate tests.

High-speed chases are usually anything but safe. Besides exchanges of gunfire (which should take place following normal combat and vehicle combat rules), there is the constant risk of spinning out of control, or even running into other traffic. When making Operate tests during a high-speed chase, any result of 99–100 means that the vehicle flips out of control or crashes into an obstacle and explodes (see the 10+ result on **Table 7–34: Hull Critical Hit Effects**, page 259 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**). The “danger zone” can be increased depending on the circumstances of the chase. Chases along a crowded habways may mean that crashes occur on a result of 97–100, while chases proceeding against traffic may modify that to 92–100. As always, the GM is the final arbiter in such matters.



## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: LIVE-FIRE

This optional encounter should be introduced while the Acolytes are still very much within the shadow of the hive, no more than 50–75 kilometres out. As the Acolytes are travelling, a whistling sound announces the arrival of an artillery shell, which lands a short distance away from them with a massive detonation. Though it should not be immediately apparent, the Acolytes have wandered into the vicinity of a live-fire training exercise by the Desoleum Involute Cadres. The Cadres routinely hold such exercises in the wastes surrounding the hives, for these areas are conveniently located and receive comparatively little traffic. This first shell is not close enough to injure the Acolytes, although if they are mounted in a vehicle, the GM could increase the dramatic effect by having the shell land directly in front of them, forcing the driver to come to an abrupt stop. A few seconds later, a second shell lands nearby, followed quickly by a third. The Acolytes might be quite alarmed by now, even believing themselves to be under attack.

If the Acolytes continue travelling, around the next bend they catch sight of a part of the Involute Cadre training forces. Approximately a kilometre away from the roadway is a detachment of infantry, including a squadron of Basilisk tanks. If the Acolytes observe through magnoculars, they can clearly see the tank crews loading the next batch of Earthshaker shells, while Tech-Priests direct adjustments to the firing trajectories. At the same time, the Acolyte can clearly make out the distinct cracking sound of lasgun fire coming from the other direction.

As the Acolytes debate how to respond, or if they simply continue on, after only a minute or two they see a low cloud of approaching from the northeast. This is, in fact, the dust kicked up by the treads of five Taurox armoured personnel carriers. The vehicles approach the Acolytes, ordering them to halt over a loud voxponder. Senior Oathsmen Leygius Horne emerges from the top-hatch of the lead Taurox, demanding that the Acolytes vacate the area and return to Hive Desoleum. He explains that a training exercise of the Desoleum Involute Cadres is underway; the Acolytes' presence puts them in danger and (worse) poses an inconvenience to his forces.

The exercises are occurring over the next 10 kilometres, so it is not an acceptable solution, in Horne's opinion, for the Acolytes to continue on their current heading; he insists that they turn back. This leaves the Acolytes with a few different options. If they wish to avoid conflict, and the risk of exposing their mission, the Acolytes could turn back, only to find an alternate path or to pass by once his attention is elsewhere.

If the Acolytes ignore his warnings about the danger and attempt to pass through, he only hesitates briefly prior to using whatever force is necessary to stop them, including, perhaps ironically, lethal. Allowing citizens to defy the orders of a military leader sets an unacceptable precedent, in Horne's view. This, of course, assumes that the Acolytes' true identities are unknown to Horne. He is likely to be much more amenable should he understand something of the situation or the warband's authority. However, Horne is also not predisposed to listening to explanations; he is Confident with a starting Disposition is 30.

As the Acolytes try to explain the situation, Horne belligerently interrupts them almost constantly. Unless the Acolytes can get his attention succinctly (such as by announcing their authority, or that they are on the trail of a group of dangerous heretics), they suffer a –10 penalty on their Interaction skill tests with Horne.

Oath-magister Hiethen Prass is overseeing the training from his own command Chimera tank approximately 5 kilometres away, and the Acolytes are unlikely to come face-to-face with him unless they make a particular effort to do so. However, any of the assembled platoons can contact the Oath-magister using the heavy, backpack-mounted voxcaster carried by each vox operator. Prass is unwilling to suspend operations for the safety of ordinary citizens, and only by exerting their Influence can the Acolytes make the proud officer budge.

Enterprising PCs might attempt commandeering or capturing a Taurox (see page 46) for their own use; this could result in an interesting trip if none of the Acolytes are skilled in operating one. If one of the Oathsmen Troopers accompanies the warband to act as driver, use the profile from page 394 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook as needed for him. Prass is quite upset if one of his vehicles is taken however, no matter the reasons, and orders artillery barrages “accidentally” in their path. This should only slow the Acolytes' pursuit of the smugglers, but should damage their vehicle enough to prevent it from being used to easily overpower any future threats.





## GLASS STORM

Once the Acolytes are approximately an hour out from the hive, they glimpse a dark, yet glittering shape obscuring the horizon, moving towards them. This is one of the dreaded glass storms of Desoleum, which any natives characters (especially NPCs) easily recognise. As powerful storm-force winds move across the wastes, they pick up not only sand and ash, but larger pieces of glass from the vitreous plains. These storms are incredibly deadly; while sand alone would be dangerously abrasive, the storms propel shards of glass at such high speeds as to slice a man apart in moments. If the Acolytes do not recognise the danger and take appropriate steps, have them encounter a traveller or group of travellers either fleeing from the storm or taking measures to build shelter and ride it out.

From the time they first spot it, the Acolytes have roughly ten minutes before the storm hits. This time should be reduced if the Acolytes continue travelling towards the storm. At the beginning of each of his turns within the storm, each Acolyte must make a **Difficult (-10) Dodge test**; if he fails, the storm inflicts 1d10 Rending damage to a randomly determined location. Lying Prone on the ground provides cover with an armour value of 6; suitable cover in the form of rocks or ruins gives cover with an armour value of 8 or more. Acolytes could also dig trenches, or just bury themselves to take shelter. Either of these approaches provides 5 points of cover, with an additional +1 armour value for each degree of success the Acolytes achieve on a **Routine (+20) Athletics test** made as part of their efforts. The GM should remember to reduce cover from storm damage each round, as per the rules of page 229 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook** to heighten the tension of the storm. If the Acolytes are currently without a vehicle, the GM should consider having the storm appear when they are close to potential shelter, such as that provided by a merchant caravan, rock formation, mine tunnel, or even one of the primordial xenos ruins that dots the surface of Desoleum.

If the Acolytes are in an enclosed vehicle, then they are in good position to weather the storm, although the vehicle is sure to be worse for wear afterward. If the vehicle uses rubber tyres, the flying daggers of glass are liable to puncture them. Unless the Acolytes find a way to protect the tyres, the Game Master should roll 1d10; on a result of 6 or higher, one tyre is ruined, and on a result of 10, two tyres are destroyed by the shards of glass. If the Acolytes are driving while the storm hits, the Acolyte operating the vehicle must make a **Difficult (-10) Operate (Surface) test**, with a further -20 penalty should any of the vehicle's tyres be ruined as previously described. If the driver fails the test, the vehicle goes Out of Control (see page 255 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**).

The storm is overwhelming, but fortunately brief, as the gale winds swiftly pass the Acolytes by. The onslaught lasts for only 2d5 rounds, although this should seem like an eternity to unprotected Acolytes. If the Acolytes are well-protected by a vehicle, the GM could draw the storm out longer, playing up the gradual damage done to their transport, and the threat of the storm shattering its viewpane or even shearing through its hull at any moment.

This encounter is intended to add some excitement to the Acolytes' journey without putting them in great danger, at least so long as they take adequate precautions. If the Game Master prefers to make things more challenging for the Acolytes, he could

combine the glass storm with another encounter. For instance, the storm might blow up while the Acolytes are holding tense negotiations with Oathsmen Horne, or in the midst of fighting off the nomadic raiders of Frohrn the Slayer. The storm could even arrive while the Acolytes are speaking with Hashian Trels, in which case the trader's calm demeanour in the face of the danger can further highlight his vaguely threatening aura.

## THE WASTELAND MERCHANT

This encounter is best inserted during a lull between dangers and combats in the voyage across the sandy wastes. After the Acolytes have travelled some way without laying eyes on any sign of life, they encounter a roving trader coming from the opposite direction. The man is on foot, heavily wrapped in protective robes, with storm-weathered goggles and a respirator loose around his neck. Accompanying him is a diminutive figure holding the reins of a pair of misshapen draught animals towing a cart laden with an assortment of goods and what look to be simple junk. The smaller individual appears to be a child, but is severely weather-beaten and clearly mutated, making its true age difficult to guess—its skin is completely hairless and scaly. The pair move almost excruciatingly slowly; in addition to towing the cart, the mutant's legs are mismatched in size and he moves with a limp, whereas the trader walks with a cane hewn from a glassteed legbone. The trader's name is Hashian Trels (see page 47), while the mutant has no name and cannot speak.

Hashian Trels sees much in his travels across Desoleum, and deals in information as readily as goods. His wares are an odd assortment, some scavenged from the wastes, others bartered from nomads or fellow travellers. For the most part, his goods are unlikely to be of interest to the Acolytes, but he could have some treasure amidst the detritus. Exactly what he has to offer is left to the Game Master, who should feel free to use items from the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook** or devise new and bizarre devices and weapons of his own invention.

One item in particular which the GM might wish to have amongst Trels' offerings is a single void suit. Though it might seem useless in the wastes, the suit can protect a character from the toxic lake surrounding the Sable Traders' camp (see page 31) for five minutes, after which the suit begins to degrade. Trels says nothing specific about why such an item might be useful, but simply offers it to the Acolytes, smiling knowingly.

More important than his merchandise is the information Trels can offer the Acolytes, should they provide adequate recompense. Information is a resource, after all, and no good merchant gives a resource away for free. If the Acolytes are still in pursuit of the smugglers, then they could rightly surmise that Trels, coming from the opposite direction, must have already passed the smugglers. In addition to confirming that he did pass them, he can offer additional information about the smugglers' current status based on what, if any, deals they struck or attempted. This is left to the GM's discretion, and depends entirely on the events of the adventure thus far. If the smugglers have suffered considerable damage at the hands of the Acolytes, they are likely in desperate need of medical supplies. It is even possible that, if the smugglers suspected they were being followed, they left a message or threat to be passed along.



Trels can also offer general advice and information about the wastes and potential hazards. The GM can use Trels's cryptic messages to foreshadow other encounters during this section of the adventure. He can offer advice on surviving a glass storm, perhaps with the warning that one is soon coming (he can feel it in his bad knee), or caution the Acolytes of raiders in the area, even mentioning Frohrn the Slayer by name. He displays a Submissive Personality with a Disposition of 65 where needed.

Because Trels trades in information as a commodity, obtaining information from him requires a **Requisition test**, rather than a **Charm** or **Investigate test**. The Availability modifier for the test depends on Trels' perceived value of the information in question. As a benchmark, common knowledge about the wastes has a modifier of +30, information that could save one's life (such as how to detect an approaching glass storm) is +0, and specific information, such as details about the smugglers or nomads in the area, is -10 or more. The Acolytes can also use some of their own possessions to sweeten the deal, using the rules for Trading In Items from page 143 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook.

## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: KREAYTEX

In this optional encounter, the Acolytes come face-to-maw with one of the savage and unnatural predators that roam the wastes of Desoleum. The origins of such strange creatures are shrouded in mystery, but some Magi Biologis theorise that the Kreyatex and other seemingly hybrid monstrosities are a result of the same fiery holocaust that vitrified the great glass plains of Desoleum. What few, if any, suspect is the much darker possibility: that these abominations could bear the taint of Chaos, which brought down the ancient inhabitants of such worlds as Desoleum and Thaur. By the end of this adventure, however, the Acolytes might even form such a suspicion for themselves.

The GM must use his discretion when deciding when to employ this encounter, as it can reasonably occur at almost any time during the Acolytes' journey. If their trip lasts overnight, having the Kreyatex (see page 48) attack in the dark of night is a good option. Once it picks up their trail, the Kreyatex stalks the Acolytes and prepares for attack. The Acolytes can attempt an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Awareness test** against the Kreyatex's **Challenging (+0) Stealth**. In addition to catching sight or sound of the creature, if any of the Acolytes are not aboard a sealed vehicle or wearing respirators or similar equipment, they might detect its distinctive odour (granting them a +20 bonus on the test). When the Kreyatex does attack, it does so savagely and without holding back. Any Acolytes who fail win the **Opposed test** count as **Surprised** at the outset of combat.

If the Acolytes are mounted on a vehicle, this could diminish the threat of the encounter. There are a few possibilities for tailoring the encounter so that this is not the case. One is to simply wait until the Acolytes disembark from their vehicle, or at least stop and open the hatches, perhaps when they are dealing with another encounter. Another option is to have the Acolytes' vehicle actually hit the Kreyatex as it bounds out in front of them, thus forcing them to stop. If one of the Acolytes is driving the vehicle, the GM should allow him a **Hard (-20) Operate (Surface) test** to avoid hitting the creature as it bounds into their path.

Even if he is successful, the sloped dunes and rocks on the sides of the roadway force the driver to bring the vehicle to a stop. Whether the Acolytes decide to stay in the vehicle or get out and investigate what it is they hit, this gives the GM an opportunity to ratchet up the tension before the Kreyatex springs back to its feet.

Finally, if he wishes to make this encounter even more challenging for the Acolytes, the GM can employ the Kreyatex's signature tactic of digging a pit trap. This is most plausible if the Acolytes have left the main roadway for any reason, although, because even the primary road on which the Acolytes are travelling is little more than compacted sand, it is possible the creature chose to prepare its trap on the road, or just off to the side. In either case, noticing the pit requires a **Hard (-20) Awareness test**, with an additional -20 penalty for a character mounted on a swiftly-moving vehicle or if attempted at night.

## RAIDERS

The wastes are dangerous for a multitude of reasons, as the Acolytes doubtless have come to realise by now. Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the wastes surrounding Hive Desoleum is the band of nomads led by Frohrn the Slayer. Though perhaps not the most powerful or influential warlord to be found in the wastes covering Desoleum, Frohrn is certainly one of the most successful within this area. From his station atop his heavily-converted Viator, Frohrn leads his band of barbaric raiders known as the Gwydrae in search of prey and plunder.





As his namesake indicates, Frohrn is violent and bloodthirsty, and he and his warriors savour the thrill of battle. When Frohrn encounters the Acolytes, he attacks immediately. Once his forces have inflicted some damage, however, he calls out for the PCs to surrender. He is not at all concerned, however, with taking them alive. If his foes surrender, he happily accepts them as slaves; if not, he drains the water from their bodies and adds it to his stores of wealth. There is one third possibility, though not open to any Acolytes who proudly display symbols of the Imperium or the Ecclesiarchy, due to Frohrn's disdain of the Imperium. On occasion, Frohrn offers a place in his band of raiders to a foe who impresses him with strength and ability. If any of the Acolytes impress Frohrn, he could make just such an offer. Those who decline such an invitation are condemned to death along with their allies. If needed, Frohrn has a Confident Personality with a Disposition of 30; his profile can be found on page 48

If Lano (see *The Guide* on page 24) is with the Acolytes and they have heeded his advice and directions thus far, then he leads them directly into Frohrn's ambush. The GM could give the players one more chance to discern Lano's treachery. Acolytes who succeed at an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Scrutiny** test against Lano's **Challenging (+0) Deceive** test are not Surprised during the first round of combat, having realised at the last moment that something is not right.

If Lano leads the Acolytes directly into the ambush, then no sooner do the Acolytes hear the thunderous sounds of Viator engines than Frohrn and his raiders are on top of them. As soon as the battle begins, Lano joins battle against the Acolytes. He attacks whichever of them is most convenient to him, favouring the more threatening or heavily armed, all things being equal. Lano's evaluation is based on his own judgement and the information available, and is not necessarily correct. Particularly since many warbands do not contain a single leader or "most dangerous," Lano is likely to attack whomever is the most physically large and intimidating, since such people tend to be both the leader and the most dangerous in his culture.

Assuming Lano is not guiding the Acolytes, they are unlikely to be caught by surprise due to the loud engines and bloodthirsty war-cries that herald Frohrn's approach. The raiders begin the battle by roaring onto the road from behind a rocky outcropping as the Acolytes pass, and then attempting to pull up alongside the Acolytes' vehicle. If the Acolytes are on foot, they are at a distinct disadvantage. Frohrn does enjoy some challenge, so the GM might wish to have the raiders attack on foot in this situation, only calling for their Viator once the Acolytes successfully defend against their initial assault.

In addition to Frohrn himself, his converted Viator crawler the *Black Reaver* (see page 50) is carrying a nomad champion (page 49) who fights by Frohrn's side at all times, a nomad shaman (page 49), and a number of nomad raiders (page 50) equal to the number of Acolytes plus 3, adjusted as necessary for the group using the threat threshold system. This is an intentionally challenging encounter, and the Acolytes might despair at the odds. Miraculously, however, help is coming, as if sent by the Emperor Himself.





## DIVINE RETRIBUTION

Fortunately for the Acolytes, a Revelationist of the Temple Sacramentum Sacrosanctus named Balthios D'Harn crosses their path just in time to lend his assistance. As D'Harn passes nearby, it is impossible for him to not detect the clamour of battle, and he rushes to the scene to assist any loyal servants of the Emperor who are under siege by the enemies of humanity. Even if the Acolytes' nature is not readily apparent, D'Harn has spent enough time in the wastes to recognise a nomad raiding party, and assumes them to be beleaguered travellers in need of aid. After five rounds of combat—or sooner if things get off to a particularly bad start for the Acolytes—D'Harn comes riding into battle atop a glassteed (see page 190 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook), accompanied by three or more lay missionaries (use the Devout NPC profile on page 389 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook) similarly mounted and armed with shotguns. D'Harn (see page 51) and his followers immediately attack Frohrn and his raiders.

As he fights, D'Harn bellows prayers to the Emperor and the spirits of battle, decrying the heresy of his foes. The effect of D'Harn's sudden onslaught is powerful, and even the fearsome raiders of Frohrn the Slayer might be overwhelmed by the display along with the Acolytes' resistance. Once fewer than half of his original numbers remain, Frohrn must succeed at a **Challenging (+0) Command** test to keep his men fighting. If any of the Acolytes are making an effort to be intimidating or frightening, this can be resolved as **Opposing the Acolyte's Difficult (-10) Intimidate** test. Should Frohrn fail, his remaining men turn tail, disengaging their vehicle and driving off (assuming it is still working), leaving Frohrn little choice but to retreat as well.

## THE MISSIONARY

Once Frohrn the Slayer and his raiders are defeated, Balthios D'Harn introduces himself properly to the Acolytes. Alternatively, if the Acolytes handily defeat the raiders without assistance, D'Harn arrives on the scene in the aftermath of the battle, inquiring as to the events and congratulating the Acolytes on their victory.

The Temple Sacramentum Sacrosanctus is one of the Ecclesiarchy's orders within Hive Desoleum. Revelationists such as D'Harn take the word of the Emperor beyond the cathedrals and basilicas, to the downtrodden and to the unbelievers. In the case of D'Harn, his missionary work has brought him to the wastes, where he seeks to bring the teachings of the Temple to the heathens. For those beyond redemption, such as Frohrn, he instead brings cleansing fire. Revelationists are hearty, unlike some priests in the hive's upper reaches who grow soft in the lap of luxury. D'Harn is particularly so, as he must be to face the dangers of the wastes. With him are lay missionaries who have also volunteered to aid in his cause. These individuals left behind whatever life they had in the hive in order to do so.

First, D'Harn tries to gain the measure of the Acolytes; as needed, he has a **Confident Personality** and a **Disposition** of 75. He questions them as to their reason for travelling the wastes. If the Acolytes attempt to hide their true mission, call for an **Ordinary (+10) Opposed Deceive** or other appropriate skill test against D'Harn's **Scrutiny**.

If he succeeds and realises the Acolytes are being deceptive, he assumes the worst and redoubles his efforts to find the truth. This could include questions about either the teachings of the Temple Sacramentum Sacrosanctus, or about the Acolytes' personal religious views and levels of devotion. D'Harn assumes that anyone who would lie to a pious servant of the Emperor like himself must be hiding some heresy or blasphemy. However, once he feels confident that the Acolytes are true servants of the Emperor, he provides whatever aid he can.

Should they choose, the Acolytes could convince D'Harn to accompany them in their mission, for the firebrand is always ready to strike against the heretics that pollute his would-be flocks. If the Acolytes are injured, D'Harn is carrying adequate medical supplies, which he graciously provides to the warband if the Acolytes have gained his trust.

D'Harn has spent many months in the wastes, and in fact this is not his first mission to the areas surrounding the hive. If the Acolytes befriend him, or simply convince him of their dedication to the Emperor's service, he can offer some advice and warnings about the surrounding locales. If the Acolytes request it and explain something of their business, D'Harn could even act as a guide, accompanying them through the wastes. After all, he is eager for any opportunity to cleanse the wastes of heretics.





# THE CAMP

*"We're moving the next shipment tonight. If anything goes wrong, I'll kill you myself."*

—Sable Trader Golsken Hresk,  
providing encouragement to a subordinate

Eventually, the Acolytes reach the smugglers' encampment, whether hot on the trail of Tynel and his men, or following the crude map taken from his cold hands. Depending on how many encounters occur during the journey and how much time each takes, it could take the Acolytes many hours or even days to reach the camp. The adventure assumes that the Acolytes arrive at dusk, but the actual time depends on when they left the hive and how long their journey took. The timing influences the difficulty of the following action, depending on the Acolytes' planned approach. Generally, arriving at the smugglers' encampment at sundown makes things easier for the Acolytes, particularly if they plan a stealthy approach. Even if the Acolytes plan a head-on assault, they are greatly outnumbered, and so stand to benefit more from the darkness than their adversaries.

Regardless of the timing, there is always a great deal of activity at the smugglers' camp. Depending on the lighting and the Acolytes' equipment, they might or might not be able to see the full extent of the camp. However, even in the deepest hours of night, massive floodlights illuminate much of the camp to facilitate the constant work.

Though the camp's location was selected in part for its remoteness, the smugglers have taken additional precautions to ensure that their base of operations is secure. If Tynel arrives with the knowledge that the Acolytes are pursuing him, the smugglers quickly act to increase security and fortify all possible points of ingress to the camp.

When the Acolytes reach the camp, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*Finally, you have reached your destination. Up ahead, a sprawling encampment rises up from an island amidst a steaming chemical lake. Gates of scrap encompass an array of prefab buildings, ramshackle hovels, and plastek tents. Men in armour or protective gear move about, hauling crates onto the decks of vehicles, while armed guards patrol the perimeter of the camp. The gate lies at the very edge of the island, and two large towers hold up a drawbridge which seemingly provides the only access.*

If the Acolytes followed Jarrik and his group here, continue with the following:

*As the smugglers' Viator approaches the edge of the caustic lake, a bridge slowly descends as heavy chains cycle through winchworks. Simultaneously, the wide iron and plastek gates swing slowly open, pulled manually aside by a half dozen men. The bridge buckles slightly under the weight of the vehicle as it crosses over the acidic moat and through the open gate.*

The smugglers' camp is certainly makeshift, but is also well-protected. When establishing their base, the Sable Traders purposely chose a defensible position in the small island, and have since fortified it substantially with a combination of prefabricated structures and scavenged parts. A wall of metal three to four metres high surrounds the camp. Narrow walkways alongside the back of the outer walls allow guards to patrol the parapets and access the heavy stubbers affixed to the wall in several places. The drawbridge and gate are both manually operated, the former through a complex series of winches and pulleys that allow a pair of men to raise or lower the gate. With the caustic nature of the chemical lake, the defence is formidable. However, while it is the most obvious entrance, the drawbridge is not the only point of ingress. The land on which the camp sits is not a true island, as it backs up against a rocky cliff face on the far side of the lake. It is possible for the Acolytes to cross around the perimeter of the lake, as the ground gradually rises, and then to rappel or climb down to the peninsula. This would put the Acolytes on the far side of the camp, where there is no gate or other entrance, adding a further complication.

After crossing the 200 metres to the wall, the Acolytes must then scale it or force their way through. If they choose to attack the wall directly, it has 12 Armour points; the Acolytes must damage it to below 5 in order to create an opening large enough for a single person to pass through. This damage must be done silently, or the guards automatically notice the fire of guns or roaring of chain weapons. The wall is not a sheer surface, as it is roughly constructed from various scrap metal and parts, and so provides adequate hand-holds for climbing. Climbing the wall requires an **Ordinary (+10) Athletics test**.

Under normal conditions, four guards patrol the walls at a time, two moving clockwise while two complete a circuit in the opposed direction. The guards' routes are designed to keep as much distance as possible between them, ensuring that no part of the wall goes unwatched for long. In addition, two guards posted in the guard tower survey the surrounding area with a huge stablight, watching for intruders or wild beasts. One guard manoeuvres the lamp, while the other stands ready with a long-las. At the sight of trouble, the guards raise the alarm. Each guard on patrol carries a hand-vox to signal the others if necessary.

## THE SABLE TRADERS

There are roughly eighteen Sable Traders in the camp. These include those assigned to the watch (a rotating schedule, which all smugglers take at some time or another), but not including Tynel and the men accompanying him, or Golsken Hresk, the camp leader (see page 36). Four members of the Children of the Inheritance (see the sidebar on page 37) are also present. These numbers would be higher if a group had not recently left for Port Gyre with a stash of xenos artefacts. An Acolyte who surveys the camp's layout can attempt an **Ordinary (+10) Awareness test** can determine these numbers, but requires three or more degrees of success to differentiate the Children from the smugglers.





## IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

The Trade Sable encampment is approximately 200 metres across at its widest point, and is roughly semicircular in shape. The only entrance is a large double gate facing southeast. The walls of the compound are about three metres high, rising to four metres in some spots. The walls are actually constructed from several materials, largely scavenged from vehicle hulls, including wire mesh, heavy plasteel plating, and rusted and pitted iron, with flakboard layered on top. The ground of the camp is bare, and some of the buildings even lack floors. The ground is flat and rocky, with a fine layer of the silica sand that covers the deserts around the hive. Periodically, the acid lake overflows from unknown pressures below, nearly flooding the camp; the GM could have this occur during the adventure if the Acolytes are not sufficiently challenged in penetrating the camp's defences.

The camp is usually active, and sounds of men shouting can be heard drifting over the walls. The loudest sounds coming from the camp are those of the squat, functional promethium-burning generators that power the smugglers' equipment and buildings. These are also responsible for an odour of promethium fumes which would be quite potent were it not overshadowed by the noxious stench of the acidic lake. Occasionally, an orbital craft can be seen coming in overhead, bound for Port Gyre to the northwest. The lights of the spaceport and, indeed, the hive itself loom on the horizon, as well as the smaller blinking lights of interorbital traffic.

The following are the major elements of the camp. Some of the locations include NPCs; these are references for the GM as to where these characters are likely to be found on a typical night, and this night in particular, barring the Acolytes' involvement. If the Acolytes attack the camp or are discovered, many of the smugglers and cultists present will move to investigate the disturbance or defend the camp. Depending on the Acolytes' actions, the GM must determine if characters can be found at their usual location, based on what he knows about the NPC in question, his best judgement, and the needs of the game.

### THE LAKE

Surrounding the smugglers' camp is a lake of acidic chemicals. Such lakes are common throughout the wastes; this one is a soup of noxious waters, further bolstered by ancient irradiated glass debris lying at the bottom. The liquid is highly acidic, and even passing nearby is dangerous for someone not wearing protective gear. A character within five metres of the lake's surface must attempt an **Ordinary (+10) Toughness** test after three rounds and each round thereafter. On a failure, he suffers 1d5 Impact damage that ignores armour, and suffers 1 level of Fatigue. A character that comes into brief contact with the liquid, such as being splashed by it, suffers 1d10 Energy damage to that location with the Toxic (2) quality. A character submersed in the liquid suffers 1d5 hits dealing Energy damage to the body location as above but also with the Corrosive quality, representing the acid clinging to his body and continuing to dissolve.



Despite the lake's acidic nature, hearty and thoroughly unwholesome creatures dwell within it. Though these do not compare to the titanic beasts that prowl the bottomless depths of Desoleum's acid oceans, they are nonetheless dangerous if provoked. Clever Acolytes can use the lake and its inhabitants to their advantage. The beasts are drawn by the scent of fresh blood, and will even lunge up from the lake to attack wounded targets along the shoreline. If the Acolytes can draw smugglers out from behind the camp walls, this could be used as part of an attack. Conversely, if the Acolytes are careless, they might find themselves as the beasts' prey. If blood is spilled, or a character suffering from the Blood Loss condition goes within 5 metres of the lake's edge, test against the beast's Perception of 40. For each degree of success, the scent draws one of the beasts, which arrives in 1d5 rounds. It hides below the surface, as its skin cannot withstand gaseous oxygen, and sprays acid at its target at a random Hit Location. The target must make a **Challenging (+0) Agility test** or suffer the same effects as being splashed by the acid as described earlier. Any successful ranged attack into the lake scares away a beast for 1d5 rounds, after which it returns to attack again.

## DRAWBRIDGE AND GATEHOUSE

The drawbridge is situated at the island's closest point to the opposite bank, a span of roughly six metres. The bridge is constructed from numerous sheets of metal of various sizes, shapes, and widths, soldered and bolted together. Though its appearance does not inspire confidence, the bridge has thus far proven sturdy enough to accommodate a single vehicle at a time. The bridge is operated from a fortified gatehouse, a few metres forward from the main gates themselves. Two sturdy pinions support the bridge in its drawn position, and the bridge can be lowered using a heavy wheel. A single operator can lower the bridge easily, but it takes two to raise it. A single person can raise the bridge by passing a **Hard (-20) Athletics test**.

## GUARD TOWER

A guard tower is built into the wall on the right side of the gate. This structure extends an additional four metres above the wall's height, offering a commanding view of the surrounding area. The uppermost floor of the guard tower, accessible by stairs climbing

## WAYS OF MAKING THEM TALK

As with any mystery adventure, in order to unfold properly **FORGOTTEN GODS** requires that Acolytes not obtain certain information, or too much of it, too quickly. While the adventure is constructed with this in mind, the responsibility must also fall to the GM, for it is through him that the players experience the world of **DARK HERESY**. Clever players might attempt to take prisoners for questioning and interrogation. While this is commendable behaviour for an Acolyte, it can also pose a problem for the GM. While such captives might be unwilling to talk, Acolytes can be quite persuasive (particularly those skilled in the arts of an excruciator). For players who have spent time and xp developing characters skilled at prying information from suspects, it can be not only disheartening to have their skills prove ineffective, but also break the suspension of disbelief that is important for an immersive roleplaying experience. Fortunately, GMs have a number of tools for restricting the information available to Acolytes without sidelining their abilities or breaking immersion.

At the most basic level, GMs should remember that few NPCs have all the information. In criminal factions, malefic cults, and other such groups, it is common to restrict information to a "need-to-know basis," reserving it only for leaders or subordinates tasked with a given assignment. Thus, while the Acolytes can pry information from a low-level minion, he simply does not know the facts they really need, forcing them to go in search of bigger game. If under duress, an NPC who has reached the limits of his knowledge might make up lies, telling the Acolytes what he thinks they want to know. While realistic, this has the potential to make for a confusing and, perhaps, unsatisfying game, so the GM should allow Acolytes an **Opposed Ordinary (+10) Scrutiny or Logic test** against the subject's **Challenging (+0) Willpower or Deceive test** to unravel such falsehoods.

For members who must know more information, it is common for a group to take additional precautions to ensure that they do not reveal it should they be captured by the enemy. After all, losing an important leader is a harmful enough blow without his loose lips bringing down the rest of the organisation. There are a number of methods that a group might employ, depending on its resources, modus operandi, beliefs, and purpose. The GM should think about these various factors when dealing with a captive and the Acolytes' interrogation of him. For instance, a group with access to powerful psykers might place a mental ward or branded hypnoath on its knowledgeable members, ensuring that they are unable to speak certain secrets even should they desire to. In the most extreme cases, such wards might trigger a cerebral haemorrhage when the bearer's will is finally broken, or cast his soul from his body. Groups employing the services of hereteks might utilise similar tools, albeit of a technological nature. Volitor implants, meme-walls, and engrammic blocks can all similarly restrict access to the information in a person's mind, and again, could feature a failsafe that is fatal.

On a more mundane level, members might be trained or conditioned to end their own lives before divulging information. Poison pills are a time-honoured method, and the technology of the 41<sup>st</sup> millennium offers a number of alterations on this age-old method, some of which can also prove harmful to others in the vicinity. These can include such things as mind-activated toxic glands, poison gas canisters concealed in false teeth, hidden micro-grenades, and chemsacs embedded in the individual's flesh that flood him with frenzon, turning him into a rampaging killing machine and allowing him to either escape his bonds and overpower his captors—or die trying.



the tower's exterior, houses a floodlamp on a 360° mounting. Unless an incident occurs, the lamp is always aimed away from the camp, used to survey the surrounding area. Two guards are always stationed in the tower, with one operating the light and other surveying the area either with a pair of magnoculars or the telescopic sight of his sniper rifle. The bottom floor of the tower includes a table and chairs where smugglers sometimes kill time while waiting their turn on guard duty. This room includes a weapons locker with three autoguns and ammunition, as well as lockers for personal equipment. The majority of the smugglers' extra weaponry is stored in the armoury.

## ABODE OF THE INHERITORS

Though the true nature of the Children of the Inheritance, or their name, should not yet be known to the Acolytes, it is apparent that something sets this group apart from the rest of the smugglers. A small number of these cultists are stationed at the smugglers' camp, working closely with them to ensure their sacred artefacts are retrieved from their rivals within Hive Desoleum.

The cultists (see page 54 for their profile) have taken some effort, whether deliberately or not, to make their section of the encampment more reminiscent of their home world of Thaur. Bones and skulls are piled high about their prefab shelters, to such an extent that some buildings appear at a glance to be constructed from them. The Inheritors make do with whatever is available, and so many of the bones belong to the animal life of the wastes—some clearly belonged to truly huge and monstrous beasts—but there is certainly no shortage of human remains to be found here as well. In all, it makes their area markedly different from the rest of the camp; an **Easy (+30) Awareness test** reveals this. Any Acolytes with prior experience on Thaur recognise this as reminiscent of that world without a requiring a test.

During this section of the adventure, if it seems appropriate, the Acolytes could overhear smugglers referring to “the Inheritors.” This should be enough to pique the Acolytes' curiosity, but they should not discover exactly who this refers to, and certainly not the true nature of the cult.

It is here that all xenos artefacts are kept; this includes the items taken from the Gallowsway if the Acolytes did not intercept those smugglers before they could reach the camp. The Inheritors insist on keeping these items under their own watchful gaze, to ensure their safety. Some of the cultists always accompany a shipment of artefacts back to Thaur, soon to be replaced by more of their brethren from that world. Because such a shipment recently departed, only four cultists are currently at the camp.

## TEMPLE

The cult has established a makeshift temple where they continue their ritual observances. The temple is a small prefab building, extensively decorated with bones mounted in configurations which hold ritual meaning only for the cult, although the effect is inexplicably unsettling for observers (more so than can be explained simply by the sight of bones in architecture, which is common enough in the Imperium). In addition, the grey rockcrete of the shelter has been painted black and elaborately chiselled with strange runes and patterns. Within, a plinth of glass carved from the nearby plains acts as an altar. This crystalline slab eerily reflects and refracts the light of scores of candles situated around the room atop piles of carefully arranged bones.

Atop the plinth is an irregularly-shaped, roughly conical piece of black material—like that of the orb and other xenos artefacts—approximately half a metre high. Arrayed about the artefact are six human skulls, elaborately engraved with swirling lines and strange geometric shapes. The walls are crudely painted with depictions of monstrous, inhuman figures. The entire scene is extremely unsettling, and the Acolytes must test against **Fear (1)** upon seeing these horrors, as described in **The Artefacts** sidebar on page 21.

In the presence of other xenos artefacts, the black cone emits a low humming noise, reminiscent of a swarm of locusts. If any of the skulls are removed from the plinth, all of the candles in the room immediately extinguish.

## BARRACKS

Three long, squat prefab buildings provide lodging for the smugglers. Each barrack can functionally (if not comfortably) accommodate up to ten individuals. The beds are single-stacked, as there is currently plenty of room. At the foot of each bed is a footlocker storing the occupant's personal belongings. These tend to be locked, as the smugglers are not so foolish as to trust their fellow criminals. The barracks have a door and two windows at each end, and three fans planted in the ceiling to provide ventilation.

There are six to eight smugglers in the barracks, cleaning and maintaining their equipment, drinking, and generally relaxing. Four of them have gathered around a trunk turned on its side, playing fast games of fingerbones and hivequake.

## HRESK'S OFFICE

Hresk keeps his quarters separate from the other Sable Traders, a perk that comes with his authority. The building that houses his office also houses his bunk in a separate room. His office includes several trunks and cabinets containing papers, cargo manifests, contracts, false shipping documents and identification, and other sundry documents. Hresk can usually be found here when he is not occupied with some matter of camp maintenance. A small portable generator sits outside this building, thrumming loudly and puffing out clouds of black smoke. In addition to glow-globes and a ventilation fan, the generator powers a portable cogitator and a vox-caster set up inside. The vox-caster is a military-grade model, taking up the entire surface of a worktable, and features encryption and a signal booster capable of reaching craft high in orbit. The cogitator rests on the surface of a desk, along with papers, a half-full bottle of cheap amasec, and a pitted drinking glass. The cogitator's machine spirit only cooperates with authorised users; convincing it to yield data requires a **Difficult (–10) Tech-Use test**. It contains several documents pertaining to the recent shipment, including a message confirming that the smugglers have secured passage on a ship from Port Gyre, and the estimated departure date—today (see **Handout 1: The Smuggler's Note** on page 42). Scattered throughout the documents are references to “the Inheritors,” with context indicating them either as customers or as partners in operations. Several messages discuss working with the Inheritors to attack the Mournful Song's stores of “merchandise.”

Among Hresk's effects is a pict recorder with vid-caps of the exterior of the warehouse where the dead cultists and smugglers were found, as well as pictures of several other structures within the hive. Some of the images show robed figures coming or going, carrying chests or packages.



A hand-scrawled personal missive signed in Hresk's name seems to be written for a superior. In addition to summarising recent activity, including a raid planned for the "near future" by Tyrnel, the note laments the difficulties in working alongside the Inheritors. Hresk complains of the constant chanting, and of much nausea and illness amongst his men, which he blames on the Inheritors' activities.

Acolytes who take time to read through Hresk's correspondence should make an **Ordinary (+10) Logic test**. Success reveals that the more recent documents are disorganised and contradictory, indicating the writer's sanity has been slipping.

A locked chest in Hresk's sleeping quarters contains a combi-tool, multi-key, inferno pistol, shock-stave, several data-slates, and Mechanicum icons (the GM can add other items as desired, such as ammunition clips or other gear). These were the belongings of the captured Tech-Priest (see **The Pillory** on this page). A **Difficult (-10) Security test** is needed to pick the lock, assuming one has the proper tools. It is also possible to destroy the lock or break the chest open, though this of course risks damaging the contents. Forcing the chest open requires a **Very Hard (-30) Strength test** if the Acolyte possesses a prybar or similar tool. If an Acolyte attacks the lock, he must inflict damage in excess of its armour value of 15; however, this should damage or destroy at least one item inside depending on the weapon used, at the GM's discretion.

## ARMOURY

As one might expect, the smugglers maintain a large supply of weapons, both to have options when outfitting themselves for various missions and to draw on should they need to defend their camp. In addition to various lasguns, autopistols, and stubbers, their stores include grenades and even a few missile launchers. The armoury building is one of the best-fortified at the camp, with no windows or other access save for a single, locked plasteel door. Golsken Hresk and Jarrik Tyrnel carry keys to the armoury, as does Nolthis Skren, the group's unofficial head of security.

Locating a specific weapon requires an **Ordinary (+10) Awareness test**, modified by the item's Availability. At the GM's discretion, any suitable weapon or ammunition with a positive Availability modifier can be found automatically, with no test required. Weapons with an Availability less than Very Rare (-30) are unavailable; such items are too singular for the general armoury, and would always be in the hands of a particular smuggler.

## VEHICLES

A wide and utilitarian vehicle bay houses the smugglers' vehicles and the equipment needed to maintain them. Two Viators are parked inside the bay, with an additional Viator and three Veloxic bikes (see page 190 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**) parked outside it. It is well-equipped with tools and supplies for maintaining and repairing simple ground vehicles.

Acolytes who search this area find two rebreathers, two applications of sacred unguents, and a combi-tool, as well as an assortment of spare vehicle parts.

Under default conditions, three smugglers are at the garage conducting minor repairs on one of the Viators. A set of Viator tracks leads away from the area and out the front gate; a **Routine (+20) Awareness** or **Survival test** reveals they are very recent. Another fresh set of tracks is present if Tyrnel and his men made it back aboard their Viator.

## GENERAL STORES AND MESS

A row of small storage sheds houses the smugglers' general supplies, including rations, tools, hygiene equipment, power cells, and extra items for the vehicle bay and medicae tent. The sheds are usually unlocked, and the supplies are organised, but finding anything specific requires an **Ordinary (+10) Awareness test**.

Near the storage sheds is a wide mess tent, covering several basic but functional chairs and tables. An industrial refrigeration unit contains the camp's perishable goods, with a long, thick power cable connecting it to one of the generators stationed near the camp's edge. The exterior of the unit is heavily corroded and streaked with rust. It emits a constant, loud thrumming sound as its poorly maintained coils work to keep the food unspoiled in the harsh wasteland heat.

## MEDICAE TENT

The smugglers are often in need of medical treatment, usually as a result of combat, and providing these services in-house cuts down greatly on potential trouble. The facilities are basic; a canvas tent shelters several gurneys, a cooler of pharmaceuticals and chems, a chest of equipment, and other standard utilities. Kross Stehls is the resident medicae, a Sable Trader with a background serving as a field surgeon with the Involute Cadres. He is assisted by a medicae servo-skull. The environment is far from sterile, and the ground consists of sand caked with dried blood.

If Tyrnel and his group made it back to the camp in advance of the Acolytes, the two wounded smugglers are in the medicae tent. The smuggler suffering from a chest wound is laid out on one of the gurneys, possibly unconscious, while the one with an injured arm is sitting up. Kross is here attending to their wounds. Any or all of the three might leave the tent in order to combat the Acolytes if their presence becomes known.

Acolytes who search the medicae tent can find a medi-kit, drug supplies and injectors good for five doses of de-tox and six doses of stimm, and an obscura pipe with enough obscura for three uses. While the medicae tent is far from an ideal facility, it is well-furnished with supplies and prepped for use, adding a +10 bonus to any Medicae tests the Acolytes attempt while within it.

## THE PILLORY

The smugglers have constructed a small, crude prison, although this is rarely used as most captives are simply killed. Converted from a cargo trailer, steel bars divide the interior into two cells, separated by a small walkway from where the gaoler can open the gates or slip rations in. Only one of the cells is currently occupied, by a man with the tell-tale red robes and cybernetics of a Mechanicum adept.

This is where the Acolytes find Tech-Priest Iyathson; see page 55 for his profile. Captured by the Sable Traders while following the trail of a missing technological relic, Iyathson is wounded and drained, mentally and physically. Nonetheless, he can be of some help to the Acolytes, as he is eager to see the smugglers brought to justice for their crimes against the Ommissiah. Upon first seeing the Acolytes, Iyathson is cautious and suspicious; he is Submissive and begins with a Disposition of 30. Increase this by +10 if a clear member of the Adeptus Mechanicus is with the warband. Similarly, any characters from an Adeptus Mechanicus background receive a +10 bonus to interaction tests with Iyathson.



If convinced that the Acolytes are enemies of the Trade Sable and servants of the Imperium, Iyathson offers whatever information or other assistance he is able. Should the Acolytes want to free Iyathson, opening the locked cell requires a **Difficult (-10) Security test**.

Iyathson has been a prisoner of the smugglers for almost three months, and he has overheard a fair amount in that time, due in part to his cybernetic senses. Depending on the Game Master's preferences, the interaction with Iyathson can be largely narrative or utilise the full rules for social interaction. In the former case, the Acolytes must succeed on a **Hard (-20) Charm test**, or other suitable test at the GM's discretion. If utilising the full interaction rules, the GM should make a **Disposition test** for Iyathson after every successful Social skill use by an Acolyte, with each successful test revealing one useful item of information. If the Acolytes gain his trust, Iyathson can reveal the following information:

- The smugglers are members of the Trade Sable, an organisation based on the world of Desoleum.
- The Sable Traders are collaborating with an off-world group they refer to as "the Inheritors."
- The Sable Traders do not trust the Inheritors, but have some sort of mutually beneficial business arrangement.
- The Inheritors represent a cult of some type, though Iyathson does not know what the object of their worship is.
- A group of smugglers and Inheritors departed the camp scant hours before the Acolytes' arrival.

## ENTERING THE CAMP

The Trade Sable encampment presents an impressive obstacle for the Acolytes, particularly if they are on their own. There are many strategies they might employ to gain access to the camp. The various options can be broken down into three fundamental approaches: infiltrating the camp using stealth, bluffing their way past the guards, or fighting their way in.

### INFILTRATION

A covert approach could be the Acolyte's best method to gain entrance, particularly if any are skilled in Stealth. If only one or two of the Acolytes are adept in Stealth, it falls to these individuals to take the lead (see the sidebar on **How Not To Be Seen** on page 15). If the Acolytes are infiltrating the camp during the night, the darkness works very much to their advantage. Though powerful stablights flood the camp, they are not sufficient to illuminate every metre, and they cast sharp and deep shadows. There are enough buildings, vehicles, and supplies scattered about the camp to offer plentiful hiding spots. Further, a small number of smugglers are actively engaged in guard duties at any time; if the Acolytes take the time to observe the guards' habits, they can plan their infiltration accordingly by making an **Easy (+30) Logic test**. Before they can take advantage of this cover, however, the Acolytes must gain access to the camp. As usual, the GM should listen to whatever plans the Acolytes concoct, and allow a chance of success as long as the plan is reasonable and the Acolytes succeed on enough relevant skill tests.

The most straightforward way to enter the camp without being detected is to scale the wall and time it so that no guards are close to the chosen point of infiltration. Once within the camp, the Acolytes should make occasional **Opposed Challenging (+0) Stealth tests** against smugglers' or cultists' **Awareness** wandering the grounds, as well as against the guards. If at night, the latter suffer a -10 penalty as they are less alert. There is always activity at the camp, but usually less at night. However, while their focus is usually outward, the guards patrolling the wall also observe the interior of the camp some of the time.

### DECEPTION

Some Acolytes might decide the best approach is to bluff their way into the camp with a suitable cover story or even a physical disguise. The smugglers do not conduct business directly from their encampment, so posing as potential customers is difficult but not necessarily impossible. The GM should hear out the players' planned deception, and assign a difficulty for their **Opposed Deceive tests** and the smugglers' **Scrutiny** skills, as appropriate.



Acolytes with some knowledge of the Trade Sable could attempt to pass as members. This is difficult, but can potentially work if the Acolytes know enough and succeed at the requisite skill tests. One problem comes from the formalised facial scars with which Sable Traders identify themselves. The Acolytes could get around this by posing as apprentice traders, but they are unlikely to be admitted to the camp without at least one (apparent) full-fledged Sable Trader to vouch for them. If the Acolytes have not figured out the importance of the Sable Traders' facial scars, this could prove their undoing, for even lowly apprentices have some knowledge of the scars, even if they lack a full understanding of the significance of a scar's size, shape, and position. Acolytes skilled in Deceive and with the proper supplies (make-up, prosthetics, etc.) could attempt to recreate the scars on one or more of their number. Unless the Acolyte possesses an appropriate Forbidden Lore skill or Peer talent, or has a smuggler's face available to study, this requires a successful **Very Hard (-30) Awareness** test if the character is to have any hope of accurately recreating the scars (assuming, of course, the Acolyte has seen and recognised a Sable Trader's facial scars in the past).

If the Acolytes are successful in deceiving the guards, they will be taken to meet Golsken Hresk, who meets all new arrivals to the camp.

## ASSAULT

One approach to dealing with the Sable Traders' camp is to stage a direct assault. If on their own, the Acolytes are badly outnumbered and probably outgunned as well. Add to this the camp's defensible position and other precautions, and this makes for a difficult, perhaps even suicidal, proposition. However, it is possible the Acolytes could have help in the form of Balthios D'Harn and his followers, a detachment of Sanctionaries, or even a platoon of the Desoleum Involute Cadres. Requisitioning the services of the Cadres is no mean feat however, and almost certainly requires the Acolytes to invoke the full authority of their master or to present a truly titanic ruse. Similarly, the smugglers' encampment falls well outside the jurisdiction of the hive's Sanctionaries, and only direct orders from an Inquisitor, or an Acolyte speaking with his authority, could bring them.

A third possibility which could occur to the players, particularly if any of the Acolytes come from an Adeptus Arbites background or have ties to that organisation, is to contact that group for help. The Adeptus Arbites maintain a precinct at Port Gyre, and Trade Sable activities that contravene the Lex Imperialis would definitely be a matter for their concern.

If the Acolytes have such support, it certainly improves the odds. In the case of the Adeptus Arbites or Involute Cadremen, the odds are actually stacked well in the Acolytes' favour. Gaining the assistance of either of these forces should represent some difficulty in itself, and if the Acolytes choose this route it is perfectly fine if the actual assault is not a significant challenge for them. If the GM prefers, however, he can increase the number of smugglers at the camp, or add additional defences such as gun servitors or heavy weapons turrets.

The key to running such a large conflict is to focus on the PCs and their actions while describing the rest of the battle in broad strokes, as the focus of **DARK HERESY** is not on massed battles. If the players are enjoying the combat, by all means allow them to show off their abilities. On the other hand, if the Acolytes prefer to purge the camp quickly and decisively so that they can resume the investigation, feel free to have them do little more than stand by and observe while the military or the Arbitrators do what they are made for (assuming, of course, the Acolytes requisitioned sufficient troops). See the **GM Guidance: Running Large Combats** sidebar on page 98 for more on conducting such encounters.

## GOLSKEN HRESK

Golsken Hresk is the most senior of the Sable Traders at the wasteland camp and the de facto leader. Though he hides it from his underlings, Hresk has become more and more concerned about the Trade's involvement with the Inheritors. As the full extent of the cult's religious mania has become apparent, Hresk fears he has finally gone too far. If the Acolytes meet with Hresk under civil circumstances, there is a chance he might cooperate with them if they express that their interest is primarily in the Inheritors. Hresk is suspicious of nearly everyone, and his current mental state is precarious, so negotiations should be tense and dangerous. The slightest misstep on the Acolytes' part sends Hresk going for his plasma pistol and calling for backup. Further, the Acolytes should be aware that as a senior member of the Trade Sable, Hresk is responsible for unforgivable crimes. These include polluting the hive with xenos artefacts; the true extent of the damage this has caused is still unapparent but possibly catastrophic. Cooperating with Hresk should test the resolve of even the most jaded Acolyte; he has a **Confident Personality** but a **Disposition** of 25. See page 52 for his complete profile.

It is more likely that the Acolytes encounter Hresk under combat conditions, or at least as a prelude to combat. Hresk places the success of the Trade Sable second only to his own life, and personally intervenes in any sign of trouble at the camp. He is very interested in anyone who would attack his lair, and insists the Acolytes be taken alive for questioning if they are overrun.

If Jarrik Tyrnel made it back the camp alive, he can be found in Hresk's presence until he departs for the port. As his right-hand man, Tyrnel is the first person Hresk turns to for assistance at any time. If needed, Tyrnel's **Personality** is **Aggressive** with a **Disposition** of 35. Additionally, whenever meeting with outsiders, Hresk makes sure to have at least two smugglers with him to offer assistance if matters turn violent.

## MORE THAN SMUGGLERS

It is during this part of the adventure that Acolyte should receive their first real inkling that another group is involved beyond the cultists under the Callers of Sorrow and the Trade Sable. The Acolytes should not learn the true nature of this third group or its full name—the Children of the Inheritance—although they can find some clues and come across the name “the Inheritors,” an informal shorthand that the Sable Traders often employ. For more obvious reasons, the smugglers also call them “bonefolk” when the cultists are out of earshot.



There are several ways the Acolytes could become aware of the Inheritors. The appearance of the cult's section of the camp offers one clue. Whereas the rest is rather sparse and utilitarian, the Inheritors have decorated their area with elaborate sculptures and symbolic arrangements of bone. Even more obvious is the shrine contained within their makeshift temple. Combing through the records in Hresk's office also turns up notes and documents referencing the smugglers' employers. Simply observing the camp activities should also make clear that these strange, sombre individuals are not smugglers.

The cultists themselves clearly stand out from the smugglers. Whereas the Sable Traders wear functional armour and stylish clothing, the cultists dress in dark, sombre robes, adorned with skull and bone motifs, or even decorated with minute fragments of xenos stonework (these are too inconsequential to produce a psychic effect, though their strangely slick feel and sheen mark them out as xenos). In mannerisms, as well, the cultists are quite different from the smugglers. While the smugglers are crude, cultivated, or even charming and roguish, they are for the most outgoing and gregarious. The cultists, in stark contrast, are withdrawn and serious. They speak in monotone, and their speech is filled with strange references to "ancestors." As they Acolytes will later learn, this is both a result of Thaur's culture of ancestor reverence and the cult's belief in the extinct xenos as spiritual ancestors. When roleplaying the cultists of the Inheritors, the GM should remember that they are religious fanatics, devoted to the slumbering gods of an extinct xenos species. This is a far cry from the Trade Sable smugglers, for whom nothing is sacred and only financial profit has any value. Indeed, the smugglers and cultists share so little in common that living alongside each other is a challenge for both. The smugglers try to tolerate the Inheritors' stoic fanaticism so long as they continue to prove a lucrative source of income, while the cultists abide the "sacrilegious" smugglers as a necessary evil to obtain the ancient xenos relics which are so vital for their cult and its goals.

## TOO LATE

Regardless of how events unfold at the encampment, whether the Acolytes sneak in or blast down the door and go in guns blazing, the most important outcome is that the Acolytes learn a shipment of xenos artefacts has already left for Port Gyre. They now have little time before a ship departs, carrying the relics to an unknown destination. In fact, the evidence indicates the Acolytes are already too late. This fact is important, because the final events of this chapter should be a desperate race, leaving the Acolytes no time to research the vessel or its potential destinations—they probably only learn these facts in the next chapter, once they are already aboard the ship.

The Acolytes can learn of the shipment in a number of ways. Going through the documents and papers in Golsken Hresk's chambers reveals the plan. Additionally, any of the smugglers present can reveal this information if put to the question (an **Opposed Ordinary (+10) Interrogation test** against a captive's **Difficult (-10) Willpower test**). Likewise, the cultists can reveal the information, though they are likely to do so in a much more dramatic fashion, and with less difficulty—they relish the opportunity to highlight the unbelievers' perceived failure.

## THE CHILDREN OF THE INHERITANCE

The size and scope of the Imperium of Man is vast beyond any mortal's understanding. The sheer billions of billions of human souls that crawl through their daily lives and die unsung beggars the imagination. In a ceaseless quest for meaning in the face of this seemingly obvious insignificance, Mankind often turns towards elaborate and extravagant burial traditions and rituals, lauding the dead to give comfort to those left behind. No human funereal tradition is as profligate as the establishment of an entire planet reserved for the burial of imminent personages.

The planet Thaur has been a tomb world for Imperial dignitaries for as long as the Askellon Sector has been established. Generations of honoured servants of the Imperium have been carted to the drab surface to be interred within immense cities of the dead. Mausoleums a thousand metres high house the remains of uncountable millions, while cemeteries the size of continents house the more elaborate tombs of countless millions more. Living amidst these silent monoliths to bygone servants are the men and women of the Eulogus Askelline, an enormous order tasked with the tending of the graves and the souls of the departed.

Over the millennia of their service the Eulogus Askelline has evolved and fractured, giving rise to an astonishing array of factions and divisions which vie quietly with each other for control over the world of bone. Many strange beliefs have sprung up amidst these groups in regards to their timeless charge; some well within the acceptable scope and range of the Imperial Creed, some far, far removed from any sense of sanctity or piety. One of the darkest sects among that last category are the Children of the Inheritance.

The Children, known also simply as the Inheritors, believe that they worship a barely-understood xenos race that once called Thaur its home. The cult is utterly certain that humanity is an intruder upon the sacred dust of Thaur, and will, with the help of the Inheritors, be swept from the surface of the world when their long-dead xenos patrons return. The cult is certain that by gathering a vast collection of artefacts believed to have originated with their xenos forebears, and conducting a ritual they believe will cleanse the planet of all unbelievers, these ancient masters will return to claim Thaur, and transform the Children into members of this superior race.

Much of the deeper belief system of the Children of the Inheritance is unknown to the Trade Sable and their other smuggler allies. However, it is well known that these true believers serve some dark and mysterious interest that is far removed from the Blessed Emperor, and so taint everything they do and everyone who helps them in their work. This knowledge is a constant source of unease to the uppermost members of the Trade Sable. The Children, through the raiding of the human tombs of Thaur, are blessed with nearly unlimited funds—just the thing to keep the smugglers happy enough to remain complacent and helpful.



## YOU AGAIN!

If the Acolytes previously completed the adventure *Dark Pursuits*, they have already encountered the Sable Trader Zax Holthane (see page 427 of the *DARK HERESY* Core Rulebook). If he survived the those events, he could appear once again amongst the smugglers at the camp. This can offer additional depth for the encounter; he may have become a contact for the Acolytes at this point, and perhaps could aid them with proper incentive. Alternatively, if he escaped the warband's efforts, the Acolytes might relish this opportunity for revenge or to turn him to their purposes.

In fact, the ship does not depart until the Acolytes are aboard. Of course, the players should not know this.

If Jarrik Tyrnel and his group made it back to the encampment, he leaves again after a brief meeting with Hresk and a few other preparations. After roughly an hour, Jarrik leaves the camp in a Viator, carrying the artefacts he retrieved and accompanied by three smugglers. He is heading for Port Gyre, specifically landing platform Omicron 7-2a, in order to connect with the smugglers and cultists already there and accompany them off-world.

## DEPARTURE

*"Benificence-1, credentials verified. Clearance to land at platform Nu-21-3L. The Emperor protects."*

—Port Gyre vox-chatter

This chapter concludes with the Acolytes boarding a voidship set to depart for an unknown destination. Based on the intelligence the Acolytes have previously gathered, they know that they have little time to catch up to the departing smugglers, and might already be too late.

If the Acolytes discovered the message on Hresk's cogitator, they know the platform from which the smugglers are to embark on their transport vessel. In this case, it is a simple matter of travelling to Port Gyre, gaining entrance, and locating the correct platform in time. The Acolytes can also discover this information from interrogating Hresk or any of the other senior smugglers or the remaining cultists. Alternatively, the Acolytes could be forced to follow the smugglers' physical tracks.

Once the Acolytes reach Gyre, they must decide on a method of entry and make their way to the platform. They must contend with either the inconveniences of Imperial bureaucracy or the dangers of the under-tunnels, depending on their chosen approach.

## IN THE SMUGGLERS' WAKE, AGAIN

Once more, the Acolytes find themselves pursuing a group of Sable Traders across the wastes of Desoleum. If the Acolytes did not uncover the details of the smugglers' destination either from Hresk's cogitator or from one of the NPCs at the camp, they have no choice but to follow the smugglers' trail.

Fortunately, the Viator desert crawler was taken by the smugglers only a few hours before the Acolytes arrival, and has left visible tracks in the sand of the camp. Acolytes can follow this trail through the wastes with successful use of the Survival skill. The group of smugglers and cultists carried a number of potent xenos artefacts, which the Acolytes can use to aid them much as they might have already done when initially pursuing Tyrnel through the hive; see *Unholy Resonance* on page 14.

If the Acolytes have continued to covertly observe Tyrnel without revealing their presence or attacking, they can simply continue to follow him and his Viator through the wastes.

## PORT GYRE

Port Gyre is the primary spaceport for the world of Desoleum, and for Hive Desoleum in particular. Shuttle and lighter traffic constantly streams between Gyre and Kappex Orbital in geosynchronous high anchor above, while dozens of Warp-capable interstellar craft sit silently in orbit or cradled in the docking arms of the space-station for refuelling and resupply. Vacuum travel tubes branch off from the port, leading to Hive Desoleum and the other nearby hives. As the Acolytes near the port, they also discover a wide, paved road which leads from it out through the wastes, which might come as a surprise after their time spent on the unpaved roads that traverse most of the desolation outside the hives.





As the Acolytes approach Port Gyre, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*Rising from the desert wastes ahead is the massive structure of Port Gyre, dwarfing the ramshackle settlements clustered in its shadow. The port is akin to a miniature hive in itself, the landing pads and officios currently in use sit atop hundreds of metres of ancient loading tunnels and machinery, much of it derelict. Vox-spines and landing platforms sprout from the upper levels of the port, while ventilation grates and pipes raining sludge jut from its lower depths. Even from a distance, the smell of burning fuel is overpowering, and its source is obvious—a fog of smoke and plasma engine exhaust envelops the head of the towering port. Hundreds of blinking lights illuminate the cloud from within, some marking landing platforms, others rising into the sky, toward the ships' lights visible in low orbit.*

## LIFE IN PORT GYRE

The labourers, loaders, and tech-wrights who keep the port running are formed into different hereditary clans that are fiercely competitive. For the most part, they are oath-bonded to the members of the Consortium, but they battle, often literally, for the right to unload or service incoming ships. Though some are firmly in control of one Consortium group or another, many areas of the port are less clearly delineated, and the various work-clans fight over these in gang-like fashion, often swarming in and engaging in small wars as ships arrive in orbit, or even as a lander becomes visible in the sky, fighting to the death for the right to unload or service the newly-arrived vessel. The situation is even more cutthroat in the loading tunnels, where displaced and disgraced clans turn to theft and murder. During transit, cargo must be well-guarded lest it be stolen by such underclanners, criminal gangs, mutant scavengers, or worse.

In the upper levels of the port, the Consortium has its own security forces, or else rely on the local Sanctionaries. Off-worlders who are not in business with the Consortium cannot necessarily rely on the Sanctionaries, and so mercenary caravan guards hire out their services to escort goods from lander to destination in the hive. Some of these groups are merely criminals or gangs, who take the goods for themselves and have no qualms about killing the proper owners.

## WHAT PORT?

If the players previously completed *Dark Pursuits*, there is a chance that Port Gyre was heavily damaged or even destroyed in the events of that adventure. Such an event is disastrous for Desoleum, and should not be understated. For purposes of this adventure, however, what is relevant is that much of the traffic that previously went through Port Gyre now uses Coriolis Spaceport. The rest of this section of the adventure remains primarily unchanged, but the GM is encouraged to sprinkle in references to the loss of Port Gyre and its disastrous effect, such as entire families of merchant traders reduced to poverty and countless deaths of the ensuing wars as rivals fought over salvage rights and to secure property at Coriolis Spaceport.

Every facet of the process of transferring goods is prone to danger and violence for those unaccustomed to the ways here. In order to avoid tariffs, some merchants wilfully deal with the less reputable elements, or try to bypass the locals entirely. Such actions earn the ire of the work-clans and, if valuable shipments are concerned, they also draw the unwanted attention of the Consortium and Administratum. Aside from the dangers of transporting goods from ship to hive, legally offloading them is a nightmare in bureaucracy, typically requiring the filing of numerous copies of the cargo manifest with the Administratum and the relevant Consortium members, abiding by numerous protocols, completing innumerable forms, and other sundry tasks. With such time-consuming and expensive matters, it is no wonder that some merchants turn to smuggling even goods that would be otherwise legal.

As cutthroat as the work-crews and dockside taverns are, the deep tunnels below the port are much worse. The deepest levels of the site, including ground level, have long ago fallen to disuse and disrepair. No Sanctionaries or security forces patrol these areas; they are in effect as lawless as the Dark of the underhive. The tunnels are the domain of gangs formed of ships' crews that have been stranded due to their deserting, kidnapping, or simply getting lost in the tunnels. It is whispered that in some cases, such men have become so lost and desperate in the undertunnels that they turn to murder and cannibalism to survive. In the taverns above, voidsmen and workers trade tales of misshapen creatures that were once human stalking the deep tunnels in search of the most convenient fresh meat on which to feed—human flesh.

Goods that have been lost or stolen over the centuries are scattered throughout the underport, and entire groups make their livelihood picking over these scraps. Many legends and rumours tell of particularly worthwhile finds, which draw groups of treasure hunters from as far away as the hive proper. That these scavengers would risk the dangers of the undertunnels speaks to the supposed value of these treasures and the persistence of the stories.

## IMPORTANT LOCATIONS IN PORT GYRE

Port Gyre is a city unto itself, encompassing many cubic kilometres of landing platforms, warehouses, loading tunnels, officios, and more. Following are a few of the locations most likely to feature in the adventure, depending on the Acolytes' actions. For more information on Port Gyre and the locations it encompasses, see page 428 of the *DARK HERESY* Core Rulebook.

### THE DEEP TUNNELS

Below the much-used service tunnels through which goods are offloaded and transported to the hive or a Port Gyre warehouse are the deep tunnels. These corridors are no longer used by any legitimate traders or workers, and are shunned even by most criminals and thieves. Large stretches of the deep tunnels are completely without power, and some areas are bone-chillingly cold, while others a mere few rooms away are blazing hot for no apparent cause. It is usually eerily quiet in the deep tunnels, save for the dripping of liquids. Water, fuel spills, waste runoff, and sewage from above seep down into the ill-lit depths, sometimes taking years to reach the bottom. In some areas, rivers of unidentifiable effluent cascade over tumbled ruins; in others, small lakes of promethium or brackish water lay dark and quiet.



The deep tunnels are home to roving bands of desperate renegades, cannibals, and mutated creatures that were never human at all. Travellers would do well to go well-armed, in numbers, and with plentiful lamp-packs.

### THE WORK CAMPS

Crowded around the base of the towering Port Gyre are haphazard and ramshackle encampments. These settlements cater to wasteland nomads, off-worlders, port workers, merchants, smugglers, and a hundred other types. Every single resident suffers acutely, however, from either a lack of resources or a desire to avoid any entanglements with the authorities. For anyone else, accommodations within the hive are preferable.

Here, the Acolytes can pick up information about the Trade Sable or other rumours. In addition, numerous petty merchants and smugglers hawk their wares. If the Acolytes need to pick up any additional supplies before their journey, nearly anything they might need can be found here, for a price.

Closest to the base of the port, the inhabitants of the work camps have set up guard posts and even walls to protect themselves from the denizens of the deep tunnels. During the day, these posts are not garrisoned, for the tunnelghasts and other horrid creatures can rarely abide sunlight. As night falls, however, volunteer militias take their positions, vigilant for excursions from below.

### THE LONG-HAULS

“The Long-Hauls” is the name Gyre’s workers and load-crews have given to the massive freight elevators that descend from the port’s upper levels to the ground below. These lifts are on the exterior of the structure, and it is unclear if they are a part of its original construction or were added later. Likewise, it is unclear if the successful use of the lifts is the reason that the deep tunnels were abandoned by respectable users, or if the lifts were perhaps added as an alternative to the lawless and dangerous deep tunnels. In either event, for traders too poor to use the vacuum transit-tubes or hire a lighter, the lifts are the only reliable way to reach the desert floor beneath the port. From there, traders set out across the wastes, bringing supplies to the nomads, or take the main road to reach the other hives. The lifts are also the primary method by which the inhabitants of the work camps reach the top of the port.

At the top of each lift is a checkpoint station garrisoned by Sanctionaries who check the oath-cogs and work permits of those passing through, watching for smugglers or other criminals. If the Acolytes pass openly in their true guise through one of these checkpoints, their Subtlety decreases by 1d5–1. If more detail is needed, the checkpoints are similar to Securitas Station Lambda-XC-19 (see page 22).

## ENTERING THE PORT

This might not be the Acolytes’ first visit to Port Gyre, especially if they previously completed *Dark Pursuits*. However, it is possibly their first time approaching the port from outside the hive. The Acolytes have a few options for gaining entrance to the port.

## THROUGH THE DEPTHS

If the Acolytes are following the trail of the smugglers, the Viator tracks lead to an ancient and dilapidated doorway, large enough to accommodate it or similarly-sized vehicle. “No Entry” is clearly written on the heavy plasteel doors, which are currently closed and unpowered. A character can pull the doors apart with a **Arduous (–40) Athletics test**, and up to five characters can assist with this test (see page 25 of the *DARK HERESY* Core Rulebook for the rules on test assistance). Alternatively, an Acolyte can attempt to reconnect the doors to the structure’s power grid. This requires prying open an access panel and physically rerouting the heavy power couplings within by passing a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use test**. If successful, several green lights illuminate the doorframe, and the cyber-eyes of a human skull mounted within an access terminal shine red. Communing with the access terminal’s machine spirit so that it opens the doors is a simple matter, and does not require an additional test.

The journey to the upper areas of the port, where the actual landing pad is located, is neither brief nor easy. Once passing through the threshold, the Acolytes find themselves within the higher levels of the deep tunnels. Many stretches of these corridors are without power. Even where power is available many of the glow-globes and electro-lanterns are faulty, casting flickering and intermittent light.

### OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: DINNER GUESTS

This optional encounter serves to reinforce the dangerous nature of the under tunnels, and to provide some additional challenge and excitement for the Acolytes. Dying alone and unsung in the deep tunnels is not a fitting end for this adventure, and if the Acolytes are badly wounded or otherwise unprepared for a fight, the GM could skip this encounter.

While traversing the deep tunnels, the Acolytes reach a vertical shaft ascending some twenty metres. They might be able to find an alternate route, although this would be time-consuming. As the Acolytes climb the ladder, they pass two additional tunnel entrances before reaching the top. At the second tunnel, a group of cannibalistic wretches crouch in wait, and attack the Acolytes as soon as they approach. This group consists of three tunnelghasts, represented by the *Fleshbent* profile on page 408 of the *DARK HERESY* Core Rulebook. In addition to the threat of the mutants, the Acolytes’ status climbing the ladder is a serious predicament, leaving them vulnerable, unable to bring their full armaments to bear, and close to plummeting to their deaths. Alternatively, the Acolytes can awaken an equivalently threatening swarm of smelt-rats (see page 402 of the *DARK HERESY* Core Rulebook), eager to devour both the warband’s flesh and metal.

### IN FOR THE LONG-HAUL

The Acolytes can reach the landing platforms atop Port Gyre with much less danger by using one of the large Long-Haul lift platforms. The work camps congregate close to the lifts, making it all but impossible to avoid them. Most of the camp inhabitants pay little interest to the Acolytes, however, assuming them to be just another group of travellers. After passing several lifts already in use—the Acolytes can see the elevators high above, rising into the sky or ponderously descending—they reach one just in time to board before it begins its ascent.



The platform is already crowded with labourers in heavy coveralls, wasters in sand-blasted robes, and itinerant merchants in gaudy dress. Several servo-skulls hover about the platform. Once the Acolytes are aboard, one of the port workers pulls a lever, and, with a hiss of steam and a series of loud grating and clanking sounds, the lift begins to move.

To avoid endangering cargo, the lifts move at a moderate rate, taking over thirty minutes to traverse the kilometre-high structure. The trip is uneventful, though if the Game Master wishes to add some excitement, he can have a loud argument break out between two of the labourers over unpaid gambling debts that threatens to erupt into violence without the Acolytes' intervention. If necessary, the GM should remind the players that the cramped platform barely has enough room for the two dozen passengers, and side railings are practically nonexistent.

When the lift reaches its destination, just beneath one of the landing platforms jutting from the uppermost surface of the port, the passengers face a securitas checkpoint manned by three Sanctionaries. The Sanctionaries check the identification of the lift passengers two at a time. The process takes an additional twenty minutes, and the Acolytes must decide whether to wait their turn patiently or push their way to the front of the queue. If the Acolytes pass through the checkpoint under their true identities, reduce the warband's Subtlety by 1d5-1.

### OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: ROUGH JUSTICE

This optional encounter can be inserted at any time as the Acolytes explore the upper surface of the port; it serves to reinforce the brutality of the 41<sup>st</sup> Millennium. As the Acolytes pass by a landing pad in its lowered position, they see several ragged prisoners chained to the charred platform. One of them tries to catch the Acolytes' attention, begging them for help. The prisoners are stowaways about the face the penalty—death by plasma drive. When the Acolytes next walk by, or pass another pad, they see only the crumbling remnants of charred skeletons.

Should the Acolytes intervene or inquire about the matter, they learn that the stowaways were caught on the Rogue Trader vessel *Oath Unspoken*. This information could be the Acolytes' first clue as to the name and nature of the ship they soon find themselves aboard, and so this encounter should be strongly considered if the Acolytes seem in need of such information.

## PLATFORM OMICRON 7-2A

The landing platform designated Omicron 7-2a juts from the outer skin of the port's upper levels like a plasteel barnacle. The platform is hidden from view by the platforms above; such tertiary landing pads are often the purview of smugglers or those who wish to perform their business unobserved. Such platforms lack the prestige of those on the topmost surface of the port. More importantly, they are subject to less scrutiny—and less maintenance. Like many such platforms, Omicron 7-2a is covered with a layer of ash from previous landings. The blinking lights that outline its surface are discoloured, and many have failed completely.



Omicron 7-2a is accessible from the loading tunnels. If the Acolytes came up through the deep tunnels, they would approach from below. If they went up on one of the mass cargo elevators, they would then descend several levels through the loading tunnels. When the Acolytes reach Omicron 7-2a, a small, squat cargo shuttle is waiting on the platform. The pilot is expecting another group of smugglers (Tyrnel and a small group of Adherents), so it is simple for the Acolytes to convince him that they are the group he is waiting for. Alternatively, the Acolytes could simply threaten, bribe, or invoke their authority to command the pilot, in order for him to take them to the *Oath Unspoken*, waiting in orbit.

If the Acolytes pursued Jarrik Tyrnel's group to the platform, a confrontation is finally unavoidable. The shuttle is not anywhere near large enough for the Acolytes to enter without notice. When the Acolytes reach the platform, Jarrik (see page 53) is speaking with the shuttle's pilot while his men board the shuttle. As soon as they detect the Acolytes, the smugglers open fire. Regardless of who shoots first, the pilot is alarmed, but he ducks down in his cockpit blister and takes no action until the fight is over. Alternatively, if the Acolytes are stealthy enough to board the craft without being detected, the fight could occur as the ship lifts off. The journey to the ship in orbit takes approximately fifteen minutes, so any combat should be done long before the craft reaches its destination shuttle bay. The shuttle's cargo compartment is approximately 10 metres by 20 metres, and is crowded with shipping crates that shift somewhat alarmingly during ascent. Should the Acolytes pry them open, they find only Desoleum ration bars, fresh and still moist with foul organic paste.



## CONCLUSION AND REWARDS

The chapter concludes once the Acolytes' shuttle has boarded the orbiting ship; this should occur just after resolving the firefight with the smugglers, or a few minutes of narrative time if they are alone. There is no turning back now, for almost as soon as they are aboard, the ship fire its massive plasma drives to move toward the system's edge for Warp translation. The Acolytes will discover the ship's identity and its destination shortly, but for now, they have made important progress toward discovering who is behind the shipments of xenos artefacts, and why. In the process, they possibly have shut down a major Trade Sable operation.

The Acolytes should gain 250–300 xp per session while following the trail all the way to the vessel, with an additional 50xp for the session in which they reach the ship. The GM should also award bonus of 50-100 xp for such feats as taking the camp without suffering any injuries, capturing Tyrnel, or turning Hresk firmly to their side against the Inheritors. The latter, especially combined with developing new contacts and allies in the hive, could be worth 1-2 Influence points as well at the GM's discretion.

Depending on their actions with these groups and the GM's discretion, the Acolytes might be offered the Peer (or Enemy) talents for the following groups, either free or at a lowered xp cost: Desoleum Wastes Nomads, Red Walk Gangers, Desoleum Sanctionaries, Sable Traders.

## REPLACEMENT CHARACTERS

The wastelands of Desoleum are unforgiving, and not all Acolytes may have survived them. New characters can be generated using Hive Desoleum as a new home world (see page 7), or using the standard hive world rules. Alternatively, players can develop new characters from the many NPCs and locations in the chapter, such as smugglers, Involute Cadremen, Adeptus Arbiters, Sanctionaries, underhivers, wasteland nomads, port officials and dockworkers, gangers, and others.

### HANDOUT 1: THE SMUGGLER'S NOTE

*We have secured passage aboard the ship, which is once again making its journey to the Inheritors' world. As usual, our arrangements with the cargo steward are unknown to the vessel's captain and there will be no record of our passage.*

*Have Tyrnel and the Inheritors bring the merchandise and meet us at Gyre platform Omicron-7-2a. The shuttle is set to depart before the next day is out, so make sure they don't waste time.*

## ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following are some of the possible other adventures the Acolytes might pursue during or after the events in this chapter:

- Several of the Red Walk gangers are displaying scars reminiscent of the Blood God's icons. As devotees of the blade, it would be an easy step for them to devolve into worship of Khorne. The Acolytes might even find gang leader Vornas Crimson secretly ruling this new cult.
- The live-fire exercise in the Wastes might not have been as accidental as it seemed. Perhaps others were attempting to remove the Acolytes either as the result of their prior actions, or to keep them from uncovering something in the future. Further investigation into the Involute Cadres could reveal heresies reaching all the way to the senior oath-generals.
- One of the charred skeletons described as simply the result of stowaway attempts at Port Gyre appears to be non-human, or worse seems to wear the burnt remains of an Inquisitor's sigil. It is possible xenos incursions are underway, or other Acolytes have been killed, but who is behind these deaths and why have they bodies been left where others could witness the remains?

## CHAPTER I NPCs

The following NPCs appear in Chapter I: **Standing in the Shadow**. Many are Desoleum natives, either of its most infamous hive or the desolate Wastes that surround it.

### OATH-CAPTAIN KAYTIAN NILS

Oath-Captain Kaytian Nils is an experienced and competent Sanctionary officer, who keeps her uniform pressed and her skills honed. Unlike many Sanctionaries, she truly believes in obeying the law to which so many of her peers pay only lip service. Nils would sooner die than accept a bribe or otherwise shirk her duties, and would willingly enforce her morals on any fellow Sanctionaries found wanting. If the Acolytes previously met Nils during the events of **Desolation of the Dead**, then it is likely that a mutual respect—or at least some sort of working relationship—already exists between them. If not, Nils treats the Acolytes with an appropriate level of respect, at least until they give her a reason to do otherwise. She shows the proper deference to Acolytes of an Inquisitor, if the Player Characters choose to operate openly. If she knows their true loyalty, she is willing to tolerate some degree of latitude, but any serious violations of Hive Desoleum law are likely to bring the working relationship to a shuddering halt.

Despite how helpful they have proven to be, the presence of a warband of Acolytes has never meant anything less than the disruption of her district and the dissolution of the order and safety she strives to maintain. Of course, if the Acolytes are operating undercover, Nils brooks no trespass against the law.



OATH-CAPTAIN KAYTIAN NILS (ELITE)					12	
H <sup>4</sup> 01-10		7		WS	BS	S
AR <sup>4</sup> 11-20		7		41	44	33
AL <sup>4</sup> 21-30		7		T	AC	INT
B <sup>4</sup> 31-70		7		39	32	38
LR <sup>4</sup> 71-85		7		PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>4</sup> 86-00		7		38	38	28
				IFL		
				—		
HALF 3		FULL 6		CHARGE 9		RUN 18
THREAT 13						
HAND CANNON			CLASS PISTOL			
RNG 35M		RoF S/--		DMG 1d10+4 (I)		
PEN 2		CLIP 5		RLD 2 FULL		WT 3 KG
AVL SC						
SPECIAL:						
SHOCK MAUL			CLASS MELEE			
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+6 <sup>3+SB</sup> (I)		
PEN 0		CLIP —		RLD —		WT 2.5 KG
AVL SC						
SPECIAL: SHOCKING						

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +20, Common Lore (Underworld) (Int) +10, Inquiry (Fel) +10, Interrogation (WP), Navigate (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +10

**Talents:** Die Hard, Disarm, Iron Jaw, Keen Intuition, Takedown

**Gear:** Sanctionary armoured uniform, manacles, micro-bead, respirator, detachable oath-cog (can be used as a truncheon)

**Dispassionate:** All skill tests made to socially interact with the Sanctionary suffer a -20 penalty.

## SANCTIONARY GHENNER KLEYNE

Sanctionary Ghenner Kleyne was the first on the scene of the fight between the smugglers and the Callers of Sorrow cultists, though he mistook the situation for an ordinary gang fight. As a rank and file member of the area's law enforcement, he has seen some truly disturbing crime scenes, but he has turned his back on his fair share as well, for the right price. The life of a Sanctionary is not an easy one, between the low wages, the stress of the job, and the trauma of witnessing, day in and day out, the horrors that the lower elements of society are capable of visiting upon each other on a regular basis.

Like most of his colleagues, Kleyne is a jaded man who nevertheless can be surprised on a regular basis by humanity's capacity for terrible things. Kleyne has seen his fair share of violence, but the terrible presence of Chaos or xenos elements in the investigation unnerves him. He will do what he can to help the Acolytes, but resents becoming entangled in such a weighty matter by chance.

SANCTIONARY GHENNER KLEYNE (TROOP)					10	
H <sup>4</sup> 01-10		7		WS	BS	S
AR <sup>4</sup> 11-20		7		31	33	28
AL <sup>4</sup> 21-30		7		T	AC	INT
B <sup>4</sup> 31-70		7		34	36	35
LR <sup>4</sup> 71-85		7		PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>4</sup> 86-00		7		28	25	22
				IFL		
				—		
HALF 3		FULL 6		CHARGE 9		RUN 18
THREAT 5						
SHOTGUN			CLASS BASIC			
RNG 30M		RoF S/--		DMG 1d10+4 (I)		
PEN 0		CLIP 8		RLD 2 FULL		WT 5 KG
AVL AV						
SPECIAL: SCATTER						

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Underworld) (Int), Inquiry (Fel) +10, Interrogation (WP), Navigate (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Tech-Use (Int)

**Talents:** Disarm, Iron Jaw, Keen Intuition, Takedown

**Gear:** Sanctionary armoured uniform, manacles, micro-bead, respirator, detachable oath-cog (can be used as a truncheon)

**Look the Other Way:** Characters who offer a suitable bribe along with their words gain a +10 bonus to Interaction skill tests they make involving Sanctionary Ghenner Kleyne.

## KRUMB, DREG INFORMANT

Krumb is well-known amidst the scum of the Gallowsway. Though his appearance is no different from the other dregs, Krumb nevertheless always seems to be in the right place at the right time when there is a crime to investigate. Over the last year or so, he has come to the notice of the Sanctionaries as both a valuable intelligence asset and an increasingly disquieting presence. Belying this anxiety, however, Krumb continues to behave like just another chem-addict looking for his next fix; muttering to himself, wrapped in malodorous rags, and moving at a slow, deliberate gait.

In fact, to the very discerning eye, Krumb becomes a much deeper, more puzzling enigma. He is in good health. His clothing looks worn and stinks to the Golden Throne, but is in fact of very good manufacture and is structurally quite sound. Although his act of vague disinterest is nearly flawless, when he is in a hurry his pace becomes quite directed and brisk, his bearing far more confident and self-assured. There is something about Krumb that, in the final analysis, sets him very far apart from his neighbours.

If questioned about the crime scene, or in fact any of the Acolytes' deeper suspicions, it quickly becomes apparent that not only does he pay careful attention to everything around him, but he is quite aware of the latest gossip and current events in the upper hive as well. Krumb is, himself, an agent—though who he is actually working for something the Acolytes should never discover. He might be a fellow Acolyte working for their Inquisitor, a deserter hiding from his masters amongst Gallowsway's scum population, or anything the GM desires to best fit his campaign. Krumb could perhaps even appear in other adventures in a totally different guise, this time perhaps hindering the Acolytes under orders from those opposing their Inquisitor.



**KRUMB, DREG INFORMANT (ELITE)** 12

<b>H</b> 01-10	3	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>AR</b> <sup>2</sup> 11-20	5	30	38	28
<b>AL</b> <sup>2</sup> 21-30	5	<b>T</b>	<b>AG</b>	<b>INT</b>
<b>B</b> <sup>2</sup> 31-70	5	31	42	41
<b>LR</b> <sup>2</sup> 71-85	5	<b>PER</b>	<b>WP</b>	<b>FEL</b>
<b>LL</b> <sup>2</sup> 86-00	5	46	38	36
		<b>IFL</b>		31

HALF 4 FULL 8 CHARGE 12 RUN 24 THREAT 14

**HOT-SHOT LASPISTOL** CLASS PISTOL

RNG 10M RoF S/2- DMG 1d10+4 (E)

PEN 7 CLIP 20 RLD 2 FULL Wt 2 KG AVL RA

SPECIAL: COMPACT (BUILT INTO WEAPON PROFILE)

**LUG NUT MACE** CLASS MELEE

RNG — RoF — DMG 1d10+2<sup>SB</sup> (I)

PEN 0 CLIP — RLD — Wt 2 KG AVL PL

SPECIAL: PRIMITIVE (7)

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel) +20, Logic (Int) +10, Survival (Per) +20, Tech Use (Int) +10

Talents: Catfall, Jaded, Quick Draw

Traits: Touched by the Fates (1)

Gear: A thick assortment of smelly rags, an intriguing collection of knick-knacks of dubious origin that might serve some yet-unknown purpose, a concealed journal written in a Krumb's personal, unbreakable cipher

Layers Within Layers: Any Acolyte interacting with Krumb may make a Very Hard (-30) Scrutiny test to realise that the dreg is, in fact, an active undercover operative of some kind. Should he be revealed, the GM should add other skills and talents as desired to represent Krumb no longer hiding his advanced training. At the GM's discretion, Krumb can also provide essential clues or information the Acolytes have not yet been able to produce, quietly prodding them in the right direction for purposes unknown.

## VORNAS CRIMSON, RED WALK GANG LEADER

A renegade from the more established Red Lions gang closer to the Gallowsway, Vornas Crimson struck out on his own to form the Red Walk. He claimed the underhive settlement of Gantry as his cutting grounds and consolidated his local power by destroying or absorbing the other gangs in the area. Vornas is sadistic and utterly without remorse, but he is a surprisingly canny operator for one so savage. He bears his scars proudly, both those received in combat and the more ritualistic markings of the Red Lions and the Red Walk gangs.

Crimson had established himself as the law in Gantry and was positioning himself for wider expansion of his power and influence when all of his stratagems were upset by the betrayal of the arch-heretic Ferrue Fayne. That night, the dead rose from their foul, restless slumber to brutalise the living, dragging down half of the populace of Gantry and bringing the settlement to the very brink of destruction. It was enough to pry open the eyes of even an inveterate psychopath such as Vornas Crimson, who now feels it might be time to move on to other areas and gain new allies. Vornas is willing to assist the Acolytes so long as he feels he can gain by it, and so long as they do not insult his perverse sense of martial pride.

**VORNAS CRIMSON, GANG LEADER (ELITE)** 13

<b>H</b> 01-10	4	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>AR</b> <sup>3</sup> 11-20	7	49	33	36
<b>AL</b> <sup>3</sup> 21-30	7	<b>T</b>	<b>AG</b>	<b>INT</b>
<b>B</b> <sup>4</sup> 31-70	8	41	35	34
<b>LR</b> <sup>3</sup> 71-85	7	<b>PER</b>	<b>WP</b>	<b>FEL</b>
<b>LL</b> <sup>3</sup> 86-00	7	38	32	34
		<b>IFL</b>		—

HALF 3 FULL 6 CHARGE 9 RUN 18 THREAT 12

**BOLT PISTOL** CLASS PISTOL

RNG 30M RoF S/2- DMG 1d10+5 (X)

PEN 4 CLIP 8 RLD 1 FULL Wt 3.5 KG AVL VR

SPECIAL: TEARING

**POWER SWORD** CLASS MELEE

RNG — RoF — DMG 1d10+8<sup>SB</sup> (E)

PEN 5 CLIP — RLD — Wt 3 KG AVL VR

SPECIAL: BALANCED, POWER FIELD

Skills: Athletics (Per) +10, Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Underworld) (Int) +20, Intimidate (S) +10

Talents: Blind Fighting, Combat Master, Halo of Command, Jaded, Precision Killer (Weapon Skill)

Gear: Scavenged stylish clothing, mesh armour, countless blades

Battlefield Coordination: Once per round, as a Half Action, the character can make an Ordinary (+10) Command test to coordinate the efforts of his allies around him. If he succeeds in the test, a number of allies up to his Intelligence bonus (3 for this NPC) in line of sight and earshot of the character can immediately make an out-of-turn Move action (taken as a Half Action).

## RED WALK LIEUTENANT

No operation as extensive as the Red Walk can be successfully run by a single man. Vornas Crimson relies upon a small cadre of trusted minions to keep the rest of his gang in line, keep the protection money from local businesses flowing, and extend his influence out into the wastes beyond Gantry. These are the roughest and most violent men and women the Red Walk has to offer, and every one of them is eager to prove his or her value to the undisputed ruler of the gang. Until, that is, the opportunity presents itself to seize the reins of power from him.



**RED WALK LIEUTENANT (ELITE)** 9

<b>H</b> 01-10	3	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>AR</b> <sup>2</sup> 11-20	5	45	31	34
<b>AL</b> <sup>2</sup> 21-30	5	<b>T</b>	<b>AG</b>	<b>INT</b>
<b>B</b> <sup>3</sup> 31-70	6	36	34	31
<b>LR</b> <sup>3</sup> 71-85	5	<b>PER</b>	<b>WP</b>	<b>FEL</b>
<b>LL</b> <sup>3</sup> 86-00	5	33	28	33
		<b>IFL</b>	—	

HALF 3    FULL 6    CHARGE 9    RUN 18    THREAT 10

**CUSTOMISED SWORD**    CLASS *MELEE*

<b>RNG</b> —	<b>RoF</b> —	<b>DMG</b> 1d10+3 <sup>SB</sup> (R)
<b>PEN</b> 1	<b>CLIP</b> —	<b>Wt</b> 3 KG <b>AVL</b> RA

SPECIAL: *BALANCED*

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Command (Fel), Intimidate (S) +10  
 Talents: Combat Master, Jaded, Swift Attack  
 Gear: Once-flashy clothing and hive leathers, assorted other small knives and blades  
 Perform for the Boss: A Red Walk Lieutenant gains a +20 bonus to any Strength, Toughness, or Agility test if the current Gang Leader is observing.

## RED WALK GANGER

The Red Walk, like most gangs in the underhive, recruits its members from the lowest, most hopeless denizens of their environment: the juves that have reacted to the misfortune of their birth with the most violent, anti-social means at their disposal. These are the men and women who lack almost all moral guidance and yet lack the strength, the courage of their convictions, or the opportunity to rise any higher in the gang's social structure.

**RED WALK GANGER (TROOP)** 6

<b>H</b> 01-10	2	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>AR</b> <sup>3</sup> 11-20	5	44	21	33
<b>AL</b> <sup>3</sup> 21-30	5	<b>T</b>	<b>AG</b>	<b>INT</b>
<b>B</b> <sup>3</sup> 31-70	5	28	33	26
<b>LR</b> <sup>3</sup> 71-85	5	<b>PER</b>	<b>WP</b>	<b>FEL</b>
<b>LL</b> <sup>3</sup> 86-00	5	30	27	33
		<b>IFL</b>	—	

HALF 3    FULL 6    CHARGE 9    RUN 18    THREAT 6

**SWORD**    CLASS *MELEE*

<b>RNG</b> —	<b>RoF</b> —	<b>DMG</b> 1d10+3 <sup>SB</sup> (R)
<b>PEN</b> 0	<b>CLIP</b> —	<b>Wt</b> 3 KG <b>AVL</b> CM

SPECIAL: *BALANCED*

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +10  
 Talents: Combat Master

Gear: Hive leathers, extra knives and blades

Courage in Numbers: A Red Walk ganger gains a +5 bonus to Weapon Skill tests for each ally beyond the first within 5 meters. He suffers a -10 penalty to Willpower tests, however, if he has no allies within 5 metres.

## RED WALK HEAVY

The largest, scariest, and most violent members of the Red Walk are almost immediately trained as the elite enforcers of the gang and the bodyguards of its leaders. Mental agility and initiative are not highly prized among these servants. Their sheer bulk, bloody-mindedness, and willingness to visit a violent death upon any whom their leaders deem worthy cause these monsters to rise to the top of their chosen specialities.

The ceremonial Khopesh blade that most of the Red Walk Heavies wield is a massive slab of composite metal taken from the scaffolding high above Gantry and ground down into a powerful, forward-curving blade. The weight and shape of the weapon make it impractical for parrying, but when a well-placed blow falls, the results are often spectacularly violent and fatal.



**RED WALK HEAVY (TROOP)** 6

<b>H</b> 01-10	2	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>AR</b> <sup>3</sup> 11-20	7	41	19	47
<b>AL</b> <sup>3</sup> 21-30	7	<b>T</b>	<b>AG</b>	<b>INT</b>
<b>B</b> <sup>3</sup> 31-70	7	49	31	22
<b>LR</b> <sup>3</sup> 71-85	7	<b>PER</b>	<b>WP</b>	<b>FEL</b>
<b>LL</b> <sup>3</sup> 86-00	7	28	26	25
		<b>IFL</b>	—	

HALF 3    FULL 6    CHARGE 9    RUN 18    THREAT 8

**HEAVY KHOPESH BLADE**    CLASS *MELEE*

<b>RNG</b> —	<b>RoF</b> —	<b>DMG</b> 2d10+6 <sup>SB</sup> (R)
<b>PEN</b> 2	<b>CLIP</b> —	<b>Wt</b> 8 KG <b>AVL</b> RA

SPECIAL: *UNWIELDY*

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Intimidate (S) +10.

Talents: Bulging Biceps, Crushing Blow (included in profile)

Gear: Castoff finery, old flak armour, various knives and blades

Artists of the Arena: As long as there is a lieutenant, a leader, or an expectant audience watching, a Red Walk Heavy inflicts an additional 2 damage in his attacks.



## D'LAYNE TRAVERS

D'Layne Travers is a wanderer in the Desoleum Wastes. A strange, idiosyncratic fellow, he is widely believed a madman by the denizens of the Wastes. Nevertheless, they are strangely reluctant to cross him, and most of the local nomads avoid him whenever possible. The only raider in the wastes who does not believe he is mad is, of course, Frohrn the Slayer.

D'LAYNE TRAVERS (ELITE)					13	
H <sup>2</sup> 01-10		5		WS	BS	S
AR <sup>3</sup> 11-20		6		36	41	32
AL <sup>3</sup> 21-30		6		T	AG	INT
B <sup>3</sup> 31-70		6		33	49	35
LR <sup>3</sup> 71-85		6		PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>3</sup> 86-00		6		41	21	29
				IFL	—	
HALF 4	FULL 8	CHARGE 12	RUN 24	THREAT 10		
CUSTOMISED LASPISTOL				CLASS PISTOL		
RNG 30M	RoF S/2/-	DMG 1D10+3 (E)				
PEN 1	CLIP 30	RLD HALF	WT 2 KG	AVL VR		
SPECIAL:						

**Skills:** Athletics (S) +10, Deceive (Fel) +10, Operate (Surface) (Ag) +30, Stealth (Ag) +10, Tech Use (Int) +10

**Talents:** Independent Targeting, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload

**Gear:** An unidentifiable flak uniform that is old and worn but originally of high quality, a signet ring with illegible markings and an unidentifiable stone

**Favoured of the Gods:** Most likely due to his strange behaviour in all circumstances, most nomads of the Desoleum Wastes view Travers as a holy madman. Because of this, any social interaction tests taken by the Acolytes in dealing with Nomads gains a +20 bonus when in the presence of the captain. This bonus does not apply to any interactions with Frohrn the Slayer.

## CAPTAIN TRAVERS' SAND-LYNX

The *Sand-Lynx* is a modified Hectin Autocarriage that Travers has been using to shuttle paying passengers over the Desoleum Wastes for over a decade now. The vehicle is barely recognisable as a Hectin any longer as Travers has added an array of alterations, from the practical addition of extensor fuel cells to the purely cosmetic application of vestigial snub wings that he is convinced make the vehicle look faster to prospective clients. The *Sand-Lynx* and its distinctive black and yellow paint scheme is a familiar sight throughout the Wastes, making irregular stops along the various communities, garrison forts, and research stations scattered across the barren deserts.

THE SAND-LYNX		WHEELED
FRONT: 18	SIDE: 12	REAR: 10
CRUISING SPEED: 80 KPH		TACTICAL SPEED: 20 M
MANOEUVRABILITY: +15	SIZE: ENORMOUS	AVL: UN
CARRYING CAPACITY: 8	INTEGRITY: 22	THREAT: 7
CREW: DRIVER/COMMANDER		
VEHICLE TRAITS: ENCLOSED, RUGGED, WHEELED		

**Touched by the Gods:** The *Sand-Lynx* is well-known across the Wastes, and most Nomads give the vehicle a wide berth. The Acolytes gain a +20 modifier to all Charm, Deceive, and Intimidate tests involving Nomads when in the presence of the pilot or passengers of the *Sand-Lynx*.

## WEAPONS

A single pintle-mounted boltgun on the roof.

BOLTGUN			CLASS BASIC	
RNG 100M	RoF S/3/-	DMG 1D10+5 (X)		
PEN 4	CLIP 24	RLD 1 FULL	WT 7 KG	AVL VR
SPECIAL: TEARING				

## TAUROX

This armoured personnel carrier is a mainstay transport in the Astra Militarum, and is seen in combat across the galaxy. Though lighter in weaponry and armour than the Chimera, a Taurox still can lay down enough heavy firepower through its twin-linked autocannons to keep enemy forces on the defensive. The specialised "Castellan" quad-track drive also allows it to negotiate even the most difficult of terrain, driving through treacherous ground or urban ruins to deploy Guardsmen directly into battle from side and rear hatches. Several companies of the Involute Cadres employ squadrons of Taurox APCs as light reconnaissance vehicles, scouting ahead of main formations to probe and exploit weaknesses in enemy lines.

TAUROX		TRACKED
FRONT: 25	SIDE: 20	REAR: 14
CRUISING SPEED: 70 KPH		TACTICAL SPEED: 15 M
MANOEUVRABILITY: +0	SIZE: MASSIVE	AVL: ER
CARRYING CAPACITY: 10	INTEGRITY: 30	THREAT: 25
CREW: COMMANDER (TURRET), DRIVER, GUNNER		
VEHICLE TRAITS: ENCLOSED, RUGGED, TRACKED		

**All-Terrain:** The vehicle ignores negative modifiers up to -15 for operation across difficult terrain.



## WEAPONS

The Taurox can carry a twin-linked autocannon, either fixed to the hull or mounted on the turret:

<b>AUTOCANNON</b>				CLASS <i>HEAVY</i>	
RNG 300M	RoF S/3-	DMG 3D10+8 (I)			
PEN 6	CLIP 40	RLD 2 FULL	WT 40 KG	AVL VR	
SPECIAL: RELIABLE, TWIN LINKED					

It can also take one Pintle-mounted weapon atop the turret (choose one of the following):

<b>STORM BOLTER</b>				CLASS <i>BASIC</i>	
RNG 90M	RoF S/2/4	DMG 1D10+5 (X)			
PEN 4	CLIP 60	RLD FULL	WT 9 KG	AVL ER	
SPECIAL: STORM, TEARING					
<b>HEAVY STUBBER</b>				CLASS <i>HEAVY</i>	
RNG 100M	RoF -/-/8	DMG 1D10+4 (I)			
PEN 3	CLIP 80	RLD 2 FULL	WT 30 KG	AVL ER	
SPECIAL:					

## HASHIAN TRELS, WASTE TRADER

Eccentric and somewhat mysterious, Hashian Trels has passed back and forth over the grinding powdered glass of Desoleum for decades, calling upon nearly all of the settlements dotted across the wastelands more times than anyone could count. His caravans are famed for producing exactly what any hapless traveller might need, and more than once has his timely appearance been lauded as the difference between life and death. He has also learned that information can often be more valuable than even the most sought-after bauble, and he has taken to brokering intelligence from his gaudy wagons as much as he does any other goods or services.

<b>HASHIAN TRELS (ELITE)</b>						10
H <sup>1</sup> 01-10	4	WS	BS	S		
AR <sup>2</sup> 11-20	5	28	24	30		
AL <sup>2</sup> 21-30	5	T	AG	INT		
B <sup>2</sup> 31-70	5	31	30	44		
LR <sup>2</sup> 71-85	5	PER	WP	FEL		
LL <sup>2</sup> 86-00	5	36	34	42		
		IFL	—			
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 8		
<b>HAND FLAMER</b>						CLASS <i>PISTOL</i>
RNG 10M	RoF S/-/-	DMG 1D10+4 (E)				
PEN 2	CLIP 2	RLD 2 FULL	WT 3.5 KG	AVL RA		
SPECIAL: FLAME, SPRAY						
<b>ELECTRO-FLAIL</b>						CLASS <i>MELEE</i>
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1D10+5 <sup>2+SB</sup> (I)				
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 5 KG	AVL RA		
SPECIAL: FLEXIBLE, SHOCKING						

Skills: Charm (Fel) +10, Commerce (Int) +30, Deceive (Fel) +20, Survival (Per) +10

Talents: Disarm, Peer (Desoleum Waste Dwellers)

Gear: Armoured robes, assorted trading goods

**Everything for Everyone:** Should an Acolyte succeed in a Commerce test with Trels in order to obtain an item (see "The Emperor Provides" on page 143 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook), he gains a +20 bonus on his Requisition test rather than the standard +10 bonus. The GM should make the final determination as to what items Trels has on hand, however, and their Availability.



## KREAYTEX

The Wastes of Desoleum are haunted by all manner of creatures and vermin, but one of the most fearsome is the desert predator known as the sand fisher, or Kreyatex. The foul beast is coated with matted tan fur and sports six long thin legs with two smaller arms, ending in eerily humanlike hands. The creature has a long, prehensile tail tipped with a dangerous bone barb that becomes slicked in poison when the animal is angered or frightened. The poison is most painful, and a high enough dose has been known to incapacitate the hardest of travellers. The head of the Kreyatex is the most disturbing feature of all, with an exoskeletal skull of bone shading from dark brown to black, emerging like a death mask from the creature's knotted fur.

As fierce as the Kreyatex is when encountered upon the open vitreous sands, it poses a far greater threat given enough time to prepare its favoured form of hunting: the pit trap. The Kreyatex uses its powerful legs to dig a massive pit, weaving a fragile cover over the hole and then hunkering down inside to await the arrival of its next meal. The Kreyatex has been known to take down a fully-grown sand tiger bull with this tactic, and it is certain that many a lost traveller's last moments in this life are spent sliding down the crumbling wall of a pit trap, the solid-seeming earth having dropped out from beneath him.

KREAYTEX (ELITE)					19	
H <sup>1</sup> 01-10		7		WS	BS	S
AR <sup>1</sup> 11-20		7		55	—	55
AL <sup>1</sup> 21-30		7		T	AC	INT
B <sup>1</sup> 31-70		7		60	42	22
LR <sup>1</sup> 71-85		7		PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>1</sup> 86-00		7		40	25	—
				IFL	—	
HALF 8	FULL 16	CHARGE 24	RUN 48	THREAT 18		
BONE SPURS			CLASS MELEE			
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+6 (I)				
PEN 2	CLIP —	RLD —	WT —	AVL —		
SPECIAL: TEARING						
BARBED TAIL			CLASS MELEE			
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+8 (I)				
PEN 4	CLIP —	RLD —	WT —	AVL —		
SPECIAL: TOXIC (3)						

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Stealth (Ag) +30

Talents: Combat Master, Leap Up, Thunder Charge

Traits: Burrower (4), Deadly Natural Weapons, Quadruped (6 legs), Size (3)

Ambush Hunter: This creature's attacks inflict +4 damage against Unaware targets.

## FROHRN THE SLAYER, CHIEFTAIN OF THE GWYDRAE

Among the most famed of all the barbarian chieftains who prey upon the ground traffic across the wastes is a man known only as Frohrn the Slayer, leader of the Gwydrae. Frohrn is a simple and violent man, but far from unintelligent. It is by his canniness as much as his skill with a blade that he has secured and held his position. Resplendent in fantastic barbarian finery featuring the pelts and scaled hides of the most dangerous beasts of Desoleum, Frohrn rules over his tiny kingdom like a reaver captain of old. Though he has little respect for the institutions of the Imperium, the Acolytes can win his respect through demonstrations of their own martial abilities. Frohrn bows to no authority, however, and is extremely unlikely to provide any sort of assistance to the Acolytes.

Whether a natural son of the desert or a fallen servant of the Emperor, one thing is in no doubt; Frohrn the Slayer is no lackey to the Adeptes of the Imperium. Frohrn has been known to take extra pains to punish members of the Ecclesiarchy that fall under his sway, accusing them of tempting the men and women of his tribe from the purity of their natural path. His hatred of all things religious does not end with the Creed of the Emperor, however, as he seems to bear an unnatural hatred for any truck with the spiritual realm at all. More than one cult of the Ruinous Powers, fleeing Desoleum Prime and the just fury of the Emperor's servants has met its final, brutal end at the hands of the Slayer. The slightest hint of religiosity, spirituality, or sorcery is enough to goad the barbarian chieftain into fit of irrational rage that does not wane until the offending objects of his ire are pounded into the glittering dust.

FROHRN THE SLAYER (MASTER)					21	
H <sup>3</sup> 01-10		7		WS	BS	S
AR <sup>3</sup> 11-20		7		54	38	42
AL <sup>3</sup> 21-30		7		T	AC	INT
B <sup>3</sup> 31-70		7		41	49	42
LR <sup>3</sup> 71-85		7		PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>3</sup> 86-00		7		41	38	45
				IFL	56	
HALF 4	FULL 8	CHARGE 12	RUN 24	THREAT 26		
SHARD HAND CANNON			CLASS PISTOL			
RNG 60M	RoF S/-/-	DMG 1d10+8 (R)				
PEN 2	CLIP 4	RLD 2 FULL	WT 3 KG	AVL VR		
SPECIAL: TEARING						
XENOS BLADE			CLASS MELEE			
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+6 <sup>2+SB</sup> (R)				
PEN 2	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 4 KG	AVL VR		
SPECIAL: BALANCED, FELLING (3)						



Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Athletics (S) +10, Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (S) +20, Survival (Per) +20

Talents: Combat Master, Iron Jaw, Swift Attack, Take Down

Traits: Touched by the Fates (1)

Gear: Splendid barbarian finery, modified leather and flak armour, fetishes of feather, bone, and hair, and a necklace incorporating the rings of several itinerant priests of the Ecclesiarchy

Lead by Example: Such is the inspirational nature of Frohrn's showmanship in battle that his tribe rallies around each and every success he achieves in battle. Whenever Frohrn succeeds on an attack test, each of his allies within 10 metres gains a +10 bonus to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests until the beginning of Frohrn's next turn.

## CHAMPIONS OF THE GWYDRAE

Among the most talented and deadly of the nomad tribesmen, the champions of the Gwydrae are fanatically loyal to their chieftain, Frohrn. They are often trusted with independent commands during far-ranging raider missions or rare trading operations with other roving tribes, and are hard, practical warriors who have proven themselves in countless battles. Should an Acolyte find himself confronted by one or more these champions, he finds himself sorely tested by these renowned adversaries. These foes might even call for a ritual combat to first blood, in which a member of the warband must face a champion (armed only with the clan's customary xenos knives, which is provided for the Acolyte). Once a group has proven itself worthy of the attention of the tribe the members of that group are to be treated as equals: harshly and without pity, but fairly and honestly.

CHAMPION OF GWYDRAE (ELITE) 13				
H <sup>3</sup> 01-10	6	WS	BS	S
AR <sup>3</sup> 11-20	6	40	32	34
AL <sup>3</sup> 21-30	6	T	AG	INT
B <sup>3</sup> 31-70	6	38	42	37
LR <sup>3</sup> 71-85	6	PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>3</sup> 86-00	6	36	35	29
		IFL		—
HALF 4	FULL 8	CHARGE 12	RUN 24	THREAT 9
<b>HAND CANNON</b>		CLASS PISTOL		
RNG 35M	RoF S/—	DMG 1D10+4 (I)		
PEN 2	CLIP 5	RLD 2 FULL	WT 3 KG	AVL SC
SPECIAL: TEARING				
<b>XENOS KNIFE</b>		CLASS MELEE		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1D10+3 <sup>SB</sup> (R)		
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 1 KG	AVL SC
SPECIAL: FELLING (1)				

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Athletics (S), Parry (WS) +10, Survival (Per) +10

Talents: Counter Attack, Iron Jaw

Gear: Barbaric clothing of leathers, skins, and scaled hides; fetishes crudely made from teeth, bone, fur, and crystals

Failure is Death: Once per turn when fighting within sight of his chieftain, a Champion of the Gwydrae may suffer 1 level of Fatigue to re-roll a failed Weapon Skill test.

## ANCESTRAL SHAMAN OF THE GWYDRAE

The Ancestral Shamans of the Gwydrae contend that they are able to channel the very essence of the great warriors who have gone before. They do so for both guidance in the day-to-day running of the tribe and for aid in the heat of combat. In battle, the Shamans pray that the experience of those heroes of bygone eras might help their descendants invoke their ancient power and triumph once again.

The Ancestral Shamans regularly perform long, elaborate rituals of meditation and minor self-mutilation to commune with their greatest forerunners. Whether these elders are, in fact, tapping into some vast, unknown racial consciousness, the true spirits of their forebears, or some darker influence within the Warp is unknown. What cannot be disputed, however, is the efficacy of the advice and wisdom the shamans are able to produce after their painful rituals.

SHAMAN OF THE GWYDRAE (ELITE) 14				
H <sup>2</sup> 01-10	5	WS	BS	S
AR <sup>2</sup> 11-20	5	38	30	32
AL <sup>2</sup> 21-30	5	T	AG	INT
B <sup>3</sup> 31-70	6	35	37	41
LR <sup>2</sup> 71-85	5	PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>2</sup> 86-00	5	40	41	25
		IFL		—
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 9
<b>XENOS LONGKNIFE</b>		CLASS BASIC		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1D10+4 <sup>I+SB</sup> (R)		
PEN 1	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 3 KG	AVL RA
SPECIAL: BALANCED, FELLING (1)				

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Charm (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +10, Logic (Int) +0, Parry (WS) +10, Survival (Per) +10

Talents: Counter Attack, Disarm, Resistance (Psychic Powers)

Gear: Robes of bestial hides, crystal phials containing the mixed ashes of the most powerful ancestors of the tribe

Communing with the Ancients: Once per encounter a Shaman of the Gwydrae may spend a Full Action to use the rules for the Pyromancy psychic power Inferno, as if successfully cast with an effective psy rating of 5.



## GWYDRAE NOMAD

The common nomad warriors of the Desoleum wastes are among the hardest men and women on the entire planet. Tough as cured leosaur hide, strong as calcified glass, and enduring as the desert itself, these warriors are easily a match for the most vaunted gangers of the underhive.

GWYDRAE NOMAD (TROOP)					8
H 1 01-10 4		WS	BS	S	
AR 1 11-20 4		40	32	35	
AL 1 21-30 4		T	AG	INT	
B 1 31-70 4		38	41	32	
LR 1 71-85 4		PER	WP	FEL	
LL 1 86-00 4		31	28	35	
		IFL			
		—			
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 5	
AUTOGUN			CLASS BASIC		
RNG 100M	RoF S/3/10	DMG 1d10+3 (I)			
PEN 0	CLIP 30	RLD 1 FULL	WT 5 KG	AVL AV	
SPECIAL:					
XENOS KNIFE			CLASS MELEE		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+3 <sup>SB</sup> (R)			
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 1 KG	AVL SC	
SPECIAL: FELLING (I)					

Skills: Athletics (Ag) +0, Parry (WS) +10, Survival (Per) +10

Talents: Combat Master, Take Down

Gear: Animal hide leather armour, survival gear, tribal fetishes

Resilience of the Desert: Once per encounter, as a Full Action a Nomad may make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test. If he succeeds, the Nomad removes 1 point of damage.



## THE BLACK REAVER OF FROHRN THE SLAYER

Frohrn rules his wandering tribe from the deck of a heavily-modified cargo conveyor that serves as a mobile fortress and strongpoint. From it, he attacks less well-guarded caravans with near impunity. The vehicle bristles with weapons, its flanks studded with gun ports housing the muzzles of ancient cannons, modified to use the ubiquitous shards of primordial glass as ammunition. The prow of its armoured and enclosed cockpit thrusts forward like a belligerent jaw, while the below-deck spaces are crammed with ferocious barbarian warriors. The reputation of the barbarian king's personal vehicle has spread across the wastes, and when the bulky outline of the *Reaver* appears above the horizon there are few Desoleum caravans that do not abandon their route for immediate evasive manoeuvres.

THE BLACK REAVER		WHEELED
FRONT: 30	SIDE: 20	REAR: 10
CRUISING SPEED: 60 KPH		TACTICAL SPEED: 10 M
MANOEUVRABILITY: +0	SIZE: MASSIVE	AVL: UN
CARRYING CAPACITY: 30	INTEGRITY: 30	THREAT: 25
CREW: COMMANDER, DRIVER, GUNNERS, RIGGERS (20 IN ALL)		
VEHICLE TRAITS: OPEN TOPPED, REINFORCED, RUGGED, WHEELED		

The Power of the Wind: If the power system of the *Black Reaver* is damaged, the vehicle is capable of deploying a massive mast and boom array that houses solar-activated fabric sails capable of keeping the *Reaver* moving until repairs can be made. While moving under sail power, its Cruising Speed and Tactical Speed are halved.

### WEAPONS

Four shard cannons on modified sponson mounts on either side of the vehicle. Each of the forward pair can fire into either the front or its respective side facing, while each of the rear pair can fire into the rear or its respective side facing.

SHARD CANNON			CLASS HEAVY	
RNG 200M	RoF S/-/-	DMG 1d10+10 (R)		
PEN 3	CLIP 1	RLD 1 FULL	WT 60 KG	AVL ER
SPECIAL: INNACURATE, RECHARGE, TEARING, UNRELIABLE				

Two hull-mounted heavy stubbers fired from the command deck:

HEAVY STUBBER			CLASS HEAVY	
RNG 200M	RoF -/-/8	DMG 1d10+4 (I)		
PEN 3	CLIP 80	RLD 2 FULL	WT 30 KG	AVL RA
SPECIAL:				



## BALTHIOS D'HARN, TEMPLE REVELATIONIST

Balthios D'Harn spent most of his early life ministering to the downhivers of Desoleum, until a mission into the Wastes revealed to him the many societies there that existed without the Emperor's Word. Shocked and appalled, Balthios felt a divine calling to the barren wastes, to bring the light to those who wandered in darkness. Ever since his epiphany, he has crisscrossed the barren sand and rock in an attempt to bring the Truth to the scattered peoples of this desolate realm.

His life has been in dire jeopardy more often than he cares to remember, but each time the Emperor has protected His faithful servant, and he has in fact brought several of the smaller tribes into the Imperial fold. With each minor triumph, however, he is seen as more of a threat by the larger nomad clans. Frohrn the Slayer, in particular, views Balthios as a dangerous threat to the nomadic way of life.



BALTHIOS D'HARN (ELITE)					14
<b>H</b> 1 01-10	5	<b>WS</b>	<b>BS</b>	<b>S</b>	
<b>AR</b> 2 11-20	6	36	41	37	
<b>AL</b> 2 21-30	6	<b>T</b>	<b>AG</b>	<b>INT</b>	
<b>B</b> 4 31-70	8	48	32	41	
<b>LR</b> 2 71-85	6	<b>PER</b>	<b>WP</b>	<b>FEL</b>	
<b>LL</b> 2 86-00	6	43	38	26	
			<b>IFL</b>		
			—		
<b>HALF</b> 3	<b>FULL</b> 6	<b>CHARGE</b> 9	<b>RUN</b> 18	<b>THREAT</b> 7	
<b>CEREMONIAL CROZIUS</b>				<b>CLASS MELEE</b>	
<b>RNG</b> —	<b>RoF</b> —	<b>DMG</b> 1d10+4 <sup>I+SB</sup> (I)			
<b>PEN</b> —	<b>CLIP</b> —	<b>RLD</b> —	<b>WT</b> 6 KG	<b>AVL</b> RA	
<b>SPECIAL:</b> BALANCED, CONCUSSIVE (2)					

**Skills:** Charm (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (High Gothic) (Int) +20, Scholastic Lore (Imperial Creed) +10, Survival (Per) +20

**Talents:** Hardy, Hatred (Heretics)

**Gear:** Ceremonial robes over scavenged flak armour, respirator, holy books, censer, sacred incense, religious icons

**Fiery Oratory:** Once per encounter, Balthios may make an Ordinary (+10) Charm test as a Full Action.

If he succeeds, each ally within 10 metres gains the Hatred (Heretics) talent until the end of the encounter.



## GOLSKEN HRESK, TRADE SABLE MASTER SMUGGLER

One of the most prominent smugglers within the Trade Sable is Golsken Hresk. He began life among the lowly dregs of Desoleum Prime, digging through the slag pits for cast-off uphive treasures. Every oath-credit he earned was hoarded until he could fund his own small expedition into the Wastes, sneaking his way into a series of xenos ruins and returning with items strange enough to catch the attention of local Sable Traders. His rise in the trade has been meteoric, but nothing has slaked his desires, and he has taken greater and greater risks in recent years. Working with the cult members of the Children of the Inheritance was just the latest desperate act of a man incapable of denying himself any opportunity to accrue more money and power. Unfortunately, this might have proven to be a step too far, and Hresk has allowed his love of wealth and his life in the grey region between law and damnation to colour his perspective, pushing him past the point of no return.

Hresk most likely poses an obstacle for the Acolytes, but if they can put aside their moral aversion and negotiate with him, he is a potential source of information. Hresk is becoming frantic to disentangle the Trade Sable's affairs from the Inheritors, and if he believes the Acolytes can take care of the cult without also bringing down the Trade Sable's other operations, he might consider offering aid. However, Hresk owes all his success in life to the Trade Sable, and viciously defends it against any perceived threat from the Acolytes or anyone else.

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +10, Commerce (Int) +10, Deceive (Fel) +10, Navigate (Surface) (Int) +20, Parry (WS) +20

**Talents:** Combat Master, Jaded, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (2)

**Gear:** Fur-trimmed fine clothing over light carapace armour, expensive jewellery

**A Step Too Far:** The Acolytes gain a +10 bonus to any Opposed social tests they make against Hresk. If a character fails one of these tests, however, Hresk's Disposition is reduced by 10 and his Personality shifts to Aggressive.



GOLSKEN HRESK (MASTER)					22	
H <sup>4</sup> 01-10		7		WS	BS	S
AR <sup>4</sup> 11-20		7		48	42	35
AL <sup>4</sup> 21-30		7		T	AC	INT
B <sup>5</sup> 31-70		8		39	42	39
LR <sup>4</sup> 71-85		7		PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>4</sup> 86-00		7		45	45	52
				IFL	42	
HALF 4	FULL 8	CHARGE 12	RUN 24	THREAT 20		
PLASMA PISTOL			CLASS PISTOL			
RNG 30M	RoF S/2/-	DMG 1d10+6 (E)				
PEN 6	CLIP 10	RLD 3 FULL	WT 4 KG	AVL VR		
SPECIAL: MAXIMAL, OVERHEAT						
CHAINSWORD			CLASS MELEE			
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+5 <sup>2</sup> +SB (R)				
PEN 1	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 6 KG	AVL AV		
SPECIAL: BALANCED, TEARING						



## JARRIK TYRNEL, TRADE SABLE SMUGGLER

Jarrik Tyrnel has been the primary assistant to Golsken Hresk for several years. Because of his constant, close proximity to the master smuggler, Tyrnel is probably the only person who truly knows how deeply disturbed his superior has become. Tyrnel himself is in a hurry to get out of Hive Desoleum with the spoils he took from the Callers of Sorrow, and his own mental state is further agitated by the presence of the xenos artefacts. As the day wears on and he begins to experience the terrifying visions granted by the xenos artefacts, he becomes more and more manic in his rush to be done with the job.

JARRIK TYRNEL (ELITE) 14				
H <sup>3</sup> 01-10 6	WS	BS	S	
AR <sup>3</sup> 11-20 6	46	40	33	
AL <sup>3</sup> 21-30 6	T	AC	INT	
B <sup>3</sup> 31-70 6	37	40	38	
LR <sup>3</sup> 71-85 6	PER	WP	FEL	
LL <sup>3</sup> 86-00 6	42	38	42	
	IFL	—		
HALF 4	FULL 8	CHARGE 12	RUN 24	THREAT 12
<b>BOLT PISTOL</b>		CLASS PISTOL		
RNG 30M	RoF S/2-	DMG 1d10+6 (E)		
PEN 6	CLIP 10	RLD 3 FULL	WT 4 KG	AVL VR
SPECIAL: TEARING				
<b>HALLUCINOGEN GRENADE</b>		CLASS THROWN		
DMG —	PEN 0	WT 0.5 KG	AVL SC	
SPECIAL: BLAST (6), HALLUCINOGENIC (2)				

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Commerce (Int) +10, Inquiry (Fel) +10, Navigate (Surface) (Int) +10

Talents: Hard Target, Hip Shooting

Gear: Dark clothing with a modest amount of fur trim over light flak armour, a diamond ear stud and platinum rings

The Power Behind the Throne: Jarrik Tyrnel's Disposition increases by 10 and his Personality changes to Confident should Golsken Hresk die.

## ADHERENT TRADE SABLE SMUGGLER

These are the mid-level smugglers, generally unwilling or unable to strike out on their own, but sucked into the truly damning trade by Hresk. They form the rank and file of the secretive organisation. Although lacking in experience or initiative, they are more than capable of riding herd over a collection of artefacts from their point of origin to their final destination.

TRADE SABLE SMUGGLER (TROOP) 7				
H <sup>3</sup> 01-10 6	WS	BS	S	
AR <sup>3</sup> 11-20 6	35	32	30	
AL <sup>3</sup> 21-30 6	T	AC	INT	
B <sup>3</sup> 31-70 6	33	35	33	
LR <sup>3</sup> 71-85 6	PER	WP	FEL	
LL <sup>3</sup> 86-00 6	36	30	34	
	IFL	—		
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 8
<b>LASPISTOL</b>		CLASS PISTOL		
RNG 30M	RoF S/2-	DMG 1d10+2 (E)		
PEN 0	CLIP 30	RLD HALF	WT 1.5 KG	AVL CM
SPECIAL: RELIABLE				
<b>SHOCK MAUL</b>		CLASS MELEE		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+6 <sup>3+SB</sup> (I)		
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 2.5 KG	AVL SC
SPECIAL: SHOCKING				

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Navigate (Surface) (Int) +10  
Talents: Quick Draw, Double Team

Gear: Impressive, dark clothing over light flak armour, smattering of expensive jewellery or an abundance of cheaper gems

Courage in Numbers: So long as there is a trusted ally within 5 metres, the Adherent gains the Jaded and Iron Jaw talents.



## VIATOR DESERT CRAWLER

One of the most dependable forms of transportation used throughout the Wastes of Desoleum is the boxy, six-wheeled cargo transport known as the Viator. Often used by the mobile reserve of the Involute Cadres in place of the more armoured and durable Taurox, the Viator is a common sight across the planet. It is the vehicle of choice for most smugglers as well when their business forces them to travel beyond the relative safety of Desoleum's hives. These craft are often painted in unassuming shades of dark grey that just happen to blend perfectly into the silicate deserts and the stretching shadows of the night.

VIATOR DESERT CRAWLER		WHEELED
FRONT: 25	SIDE: 18	REAR: 14
CRUISING SPEED: 70 KPH		TACTICAL SPEED: 15 M
MANOEUVRABILITY: +0	SIZE: MASSIVE	AVL: RA
CARRYING CAPACITY: 10	INTEGRITY: 25	THREAT: 8
CREW: DRIVER, COMMANDER		
VEHICLE TRAITS: ENCLOSED, RUGGED, WHEELED		

### WEAPONS

One of the following can be chosen as a Pintle-mounted weapon:

AUTOCANNON		CLASS HEAVY
RNG 300M	RoF S/3/-	DMG 3d10+8 (I)
PEN 6	CLIP 40	RLD 2 FULL Wt 40 KG AVL VR
SPECIAL: RELIABLE		
BOLTER		CLASS HEAVY
RNG 100M	RoF -/3/-	DMG 1d10+5 (X)
PEN 4	CLIP 24	RLD 1 FULL Wt 7 KG AVL VR
SPECIAL: TEARING		
HEAVY STUBBER		CLASS HEAVY
RNG 100M	RoF -/-/8	DMG 1d10+4 (I)
PEN 3	CLIP 80	RLD 2 FULL Wt 30 KG AVL RA
SPECIAL:		

**Cargo Mods:** Viators used by the smugglers of the Trade Sable have often been adapted to carry more cargo and fewer passengers. These vehicles often lack comfortable seating for more than four passengers and sport racks and cargo strap arrays that can be used to affix modular crate systems to the hulls. In these instances, however, a mounted weapon has its arc of fire reduced to only the forward firing arc.

## CHILD OF THE INHERITANCE PROSELYTE

The Proselytes are the minions of the higher orders within the cult. The most likely to bear arms in open actions against unbelievers, they are the solid core of the sect, maintaining its equipment and supporting the efforts and beliefs of the group through their unquestioning zeal and obedience.

INHERITOR PROSELYTE (TROOP)					7
H 01-10	3	WS 28	BS 25	S 32	
AR 11-20	2 5	T 31	AC 32	INT 21	
AL 21-30	2 5	PER 33	WP 25	FEL 28	
B 31-70	2 5	IFL			
LR 71-85	2 5				
LL 86-00	2 5				
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 5	
AUTOPISTOL			CLASS PISTOL		
RNG 30M	RoF S/-/6	DMG 1d10+2 (I)			
PEN 0	CLIP 18	RLD 1 FULL	WT 1.5 KG	AVL AV	
SPECIAL:					
RITUAL KNIFE			CLASS MELEE		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+4 <sup>I+SB</sup> (I)			
PEN 0	CLIP 30	RLD 1 FUL	WT 1 KG	AVL AV	
SPECIAL: TOXIC (0)					

**Skills:** Linguistics (High Gothic) (Int), Stealth (Ag)

**Talents:** Double Team, Hard Target

**Gear:** Robes, sacred texts written in unbreakable code, jewellery made from bits and pieces of clearly xenos items, small neck-bags containing 1d5 round bone chips of various sizes

**Martyrs to the Cause:** When a Child of the Inheritance is reduced to zero wounds, he immediately makes a single Standard Attack at the closest enemy target but with a -20 penalty on the relevant attack test. After this is resolved, he then collapses dead.





## TECH-PRIEST IYATHSON

Tech-Priest Iyathson is a practitioner of a splinter philosophy within the Askellian Cult Mechanicus known as the Quaerostori, whose followers seek out stolen or misplaced technology and return it to the protection of the Omnissiah. Many focus their efforts not only on ancient technological miracles vanished from memory many millennia ago, but also on recovering machines or schematics lost in recent centuries. Often, such objects are stolen, and retrieval requires combat as much as investigation. Some who follow this rare doctrine do so because of data-visions they believe the Omnissiah has granted them; others simply believe it to be the most rational path of worship.

Upon departing Core Theta, where the sect has particular sway, particularly devout Quaerostors pledge to recover a specific artefact, swearing not to return until they bring this device back into the Omnissiah's waiting arms. This is how Iyathson came to be prisoner of the Trade Sable. He had followed a string of binaric omens that set him to Desoleum on the trail of a particularly dangerous item, and he reached the Trade Sable camp only to fall into a cunning ambush laid by Jarrik Tyrnel.

Iyathson is very willing to assist the Acolytes should he be convinced of their loyalty to the Imperium and especially to the Machine God. However, his primary goal is to resume his search for a device known as the oculus ignis. He refuses to share any details about the ancient item with the Acolytes, save that the extant pattern for the device on Core Theta became irreparably corrupted a mere two centuries ago, and he hopes to find a surviving example of the sacred device somewhere in the Wastes. Should the Game Master desire, a quest to recover and learn more of this mysterious device can become part of a new adventure at a later time.



TECH-PRIEST IYATHSON (ELITE)						10
H <sup>2</sup> 01-10	7	WS	BS	S		
AR <sup>1 2</sup> 11-20	8	34	35	39		
AL <sup>1 2</sup> 21-30	8	T	AC	INT		
B <sup>1 2</sup> 31-70	8	52	32	57		
LR <sup>1 4</sup> 71-85	10	PER	WP	FEL		
LL <sup>1 2</sup> 86-00	8	32	36	29	IFL	—
HALF 3		FULL 6		CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 10
<b>INFERNO PISTOL</b>					CLASS PISTOL	
RNG 10M		RoF S/--		DMG 2D10+10 (E)		
PEN 12	CLIP 3	RLD 1 FULL	WT 3 KG	AVL NU		
SPECIAL:						
<b>SHOCK STAVE</b>					CLASS MELEE	
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1D10+7 <sup>++SB</sup> (I)		
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 1 KG	AVL RA		
SPECIAL: CONCUSSIVE (2)						

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Forbidden Lore (Int) (Adeptus Mechanicus), Tech-Use (Int) +20

**Talents:** Keen Intuition, Luminen Shock, Mechadendrite Use (Utility), Weapon-Tech

**Traits:** Machine (2), Mechanicus Implants

**Cybernetics:** Bionic eye (left), bionic leg (right, +2 Toughness bonus included in right leg Hit Location), interface port, luminen capacitors implant, utility mechadendrite

**Gear:** Combi-tool, portable vox (disabled), one dose of sacred unguents, heavy robes—note that his belongings, including his weapons, are locked in Hresk's office

**Expert Aid:** Tech-Priest Iyathson excels at instructing others, and grants a +30 bonus when Assisting on Tech-Use tests.





## CHAPTER II: TO THE WORLD OF BONE

**I**n this second chapter of FORGOTTEN GODS, the Acolytes find themselves aboard the Rogue Trader vessel *Oath Unspoken*, en route to the shrine world of Thaur. Being trapped aboard a ship at high Warp with their quarry does not make it any easier, however, for the Acolytes to capture the remaining smugglers. The *Oath Unspoken* is a massive vessel and many thousands of pilgrims currently swell its population, all eager to reach the legendary planet of cemeteries. On this city-sized vessel, the Acolytes must continue their investigation in order to discover their foes' plan.

Based on information they already possess, the Acolytes could surmise that Thaur is the origin world for the cult known thus far only as “the Inheritors.” During this chapter, the Acolytes confirm this fact and discover much more about the Children of the Inheritance. This xenophilous sect perverts the ancient teachings of the Eulogus Askelline, the venerated order which is charged with maintaining Thaur’s tombs.

Having gained a better understanding of their foes, the Acolytes must halt the cultists’ plans to destroy the *Oath Unspoken* upon its arrival at Thaur as part of a sacrifice to Izumat, an entity worshipped by the long-extinct xenos. Should the Acolytes succeed they still have no time to rest—even as they save the vessel, the cultists have other plots in motion to awaken the being they believe to be their slumbering god.

### THE OATH UNSPOKEN

*“A wise man learns from the mistakes of his forebears, and a humble one learns from his own follies. Regrettably, I am not wise enough to be humble, so I must endeavour to carry on without all of the advantages such virtues confer.”*

—Lord-Captain Aristide Anzaforr

**T**he *Oath Unspoken* is a unique and heavily modified vessel sharing many similarities with the Dauntless-class light cruiser. The origins of the ship are lost to history, but it is said to have been in the possession of Ethaniel Anzaforr at the birth of the Askellon Sector. Whether this is true or not, records do confirm that the vessel has been in service since at least the Age of Apostasy. For millennia, the *Oath Unspoken* has served as the flagship of the Anzaforr Rogue Trader Dynasty. In this time, it has vanquished xenos fleets, pushed back the boundaries of the sector, and hosted individuals of the highest importance.

The *Oath Unspoken* was clearly built originally with war in mind, and despite many modifications, it still bristles with guns and is clad in heavy armour. This makes it all the more puzzling that its master, Aristide Anzaforr, has in recent years pressed the ship into service primarily as a transport for pilgrims.



## HOME WORLD: THE OATH UNSPOKEN

Players can adopt the *Oath Unspoken* as their home world when creating a new Acolyte, especially as a replacement character while adventuring in that location. Characters from the *Oath Unspoken* follow the standard voidborn rules (see page 42 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook), but with the following new Home World Bonus instead of the usual one:

### HOME WORLD BONUS

*Master of the Drunnels:* All those from the *Oath Unspoken* have become expert at the art of haggling and trading from time spent in the Drunnels or from working with their Rogue Trader Captain. A character from this vessel gains a +20 bonus to Opposed Commerce tests and tests for the Evaluate special use of the Commerce skill.

Nearly six and a half kilometres from prow to stern, the *Oath Unspoken* is a majestic sight. Eagle's wings unfurl across the mighty, armoured prow. Gothic arches and crenellated towers adorn its hull, and statues of Imperial saints gaze wisely down from its ramparts. Passengers can gaze back upon these heroes of old from buttressed armour-glass walkways along the ship's exterior. From the highest spires fly banners of Anzaforr and Askellon, ancient mechanisms artificially waving them in the airless void.

More than a hundred thousand crew tend to the machine spirits and systems of the *Oath Unspoken*, from scrub-cleaners and artilleryists to ratings of every stripe. While strange and esoteric technological systems provide the *Oath Unspoken* with life-giving atmosphere, artificial gravity, and the capability to tear a hole in the very fabric of existence to enter the nether-realm of the Warp, it is raw manpower that underpins all of this. From the tech-adepts and technomats who maintain the temperamental machine spirits to the massive workgangs that manually direct her mighty guns in battle, the *Oath Unspoken*, like all Imperial vessels, relies on her numerous crew for many reasons.

Considering the size of this community and the many months the vessel spends away from port, it is not surprising that extended familial clans have arisen amongst the crew over the millennia. Though "out-shippers" do join the crew when necessary, and must earn a place of acceptance, native citizens of the *Oath Unspoken* fill most positions. As on many worlds of the Imperium, families tend to specialise in a given task, their duties passed on through the generations. Extended clans encompass a larger area of the ship's duties. For instance, while a father and his children might have responsibility for cleaning certain life-sustainer arteries throughout a certain portion of the ship, the clan to which they belong holds responsibility for all life-sustainer functions and systems in the aft decks. The clan owes fealty to the Tech-Priests who possess overall responsibility for the life-sustainers, and it is the hope of every family that one of their children is chosen for induction into the deeper mysteries of the ancient vessel's technological systems, joining the ranks of the tech-adepts. Even more so than the venerated Tech-Priests, however, each and every member of the *Oath Unspoken*'s crew owes his allegiance to the Anzaforr Dynasty, and specifically to its current patriarch, Aristide Anzaforr.

## THE ANZAFORR DYNASTY

For much of the Askellon Sector's recorded history, the Anzaforr Dynasty been one of the greatest, if not the foremost, of its trade dynasties. Indeed, the family's Warrant of Trade is said to have been bestowed during the Great Crusade, and signed by Malcador the Sigilite himself. Of course, in these times, the Warrant is held safely behind a stasis field, hidden away on one of the family's many estates, so this claim is difficult to verify, but Aristide himself is quick assure any who ask that he has seen it. In recent millennia, the Anzaforr Dynasty's greatest competition has come from the Surena Dynasty, whose more recent and riotous arrival in the Askellon Sector disrupted the exploitation of resources beyond the fringes by the Anzaforr Dynasty, House Roth, and other established powers.

This conflict came to a head just over a century ago with the bloody war over a newly rediscovered set of worlds, and the set of violent, destructive skirmishes. While fought ostensibly over the opportunity to exploit a set of worlds finally freed from Warp storms as the Pandaemonium temporarily subsided, the war resulted in untold collateral damage, costing both dynasties and the sector greatly. In the aftermath of the conflict, the great powers of the Imperium demanded both houses undergo considerable penance. Aristide Anzaforr, having newly-inherited the family's Warrant of Trade in the wake of the war, accepted this requirement without question and immediately turned the major part of his dynasty's resources toward compliance. This included the family's flagship, captained personally by the Rogue Trader on journeys of pilgrimage, and his connections within the Adeptus Ministorum have grown deep during this time. The Surena Dynasty, led by the daring Banu Surena after the penitential abdication of her father Rostam, has paid its penance by assisting the beleaguered forces of Port Lokhart, strengthening its ties with the Imperial Navy forces that operate from there.

The Anzaforr Dynasty has always been strongly associated with Desoleum. The house still maintains expansive holdings amongst all three of Desoleum's primary hives, although in recent years Aristide Anzaforr has donated a great deal of property to the Temple Sacramentum Sacrosanctus. His reasons for doing so are charitable, or so he claims, but the spark in his eye whenever he makes this proclamation says a great deal more than his words.

## THE WAR OF THE GREAT DYNASTIES

The wounds of this violent conflict are still too fresh for detached analysis, and a widely-accepted name is yet to be coined. Both the Anzaforr and Surena families employ legions of scribes and scholars to ensure that history shows them in the proper light. If the heads of the dynasties suspect that other events might soon eclipse their own indiscretions, they have not shown it.

Both the Surena and Anzaforr dynasties attribute the start of the war to a particular hostile action taken by the other, casting themselves as the defender. Behind such incidents and raids, however, the true catalyst for the war was a waning of the Pandaemonium. Prior to this, the great Warp storm front had not receded for many years, and had in fact been growing, swallowing more and more worlds far from the major Warp routes and leading to a scarcity of targets for Rogue Traders to plunder.



The great dynasties of Anzaforr and Surena were especially vulnerable to this; unlike lesser houses and merchant conglomerations, who conduct business within the relative safety of the sector, Rogue Trader dynasties make their fortunes—and continue to expand them—by bringing in plunder and the spoils of war from Wilderness Space. Both dynasties further suspected the other of possessing secret routes through the Pandaemonium front, jealously guarding this information and using it to their advantage. When the Warp storms began to subside, exposing the long-shrouded systems of Thedor and Flostos, both dynasties leapt at the opportunity to claim them, racing forth to dredge up the resources, relics, and treasures these worlds might hold before they were swallowed up by the Pandaemonium again. Which faction arrived first is a hotly debated subject, and it might never be known which side fired the opening salvo, but it is clear that both dynasties had caught the scent of coin and would not be dissuaded by the presence of the other. As such, terrible violence ensued.

The Surena and Anzaforr forces struck almost simultaneously. Due to the vagaries and unpredictability of Warp transit and Astropathic communication, however, it is impossible to say which side truly made the first blow. Each of the houses might well have already made the decision to attack the other. As the years wore on, both launched numerous attacks against each other's shipping interests. These were primarily at the outskirts of Askellon, or beyond its borders. The storms, while diminished, had far from receded entirely, and continued to restrict access to the sector. As the forces of the Surena and Anzaforr Dynasties laid ambushes at the mouths of the stable Warp passages into the sector, their actions soon began to affect others.

One of the more infamous attacks occurred when the Surena's Dauntless-class cruiser *Hand of Juno* fired on the sprint trader *Pathmaker* as it exited the Warp in the Cyclopa sub-sector. While the *Pathmaker* had, indeed, done business with the Anzaforr Dynasty in years past, the chartist vessel was currently delivering on a contract held with the Adeptus Mechanicus. Only by disavowing the *Hand of Juno's* captain did the Surena Dynasty escape further retribution. By doing so, the Surena forfeited the vessel, which was promptly seized by the forces of the Askellian Mechanicum.

## THE PENANCE

Eventually, the damage the incessant violence inflicted on Askellon became too much to ignore. Under pressure from the Priesthood of Mars and the lords of the sector, the Sector Praefect issued an ultimatum to the Anzaforr and Surena houses: end their war, or suffer retribution as enemies of the Askellon Sector. While Rogue Traders are a law unto themselves when outside the bounds of the Imperium, within its sectors they are subject to the stipulations and rule of the Lex Imperialis. Like other peers of the Imperium, Rogue Traders must weigh

the costs of their actions politically; denunciation would effectively end all remotely legitimate business cooperation. Moreover, at this same time, the Pandaemonium was already waxing again, raising the stakes and making the continuation of the war a highly self-destructive prospect for both houses. Some have questioned the Sector Praefect's timing for precisely this latter reason.

In order to preserve what remained of their wealth and reputations within Askellon, both dynasties agreed to undergo penance, negotiated with the Sector Praefect and Arch Cardinal Harus of the Sector Synod. The written details of the penance came out to hundreds of pages of parchment, with such requirements as the payment of additional tithes to the Sector Synod and granting the scions of noble houses officer positions in the dynastic fleets. Finally, perhaps at the demand of unseen powers or perhaps out of a desire to give his heir a clean succession, then-patriarch of the Surena Dynasty Rostam Surena stepped down, bequeathing the Warrant of Trade to his daughter Banu. The same would surely have occurred within the Anzaforr dynasty, were Nemaenon Anzaforr not already presumed dead. Having been aboard the *Reborn Spirit* when it was lost at Warp, most assume him swallowed up by the Pandaemonium and lost forever.





## ARISTIDE'S ASCENSION

During the war with the Surena, Aristide won great renown, both for his shrewd manoeuvring outside of combat and for his tactical acumen. In a series of battles, raids, and skirmishes, he bested the captains of the Surena again and again, losing only one conflict (and his leg along with it). When Nemaenon was lost and the Anzaforr needed to choose a successor, Aristide was a natural choice. It was surprising to all, then, when the once-belligerent combatant humbly accepted the penance demanded of him. Further, he even went beyond its requirements, volunteering his flagship, the *Oath Unspoken*, to transport pilgrims across the holy pilgrimage routes of the sector, notably to the sacred cemetery world of Thaur.

His unexpected actions were a source of great aggravation and controversy within his own dynasty, and simply bewildered outsiders. Behind closed doors, Aristide met with the scions of his line. His explanations, whatever they might have been, satisfied most, but sent others to new heights of rage. No fewer than seven of his line took what wealth and ships they could and left Askellian space before the Warp storm front rose to its full height once more, and have not returned since. Aristide carried on, meting out no visible retribution upon these deserters beyond his mild amusement—which was perhaps the most damning insult he could hurl at his wayward kin. Under his rule, the dynasty has prospered, but many of its gains have been intangible, winning alliances in all manner of unexpected places and organisations.

Aristide has never been known as a particularly pious man, though, of course, he showed proper reverence to the Emperor and to the Ecclesiarchy. This makes his seeming dedication to the penance required of him particularly puzzling. In fact, Aristide is ever looking for ways to turn a profit. Most of his trusted servants, officers, and seneschals retain faith in their master, believing that his actions are all for the good of the dynasty. Sector Praefectrix Anastasia XX and Arch Cardinal Harus do seem to approve of Aristide's actions, and both have been known to compliment the depths of his devotion and penance. Some believe that Aristide's outward piety and apparent remorse are calculated to improve his reputation throughout the sector, unlocking new doors and opportunities. This theory is quite plausible, for the storm front makes business beyond the sector difficult to conduct profitably, and so the Anzaforr dynasty must turn inward for new ventures.

Aristide has made the pilgrimage business as profitable as could be expected. Many pilgrims give up their last possessions to pay for the trip; after all, most visitors to Thaur never intend to leave. Moreover, in the course of his ceaseless transits, he looks for any opportunity to turn a profit. Nobles, Consortium representatives, and other such worthies invariably dine with the Lord-Captain. During these solemn meals, talk often turns to business, and the Rogue Trader has struck many deals in this way.



## SHIPBOARD SOCIETY

Society aboard the *Oath Unspoken* is highly stratified. Each member of the crew has a very specific role and set of responsibilities, as well as a strict chain of command. Ratings know better than to speak directly to an officer unless he addresses them first. The familial clans that hold responsibility for various tasks and ship's systems are insular, with strong ties of loyalty between members. Often, clans with similar or overlapping duties become very competitive, which can work to the detriment of the ship. Purposeful sabotage is rare, but not unheard of.

In these times, those crew who are not native to the *Oath Unspoken* come primarily from Desoleum. This is because the vessel's primary ports of call are Desoleum and Thaur, and Thaur is not a world that yields up life and vitality.

Workers hoping to escape the drudgery of life under Desoleum's oath system might be disappointed to learn that life is no easier serving aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. Though the social structure is different, it is no less demanding on the labourers. Ratings, galley-serfs, and pressgangs toil ceaselessly under the watchful eyes of officers. Blind obedience is drilled endlessly into the crew's minds, with patrols of armsmen to reinforce the lessons when necessary.

Things are very different among the officer class. As with those of lesser crew, officers' positions are often inherited. Most officer families have been a part of the Anzaforr Dynasty for generations, and many are related to Aristide on some level. Most of these cousins and nephews could never realistically hope to wield the Warrant of Trade, but this does not always stop them from plotting. Nonetheless, their blood ties bind them to the Anzaforr Dynasty, making them a part of it. As such, these officers tend either to be very loyal to the dynasty's interests, or to their own ambition, should they hope to one day rise to be head of the dynasty. A complex web of relations, debts, and favours permeates the officers' ranks of not only the *Oath Unspoken*, but the entire Anzaforr fleet. Unlike the ratings and lesser crew, who are destined to spend their entire lives aboard a single vessel, it is not uncommon for officers to be reassigned from one vessel to another. In some cases, this is to keep their ambitions in check; in others, it is a result of the officer's manoeuvrings resulting successfully in a promotion, or a move to a ship where there is less competition.

While the crew can be broadly defined as officers and common crew, this is a simplistic distinction that fails to recognise the many distinct classes serving aboard the vessel. Certainly, not all crew are equal in status. Generally, those whose duties involve some measure of technological work are seen as holding a higher social standing. This is not to say that such skilled workers have any understanding of technology even approaching the lowest ranks of the Martian priesthood, but simply learning certain rote tasks and rites gives them an air of mystery and sophistication. Certain physical regions of the ship are also given over to more negative or positive associations. Crew serving on the ship's bridge hold a measure of status above most others, while the ratings who serve the Tech-Priests in the Enginarium are slightly lower on the social order.

In addition to uniform differences, a crew member's accent helps to demonstrate his position. The various regions and compartments of the *Oath Unspoken* are generally quite isolated, and most ratings and officers live their entire lives without ever witnessing a good portion of the ship. As such, the various crew-clans tend to develop noticeably different accents, which betray their origin and region to informed listeners. On those rare occasions when an officer must converse directly with a low-deck rating or pressgang boss, he might need to employ the services of a translator of a more middling social stratum to overcome what is, to him, an indecipherable series of pronunciations.





## IMPORTANT LOCATIONS ON THE *OATH UNSPOKEN*

The *Oath Unspoken* is truly massive, and in addition to the vital components of any starship, the staterooms of the dynasty, and myriad other rooms both functional and ceremonial, many chambers and entire holds have long since been forgotten. In the depths of the ship and along its many labyrinthine interior corridors, these forgotten places collect dust, or even become the abode of outcasts and worse.

The following are only those locations likely to feature prominently in the Acolytes' investigation. As with the great hive city of Desoleum, it would be impossible to produce a complete and accurate map of the mighty vessel, as sections shift with the centuries from damage, neglect, or the infrequent upgrades and replacement installations.

### THE BASILICA UNSPOKEN

As a further display of his piety after assuming the mantle of Rogue Trader, Aristide Anzaforr ordered a great expansion of the existing temple-shrine aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. With full blessing of Cardinal Solomar Iactus, Anzaforr began the task of transforming the modest shrine to a great and awe-inspiring basilica. Despite the polite protests of his senior crew and officers, surrounding facilities were reduced, relocated, or removed entirely to make room for the expanded cathedral-space. For decades, Tech-Priests grudgingly worked with famed architects and preachers of the Ecclesiarchy to establish this great edifice to the Emperor. The Basilica Unspoken's vaulted ceiling rises dozens of decks in height, its enormous stained-glass windows looking out into the void above the main hull of the ship.

### THE BRIDGE

If the Enginarium is its heart and the Basilica Unspoken its soul, the bridge is the mind of the *Oath Unspoken*. Here, officers and crew keep the ship's operations in sync, and set the ship's course. Lord-Captain Anzaforr's command throne towers over the surrounding consoles on its raised platform. The scent of sacred incense and hushed whispers of the crew fill the air, lending the great, domed chamber a solemn and monastic tone. Alongside crewmembers, whose cranial cables tether them to their consoles, servitors move to and fro or rest in their permanent emplacements.

Of course, Aristide cannot be present at all times, and his many experienced officers are well up to the task of maintaining the status quo. However, at times of danger or import, including any translation into or from the Warp, Rogue Trader Anzaforr always takes his proper seat atop his throne, there to oversee that all goes according to his wishes.

The bridge is a multi-level chamber approximately 45 metres across at its widest point. The apex of its domed ceiling is 20 metres high, with the Navigator's seclusion blister hanging amidst a tangle of thousands of data-cables and wires like a cocoon at the centre of a web. The bridge is tiered, with the most important crew stationed just beneath the Lord-Captain's throne, and the lowliest servitors at the fourth and lowest tier. This arrangement allows the Rogue Trader a clear view of the massive, panelled vista port that dominates the fore end of the chamber.



First Officer Flavion Borgias can usually be found here, even when the Lord-Captain has taken the command baton for the bridge. Borgias is a man of refined middle age and noble bearing, with a haughty air about him that puts off even some of the other officers. The first officer takes his duties quite seriously, and hopes that Aristide will one day grant him the captaincy of one of the other vessels of his fleet. To this end, he constantly attempts to impress the Rogue Trader, even taking what some might consider foolish risks in combat in order to prove his heroism.

### NAVIGATOR'S SANCTUM

The Navigator's Sanctum lies just off of the bridge. This area functions as the Navigator's living space, study, and personal astrocartographic library. A passage forbidden to all others leads directly from the sanctum to the seclusion blister atop the bridge, from which the Navigator communicates indirectly with the crew, despite being just scant metres away from them. This sanctum includes a greeting chamber, where Navigator Hlaw Osirius receives visitors, as seldom as that is. Osirius deigns to meet with few individuals other than Aristide Anzaforr, and these are almost exclusively representatives of his own or of other Navigator Clans. The walls of the chamber feature floor-to-ceiling book cases, laden with charts, scrolls, books on every conceivable topic, and various curios and objets d'art.

### THE ASTROPATHIC CHOIR

The chamber of the Astropathic choir is massive, meant to shelter many Astropaths and their attendants. Yet today, the great vaulted chamber is largely empty, the whispers of its remaining inhabitants echoing across the darkness. With the rising Pandaemonium, fresh arrivals of Astropaths to the Askellon Sector have diminished, and the mighty Anzaforr dynasty has not escaped the consequences. At the sector's height, over a score of Astropaths of varying ranks attended here, assisting the Astropath Primus and ready to assume his duties should he succumb to the demands of his station. Currently, only two Astropaths serve the *Oath Unspoken*. Kyrel Johannus is the younger of the two, having come into Aristide's service some five years hence through savvy political manoeuvring, for to obtain a fresh Astropath in these times is a great coup. The other Astropath, Severus Craine, has served the Anzaforr for over five decades—an almost inconceivable feat for an Astropath, whose duties are so draining that even the juvenat treatments available to the Imperium's elite and their servants can do nothing to delay the accelerated ravages of time. Severus has been a loyal servant, but these days he sends messages only in the direst of circumstances.

## SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF THE SHIP

The *Oath Unspoken* is massive, akin more to a hive city drifting through the void than to a mere vehicle that ferries people from place to place. Consequently, the ambience varies drastically depending on which part of the vessel one finds oneself in. In the upper decks, which include the basilica, bridge, and staterooms, the surroundings are filled with luxurious decor. Expansive galleries of artwork open to massive librariums, with great arched windows overlooking terraces of statues. The corridors are spacious and smell of incense and sacred machine oils, and choral hymns issue from bronze pipes ensconced along the walls. Ancient and ornate electro-lamps and glowglobes provide soft yet adequate illumination, and overall every effort is taken to ensure comfort and to impress visitors with the grandeur of the Anzaforr dynasty.

Descending to the lower decks, things soon become quite different, particularly closer to the core of the vessel. Here, luxury gives way to pure utility. Corridors are small and crowded with ratings and serf-labourers. The metal tang of machinery and promethium only somewhat masks the rank stench of humanity. Lighting is provided only as necessary, and corridors which see little use are left in the dark as filaments burn out and lamps extinguish. It can take years for a maintenance servitor to reach some areas, while others are forgotten completely. In the lower decks and bilges, the only sounds are those of grinding machinery and grinding of manual labour, with the occasional scream of pain from an unfortunate accident or violent incident.

For the most part, Severus acts as a mentor to the younger Astropath, the creases of whose face already show the cost of his duties. More commonly, Craine receives messages, many unbidden. While some Astropaths must purposefully enter a psychic trance to even receive messages, Craine's experienced mind is always open to the messages on the Warp's currents, most especially when he sleeps. Craine claims to have not had a decent night's sleep in decades, and his minders can attest to the many nights he wakes ranting of useless messages meant for long-dead recipients.





## BANQUET HALL

The great banquet hall is set aside for receiving noteworthy guests. The massive chamber exists solely to impress, from the frescoes painted on its ceiling to the chandelier of electrum and gold-plated skulls. Masterful and priceless paintings adorn its walls, depicting idyllic hunting scenes, worlds conquered or discovered by the Anzaforr Dynasty, and previous bearers of their Warrant. The table, of finest Illandrian oak carved by the great carpenter Houj Lessenter, seats up to fifty guests. The banquet hall is situated close to the master kitchen, so that servants can ferry in the many courses of a meal with haste. Here, Anzaforr treats his guests to fine delicacies from across the Askellon Sector and even beyond.

## THE DRUNNELS

The Drunnels are a large open market, taking up an entire hold amidships and spilling over into the surrounding corridors. While not officially sanctioned by the Lord-Captain, the Drunnels are good for morale, so he tolerates their existence. In fact, the Drunnels have become a source of profit for the Rogue Trader, as through designated assayers he collects a tax on all transactions there. In the case of barter, he eventually profits one way or another from the deal; after all, everything in the ship ultimately belongs to Aristide. In addition to a place where crew come to spend what little time they have away from their assigned tasks, the Drunnels attract passengers as well. Through his chosen intermediaries, Anzaforr ensures that the primary profit from all transactions with out-shippers makes its way to him. The Drunnels are far from luxurious, mostly consisting of various haphazard constructions put up by the crew over the years. Ladders and wrought-iron stairs lead to gantries and second-floor constructions, with foot traffic moving in all directions at any time of day.

Dignitaries and nobles travelling aboard the *Oath Unspoken* are not typically seen here, although some occasionally enjoy the thrill of “slumming it,” hiding their identities behind concealing robes and living amongst the rabble for a brief time. More commonly, the servants of such individuals travel to the Drunnels to trade of all manner of goods and enjoy entertainment and drink. Pilgrims, too, flock to the Drunnels, where there is a great market for icons of religious devotion, holy texts, prayer-slates, and even alleged saints’ relics—all certainly fake.

## THE CORPSE-HOLDS

The existence of the expansive Corpse-Holds speaks to Anzaforr’s devotion to his chosen work ferrying passengers—both living and dead—to the world of Thaur. The fact that these were ready almost as soon as Anzaforr announced his first trip to Thaur raises a whole host of other questions, however.

The Corpse-Holds comprise several linked galleries along the lower decks of the *Oath Unspoken*, stretching a combined total of over 1.5 kilometres. This space stores thousands of bodies; like the quarters for the living, accommodations vary depending on the wealth of the passenger. The corpses of wealthy nobles receive their own dedicated cryo-chambers, with dutifully attentive Tech-Priests and mortuomats to ensure the body reaches its destination in perfect condition. The common masses, on the other hand, are stacked from floor to ceiling in huge, refrigerated corridors. Workers in thermal suits and servitors patrol these great halls, chasing away vermin and would-be tomb robbers. Meanwhile, tech-adepts periodically make adjustments to ensure the bodies remain, for the most part, at an acceptable temperature for storage during the passage.

## LORD-CAPTAIN’S QUARTERS

Rogue Trader Aristide Anzaforr’s quarters are located on the uppermost deck of the ship. Consisting of a parlour adjoining a bedchamber and a private study, the quarters are lavishly decorated and furnished for comfort. Many of the art objects are religious in nature, such as paintings of blessed Imperial and Askellian saints performing their best-known miracles. The several bookcases hold volumes of history, poetry, and theology. Anzaforr sometimes receives guests here, which most consider to be a great honour. Delicate matters find often discussion here as well, and grand bargains that decide the fate of worlds are struck in these quarters.



## PASSENGER COMPARTMENTS

As one of its primary functions in recent years has been the transportation of pilgrims, the *Oath Unspoken's* passenger quarters are extensive, to say the least. However, the living space given over to the pilgrims is less than extravagant. Most pilgrims equate comfort with sinfulness, and so are quite content (if such can really be called contentment) to sleep on a rough bedroll on the floor of a hold alongside hundreds of fellow travellers. Many of the passenger compartments are, in truth, nothing more than cargo holds with some minor alterations.

Not all of the *Oath Unspoken's* passengers are pilgrims of this sort, however. Some individuals of greater means make the holy voyage to Thaur to visit the tombs of Askellon's heroes and saints. Others intend to visit the sepulchres of their own ancestors. These nobles, merchants, and mighties of the Imperium demand more pleasing accommodations, which the *Oath Unspoken* provides. These range from comfortable but plain bunks for groups of travellers to lavish staterooms for wealthy nobles and dignitaries. These cabins are located toward the fore of the vessel, in the upper decks. Symbolically, this places them in a position of greater importance, closer to the Lord-Captain. Anzaforr also finds it easier to visit his guests located here, when he desires.

## CREW COMPARTMENTS

Lodging for the *Oath Unspoken's* crew is scattered throughout the ship, for most ratings and pressmen live close to their work stations. However, quarters are, for the most part, grouped together into areas not unlike the hab blocks of Hive Desoleum. Alongside the modest sleeping chambers are facilities including medicae centres, galleys, and even shops, after a fashion. The Anzaforr Dynasty provides the necessities of life to the crew, who must barter with their fellows for anything else they desire. Trades can occur anywhere, of course, but are primarily conducted in the Drunnels.

## ENGINARIUM

The Enginarium is perhaps the most vital component of any ship. Without the fires of its plasma furnaces and the tending of the red-robed servants of the Ommissiah, the ship would be little more than a massive and cold tomb. Honouring ancient pacts between the Anzaforr Dynasty and the Tech-Priesthood, thousands of Enginseers and other tech-adepts serve aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. These emissaries of Mars ensure that the sacred technology imbuing the vessel with life receives proper honour and that the maintenance rites are executed properly. In turn, the machine spirits that grant the myriad systems of the *Oath Unspoken* with movement and life continue to serve in their proper function. Hundreds of tech-adepts and servitors can be found here at all times, performing the rites and rituals to ensure proper functioning of the plasma generators and other vital systems that maintain the *Oath Unspoken*. Servo-skulls hover throughout the massive, multi-levelled chambers of the Enginarium, some observant for maintenance needs, others simply holding aloft candles or electro-braziers to provide lighting.

Enginseer Primus Orathion is undisputed master of this realm. Though he ostensibly serves at the behest of Lord-Captain Anzaforr, Orathion in truth holds allegiance only to the Adeptus Mechanicus. The Enginseer Primus's only concern is that the ship's sacred and venerable tech-systems receive proper care; he cares little what ventures Anzaforr undertakes, so long as they do not contravene the divine laws of the Mechanicum. Fortunately, Anzaforr's business has yet to present such a problem, and so long as the Rogue Trader shows the proper respect for the ways of the Ommissiah, Orathion continues to tend to the machine-systems of the vessel, obeying the instructions of her Lord-Captain.

## BRIG

The many armsmen of the Anzaforr Dynasty maintain harsh order aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. While the majority of the crew are content to perform their assigned tasks and take solace in serving their Lord-Captain and the Emperor, there are always malcontents who flout the proper order. Passengers are also known to cause trouble; this might range from trespassing drunken travellers to stowaways and smugglers caught in the act. The *Oath Unspoken* features a sizeable brig to restrain such criminals and problematic crew. The armsmen maintain and staff this area, which can house upwards of five hundred prisoners, though it is rarely at full capacity.



The brig cells are each two metres square, with a bunk for two occupants. An armour-glass window allows gaolers to securely view the interior of each cell. The cell doors are made of three-inch thick plasteel, with an armour value of 25, and are operated by electronic locks. Bypassing the locks from the outside requires knowledge of the access code or a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use test**. Opening a cell from within is much more difficult. An occupant can gain access to the electronic components that control the door by removing a wall panel, requiring a **Very Hard (-30) Athletics test** and a flat yet strong object with which to pry, followed by a **Very Hard (-30) Tech-Use test**. Of course, there are other possibilities, such as breaking the reinforced window (which has an armour value of 15), but these are left to the GM's discretion should the need arise.

## CARGO HOLDS AND LIGHTER BAYS

The *Oath Unspoken* features a number of cargo holds and lighter bays, often one and the same, to allow for the transport and storage of merchandise and supplies. These massive holds can each store many thousands of tonnes of goods. Small shuttlecraft, such as Arvus lighters, serve to ferry the groups to and from the surface of a world. Bulk cargo is transferred from huge lifters or void stations such as Kappex Orbital high above Desoleum, for the *Oath Unspoken* is far too large to land on a planet's surface.

Even during periods of relative inactivity, the bays ring with the sounds of servitors performing maintenance. When the *Oath Unspoken* is in orbital dock, the bays are a hub of activity for the duration of the stay. Labourers load and unload cargo, lighters leave and arrive in a seemingly endless succession of pilgrims and passengers, and Tech-Priests with their attendant servitors constantly monitor the landers between trips. During the journey between worlds, shipping crates of all shapes and sizes fill the bays as the machine spirits of the lighters and landers rest and recover their strength. As with most locations in the mighty vessel, a jungle of wires, cables, and pipes hang from the ceilings, descending along the walls like creeper vines.

## GM GUIDANCE: USING THE BRIG

This adventure assumes that the brig will not play a major role; there are a few instances, however, in which the GM might see fit to make use of this location. It is possible that the Acolytes might run afoul of Anzaforr's armsmen during the course of this chapter. In the event that the Acolytes are captured and refuse to reveal their identities or purpose aboard the ship, the armsmen might throw them in the brig until a solution presents itself. If for any reason the Acolytes end up imprisoned in the brig, Aristide Anzaforr discerns their true purpose and has them brought before him, greeting them not with punishment for whatever sins they might have committed, but with his hospitality. By doing so, he hopes to win their allegiance, and that of their Inquisitor. The GM can proceed to the encounter **A Dinner with the Lord-Captain** (see page 86), thus preventing the Acolytes from becoming stuck in an extended and likely very uninteresting stay in the shipboard prison.

Another possibility is that the Acolytes might visit this location to meet or interrogate a prisoner. This is not part of the normal order of events, but the GM could spice up certain encounters by moving them to the brig. For instance, if the Acolytes learn of the narco-smuggler Jarrad Cincayde, perhaps they arrive at his rented hovel only to discover that he was recently arrested by the armsmen. This leaves the Acolytes with the option of either cooperating with the armsmen (likely if they have already made contact with the Lord-Captain) or perhaps breaking their would-be informant out. The Acolytes might also decide to make use of the brig for holding and interrogating prisoners, once they have established their working relationship with Anzaforr.



# CHAPTER OVERVIEW

*“Soon, we shall reach our ancestral home, and the blessed clamour of our return shall wake the gods themselves.”*

—Parathas Hayne,  
Praesul of the Children of the Inheritance

As with the first chapter, the events in Chapter II are largely investigative. There are several opportunities for combat, but with the exception of the final battle for the fate of the *Oath Unspoken*, the point at which these conflicts occur depends largely on the Acolytes’ actions, and in some cases, the players can avoid them entirely. Many of the following scenes and encounters can occur at nearly any point during the journey, as the Acolytes’ actions dictate. Some encounters are keyed to particular locations; the encounters in the **Market Day** (page 76) section, for instance, occur when the Acolytes visit the Drunnels, although they might unfold over the course of several visits. Throughout the following chapter, advice is present to assist GMs in placing encounters and responding to the Acolytes’ actions. As always, it is impossible to predict every route that players might think of, so the GM should familiarise himself with the characters, locations, and events of this chapter so that he can respond on-the-fly to whatever the players come up with.

The journey to Thaur takes roughly two weeks, which leaves the Acolytes plenty of time to continue their investigation. As always, however, Warp travel is unpredictable, even on a stable route like that between Desoleum and Thaur; Navigator Osirius estimates the journey to take between one and seven weeks. Even while the Acolytes conduct their investigation, their enemies continue to act unseen. At certain points in this chapter, the Acolytes have the potential to uncover the cult’s actions or aftermaths, bringing them closer to the truth and to stopping the heretics’ vile plot.

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

In this chapter, the Acolytes continue on the trail of the smugglers and cultists who boarded the *Oath Unspoken* with a shipment of xenos artefacts. As the Acolytes discover, this is a Rogue Trader vessel serving as transportation for pilgrims, undergoing regular journeys to and from the sacred cemetery world of Thaur.

This search for the smugglers’ whereabouts is the focus of the first part of Chapter II, as the Acolytes continue gathering clues about both the nature and current location of the heretics. The *Oath Unspoken* is a massive vessel, as are all Warp-faring craft, and the search for a small group of heretics amidst the many thousands of crew is no simple task. The Acolytes must conduct their investigation aboard the ship and deal with its Lord-Captain, the Rogue Trader Aristide Anzaforr, who both helps and hinders their efforts to find the smuggled relics.

Even as the Acolytes investigate the heretics, the Inheritors continue to enact their own plots, but without the knowledge of their erstwhile allies in the Trade Sable. Parathas Hayne, leader of the group of Inheritors aboard the ship, makes arrangements to obtain additional weapons and gunhands for his intended takeover of the *Oath Unspoken*. Meanwhile, a small group of cultists of the Mournful Song monitor the activities aboard, in hopes of steering the Acolytes to destroy their rival cult.

As these events unfold out of sight, the Acolytes must carry out their investigations. In addition to the crew, the *Oath Unspoken* is currently carrying several thousand pilgrims on the journey to Thaur. The Acolytes encounter these pilgrims early on, and these seemingly innocuous passengers have the potential to strongly influence the other events in the chapter, which could work to the Acolytes’ advantage or harm.

The Acolytes’ search should eventually take them to the Drunnels, a major attraction for crew and passengers and also a place where rumours flow as easily as the void sweat and “misplaced” amasec. Here, the Acolytes can learn further clues as to the nature and intentions of their foes, as well as rearm and reequip for the battles to come.

And at some point in all this, the Acolytes might dine with the Lord-Captain himself, Rogue Trader Aristide Anzaforr. There are a number of ways this might come about, from the Acolytes drawing attention to themselves and being approached by Anzaforr’s messengers (or armsmen) to them approaching him to request a meeting. He is an immensely powerful individual, and nowhere is this truer than aboard his flagship, where he is truly master and commander of all aboard. Anzaforr’s great power and resources can be of immense aid to the Acolytes, but his overzealousness and ulterior motives also have the potential to hinder the Acolytes’ investigation.

Eventually, the Acolytes’ investigation leads them to the Corpse-Holds, where the smugglers and cultists have concealed themselves. When the Acolytes arrive, however, they discover the Sable Traders are dead or dying, having been betrayed by the Children of the Inheritance. From interrogating a dying smuggler or through gathering physical evidence, the Acolytes learn more about the cultists and discover their plot. The Inheritors aim to seize control of the *Oath Unspoken* once it reaches its destination and there destroy it, sacrificing untold thousands of crew and passengers in order to awaken their ancient xenos god.



## ABOARD THE OATH UNSPOKEN

*“I welcome all, and may the God-Emperor bless this voyage.”*

—Aristide Anzaforr’s standard broadcast,  
repeated across all loud-hailers during boarding

**T**hapter II of FORGOTTEN GODS is very much an open investigation, allowing the Acolytes to go where they will and conduct the investigation as they see fit. In the following pages, encounters are grouped both thematically and by location. Certain encounters, however, could occur in a number of different settings and circumstances, depending on the Acolytes’ actions and the GM’s judgement. These encounters might occur as a direct result of the Acolytes’ actions, or the GM might decide to spring them on the Acolytes at the most inopportune moments.

### INTO THE WARP

As the Acolytes begin their investigation aboard the *Oath Unspoken*, the vessel is already moving away from Desoleum in order to reach a safe distance for Warp translation. Voidborn characters recognise the comforting background noise of the plasma engines, and can tell that the ship is moving. These characters, or those with experience with interstellar travel, also know that this most likely means the ship is soon to enter the Warp for the journey to another system.

It takes the *Oath Unspoken* several hours to reach a safe distance from the planet to activate its Warp engines. The Game Master can adjust this duration to be slightly or even considerably longer, should that best fit the Acolyte’s activities upon arriving (as described on page 70, *Amongst the Pilgrims*).

When the GM determines that the *Oath Unspoken* is ready for translation into the unnatural realm of the Warp, massive shutters abruptly slide into place across every exterior window of the ship, blocking out the view of the void beyond. This precaution is necessary because once the vessel enters the Immaterium, the vista of empty blackness is replaced by the swirling and impossible maelstrom of energy that is the Warp. Few can gaze into the Sea of Souls and retain their sanity. For the crew of the *Oath Unspoken*, the clattering of the Warp shutters is a familiar experience, but one that evokes unease, for it means the vessel is just moments away from plunging into that nightmare realm.

Soon after, the *Oath Unspoken* engages her Warp engines; read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*The background noise of the vessel’s plasma engines, a throbbing sound that cuts across the decks, abruptly ceases. A moment later, a prickling sensation causes the hairs on your neck and arms to raise, as the reality-encompassing bubble of the ship’s Gellar Field springs into existence. You feel a gut-wrenching shuddering, as the vessel seems to tilt without moving, leaving reality behind and dragging itself into the Warp.*

### WHERE DO WE SLEEP?

The journey to Thaur takes about two weeks. While the Acolytes are sure to be busy investigating the cult and smugglers, they obviously must eat and rest during this time. Some groups might be perfectly fine skipping over these details, but others might find it enhances their sense of immersion and engagement with the game to either work out these details narratively or even spend time roleplaying them out in detail. Depending on their chosen approach to the investigation, the Acolytes have several options for living arrangements during the journey.

The default events of the adventure put the Acolytes in the position of stowaways aboard the *Oath Unspoken*, which has both advantages and disadvantages. Being unknown to the ship’s crew and Lord-Captain allows the Acolytes to conduct their investigation discreetly, but it also makes for less pleasant sleeping arrangements. In the most extreme case, the Acolytes might choose to find a quiet, forgotten place somewhere in the ship’s depths to sleep, pilfering their rations or subsisting on the protein-rich fungus that grows in the danker portions of the bilges. This arrangement has its own difficulties, as the Acolytes must compete with vermin and outcasts for space and nourishment. The void travel section on page 179 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook can offer useful guidance here.

The *Oath Unspoken* has a crew of many tens of thousands, most of whom interact with only a small portion of their fellow shipmates. Another possibility, then, is for the Acolytes to pass themselves off as crew and claim shift rations and bunks in the crew quarters. This might prove more difficult the Acolytes anticipate; crew fulfil very specialised duties, with transfers being all but unheard of. The Acolytes can pass themselves off as new arrivals from Desoleum—this is by far the most effective means, for the Acolytes lack both the knowledge and accents of *Oath Unspoken* crew. However, native crew are quite suspicious of outsiders, and view newcomers with thinly veiled contempt.

Depending on the Acolytes’ backgrounds, they might be seasoned space travellers, or still new to the experience. If any of the characters are Desoleum natives, it is even possible that this is their first time aboard a ship as it traverses the Warp. No matter how many times one has experienced Warp travel, though, it never becomes routine. Even a lifelong voidsman must struggle with the fear that accompanies such a journey. In fact, those with little experience are likely to be less afraid, though the sheer physical sensation is enough to make them uneasy. This is one reason why the true danger of Warp travel is kept secret from the populace at large. After many journeys, however, most voidsmen come to realise that there are dread entities outside the closed shutters, malevolent intelligences that follows in their vessel’s wake like schools of sharks.



Different people experience Warp travel in unique ways, but it is invariably an unsettling experience at best. Many individuals feel a constant and vague sense of unease during such a journey, perhaps as if unknown observers are watching them. Some hear faint, inhuman voices at the edge of their perception. For some, these are a constant, barely-perceptible background sound. Others hear, occasionally, a clearer voice, though the words are likely in an incomprehensible language, and might even respond, mistaking the voice for a nearby fellow traveller. Some people glimpse movement from the corner of their eyes, or half-formed shapes in the shadows cast by tangles of wire and cable hanging from ceilings. It is common for travellers in the Sea of Souls to experience strange and vivid nightmares, which leave lingering impressions upon waking.

The experience of Warp travel is almost always worse for psykers. Because of their ties to the Immaterium, any or all of the experiences that befall ordinary passengers can affect a psyker, but to a much greater degree. Voices are louder and more constant, visions more insistent and disturbing. In addition to their susceptibility to and awareness of the Warp, psykers' experiences are worse because they have a greater understanding than most of the dangers posed by the Warp. While an ignorant rating can convince himself that the voices are "nothing," a psyker, particularly one who has undergone the training of the Scholastica Psykana, knows all too well that the voices are far from nothing. He knows they are in fact the whispers of malevolent intelligences that seek to break down the thin wall of reality generated by the Gellar Field, and consume the souls of all those aboard.

## THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

Through interrogating a captured Sable Trader with whom they previously did business, the Callers of Sorrow learned that the smugglers were using the *Oath Unspoken* for transportation of artefacts. In order to ensure that the Acolytes continue their investigation of the Inheritors, a small group of Mournful Song cultists have also snuck aboard the *Oath Unspoken* under the orders of Tormus Fayne. The intention of these cultists is to observe the Acolytes in secret, while simultaneously conducting their own investigation into the Inheritors as a sort of contingency plan.

The group consists of three Strain Initiates led by one Strain Infector (see pages 406–407 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook). This group is far too small to pose a threat to the Children of the Inheritance on their own, and thus attempt to avoid detection while observing the Acolytes, the Inheritors, and Sable Traders. The Strain Initiates can gather information by talking with the crew and other passengers, much as the Acolytes do. Depending on how this chapter unfolds, the Acolytes might not even become aware of the Mournful Song's presence. However, there are a few ways the GM can utilise the Strain members throughout this chapter.

If the Acolytes miss clues, ignore leads, or otherwise need assistance locating the Inheritors and Sable Traders, the GM can use the Mournful Song cultists to pass on information without exposing their presence. This could take the form of hand-written notes, rusty data-slates, messages communicated by intermediaries, or discreet markings on bulkheads. In any case, the GM should allow Acolytes who are familiar with Desoleum cults to attempt

**Awareness** or **Logic** tests to recognise the hand of the Callers of Sorrow at work. Successful tests detect such clues as inexplicable rust or tarnish on devices, cult symbology included in hidden messages, or descriptions of the cultists from witnesses or intermediaries. Any information the cultists pass on should help the Acolytes to get back on track, but should not eliminate the need for them to do their own footwork. Even if the information is complete, the Acolytes would do well to distrust it until verifying it for themselves. Additionally, the GM should remember that the cultists are also operating on incomplete information. If he does not think it would prove frustrating for the players, the GM could insert some inaccuracies in the information that the cult supplies. This leaves the Acolytes to determine whether their source is simply mistaken or is purposefully misleading them.

In particular, the Strain Infector, one Gerag Corlin, attempts to stay completely out of sight, for his countenance is so decayed and diseased as to mark him as accursed. The Strain Initiates still appear normal enough that they can interact with others without necessarily drawing suspicion. In this way, the Acolytes could learn of the Mournful Song's presence. If he wishes, the GM can allow Acolytes who obtain more degrees of success than necessary on Investigate tests aboard the ship to also learn that another group has been asking similar questions. Alternatively, if the Acolytes' presence becomes known, any allies they make amongst the crew, passengers, or pilgrims can potentially advise them that another group has been asking questions about them.

## PULLING BACK THE HOOD

It is, of course, possible for the Acolytes to discover the Mournful Song's presence, and perhaps even its identity. If the Acolytes learn of its presence indirectly, or if the cultists provide information to the Acolytes, they might choose to investigate the identity of this third party. They are certainly correct to do so as long as they do not abandon their primary investigation.

If the Game Master desires a confrontation with the cultists, he can give the Acolytes a chance to notice the presence of one of the Initiates. This could mean spotting him in a crowd in the Drunnels, or detecting his presence as he follows the Acolytes at a distance through the corridors of the ship. In either case, the GM should call for one of the Acolytes, either the one in the best position to notice a cultist or the Acolyte with the highest Perception or Awareness skill to make an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Awareness** test against the Initiate's **Ordinary (+10) Stealth** test. These Initiates were specifically chosen for their mission based on their abilities, and should be treated as having Rank 1 (+0) in the Stealth skill. Most areas on the ship allow sufficient hiding places, such as behind bulkheads, amid tangles of pipes and cabling, or simply in the shadows left by insufficient lighting. As such, the cultist should usually gain at least a +10 bonus to the test from the environment.

The cultists do not intend to confront the Acolytes, and attempt to flee if discovered. They do not attack the Acolytes except in self-defence. Even then, the cultists try to drive the Acolytes off or pin them down while they escape, and not to kill them. Tormus is counting on the Acolytes to destroy the rival Inheritors, and has given his Mournful Song cultists on this mission express orders not to interfere with or harm the Acolytes.





## SHIPBOARD COMBAT

Combat aboard a ship requires certain considerations that do not apply in terrestrial situations, although the interior of a hive city is actually similar environment in many ways. Due to the open nature of this chapter (and the nature of players!), it is not always possible to predict where a combat might occur. For those combats where a set location is not available, Game Masters should find the following advice and information helpful during this portion of the adventure.

Most locations on the *Oath Unspoken* provide adequate cover for characters who wish to take advantage of it. This includes bulkheads, doorways, buttresses, support struts, statues, tangles of wire, cables, pipes, and even cogitator terminals. While some of these might be perfectly innocuous, others could be dangerous as cover, either directly or due to their importance to shipboard systems.

The first time a character taking cover is struck in a location behind cover, the GM can randomly determine one of the following effects or choose an appropriate result based on his description of the environment. It is also, of course, perfectly fine for the GM to decide that the object a character is using for cover is simply non-functional or otherwise inert and has no special result if damaged. Ships have many systems that are either intentionally redundant or simply out-of-use due to time and the constraints of crew and resources.

- **Cogitator bank:** A cogitator bank has an armour value of 8. Damage to the cogitator is not directly dangerous to nearby characters. However, for each point of armour value it loses, Tech-Use tests to access it suffer a -10 penalty. If the cogitator's armour value is reduced to 5, it is destroyed, and cannot be accessed by any means. In addition, such damage to a shipboard machine spirit is sure to draw attention; reduce the Acolytes' Subtlety by 1d5-2 (minimum of 1).
- **Effluent pipe:** A rusted pipe carrying the passenger and crew waste products is structurally identical to a regular water main. The difference becomes apparent when any attack punctures it and the foul contents leak over the surroundings. When this happens, all characters within 5 metres must pass a **Challenging (+0) Toughness test** or become Stunned for 1 round.

- **Power conduit:** This cover provides an armour value of 4. Once its armour value is reduced to 0, the surrounding area loses power. The most common result of this is that the area becomes dark, with all the combat modifiers that entails, though the GM might also have stray sparks or electrical arcs leap from a damaged conduit.
- **Promethium storage:** These tanks or pipes are rare aboard the *Oath Unspoken*, and found primarily in the Enginarium and surrounding area. They have an armour value of 10. Each time an attack damages this cover, it spurts a stream of ignited gas; any adjacent characters must pass a **Challenging (+0) Agility test** or catch on fire (see page 243 of the *DARK HERESY Core Rulebook*). If an attack reduces the armour value 0 or deals damage in excess of three times its current armour value, the item explodes and deals 3d10 Energy damage with the **Flame and Blast (2d10)** qualities.
- **Steam pipe or coolant line:** This cover has an armour value of 6. Each time an attack reduces its armour value, adjacent characters must pass an **Ordinary (+10) Dodge test** or suffer 1d10+1 Energy damage.
- **Water main:** A water main has an armour value of 8. If its armour value is reduced, it begins leaking, with the speed of the leak increasing for each additional point of armour it loses. While not necessarily dangerous, this could interfere with the character's actions, providing penalties at the GM's discretion. Once the pipe's armour value is reduced to 4, the amount of water is a serious hazard, and characters moving through the area must pass an **Ordinary (+10) Agility test** or fall Prone.
- **Weight-bearing strut:** This could be an obvious strut, a buttress, or a seemingly decorative column or statue. It has an armour value of 15, and there is no ill-effect unless its armour is reduced to 5 or is struck by an attack that deals double its current armour points. In either of these cases, the support gives out, and a section of ceiling directly overhead buckles inward, causing steel plating, tiles, and other debris to come crashing down on anyone under or within 1d5 metres. It deals 2d10 Impact damage, and if any pipes or conduits are adjacent to the character, the collapsing wall section causes these to rupture as well.



## THE CREW

The experience of dealing with the crew of the *Oath Unspoken* is very much dependent on which nature of the crewmen in question, as well as where the encounter takes place. Crew personalities and temperaments can vary depending on their duties and positions. A complex series of social divisions exists amongst the masses of ratings and elite officer classes. Some crew, such as those involved in seeing to the living arrangements for passengers or in loading or offloading cargo, have experience dealing with outsiders, and so are friendly enough. On the opposite end of the spectrum, bilge-scrubbers and other ratings of the lower decks might have never encountered someone even outside their immediate work-clan before. Not only would they have no idea how to behave in the presence of an outsider, but their debased dialect of Low Gothic could prove all but unintelligible.

If the Acolytes have reason to speak with such crew, the GM should require a **Challenging (+0) Linguistics (Low Gothic) test** for the Acolytes to successfully communicate. If an Acolyte fails this test, he has trouble in both making himself understood and in comprehending the crew. While these are likely to be minor setbacks, a failure by more than three degrees could indicate a serious breach of custom or potentially disastrous misunderstanding, at the GM's discretion.

In general, even those crew experienced dealing with outsiders are tight-lipped about ship business. In the Drunnels, crew tend to relax this attitude, making it the most advantageous place to obtain information from crew. Of course, even outside of the Drunnels, tactics such as bribes or successful use of Interaction skill tests can meet with some success. See **Whispers and Lies** on page 79 for more about speaking with the crew and what information Acolytes can obtain in this way.



## AMONGST THE PILGRIMS

*“Prayer cleanses the soul, but pain cleanses the body.”*

—Confessor Niles Graves

As the chapter opens, the Acolytes have just arrived aboard a ship, the identity of which is possibly as-yet unknown to them, by means of a small cargo shuttle. To begin this section of the adventure, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*After interminable minutes, the constant shaking of the shuttle's movement comes to an abrupt halt, jostling the cargo compartment as it shakes forcefully. Immediately, the roar of the engines dies down, replaced a moment later with the sound of hissing steam and clanking metal as the rear access ramp lowers, revealing a large metal chamber: a cargo hold. Several additional lighters sit nearby, clamped into their docking cradles. Across the surprisingly empty chamber, a number of servitors stack crates and shipping containers, seemingly oblivious to your arrival.*

Depending on how the first chapter concluded, the shuttle pilot might either be unaware of the Acolytes or terrified of them. Most likely, the pilot ignores their presence, hoping not to become involved in whatever trouble they might represent. He busies himself with shutting down the vessel's systems and providing instructions to a group of servitors who approach, ready to tend to the shuttle. This leaves the Acolytes free to exit and begin their exploration of the much larger vessel they now find themselves aboard.

The Acolytes should have several questions in mind as this chapter opens; notably, where are they, where its destination is, and where the first group of smugglers to come aboard are located. The pilot, should the Acolytes inquire, can answer these first two questions, but not the last. He did ferry another group aboard unofficially about six hours beforehand, but he has no idea where they went. Of course, the Acolytes might not trust the pilot, who has shown himself willing to violate the laws of his ship. If the Acolytes detain and interrogate or otherwise question the pilot, he is unable to provide any additional information. Should a profile for the pilot be necessary for purposes of skill tests on the Acolytes' part, use the Rating profile on page 394 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook** with the addition of the Operate (Aeronautica) skill at Rank 1 (+0).

Though the Acolytes might not know it, they have arrived only barely in time, for the *Oath Unspoken* is even now preparing for its journey through the Warp. The GM should allow the Acolytes to begin their investigation, and should narrate the vessel's entry into the Immaterium once the appropriate time has passed (see **Into the Warp** on page 67). This helps to reinforce that the Acolytes are not the centre of the universe—events are always in motion around them, and the chronometer is always ticking down.

The order in which the following encounters occur depends greatly on the actions of the Acolytes. Should the PCs simply begin exploring the vessel, the GM should present them as desired.



## THE PILGRIMS

While it did pick up a considerable amount of cargo at Desoleum, the *Oath Unspoken's* primary purpose at Port Gyre was to load thousands of pilgrims, both living and dead, for the journey to Thaur. The deceased are covered under *Amongst the Dead*, beginning on page 91, but the Acolytes are much more likely to encounter the living pilgrims first. If profiles are necessary, use the Pilgrim profile on page 388 of the *DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook*.

Thaur is revered, holy world, the burial place of many of the sector's saints and heroes from throughout Askellian history. Consequently, it is a main part of many pilgrimage routes. In many cases, Thaur is a final destination, with the hope that fortunate pilgrims can live out their final days in worship and be entombed there. The *Oath Unspoken's* current voyage is particularly well-attended by pilgrims hoping to reach Thaur in time for the celebration of the martyrdom of Saint Merusaad the Virtuous, one of the sector's most beloved and revered saints.

It should not take long for the Acolytes to run across some pilgrims, as the religious travellers thoroughly crowd the decks of the *Oath Unspoken* that are accessible to passengers. While some are natives of Desoleum, for many of them that world was just one stop on their long pilgrimage, perhaps years or even generations in duration. Desoleum is one of the oldest settled worlds in the Askellon Sector, and has numerous holy sites, which attract many millions of visitors each year.



Some of the pilgrims currently aboard the *Oath Unspoken* have spent decades on the pilgrim trail, and it shows in their haggard countenances and thread-bare robes and foot-bindings. If they have not already learned it through other means, any pilgrim can tell the Acolytes that they are bound for Thaur, and are aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. For the pilgrims, their destination world is much more important than the ship taking them there. They are glad to speak of Thaur and its glorious tombs, but only speak about the ship if the Acolytes specifically ask. Most of the pilgrims know little about the *Oath Unspoken*, except that it makes regular transits between Desoleum and Thaur. Many of the pilgrims do not even realise that it is a Rogue Trader vessel, or indeed what that precisely entails.

Unless the GM has something else in mind, the Acolytes should encounter the pilgrims for the first time after fifteen or so minutes of exploring the corridors of the ship. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*You hear the sound of plainsong echoing down the corridors, growing louder as you approach the source, the sweet smell of incense wafting strongly down the hall. Rounding a corner, you see a massive chamber with arched windows looking out into the void. Gathered on the floor level, hundreds of people in plain robes lend their voices up in praise of the Immortal Emperor. Above them, a wizened man in the robes of a priest of the Temple Sacramentum Sacrosanctus leans over a railing, leading the song through a vox-amplifier.*

Though they tend to cluster together, pilgrims can be found nearly anywhere that is accessible to passengers. The pilgrims represent a wide assortment of philosophies and approaches to faith, and a small number prefer solitary worship. As they explore the ship, Acolytes might come across lone mendicants in the most unusual of places, such as storage closets, exchanger-vents, or even in airlocks. Consequently, the encounters in this section could occur in any number of locations based on the GM's desire or plans for the narrative.

## THE FLOCKS

The reaction of the pilgrims to the Acolytes depends greatly on the Acolytes' appearance. While the pilgrims come from a broad range of background and a variety of clothing is represented, it mostly tends toward the plain, simple, and well-worn. Further, while the occasional weapon can be seen, armour is almost completely absent from the pilgrims, and even wearing a flak jacket causes a PC to stand out. However, what draws the most attention is any garment that marks a character out as a member or servant of the Ecclesiarchy. Amongst the thousands of lay pilgrims, only a handful of clerics can be found, most notable Preacher Lazarun (see page 72) and Confessor Graves (page 74). If an Acolyte is present whose garb marks him out as a member of the Adeptus Ministorum, pilgrims flock around him, following him throughout the ship, asking questions of theology, and begging for blessings and prayers. This can be a problem for Acolytes attempting to act without drawing undue attention, and can generally obstruct and hinder the warband.



The Ecclesiarchal Player Character might try ordering or politely asking the pilgrims to leave him alone, and if he succeeds on a **Routine (+20) Command** or **Charm test**, they do for a time. It does not take long, however, for a new group of pilgrims to gather, either ignorant of the fact that the Acolyte desires to be left alone, or hoping he changes his mind.

As soon as one or more of the Acolytes become an object of veneration for the pilgrims, the warband loses 1d5 Subtlety. Rumours circulate swiftly through the ranks of the pilgrims, so even if the Acolytes quickly drive off their new admirers, some damage is done. However, if the Acolytes act swiftly to distance themselves from the pilgrims and the PC who drew attention in the first place takes appropriate steps to change his appearance, the GM might choose to reduce the Subtlety loss to only 1 or 2 points.

Further, as long as a group of pilgrims remains following the Acolytes, any Subtlety tests suffer a -10 penalty, or higher if the GM deems appropriate, depending on how large a crowd gathers around them. A group of fawning pilgrims might cause other complications based on what situations the Acolytes enter, or perhaps serve as useful combat fodder, depending on how the Acolytes wish to treat them.

## VIRTUOUS IGNORANCE

For the most part, the pilgrims are unable to offer much actionable information to the Acolytes, or at least little information of obvious use. The pilgrims are unaware of any smugglers or cultists coming aboard at the time they did, and directly inquiring can cause an entirely different set of problems (see **Fervour** on this page). However, this can actually provide some solid information for astute Acolytes. If the smugglers are not in plain sight amongst the pilgrims, then it follows that they must be hiding in an area of the ship that is not open to passengers.

Once the Acolytes determine this, it might lead them to take their investigation elsewhere aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. However, before the Acolytes delve into the dark corners of the ship, the GM should steer them toward the open markets of the Drunnels. This can be done by having a pilgrim or crewmen recommend the Drunnels as a place to find information, or it can be as simple as having the Acolytes stumble across the market while en route to the lower decks.

## PREACHER NESSIAH LAZARUN

The de-facto leader of the pilgrims is Preacher Nessiah Lazarun of the Temple Sacramentum Sacrosanctus. Having spent his entire life in Hive Desoleum, Lazarun is now a very old man, and he wishes to see more of the Emperor's domain before he dies. The ancient preacher is ready to face his death, believing that he has completed his service to the Emperor. As his final act of devotion, he plans to be interred alive in a tomb on Thaur. Even now, custodians are preparing his waiting tomb, and Lazarun hopes only to live long enough to enter his grave.

Lazarun's body is frail, and his mind is not as sharp as it once was (see page 106 for his profile). Nonetheless, the preacher is as dedicated a servant of the Emperor as ever, and could be of use to the Acolytes. The pilgrims are deeply devoted to Lazarun, whose sacrifice they see as a shining example of devotion. If the Acolytes can gain the trust of Preacher Lazarun, they also gain the cooperation of the pilgrims.

Unlike most of the pilgrims, Lazarun understands the need for discretion, and does not necessarily raise the alarm should he become aware that heretics are aboard the ship. If the Acolytes do explain something of the situation, Lazarun is willing to assist them by retrieving information from the pilgrims or passing it on to them, without whipping them into a righteous and possibly uncontrollable frenzy.

Lazarun's Disposition begins at 40, increasing to 50 if any of the Acolytes are fellow members of the Ecclesiarchy, and possesses a Confident Personality. Lazarun is quite ancient, and tends to speak slowly and methodically, as if each word requires a great deal of commitment and energy. He is a loyal servant of the Emperor, and though he lacks the understanding of those in service of an Inquisitor, he respects the fact that there are great dangers to the Imperium that require the harshest measures to combat.

If the Acolytes reveal their responsibility or otherwise gain Lazarun's trust through successful use of Interaction skills, the venerable preacher helps in whatever way he can. He is completely unsuited to combat, and even exploring the ship would take quite a toll on his old bones. The greatest tool at Lazarun's disposal is the sway he holds over the pilgrims. However, because a crowd is more susceptible to fiery oratory than calm and measured speech, Lazarun swiftly loses control of the pilgrims should Confessor Graves (see page 74) begin raising their fervent ire.

## FERVOUR

The pilgrims are a fanatical group for the most part, and their devotion to the Emperor could be either a help or hindrance to the Acolytes, should the pilgrims become aware to any extent of the events currently unfolding aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. The pilgrims are restless on their journey, and it takes only the merest hint of heresy to whip them into a frenzied, torch-wielding mob.

Each time the Acolytes question the pilgrims about the smugglers or cultists, the GM should make a **Subtlety test** for the warband (in secret, as always). The GM should apply a penalty to the test if the Acolytes are asking very blatant questions about the Trade Sable or the Inheritors, but should apply a bonus if the Acolytes are attempting to be circumspect with their questions or adopt a respectful or similarly agreeable tone. In the latter case, GM might wish to first make a **Hard (-20) Logic** or **Scrutiny test** for the pilgrim being questioned, with modifiers based on the way the Acolyte is conducting the questioning, to determine if he realises the true meaning behind the Acolyte's inquiries.

If the Subtlety test succeeds, all is well. If it fails, note the degrees of failure. Once the Acolytes reach a cumulative number of degrees of failure from these tests equal to their current Subtlety bonus +2, the pilgrims form a zealous mob and begin hunting for the heretics they now believe to be somewhere aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. Until the degrees of failure reach the tipping point, the GM should throw hints at the players that the pilgrims are becoming agitated, perhaps even becoming questioners themselves as they eagerly seek out more information on heretics to burn. This gives the Acolytes a chance to realise the consequences while they still have time to change course.



The mob of wrathful pilgrims can pose a number of problems for the Acolytes, but it could also work to their advantage. If the Acolytes are attempting to be discreet in their investigation, a frenzied mob is certain to blow their cover, and quite likely to alert the smugglers to their presence. Once the Acolytes' inquiries incite the pilgrims to action, the Acolytes lose 1d5+1 Subtlety. After adjusting the Acolytes' Subtlety, the GM should then make a new Subtlety test for the warband to determine if the Sable Traders are aware of the events transpiring aboard. If the warband fails the Subtlety test, the Sable Traders are aware that an angry mob is looking for them, and take steps to hide their presence even more carefully than they were already doing. If the test results in more than three degrees of failure, the smugglers are also aware, at least tangentially, of the Acolytes. They may or may not realise who the Acolytes are, depending on how open they have been about their identities in their dealings with the pilgrims, but at the very least the smugglers know someone followed them onto the ship.

If the Acolytes do reveal that they are in the service of an Inquisitor, this news spreads quickly throughout the pilgrims' ranks, as they rejoice at the news and become eager to assist—whether the Acolytes want it or not. Particularly in this case, the smugglers are on high alert and ready to respond with sudden and extreme violence to any threat. Additionally, with the pilgrims pressing in all around, the smugglers might decide they have no choice but to take out the Acolytes, and force a confrontation early (see *Darker Than Sable* on page 94).

In addition to reducing their Subtlety, a frenzied mob of religious zealots could pose a number of additional problems, and GMs are encouraged to integrate this into encounters throughout this chapter. Many individuals who might hold useful information are too frightened to talk to the Acolytes, lest the overzealous mob throw them on the pyre. The pilgrim mob even presents a danger to the *Oath Unspoken*, and Anzaforr takes action accordingly.

Given sufficient time and resources, the pilgrims might actually locate, or at least smoke out, the smugglers and the cultists. For this to happen, however, the Acolytes must stop the armsmen from interfering (see *The Lord-Captain's Law*, on page 74). Left to its own devices, the mob grows under the firebrand oratory of Confessor Graves, and as more and more pilgrims take up a torch and expand their search for the heretics, they eventually encounter the Sable Traders and Inheritors. Though holy wrath drives them, the pilgrims are not warriors, and the smugglers are able to shoot their way past the mob, leaving a pile of dead pilgrims before fleeing to a new hiding spot. At this point, the Acolytes could encounter a group of the smugglers; see *Darker Than Sable* on page 94 for details on resolving such an encounter.

Should the Acolytes direct the actions of the mob, they might have a force of zealous pilgrims to back them up when

they do finally encounter the smugglers and

Inheritors. However, the pilgrims are not a trained fighting force, but a frenzied and mad mob, just as likely to get in the way or accidentally injure the Acolytes as to offer any real assistance. For the pilgrims to provide effective assistance in either tracking down the smugglers or in combat, an Acolyte must succeed at a **Challenging (+0) Command test**. Acolytes who are recognisable as members of the Ecclesiarchy or who possess the *Peer (Adeptus Ministorum)* talent gain a +20 bonus to this test. If the Acolyte fails the test, then the pilgrims cause more problems than not. If searching for the smugglers, the pilgrims' overzealous actions inflict a -10 or greater penalty, at the GM's discretion, to all relevant tests the Acolytes attempt, as they scare off or set fire to witnesses, destroy evidence, and generally get in the way. In combat, the pilgrims rush blindly forward, providing cover to the Acolytes' enemies and inflicting a -10 penalty to all attack tests the Acolytes attempt. In addition, it might prove impossible for the Acolytes to enter into melee combat with their enemies, due to the throng of pilgrims pressed in around them.



## CONFESSOR GRAVES

The youthful Confessor Niles Graves is quite the opposite of his elderly counterpart, Nessiah Lazarun. Graves is a firebrand through-and-through, moving amongst the pilgrims and drawing forth confessions and incriminations in equal measure. Charismatic and with a palpable energy of faith around him, Graves is quite popular amongst the pilgrims, who hang on his every fervent word. Graves has a tendency to begin a conversation speaking softly, forcing his listener to focus on his words, before deliberately building in volume and intensity until he reaches the fever pitch for which he is known.

Perhaps astutely, Graves is untrusting of Anzaforr's motives for transporting the pilgrims. Should Graves catch wind of the Acolytes' reasons for being aboard, or the mere hint of an Inquisitor's involvement, the well-meaning zealot soon causes things to spin out of control for the Acolytes.

Graves has an Aggressive Personality with a Disposition of 50 (his complete profile is on page 106). If the confessor learns of the Acolytes' mission, or the presence of a heretical cult aboard the ship, he immediately begins whipping the devoted pilgrims into a righteous fury. This has the same end result as if the Acolytes failed a sufficient number of Subtlety tests during their inquiries, including the resulting loss of Subtlety (see *Fervour* on page 72).

## THE LORD-CAPTAIN'S LAW

Should the frantic pilgrims begin to rampage through the *Oath Unspoken* in search of heretics, it does not take long for the armsmen to get involved. From there, word quickly reaches the Rogue Trader, who tasks his men with uncovering the cause.

There are three likely outcomes for this. The first is that the armsmen and Anzaforr's other servants are unable to discover the cause of the witch-hunt. If the Acolytes attempt to conceal their involvement, the GM should make a **Subtlety test**, modified depending on what actions (or lack thereof) the Acolytes have taken. If successful, the Acolytes escape blame for the incident. If the test fails, however, the armsmen do manage to track down the Acolytes. What happens at this point is very different depending on whether or not the armsmen treat the Acolytes as common rabble-rousers, and stowaways to boot, or as noteworthy guests. This depends largely on the Acolytes' actions. If they cooperate and state their importance or request (or demand) to speak with the Lord-Captain, the armsmen might contact Anzaforr, or even bring the Acolytes directly to him. If, on the contrary, the Acolytes are belligerent or do not present themselves as noteworthy individuals (whether using their actual identities, or cover stories), the armsmen deal with them the way they deal with other troublemakers—throwing them in the brig, or shooting them down if they resist. See page 104 for the profile of a typical armsman.

The armsmen are used to hearing lies and excuses from recalcitrant crew and stowaways, and do not simply trust the Acolytes, even should they tell the truth about their identities. The Acolytes must succeed at Social skill tests to convince the armsmen to grant them an audience with the Lord-Captain. Note that the armsmen are extremely unlikely to simply let the Acolytes go after confronting them, regardless of the story they present.



Unless the Acolytes immediately offer violent resistance, Armsmen Commander Jyrgan Hessiial arrives to speak with them before any decisions are made as to their fate. He has overall responsibility for the armsmen's actions, and has the authority to bring the Acolytes before the Rogue Trader. Hessiial is not pleased with the events of the mob. He has a Confident Personality and his Disposition begins at 30; see page 104 for his full profile.

If the Acolytes resist violently or fail grievously on Interaction skill tests, a fight might very well break out with the armsmen. While this is certainly a regrettable outcome, it does not necessarily prevent future cooperation with Anzaforr. It does, however, require the Acolytes to reveal their true identities to have any hope of gaining the Rogue Trader's cooperation, as he can only forgive someone as important as the trusted servant of an Inquisitor for causing injury to his servants. See *A Dinner with the Lord-Captain* on page 86 for details of what happens should the Acolytes convince the armsmen to take them before Anzaforr.

## THE BASILICA UNSPOKEN

The Acolytes' investigations might bring them to the Basilica Unspoken, Aristide Anzaforr's own personal cathedral. Here, Deacon Artemos Frayle tends to the spiritual needs of the *Oath Unspoken's* crew. The deacon is a well-respected priest of the Ecclesiarchy, with many years of dutiful service to his name. For someone serving aboard a Rogue Trader vessel, Frayle is surprisingly conventional in his beliefs and attitudes; this complements the appearance of piety that Anzaforr has been presenting in recent years. Should it be needed, Frayle can be represented by the Preacher profile on page 390 of the *DARK HERESY Core Rulebook*.

No pilgrim would dare think of travelling aboard the *Oath Unspoken* without visiting the holy basilica, and the massive hall is constantly filled beyond capacity. Pilgrims throng around the nave, jostling for an opportunity to view the shrine itself. The crowd is such that even moving through the basilica is difficult and should Acolytes attempt to push their way forward it could provoke the ire of the pilgrims around them. Unless the warband already has a reputation amongst the faithful, one of the PCs must pass an Interaction skill test, with **Charm** or **Intimidate** being the most likely skills. If the Acolyte fails, a nearby group becomes enraged and attempts to forcibly bar the warband's progress.

For all this trouble, Deacon Frayle is unlikely to be of much help to the warband. He keeps to the basilica primarily, is unaware of any smuggling activity, and takes offence at the suggestion that any of the crew are involved or complicit. In addition, either Preacher Lazarun or Confessor Graves might be present when the Acolytes visit, and the GM should include at least one of these NPCs if the Acolytes have not already encountered them both. The confessor and preacher both visit the basilica regularly during the journey, both to worship at the appointed times and to speak with the deacon.

## FINAL SERVICE

Alongside the common rabble of the pilgrims are others, including nobles travelling to Thaur. These individuals isolate themselves from the common pilgrims for the most part, although the Acolytes could encounter them pushing their way through the masses, particularly in the basilica. The Acolytes are more likely, however, to encounter the servants of nobles, some of whom spend their leisure time engaging in acts of worship with other faithful.

One group of servants in particular does not have a cabin to return to on the upper decks. This is because their master is deceased, and they are accompanying his body to Thaur for interment. As is customary for the nobility of Snope's World, the most senior and favoured servants within the Platinal Palace accompany their master to the grave, entombed alive to ensure his secrets die with him. The servants (eight including their leader, Steward Jolmas) are quite content with this state of affairs, which they see as both a final duty and an honour for their families.

The Acolytes might encounter this group of servants at any time as they move amongst the ranks of the pilgrims, or in the Drunnels. This meeting is not fully necessary for the investigation. However, in addition to reminding the Acolytes (and players) that the Askellon Sector is a big place, with many strange traditions, it serves as a potential source of information. Jolmas and his fellow servants make regular visits to the Corpse-Holds to check on their master and ensure his accommodations are in order. During their most recent such trip, they saw several people who looked quite out of place. This group were clearly not crew, for they were armed and armoured, with three wearing black fur cloaks to protect them against the cold temperatures of the Corpse-Holds. In addition, two other individuals wore dark robes, adorned with numerous bones and charms.

Jolmas and his fellow servants had no direct interaction with this group, but simply observed them as they passed. While the incident was unusual, he did not think it of particular import at the time. If the Acolytes' presence and intentions become known, Jolmas realises that the individuals he saw could be connected to the heretics the Acolytes seek, and approaches them to share his story. Otherwise, Jolmas only mentions the incident if the Acolytes question him about unusual occurrences. Jolmas and the servants can be represented by the Citizen NPC profile on page 392 of the *DARK HERESY Core Rulebook*. If the Acolytes ask appropriate questions and succeed at an Interaction skill test, such as **Charm** or **Inquiry**, Jolmas explains the encounter.

The information Jolmas volunteers is certainly helpful, but the Game Master should remember that in this situation (the Acolytes' business and intentions are public), the Sable Traders are also most likely aware of the Acolytes (see *Fervour*, on page 72). Consequently, the smugglers have moved to another location by the time the Acolytes reach the Corpse-Holds. The Acolytes can still locate important clues by searching those cold halls, though, making the trip worthwhile.



# MARKET DAY

“Anything you want, for the right price.”

—“Mad” Grishom, unsanctioned merchant

After some time spent exploring the ship, the Acolytes find themselves in the open market space known as the Drunnels, either by chance or on the recommendation of an NPC. As an area where both crew and passengers come to relax, trade, and drink, this is perhaps the best place to pick up information about current goings-on aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. Here, the Acolytes have a number of opportunities to obtain useful information. Additionally, the Drunnels are, after all, a marketplace, and the Acolytes can take this opportunity to resupply and equip themselves for their further investigations. As a semi-tolerated operation, a number of questionable and outright illegal items are available for those who know how to ask.

During their time in the Drunnels, the Acolytes can experience several potentially illuminating events, which are explained in detail over the following pages. The Acolytes can pick up useful rumours both pertaining directly to the smugglers and more generally to Desoleum and Thaur. Observant Acolytes might see a Sable Trader in the crowd and, depending on their reaction speed and actions, could pursue him or even end up in a gun battle in the middle of the crowded market. If necessary, this also makes for a good location for a replacement Acolyte to join the warband, perhaps as a crewman eager for greater service or a pilgrim looking to serve the Emperor more directly.

## ARRIVAL

When the Acolytes first enter the Drunnels, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*Ahead of you, the corridor opens up into a massive chamber, its ceiling lost amidst shadow, mist, and tangles of steel wire and heavy cablings. The chamber is given over to a huge, open market. The roar of voices echoes across the room as thousands of individuals push past one another in a huge crowd, surveying the goods offered at stalls and haphazard shop fronts. A tangle of freestanding structures erected from scrap metal and flak board are built atop one another, rising almost to the ceiling. Gantries, ladders, and rope bridges connect the many entrances and platforms, and a number of acrobats perform their art amidst the ropes and beams that hold the upper levels aloft, to the entertainment of the crowd below.*

While a number of encounters await them, it is certainly possible that the Acolytes simply wish to do some shopping of their own. With the race to catch the smugglers in Chapter I, this might be the Acolytes’ first opportunity to acquire new and replacement weaponry or other items. The GM should allow the Acolytes to shop for whatever they might desire, following the normal rules for obtaining equipment.

## THE RIGHT PRICE

The GM might prefer to resolve the Acolytes’ purchases with a simple Requisition test. While this is perfectly acceptable, shopping in the Drunnels is a great opportunity for roleplaying. The Drunnels are a unique market place existing at the crossroads of inter-system trading and the poverty of crew-serfs. Here, haggling is a necessity, and a form of entertainment in itself for many crewmen. In fact, many times they have little to offer in trade and a good haggle is a form of payment in itself. With stricter merchants, hours of offers and counter-offers might only come to the conclusion that the would-be buyer has nothing to offer. The haggling customs of the Drunnels can be confusing to outsiders, but offer a chance for silver-tongued Acolytes to really display their business acumen.

In place of a standard Requisition test using Influence, the GM could have an Acolyte wishing to purchase an item engage in a social encounter with a merchant. Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, merchants here begin with a Disposition of 40 and the Clever personality. For each counter-offer he makes, the player should roleplay his interaction with the merchant and then attempt an Interaction skill test. Commerce is the most appropriate skill, but Charm and even Intimidate are also possibilities. After each skill test, the GM should make a Disposition test for the merchant, applying the item’s availability modifier. If the test is successful, the merchant concedes and gives the Acolyte the item in exchange for his last offer. For items with a Average or greater Availability, the GM should allow players to use Fellowship for skill tests. For rarer items with a Scarce or lower Availability, however, the GM should require the Acolytes use the Influence characteristic, as usual (not forgetting that Requisition tests for items with negative Availability modifiers also affect the warband’s Subtlety).

Using this approach, even haggling over a mundane or ordinary item could require a fair bit of game time and roleplaying. While this might not appeal to all groups, it can offer an interesting and hopefully enjoyable reprieve from the horror, investigation, and combat that occupies so much of the Acolytes’ time, and can help to further immerse the players in the setting.

Though the *Oath Unspoken* has not made a journey of discovery in some time, it supports a community of many thousands, and its visitors and passengers introduce new goods and wares into the economy. Additionally, the ship has an impressive history, and some inhabitants mount expeditions into the deepest and darkest corners of the forgotten holds, returning with exotic goods to sell at market. Consequently, those with the resources may be able to obtain nearly anything in the Drunnels. To increase the impact of some of the following encounters, the GM might even choose to begin them while the Acolytes are in the middle of a transaction.





## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: STOP, THIEF!

In this optional encounter, the Acolytes must deal with a rather mundane problem that nonetheless could spell serious trouble for them. The Drunnels are far from a safe place, and in addition to greedy merchants, there is the risk of literal robbery. This encounter is best used soon after the Acolytes first arrive at the Drunnels, while they are still getting the lay of the land.

One of the many small-time thieves who prey on travellers, a wastrel named Nico Harlaus, sets his sights on the warband. If the Acolytes are particularly threatening-looking, the GM might decide that this encounter is inappropriate; on the other hand, if they are threatening due to high-quality weapons, such a display of wealth might prove too tempting for the brigand. Similarly, the GM should roll a **Subtlety** test for the Acolytes. If the test fails, the Acolytes' reputation precedes them and Harlaus decides against targeting such dangerous foes. Again, the GM should weigh the specifics of the Acolytes' reputation and appearance when making this decision. Assuming Harlaus thinks the Acolytes are worthwhile marks, he attempts to steal something of value from one or more of them—a holstered weapon, a pocketed gear item, a memento, or something else he can lift with little notice.

To represent the thief, use the **Skulker** profile on page 388 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**. Harlaus makes his attempt at a time when the Acolytes are distracted, either questioning someone or making a trade. The GM might allow one of the Acolytes an initial **Challenging (+0) Awareness** test opposed by Harlaus' **Shadowing** with a **Challenging (+0) Stealth** test. The crowds of

the Drunnels grant Harlaus a +20 bonus. If the Acolyte wins the **Opposed** test, he notices Harlaus following the group, allowing a chance to take pre-emptive action against him. If Harlaus is able to get close to the Acolytes undetected, he makes an **Ordinary (+10) Sleight of Hand** test, opposed by the chosen Acolyte's **Challenging (+0) Awareness** test. The GM should apply further modifiers to the tests if the Acolytes are appropriately distracted and based on the size, shape, and location of the target item.

Harlaus attempts to pickpocket an item he saw on the character during his previous observation. If any of the Acolytes are carrying a xenos artefact, this is a particularly good choice; while Harlaus does not realise the true significance, he presumes the item to be valuable due to its unusual nature and how protective its owner seems about the item. This also gives the Acolytes extra incentive to retrieve such a valuable artefact. The Acolytes might presume Harlaus to be an associate of the **Inheritors** or **Trade Sable**, lending potential drama, albeit with confusion, to the encounter.

If Harlaus succeeds in his theft, he almost immediately goes to trade the item to one of the Drunnels' many merchants. At some point during the Acolytes visit to the Drunnels, they should then see their stolen item on display in a cart or shop display. Of course, the merchant insists that he obtains all his wares legitimately, leaving the Acolytes with the choice of either haggling over the price of their own possession, calling for armsmen to protest the theft, or resulting to intimidation or use of **Influence** to rectify the situation. In the latter case, the shopkeep is able to identify the thief, should the Acolytes seek vengeance.



## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: MAKE A DEAL

For the merchants and traders of the Drunnels, haggling is an art and often an end in itself. This optional encounter illustrates this point and provides some levity in an otherwise tense and dangerous environment. The GM can introduce this encounter at any time as the Acolytes explore the Drunnels, either with a shopkeep catching the Acolytes' attention as they pass by, or when the Acolytes go to make an offer on some merchandise. In either case, the merchant makes an offer on a possession that the Acolytes are probably not interested in selling. This should be an item that is worn openly, or at least visibly, although it does not necessarily have to have any clear value—some of the Drunnels merchants are quite peculiar, or know of buyers interested in the outré and uncommon. Even if the Acolytes plainly state that the item is not for trade, the merchant takes this as a negotiating tactic and comes back with a counter-offer. This goes on until the Acolytes leave or resort to drastic measures to make their point. This encounter can be resolved following the guidelines in *The Right Price* sidebar on page 76, although other skills might come into play depending on how the Acolytes react.

## INVESTIGATING THE DRUNNELS

The way in which events unfold in the Drunnels is very much dependent on the Acolytes' actions and choices, as is much of the action throughout this chapter. A number of notable NPCs are presented throughout this section who can provide the Acolytes with information and clues, as well as events that the GM can insert where he deems appropriate. There is no single path through this section, and it is very possible that the Acolytes might not encounter all of the NPCs detailed here. For instance, Acolytes who decide to hire their own extra muscle could meet Ternace Del directly, bypassing the information broker Calvin Sterr. These NPCs are only a minuscule sample of the denizens to be found in the Drunnels. If the Acolytes' own style dictates a drastically different approach, the GM might prefer to introduce additional NPCs to provide the same information. Ultimately, the Acolytes should find clues pointing them in the direction of the Corpse-Holds. Whether this takes a good deal of gameplay or a brief visit to the Drunnels depends on the preference of the GM and on the actions and success of the Acolytes.

## THE CIRQUE COMMERCIA

The Cirque Commercia is not confined to a single location with the Drunnels, although it does have several stage platforms along its main avenue. The cirque blends theatrics and commerce in ways few Acolytes could image. Performers engage audience members or passers-by, drawing them in with mesmerising dances, thrilling and dangerous acrobatics, and other, more exotic entertainments. It is usually not immediately apparent to visitors unfamiliar with the ways of the Drunnels that these are not free performances. Whereas the street performers of some hives and cities perform for the crowds in hopes of some scrip or coins, the performers of the Cirque Commercia understand that a deal is struck the moment a potential customer views a part of their acts. For this reason, those familiar with the Drunnels and uninterested in purchasing a performance often go about with their eyes pointed firmly at the floor, with only quick glimpses upward in order to locate the desired merchandise or vendor.

The longer an act goes on, the higher pay the performers expect. Cirque artists weave the haggling of a price into their performances, although it is rarely a straightforward verbal exchange (although there are some poets and dramatists who subtly slip it into their speech). As with other merchants here, the performers are almost always willing to accept something in trade, rather than strict currency. A return presentation is generally considered acceptable; of course, it must equal the original performance in value, for it to be considered a proper trade.

Other merchants in the Drunnels have mixed opinions of the Cirque Commercia. Most are willing to part with small baubles, foodstuffs, or other mundane goods in exchange for a performance. Visitors are often puzzled to see jugglers or firebreathers moving from cart to cart, providing a display of their skills and in return receiving a dataslate, machine part, or bowl of steaming protein paste. Other merchants avert their eyes or lower the brims on their hats, and gesture for the performers to simply move on.

The performers of the Cirque Commercia tend to wear garishly colourful costumes. Some of these are in fact well-made and lavish, perhaps bartered for with passing travellers, but many are made from whatever materials and dyes are available. Most wear masks, with skull motifs and celestial bodies being popular. Other subjects include various animals, familiar or unusual, living or legendary, from across the sector or beyond. Some of the dramatists prefer more traditional masks expressing emotions particular to the role, or representing the dichotomy of drama and commedia that they incorporate into some works. Many of the costumes—except those that would interfere with acrobatic feats—feature large, flared sleeves, flowing scarves, and other loose, elaborate clothing.

The GM can incorporate the Cirque Commercia into the adventure in a number of ways. One is to simply insert them as background colour, describing their presence along with the other sights and sounds of the Drunnels. Another is to use the following optional encounter.



## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: THE JUGGLER

As the Acolytes go about their business in the Drunnels, a man in loose, striped breeches and a faded yellow vest bars their path. The entertainer wears a yellow crescent-moon mask, with a wickedly pointed nose. As soon as he has the Acolytes' attention, the man begins juggling several objects, and continues to incorporate more into his routine the longer they allow it to go on. The objects include razor-edged pieces of carved bone, skulls wrought with metal studs, and even vials of unidentifiable liquid. The longer the routine goes on, the more objects he juggles at once and the more dangerous the objects. As his routine grows more elaborate, the more he expects his audience, the Acolytes, to pay. The man does not speak, but continues to bar their path, juggling ever more elaborately, until they pay him or offer some item in trade.

If the Acolytes are not familiar with the ways of the cirque, the GM can call for a **Challenging (+0) Awareness or Logic** test to see other similar artists receiving some item of compensation for their performances and determine that the juggler expects compensation. Should the Acolytes be willing to barter, the GM should run the encounter using social Interaction skills, as described in **The Right Price** sidebar on page 76. Additionally, to represent the difficulty of bartering with someone who does not speak, the GM should periodically call for an **Ordinary (+10) Linguistics (Low Gothic)** test. Each degree of success on each of these tests confers a +5 bonus to that character's next **Commerce** test, while each degree of failure adds a -5 penalty.

To represent the juggler, use the Gilded Performancer profile on page 392 of the **DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook**.

## WHISPERS AND LIES

As a place where travellers and crew both congregate, and where crew feel more at-ease to speak their minds without fear of punishment, the Drunnels are the best place on the ship to pick up rumours. These stories pertain not only the activity aboard the *Oath Unspoken*, but across the wider Cyclopia Sub-Sector. While in port, those crew who receive the privilege of going planetside pick up many stories, swapping tales with voidfarers from other vessels as well as locals. Additionally, travellers bring stories from their own worlds or from other places they have visited. In this way, stories from worlds the *Oath Unspoken* has never visited come to the Drunnels. Of course, the accuracy of such stories is very much in question. If the Acolytes spend time simply asking around and listening in an attempt to pick up information, they can find any number of rumours. While most of these are completely irrelevant, some do have a bearing on the Acolytes' investigation, although their veracity is another matter.

Table 2-1: Drunnels Rumours

DEGREES OF SUCCESS	RESULTS (CUMULATIVE)
1	<i>"Smugglers are everywhere, you just have to know what to look for. Why, are you looking to buy something?"</i>
2	<i>"They say the Sable smugglers deal in the forbidden and blasphemous. I hear they move their wares about unseen, in the darkness. Who knows could be they're right here on the Oath, even."</i>
3	<i>"This trip to Thaur feels ill omened; I heard the hullfrost formed sour patterns on departure. I swear to you, after the last trip, some of the dead refused to rest."</i>
4	<i>"I heard soft whispers of some outfit that did wrong back on the last stop on Desoleum, part of something called the Mournful Song? Keep it low, not many live saying that name aloud. They say they are a bunch of madmen and twisted medicae that do all sorts o' horrible things."</i>
5+	<i>"I hear that there's some kind o' war between these Songers and this other group who call themselves Inheritors or some such. Thing is, these Inheritors aren't on Desoleum, but are from Thaur bone world. You'd think they'd get on better, both being obsessed with death..."</i>

Acolytes who spend time picking up rumours in the Drunnels should make an **Ordinary (+10) Inquiry** test. Compare to the Acolyte's degrees of success on the test to **Table 2-1: Drunnels Rumours** on this page to see what the Acolytes overhear (the results are cumulative, so an Acolyte who scores 2 degrees of success learns the rumours in both the 1 and 2 degrees of success rows). Should they instead gain only degrees of failure, the GM can instead provide false rumours, lies, or outright disinformation depending on situation; the GM can also depress the warband's **Subtlety** for strong questioning or overt displays of presence.

If the GM wishes, he can allow the Acolytes to pick up these same rumours in other locations on the ship. Outside the Drunnels, crew are much more tight-lipped, and any tests to discover these rumours suffer a -10 penalty.

In addition to picking up rumours, any successful Interaction skill tests should garner the Acolytes the name of Calvin Sterr, the information broker (see page 80). Sterr makes it his business to keep up with events occurring aboard the ship, even those that are not well known. If the Acolytes are not inclined to deal with Sterr, the GM can also directly provide the names of Jarrad Cincayde (see **The Narco-Smuggler**, on page 83) and Ternace Del (see **The Hired Gun**, on page 81).



## THE INFORMATION BROKER

If the Acolytes spend time inquiring around the Drunnels, they are sure to eventually hear the name Calvan Sterr. Sterr is a well-regarded information broker; whereas other merchants deal in physical goods, Sterr's products of choice are intelligence, facts, and rumours.

A slight man with lank, oily hair that hangs over his eyes, Sterr's face sports a perpetual, and slightly unsettling, grin. While other merchants trade in physical wares or provide more tangible services, Calvan Sterr deals only in information. He is not native to the *Oath Unspoken*, having come aboard at some point in the past and deciding to stay. Whether this was a deliberate choice or due to circumstances beyond his control, he refuses to say. Sterr is represented by the Insurrati Oiler profile on page 388 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook.

Dealing with Sterr is very similar to dealing with any other merchant of the Drunnels: he expects payment or trade for his services, and also expects to haggle over the price. Of course, in Sterr's line of work, he accepts information for trade. The value of the information depends on his judgment, as the GM envisions it, and on the success of the Acolytes' Commerce tests. If the Acolytes offer the right price, or exert their Influence to force his cooperation, he can offer valuable information.

Sterr has an unsettling habit of grinning broadly even when delivering the most unsavoury of information. However, he prides himself on his reputation, as does any good merchant, and trades primarily in what he believes to be verifiable facts from trustworthy sources. When dealing in rumours, Sterr makes this clear to his customers. He also tends to ask a lower price for rumours, while expecting more in exchange for reliable information.

Calvan Sterr can provide the Acolytes with the following information via successful **Inquiry**, **Charm**, or other **Social tests** at the GM's discretion, as well as any of the rumours from earlier in this section:

- A well-known smuggler named Jarrad Cincayde is travelling aboard the *Oath Unspoken* (see **The Narco-Smuggler** on page 83).
- Someone has been hiring as many mercenaries and gunhands as possible. Sterr can direct the Acolytes to one in particular who he knows turned down the offer, Ternace Del (see **The Hired Gun** on page 81).
- Not long ago, a strange, dark, stone-like object came into the possession of one of the local merchants, Ghorace Malk (see **The Merchant** on this page).
- A higher than normal number of crew have recently gone missing from the lower decks.

## THE MERCHANT

Ghorace Malk is typical of the merchants in the Drunnels, and GMs can simply insert this character when the Acolytes decide to do some shopping, or find out about him from the information broker Calvan Sterr. Malk deals in anything and everything, for he acquires his merchandise primarily through bartering with travellers and even with his fellow merchants. Malk is noteworthy because of an object that recently came into his possession, and the way by which he parted with it. He does not simply bring this up in regular conversation, of course, but is willing to speak of it if the Acolytes ask the right questions or learn of it first through another source, such as from Calvan Sterr.

In the course of a typical trade, Malk ended up receiving an item with no obvious value other than as a curio. The object, which he was told came from Thaur, was like a shard of pottery, but cold and oily to the touch. Neither Malk nor the person from whom he acquired the shard seemed to place much value on it, but a short time before the Acolytes arrived (either hours or days, depending on how long they have been aboard), an unusual man in black robes purchased the item from Malk for a king's ransom in Thaurian bone-chips. Normally, Malk would have insisted on

a proper haggle, but the amount the stranger offered was simply too much to pass up. Normally, local currency, even in large denominations, is not a sure bet, but the *Oath Unspoken's* usual trips to Thaur all but ensure the value of the chips in future trades.

The customer was, of course, a cultist of the Children of the Inheritance, though Malk does not know it, nor does he recognise that name. He can describe the customer as a man of indeterminate age, clean-shaven, with a sombre expression and bearing, as of one attending a wake. In addition, the man's black robes were adorned with small bones and other talismans of death. The cultist is the same one whom the Acolytes might encounter during their time in the Drunnels (see **Heretics in the Crowd** on page 81), and Malk can identify him if given the opportunity.

If needed, Malk can be represented by the Merchant NPC on page 393 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook.





## THE HIRED GUN

Ternace Del is a solo mercenary who has spent the past half-circuit living in a rented room just off the Drunnels. Recently, a dark-robed, sombre man approached Del with a vague offer, promising a large payout in Thaurian bone chips. Del turned down the job, not because of the nature of the payment, but because he found the man extremely untrustworthy. “Put it down to experience, but there was something about him I didn’t like,” recounts Del, if asked. More concretely, the man offered few details about the job, other than that it would occur aboard the *Oath Unspoken* at some point during their journey. Additionally, he strongly implied that the job might put them at odds with the ship’s captain, something Del wants no part of.

Del’s accent is clearly not native to Desoleum. He mostly keeps to himself, though he has found some work settling disputes between merchants. There are whispers that Del was previously in the employ of a now-disgraced noble family, perhaps even from beyond Askellon. An ageing but still vigorous man, his wary eyes and deeply creased face indicate one who whose past wears on him. If needed, Del can be represented by the Hired Lasgun NPC profile on page 439 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook.



## HERETICS IN THE CROWD

In order to carry out their plot to take control of the *Oath Unspoken*, the Children of the Inheritance need assistance in the form of additional fighters and weapons. To this end, the cultists are recruiting from two primary sources: the mercenaries and hired guns who offer their services in the Drunnels, and the outcasts and mutants who dwell in the black holds and other forgotten places of the ship. As well as manpower, the Inheritors are seeking to purchase weaponry both for their own use and to arm the rabble they recruit for this mission.

In the pursuit of this mission, two cultists of the Children of the Inheritance are spending time in the Drunnels, shopping for weapons and hiring mercenaries. These two individuals come from the group of Inheritors who boarded the ship unbeknownst to the Sable Traders, so as not to raise the smugglers’ suspicions about the cult’s plan.

If the Game Master desires, he can also introduce agents from the Mournful Song into this encounter. These cultists aboard the *Oath Unspoken* are observing both the Acolytes and the Inheritors, so it is very likely that they witness any encounters between the two. However, they wish to avoid revealing their presence, and so do not involve themselves in a fight unless it becomes clear that the Acolytes are likely to lose without assistance. In this case, the Mournful Song members do intervene, attacking their rival cultists, and then attempt to withdraw as soon as the battle clearly swings in the Acolytes favour, so as to avoid being caught.

## ENCOUNTERING THE CULTISTS

There are two primary methods by which the Acolytes might encounter the Inheritors in the Drunnels. If the Acolytes learn of their activity from Ternace Del or Ghorace Malk, they might actively seek them out. The cultists pay for their purchases in Thaurian bone chips whenever possible, and asking around based on this detail can lead the Acolytes to the Inheritors with a successful **Challenging (+0) Inquiry test**. Alternatively, the Acolytes might simply notice the Inheritors as they conduct their investigation. This second option is less likely if the Acolytes’ presence is known aboard the ship, for in this case the Inheritors take additional precautions. Before this encounter, the GM should attempt a

**Subtlety test** for the Acolytes. If the warband fails this test, the Inheritors are aware of their presence aboard the *Oath Unspoken* and are taking additional steps to hide their own activities. In this case, the Inheritors disguise themselves in plain brown robes or coats, easily blending in with the masses of pilgrims and other itinerants, and actively look for the Acolytes’ presence.



After the Acolytes have spent some time in the Drunnels, the GM should call for each of them to make a **Challenging (+0) Awareness test**. For best effect, the GM should have this occur when the Acolytes are otherwise engaged in a conversation or trade, imposing an additional  $-10$  penalty to the test due to this distraction. Acolytes who succeed notice a suspicious individual nearby, haggling with a merchant over an assortment of lasguns and stubbers. If the Acolytes have remained subtle, the Inheritor is wearing the dark and bone-ornamented robes of his order. Acolytes can recognise this (either from the original Desoleum crime scene or from the Trade Sable encampment in the wastes) on a successful **Ordinary (+10) Awareness or Logic test**. However, if the Acolytes failed the prior **Subtlety test**, the Inheritor is wearing plain robes, not unlike those of thousands of others aboard the ship. In this case, the Acolytes' tests suffer a  $-30$  penalty.

An Acolyte who succeeds at this test notices that the pale, sombre individual is offering large quantities of bone chips in trade. If Thaurian bone chips have not previously come to the Acolytes attention, they might not realise the significance. In this case, have any of the Acolytes who witness the bone chips make a **Difficult (-10) Awareness test** or **Routine (+20) Common Lore (Askellon Sector) test** to determine whether they recognise the Thaurian currency.

## TURNING THE TABLES

If the Acolytes' presence is known to the Children of the Inheritance, then the cultists in the Drunnels are watching for signs of them, and have called for reinforcements. In this case, the two cultists stick close to one another, with one scanning the crowd while the other conducts business. An additional number of Inheritor cultists wait nearby, enough to provide a mild challenge for the Acolytes (one cultist with the profile on page 107 per Acolyte, adjusted as necessary using the threat threshold rules). These can either hiding amongst the crowd or sitting in a tavern or cookhouse.

The Inheritor cultist watching the crowd makes an **Opposed Ordinary (+10) Awareness test** against the Acolytes' **Stealth or Deceive tests**, depending on how they are attempting to remain undetected and with modifiers based on what specifics methods they are using. If the PCs are taking no actions of this nature, the GM can instead use a **Subtlety test** to oppose the Inheritor's **Awareness test**.

If the Inheritor cultist on watch wins the **Opposed test**, he recognises the Player Characters based on their appearance or behaviour. He signals to the back-up, and goes to alert the Inheritor conducting business. The Inheritors do not wish to confront the Acolytes at this time, thereby giving away their numbers and potentially their plans. The cultists' intention is to quickly withdraw from the Drunnels, without confronting the Acolytes. However, if the Acolytes intercept the cultists (from winning the **Opposed test** and remaining undetected), the additional Inheritors waiting in the wings reveal themselves. The cultists attack the Acolytes in an attempt primarily to drive them back and allow for a retreat, or alternatively to try to kill them if the Acolytes do not fall back.

## COLLATERAL DAMAGE

The Drunnels are crowded at all times of the day, making a fight a dangerous prospect. The GM should make sure the players are aware of this. If the Inheritors flee and the Acolytes pursue, they and the fleeing cultists make extended **Opposed Difficult (-10) Athletics tests**, as they attempt to either weave or shove their way through the crowd. An Acolyte who achieves 6 degrees of success over the Inheritors catches up to his quarry, although the Inheritors are not willing to give up without a fight. Any Inheritor who obtains 6 degrees of success over the Acolytes successfully eludes them and escapes.

If a fight breaks out, the bystanders attempt to clear the area, but the sheer number of people in the crowd makes this difficult. It takes 5 rounds for the area around the fight to clear, though this can be adjusted at the GM's discretion. Until the area is clear, all ranged attacks suffer a  $-20$  penalty and all melee attacks suffer a  $-10$  penalty. Any unsuccessful attack tests with three or more degrees of failure instead hit a bystander as they blunder into the way of a striking blade or run through the field of fire.

Any character can take cover amid the crowd, until it disperses. Generally, this covers a characters' legs and body locations, and potentially one arm. Treat crowd members as cover with an armour value of 10. A person used as cover in this way suffers damage similar or identical to that of the attack's actual target, at the GM's discretion (or can simply be assumed to suffer **Critical damage** and be killed, for the sake of simplicity).

The dense crowd counts as a treacherous environment (see page 246 of the **DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook**) for purposes of Movement. Vendor stalls, carts, makeshift buildings, and even assorted ship support structures (see the **Shipboard Combat sidebar** on page 69) can all also serve as cover with an armour value of 4 to 8 depending on the type.

If the Acolytes manage to capture any of the Inheritors alive, the cultists can provide only limited information. The captives are fanatical, and extracting information requires **Opposed Hard (-20) Interrogation or Charm tests** to succeed in questioning them against their **Ordinary (+10) Willpower tests**. Even if the Acolytes can force information from a captive Inheritor, he speaks in terms that seem both contradictory and nonsensical. The Game Master should reference **The Children of the Inheritance** on page 112 for more information about the Inheritors and their beliefs, and portraying them in-game. However, because Parathas Hayne knew there was a chance the cultists sent to the Drunnels could be compromised, he intentionally withheld information from them concerning his plans. While they know that their mission is to obtain weapons and warriors to fight for their cause, they do not have knowledge of Hayne's plan to capture the *Oath Unspoken*—this information is reserved for higher-ranking cultists.





## THE NARCO-SMUGGLER

There is more afoot on the *Oath Unspoken* than the actions of Sable Traders and Inheritors. On a vessel that amounts to a voidborn city, there is always crime. On a vessel that travels between systems, that crime is bound to include smuggling of one variety of another. It is not the Acolytes' duty to stop every crime occurring aboard the *Oath Unspoken*; that task falls to the Anzaforr Dynasty's armsmen, the Adeptus Arbites, the planetary Enforcers at either destination, or perhaps the Imperial Navy, depending on its nature and scale. In any case, to attempt to truly police the entire vessel is impossible for any number of operatives, and for the Acolytes to attempt to do so would be laughable were it not such a waste of their abilities. However, sometimes the nature of a crime is not at first apparent, and all good Acolytes know that seemingly mundane crimes often mask the most profane of heretical activity. As such, while investigating the presence of Trade Sable smugglers aboard the *Oath Unspoken*, the Acolytes might become aware of the narco-smuggler Jarrad Cincayde, or vice versa.

Cincayde's activities are doubtless illegal, but they are also beneath the concern of the Acolytes. However, should the Acolytes learn this fact at a time when they are in position to act on it, they must decide if dealing with Cincayde is worth their time, effort, and the risk. Making these kinds of determinations is a real challenge that always faces Acolytes in service of an Inquisitor, and in addition is a great opportunity to explore the convictions of the Acolytes. The GM has some expectation of the kind of game his players enjoy, so must use his discretion when managing this encounter. However, though he is not involved with the Trade Sable, investigating him can lead the Acolytes back to the right course. Should the Acolytes investigate Cincayde, they can find that he is using dead bodies interred in the Corpse-Holds to move his contraband. Following this lead to the Corpse-Holds brings the Acolytes closer to the Inheritors, who have made their abode amongst the *Oath Unspoken's* cargo of the dead. Canny Acolytes might recognise that capturing Cincayde can also be used as an opportunity to gain favour with the ship's armsmen and her captain, something that can be very useful whilst on the ship.

Cincayde is a solo operator, with no direct allegiance to any organisation. However, he has strong ties to the Insurrati of Hive Desoleum, which uses its criminal network to distribute the chems that Cincayde provides. He specialises in retrieving difficult-to-acquire ingredients, and has made a number of trips aboard the *Oath Unspoken* to Thaur, in order to obtain the key ingredient for the proscribed chem known as mindshade. Because Cincayde is en route to Thaur, he is not currently carrying the corpse-crawler extract (see **Mindshade** on this page), although he is carrying a small number of doses of the refined drug. Additionally, he increases his profits by smuggling more commonplace chems to unload on Thaur, including obscura.

There are multiple ways the Acolytes can learn of or encounter Cincayde. Cincayde has made several trips between Desoleum and Thaur, and so one of the occupants of the Drunnels can identify him as a frequent traveller. Because he is clearly not a pilgrim, odds are good that his making the trip for less commendable reasons. The information broker Calvan Sterr can also name Cincayde as an established smuggler.

Cincayde can usually be found in the Drunnels, where he is renting a merchant's storeroom as his living quarters. This small space contains stacked crates and boxes of non-perishable goods, his bedroll and personal effects, and a single chemical lantern.

Because he generally operates alone, Cincayde does his best to avoid entanglements with authorities of any kind. He is most likely to run for it if the Acolytes confront him, or if he becomes suspicious that they are looking into him. If the Acolytes force his back to the wall, Cincayde might fight back, but if he believes he can strike a deal or otherwise benefit through cooperation, he is willing to do so. Often, the Inquisition's reputation precedes its members and its Acolytes, and few criminals would expect any mercy at the hands of an Inquisitor or his servants. Therefore, if the Acolytes' nature is known aboard the ship, the GM should make a **Subtlety test** to determine if Cincayde realises who they are, in which case he would rather fight than surrender. Of course, in reality things are more complicated, and many Inquisitors and Acolytes are willing to cooperate with mundane criminals in order to combat the true threats to humanity—though such criminals rarely know who it is they are assisting.

As a smuggler, Cincayde knows of the Trade Sable, and what he knows frightens him. In addition to being utterly ruthless, they deal in truly dangerous goods that he would never touch. He does know some of their signs, including a penchant for dark furs and use of facial scars, although he does not know all the details of the scars' meaning. However, he knows enough to have recognised two Sable Traders making their way through the Corpse Holds. Cincayde has a **Clever Personality** and a **Disposition of 55**; see page 106 for his full profile. If the Acolytes properly bribe, trick, or coerce him using an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Influence, Intimidate, Charm, or even Deceive test** against his **Ordinary (+10) Willpower test**, he can take them to the spot; see **Amongst the Dead** on page 91.

### MINDSHADE

Mindshade is a proscribed narcotic that produces a powerful sense of detachment in the user. In most forms it is a murky, dark liquid with a slight green tint. Mindshade is rare due to the uniqueness of its ingredients, and so demand is high. It is particularly popular in Hive Desoleum, where users take the drug to numb the pain of ceaseless drudgery. Unlike some drugs, a user retains control of his faculties, albeit at a diminished capacity, allowing him to continue working without likelihood of detection and punishment.

When a user injects a dose, he feels an immense sense of detachment for 1d5 hours. During this time, the user feels like he is an observer to his own life. Although he retains control over his actions, his reflexes are greatly dulled, as are his emotions. While under the effects of mindshade, a character suffers -30 to Agility tests and -20 to all other tests, except for Willpower tests for Fear or Intimidation, for which he instead gains a +30 bonus. While dosed, he cannot make any Reactions.

Though this fact is far from common knowledge, requiring a **Very Hard (-20) Common Lore (Askellon Sector) or Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Beasts) test**, mindshade can be made only from the excretions of corpse-crawlers, horrific and dangerous creatures native to Thaur. The drug is addictive, and has an **Availability of Common** in Hive Desoleum (it is instead **Very Rare** elsewhere).



## OTHER ENCOUNTERS

### ABOARD THE *OATH UNSPOKEN*

As the Acolytes are to be aboard the *Oath Unspoken* for roughly two weeks, possibly longer, there are many opportunities for other encounters aboard the massive ship should the group desire. These encounters do not necessarily have to have any direct bearing on the Acolytes' investigations, but can add flavour to their experiences whilst in the Warp on their way to Thaur.

Once the Acolytes have settled a bit after their abrupt and possibly unexpected arrival aboard, and have visited the Drunnels or possibly some of the other shipboard locations, the GM can gauge player reactions to the voyage. Given the vagaries of Warp travel, the two-week estimate can be adjusted to best fit the needs of the group. If the group finds the vessel and their trip to be a rewarding part of the adventure, the GM can use these additional shipboard encounters to provide greater depth to the Warp-passage. These allow the Acolytes to more fully explore the vessel and its inhabitants.

While these encounters do not have to provide direct support for the Acolytes in their quest to eradicate the xenos artefact trade, they can give the Acolytes opportunities to gain favour (or create friction) with various ship's crewmen, religious authorities, criminal factions, and other powers within the vessel. The GM can also use them to offer subtle clues if the warband appears off-track or in need of direction. Such encounters can also be used to provide a rising sense of tension during the trip, as if the ship itself knows the mortal peril it faces.

Many of these encounters can arise out of travels through the vessel, or from words overheard in the Drunnels or other areas. They can be ideally woven into the adventure narrative as the Acolytes explore their temporary home on the way to Thaur, and occur on the way to a destination or at the destination itself. The GM could also save some or all of these for the return journey to Desoleum (if the Acolytes' Inquisitor desires them to return there). The encounters are also nonspecific to the *Oath Unspoken*, so that they could be used alternatively on other vessels, large space stations, or even suitable planetary locations such as a hive city.

Most of these can occur at any time during the voyage, and be intertwined with the other encounters in the Drunnels or with Rogue Trader Anzaforr (see *A Dinner with the Lord Captain* on page 86). However, the GM should probably deploy any encounters he wishes to use before the events in the Corpse-Holds and the battle for the bridge. This keeps the rising threat from the cult from abating during the final stages of the passage to Thaur, and ensures the trip has a suitably climactic conclusion.

### DECK COLLAPSE!

Millennia-old ship construction finally gives out, possibly from overloading or some esoteric failure of the grav-plating. The once-solid flooring underfoot shakes and screams before crumbling into a tangle of pylons and broken metal. The collapse triggers the destruction of the deck below, and wide areas of the ship might become impossible to traverse. Pilgrims loudly cry that the end day has arrived, and the Emperor's gripping hand is upon them in final judgement. The Acolytes might be caught in the collapse and struggle to escape, or aid in rescue efforts to help support their cover identities and gain allies in battles to come.

### FOOD RIOT

One of the ship's nutrient vats has failed, or stores of provisions are found to be so decayed that even ravenous hullghasts would not touch them. Harsh rationing is to be implemented for the associated deck section. As word of rationing measures spreads across the Drunnels, agitators seek to rile up a mob sufficient to storm nearby decks for food. Should this happen, the riots can spread to even more decks and threaten order on board. The Acolytes could step in to aid the armsmen and quash the riot, or use the event to investigate areas stripped of normal levels of protection for clues as to the Rogue Trader's true motivations.

### PIT FIGHTS

The Acolytes stumble across a forgotten hold, filled with yelling crew and even several groups of pilgrims. Two massive fighters are at the centre, brutalising each other with bare fists, chainblades, and teeth. Wagers of bone-chips and ration chits fly through the humid air along with blood and mangled flesh. Here the Acolytes might show off their martial prowess, impressing (or intimidating) others whilst also winning some extra coin in the process.

### PUBLIC EXECUTION

A large hold next to the Drunnels is packed with spectators for the upcoming execution of a notorious criminal. A massive excruciation booth has been set up for the preceding ritual cleansing, and vox-proclamations from the Rogue Trader's Chief Magister warn passersby of the crime that merited the sentence. Such a criminal could be very grateful and very useful to the Acolytes in their pursuits, should they wish to attempt a rescue.

### THE SECRET CHAPEL

Deep below the main decks is a small hold that has been converted into a place of worship. Here, an escaped prisoner from the old wars between the Rogue Trader dynasties leads the wretched underdeck scum in prayer, truly a powerful bastion of faith to the Emperor. Should Anzaforr learn of its existence and the identity of their pastor, though, the Acolytes could be richly rewarded in both material rewards and gain powerful favours.

### THERMAL FAILURE

The local temperature regulation mechanisms along this deck are breaking down. The massive coolant lines, used to dissipate the extreme heat of leaking power conduits and plasma drives, shudder ominously or become frenzied and pump so vigorously that thick ice forms everywhere. Pilgrims line the way to the tech-shrines, desperate to find succour from the impending disaster. The Acolytes could selflessly display their knowledge of the proper ways to sooth the turmoil in the *Oath's* machine spirits and help repair the failing systems, or perhaps instead devise localised relief for those who can exchange useful information for comfort.

### UNDERDECK INCURSION

Undesirables from the lower decks have found a passage into the main decks and the Drunnels, and are running amok. Their mere smell is impacting trade in the market, to say nothing of theft and assaults. Rumours fly thick that there might even be mutants among them. The Acolytes could aid in ending this eruption, or use these new-found passages to better explore the ship.



## UNWELCOME GUESTS

A flock of horrid Chaos Furies erupts within the ship, due to a momentary failure in the ship's ancient Gellar Field or perhaps an emergent rogue psyker's nascent powers igniting. Their leathery skin is the colour of wet blood and covered with unholy brands burnt into their flesh, and their claws gleam like brass daggers as they rend apart the living. If any Acolytes or others possess any of the xenos relics, these Daemons seem especially eager to attack those individuals with even greater bloodthirstiness.

These foul Warp-spawn (see page 417 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**) serve the Blood God, and their attacks gain the Proven (5) weapon quality. Acolytes with the **Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)** skill recognise their allegiance with no test required. Why Khorne would have an interest in these artefacts should not become clear to the Acolytes until the climax of **FORGOTTEN GODS**.

## WYRD BURNING

A mob has gathered in one of the many crew meal halls to bring impromptu justice to a suspected wyrd. Shouts decry his sins, from causing an Aquila to tarnish and crumble to making a servitor's augmetics sputter and fail, or being unable to fully sing hymns to the Emperor in this morning's mass. A pyre of live plasma venting ducts is being installed in a pit of sheet plasteel to cleanse the taint of the rogue psyker. Chanting crowds gather, eager for the fire to bring death to a hated mutant, and the entire area soon falls into anarchy as other suspects are found and readied to also be burned at the torch. Armsmen and senior crew attempt to regain control before the ship is damaged, but nothing it seems can stop the overwhelming terror and paranoia that has gripped the crowd.

The wyrd could be a poor unfortunate caught up by the fearful mob, or an actual psyker if desired. In the latter case, the Warp-Caller profile from page 409 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook** can be used. If rescued, he could become a valuable ally; alternatively, if the Acolytes execute him themselves they could gain respect from the crowds as well as from the armsmen for cleanly dealing with the situation.



# A DINNER WITH THE LORD-CAPTAIN

*“On the contrary, the greatest tool in my arsenal is not a weapon, but my hospitality. After all, I have plenty of corpses aboard my vessel already. What do I profit by tossing one more body into the holds? But a favour, from the right place, at the right time—that is invaluable.”*

—Rogue Trader Aristide Anzaforr

At some point during the events of this chapter, the Acolytes are all but certain to encounter Rogue Trader Anzaforr. If they do not meet him sooner, then this occurs when they fight off the cultists and save the *Oath Unspoken*, as Anzaforr is on the bridge at that time, even if he is unaware of the plot. It is very likely, however, that the Acolytes encounter Anzaforr prior to the dramatic conclusion of the chapter. The two most probable ways for this to happen are either for the Acolytes to seek an audience with the Lord-Captain, or for him to become aware of the Acolytes' presence on board and request a meeting with them.

In either case, the Rogue Trader arranges for the Acolytes to meet with him at a formal banquet. While Anzaforr presents this as a purely benevolent gesture, the event is actually both to put the Acolytes at ease and to reinforce Anzaforr's position—they are his dinner guests, just as they are guests aboard his ship. Anzaforr spares no expense; on a small level, presenting such a lavish meal serves to establish the guests as recipients of a gift from the Lord-Captain. This in effect means they already owe him a favour in his eyes, before any discussion has even occurred.

There are a number of possibilities for how the Acolytes might receive the invitation to dine with the Lord-Captain. Should the Acolytes seek out the Rogue Trader, they encounter only his servants, who explain that he is unavailable, and that they will pass on the message. A time later, a servant finds the Acolytes to formally invite them to dine with the Lord-Captain. If the Acolytes' actions reveal their presence aboard the ship, the Rogue Trader likewise sends a servant to deliver his invitation.

Assuming the Acolytes act in such a way as to potentially reveal their presence and their importance (whether as Acolytes of an Inquisitor, important servants of the Imperium in their own right, or under whatever cover story they have assumed), the GM should make a **Subtlety test**. If the warband fails the test, word of their presence has reached Anzaforr. If the test succeeds, then the Acolytes have not yet caught Anzaforr's attention, and the GM should test again after additional time passes or events occur. The time to make the first such test is left to the GM's discretion; it is recommended that it wait until the Acolytes have had some time to explore the ship, unless they immediately take actions to draw attention to themselves. If the Acolytes' Subtlety falls below 30, though, the Rogue Trader automatically becomes aware of their presence and sends an invitation. Anzaforr employs numerous spies and informants throughout his domain, ensuring that he can maintain a tight grip on his vessel.

A third way the Rogue Trader could become aware of the Acolytes has already been discussed under *The Lord-Captain's Law*, on page 74. Whether through raising the fervour of the pilgrims or through some other act, if the Acolytes come to the attention of Anzaforr's armsmen, it might lead to a dinner invitation—if the Acolytes reveal something of their purpose or identity and show that they are not merely troublemakers for the armsmen to deal with, that is.

## THE BANQUET

Regardless of how the Acolytes receive their invitation, when they arrive at the banquet hall at the appointed time, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*As you approach the banquet hall, a gilded servitor acknowledges your presence and pushes open the great double-doors. Within, a chandelier of gold-plated skulls supporting electro-candles casts a glittering luminescence across the massive chamber. Works of art, including paintings, tapestries, and sculptures atop pedestals line the walls. The centrepiece of the room is the banquet table, carved from finest Illandrian oak, each of the table legs ends in an elaborately carved lion's foot. Already, numerous dishes and decanters cover the table top. The table appears to seat at least fifty guests, but currently only a few are present, with an additional place setting for each of you. At the far end of the table, a man in stately garb stands. He gestures to the table, greeting you.*

When the Acolytes arrive, Anzaforr is sitting at the table with his seneschal, Gaivius Heln, and the Eldar Morrinoe. As the Acolytes approach, the seneschal rises and bows, but the Eldar only acknowledges their presence with a faint nod. She is clearly not human, something the Acolytes recognise with no test required. A successful **Routine (+20) Forbidden Lore (Xenos-Eldar) test** is needed to reveal her species, however; two or more degrees of success on this test also indicates she is a Ranger.

Anzaforr greets the Acolytes and motions for them to sit, before taking his own seat again. Before the Acolytes can say anything, he asks them what they would like to drink and motions for a highly augmented servant to come forward and take their orders. If the Acolytes try to broach any topic of note, Anzaforr insists on getting their drink orders first. He then asks his servant to explain the items they will be dining on, all delicacies from across the sector, at length. The GM is encouraged to play this for comic effect, as the Rogue Trader politely insists that the Acolytes hold off on “any talk of business.”

Once the Acolytes have made their selections and heard the menu, Anzaforr is open to talking. He has a **Confident Personality** with a **Disposition** of 60; see page 103 for his complete profile. How the conversation progresses depends both on how the Acolytes conduct themselves and on what the Rogue Trader already knows about them, or discovers during the course of the conversation. If he knows or suspects that the Acolytes serve an Inquisitor, or even another powerful master, he attempts to gain their trust and favour, hoping to benefit from the relationship later on. Anzaforr is willing to do almost anything within reason to assist the Acolytes in their mission, and he asks for nothing directly in return. However, it should be clear to the Acolytes that he expects a favour in the future.





There are several ways the GM can accomplish this. Early on in the conversation, he asks probing questions about the Acolytes' resources, and that of their master. The Lord-Captain is understanding, though, if the Acolytes are hesitant to reveal much information, smiling and nodding knowingly. However, he continues in his attempts to discern the nature of the Acolytes' master, albeit more subtly.

The Rogue Trader is willing to put his resources at the Acolytes disposal, including the assistance of his armsmen and other crew. He can also allow the Acolytes access to his shipping records and passenger rosters, although he feigns hurt at any implication that he has something to hide.

If the Acolytes have already uncovered the Inheritors' plot to destroy the *Oath Unspoken*, they might take this opportunity to warn the Lord-Captain of the threat. Anzaforr displays some amusement at the idea that the cultists believe themselves to have an actual chance of succeeding, but he agrees that such boldness is certainly cause for concern.

## PARLEYING WITH THE ROGUE TRADER

The banquet with Anzaforr can be handled based on the preferences of the GM and players. If the players are eager to return to their investigation, the GM can handle the dinner largely narratively. However, the Lord-Captain is an important individual, and it is recommended that the GM run the encounter in some detail, using the rules for social interaction and punctuating the roleplaying with skill tests at appropriate intervals—particularly if any of the Acolytes are adept in social situations. He as eager to

assist the Acolytes, but only so long as he feels he can benefit. Anzaforr has full confidence in his own shrewdness, however, and is certain that assisting the Acolytes will work to his advantage in the long run, even if the Acolytes do not realise it. Ultimately, unless the Acolytes behave in an appallingly antagonistic manner, Anzaforr provides whatever assistance he can, within reason, with the expectation that they (or their master) will someday repay him for it, in some way. Anzaforr is almost always cordial, and is a master charmer. If the Acolytes confront him directly on the matter of his expectations, he attempts to deflect their concerns.

Anzaforr is also willing to talk about himself and his dynasty. He freely says that the open war with the Surena Dynasty was a mistake, and makes a great show of expressing his remorse. In truth, Anzaforr sees it as yet another business venture, one with mixed results, and he relishes his own success in it. Acolytes who succeed at an **Opposed Hard (-20) Scrutiny** test against his **Challenging (+0) Willpower** test doubt the Rogue Trader's sincerity on this matter. If the topic of conversation turns to the Lord-Captain's own part in the battles against the Surena, his pride is difficult to conceal and they gain a +20 bonus to their test. If pressed on the matter, Anzaforr insists that he regrets the overall war, yet does feel a sense of pride in his personal accomplishments. He then goes on to say that such pride is surely a sin, and that he will perform proper penance. If the Acolytes ask him about the Surena, he speaks at some length about his battles against them, his grudging respect for their former patriarch, Rostam Surena. He lingers wistfully on his one defeat during the war, at the hands of Banu Surena, their current leader.



In his telling of the tale, Banu's daring ambush in the midst of the Kashen Wrecks cost him his chance to win the war decisively and his leg, which he has now replaced with a sturdier cybernetic limb. He only escaped, he describes with considerable relish, by banking his own vessel off of a piece of large debris, allowing it to turn more quickly (at the cost of several expendable decks) and slip out of her trap. Despite his cutting words for her unexpected, underhanded attack upon his vessel years ago, any Acolyte who succeeds at an **Ordinary (+10) Scrutiny test** can see that Aristide clearly admires his counterpart's boldness and audacity. If the Acolytes have had contact with Banu Surena, Aristide quickly inquires how she chose to recount the story of their encounter (and whatever else she might have said of her old nemesis).

For his part, Gaivius Heln says little unless the Acolytes or Anzaforr directly pose him a question. Anzaforr turns to Heln whenever he requires a specific item of data or statistical information, which the seneschal is invariably able to produce from memory or, in rare cases, after consulting a data-slate. The one exception is information of a delicate or perhaps incriminating nature, in which case he explains that he must consult his records to determine the answer. If needed, Heln can be represented by the Consortium Merchant Magnate profile on page 398 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**.

## THE XENOS AMONG US

The Acolytes might be quite surprised to find a xenos aboard the *Oath Unspoken*, and apparently as a trusted member of the crew, at that. Acolytes can perform an **Challenging (+0) Common Lore (Rogue Traders or Askellon Sector) test** to remember the concept of xenos serving with Rogue Traders, and of the "sanctioned xenos," a rare circumstance in which the Adeptus Terra permits a xenos' presence within the Imperium's borders and even on the surfaces of its worlds while under the eye of an individual of sufficient influence. Such arrangements are extremely rare, and limited primarily to Rogue Traders, since few others have the opportunity to engage with aliens. It is not unheard of for some Inquisitors to make such arrangements and alliances with xenos when they are necessary to the protection of humanity.

If the Acolytes question Anzaforr about the Eldar, he uses it as an opportunity to point out that he has nothing to hide from them. If the Acolytes ask, Anzaforr explains that he first encountered Morrinoe several years ago, and that her intervention saved him from the predation of Eldar pirates. In the aftermath of the incident, she stayed aboard his ship for a time, and was of great assistance in numerous matters, several times averting crises aboard the vessel that would have taken a terrible toll upon its passengers and crew. To cement their business arrangement once it became clear that it would be semi-permanent, Anzaforr sought sanctioning for her. The Acolytes might have many more questions about this, as well they should, but information is less than forthcoming. In fact, Anzaforr does not know Morrinoe's true reasons for serving alongside him. He suspects, as he does of everyone, that she has her own reasons, but as long as she continues to provide him with able assistance, he does not wish to jeopardise matters by prying into her own affairs.

Morrinoe secretly originally hails from Craftworld Miandrothe; this craftworld's existence is known to only a handful of humans within the sector and this fact is guarded extremely well. As with all Rangers, she is truly beholden only to her own wanderlust. However, she maintains contact with her Craftworld and monitors Thaur—and Lord Pyre—to guarantee that he continues to maintain the ancient bargain as discussed on page 121. Her position aboard Rogue Trader Anzaforr's *Oath Unspoken* provides a convenient manner of visiting Thaur with some regularity—and also allows to pursue her Craftworld's other agendas as related to the sector. Under no circumstances does Morrinoe reveal anything of her true reasons for serving with Lord-Captain Anzaforr, or even allow a discussion about her origins to begin. See page 105 for her complete profile.

## TREATING WITH THE ALIEN

Morrinoe offers no information about herself, and outright refuses to answer any such questions if they Acolytes ask her directly. If the Acolytes make any attempt to invoke authority over her, Morrinoe shows amusement. Should it become clear to Anzaforr that the Eldar's presence is problematic, he excuses her from the meeting, and she leaves with a cryptic comment about seeing the Acolytes again someday.

## GM GUIDANCE: ROLEPLAYING MORRINOE

When portraying the Eldar Ranger, the GM should try to get across her unsettling alien nature. Though Eldar bear some superficial physical similarities to humans, they move with a disturbingly fluid motion, which some misguided souls might call graceful. What sets them apart even more, however, is their alien mind and worldview. Morrinoe's mind, like that of all Eldar, simply does not work like that of a human. This is more than just a cultural difference, although that is certainly part of it, but is rather an intrinsic one. Eldar live exceedingly long lives, and experience life in a way incomprehensible to humans. Their senses and emotions finely tuned and more sensitive, experiencing both negative and positive experiences with much greater depth.

Rangers tend to be different from other Eldar; they possess a wanderlust and willingness to interact with the galaxy's lesser races. In particular, Morrinoe possesses a developed and pronounced (if grim) sense of humour, which she employs in attempts to connect with the aliens she must deal with. Unfortunately, her sense of humour is simply not like that of any humans, and it can come across anywhere from nonsensical to antagonistic. Further compounding this is the fact that humans, including the Acolytes, find her all but impossible to read. Her mannerisms, facial expressions, and the inflections with which she speaks her strangely accented Gothic are all so alien as to be inscrutable.



During the meeting, Morrinoe speaks little, other than to make the occasional puzzling comment. In fact, these seemingly incongruous statements are Morrinoe's idea of humour, which does not translate well to the humans. However, if the Acolytes need any assistance convincing Anzaforr of the importance of their mission, she readily speaks to reinforce their arguments. It should be clear that Morrinoe knows quite a bit about the situation, although she is unwilling to explain what exactly she knows or how. However, she seems to believe it important that the Acolytes succeed in their mission, and she can offer some limited information if the Acolytes do not yet know anything of the nature of their enemy.

If the Acolytes ask, she can confirm that the Children of the Inheritance are from Thaur, as are the strange xenos artefacts. She can also confirm that the artefacts have no connection to her own kind, and finds it somewhat insulted if any of the Acolytes imply or state such a connection. However, she is unwilling to reveal any information about whoever did create the artefacts. When the Acolytes conclude their conversation with her, she wishes them well in their upcoming endeavour upon Thaur. Her words are chosen with inhuman precision, but are seemingly genuine as a **Easy (+30) Scrutiny test** reveals even with her inhuman expressions.

## BIGGER PROBLEMS

Some Acolytes of a more puritanical bent might have a problem with the presence of a xenos aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. There is certainly nothing wrong with this, and it can provide a great opportunity for roleplaying. Any Imperial citizen raised among the teachings of the Ecclesiarchy should object to the presence of a xenos, for the Adeptus Ministrorum teaches that all aliens are unclean and anathema to Mankind. However, should the Acolyte contemplate violence or an attempt to censure or rebuke the Rogue Trader, it might be necessary for the GM to remind him that Morrinoe is a sanctioned xenos—as long as she stays within the purview of Rogue Trader Anzaforr, the Adeptus Terra permits her presence within Imperial space.

Additionally, the Acolytes are concerned with the work of their Inquisitor—protecting the future of Mankind, not meting out justice for doctrinal infractions. Making an enemy of the Rogue Trader while aboard his ship is certainly not conducive to the successful completion of their mission, which is always of paramount importance. Attempting to attack the Eldar or take any action against her or the Rogue Trader would be an immensely short-sighted move, and one that might have incalculable consequences if it means they cannot reach Thaur and stop the Children of the Inheritance.

## FOR GOOD OR ILL

What exactly the Acolytes gain from their meeting with Rogue Trader Anzaforr depends on what they request and how they comport themselves. Ultimately, the GM must use his discretion in adjudicating the consequences, both positive and negative, and their influence throughout the remainder of this chapter's events. Following are some of the potential effects, based on the Acolytes' most likely requests. In addition, the Rogue Trader is happy to offer his own suggestions.

The Acolytes might request that Anzaforr keep their presence and mission a secret, using an **Opposed Routine (+20) Charm, Deceive**, or even **Intimidate test**, against his own **Ordinary (+10) Willpower test**. Alternatively, GM can simply perform a **Disposition test** for him, which if successful counts as the Acolytes winning the **Opposed test**.

If the Acolytes win, he attempts to comply with the Acolytes' request, at least for the most part. In this case, the Acolytes lose **1d5-1 Subtlety**, as the Rogue Trader speaks with his senior officers and even drops hints to some of his more noteworthy guests. If the Acolytes do not specifically ask for the Rogue Trader's discretion or he wins the test, reduce the warband's **Subtlety** by **1d5+2**, as Anzaforr makes proclamations to his crew and entreats his other guests for assistance with the warband's mission. However, if it is known to the crew that the Acolytes have the favour of the Lord-Captain, the PCs gain a **+20 bonus** to all **Influence tests** for the duration of their stay on his ship.

Whether or not they ask for his discretion, or even if they request that he not interfere in their business, Anzaforr inserts himself into their investigations, attempting to assist them by whatever means he can. This includes contacting them frequently to offer assistance, providing information both true and false, and directing his crew to assist them. This "assistance" can and should occur at the most inopportune times, disrupting the warband's investigations or other activities.

In addition to his legitimate attempts to help the Acolytes, Anzaforr makes an effort to keep tabs on their activities. There are a number of reasons for this, including to obtain information that might prove useful in future negotiations, and to ensure that they do not undertake any actions that might harm his vessel.

## ARMED ASSISTANCE

Anzaforr is happy to offer the assistance of his armsmen, and to arrange a meeting with their commander Jyrgan Hessiial, if they have not already met him. To an extent, the Acolytes can offer direction and guidance to the armsmen. However, the armsmen, and Hessiial, perform their own operations based on whatever information the Acolytes provide. If Hessiial believes there to be members of a dangerous cult or of the Trade Sable aboard the vessel, he does whatever he deems necessary to deal with the problem. In essence, if the Acolytes intend to continue with a discreet operation, the armsmen make this difficult as they begin going deck-to-deck, scouring the ship for signs of cultists and smugglers, thus forcing the Acolytes' targets deeper into hiding.



## AMONGST THE ELITE

The *Oath Unspoken's* banquet hall is located near the cabins and staterooms set aside for visiting nobles and dignitaries. During the course of their meeting, possibly as it concludes, Anzaforr offers the Acolytes lodgings in his finest staterooms. In fact, he all but insists on this, in the most gracious way, of course.

The accommodations are indeed luxurious, and the cabins are adorned with opulent decorations. Comfortable beds, spacious wash basins, and lounging areas complete with upholstered divans are all provided, should the Acolytes accept the invitation. In addition, servants of the Anzaforr Dynasty wait at the Acolytes' every whim.

The Acolytes might take the opportunity before or after their meeting with Anzaforr to inquire amongst the nobility and other important guests. Although the Acolytes should not necessarily know this at first, the nobles are even further removed from the activities of the Inheritors aboard the ship than the other guests or the crew, and consequently have less information to offer. At the GM's discretion, the nobles, artisans, and wealthy merchants might be able to provide some of the same rumours (see *Whispers and Lies* on page 79). In addition, the GM can use these NPCs to provide additional information about Desoleum, Thaur, and even about the Anzaforr Dynasty.

Ultimately, this section should take as much or as little time as the players and GMs choose. While no plot-critical events occur here, it provides an opportunity to glean some information and to hobnob amongst some of Askellon's elite. Savvy Acolytes looking for an opportunity to increase their own influence might benefit from this opportunity. In addition, it provides an opportunity for roleplaying and for the GM to further immerse the players in the world of **DARK HERESY**. While refined manners and golden decorations present a facade of civilisation, the halls of the nobility conceal just as much barbarity as any low-hive slum.

## THE NOTEWORTHIES

While none of the elite guests aboard the *Oath Unspoken* are integral to the adventure's plot, brief information on a few of these individuals is provided here. The GM can use these personages or even invent others should the Acolytes decide to spend time amongst the elite cabins and staterooms on these decks.

### LORD AND LADY HAVOFAST

Lord Tenner Havofast and Lady Andrea Havofast are travelling from Desoleum to Thaur to visit the tomb of an ancestor and to partake of the celebration of Saint Merusaad. The noble couple have a spacious suite with several adjoining rooms for their numerous valets, ladies in waiting, and other servants. In conversation, the lord and lady present the detached air of superiority and rigid attention to formulaic social codes that so typify Desoleum's nobility. Both of them proudly display their ancient and ornate oath-cogs, affixed to the nobles' clothing by finely wrought silver chains. The reaction of the lord and lady to the Acolytes depends greatly on the Acolytes' appearance and behaviour. The Havofasts have no interest in speaking with commoners, as their armed bodyguards make clear.

Acolytes who participated in the adventure *Dark Pursuits* and encountered the sadistic Babyfaces ganger "Skinner" might or might not recognise the name Havofast, depending on how much they pried into that nefarious individual's identity. These are, in fact, Eldrid "Skinner" Havofast's parents. The GM can make as much or as little as this as he wishes. For instance, if the Acolytes killed or severely injured Eldric, the lord and lady might know of it. Though they do not approve of their son's time with the Babyfaces, Lord and Lady Havofast did make an effort to keep tabs on him, and would most likely find out sooner or later if any serious harm befell him. It is unlikely that they know the identity of his attackers, but possible. The GM can determine this with a **Subtlety test** for the Acolytes; ideally, this would be based on the Acolytes' Subtlety at the time of their encounter with the Babyfaces. The GM can estimate if necessary, or simply make a test against the warband's current Subtlety, with a +10 modifier based on the time elapsed. If the test fails, the lord and lady suspect the Acolytes involvement in their son's demise. Although they do not risk their own positions by acting directly against them, they certainly withhold cooperation from the Acolytes as much as possible. They might even aid their enemies should the opportunity arrive, or arrange for revenge at a more opportune time—making for an excellent sub-plot in a future adventure.

If needed, Lord and Lady Havofast both use the Apex Noble profile on page 397 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook.





## FAROVAL TESORRI, CONSORTIUM MAGNATE

The exceedingly well-fed Faroval Tesorri is a strict adherent to the life of luxury. Though ancient lineages such as the Havofast look down on such “new oaths,” there is no denying the wealth and influence of Consortium magnates and guilders like Tesorri. He is going to Thaur to discuss business concerns with none other than Lord Pyre himself, the Imperial Commander of Thaur. Tesorri is happy to discuss a variety of matters with anyone who he suspects could be beneficial to business. Though less discerning and more pragmatic than nobles such as the Havofasts, he is likewise disinclined to speak with penniless riff-raff.

To represent Faroval Tesorri, use the Consortium Merchant Magnate profile on page 398 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook.

## ADEPT PREFECTUS MOHOMAR PARTHUS

A representative of the Adeptus Administratum, Parthus is travelling to Thaur to discuss matters of the Imperial tithe with his counterparts stationed on that world. He is far from honest in his work, however, and has taken bribes on numerous occasions, including from Lord-Captain Anzaforr. Should any whispers of the Acolytes’ true nature spread, Parthus consigns himself to his cabin, fearful of running afoul of the Inquisition. He has heard even the least of their agents can see through his soul to detect his crimes, and would prefer not to learn if it is true or not.

To represent Adept Parthus, use the Scribe profile on page 439 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook, with the addition of a compact laspistol.

## AMONGST THE DEAD

*“They say that most who visit Thaur never leave. I suppose they’re right.”*

–Flavion Borgias, First Officer of the *Oath Unspoken*

Eventually, the Acolytes’ investigation takes them to the Corpse-Holds, an area of dozens of square kilometres given over to the storage of corpses for transportation to the cemetery world of Thaur. Amongst the hundreds of thousands of bodies, the small group of Sable Traders and Inheritors have made their hiding place. Though leads point here, the only way to discern the precise location of the heretics is to search the area. Whichever method they choose, eventually they find the place where the heretics have stowed away. To the Acolytes’ surprise, however, the two groups have turned against each other, and the Sable Traders are dead or dying. From the last words of one of these heretical smugglers, or from other evidence left behind, the Acolytes learn of the cultist leader Parathas Hayne’s plot to destroy the *Oath Unspoken*, sacrificing all aboard to awaken the profane xenos god that is the object of the cult’s veneration. This brings the Acolytes to the climax of Chapter II and a desperate battle to save the vessel and the more than 300,000 souls aboard.

There are many means by which the Acolytes might come to the Corpse-Holds. If Jarrad Cincayde is acting as their guide, he can take them to a spot in a cavernous corridor stacked with bodies where he saw a pair of Sable Traders. This spot, though Cincayde does not know it, is approximately 800 metres from the Sable Traders’ hiding spot, making it an excellent place to begin their search. As a smuggler, he can serve as a useful guide, as he is able to pick up on signs of the Trade Sable that others might overlook.

Alternately, or even in addition to Cincayde, the Acolytes can once again turn to any of the xenos artefacts in their possession to guide them. A simpler option is to simply begin looking; while searching the entire ship for a small group would be a monumental feat, the Corpse-Holds, while expansive, present a much more reasonable area to search.

The holds are locked, but if Lord-Captain Anzaforr is informed of their visit he provides an authentication glyph that allows entry. Otherwise, a **Difficult (-10) Security** test is needed to convince the primitive machine-spirits of the massive doors to open, or a **Very Hard (-30) Athletics** test to force the ancient locks. If the Acolytes succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Awareness** test, they notice that others have breached the doorway through illicit means sometime earlier.

When the Acolytes first enter the Corpse-Holds, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The vast chamber extends before you into the unseen distance. The chill of the room slowly sinks into your bones, your breath frosting before you. Along the sides are stacked the corpses of the devoted, untold thousands kept here as they journey to Thaur for their final rest.*

## EXPLORING THE CORPSE-HOLDS

Depending on the methods the Acolytes employ and the GM’s preference, the exploration of the Corpse-Holds can be a brief experience handled mostly narratively, or can take one or more sessions of play. Because the Acolytes have already spent a great deal of time and effort tracking the heretics, it is perhaps best to strike a balance here, thus building tension without prolonging events to the point of frustration.

In addition to using Jarrad Cincayde as a guide or utilising xenos relics in their possession as a sort of divining rod, the Acolytes can also search for physical clues of the Sable Traders’ presence, or ask witnesses. While the Corpse-Holds do not receive much traffic, technomats and other crew do make regular, if infrequent passes to check on the status of the bodies and ensure the cooling systems are functioning. The private chambers set aside for the storage of deceased personages of note receive much more attention, which is precisely why the heretics have chosen an area amongst the masses of common dead.

Crew members in the Corpse-Holds might have spotted the Sable Traders or Inheritors furtively making their way in those areas. Acolytes asking around amongst the small number of crew to be found should make a **Difficult (-10) Inquiry** test. Success verifies that crew have seen individuals matching the heretics’ description, but conflicting reports make a location impossible to narrow down. Three or more degrees of success reveal a more specific location of the hideout.

If the Acolytes have in their possession one of the xenos artefacts, they can use its reaction in the vicinity of other artefacts to help pinpoint their enemies as per page 14 in Chapter I.



The Acolytes might decide to simply search the Corpse-Holds for signs of their quarry. The GM can resolve this with one or more extended tests. The most likely skills are *Awareness* or *Survival*, to look for signs of life or of clues that individuals have recently passed a certain area. While the Corpse-Holds are crowded with bodies, there are few living ones to found other than vermin. If the Acolytes have an auspex or other scanner, they can use it to scan for signs of biological life in the vicinity. The base modifier for using any of the preceding skill uses, or any others the players suggest and the GM deems appropriate, is **Difficult** (–10). Once the Acolytes score a cumulative total of 6 degrees of success on these tests, they find the Sable Traders' location. The GM should keep track of the degrees of success, so that he can interrupt the skill tests to resolve the various encounters detailed under *Encounters in the Corpse-Holds*.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE CORPSE-HOLDS

As the Acolytes explore the Corpse-Holds, they might face several encounters. The GM can consider the following two engagements as optional, although they can both serve to point the Acolytes in the right direction.

### NEW RECRUITS

The Inheritors' plan to take control of the *Oath Unspoken* requires more than just the handful of cultists who boarded the vessel with the Sable Traders. To fulfil the plan, a larger number, approximately a score, of Inheritors boarded the *Oath Unspoken*, keeping their presence hidden this entire time from the Sable Traders. Even with these additional cultists and the element of surprise, Parathas Hayne believes he needs more help for his plan to succeed. To this end, he has despatched a number of his minions to obtain weapons and hire mercenaries from the Drunnels, as the Acolytes might have already found, and to recruit mutants and other outcasts from the black holds and other forgotten places of the ship.

As the Acolytes search the holds, they come across one such group, responding to the requests for assistance and promise of rewards and vengeance that the Inheritors have circulated throughout the deep holds. It numbers roughly half again as many as the warband's members, and is made up of vile wretches. They do not attack the Acolytes on sight, but respond poorly to inquiries or displays of authority.

The group consists of one mutant or outcast per Acolyte (adjusted as necessary using the threat threshold rules); use the *Fleshbent* and *Thug* profiles from pages 408 and 387 of the **DARK HERESY CORE** Rulebook, respectively. They are led by a spiteful and insane rogue psyker known as Ripken. He was born to one of the work-clans aboard the *Oath Unspoken* and forced to flee into hiding at a young age when his psychic abilities began to manifest. Consequently, Ripken hates the *Oath Unspoken* and all those aboard with an all-consuming passion, and is ready to give his own life in support of the Inheritors' plan to destroy them all. To represent Ripken, use the *Warp-Caller* profile on page 409 of the **DARK HERESY CORE** Rulebook.

## SETTING THE SCENE: THE CORPSE-HOLDS

The Corpse-Holds are, to say the least, an unsettling place. Hundreds of thousands of bodies line the walls of the corridors and fill entire rooms, stacked from floor to ceiling in the pallid light. The air is kept uncomfortably chill to ward off decomposition, although this is far from completely effective, and the smell of rotting flesh permeates the region, alongside the overpowering chemical smell of preservatives and embalming fluids. In some tunnels and chambers, the cooling systems are operating at less than optimum capacity, or have failed completely—areas that are best avoided.

The GM can reinforce the horror of these areas by requiring Acolytes without respirators or similar equipment to pass a **Routine** (+20) *Toughness* test or suffer a level of *Fatigue* as they deal with nausea. For the most part, the holds are eerily silent, save for the spinning of large cooling fans mounted in the ceiling, the dripping of condensed water or other fluids, and the shuddering of vent shafts as they pump chilled air in. The silence is occasionally broken by vermin scratching or even gnawing on bodies, collapsing corpse-racks, and other disconcerting sounds.

As the leader, Ripken does most of the talking for his motley crew; he is *Confident* and begins with a *Disposition* of 20. If he (correctly) believes the PCs are trying to stop his newfound allies (the Inheritors), he immediately leads his group to attack the Acolytes. If they do not defeat Ripken and his minions soundly at this time, the PCs possibly encounter them again in the battle for control of the *Oath Unspoken's* bridge in the final scene of this chapter. If they lose more than half their number, the motley scum rapidly disappear into the dark through torn passages in the decks.

### BODY BAGS

Jarrad Cincayde is using a number of corpses to smuggle goods to Thaur. He gained access to the bodies after they had been brought aboard; in fact, this is the reason he was in the Corpse-Holds to begin with, when he saw the Sable Traders. These bodies are all close to one another amidst the stacks of corpses that crowd the corridors of the Corpse-Holds. The bodies show some evidence of tampering where Cincayde cut them open, inserted his stash, and sewed them back up. Acolytes who pass by these bodies should make a **Challenging** (+0) *Awareness* or **Easy** (+30) *Medicæ* test, with a +10 bonus if they are taking the time to closely examine the stacks of corpses for any reason. Any character who succeeds on this test notices the recent incisions. Should the Acolytes take the time to open the bodies, they find a total of twenty doses of *obscura*, five doses of *slaught*, and ten doses of *mindshade*.

If Cincayde is with the Acolytes, he is likely to try to distract them from this stash, or possibly to attempt to run away should the Acolytes discover it. This depends on Cincayde's relationship with the Acolytes thus far. The situation can be resolved through a **Disposition** test, or an **Opposed Scrutiny** test should any Acolytes state they are suspicious of his behaviour.



## GM GUIDANCE: CULTIST KNOWLEDGE

The teachings of the Children of the Inheritance are a combination of truths and falsehoods. Many members of the cult are, in fact, not entirely certain what they believe, but the charisma of the cult's leaders and their own misguided faith keep them loyal. For many cult members, their beliefs are fractured and contradictory. While the Acolytes can learn certain details from interrogating such individuals, this can also raise further questions. Only the highly-placed members of the cult have anything approaching a true understanding of the situation, and even they do not comprehend the true nature of their god, Izumat. What they believe to be an ancient xenos god is in fact a Daemon of Chaos, as is detailed later on page 114. This distinction is important—the Inheritors do not believe themselves to be worshipers of Chaos (in fact, they have little or no knowledge that there is even such a thing), but of ancient alien gods. Because of this, it will be difficult, if not impossible for the Acolytes to glean an accurate picture of the cult's activities until the final confrontation in Chapter III.

These cultists do, however, know that they have been tasked with returning their god's artefacts back to Blessed Thaur, in preparation for a monumental event that will change Askellon forever. Further, they have recently made contact with the Arch-Heretek Somnius Halbrel (see page 102 for more details), who traded their leaders important information in exchange for a particular artefact from Thaur in **Dark Pursuits**.

## AMBUSH

Depending on the Acolytes' activities thus far, the Inheritors might be expecting them. Parathas Hayne prefers to deal with the Acolytes sooner, rather than risk them interrupting his plan to take control of the ship. If the cult is aware of the Acolytes closing in on them, they prepare an ambush. As the Acolytes arrive at the Corpse-Holds, the GM should secretly make a **Subtlety** test for the warband. If the Acolytes are accompanied by Anzaforr's armsmen, apply a -30 penalty to this test. If the warband fails this Subtlety test, an ambush is ready with the aid of Ripken and his gang of outcasts and mutants (see **New Recruits** on page 92).

The Inheritors set their ambush in one of the large chambers adjoining the primary corridors of the Corpse-Holds. To ensure that the Acolytes enter the selected room, one of the Inheritors waits in the main corridor, dashing into the chamber as soon as the Acolytes see him. The rest of the ambushers, consisting of six Inheritor Proselytes (see page 54) and two Disciples (page 107), plus Ripken and his group, conceal themselves amidst the piles of bodies cluttering the room. Should Ripken's group have already been defeated earlier, another similar group of black deck wretches can be used in the ambush. If necessary, Game Master should use the threat threshold rules to make this encounter easier or more difficult, depending on how combat-oriented his Acolytes are at this time.



The corpse-stacks rise up many metres, and the heretics climb high to gain the advantage of height as well as surprise. As soon as the Acolytes enter, a cultist concealed near the bulkhead activates a control stud, closing the massive plasteel door, and the heretics attack. Acolytes who succeed at a **Hard (-20) Awareness** test are not Surprised during the first round of combat. If any Acolytes state they are actively watching for an ambush, or are searching for attackers as they enter, they receive a +20 bonus to the test.

These Inheritors are prepared to sell their lives to accomplish Hayne's plot, and fight to the death. Ripken and his group, while not so fanatical, are desperate enough not to retreat, particularly since the sealed door makes it a difficult proposition. In preparation for the ambush, the Inheritors tampered with the door mechanisms so that it cannot be easily opened. Unsealing the door requires a total of 6 degrees of success from **Very Hard (-30) Tech-Use** tests (only one Acolyte can perform this test at a time, however).

## COMBAT IN THE CORPSE-HOLDS

Fighting in the Corpse-Holds is potentially an extremely gruesome scenario. Stacks of bodies provide ample cover, and even if combatants do not take advantage of this, stray bullets are bound to strike corpses as the corridors and chambers are so choked with them. After 5 rounds of combat in the Corpse-Holds in which ranged weapons are employed, or as soon as an explosive weapon such as a grenade or bolter detonates, a hazy red mist forms in the frigid air, inflicting a -10 penalty to all ranged attack tests and Perception tests.

The GM might wish to include other effects in response to failed attack tests or just to keep things interesting, such as vermin bursting forth from body piles and running across the floor, or blasts of frosty air from overhead vents. Such unexpected events can inflict a penalty to tests during that round, or even cause characters who fail an **Agility** test to be limited to a Half Action as they deal with the distractions.



## DARKER THAN SABLE

*"When the gods awake, we shall reap the rewards of dutiful service, and the unbelievers shall burn."*

—Carolus Renthear, Arch-Rector Legatarius  
of the Children of the Inheritance

Eventually, the Acolytes track the smugglers to their hiding place aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. This is a series of chambers in a deep section of the ship just off of the Corpse-Holds, an area of rarely used maintenance tunnels and chambers. The lodgings are far from luxurious, but the group has set up bedrolls, cots, lanterns, and even tents to make things more hospitable. Once again, the Inheritors have decorated their area with signs of their faith—sculptures of vermin and human bones, dark parchment, fabric, and flayed skins daubed with runes and cryptic prayers to something called "Izumut." The liquid making up these painted runes is a viscous, purple ooze flecked with luminescent dots, and the letters seem to shift into different marks of a forgotten tongue each time the Acolytes look away. An Acolyte can make a **Difficult (-10) Awareness or Logic test** to determine that the luminescent dots within the liquid are the same material as the stone artefacts. If an Acolyte earlier succeeded in examining the liquid (page 21), though, he automatically recognises it. Any character who touches the shifting runes directly suffers 1 Corruption point, and any character who attempts to study them closely must make a **Routine (+20) Willpower test** or suffer 1 Insanity point.

Once the Acolytes locate this place, they discover a great deal of additional information about the cult, either through documents left behind or from a dying Sable Trader. For once the Acolytes reach the hiding place, the Inheritors are gone, having left for dead the three Sable Traders who were accompanying them. From the lips of these dying smugglers, or from documents left behind or a captured cultist, the Acolytes learn more about the Children of the Inheritance and their beliefs.

For additional information on the cult, see **The Children of the Inheritance** on page 112.

## A TRAIL OF DAMNATION

While the Acolytes can discover much about the cult after tracking down their hiding spot, there are also opportunities to uncover bits of information throughout this chapter, some of which might not seem relevant except in hindsight. Acolytes who specifically look for information and ask questions about the cult throughout their time aboard the *Oath Unspoken* can learn some of the following from various sources aboard the ship, at the GM's discretion. However, it is impossible to discover much concrete intelligence from anyone not directly in the cult.

Acolytes who ask questions about Thaur can learn about the Eulogus Askelline (see page 111) from crew and passengers. Some individuals might be brazen enough to speak of the factional divisions rumoured to exist within the Eulogus. Additionally, whispered rumours speak of walking dead seen in Thaur's dark forests. GMs should allow Acolytes who survived **Desolation of the Dead** to make the connection between these rumours and the events of that adventure using a **Challenging (+0) Logic test**.

## BETRAYED

The Children of the Inheritance have finally obtained the artefacts they need to awaken their slumbering deity. With the Sable Traders of no more use, Hayne gave the order to kill them. The Inheritors plan to destroy the *Oath Unspoken*, sacrificing all aboard (including themselves) to summon their god Izumat. The Sable Traders, though remorseless heretics, are motivated only by greed; they lack the religious devotion of the Inheritors, and would never willingly sacrifice themselves. Since the smugglers knew too much and could pose an obstacle to his plans, Hayne made the decision to sacrifice them a bit early, before they discovered his intentions.

The adventure assumes that the Acolytes reach the smugglers' den too late, and the Inheritors have already left the Sable Traders for dead. However, if the Acolytes are particularly successful in their investigation, the GM could allow them to arrive in time to intervene. In any case, Hayne and the bulk of the cult should not be present, only a small group of cultists (roughly the same number as the Acolytes, though this can be adjusted as desired).

Assuming the Acolytes do not intervene earlier, the events unfold in the following manner. One of these cultists gives the signal and they fall upon their former allies, attacking the smugglers without warning in a sudden onslaught of blades and guns. The smugglers fight back, but one dies before the others can even draw their weapons. The next smuggler catches a bullet in the gut before another Inheritor brings him down with a succession of wicked knife wounds. This leaves Stovon Het, the leader of this group and one of Golsken Hresk's lieutenants, as the last Trader standing. After Het shoots down two Inheritors, the remaining cultists fall upon him, stabbing and shooting the smuggler multiple times.

In the aftermath, the remaining cultists attempt to retrieve their dead—despite their heretical turn, the cultists are still natives of Thaur, and so burial practices are of great import to them. If the Acolytes made good time exploring the Corpse-Holds, they should arrive in time to confront the remaining three cultists, and they might even hear the sounds of combat as they close in on the heretics' hiding place.

When the Acolytes reach the scene, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*Peering past the bulkhead, you see a scene of recent conflict. Amidst a low-ceilinged chamber lit by flickering electro-candles and sputtering lanterns that sit atop ancient pipes and cryo-storage units, three figures in dark coats and armour lay prone in widening pools of blood. Bedrolls, threadbare cots, and cooking pots speak to a sort of encampment here in the bowels of the ship.*

When the Acolytes reach the smugglers, Het is still tenuously clinging on to life. If the Acolytes arrived in time to intervene in the fight, the GM should bear in mind that Het is still a Sable Trader, thus he sees the Acolytes as enemies (assuming he has any inkling of who they are). However, he is likely to be at a disadvantage, and so should be willing to parley, assuming the Acolytes are also willing. With little left to lose at this point, it is not difficult to convince the smuggler to reveal what he knows about the cultists. It is even possible to enlist his aid in dealing with them, should the Acolytes be willing to temporarily join forces with one heretic to stop a greater threat.



## THE UNSPOKEN PLOT

There are a number of ways by which the Acolytes can learn of Parathas Hayne's plot to capture and destroy the *Oath Unspoken*. If they arrive while the Inheritors chosen to assassinate the smugglers are still present, this gives them opportunity to capture one of the cultists alive. Unlike the Inheritors whom the Acolytes might have encountered in the Drunnels, these cultists are aware of Hayne's plot and their role in it.

If the Acolytes arrive too late to confront the Inheritors, they can learn of the plot from Stovon Het, who overheard the cultists discussing it as they gathered their own dead. This dying smuggler can be represented by the Hired Lasgun profile on page 439 of the DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook. The details he knows are sketchy, but are enough to warn the Acolytes. He is willing to talk because he hopes the Acolytes can stop the Inheritors—not because he cares about the lives of those on the ship, but simply out of spite. If the Acolytes learn about the plot from the dying Het, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*"I guess there's no point in keeping my mouth shut anymore," he grins, before coughing up a wad of blood. "Sump-sucking fanatics turned on us and left me for dead. I knew we couldn't trust them, but damned if the money wasn't good. They knew we wouldn't go along with their damned scheme this time, that's why they did it." He goes into a coughing fit, leaving his hand bloody. "I overheard them as they gathered up the two I shot down," he continues, stopping to grin for a moment then wiping away a trickle of blood from his mouth. "They said something about taking control of the ship and sacrificing it to their damnable god. I want to go knowing they don't get the satisfaction."*

Unless the Acolytes provide medical treatment, Het goes into a coughing fit and loses consciousness, dying a few minutes later. If an Acolyte succeeds at a **Hard (-20) Medicae** test, he can stabilise the smuggler and keep him conscious long enough to answer a few questions. Het he believes himself to be dead already, and wants the Acolytes to kill the Inheritors as revenge. As such, if the Acolytes succeed at appropriate interaction tests with **Charm** or **Intimidate**, they can get him to answer some questions to help them destroy the cultists. The following are answers to some of the most likely questions the Acolytes might ask.

- **Who are the cultists?** *"They're native to Thaur. As far as I know, all the members come from there."*
- **What do they believe?** *"They are sump-sucking insane. They say they worship ancient, sleeping gods from before the Imperium, before humanity, even."*
- **What is their goal?** *"To awaken their gods. At least, that's what they say."*
- **What do they want with the artefacts?** *"They use them in their ceremonies. They think they connect them to their gods. I don't know if that's true, but there's definitely something, some kind of power in those objects."*
- **Who is their leader?** *"That, they kept from us. I think it's someone important on Thaur. Their reach might not go all the way up to the Lord Pyre, but they're not all gutter-scum, either."*

Het does not know many details about the cult's beliefs, and he was never particularly interested. The important thing to him was getting paid. However, he was always uncomfortable working with the Inheritors, because of their fanaticism and mad beliefs. Het does not know about the additional recruiting the Inheritors have done, or the full number of cultists aboard the ship, although the Acolytes might already have some of this information based on previous encounters. He does know that they have had dealings with a terrifying man named Somnius Halbrel, who also dealt with the Trade Sable for dark secrets and darker artefacts.

The Acolytes can learn much of the same information by interrogating a captured Inheritor. In addition, it is possible to get the name of the cult's leader, Arch-Rector Renthear. However, obtaining this information from a cultist should require an extended interrogation, something the Acolytes might wisely decide they do not have time for. However, a captured Inheritor is willing to divulge basic information about the cult's beliefs, at least so far as he understands them. His loose tongue is due to his fanaticism and utter belief that the Inheritors will triumph. The cultist does not willingly divulge any details of Hayne's plot to capture the *Oath Unspoken*, but he should make vague threats and promises about the death of the Acolytes and everyone else aboard, and that their deaths will "awaken Izumat, the god of our ancestors," and that Izumat will "destroy the nonbelievers, and return fallen Askellon to its rightful inhabitants."

## FURTHER CLUES

Whether or not the Acolytes arrive in time to stop them, the Children of the Inheritors leave some of their possessions behind, intending to retrieve them before their final attack. These include several minor xenos artefacts similar to those the Acolytes have already seen, three more vials of the viscous, purple fluid described on page 21, and a pouch containing several score of Thaurian bone-chip coins.





## FIERY HEAVENS

*“As any good captain, I am fully prepared to go down with my ship. My preference, however, is that it not come to that.”*

—Lord-Captain Aristide Anzaforr

In the final scene of Chapter II, the Acolytes must fight alongside Rogue Trader Anzaforr’s forces to save the *Oath Unspoken* and the hundreds of thousands of souls aboard from death at the hands of the Children of the Inheritance. The majority of this scene involves a massive and chaotic battle aboard the ship’s bridge.

## THE STAGE IS SET

Depending on how successful the Acolytes’ investigation has been, they might have ample time to prepare for the defence of the *Oath Unspoken*’s bridge. On the opposite end of the spectrum, if the Acolytes are unprepared, they could find themselves responding to a distress call and rushing to the aid of the bridge’s defenders, already under siege. This all depends on the Acolytes’ success thus far, and their own intuition. Even if they have discovered that the Inheritor cultists plan to take control of the vessel, this does not necessarily mean that the bridge is their target, though it should seem the most likely. However, the Enginarium would also make sense, for while the bridge is the organ that steers the *Oath Unspoken* and gives her purpose, it is the Enginarium that gives her power and life.

Parathas Hayne and his followers attack shortly after the *Oath Unspoken* exits the Warp, believing the explosive crash into Thaur is essential for their god’s rebirth. The Inheritors know that they cannot rely on the Navigator’s cooperation, nor that of the other crew members, even under force, and they know they are not able to operate the ship on their own. Therefore, they wait until the ship arrives at its destination to launch their assault. Should the Acolytes convince Anzaforr to exit the Warp early in order to buy more time for their investigation, the Inheritors attack, believing the ship to have reached Thaur.

## LAYOUT OF THE BRIDGE

The bridge of the *Oath Unspoken* is a large chamber, approximately 45 metres across at its widest point, and its roof rising to a height of 20 metres from the primary deck. Additionally, the terraced crew stations descend another five metres. The dominant features of the bridge are the Lord-Captain’s command throne, the Navigator’s seclusion blister, the ornate arches and which support the domed ceiling, and the massive vista panels at the front of the room. Statues depicting winged, robed figures grasping swords adorn the walls and several of the larger console banks. Numerous other features crowd the bridge, including many console terminals, cogitator banks, viewscreens on articulated brass armatures, and thousands of wires, cables, pipes, and data-bundles linking the various tech-devices, as well as many members of the crew.

Excluding the Navigator’s blister, there are two entrances to the bridge, both located on the rear wall. One bulkhead door exits to the corridor beyond, and another door leads to the Lord-Captain’s ready room. See the map on page 99 for a representation of the main locations and their arrangement.

## PROPER PRECAUTIONS

If the Acolytes are anticipating the Inheritors’ attack on the bridge, they might take appropriate precautions to defend it, including sealing the entrances. Rogue Trader Anzaforr is sceptical of the necessity of this, but goes along with it should the Acolytes insist.

This is, of course, a wise precaution, but is insufficient on its own to stop the Inheritors, who have secured several melta bombs for use in their assault on the bridge. After dealing with any armymen posted outside in the corridor, the Inheritors send forward a group of conscripted mutants to place the melta bombs and breach the bulkhead. From the Acolytes’ perspective, presumably on the bridge, the barely audible sounds of combat drifting through the heavy plasteel doors give way to a brief silence. This is followed by an explosion of superheated air washing over the bridge as the doors turn to molten slag and the first wave of mutants burst through, autoguns blazing.

The Acolytes might take other defensive measures as well, and the Game Master should consider the impact of these on the battle. With proper planning, the bridge is intentionally a highly defensible position. It is not unlikely that the first waves of attackers through the door could be easily cut down, which is part of the reason the Inheritors recruited additional fighters. The GM should allow clever preparations by the Acolytes to work to their success in the battle, and should not hesitate to award such precautions with significant advantages, or at least with satisfying descriptions of the effects during the conflict.

## DISPOSITION OF FORCES


The composition of the attackers and defenders depends on the Acolytes previous actions. If they have warned Anzaforr of the impending attack and the threat it poses, a higher-than-normal contingent of armymen are present on the bridge. If the Acolytes need assistance convincing the Rogue Trader, once again the Ranger Morrinoe can come to their aid, plainly telling the Rogue Trader that the cult is a serious threat and that it is of utmost important that they do not succeed. As usual, he heeds the counsel of his xenos ally. However, Anzaforr does not wish to unduly alarm the bridge’s crew, whom he hopes to keep ignorant of the threat with the exception of the officers. Unless the Acolytes persuade him otherwise, he keeps armymen in reserve in his ready room just off of the bridge, with only a few additional troops actually on the bridge.

Additional armymen are standing by to rush to the bridge’s defence, if called upon. However, unless the Acolytes have suspicions to the contrary, the Lord-Captain assumes that the cultists represent a small force, one that his valiant armymen are fully capable of dealing with.

## ALLIES

Aside from the Acolytes, the bridge’s defenders include Rogue Trader Anzaforr, Armsman Captain Jyrgan Hessiial, First Officer Flavion Borgias (if a profile for him becomes necessary, use that of Jyrgan Hessiial), the Eldar Ranger Morrinoe, and ten armymen, with an additional ten armymen waiting in the Lord-Captain’s ready room. If for whatever reason the Acolytes have not warned Anzaforr about the Inheritors’ plot, only five armymen are present, without any reserves waiting in the wings. The majority of the bridge crew are not prepared to fight, nor are they armed.





The armsmen spread out across the deck of the bridge, assuming normal guard positions. Jyrgan stands at the side of his master, alert for signs of trouble, while the Rogue Trader sits in his command throne. At some point before the battle, Morrinoe stealthily slips away and takes up a hidden position among the shadowy arches at the apex of the bridge, not far from the Navigator's blister. If any Acolytes specifically attempt to locate her, have them make an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Awareness** test against her **Simple (+40) Stealth** test (which already includes her chameleoline cloak and a bonus for the concealment of the buttresses).

In addition to these are any other allies the Acolytes might have recruited, such as Stovon Het or even the mercenary Ternace Del. Finally, the Mournful Song led by Strain Infector Gerag Corlin have continued to watch the Acolytes and the Inheritors as much as possible while remaining hidden. They creep as close to the bridge as possible, ready to intervene should it appear that the Inheritors are triumphant.

## ENEMIES

The forces available to Parthas Hayne depend in part on previous encounters with the Acolytes. Assuming no interference from the Acolytes, they consist of the following members, though these numbers and weaponry should be adjusted as necessary using the threat threshold rules to provide for a challenging combat.

- Twelve Inheritor Disciples and six Proselytes (assuming Stovon Het killed two Proselytes before his demise).
- The psyker Ripken and his gang of mutants and outcasts equal to the number of Acolytes plus five (see **New Recruits** on page 92).
- Seven hired mercenaries (use the Hired Lasgun profile on page 439 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**).
- Thirteen additional mutants and outcasts (use the Fleshbent and Thug profiles from pages 408 and 387 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**, respectively) and a single large Malatant mutant carrying an autocannon (use the profile on page 408 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**).

During the voyage to their blessed home world of Thaur, the Inheritors have acquired additional armaments from the *Oath Unspoken's* thriving black market, both for themselves and their hirelings. Approximately half of the attacking forces carry either an autogun, or an autopistol and chainblade. Hayne and three of his most favoured Proselytes each carry a specially consecrated krak grenade, which they intend to use as part of their destructive ritual once they control the bridge. Some of the others, especially the hired mercenaries, can also carry a single frag grenade or other weapons at the GM's discretion, to better balance the encounter as well as to make for a thrilling conclusion to this chapter.



## THE BATTLE FOR THE OATH UNSPOKEN

How the battle for the bridge unfolds depends on a number of factors, including the precautions taken by the Acolytes, any damage they have previously done to the Inheritors' forces, and their success in convincing Rogue Trader Anzaforr of the gravity of the situation. Once battle is joined, it is the Acolytes' skill that is the deciding factor in the outcome.

The adventure assumes that the Acolytes are anticipating the attack and are present on the bridge. If this is not the case, the following events require some adjustment. When the *Oath Unspoken* reaches its destination, or exits the Warp prematurely, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*With a shudder, the sibilant voices whispering just beyond the edge of perception cease, replaced by the familiar roar of the Oath Unspoken's mighty plasma engines. Before you, the heavy shutters that protected the bridge's occupants from the sight of the turmoil of the Warp slowly grind open, affording a view through the vista panels of the silent void beyond. The sounds of binary chatter and relayed orders pass back and forth among the crew and servitors, and the Lord-Captain smiles his relief to be back in reality. Suddenly, the rattle of autogun fire from the corridor beyond the bridge interrupts the activity, and you turn to face the sealed passage.*

### COMBAT ON THE BRIDGE

The bridge of the *Oath Unspoken* is a unique location for a fight, and requires several particular considerations. During the battle, characters might take cover behind many of the ancient consoles or other equipment; refer to the **Shipboard Combat** sidebar on page 69 for possible effects.

In addition to the combatants, upwards of a hundred crew and servitors man the stations of the bridge, crammed together on the four tiers below the main deck. These individuals do not participate in the battle, for the most part, and do not even have weapons. While the officers try to maintain discipline and keep all the crew at their stations, some nonetheless panic and attempt to flee, potentially running in front of shots and spoiling the Acolytes' aim. Other crew are permanently emplaced at their stations, or connected by enough cranial plugs and bio-cables that leaving is unfeasible. Of course, the numerous servitors present have no such problems with morale.

### BATTLE EVENTS

The final, desperate battle of the chapter is a complex encounter involving numerous NPCs and other concerns. For general advice on handling such a large combat, see the **GM Guidance: Running Large Combats** sidebar on this page. Several important events during the battle are outlined in the following pages; these serve to provide some structure to the combat. The GM can use these events to steer the encounter, preventing it from collapsing into a chaotic brawl. However, he should aim for controlled chaos in this battle—while it is important for him and the players to understand what is happening, the players should also understand

## GM GUIDANCE: RUNNING LARGE COMBATS

Running the battle for the *Oath Unspoken* might seem a daunting prospect for the GM, between the large numbers and variety of characters involved. However, it does not need to be any more difficult than any other important combat between the Acolytes and a powerful foe. The key to accomplishing this is to keep the focus on the Acolytes and their actions. It is not necessary to make attack rolls for every combatant; in fact, to do so would be detrimental to the game, bogging it down in unnecessary record-keeping and rolling. The last thing the GM wants in a climactic battle is for the players to sit around bored while he rolls dice for dozens of NPCs. Instead, the GM should only utilize the full combat rules for actions that directly involve the PCs, such as attacks directly against them. The GM can handle the rest of the combat narratively.

One effective way to do this is to include a placeholder Initiative step either at the beginning or end of each round. The GM can use this to quickly describe the action going on around the Acolytes, both in general terms and including any particular notable events, such as a major NPCs being wounded or striking an impressive blow. This keeps the players aware of what is happening and gives them the impression that a whirl of events are happening all around them, with real consequences.

The GM should take the above as guidance, not hard-and-fast rules. After all, he knows better than anyone what his players will enjoy. If he does not, perhaps due to new players or an entirely new group, there is nothing wrong with asking. If the players and GM enjoy tactical combat or non-stop violence, the GM could run the combat in more detail and involve the players in it. There are many ways to do this, from requiring tests to determine the effectiveness of their allies, to handing out extra character sheets and allowing the players to control allied NPCs during the battle, deciding on their actions and rolling the necessary tests. As with all elements of a roleplaying game, there is no right or wrong way to run a large combat—as long as everyone is enjoying themselves, the GM is doing his job.

that their characters are in the middle of a frenzied combat, with dozens of participants, the sound of gunfire, exploding consoles, shattering view screens, the screams of the wounded and dying, and countless other details calling for their attention.

It is not necessary to include all of the following events. Depending on the preferences of the GM and the players, this combat can be an exercise in tactical acumen, an extended action scene, or a mostly narrative encounter. Some groups might prefer to wrap the combat up quickly and decisively so that they can get back to the investigation and move the story forwards. For other groups, it might be preferable to spend a great deal of playtime on the combat, resolving it in great detail.



In effect, the GM should consider each of the following battle events to be optional, deciding whether or not to include each based on his own preferences and the needs of the narrative. See **Resolving the Battle** on page 100 for recommendations on using the following events as a gauge for the Acolytes' success. Depending on how the GM chooses to resolve the battle for the bridge, he can simply describe the setup for each of the following encounters to the players, or require the Acolytes to succeed at appropriate **Awareness** or **Logic** tests to notice the situation and the need for them to deal with it.

### THE INHERITORS STRIKE

Whether the bridge entrance is sealed or not, Hayne attempts to use his Gate of Infinity psychic power to open a portal on the far side of the bridge when the combat begins. Once open, his men can pass through and launch an unexpected attack against the defenders from the rear, even while his mutant and outcast recruits push in through the doorway. After emerging, they immediately open fire or rush in with their blades, while Hayne himself waits to pass through last. Once inside, Hayne uses his other powers to attack from a distance, only using his force staff if anyone gets past his minions. As he fights, Hayne cries prayers to his gods, invoking the names Izumat, Hordosar, and Behomat, extolling the cultists to kill the unbelievers or suffer the gods' wrath.

Because they intend to destroy the ship anyway, the attackers are not concerned with collateral damage to the bridge. They use every weapon at their disposal, spraying bullets with abandon. Additionally, the more level-headed attackers might use important equipment, or even crew members, as cover.

### TO THE LORD-CAPTAIN'S AID

As the Acolytes battle against the heretics, they see a desperate duel between Anzaforr and three heretics. Despite the Lord-Captain's superior skill with a blade, their superior numbers and dirty tricks have him against the ropes. Unless the Acolytes intervene, he receives a heinous wound from a chainblade. While not fatal, the injury is a source of great consternation, and leaves him less inclined to help the Acolytes in the future.

### SILENCE THE BIG GUN

Amongst the mutant scum storming the bridge, one towering bulk of muscle wields a weapon more at home on a battle tank—an autocannon. Behind a screen of lesser mutants and outcasts, this monster unleashes salvos of brutal shells with impunity, massacring the bridge's defenders or inflicting horrendous collateral damage to important ship's systems with every shot. It is up to the Acolytes to stop him, before there is little left of the bridge to defend.

### SLAY THE PSYKER

The rogue psyker Ripken, though not as powerful as Parathas Hayne, nonetheless greatly bolsters the attackers with his unnatural powers. If the Acolytes can stop him, it is sure to improve their odds. He is well-defended by the mutants and outcasts under his sway, and uses his powers from a distance while his minions provide him with cover.



*The Bridge of the Oath Unspoken*



## SAVE THE NAVIGATOR

Several enemies begin targeting the ship's Navigator's blister with their ranged weapons. While this tactic seems to ignore the immediate threat posed in the battle, were the Navigator to be killed or injured it would be catastrophic for the *Oath Unspoken*. The Acolytes must stop them and protect the Navigator's station, for the good of the vessel.

## FACE-TO-FACE WITH HAYNE

Parathas Hayne is the overall leader of the forces attacking the bridge. Though Anzaforr would surely love to vanquish him, unless the Acolytes are incapacitated it is more appropriate for them to confront the Praesul themselves. The cult leader's profile can be found on page 107 of this chapter.

Although Hayne lived on Thaur for several decades, his actual age is hard to determine from his appearance, as his skin has a hardened, waxy complexion, colourless and unmoved by nearly any emotion. The damage at the heart of Hayne's appearance, however, is not age-related, but rather the result of a crude Juvenat procedure more akin to embalming he underwent sometime in the dim past. Like most of the Inheritors, he wears heavy robes ornamented with the pale ivory of polished human bone. However, his accoutrements are enhanced with several talismans imbued with the luminescent purple fluid the Inheritors call the Blood of Izumat. His constant exposure to this liquid has eroded his ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, and often his mind is lost in visions of a glorious, ancient past that only he can see.

Hayne should make for a challenging foe, thanks to his psychic abilities. Further, even in the swirling confusion of battle, the Acolytes are unlikely to encounter Hayne alone. Several Inheritors stick close to Hayne at all times to protect him, and others rush to his aid should they see their leader in trouble.

## RESOLVING THE BATTLE

With so much going on in the battle, it can be difficult for the GM to know how to end it. There are a number of possibilities, depending on the GM and players' preferences and the whims of fate, as reflected by dice rolls. It should not be necessary to fight the battle out to the last man; once a clear victory condition has been met, the GM can wrap up the battle largely narratively. This assumes, of course, that the Acolytes are triumphant (see the *What if the Acolytes Lose?* sidebar on this page).

One dramatically effective way to end the battle is with the defeat of Parathas Hayne, preferably at the hands of the Acolytes. With Hayne's defeat, the other Inheritors begin to lose faith, and are easily cut down by the defenders, while the hirelings and conscripts potentially even lay down their arms and hope for mercy. This provides a clear victory condition, one centred on the Acolytes' actions, and provides a satisfying conclusion. The risk with this approach is that it might seem "too easy" or simple, especially if the Acolytes focus their fire on Hayne from the outset.

## WHAT IF THE ACOLYTES LOSE?

Throughout this adventure, the text generally assumes that the Acolytes win in any given battle. In few instances are the consequences so dire should they fail, however, as in the battle for control of the *Oath Unspoken*. Should the Inheritors take control of the ship, Prasul Hayne prepares a massive ritual aboard the bridge before crashing the ship into Thaur's surface in a massive explosion. Such an outcome, obviously, means an end to the Acolytes, and the GM should avoid it in all but the most extreme cases. Ideally, the Acolytes do well in the battle and their side is victorious. Should the Acolytes all fall in combat, the GM might choose to have Rogue Trader Anzaforr and the other defenders defeat the Inheritors, something the Acolytes can discover when they wake up in the ship's medicae bay. This is, of course, going to be disappointing for the players, though not so much as the Acolytes failing in their mission and dying in a spectacular crash.

Another way to handle it, if the GM can manage it, is to hold off until it is all but certain that the Acolytes have lost, perhaps after one or more of the PCs are incapacitated, and then have a game-changing event reverse the tide of battle. The simplest way to do this is to have armsmen reinforcements arrive, surging on to the bridge and relieving the pressure from the Acolytes enough for them to press their advantage. Alternatively, if the problem is not so much that the entire battle is going against the bridge's defenders, but simply that the Acolytes are having a string of bad luck or are unable to overcome Hayne or another potent enemy, is for Anzaforr, Morrinoe, or another important NPC (even Het, if he is present), to come to the Acolytes aid, assisting them without completely overshadowing their own efforts. Another possibility, with more serious consequences after the battle, is for the Mournful Song to arrive and launch a surprise assault against the Inheritor forces.

Another method is to keep track of pivotal events throughout the battle, concluding it once the Acolytes have successfully dealt with a number the GM secretly sets in advance. For more granularity, the GM can use the threat level for each adversary and tally them as each is defeated, and use a predetermined number of cumulative threat levels for the Acolytes to secure victory.

A simple way to resolve the battle while ensuring that the players get to experience all the events is to simply resolve each event and then conclude the battle in the defenders' favour narratively, with the exact outcome based on the Acolytes' success. If the Acolytes overcame the challenges, the battle concludes with a solid victory and acceptable losses, while a poor showing by the Acolytes means the defenders barely scrape by only through outside aid, and with terrible casualties.



## THE AFTERMATH

The aftermath of the battle depends on the preparations taken beforehand and the Acolytes success during the battle. Even in the best situation, there are certain to be casualties on the defenders' side. However, if the Acolytes successfully prepared Anzaforr for the battle and assisted the NPCs as needed during the combat, these casualties might be consigned merely to armsmen and crew, and not any of the noteworthy NPCs.

At least some of the heretics should probably be alive, even if they are grievously wounded, but also facing immediate execution. The Acolytes need to take specific steps to postpone this should they wish to question them, but they can still learn some by searching the bodies of the cultists.

As one of the highest leaders of the Inheritor cult, Parathas Hayne is a potential wealth of information. However, his strong resolve and potent psychic abilities also make interrogating him a difficult proposition. He acts with an Unhinged Personality and a Disposition of 25. If the Acolytes can overcome these difficulties, they should be able to gain some useful information. However, he is also completely insane, and his perception wavers between reality and visions, perhaps memories, of a time before the advent of Mankind. As such, he often comes across as rambling, and he sometimes even speaks in dead xenos languages. Consequently, the Acolytes should have a very difficult time questioning Hayne. Even if they succeed, the Acolytes should receive the distinct impression that his words might not be trustworthy, even if Hayne is certain that they are.

It is likely that one or more other Inheritors survive the battle, even if they are badly wounded. While these individuals do not possess the depth of knowledge that Hayne does, they should also be comparatively easier to interrogate.

### THIS IS NOT OVER

In the aftermath of the battle, it is important that the Acolytes discover that Hayne's plan to sacrifice the *Oath Unspoken* was just one of the Inheritors' plots to awaken their god, Izumat. There are a few ways they can learn this. If the Acolytes successfully interrogate Hayne or another surviving cultist, he is only too eager to boast that the Acolytes have "accomplished nothing," stating that even now, his brethren are preparing another sacrifice. With use of **Intimidate**, **Charm**, or **Deceive** tests an Acolyte can pry additional information from him, including that "a thousandfold souls shall wake him, but that is nothing next to the vengeance he shall reap!"

As well as potentially learning it directly from a cultist, searching the bodies turns up a scroll with details on the ritual to awaken Izumat. Hayne carries it; if his body is completely destroyed, the Game Master can have it be found fallen to the deck during the battle, or on the body of another cultist. The scroll is written partially in High Gothic, but with the addition of unfamiliar runes which are xenos in nature. If the Acolytes think to show the scroll to Morrinoe, the Eldar Ranger can confirm this fact, though she provides little additional information. In addition to the xenos

markings, the faded scroll includes occult symbols and glyphs, recognisable to the Acolytes with an

**Easy (+30) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)** test. This is one clue that the Inheritors' gods might not be what they believe them to be.

The lengthy scroll appears to be have been hand-written by more than one person, and some of the runes and symbols appear to be rubbings taken from a physical object. An Acolyte must succeed at either a **Routine (+20) Linguistics (Chaos Marks)** or **Difficult (-10) Logic** test to decipher some meaning from the scroll; having the **Forbidden Lore (Demonology or The Warp)** skill grants a +20 bonus to this test. Any Acolyte who succeeds on one of these tests learns that the lengthy and complex ritual involves sacrificing living souls in order to weaken the barrier between realspace and the Warp. The ritual effectively calls for as many living sacrifices as possible, in order to "nourish" the summoned entity. Additionally, the scroll states that the ritual must be enacted within the immediate vicinity of Thaur.

Alongside the scroll is map, torn from a larger atlas, showing a section of a planet's surface. While unmarked, the map is of a region of Thaur, as an Acolyte who passes an **Ordinary (+10) Common Lore (Askellon Sector)** or **Navigate (Surface)** test can confirm. A spot on the map is circled, though it is not annotated or labelled. This spot is the location of the statue of Saint Merusaad, which the Acolytes can discover by comparing the map portion to a more complete, labelled map and passing an **Ordinary (+10) Navigate (Surface)** test, or conferring with an individual knowledgeable about Thaur and its geography (such as Anzaforr or Cincayde.). If the Acolytes show the map to Morrinoe, it concerns her greatly, as she recognises the spot as being above one of the forbidden locations on the charts she has previously brought to Lord Pyre (see **A Secret Arrangement** on page 121). Though her unknowable vows and alien psychology prevent her from plainly explaining this to the Acolytes, she can emphasise again the importance of stopping the Inheritors. In addition, she can tell the Acolytes not to look at the surface of the marked location, but beneath it.





## A MESSAGE FROM THE ARCH-HERETEK

Alongside the ritual scroll, Acolytes searching Parathas Hayne (or another dead cultist, if that is not possible) find a data-slate, seemingly out of place amongst the parchment scrolls and bone jewellery of the Inheritors. Despite its apparent sophistication, the security precautions are minimal, requiring only an **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use test** to access its contents. The data-slate stores a single vid record; when the Acolytes access this, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*A flickering image appears on the data-slate's screen, showing close shot of a dimly-lit robed figure. Beneath a red hood stitched with the cog and skull of the Adeptus Mechanicus, a grotesque, lipless mouth opens, with a thin tongue wetting the numerous needle-like fangs before the creature speaks. The gleam of what can only be a bionic eye shines from the shadows beneath the cowl. In a writhing mechadendrite, it is holding a vial of a viscous, purple fluid flecked with luminescent motes of something decidedly unnatural. In a rasping, hissing voice, the creature speaks:*

*"Salutations, Arch-Rector. By now, you will have received the data-logs I promised about refining the artefacts, and I have received the package you prepared for me. The delivery of this information concludes our business. I am confident that, in tandem with all else I have given you, it shall allow you to draw forth the Awakened One. By the process I have provided, you can create a liquid from the artefacts—the Blood of Izumat. Blood calls to blood, after all. If, of course, you can find sufficient sacrifices. But there should be no shortage on Thaur. I shall be well away from the Bone-World at that time, but I anticipate that the experience will meet the parameters you have set forth."*

The speaker in the recording is none other than the Arch-Heretek Somnius Halbrel, who the Acolytes might have previously encountered in *Dark Pursuits*. If so, they immediately recognise him, but give the players a moment to reach this conclusion for themselves before making the announcement. If the players did not complete that adventure, allow Acolytes to make a **Routine (+20) Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus)** or **Very Hard (–30) Awareness test**; any with Peer (Adeptus Mechanicus) or other relevant talents gain a +20 bonus. An Acolyte who passes the test realises that the speaker in the recording is Somnius Halbrel, a former Tech-Priest excommunicated from the Priesthood of Mars for his heretical experiments in the field of xenology. The Adeptus Mechanicus carefully guards knowledge of such treacherous Tech-Priests, and even knowing such information can be dangerous.

If the Acolytes halted Halbrel's attempt to obtain the Daemonhost Suvfaeras in *Dark Pursuits*, additionally read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The Arch-Heretek pauses for a moment, his ragged breathing quite audible in the silence, before continuing: "The business with...the divine host, as you call it, was unfortunate. However, the matter was concluded without the interferers learning the full details of its original creation and procurement. The loss of such a unique specimen for my experiments demands a retribution I shall mete out on my own."*

Though it should not yet be clear to the Acolytes, the Daemon Suvfaeras, which they encountered in the form of a Daemonhost if they participated in the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook** adventure *Dark Pursuits*, is in fact the object of the Inheritors' veneration (see *Slumbering Gods* on page 114).

## CONCLUSIONS AND REWARDS

Acolytes should receive between 300 and 450 xp for each session of this chapter, depending on how well they conduct the investigation and portray their characters through roleplaying. In addition, each character involved in successfully defending the bridge of the *Oath Unspoken* gains 3 Influence.

For their valuable assistance in saving the *Oath Unspoken* from destruction at the cult's hands, the Acolytes each receive the Peer (Rogue Traders) talent, unless the GM decides that circumstances dictate otherwise. Rogue Trader Aristide Anzaforr himself could even be developed into a new Reinforcement Character depending on the events on his vessel. At the GM's discretion, Acolytes can also receive one rank in the Common Lore (Chartist Captains) skill at no experience cost.

## REPLACEMENT CHARACTERS

It is very possible that not all Acolytes survived their voyage on the *Oath Unspoken*. New characters can be generated using the vessel itself as a new home world (see page 57), or using the standard voidborn rules. Alternatively, new Acolytes could be found amongst the many pilgrims, armsmen, bridge and Enginarium crew, noble passengers, and even rogue psykers and underdeck scum.

## ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following are some of the possible other adventures the Acolytes might pursue during or after the events in this chapter:

- Faroval Tesorri is actually the leader of a Slaanesh sensory-cult, one devoted to excesses of gastronomic pleasures. A disciple of the depraved gourmaster Kellum Lim, who appeared in *Desoleum* seemingly from nowhere to take the hive's culinary senses by storm, Tesorri seeks to further his master's efforts on Thaur. The Acolytes might encounter him planetside after resolving the adventure and be forced to stop him before he seduces Lord Pyre to his corpulent side.
- Within the Corpse-Holds are bodies that are no longer whole. Revealed during the combats within, many are missing limbs or organs. All show the signs of precise surgical work, which could mean a group eager for illicit ingredients for chems is at work or some more sinister cult is eager for sacrificial items. The Acolytes might even begin to worry about the dishes served at the Lord-Captain's table.
- One of the "cultists" participating in the battle for the bridge is in fact a Surena Dynasty saboteur. This might be revealed through examining the dead, or careful questioning from Anzaforr (who might even recognise a distinct accent or speech pattern). Such a discovery could rock the carefully maintained peace between the two dynasties, and plunge the sector into a new war. The Acolytes might be called upon (especially if they owe the Rogue Trader any favours) to aid him in seeking a secretive but effective retribution.



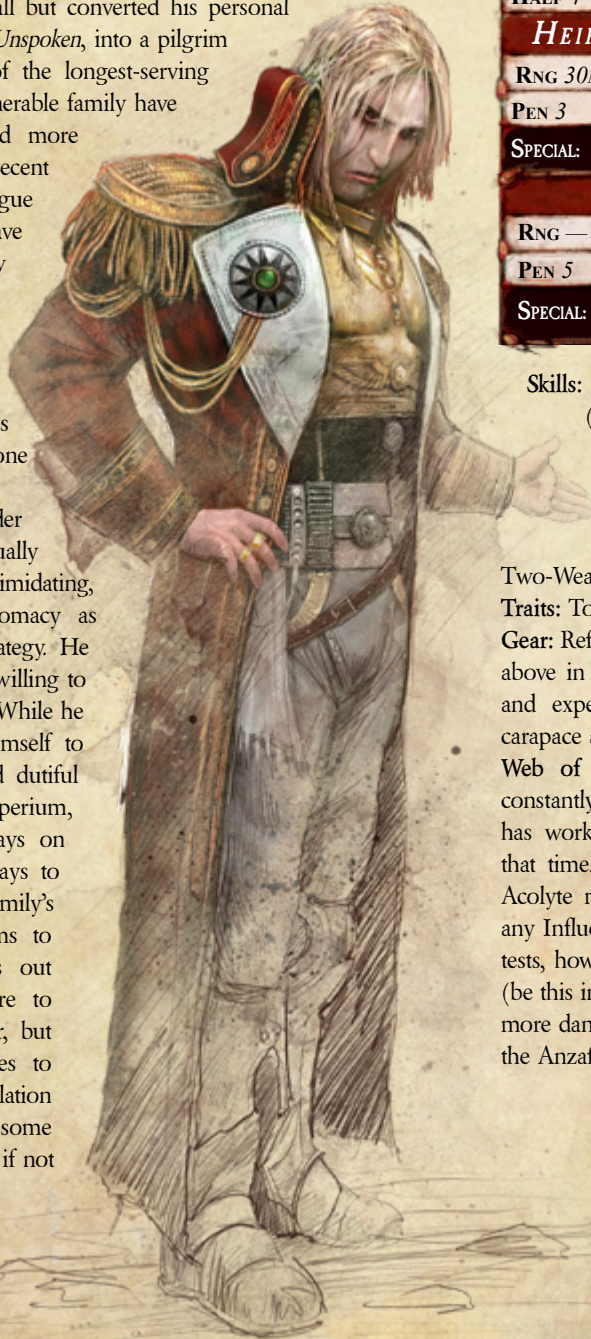
## CHAPTER II NPCs

The following NPCs appear in Chapter II: To the World of Bone, and are inhabitants or travellers aboard the mighty vessel called the *Oath Unspoken*. Many might well spend their whole lives on this massive, floating city, or even within the confines of a single deck, though others have served on other ships and seen worlds untold.

### LORD-CAPTAIN ARISTIDE ANZAFORR

Aristide Anzaforr is a mystery even to his own vassals and servants. A man whose personal piety was never central to his concerns, he has all but converted his personal flagship, the *Oath Unspoken*, into a pilgrim transport. Many of the longest-serving retainers of the venerable family have become more and more despondent in recent times as other Rogue Trader families have moved in on new trade openings while, as they see it, Aristide has taken to shuttling lice-ridden fanatics and mystics from one world to the next.

Rogue Trader Anzaforr is equally charming and intimidating, a master of diplomacy as much as naval strategy. He is also more than willing to help the Acolytes. While he loudly portrays himself to all as a pious and dutiful servant of the Imperium, he is in fact always on the lookout for ways to improve his family's fortunes. He claims to help the Acolytes out of a selfless desire to serve the Emperor, but in truth, he hopes to benefit from his relation with them, at some point in the future if not at present.



LORD-CAPTAIN ARISTIDE ANZAFORR (MASTER) 23									
H <sup>4</sup> 01-10		7		WS	BS	S			
AR <sup>5</sup> 11-20		8		58		45		37	
AL <sup>5</sup> 21-30		8		T	AC	INT			
B <sup>5</sup> 31-70		8		33		46		42	
LR <sup>5 2</sup> 71-85		10		PER	WP	FEL	6		
LL <sup>5</sup> 86-00		8		48		50		41	
						IFL		66	
HALF 4		FULL 8		CHARGE 12		RUN 24		THREAT 25	
HEIRLOOM HAND CANNON								CLASS PISTOL	
RNG 30M		RoF S/2-		DMG 1D10+5 (R)					
PEN 3		CLIP 6		RLD 1 FULL		WT 3 KG		AVL NU	
SPECIAL: TEARING									
POWER SABRE								CLASS MELEE	
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1D10+8 <sup>5+SB</sup> (E)					
PEN 5		CLIP —		RLD —		WT 4 KG		AVL VR	
SPECIAL: BALANCED, POWER FIELD									

**Skills:** Charm (Fel) +30, Command (Fel) +30, Commerce (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel) +30, Dodge (Ag) +30, Navigate (Stellar) +30, Operate (Voidship) +20, Parry (WS) +20

**Talents:** Blademaster, Combat Master, Disarm, Halo of Command, Hip Shooting, Lightning Attack, Peer (Rogue Traders), Quick Draw, Step Aside, Swift Attack,

Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged)

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (3), Unnatural Fellowship (2)

**Gear:** Refractor field, bionic leg (left, +2 Toughness bonus included above in left leg Hit Location), stylish recoil gloves, flamboyant and expensive clothing, rare trinkets and jewellery, heirloom carapace armour

**Web of Favours and Oaths:** Aristide Anzaforr has travelled constantly across the Askellon Sector for many decades, and has worked hard to establish an incredible web of contacts in that time. While aboard his vessel and in his good graces, an Acolyte may use Aristide Anzaforr's Influence characteristic for any Influence test he would make. If an Acolyte fails one of these tests, however, the Lord-Captain asks some favour of the Acolyte (be this information, the name of a contact, or perhaps something more dangerous) before he allows the Acolyte to use the name of the Anzaforr Dynasty again.



## JYRGAN HESSIAL, COMMANDER OF THE ARMSMEN

The overall leader of Aristide Anzaforr's armsmen is a grizzled veteran named Jyrgan Hessial. Hessial has served the family Anzaforr for his entire life, but longs for action and deeply resents the *Oath Unspoken's* conversion to a mere pilgrim ship. Hessial sees this pointless ferrying of religious fanatics as a profligate waste of the family's influence and assets. He is a potential ally; should the Acolytes seek Hessial out or explain the nature of their investigation, he is more than willing to put his armsmen on the case. Not only is it his duty to deal with smugglers, stowaways, and other malcontents on the ship, but it promises exactly the sort of excitement he has been missing.

COMMANDER JYRGAN HESSIAL (ELITE) 19				
H <sup>4</sup> 01-10	8	WS	BS	S
AR <sup>4</sup> 11-20	8	50	45	40
AL <sup>4</sup> 21-30	8	T	AC	INT
B <sup>5</sup> 31-70	9	41	40	38
LR <sup>4</sup> 71-85	8	PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>4</sup> 86-00	8	50	36	38
			IFL	—
HALF 4	FULL 8	CHARGE 12	RUN 24	THREAT 15
NAVAL HAND CANNON CLASS PISTOL				
RNG 20M	RoF S/—	DMG 1d10+5 (I)		
PEN 2	CLIP 6	RLD 2 FULL	WT 3 KG	AVL SC
SPECIAL:				
POWER SABRE CLASS MELEE				
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+9 <sup>S+SB</sup> (E)		
PEN 5	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 4 KG	AVL VR
SPECIAL: BALANCED, POWER FIELD				

Skills: Athletics (S), Command (Fel) +20, Navigate (Stellar) (Int) +20, Parry (WS) +30

Talents: Blademaster, Combat Master, Counter Attack

Gear: Micro-bead, liveried uniform with aiguillettes, recoil gloves, Anzaforr carapace armour

Service Unto Death: If an enemy successfully attacks the Rogue Trader and Hessial is within three metres of his commander, Hessial can use his Reaction to Parry the attack as if he himself had been attacked. Any hits that would be inflicted as a result of this attack are inflicted on Hessial instead of the Rogue Trader.

## ANZAFORR ARMSMAN

The Armsmen of Lord-Captain Aristide Anzaforr are exemplars of service. Honest, steadfast, and unwavering in their loyalty to their lord and master, they come from families that have bonded to the dynasty for generations upon generations. The veterans of countless expeditions through the sector and beyond, the elite men and women who accompany him aboard his flagship the *Oath Unspoken* move with a discipline and confidence easily the equal of any Imperial Guard regiment.

ANZAFORR ARMSMAN (TROOP) 8				
H <sup>3</sup> 01-10	6	WS	BS	S
AR <sup>4</sup> 11-20	7	40	32	36
AL <sup>4</sup> 21-30	7	T	AC	INT
B <sup>4</sup> 31-70	7	33	34	30
LR <sup>4</sup> 71-85	7	PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>4</sup> 86-00	7	36	31	28
			IFL	—
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 7
COMBAT SHOTGUN CLASS BASIC				
RNG 30M	RoF S/3/—	DMG 1d10+4 (I)		
PEN 0	CLIP 18	RLD 1 FULL	WT 6.5 KG	AVL SC
SPECIAL: SCATTER				
STUN GRENADE (2) CLASS THROWN				
DMG —	PEN 0	WT 0.5 KG	AVL CM	
SPECIAL: BLAST (3), CONCUSSIVE (2)				

Skills: Athletics (S), Tech-Use (Int) +10

Talents: Double Team, Rapid Reload

Gear: Liveried uniform, Anzaforr flak armour





## MORRINOE, ELДАР RANGER

The Eldar Ranger known to humans as Morrinoe (her true name being nearly impossible for a human to pronounce with the proper tonal and emotional inflections) serves with the Rogue Trader for her own inscrutable reasons. Whatever her mission is, she has clearly made some arrangement with Aristide Anzaforr, for she can often be seen wandering the halls of his personal ship, the *Oath Unspoken*, as it plies Askellian space.

Morrinoe is aloof and mysterious to the Acolytes, but can prove to be a surprising source of assistance. Though she has no care for the Acolytes or their fate, she understands the gravity of the work they do, not for the sake of humanity, but for its impact on the wellbeing of the region known to the Imperium as the Askellon Sector. If necessary, she provides vocal support of the Acolytes, and can also provide them with a degree of encouragement and even a small amount of invaluable information, just enough to ensure that they stay on the right track.

Speculation runs rampant through the crew as to her true purpose. Is she tracking some enemy of her people? An ancient artefact stolen from one of their fallow worlds? The more imaginative spin tales of a tragic failing that has driven Morrinoe from her people on some dark and secret quest for redemption. Whatever her purpose, she has become a sporadic (but common) visitor aboard ship, and is tolerated by its crew, although given a reasonably wide berth.

Whatever the enigmatic Eldar Ranger's purpose on the ship or her predisposition towards its passengers and crew might be, one thing is for sure: Morrinoe needs the ship for something. Should anything or anyone threaten the vessel, she does her utmost to defend it.



ELДАР RANGER MORRINOE (ELITE)						12	
H <sup>4</sup> 01-10	7	WS	BS	S			
AR <sup>4</sup> 11-20	7	48	57	37	T	AG 7	
					34	47	
					PER 6	WP	
					49	42	
						FEL	
						44	
						IFL	
						—	
LR <sup>4</sup> 71-85	7	LL <sup>4</sup> 86-00	7	HALF 7			FULL 14
				CHARGE 21	RUN 42	THREAT 8	
<b>ELДАР LONG RIFLE</b>						CLASS BASIC	
RNG 250M		RoF S/--		DMG 1d10+12 (E)			
PEN 2	CLIP 18	RLD 1 FULL	WT 4 KG	AVL NU			
SPECIAL: ACCURATE, FELLING (2), RELIABLE							
<b>SHURIKEN PISTOL</b>						CLASS PISTOL	
RNG 30M		RoF S/3/-		DMG 1d10+4 (R)			
PEN 3	CLIP 50	RLD 1 FULL	WT 1.2 KG	AVL ER			
SPECIAL: RAZOR SHARP, RELIABLE							

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int) +10, Stealth (Ag) +20, Survival (Per) +20

**Talents:** Blind Fighting, Disarm, Marksman, Target Selection

**Traits:** Unnatural Agility (3), Unnatural Perception (2)

**Gear:** Light Eldar mesh armour, chameleon cloak, spirit stone

**Living Ghost:** The Ranger scores two extra degrees of success on successful Stealth tests.



## JARRAD CINCAUDE, NARCO-SMUGGLER

A native of Desoleum, Cincayde broke from his oath-bond at a young age to begin peddling chems for the Insurrati. He was extremely successful in pushing a wide variety of illegal products from the shadows, evading several high-profile investigations. Throughout his now-lengthy career he managed to maintain his Insurrati connections, and now makes a lucrative trade smuggling chems and chem ingredients—with their blessing and assistance—across a territory that has grown to include four other planets. Having been to five different worlds during his career, Cincayde is exceptionally well-travelled. In fact, in moments of high self-satisfaction or under the influence of fine vintage amasec, his only indulgence, he likes to brag that he has personally embarrassed the Adeptus Arbitres of five worlds.

JARRAD CINCAUDE (ELITE)					19
H 3 01-10		WS 28	BS 24	S 30	
AR 5 11-20	AL 5 21-30	T 31	AG 30	INT 44	
B 5 31-70		PER 36	WP 24	FEL 42	
LR 5 71-85	LL 5 86-00	IFL —			
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 8	
HOLDOUT LASPISTOL			CLASS PISTOL		
RNG 20M	RoF S/—	DMG 1d10+3 (E)			
PEN 0	CLIP 8	RLD HALF	WT 1 KG	AVL PL	
SPECIAL:					
SHOCK CANE			CLASS MELEE		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+3 <sup>SB</sup> (E)			
PEN 1	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 2 KG	AVL RA	
SPECIAL: CONCUSSIVE (1), SHOCKING					

Skills: Charm (Fel) +10, Commerce (Int) +30, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Sleight of Hand (Ag)

Talents: Jaded, Keen Intuition

Gear: Good clothing, various samples of narco-applicators, medikit, armoured great coat, assorted currencies

**A Nose for Business:** Addictive drugs count as being one level of Availability easier to acquire when purchased through Cincayde, so long as they are part of a trade.



## PREACHER NESSIAH LAZARUN

Confident in his long life of service and his place at the Emperor's side, Lazarun does not fear death, and in fact intends to use his passing as a final act of ultimate devotion, being interred alive in a glorious tomb on Thaur. Custodians have been preparing his elaborate tomb for over a year, and the aged preacher hopes only that he might live long enough to pass beneath its marble archway. Knowing the depth of his devotion, the pilgrims are deeply dedicated to the Preacher, whose ultimate sacrifice is seen as an awe-inspiring example of holy zeal. They follow Lazarun without question, and abide by almost any decree he passes along, should the situation aboard the *Oath Unspoken* turn violent.

Lazarun can be found tending to the spiritual needs of the pilgrims, either in the basilica or in one of the many great holds and corridors that house the thousands of religious travellers. If the Acolytes lack a cleric, Lazarun could even be a source of spiritual guidance and counsel for them. Unlike some preachers of the Ecclesiarchy, Lazarun realises that not everything is strictly black-and-white. While many of his peers would surely condemn Lazarun were he to voice such beliefs out loud, they do make him uniquely suited to assisting in the mission of Inquisitorial Acolytes.

PREACHER NESSIAH LAZARUN (ELITE)					8
H 3 01-10		WS 22	BS 21	S 22	
AR 4 11-20	AL 4 21-30	T 28	AG 30	INT 35	
B 5 31-70		PER 30	WP 45	FEL 55	
LR 4 71-85	LL 4 86-00	IFL —			
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 6	
STAFF			CLASS MELEE		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+2 <sup>SB</sup> (I)			
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 3 KG	AVL PL	
SPECIAL: BALANCED, PRIMITIVE (7)					

Skills: Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel), Linguistics (High Gothic) (Int) +20, Scholastic Lore (Imperial Creed) +30

Talents: Halo of Command, Jaded, Peer (Ecclesiarchy)

Gear: Elaborate robes with armoured mesh fabric, religious icons  
**Life's Twilight:** Lazarun is ancient, and lacks the endurance of younger warriors. Whenever he would suffer one or more levels of Fatigue, he suffers double that number of levels of Fatigue instead.

## CONFESSOR GRAVES

The Confessor is a marked contrast to his elderly colleague, and is a firebrand noted for preaching the eternal damnation of all enemies of the Emperor. Moving amongst the pilgrims since the *Oath Unspoken* left Desoleum, Graves has lashed them ceaselessly with sermons ranging from sacrifice and mortification to ceaseless vigilance and the persecution of all blasphemers. Subtlety is not in his arsenal; if the Acolytes do enlist his aid, they might soon come to regret it, as Graves unleashes a mindless and directionless pogrom, inciting the pilgrims to acts of wrath and cleansing.



CONFESSOR GRAVES (ELITE)					15	
H <sup>2</sup> 01-10		5		WS	BS	S
AR <sup>3</sup> 11-20	6		AL <sup>3</sup> 21-30	41	38	34
B <sup>3</sup> 31-70		6		T	AC	INT
LR <sup>3</sup> 71-85	6		LL <sup>3</sup> 86-00	35	47	38
6		6		PER	WP	FEL
6		6		41	39	34
6		6		IFL	—	
HALF 4	FULL 8	CHARGE 12	RUN 24	THREAT 12		
CEREMONIAL CROZIUS			CLASS MELEE			
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+7 <sup>3+SB</sup> (I)				
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 6 KG	AVL RA		
SPECIAL: BALANCED, CONCUSSIVE (I)						

Skills: Command (Fel) +10, Intimidate (S) +20, Peer (Ecclesiarchy)  
Talents: Crushing Blow (included in profile), Hatred (Heretics)  
Gear: Ceremonial armoured robes, holy tracts, religious icons  
The Fires of Faith: Whenever Graves attempts to sway groups into religious fervour, the GM should make a Subtlety test to see if the Acolyte's true nature has been compromised. If this is failed, Graves gains a bonus equal to ten times the degrees of failure (if the warband is operating openly, this counts as a +40 bonus). If any heretical cults have been revealed, he instead gains the Halo of Command talent and a +20 bonus to any Social skill tests.

## PRAESUL PARATHAS HAYNE

Hayne is a relatively powerful psyker, although he avoided the grasp of the Black Ships. Whether the exposure to the Blood of Izumat or an innate mutation granted him his twisted mystical abilities, Hayne revels in them. Rather than seeing his powers as a curse, Parathas Hayne sees his burgeoning abilities as tangible blessings from his ancient patron Izumat, and their emergence has served only to make him more fanatical in his belief.

PRAESUL PARATHAS HAYNE (ELITE)					20	
H <sup>1</sup> 01-10		5		WS	BS	S
AR <sup>2</sup> 11-20	6		AL <sup>2</sup> 21-30	42	28	36
B <sup>3</sup> 31-70		7		T	AC	INT
LR <sup>2</sup> 71-85	6		LL <sup>2</sup> 86-00	46	42	45
6		6		PER	WP	FEL
6		6		52	58	39
6		6		IFL	—	
HALF 4	FULL 8	CHARGE 12	RUN 24	THREAT 16		
INHERITOR FORCE STAFF			CLASS MELEE			
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+7 <sup>PR+SB</sup> (E)				
PEN 6 <sup>2+PR</sup>	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 4 KG	AVL ER		
SPECIAL: BALANCED, FORCE						

Skills: Deceive (Fel) +20, Intimidate (S), Psyniscience (Per) +10  
Talents: Resistance (Cold), Warp Sense  
Traits: Psyker (PR 4)

Psychic Powers: Assail, Enfeeble, Gate of Infinity, Life Leech  
Gear: Armoured robes, unholy icons, 2d10 Thaurian bone-chips  
Fortress of Deranged Minds: When defending against a psychic power, Parathas Hayne gains a +10 bonus to his test for each other Inheritor within 5 metres.



## CHILD OF THE INHERITANCE DISCIPLE

Shoring up the strength of the Children of the Inheritance are the Disciples seeded among the Proselytes. Although not initiated into the deepest mysteries of the Inheritors, the Disciples are well-versed in the basic catechism of the cult, and lead the less-experienced Proselytes in circumstances of direct action. On the rarest occasion, such individuals might carry a small token imbued with the Blood of Izumat, derived from the artefacts of the dead xenos race from Thaur. This substance strikes religious awe into members of the cult, and instinctive revulsion into all others.

INHERITOR DISCIPLE (ELITE)					12	
H <sup>2</sup> 01-10		5		WS	BS	S
AR <sup>2</sup> 11-20	5		AL <sup>2</sup> 21-30	38	32	36
B <sup>3</sup> 31-70		6		T	AC	INT
LR <sup>2</sup> 71-85	5		LL <sup>2</sup> 86-00	35	32	21
5		5		PER	WP	FEL
5		5		33	25	34
5		5		IFL	—	
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 9		
STUB REVOLVER			CLASS PISTOL			
RNG 20M	RoF S/—	DMG 1d10+4 (I)				
PEN 1	CLIP 6	RLD 2 FULL	WT 1.5 KG	AVL PL		
SPECIAL: RELIABLE, EXPANDER ROUNDS (BUILT INTO PROFILE)						
CHAINSWORD			CLASS MELEE			
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+5 <sup>2+SB</sup> (R)				
PEN 2	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 6 KG	AVL SC		
SPECIAL: BALANCED, TEARING						

Skills: Command (Fel), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S)  
Talents: Double Team, Takedown  
Gear: Robes, unholy icons, 1d10 Thaurian bone-chips  
Directed Action: If there are one or more other Inheritors within 10 metres, this character gains a +10 bonus to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests.





## CHAPTER III: NIGHTMARES REMEMBERED

In the final chapter of FORGOTTEN GODS, the Acolytes travel to the surface of the shrine world Thaur to prevent the Children of the Inheritance from accomplishing their goal of resurrecting an ancient xenos god. Unbeknownst to the cult, though the Acolytes might now begin to suspect it, the entity known as Izumat is not a slumbering alien deity, but a Daemon of the Warp seeking ingress into reality.

Before they can halt the cult's plan, however, the Acolytes must deal with a number of challenges, including Thaur's planetary governor Jeronius Pyre, the Lord of the Wake. Suspecting the Acolytes of smuggling, a growing worry on his world, Lord Pyre orders them taken captive. The Acolytes must either convince Pyre to free them, or make their own escape, if they are to continue their pursuit of the cult and its activities.

Having escaped from captivity at the hands of Lord Pyre, the Acolytes must travel into the dense and dangerous forests of Thaur, through the ancient ossuaries, and descend into the depths of Thaur. Deep beneath a large gathering on the surface, where thousands of worshipers are celebrating a great Imperial saint, the Inheritors prepare the ritual to awaken their god. Unless the Acolytes stop them, the thousands of pilgrims will only be the first to die at the claws of Izumat the Awakened.

Should the Acolytes successfully interrupt the ritual and banish Izumat before it can fully manifest, they can save the world of Thaur from being plunged back into the darkness that swallowed its former inhabitants. Even so, they must contend with the damning knowledge that the long-dead alien race that once populated Thaur, and perhaps other worlds of the Askellon Sector, fell into the grip of Chaos.

Thus, these xenos doomed themselves and left a lasting corruption staining the sector's worlds, a terrible peril that could still be the fall of Mankind.





# THAUR

*"Why should we concern ourselves with what the living may or may not do, when the dead have already accomplished so much?"*

—Jeronius Pyre, Lord of the Wake

**T**haur is a shrine world, the sovereign domain of the Ecclesiarchy in nearly all respects. Unlike other shrine worlds that boast monumental cathedrals and glorious basilicas to the Emperor or specific saints, it is a world of silent tombs and primeval, overgrown forests. Nourished by millennia of burials, the great trees of Thaur grow thick and tangled, obscuring the graves of the past.

It is said that the graves on Thaur were already ancient when the Great Crusade first reached the region of space that would become the Askellon Sector. In the millennia since, Thaur has become the most desirable resting place for the sector's nobility, and especially for preachers of the Adeptus Ministorum. Thaur is also home to the graves of numerous saints, some celebrated and revered across Askellon, others all but forgotten.

## PLANETARY DATA: THAUR

**Population:** *Approx. 500 million, excluding pilgrims and other visitors*

**Tithe Grade:** *Exactus Non*

**Geography:** *Dense forests covering most of planetary surface, modest hills and valleys*

**Government Type:** *Eulogus Askelline—semi-autonomous Ecclesiarchy diocese with divergent beliefs*

**Planetary Governor:** *Lord of the Wake Jeronius Pyre*

**Adept Presence:** *Low*

**Military:** *Mournful Guard*

**Trade:** *Major importer of deceased from across the sector, minimal export of wood and wood products*

## ENVIRONMENT AND GEOGRAPHY

Most of Thaur's surface is covered by dense, impenetrable forests and softly undulating hills. The world has no oceans to speak of, but boasts numerous, mostly small, freshwater lakes across its surface. Despite these, water is in short supply on Thaur, which would be a problem were its population larger.

## ECOLOGY

While Thaur is known for its dead, it is also home to living things. However, the populations of native fauna are conspicuously low for a seemingly verdant world. Visitors often remark upon the fact that even deep in the forests, it is as silent as the grave. Of course, graves are everywhere on Thaur. No matter how far one travels from the Great Ossuaria or the nearest haven of the Eulogus Askelline, ancient, crumbling tombstones can be found hidden beneath vines and moss.

Though not nearly as abundant as the flora, animal life is present on Thaur. Wild canids roam the forests in packs, while birds and other small animals nest in the trees. Among the most notable of Thaur's wildlife are the grotesque creatures known as corpse-crawlers. The lifecycles of these monsters require fresh corpses,

## HOME WORLD: THAUR

Players can adopt Thaur as their home world when creating a new Acolyte, especially as a replacement character while adventuring in that location. Characters from Thaur follow the standard shrine world rules (see page 40 of the *DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook*), but with the following new Home World Bonus instead of the usual one:

### HOME WORLD BONUS

*The Dead are Watchful:* The first time a character from Thaur suffers Critical damage each session, after determining and resolving the Critical Effect, he gains back one spent Fate Point (this cannot exceed his Fate threshold).

making Thaur a prime hunting ground. Whether they are native to Thaur is a fact none have been able to determine. The creatures' activities are a constant bane to the Eulogus Askelline, who expend countless hours and resources attempting to protect their deceased charges. Despite frequent attempts to exterminate corpse-crawlers, the creatures always reappear to plague the Eulogus.

Though Thaur has no major exports, wood from its great forests is in high demand across the sector for nobility and other dioceses of the Ecclesiarchy. This is not due to the quality of the wood, but due to its origin. The soil of Thaur is considered holy, and so this characteristic is also commonly attributed to the plant life which sprouts from it. This is particularly true for trees growing in the vicinity of the graves of heroes of the sector, and even more so those of saints. Wood taken from a beatific sapling can be extremely valuable, and many nobles are willing to donate generously in exchange for such material. Between choice burial plots and wood grown on the resting places of saints, Thaur has a great deal to offer servants of the Ecclesiarchy from across Askellon.

## THE GREAT OSSUARIA

Thaur is home to many elaborate and unusual crypts, tombs, and sepulchres across and below its surface, but none are as well-known as the Great Ossuaria. Also known as the Great Bone-Tombs, it is only a few leagues' travel from the Palace of the Wake, home to the Cathedral of the Wake and the habitation of the Lord of the Wake, and thus making for a desirable location. Over the millennia, its ossuaries have grown larger, taller, and broader, built up with the bones of lesser individuals. For those who cannot afford their own tombs or even burial plots on Thaur, to have their skeletal remains used in the construction of the Great Ossuaria is a highly desirable honour. Though not firmly delineated, it covers an area of many kilometres, petering out some fifteen kilometres from the highest and most grandiose structures.

The crypts and tombs of the Great Ossuaria descend for some distance below ground. Over the millennia, many of these structures have delved deeper and deeper as succeeding generations of the sector's wealthiest noble families come to their final rest. As a result, the ossuarian crypts have run up against or broken through into the truly ancient catacombs of Thaur, some many millennia old.



## THE CATACOMBS

The thousands of kilometres of tunnels that honeycomb Thaur's crust are commonly known simply as "the catacombs." Though few know it, these crumbling corridors predate Thaur's human habitation, having been originally built by the ancient xenos that once claimed Thaur as their home. In the many centuries since humans first settled on Thaur, these catacombs have been taken over to inter countless human corpses. Closer to the surface, millennia of use by humans have obscured their origins, and xenos construction is concealed beneath more recent masonry work. In the areas of the Great Ossuaria, layer upon layer of human bone conceal the inhuman structure of the catacombs completely.

The further one descends in the catacombs, the more eerie and alien they become. The familiar forms of human bones give way to strangely smooth black stone, which seems to reflect light when there is none and to swallow it up where travellers carry their lamps.

## HISTORY

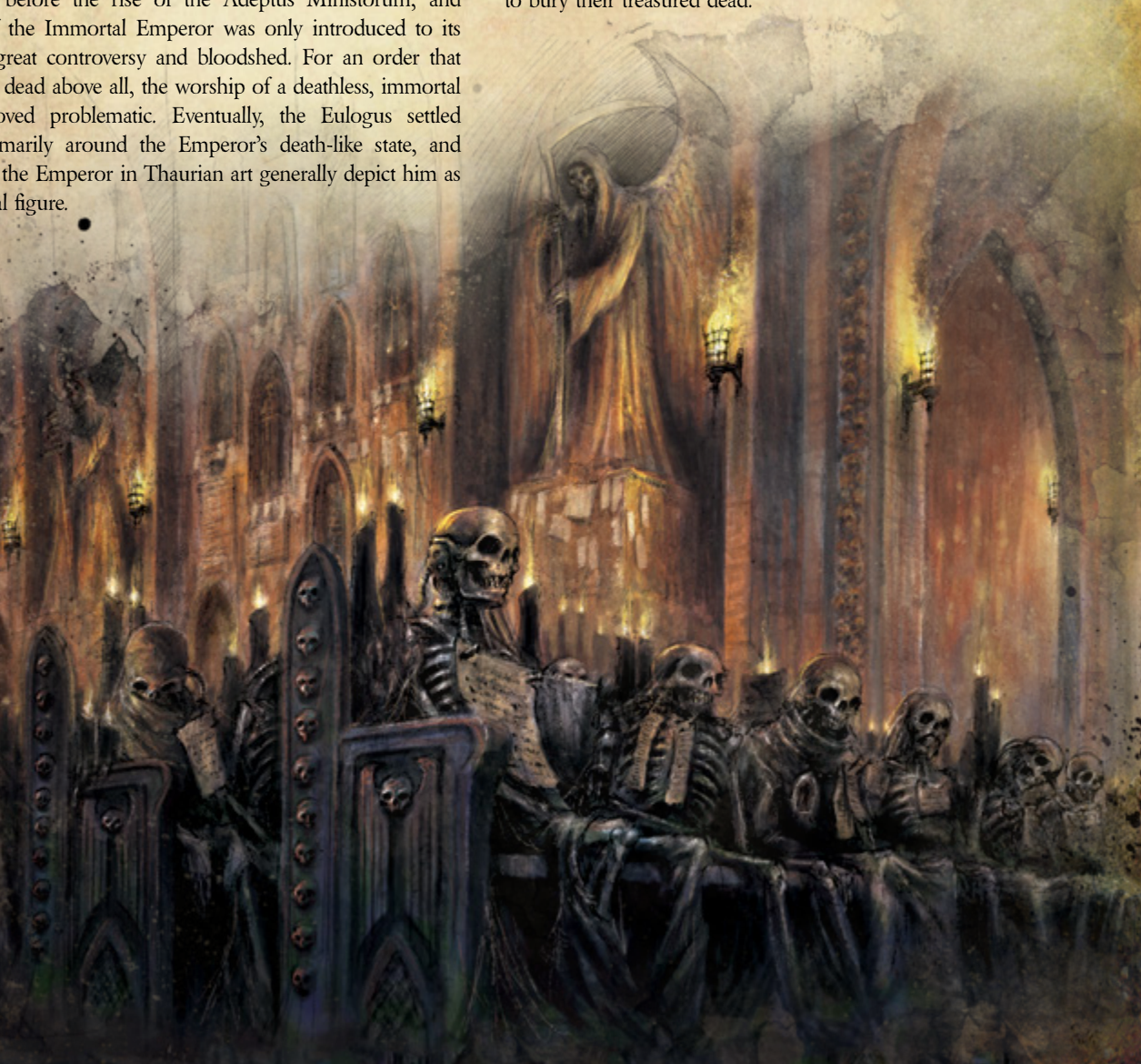
Thaur's human population, like that of many worlds of Askellon, predates the Age of the Imperium. Indeed, the Eulogus Askelline existed long before the rise of the Adeptus Ministorum, and veneration of the Immortal Emperor was only introduced to its beliefs with great controversy and bloodshed. For an order that venerated the dead above all, the worship of a deathless, immortal Emperor proved problematic. Eventually, the Eulogus settled its views primarily around the Emperor's death-like state, and depictions of the Emperor in Thaurian art generally depict him as a pale, skeletal figure.

## RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE

Thaur has seemingly been a holy world as long as humans have lived upon it or even settled in Askellian space; the oldest of its graves and tombs appear to predate the Great Crusade. However, the ravages of time have claimed many of these prehistoric resting places, while others have been covered over or replaced by more recent additions. It is not uncommon for ancient and unclaimed graves—those with unknown inhabitants—to be dredged up, their contents honoured for use in the construction of new ossuaries.

## UNRECORDED HISTORY

As with other worlds of Askellon, the true history of Thaur's pre-Imperial past is known to only a few of those individuals most steeped in forbidden lore, and even then only a fraction of the truth is known. When Mankind first settled Thaur, it was already a tomb. Perhaps not an intentional one, but nonetheless it was the resting place of an ancient xenos culture that had fallen to the veneration of Ruinous Powers and destroyed itself. Perhaps something of this solemn tragedy spoke to the early colonists, but generations of subtle manipulation by elegant alien hands guided the human inhabitants to make it a burial world. Thaur became a place for the nearby planets of what would one day become the Askellon Sector to bury their treasured dead.





It was this alien influence that led Thaur's inhabitants to establish the order that would one day become the Eulogus Askelline. In its inception, the order's purpose was not to protect the human dead buried on Thaur, but to watch for—and guard against—the return of the ancient horrors that had once dwelt there. During the ensuing millennia and the many cataclysms to engulf the region, the true purpose of the order become more and more forgotten. In the Age of the Imperium, the Ecclesiarchy has thoroughly scoured this original task from memory. While the Eulogus Askelline continues its purpose, most of the original reasons for its strange and ancient rituals are lost to history.



## THE EULOGUS ASKELLINE

The bulk of Thaur's native population are members of the Eulogus Askelline, although a small number of lay citizens live in small villages scattered throughout the many forests that cover the world. The Eulogus Askelline is a massive and byzantine religious order. Though a part of the Adeptus Ministorum, it has many unique customs and traditions. Local differences in the worship of the Emperor are not uncommon amongst the branches of the Imperial Creed found across the planets of the Imperium, but even so the Eulogus Askelline stands apart. Unlike most other sects of the Imperial Creed, it recruits from Thaur's native citizens almost

without exception. Consequently, the order is extremely isolated, and more worldly members of the Ecclesiarchy visiting Thaur might find they have less common ground with the sombre, black-robed priests of this planet of endless cemeteries than they would elsewhere in the Askellon Sector.

The Eulogus Askelline comprises dozens of specialised orders, choirs, and disciplines. Some of these maintain broad duties, while others are highly specialised. Most members wear dark robes, commonly black, adorned with holy symbols and other ornamentations. A common style incorporates motifs of death and actual human remains, especially bone segments of various sizes. The higher a member's rank, the more decorative his robes and the more numerous his accessories. Even then, the Eulogus prefer sombre, muted affectations, and the Lord of the Wake's finest garb pales in comparison to the ostentation shown by some high Ecclesiarchal figures on other Askellian worlds. Some orders wear more distinctive garb due to their specific duties, in particular the Mournful Guard and Ossuarian Custodians.

### THE LORD OF THE WAKE

The head of the Eulogus Askelline is the Lord of the Wake, an office currently held by Jeronius Pyre. Due to Thaur's status as a shrine world, the Lord of the Wake is also traditionally the planetary governor, making him a powerful individual indeed. Pyre has watched over Thaur and its dead for longer than most other servants of the Emperor in the sector have drawn breath, rising through the ranks of the Eulogus to finally become Wakeful Lord. As the most senior member of the Eulogus Askelline, Pyre ensures that the dignitaries, heroes, and true servants of the Imperium are remembered with all due ceremony and ritual. He has reached that age now, though, where he more resembles a walking corpse than a living man.

Pyre spends very little time and effort in his official capacity as governor of the living, spending most of his time observing the rituals and ceremonies of the dead. He often travels considerable distances for them, and columns of horse-drawn carriages protected by numerous Mournful Guard are a common sight across Thaur. Most of the day-to-day ruling is left to a variety of councillors and bureaucrats who have been essentially running the planet now for decades while Pyre focuses on the needs of the dead.

## SOCIETY

Thaurian society revolves completely around death and the caretaking of the dead. From elaborate funerary rites requiring thousands of professional mourners to the construction of massive crypts almost entirely from human bones, Thaur's inhabitants devote their lives to the dead. The majority of the population are inducted into the Eulogus Askelline at a young age. Those who are not inducted tend to live in small villages near the most popular cemetery sites and grave-complexes or close to the spaceports, where they act as manual labour.

For the most part, these individuals live in wretched poverty and ignorance. Their lack of resources on a low-tech world like Thaur ensures that most have practically no access to technology, and even an electro-candle or auto-quill would be a luxury. Those living in more isolated villages might not have even seen such devices, and view the lights of shuttles descending to the spaceports as angels either retrieving the souls of the dead or delivering them, depending on the local superstitions.

The currency of Thaur is the bone-chip coin. These small discs of human bone are painstakingly scrimshawed by artisans of the Eulogus Askelline. Each coin is assigned a value based on the importance of the person from whom it is carved, according to a complex and arcane system of valuation. With the exception of saints, anyone who hopes to be buried or entombed on Thaur must tithe a small portion of their skeleton for use as currency, in addition to any other payment they make.

## TECHNOLOGY

For reasons that are unclear, Thaur continues to maintain a very low technological base, and the red-robed priests of the Machine God are almost nowhere to be seen. Autocarriages and other motorised vehicles are almost completely absent. Most overland travel is made either on foot or in simple wooden carriages pulled by native equines. Far from the main tomb-complexes and spaceports, specially-trained Mournful Guard range far and wide, mounted atop massive black warhorses. These outriders live a largely solitary life, travelling for days at a time without seeing another living soul, ever-watchful for crimes against Thaur's most honoured inhabitants—its dead.



Because so much of his attention is on otherworldly matters, there are vast swathes of business on Thaur that Lord Pyre knows nothing about. He is very nearly oblivious to the rampant illicit cult activity that makes up so much of the duty roster of the Mournful Guard, and due to the nature of bureaucracy, very little about such things is brought to his attention. One aspect of his world's business is of primary concern to him, however, and that is the smuggling of relics and artefacts. Touching directly upon the sanctity of his deceased charges, Pyre spends a great deal of time and effort trying to curtail smuggling interests on Thaur, and arrests nearly anyone, regardless of credentials, if he suspects that person of smuggling. It is in no small part because of this concern that he has been able to stomach his long association with a mysterious Eldar Ranger who, rumour has it, assists him against these vermin from time to time.

### THE VESTALS

At the highest echelon of the Eulogus Askelline are the Vestals. These dedicated monks maintain a constant vigil over the graves and crypts of Thaur's most esteemed dead, including nobles, military heroes, and saints. The Vestals fulfil this duty through a highly-ritualised series of grieving ceremonies. The eyes of the Vestals are permanently red and blood-shot from the countless tears they must shed in their duties, for to not shed tears for their charges would be a blasphemous insult. If needed, the Devout NPC profile from page 389 of the DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook can be used to represent these Thaurian officials.



### THE MOURNFUL GUARD

The members of the Mournful Guard make up a huge part of the Eulogus Askelline. Though their duties and appearance would seem to mark them out as a separate organisation, they are very much a part of the Eulogus, and so are under the command of Lord Pyre, whether directly or indirectly. The Mournful Guard, sometimes simply known as the Guardians, comprises Thaur's military and law enforcement forces, and is responsible for the duties that fall to both the Enforcers and planetary defences on other worlds. It is subdivided into numerous orders with varying responsibilities, from guarding Thaur against invasion or rebellion, to enforcing planetary law and protecting the blessed dead from tomb robbers, grave robbers, and vermin.

The local units of the Mournful Guard are easily identified by their sombre dark tunics worn over form-fitting light flak vests. Due to the nature of their work, most Guardians are armed with non-lethal weaponry designed to incapacitate their targets, allowing collection and interrogation by the authorities. The force's signature weapon is the shockbow, an impressive device that launches a low-velocity shock quarrel, allowing the Guard to isolate and neutralise instigating targets at a distance.

### THE OSSUARIAN CUSTODIANS

The Ossuarian Custodians are the grim protectors of the great ossuaries and bone-tombs and dwell deep within the crypts, rarely seeing natural light. They are highly monastic in nature, approaching all of their duties with solemnity and piety. As they patrol, they weep silently for their charges resting eternally around them, as do all on Thaur who tend to the departed. Only actual humans can be allowed to perform such tasks, as servitors or other constructs are incapable of shedding natural tears in the presence of the honoured dead. Whether repairing crumbling bonework arches deep in the ossuarian catacombs, fending off tomb-robbers, or battling intrusions of Thaur's native creatures, the Custodians are fully dedicated and implacable.


In keeping with their more ceremonial role, the Custodian uniform consists of elaborate robes of deepest black worn beneath plated armour incorporating actual bone detailing. Their faces are nearly always hidden behind solemn bone masks built into tall, ornate helmets. When on patrol, they bear a long polearm known as an aduroglaive that incorporates a promethium lantern used to illuminate the deep tombs. Each also carries an ossugun, a breach-loading pistol that hold a single powerful, large-calibre round designed to fragment on impact, causing maximum damage to soft tissue while minimising collateral damage to the skeletal structure of the target. Although a great deal of speculation for this exists, there has never been a definitive answer as to why the Ossuarians are concerned with the skeletal integrity of their victims.

### THE CHILDREN OF THE INHERITANCE

The Children of the Inheritance, sometimes known simply as the Inheritors, are a heretical xenophilious cult originating on Thaur that grew out of many radical sects of the Eulogus Askelline. Whereas other splinter groups and hidden cults within the Eulogus break with tradition while remaining mostly harmless, this cult is an entirely different beast, corrupted by the very evil that the Eulogus Askelline's precursor order was established to guard against.

Known to only a few, and perhaps not even to the current Lord of the Wake himself, the Eulogus Askelline was originally founded with a more dire purpose than merely seeing to the proper caretaking of the dead. The sect's secondary purpose also called for them to protect against something from Thaur's distant past. This has been shrouded by the veil of ages, forgotten over the millennia by all but the most fanatical and devoted members of the Eulogus. Even then, the majority of those with any knowledge dismiss it as legend. Ironically, this knowledge was the genesis of the Children of the Inheritance. This small kernel of knowledge of Thaur's earlier inhabitants grew into a profane worship of forgotten xenos deities, under the leadership of Arch-Rector Legatarius Carolus Renthear, himself a powerful and highly placed member of the Eulogus.





The primary source of the cult's knowledge of the ancient xenos comes from direct contact with the artefacts that remain. Proximity with many of these objects produces terrifying visions of a time long before the origins of Mankind. These visions are particularly vivid for psykers and can be utterly mind-shattering; unsurprisingly, many of the cultists are completely insane. Most, however, are able to conceal their madness well enough to continue in their duties as members of the Eulogus Askelline. The lower echelons of the cult have only minimal, if any, direct exposure to the artefacts, and so are in a better state to interact with others.

The impossibly ancient artefacts are vital to the ceremonies and worship practices of the cult, which often involve a high-ranking member exposing himself to visions and interpreting them for the rest of the assemblage. A number of the leaders exhibit psychic powers, despite having no prior history of exhibiting such abilities. Whether exposure to the artefacts triggered nascent psychic ability, enhanced it, or created it, is a matter of debate within the cult's leaders. However, many of these magisters and praesuls relish in their newfound powers, which they take as evidence of the blessed gods' favour. Many cultists believe that these supernatural abilities are not psychic powers at all, but direct manifestations of the divine will of the gods.

## THE ARTEFACTS

Thaur hides many secrets. On a more mundane level, tomb robbing is a serious problem that keeps the Eulogus Askelline constantly busy. Many of the wealthy and important who find their final rest on Thaur are interred with treasured belongings, and the mausoleums and tombs of the wealthy are commonly decorated with precious metals and gems as well as artwork. The xenos artefacts of Thaur were originally discovered by chance, during the pursuits of more conventional treasures.

The deepest ruins beneath the surface contain many artefacts and relics of a lost xenos race, whose age makes a mockery of Mankind's concept of elder time. Beings utterly alien in every way moved through wide passageways and within structures that can only be guessed at by the last pitiful remnants left behind after millennia of human presence. Many of the disturbing relics feature a mysterious shape, only vaguely humanoid, always shrouded in impenetrable shadow. Centuries of illicit study and painstaking translation revealed the name of this figure decades ago: Izumat the Awakened. Izumat's nature has long eluded the proscribed scholars who have sought it, but those in the highest levels of the Children of the Inheritance believe with all their hearts that it is the god of the ancient xenos of Thaur.



No one knows when the artefacts were first discovered, but the practice of smuggling them off of Thaur predates the Children of the Inheritance. In recent years, the cult has made a major effort to retrieve Thaurian artefacts and return them to their home. To this end, they have employed the services of smugglers, resulting in a circular smuggling operation. In some cases, smugglers remove artefacts specifically in order to sell them back to the cult. In the course of these pursuits, the cult has formed semi-permanent business arrangements with diverse individuals within the Trade Sable and hereteks on several worlds. Such persons do not adhere to the tenets of the cult, but work closely with it for reasons of their own, which are often as simple as profit.

The Inheritors believe that there can only exist a finite number of living souls on Thaur at one time, and that they must exchange the souls of the humans living on Thaur to reawaken the lost glory of the dead xenos they venerate. Some members of the cult believe that this limit extends not only to Thaur, but to the entire sector, or even to all of existence.


In the Inheritors' view, humanity has prevented the return of Thaur and Askellon's true masters simply by existing. The cult reconciles their own existence as humans through their belief that they are the spiritual inheritors of the xenos' legacy. According to the praesuls and arch-interpreters of the cult, the primordial xenos race foresaw the future problems posed by humanity, and left behind fragments of their knowledge for it to discover, that they could enact their will even after death. Through a complex series of rituals involving exposure to the primordial artefacts, the cult leaders claim they can determine whether a person possesses this link to the ancient ones. Preying on the ignorance of Thaur's inhabitants, the cult has managed to convince many that this impossible heresy is true.

## SLUMBERING GODS

The Children of the Inheritance believe that the Ancestors' gods went into a sort of slumber or hibernation as their race waned. As the inheritors of the ancients' legacy, the cultists see it as their duty to worship and awaken these gods, and receive the spiritual rewards that are rightfully theirs. The cult teaches that its members will receive a great and bountiful reward for their faithful service, while the unbelievers who lay claim to the domains of the ancient ones will suffer the wrath of the gods.

The being known to the ancient xenos of Thaur as Izumat the Awakened is in fact an infernal creature referred to in more contemporary (albeit proscribed) texts as Suvfaeras, Daemon Prince of the God of Fate. Bound to the inscrutable will of Tzeentch, this spiteful entity harbours nothing but vicious contempt for all living beings. It yearns for freedom into the material world, where it will continue in its effort to corrupt and destroy humanity, as it did the ancient xenos race. It is not above deceiving mortals as to its true nature, however, and indeed is particularly adept at such manipulations, subtly bringing humans and anything else it can sway to serve its dark and twisted designs.

The Inheritors' beliefs are based on an interpretation of mythology, and so have only the most tenuous of connections to reality. The xenos ancients actually fell to the corruption of Chaos; from this one can conjecture that their gods might have been masks for the gods of Chaos and daemonic powers all along, but the truth of the matter is utterly lost to time.



By the end of their civilisation, they had fallen to the worship of Chaos. Among other powers, they worshipped the powerful Tzeentch Daemon Prince Suvfaeras as a god, in the guise of Izumat, and built shrines, temples, and idols in its honour. They also worshipped an entire pantheon of other so-called gods, including Hordosar and Beheomat, but it is unknown if these represented other Daemons or not.

Suvfaeras has a connection to these profane objects, which are somehow psychically attuned to his daemonic essence, perhaps as a result of intense worship and ceremony as the ancient xenos bathed in the sickly light of Chaos. As such, these objects can invoke Suvfaeras from the Warp and into the Materium. Thus, through dreams, visions, and omens, the mighty Daemon has instructed its followers to gather these items and prepare for its awakening. The process it revealed to them is to create the so-called Blood of Izumat, an unspeakable ritual that uses the artefacts to create a Warp-tainted liquid. They do this with eager obedience, blind all the while to the true nature of their supposed god. Suvfaeras' contempt for these eager slaves knows no bounds, and once free, it desires nothing more than to consume their souls and enrich itself for the glory of the God of Fate.



## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

*“And from the graves of the ancients, the true gods shall rise again.”*

—From the Propheticum Inheritus Benedictus

In the final chapter of *FORGOTTEN GODS*, the Acolytes reach the origin world of the xenos artefacts they have been pursuing, and must stop the Inheritors from unknowingly summoning a powerful Daemon of Chaos. While there remain clues to gather and puzzle pieces to fit, in this chapter it is more essential that the Acolytes race to catch up to and stop the Inheritors before they can accomplish their malefic work.

## PLOT SYNOPSIS

With either the near-precise location (or at the least a reliable estimate) of the Inheritors' next ritual in hand, the Acolytes descend to the surface of Thaur in one of Anzafor's many lighters, landing at Port Restful. No sooner do they disembark than a group of Mournful Guard, the enforcers of Thaur's law and the will of the Lord of the Wake Jeronius Pyre, arrest them on suspicion of smuggling. Once in the Lord of the Wake's grip, who by dint of his status also holds the position of Imperial Commander of Thaur, the Acolytes must either negotiate their freedom or otherwise escape. Depending on how this episode unfolds, the Acolytes might progress to the next stage of the adventure with full support of the Lord of the Wake and secondments of his Mournful Guard, or they might complete the adventure as fugitives from Pyre and his regime.

After escaping Pyre's custody one way or another, the Acolytes must push through Thaur's dense, impenetrable forests to reach an entrance to the catacombs where they suspect the Inheritors are preparing to begin the ritual. Along the way, they encounter several potential delays, including a fanatical cult adhering to a twisted version of the Imperial Creed, the horrific native creatures known as corpse-crawlers, and even a seemingly innocuous village hidden in the deep woods. Speaking to these native residents can reveal additional information about Thaur's history and culture. Unlike Pyre and his subordinates, these villagers are unaffiliated with the Eulogus Askelline, and more willing to speak freely. Of course, their information also comes from less reliable sources, and the Acolytes must distinguish rumour and story from fact.

Having finally gained ingress to the winding and nightmarish catacombs that descend deep into Thaur's crust, the Acolytes must make their way through the maze-like tunnels while evading the agents of the Children of the Inheritance, and potentially also the servants of Lord Pyre. Further complicating matters is the fact that the Inheritors have members throughout the Eulogus Askelline, including the Ossuarian Custodians who relentlessly patrol the catacombs. These hidden cultists work to deter or kill the Acolytes, and put them in the difficult position of being unable to trust any of the locals.

When they reach the site of the ritual, the Acolytes discover that they are too late, arriving in time to witness the final intonations that commence of the dark rite and the manifestation of the Daemon Prince Suvfaeras. However, the ritual is not yet complete. The Daemon is not yet at its full strength, and the ritual culminates with the mass sacrifice of the thousands of worshipers attending the celebration of Saint Merusaad far above, on the planet's surface. The Acolytes must stop the nascent Daemon from gorging itself on the unsuspecting pilgrims above, lest it become unstoppable.





# GUESTS OF THE LORD GOVERNOR

*“Indeed, as planetary governor I am responsible for Thaur’s millions of living citizens. More importantly, as Lord of the Wake, I am responsible for its billions of dead.”*

–Jeronius Pyre, Lord of the Wake

In the wake of the Inheritors’ attack on the *Oath Unspoken*, it should be clear to that Acolytes that they must travel to Thaur’s surface and stop the cult from succeeding in its additional plans. Further, it should be clear that a large sacrifice is needed for the cult’s ritual. If the Acolytes seem uncertain of how to proceed, Rogue Trader Anzaforr or Ranger Morrinoe could both provide assistance. If the Acolytes did not learn of it from the pilgrims aboard, or simply need a reminder, the Lord-Captain might suggest that the celebration of the martyrdom of Saint Merusaad the Virtuous is a possible candidate. In addition to the thousands of pilgrims on the *Oath Unspoken* who plan to attend, Anzaforr anticipates that many thousands more should already be present for the event.

## MAKING A PLAN

With a brief respite to catch their breath after the attack on the bridge, the Acolytes should begin formulating a plan to stop the Inheritors’ next ritual. This is particularly true while they still have Rogue Trader Anzaforr and his servants available to offer assistance. If the players do not come to this conclusion on their own, the GM might wish to suggest that they formulate a plan prior to leaving the *Oath Unspoken*.

In the aftermath of the battle, Anzaforr discovers the xenos relics, either by personally inspecting the bodies of the attackers or having them brought to his attention by an armsman or other subordinate. This occurs even if the Acolytes attempt to hide the artefacts’ presence. Of course, it is also likely that the Acolytes show the artefacts to Anzaforr, either now or in a previous scene, in order to gain his trust and confidence.

If the Acolytes do not think of such a plan on their own, the Rogue Trader (or possibly even the Eldar Ranger Morrinoe) recommends using the artefacts as part of a disguise in order to infiltrate the Inheritors’ domain and reach the ritual site. Such a plan is likely to not appeal to all Acolytes, and some might consider any use of the artefacts, even for such a worthy cause, to be radical or heretical. The Acolytes should be free to concoct any plan they deem appropriate, but both Anzaforr and Morrinoe believe that stealth and guile are the best approach.

If the Acolytes prefer a more direct approach, they can convince Anzaforr to offer them some amount of military support in the form of armsmen. The Acolytes cannot persuade him to leave his ship to go off on a cult-stopping mission, but if they have forged good relationships with any of the other NPCs aboard, these might be able to provide personal assistance. However, any assistance in the form of armsmen teams, other crew NPCs, or resources leaves the Acolytes in debt to the Rogue Trader, at least in his eyes. If they do not intend to repay the favour sometime in the future, it could embitter the Rogue Trader against them. Working out the exact amount of support, including the number of armsmen, is up to the Acolytes and Anzaforr. Whatever agreement they reach, the Rogue Trader explains that the armsmen must travel separately and meet the Acolytes on Thaur’s surface. This is due in part to the time it takes to prepare the armsmen and to ready a large enough shuttle for flight, but also to avoid any entanglements with Thaur’s authorities.

Once any other preparations are made, the Rogue Trader offers to provide one of his small lighters to ferry the Acolytes to the planet’s surface. If asked, he can also provide information concerning the basics of Thaur, such as its governance and the Mournful Guard, the planet’s enforcers and planetary defence. The *Oath Unspoken* has already been cleared for orbital docking high above the spaceport known as Port Restful.

## PORT RESTFUL

Port Restful is one of Thaur’s primary spaceports. Nonetheless, it is minuscule compared to Desoleum’s Port Gyre. Unloading the *Oath Unspoken*’s cargo of dead and disembarking its passengers is a massive undertaking, and simply preparing to begin takes days. It is unlikely that the Acolytes want to wait and disembark with the other passengers, and Anzaforr is willing to provide them with a shuttle to deliver them to Thaur’s surface expeditiously. Due to the dense forests that cover Thaur’s surface, even if the Acolytes would prefer to make planetfall somewhere more isolated it is all but impossible to land a craft outside of a spaceport landing pad.

Port Restful consists of a clearing in the otherwise forested area, approximately three kilometres across. A four-metre high wall of human bones held together with mortar surrounds the port. Compared to the spaceport the Acolytes travelled through to reach the *Oath Unspoken*, Port Restful is almost shockingly primitive. It consists of a handful of levels, with basic, functional landing platforms of cracked and blackened plascrete struts rising off the ground. Most are poorly maintained or showing signs of neglect. A few pads consist simply of patches of compacted, scorched dirt.

Numerous labourers from nearby villages attend the port, offering manual labour and some semi-skilled services for travellers. The official staff similarly come from the nearby villages, although there are minimal prefabricated lodgings on-site for use by members of the Adeptus Terra. Even for a port of its small size, the Adeptus Mechanicus presence is limited and its shrine to the Ommissiah barely noticeable.



## AN INQUISITOR ON THAUR

If one of the Player Characters is playing an Inquisitor, it could make this encounter more challenging from the GM's perspective. Inquisitors, at least in theory, hold unlimited power, and can command any citizen of the Imperium. However, shrine worlds, not unlike the forge worlds of the Adeptus Mechanicus, are used to receiving a certain degree of independence from other branches of the Imperium's governing structures. While the Ecclesiarchy does not enjoy quite the same level of independence as the Mechanicum, it does hold an immense degree of power and, sometimes, even bowing to an Inquisitor makes powerful members of the Adeptus Ministorum bristle.

Lord Pyre is both an Imperial Commander and an esteemed member of the Ecclesiarchy, making him an exceptionally powerful man, and without a doubt one of that category sometimes known as "Peers of the Imperium," that elite class of persons that includes planetary governors, Rogue Traders, Imperial Navy admirals—and Inquisitors. While Lord Pyre, either directly or through his subordinates, cannot directly defy the will of an Inquisitor, there are ways to skirt around the issue. For instance, he could assume that any Inquisitor visiting his world would be willing to meet with him upon request, and should the Acolytes flatly refuse, it clearly indicates they are not who they claim to be.

Further refusals to cooperate would, of course, only strengthen that appearance.

### COLD WELCOME

As soon as the Acolytes disembark from the shuttle, they see a group of Mournful Guardians approaching, see page 139 for their profile. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*As you emerge from the lighter's access ramp, you see approaching a phalanx of individuals in sombre, dark tunics emblazoned with an emblem of a skull and rose. They are clearly armed, with hints of flak armour visible beneath their decorative uniforms. Several of the group are brandishing unusual, crossbow-like weapons. These must be the Mournful Guard, Thaur's planetary enforcers. As they near, a vox-amplified voice issues from beneath the helmet of the lead warrior: "By order of the Lord of the Wake, lay down your weapons and come with us peacefully."*

The Mournful Guard approach the Acolytes with the intention of taking them into custody. Jeronius Pyre has recently come into intelligence that smugglers have been using the *Oath Unspoken* to conduct their nefarious business. Because the Acolytes have disembarked individually and without following the usual procedures taken by visitors, the Mournful Guard suspect them of smuggling and intend to detain them for questioning.

They are lead by a Mournful Warden (Aggressive Personality and Disposition 60; see page 139 for his complete profile), and a present a strong enough challenge that the Acolytes should think carefully before attacking (with at least two Guardians per Acolyte, adjusted as appropriate using the threat threshold system). The Guard prefer to take the Acolytes without violence, but if the Acolytes refuse to cooperate, they attempt to subdue them by non-lethal measures, utilising their shock mauls and shockbows. If the Acolytes attack with lethal weapons, the Guard respond in whatever means necessary to stop them, including using lethal force. In any case, the Mournful Guard attempt to refrain from unnecessary death; for instance, if an Acolyte falls unconscious due to a bleeding wound, the Mournful Guard stop attacking that Acolyte and even apply first aid if necessary.

The Acolytes might try to talk their way out of the situation, or even invoke their own Influence or that of their master. The Mournful Guard are adamant that the Acolytes must surrender and come with them, but promise they will receive the opportunity to explain themselves. If the Acolytes invoke the authority of their Inquisitor, this does give the Mournful Guard pause, but their unflinching loyalty to the Lord of the Wake ties their hands.

If the Acolytes attempt to explain their mission, and in particular should they mention smugglers or smuggling, this catches the warden's attention. If the Acolytes are convincing when stating their case, the warden agrees to take them to meet Lord Pyre, but he still insists that they give up their weapons until the Lord of the Wake is satisfied that they are not a threat.

Once the Acolytes do surrender, or are forcibly subdued, the Mournful Guard searches them as per routine protocols. In addition to any other incriminating materials they might be carrying, if any of the Acolytes are carrying xenos artefacts, perhaps with the plan of using them to infiltrate the cult, such items might be detected at this point. The Mournful Warden recognises the significance of these artefacts if found, and sternly views them as further evidence of possible wrongdoing on the Acolytes' part.

### PRISONERS

If the Mournful Guard have to forcibly restrain the Acolytes, they securely bind them with manacles and thoroughly search them. Once the Acolytes have made any sort of violent overtures toward the Mournful Guard, they must subject to this treatment, even if they voluntarily surrender after exchanging gunfire or blows. The Mournful Guard are trained enforcers, and automatically find all items that the Acolytes did not purposefully conceal. To determine if the Mournful Guard find any concealed items, the Mournful Guard make an **Opposed Awareness** test against the Acolyte's **Stealth** for each item, with the difficulty of each test modified based on the size and shape of the item, as well as any special rules (such as a concealed holster). Weapons and other personal effects are separated and placed in locked cabinets in the oubliette once they reach the Palace of the Wake.



## THE PALACE OF THE WAKE

Lord Pyre's palace is like a solemn cathedral, decorated with macabre statues, many of which incorporate actual bones. For much of the palace, simple burning torches or candles provide the illumination. It is the duty of luminance serfs to patrol the halls, relighting or replacing these simple instruments as necessary.

Much of the palace is constructed of stone blocks hewn from local mines. In more recent years, areas of the edifice have been shorn up with rockrete or even ceramite. Mostly, however, the palace looks much as it did thousands of years ago. One common element throughout the architecture is the inclusion of human bones and even full skeletons. Though not nearly so pronounced as in the great ossuaries, the quantity of bones is still higher than typical of Imperial architecture. Much more curious, however, is the inclusion of strange, black stone with an oily sheen. Though this material is very reminiscent of that used in some of the xenos artefacts the Acolytes have previously seen, requiring a **Routine (+20) Awareness or Logic test**, it does not produce the same psychic phenomena, nor does it cause a reaction in the presence of the artefacts. However, if there is any doubt that the objects are native to Thaur, this local material should help to silence them.

## THE GROUNDS OF THE PALACE OF THE WAKE

The Palace of the Wake is immense, towering above the surrounding forests and crypts. It would take far more time than the Acolytes possess to thoroughly explore the ornate grounds, and it is more likely that they are attempting to escape the area. The following locations are most likely to feature during the Acolytes' time in the palace.

### THE OUBLIETTE

The dungeons of the Palace of the Wake are substantial and very, very old, possibly predating the arrival of the Ecclesiarchy's influence on the planet. The cells of the oubliette are primarily made of stone, some of them even carved directly from the bedrock. The cells that see more common use are kept in working order, with metal or plasteel bars to contain prisoners. Other cells, some of which have not seen use in centuries or longer, are coated with slime of moss, the iron bars rusted and corroded. Amongst the hundreds of cramped, miserable cells are a number of hidden passages, their presence unknown even to the Lord of the Wake. Some of these connect to other portions of the palace, while a few exit into the primordial subterranean catacombs that run beneath so much of Thaur's surface.

### THE CATHEDRAL

The Grand Cathedral of the Wake is where the Lord of the Wake holds regular services, and where Thaur's most esteemed guests receive their final rites. Though it stands apart from the palace, the two monumental structures adjoin, to ease the Lord of the Wake's travel. The cathedral is a massive structure in the High Gothic style, built much later than the palace itself. It is home to numerous relics and houses a number of high-ranking priests of the Eulogus Askelline, and thus is under constant guard.

## IN THE HOUSE OF PYRE

Once the Acolytes surrender or are defeated by the Mournful Guard, the Thaurian troopers load them aboard a heavy, black wooden carriage pulled by four heavily-muscled equines and transport them to the governor's palace. Any Mournful Guard who do not fit within or on the carriage travel alongside atop similar horses.

Once they reach the Palace of the Wake, the treatment the Acolytes receive depends very much on their actions thus far. If they have proven themselves dangerous, the Acolytes are taken directly to the oubliette. If they require medicae attention, they receive it in a cold and dark chamber more akin to a torture room than a proper healing facility.

If the Acolytes were more cooperative, the Mournful Guard allow them to await Lord Pyre's attention in a more comfortable stone chamber, provided with chairs of local wood and even minor refreshments. However, they remain under armed guard and are forbidden from carrying any weapons of their own.



## THE CASERNE

The caserne houses the numerous Mournful Guard who attend to the palace and the adjacent cathedral. While off-duty, they can be found in these barracks resting or undertaking the basic necessities of life. It is not large enough to adequately sleep all the Mournful Guard who staff the palace, and so the residents share bunks across numerous shifts. Only the Wardens are fortunate enough to have their own personal sleeping quarters. At any given time day or night, scores of Mournful Guard are here sleeping, maintaining and consecrating their weapons and armour, or going through their daily benedictions.

## THE LORD OF THE WAKE'S CHAMBERS

A sizeable portion of the palace is set aside for the daily use of the Lord of the Wake, currently Jeronius Pyre. Aside from his spacious bedchamber, this area includes a private study with extensive librarium, and lavish washchamber. The servants' quarters are located nearby, and a level below, so that the Lord of the Wake is never left without dutiful attendance. The kitchen is also located just two levels below, so that the Lord of the Wake might take his meals in his chambers, should he please. When receiving guests, meals are held in the substantial refectory.

## PALACE SECURITY

With a few exceptions, Thaur overall has a very low technological base. In comparison to a developed world like Desoleum, Thaur is practically primitive. This fact can work to the Acolytes' advantage should they need to escape from the palace. There are few truly automatic security features of the palace; the burden of securing the palace falls mainly to those elite Mournful Guard that the Lord of the Wake hand-picks for the task. There are upwards of fifty of these Wakeful Guard on patrol at any time, with many times that number standing by, so the Acolytes could not hope to defeat them all. Supporting them are a number of servo-skulls which act as further eyes and ears observing the grounds. If the Acolytes attempt to leave the grounds or enter the palace undetected, the combination of human guards and servo-skulls are their primary challenge. The servo-skulls are capable of recording whatever their bionic eyes witness, but there are no other vid-captors to be found in the palace.

Most of the interior and exterior locks of the palace are simple but sturdy mechanical locks, with heavy iron keys carried by Mournful Wardens and Wakeful Guard assigned to those locations. It requires a **Difficult (-10) Security test** to pick a lock on a palace door. The main door, dungeon cells, and doors within the Lord of the Wake's chambers are of a higher quality, and require a **Hard (-20) Security test**.

## JUST LOOK AT US!

Acolytes take as many forms as there are worlds in the Imperium. While many choose to remain inconspicuous, others wear garb that proudly announces their allegiance to an Inquisitor or to one of the powerful Imperial Adepta. While it would seem that a person in the robes of the Adeptus Administratum or the vestments of the Ecclesiarchy should be beyond suspicion, unfortunately this is not always the case. Even aside from impostors and disguises, it is a sad fact that even powerful Adeptus members can and do betray the Imperium, from Tech-Priests to clerics or Imperial Guard officers, and all servants of the Imperium in between.

While knowledge of such treachery is generally suppressed, Lord Pyre knows all too well of such activities. And while local recidivists might be loath to compound their crimes by impersonating an Imperial official, the sorts of men who would engage in interplanetary smuggling are ruthless and canny individuals, precisely the type to take such a calculated risk. As such, even authentic trappings of office are not sufficient to convince the Lord of the Wake of the Acolytes' innocence.

## MEETING THE LORD OF THE WAKE

Regardless of how events unfolded, the Lord of the Wake himself insists upon meeting with the Acolytes. Depending on circumstances, he might be meeting them as honoured guests, in which case a formal audience is appropriate. Even if the Mournful Guard believe the Acolytes to be nothing more than dangerous smugglers, Lord Pyre meets with them. He is very concerned about the smuggling operations affecting his world, and hopes to gain some insight by being personally involved in the interrogation of these captured smugglers.

The meeting with Lord Pyre is best run as a social encounter taking full advantage of the social interaction rules as per page 277 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**. If Lord Pyre believes the Acolytes are smugglers, his Disposition begins at 25. However, if the Acolytes successfully convinced the Mournful Guard of their innocence prior to the meeting, it begins at 40, further increased by +10 if he has seen evidence that establishes the Acolytes to be true servants of the Imperium. Lord Pyre's complete profile can be found on page 138 of this chapter.

His primary goal in meeting with the Acolytes, whether formally in his guest hall or as they suffer interrogation at the hands of one of his excruciators, is to discover more information about the smuggling that plagues his world. The avenue by which he approaches this goal depends on what he knows, or believes, about the Acolytes. If he thinks them smugglers, he approaches it as an interrogation. However, if the Acolytes reveal that they are also in pursuit of smugglers, and convinces Lord Pyre of the truth of this, he changes his attitude significantly. In this case, he is also willing to put his own resources at the Acolytes' disposal toward the end of stopping the smugglers.





## GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN OTHERWISE

Convincing the Lord of the Wake of their innocence requires the Acolytes to succeed at a series of Interaction skill tests. The most promising skills are Charm or Intimidate, the latter if the Acolytes choose to invoke the fear of Inquisitors. As always, however, the GM should keep an open mind to whatever approaches the Acolytes try. For instance, if the Acolytes wish to convince Lord Pyre that they are also pursuing the smugglers, but while keeping their true identities hidden, the Deceive skill might be appropriate. Whatever skill or skills the players and GM choose to employ, the skill tests should not serve as a substitute for roleplaying, and the GM should confer bonuses if the players have their characters convincingly present their case.

Lord Pyre begins with a Confident Personality. After each successful social Interaction skill test, the GM should make a Disposition test against Pyre's new Disposition value. Pyre must obtain a cumulative total of 6 degrees of success on Disposition tests before he trusts the Acolytes. Each degree of failure scored on a Disposition test reduces this cumulative total by 1.

Concluding the conversation is left to the discretion of the GM. As long as the Acolytes offer Pyre useful information about the Trade Sable smugglers or the Children of the Inheritance cultists, he continues speaking with them, even if still believes them to be criminals or heretics.

## THE NATURE OF THE ENEMY

While Lord Pyre is well aware of the smuggling of Thaurian artefacts, and has made stopping the practice one of his top priorities, he is seemingly in denial about the existence of malignant cults on his world, particularly within the Eulogus Askelline. Pyre knows that his order is riven with factionalism, cliques, and differences of philosophy, but the idea that it harbours the truly heretical is anathema to him. Pyre can only face such a reality if presented with hard evidence. This might include the documents recovered from the Inheritors on the *Oath Unspoken* or the vid-cap of the Arch-Heretek Somnius Halbrel, whose unwholesome visage speaks for itself even if his identity is unknown.

Any mention of Arch-Rector Legatarius Carolus Renthear, such as from Somnius Halbrel's recording, brings shock from Lord Pyre. While Pyre is aware that the Arch-Rector has withdrawn from sight and shirked his responsibilities in recent years, he has always ascribed this to bitterness on Renthear's part that Pyre was chosen over him for the position of Lord of the Wake.

Pyre is stunned by any evidence that Renthear has sunk so low. The Arch-Rector, a man to whom devotion and dedication were more natural than breathing, had found a new object for his religious fervour when he was passed over. It was the merest alteration of perspective for Renthear to shift from a dogged persecutor of false faiths to a rabid disciple of a faith far older than humanity itself. It is unknown whether Renthear first sought the Children of the Inheritance in his hour of desperation and avarice, or if they found him and slowly wormed their way into his heart until he could deny their dark promises no longer.

Whatever the order of events, for many years now Renthear has been the secret leader of the cult, directing all of its blasphemous activities and preparing the way for a true god to walk once more upon the soil of his home world and elevate him to the glorious heights to which he has so long aspired. To this end, he has spent considerable time recovering the artefacts from Thaur and processing them into the substance called the Blood of Izumat by arcane and sanity-twisting methods for a ritual that he believes will return his deity—and himself, Izumat's high priest—to the memory of the Askellon Sector until the end of time.

## THE PLOT

During the course of the Acolytes' conversation—or interrogation—with Lord Pyre, details should emerge regarding the Inheritors' current plot to enact a malefic ritual. It is likely that more information emerges if the Acolytes cooperate with Pyre, however. Even if he continues to believe they are smugglers or heretics, Pyre still reveals useful information in the course of his interrogation, in an effort to glean confessions from the Acolytes. However, Pyre has no actual knowledge of the cult or the ritual, and so it is up to the Acolytes to put the pieces together and discern the importance of the information.

If, however, the Acolytes are forthcoming with Lord Pyre, he can fill in gaps in their own knowledge. One fact Pyre can provide is that the largest single gathering of living souls currently on Thaur is at the prayer service for Saint Marusaad, which Renthear is scheduled to preside over. If the Acolytes have suspicions of Renthear's involvement in the Inheritors, this news should be particularly troubling.

If the Acolytes are carrying the map fragment recovered from Parathas Hayne and show it to Lord Pyre, he immediately recognises the marked location as the tomb of Saint Merusaad, and makes the connection to the recently-begun celebration of the saint's martyrdom. If the Mournful Guard discovered the map while searching the Acolytes, they show it to Pyre prior to his meeting with the PCs. In this case, he brings the map out at an appropriate time to inquire about it. If Pyre still believes the Acolytes to be enemies at this time, he accuses them of planning some disruption or attack on the celebration.

If it somehow comes to pass that Lord Pyre learns of the ritual from the Acolytes but still does not trust them enough to release them, he arranges to have a group of Mournful Guard march to the ritual site and stop it. Of course, the Guard are not up to the task of banishing a Daemon, and they will fail without the Acolytes' support. Once the Acolytes escape and arrive at the site, they might encounter and join forces with this very same group—or arrive only to find their torn corpses.





## TURNING THE TABLES

During this scene, the Acolytes might find themselves in the unusual situation of being the subjects of an interrogation, rather than the ones doing the questioning. For various reasons, they might wish to continue the charade, particularly if they do not trust Lord Pyre and so would rather not reveal their identities. Pyre is not a trained interrogator, and it is quite likely that one or more of the Acolytes have more experience in this field than he does. Such Acolytes not only recognise every (possibly amateurish) tactic Pyre employs, but might see ways to use them to their advantage, effectively retrieving information from Pyre while maintaining the appearance that he is the one in charge. This “reverse interrogation” use of the skill requires the Acolyte to make an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Interrogation test**, against Lord Pyre who does the same. If the Acolyte wins the Opposed test, he affects Pyre as if he had succeeded on a normal Intimidate test. If the Acolyte fails his test by four or more degrees of failure and Pyre succeeds, Pyre sees through the ruse.

### A SECRET ARRANGEMENT

During their time in the Palace of the Wake, the Acolytes should have the opportunity to uncover a damning secret about Lord Pyre. There are several means by which the Acolytes are likely to uncover this, and the GM should keep the information in mind in case another promising opportunity arises during play.

Though Lord Pyre has little to no true knowledge of Thaur’s ancient past, he nonetheless maintains an arrangement with the Eldar that has been the terrible responsibility of each Lord of the Wake since time immemorial. Discovering this dark secret upon his ascension to the position was one of the most difficult challenges Pyre faced in his long life, and to this day it does not sit well with him.

The deal that he has with the Eldar, as Lord Pyre understands it, is that he will not allow graves to be dug past a certain depth or in certain areas, as dictated in arcane charts periodically delivered to him when the *Oath Unspoken* visits Thaur. In fact, none other than the Ranger Morrinoe delivers these charts. On a handful of occasions, Pyre has even met her face-to-face, though she always remains cloaked in shadows. In exchange for abiding by this agreement, the Eldar ensure that his world does not fall victim to Corsair piracy. Lord Pyre is deeply troubled with this bargain, which he views as little more than a protection racket on a massive scale, but feels that he has no choice but to maintain it—as millennia of Lords of the Wake have done before him.

Lord Pyre considers this secret arrangement not only shameful, but dangerous, both to himself and to the office he holds. Consequently, he takes great measures to conceal it and is very unlikely to admit to it except under the most pressing of circumstances. However, if the Acolytes mention an Eldar being aboard the *Oath Unspoken*, Lord Pyre’s visible blanching at the mention betrays his knowledge. The first time the Acolytes mention

Morrinoe or an Eldar Ranger, the GM should call for each of them in a position to see Pyre’s face to make a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny test**. Any Acolyte who succeeds on this test notices his clear reaction, and realises that it indicates some familiarity with the alien. As usual, they can attempt further Opposed tests using that skill (with greater difficulties) to determine if Pyre is lying or hiding something.

### DAMNING EVIDENCE


If the Acolytes receive the opportunity to search Pyre’s palace, and his chambers in particular, they can find hard evidence of his dealings with the Eldar. Such an opportunity could arise if the Acolytes win his trust, and are given leave to wander the grounds, although the Mournful Guard constantly watch the Acolytes closely. Perhaps more likely, if the Acolytes escape from the oubliette, they might decide to take some time to investigate their captor.

In any case, should the Acolytes gain access to and search Lord Pyre’s private bedchamber, call for each character searching to attempt a **Challenging (+0) Awareness test**. If a PC gave reason to be suspicious due to something Lord Pyre or even Morrinoe said, that character gains a +10 bonus. The Acolyte who scores the most degrees of success finds the evidence in the form of the charts themselves, along with maps of Thaur’s surface and particular areas of the catacombs. These maps feature annotations surrounding the areas which the arcane charts indicate as being off-limits. The charts themselves are written on an unusual material, as thin as parchment but impossible to tear, with a smooth, polished quality. Alongside strangely formal Gothic are markings clearly xenos in nature, an **Easy (+30) Forbidden Lore (Xenos-Craftworld Eldar or -Dark Eldar) test** reveals the symbols as Eldar in origin, and might even be able to decipher some of the meaning with three or more degrees of success.

Deciphering any meaning from the unfamiliar charts requires an **Ordinary (+10) Linguistic (Eldar) test** and one hour of time (something the Acolytes probably do not have at present if they are snooping around the Lord of the Wake’s chambers). Even an Acolyte who does not understand the meaning behind the xenos symbols and code-like Gothic can follow the charts to the indicated geographical locations if he succeeds at a **Challenging (+0) Navigate (Surface) test**.

The charts found in Lord Pyre’s chambers date to a previous visitation of the Eldar Ranger. During the *Oath Unspoken*’s current journey to Thaur, Morrinoe has once again brought along a set of charts. Depending on events thus far, these charts could already be in Lord Pyre’s possession, in which case he carries them on his person, or they might still be with Morrinoe. This is left to the GM’s judgement based on previous events and the Acolytes relationship with the Ranger. If the Acolytes requested Morrinoe accompany them to Thaur’s surface, she might take the opportunity to deliver the charts personally. It is possible that she could elude the Mournful Guard when they take the Acolytes prisoner, only to reappear later at the palace, in which case she might also help the Acolytes to escape. However, the Eldar has a strange and inscrutable sense of humour, and it is equally likely that she would allow herself to be captured, counting on her arrangement with the Lord of the Wake to release her.





## TAKING LEAVE

Regardless of how their meeting with the Lord of the Wake goes, the Acolytes must soon take their leave of the palace if they hope to stop the Inheritors in time and save Thaur from damnation. If the Acolytes earned Lord Pyre's trust, this is a simple matter. If, however, they were unsuccessful or chose not to reveal the truth to him, they are left with the difficult task of escaping the palace, whether using guile or force.

If the Acolytes reach an understanding with Pyre, at the very least he allows them to go free. In addition, he might provide support in the form of Mournful Guardians or transportation. If the Acolytes both earn Pyre's trust and convince him of the seriousness of the threat, he offers his assistance in stopping it. Of course, there are reasons why the Acolytes might turn down this offer, such as a desire to remain incognito so that they might infiltrate the cult, or due to mistrust of the Eulogus Askelline, if they realise how high the corruption seemingly goes. If they accept the offer, however, Lord Pyre sends a score of Mournful Guard with them, as well as providing transportation in the form of a carriage with a driver. If the Acolytes want further assistance or resources, they must succeed at an **Influence test** with appropriate modifiers based on the rarity and value of the service or item, as well as just how much Lord Pyre trusts them with his resources.

Though warning Lord Pyre of the danger and gaining his assistance can be a great boon to the Acolytes, it also entails certain risks. Pyre is not in full control of the Eulogus Askelline, no matter what he thinks, and word quickly filters through the ranks to those secret Inheritor members, warning the cult of the Acolytes' interference. If the Acolytes reveal their identities or their mission to Lord Pyre, reduce their **Subtlety** by 1d5 and apply a -10 modifier to all **Subtlety tests** during the remainder of the adventure. This can also result in ambushes by the cult at the GM's discretion.

## ESCAPING THE OUBLIETTE

If the Acolytes do not convince Pyre to release them, they must make their own way to freedom. Depending on whether the Acolytes are more adept in bare-handed combat or in stealth, the two most likely options are to try and overpower the Mournful Guard as they escort the Acolytes back to their cells, or to wait until they are once again secure in their cells before escaping.

A group of Mournful Guard equal to one more than the number of Acolytes escort them back to their cells. One guides each Acolyte, with the last leading the way and opening doors. With their hands chained behind their backs, the Acolytes suffer a -20 penalty to any attack tests. However, the Guard are not expecting trouble, and the Acolytes can gain the advantage of surprise if they act swiftly. An Acolyte can unshackle himself with a **Difficult (-10) Security test**, slip out with a **Difficult (-10) Acrobatics test**, or wrench himself free with a **Hard (-20) Athletics test**. The Mournful Guard are certain to notice the loud sound of the latter, but an Acolyte who contorts free can hide the fact with a successful **Stealth test** opposed by the Guardian's **Awareness**.

Escaping from within a locked cell requires an Acolyte to either pick the lock or force the gate open. The locks are traditional mechanical locks, and require a **Hard (-20) Security test**. It is also possible to force open the gate, requiring a total of three degrees of success on an **Arduous (-40) Athletics test** (this test can be done with Assistance from only two other Acolytes). Forcing open the gate is a loud endeavour and audible to the gaoler, who comes to investigate after three attempts.

The Acolytes' equipment is stored in storage cabinets near the stairs leading up to the palace. The cabinets are reinforced wood with an armour value of 5. Any Mournful Guard assigned to gaoler duty carries a key, or an Acolyte can pick the locks if he succeeds at a **Difficult (-10) Security test**. The Acolytes' weapons are stored more securely, in a separate room set aside for the purpose. The armorium is secured with an iron door, and the lock requires a **Hard (-20) Security test**, or can be opened using the key carried by the gaoler. In addition to the Acolytes' own weapons, it also contains three stub revolvers with twelve bullets, four krak grenades, four shotguns with sixteen shells, eight shockbows with thirty shock quarrels, five knives of various styles, two swords, a warhammer, and a massive axe (a great weapon).

## PYRE'S FATE

Should the Acolytes contemplate violence against Lord Pyre due to a desire for vengeance or any other reason, it is worth reminding the players out-of-character that murdering an Imperial Commander—and highly ranked member of the Ecclesiarchy—is a dangerous move that is sure to invite retribution, and might negatively impact their Influence. If this is insufficient and the Acolytes insist on following through with their murderous intentions, the GM should possibly have Lord Pyre burn a point of Fate Threshold to survive. The GM should follow through with appropriate consequences in-game. At the very least, the Mournful Guard take offence at the murder of their leader, and bend their full power to pursuing and punishing the Acolytes, which is sure to make the remainder of the adventure more challenging. Such an action should also have repercussions to their Inquisitor's Influence and his view towards his Acolytes, especially if he is particularly devout or has attachments to the Ecclesiarchy.



# INTO THE FOREST

*“In the darkness, look to the light of Terra.”*

—Anon.

Having won Lord Pyre’s esteem or escaped from his dungeon, the Acolytes must travel to the site of the impending ritual. Consultation of a map or simply asking a local reveals that the tomb of Saint Merusaad is some fourteen kilometres to the east of Lord Pyre’s palace. Though the Acolytes cannot know how much time they have, they do know that haste is a necessity. Autocarriages and other technological vehicles are simply unavailable on Thaur, with equine-drawn coaches being the best method of travel outside of simply riding a horse. If the Acolytes have won Lord Pyre’s support, obtaining individual equines or a carriage with a driver is a simple matter. If not, the Acolytes might resort to stealing a coach and the necessary steeds from Lord Pyre’s stables, situated on the palace grounds.

Having secured transportation or decided to proceed afoot, it is a simple matter to follow the well-travelled dirt road east, through the dense and foreboding forest. However, during the brief journey the Acolytes can encounter a number of potential setbacks, which can be added at the GM’s discretion. These include native corpse-crawlers, a bizarre Thaurian cult with its own blasphemous vision of the Imperial Truth, and a seemingly mundane village where the Acolytes can gather information and some limited supplies before delving into the catacombs.

## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: RESTLESS NATIVES

This encounter can occur at any time as the Acolytes traverse the forest, or even after they enter the catacombs. A good spot for this encounter is shortly before the Acolytes reach, or just after they leave, the village of Afterlife (see page 124). Though this threat is not directly tied to the Inheritors, it is a threat local to Thaur, and the encounter serves to remind the Acolytes that they must always be vigilant for danger. To begin the encounter, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*As you make haste through the forest, a human figure shambles into the road not far ahead. As you approach, you realise the figure shows clear signs of decay, its flesh hanging in rotten tatters and putrid juices issuing from its many ruptures. As the horror of this sets in, crashing branches announce the arrival of more walking corpses.*

Facing the warband are a number of corpse-crawlers (see page 400 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook) equal to the number of Acolytes (though the GM can use the threat threshold system to add more if he wants to create a serious threat). The corpse-crawlers are already occupying host bodies, in which they remain until destroyed. If the Acolytes are supported by Anzaforr’s armsmen or the Mournful Guard, increase the number accordingly so that the Acolytes still face a challenge while their armed backup fight the rest of the monsters narratively. Depending on the GM’s desires, these crawlers can also have the Fear (1) trait to create an especially horrific encounter.



## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: THE CORPUS BRETHREN

In this optional encounter, the Acolytes meet a cult of another sort while making their way toward the Great Ossuaria. While they do not worship xenos gods or Daemons, the twisted version of the Imperial faith espoused by these cultists surely marks them as heretics. The so-called Corpus Brethren are a small cult unaffiliated with the Eulogus Askelline, and originated amongst a group of pilgrims lost in the great forests of Thaur. Forced by starvation to begin consuming the dead they came to venerate, in their hunger-addled minds these poor wretches reconciled their cannibalism with their adoration of the Emperor. Over time, the group evolved a twisted variation of the Imperial Creed, in which they view the consumption of human flesh as a path to mirror the Emperor's deathless state.

While they primarily consume the flesh of those who are already dead, the Corpus Brethren are utterly insane and very dangerous. The members mark anyone who questions their perverse faith as an enemy to be slain and devoured. They wear tattered, filthy robes, stained with dried blood, and their taut skin is pale and sickly. Dirt and blood permanently cake their hands, in particular their long, sharp fingernails. They have a feral hunger writ across their faces, marking them out as mad and dangerous, and while willing to speak with others, their insatiable hunger keeps them always at the edge of violence.

To begin the encounter, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

*Coming around a bend in the road, you hear the sounds of tearing flesh and cracking bone. Through the trees ahead, you see a group of people crouching around an earthen mound—a dug-up grave. The figures, lean and gaunt, wearing blood-stained and tattered robes do not seem to notice you at first, as they are engaged in a meal—gnawing the bones of a human corpse.*

There are at least two Corpus Brethren per Acolyte (adjusted as needed to provide a serious threat threshold challenge). To represent the wretched cannibals, use the Devout NPC profile on page 389 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook. The Corpus Brethren begin with a Disposition of 20 and have the Unhinged personality; if their Disposition reaches 0, they immediately attack in a cannibalistic frenzy.

The Corpus Brethren do not automatically attack immediately, however. If the Acolytes ignore them, then they generally ignore the Acolytes. If the Acolytes speak with them, they speak, though their malformed teeth lend their voices a strange cadence. The Corpus Brethren are glad to explain their theology, and even invite the Acolytes to join them for a meal should their Disposition reach 30. Refusals to join them or objections to the courses, especially given the likely ingredients, could lead to a violent disagreement.

## AFTERLIFE

The village of Afterlife sits a short distance from the main road, on the very border of the Great Ossuaria and some three kilometres from the tomb of Saint Merusaad. The denizens of this village go through their lives in a constant sort of haze, their movements sluggish and their faces expressionless. In fact, this effect is not unlike that of the drug mindshade, and is a result of the village's position above an unknown subterranean corpse-crawler spawning pit. Because of this pit's concealed location, the Mournful Guard have never discovered and purged it. Consequently the foul creatures return to it with their stolen corpse-bodies, poisoning the village above with the invisible fumes of their horrific life cycle.

A wooden wall about four metres high surrounds the village, to keep out animals and brigands. The village is home to approximately three-hundred residents, and is a common stopover point for travellers from Port Restful to the Great Ossuaria.

The village includes a single store that caters to visitors. Though the shopkeeper prefers Thaurian bone chip coins, he is sometimes willing to barter with guests. It is left to the Game Master's discretion to determine what items can be found here, bearing in mind Thaur's low technology level. In general, only low-tech items or those with an Availability of Average or better should be available.

## THE VILLAGERS

The villagers of Afterlife live out their days in a chemically induced dream-state. How long this state of affairs has been the norm is impossible to say, but most likely the majority of the villagers have never known any other existence. Perhaps as a result of this bizarre state of being on the cemetery world, or perhaps due to half-remembered memories of a time when their minds were clear, they believe that they are, in fact, dead and exist in the afterlife. Strangely, this does not prevent them from providing useful information to the Acolytes, nor is their behaviour particularly strange. For them, it is simply the way of things.

Convincing the villagers of their mistake is no easy task. For their part, they assume the Acolytes are recently deceased, having not yet accepted their new condition. Any Acolytes who earnestly attempt to convince the villagers of the truth should attempt an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Charm test**, or even a **Logic test** if they resort to carefully reasoned arguments, against their **Willpower**. An Acolyte who succeeds can convince any villagers affected by his test that they are, in fact, alive. However, it is questionable if this accomplishes anything other than turning those individuals' world-views upside down, as the Acolytes do not have time to correct the misconceptions of the entire village. Convincing the villagers does nothing to counteract the effects of the chemicals influencing their behaviour, and they accept the news with the same detachment that accompanies all their other activities. A **Difficult (-10) Logic test** can link their odd behaviour, the normal effects of mindshade, and the native corpse-crawlers, together to arrive at the reason for their behaviour assuming the Acolyte already knows the connection between the creatures and the drug.



Despite their condition, the villagers pick up a good deal of information from travellers. If the Acolytes take some time to ask around amongst the addled locals, the GM can have them attempt an **Difficult (-10) Inquiry Test**, comparing the results to table 3-1: **Afterlife Rumours** to see what they discover. When presenting these rumours (or any other interactions with the villagers), the GM should be sure to draw attention to the vacant detachment on their faces and their slow, almost dreamlike manner of speaking. Just as for the rumours earlier in the adventure, degrees of failure should provide misleading rumours. In these cases, they can be of mystical visions that tie into the villager's ethereal existence, perhaps even accurate but so garbed in metaphorical language as to be confusing to the Acolytes.

**Table 3-1: Afterlife Rumours**

DEGREES OF SUCCESS	RESULTS (CUMULATIVE)
1	<i>"The Eulogus Askelline have recently barred all entry to the nearby catacombs."</i>
2	<i>"Arch Rector Renthear will give a sermon in honour of Saint Merusaad. They say Renthear was almost Lord of the Wake, but lost the position to Lord Pyre."</i>
3+	<i>"Well, they say that the Eulogus have always been here, guarding against the ancient evils, Emperor bless them."</i>

## THE GREAT OSSUARIA

Eventually, the Acolytes reach the Great Ossuaria of Thaur. As they near their goal, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Towering above the trees on the horizon, the bone-work structures of the Great Ossuaria loom before you. Stretching further than you can see, these massive edifices to the memory of the Askellon Sector's great and powerful are, to all appearances, made entirely from human bones. The structures depict a variety of styles, due to the whims of their creators. Some resemble Ecclesiarchy cathedrals, while others seem to be senseless jumbles of bone, the creation of some mad architect. Somewhere amidst the skeletal jungle is the bonework monument marking the tomb of Saint Merusaad, and somewhere beneath it is your destination.*

The Great Ossuaria includes numerous structures built from the bones of those too poor or inconsequential to warrant tombs of their own. Because these were built over many millennia at the behest of many different individuals from unique worlds across the sector, they evince a wide variety of styles. As with many structures on Thaur, the age of some of the ossuaries is very evident despite the Eulogus Askelline's efforts to maintain them. Some are overgrown with vines and moss, while others have collapsed into broken rubble.

## THE MONUMENT OF SAINT MERUSAAD

Though the Acolytes must penetrate the depths of Thaur's catacombs to stop the ritual, it is possible that they might first visit the monument of Saint Merusaad. A massive throng of pilgrims and worshipers crowds around the gigantic, bone-wrought complex, and getting close to it, let alone inside, is difficult in itself. The structure centres on the tomb itself. Within this most holy place, the bodily remains of the saint rest under a thick casing of purified Desoleum glass, atop a bier made from the bones of a dozen Askellian preachers. The burial chamber, as well as the rest of the shrine, is lit by hundreds of candles made from wax mixed with the rendered fat of the same individuals whose bones make up the structure. Facing the entrance to the room is a depiction of the holy Aquila, consisting of engraved bones plated in gold.

The monument towers above the surrounding plaza, which is tiled with thousands of human skulls, their empty eye sockets gazing upward to the pulpit cresting the shrine. It is from here that ranking members of the Eulogus Askelline, and sometimes offworld preachers, present their sermons to the assembled crowd. Currently, a choir of Eulogus Askelline chant a plainsong hymn, laud hailers amplifying their words of veneration so that they might be heard across the plaza and echo throughout the Great Ossuaria.

There are many within and around the monument to police the crowds and oversee the worship: no fewer than three hundred Vestals and other members of the Eulogus grieve for the saint, an additional hundred Ossuarian Custodians, and two-hundred Mournful Guard move about the shrine and plaza, keeping order. Approximately half of these are members of the Children of the Inheritance cult. Should a conflict erupt, they are of little use to the Acolytes, as the treacherous cultists within the ranks attack the faithful, sowing confusion and preventing the loyal members from providing assistance.

## TO THE UNDERWORLD

Having reached the Great Ossuaria, the Acolytes' next goal is to gain entry to the catacombs beneath, where the ritual should be occurring. There are numerous entries to these underground reaches, but many of these are located within the depths of sealed crypts. The Acolytes have several options for accessing the catacombs, including obtaining assistance from the locals, consulting the maps and charts in their possession, or following a group of Inheritor cultists.

The Acolytes might try to find an entrance on their own. This is most feasible if the Acolytes have the maps or charts taken either from Parathas Hayne or from Lord Pyre's chambers. If so, an Acolyte can succeed at an **Ordinary (+10) Navigate (Surface) test** to find a promising entrance to the catacombs.

If the Acolytes spent some time in the village of Afterlife, they possibly picked up rumours about certain members of the Eulogus Askelline barring entrance to the catacombs. They might have also used the villagers' tales to craft a workable map from their descriptions. With a successful **Charm, Command**, or other appropriate skill test at the GM's discretion, the Acolytes could have also persuaded villagers to take them to the entrance in question, where they find it under guard.



Whichever method the Acolytes employ, they should eventually arrive at a small tomb away from the main road through the Great Ossuaria. The process of entering the tomb is described under **Entering the Catacombs** later on this page.

### FOLLOW THE HERETICS

If the Acolytes need assistance or are otherwise having difficulty finding an entrance, the GM should provide guidance in the form of a group of Inheritor cultists. As they pass beneath the great bonework monuments of the Ossuaria, the Acolytes see many pilgrims on their way to the shrine of Saint Merusaad. Amongst them are a group of Inheritors, who break away from the crowd to attend their cult's own ritual. As the Acolytes explore the Great Ossuaria or observe the crowd, call for a **Challenging (+0) Awareness test**, with a +20 bonus if the Acolytes are purposefully looking for suspicious activity or other signs of Inheritors in the area. Any who succeed spot a group of three individuals in the black robes of the Eulogus Askelline. Rather than heading toward the saint's monument with the rest of the crowd, however, they have broken away and are moving perpendicular to the travellers on the main path. The group consists of three Inheritor Proselytes (see page 54).

If the Acolytes follow the Inheritors, they arrive at a small ossuary tomb, the cobble-bone path leading to it choked with weeds—see **Entering the Catacombs**. If the Acolytes wait and observe the three suspicious cultists, they see them speak briefly with the two sentries, and one of the newly arriving cultists produces a small xenos orb, after which the sentries open the wrought-iron gate and let them pass.

### ENTERING THE CATACOMBS

Whatever method they choose, the Acolytes eventually come to a small crypt set a ways off from the main road carrying the pilgrims to the shrine of Saint Merusaad. The small crypt is a single-level building of rectangular shape, approximately six metres by eight metres and constructed almost entirely from human bones, now overgrown with vines and moss. A wrought-iron gate set in the bone doorframe is the only entrance. Though it is far from the only entrance to the catacombs, this crypt provides the most direct access to the portion of the catacombs that the Inheritors are using for their dark ritual.







If the Acolytes decide to use an alternative entry, this should present its own difficulties. The exact nature of these challenges is left to the Game Master, but could include additional tests to even locate a viable entrance, followed by more tests to break into to a firmly locked tomb. Once in the catacombs, the Acolytes must deal with largely the same challenges no matter how they entered. However, if they use a different entrance, they might find themselves confronted with dead ends consisting of collapsed ceilings or piles of bone that fill the tunnel.

Two Inheritor Disciples (see page 107) are standing guard outside the crypt. They do not expect anyone to attempt to stop them—the two guards are expected to serve as a deterrent to curious pilgrims or other visitors, not to fend off determined attackers. Nevertheless, they are fanatically devoted to their cult's holy mission, and quite willing to lay down their lives to protect it if necessary.

The Acolytes have two primary options for entering the crypt through its single door. They can fight their way past the sentries, or deceive them in order to pass without combat. If the Acolytes are planning to infiltrate the cult, they might already have procured disguises after defeating Parathas Hayne's group aboard the *Oath Unspoken*. The combination of cult uniforms and xenos artefacts gives the Acolytes a distinct advantage in persuading the sentries to grant them access to the catacombs, using the Disguise special use of **Deceive** in a **Difficult** (–10) test. If the Acolytes are wearing convincing disguises, such as actual robes taken from defeated Inheritors, they gain a +20 bonus on the test. Presenting one or more of the xenos artefacts grants an additional +10 bonus to fool the Inheritors guarding the entrance, and showing a vial of the Blood of Izumat adds a +20 bonus as well.

Once the Acolytes convince the sentries that they are fellow brethren of the Inheritor cult, one of the guards unlocks the iron gate with a heavy key and motions for the Acolytes to enter. If they instead kill the guards, the first character to search the bodies easily finds the key. Once inside the crypt, the Acolytes find several coffins constructed from polished bone. The opening the lid of the largest coffin reveals the bone stairs down to the catacombs, while the others contain only shrivelled human remains dressed in decayed finery.

## TO STOP THE RITUAL

*"These catacombs are a maze wrought with the logic of a madman. Mark your path carefully, lest you join those entombed within."*

—Mortimer Bolthen, Vestal

Having entered the catacombs, the Acolytes must race to find the site of the Inheritors' ritual and stop them before they can summon their profane god. To reach the ritual chamber, the Acolytes must make their way through kilometres of winding tunnels, descending deeper and deeper into Thaur's crust, and witnessing the evidence of its past. Though the highest levels of the catacombs are of bare stone or piled bone, as one descends further this gives way to strange, black glistening material, with statues and icons of inhuman origin.

In addition to the challenge of simply navigating through the labyrinthine catacombs, the Acolytes must deal with a number of obstacles. These include the natural dangers of the subterranean realm, as well as potential encounters with the enigmatic Ossuarian Custodians and the cultists of the Inheritors. Depending on the GM's preference and the players' enjoyment, this section of the adventure could be brief, being handled primarily narratively, or could be played out in considerable detail.

### HAUNTED CATACOMBS

On a world of graves, it is inevitable that stories of hauntings arise. Even before the Inheritors began their ritual, the catacombs, particularly the deeper tunnels, were home to all manner of strange phenomena. After countless millennia, the lingering taint of the Warp suffuses the ruins and remains of Thaur's previous inhabitants. As the Inheritors' ritual progresses and the wall between dimensions thins, these phenomena increase in frequency and potency.

As the Acolytes explore the catacombs, the GM should describe periodic strange events, increasing in frequency as time passes, indicating the direness of the situation. Many of these events should evoke the long-dead xenos that once inhabited the catacombs, although the Acolytes might or might not make this connection. The phenomena include the sound of strange voices chanting in an unknown language drifting through the tunnels, flickering lights with no cause, strange patterns that appear on the walls only to shift or vanish when one looks away, and glimpses of inhuman figures on the edge of perception. In addition to these, the GM can generate results from Table 6–2: **Psychic Phenomena** on page 196 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook. Results that specifically affect "the psyker" can either be ignored, or applied to a psyker amongst the warband, as these individuals are particularly susceptible to the reality-rending effects of the Inheritors' ritual.



## NAVIGATING THE CATACOMBS

Descending the stairs, the Acolytes find themselves in a spacious tunnel carved into the bedrock and initially lit by torches ensconced at regular intervals. Thousands of kilometres of tortuous, twisting catacombs lace Thaur's crust, though the Acolytes can explore only a small portion in the course of this adventure. If the Acolytes have maps taken from Parathas Hayne or from Lord Pyre's chambers, these are an invaluable aid in navigating the catacombs. Once again, the PCs can use the mysterious xenos artefacts to gauge their proximity to the dark rite, but as they descend deeper this is of less use due to the interference of other artefacts still buried and the very walls themselves.

With the exception of certain crypt basements close to the surface and the areas in use by the Inheritors, the catacombs are primarily in complete darkness. Torch sconces are plentiful in the upper reaches, but the Eulogus Askelline are too busy keeping the ceremonial flames on the surface graves burning eternally to keep them lit. Generally, during their time in the catacombs, the only light source available to the Acolytes is whatever they provide. If the Acolytes are unprepared, they can simply take torches from the entrance crypt. These do not burn forever, of course, and the Acolytes might find themselves lost in darkness if they are not careful in managing their light sources.

There are several ways the Acolytes can navigate the catacombs, and several approaches the GM can use to describe and resolve this section of the adventure, depending on how much detail he and the players desire. In the most basic approach, the Acolytes choose a method and one of them attempts an appropriate skill test, with the degrees of success or failure determining how long it takes the Acolytes to reach their target and how many difficulties they face on the way that could have been potentially avoided.

Alternatively, if the GM wishes to handle the journey more narratively but with more than a single roll of the dice to decide its outcome, he can allow the Acolytes to attempt multiple tests, arriving at their destination once they accumulate a total of six degrees of success (or more, if the GM prefers to challenge the group). When using this option, each degree of failure an Acolyte scores on a test subtracts from the total degrees of success, representing lost time spent doubling back or simply going in the wrong direction. The GM might also allow the Acolytes to employ multiple skills, counting all degrees of success toward the total.

Finally, the GM can play out the entire exploration in great detail, calling for individual skill tests to overcome specific challenges, rather than to contribute toward an abstract goal. This could include **Navigate (Surface)** tests to choose between tunnel options, **Survival** tests to follow specific trails, or **Awareness** tests to notice subtle clues of the cult's presence.

Some possible approaches the Acolytes might take are described below, with advice for applying the different narrative methods detailed above. As usual, these are not the only potentially fruitful options, and GMs should allow the players to attempt any feasible approach they might come up with. If Mournful Guard or other NPCs accompany them, these can be used to provide helpful assistance should the Acolytes find themselves hopelessly lost or heading in the wrong direction.

## THE INSTINCTIVE APPROACH

If the Acolytes are navigating the catacombs with nothing other than a general idea of their destination locale as it relates to the tomb of Saint Merusaad on the surface, this is possible, though is the most difficult option. If they choose this approach, one of the Acolytes attempts a **Hard (-20) Navigate (Surface)** test to stay on course. This includes choosing the right direction when tunnels split off, and if the GM has chosen to handle the exploration of the tunnels in great detail, he can call for another test each time the Acolytes come to a fork in the tunnel. This option also allows for different Acolytes to attempt the test in different instances.

## CARTOGRAPHY

Should the Acolytes have in their possession maps or charts of the catacombs, taken from Hayne or Lord Pyre, they can be quite useful. However, such maps do not show the entirety of the catacombs, and thus are best used in conjunction with the method described above. Again, the GM can either require a single successful test to bring the Acolytes to the ritual site, or multiple tests allowing for the participation of all the characters. Reading the maps requires a **Difficult (-10) Navigate (Surface)** test.

## FINDING A TRAIL

For the most part, the catacombs receive very little traffic. The catacombs cover many, many kilometres, and there are not enough Custodians to cover them all. Additionally, the catacombs receive far fewer visitors in the form of pilgrims, Vestals, or grieving relatives than the tombs on the surface. Consequently, most areas, even those close to the surface, go months, years, or decades without a living soul walking them. By observing the years of dust covering some passages and comparing that to the recent footprints, spilled candlewax, and used torches in others, the Acolytes can follow the trail of Inheritors who have recently passed through on their way to the ritual site. Acolytes attempting to track the paths of the cult members should attempt a **Challenging (+0) Survival** or **Difficult (-10) Awareness** test, with success leading them to the ritual site or contributing toward the group's success, as described above.

## COMING HOME

The Acolytes can, once again, use any Thaurian xenos artefacts recovered from the Inheritors to guide their path. Because the artefacts in the Acolytes' possession are linked to the Daemon Suvfaeras, they react to the ritual currently in progress (which is using a vast number of the artefacts, refined into the substance known as the Blood of Izumat). However, the catacombs are home to many such artefacts as-yet undiscovered, particularly the lower one travels, limiting their use. While it is not feasible to use the artefacts as a sole means of locating the cult's ritual site, their use can enhance other methods. Acolytes using the artefacts' responses to gauge their proximity to the ritual gain a +10 bonus to any tests to find their way. If the Acolytes have discovered the secrets of the Blood of Izumat, or possess a sample of this vile, purple fluid, they gain an additional +10 bonus to these tests (to a total of +20). Alternatively, the GM can allow Acolytes to reference the artefacts with a **Hard (-20) Awareness** test, counting all degrees of success toward the target total.



## THE PSYKER'S SENSE

By the time the Acolytes reach the catacombs, the Inheritors' fell ritual is already well underway. As the ritual progresses, it weakens the veil between reality and the Warp. Ultimately, this process allows the Daemon Prince to emerge into reality. Psykers in the vicinity can clearly, perhaps painfully, sense the effects of the ritual. As the ritual draws closer to completion, the weakening of the barrier to the Immaterium is so severe that even those without the psyker's gift might sense the wrongness of the Warp intrusion. Acolytes can use a **Difficult (-10) Psyniscience test** to notice the local effects of the ritual on the Warp, and from this help gauge the direction to the ritual.

## ASSISTANCE

In addition to the above methods, the Acolytes can potentially obtain assistance from others they encounter in the tunnels. Depending on the outcome of such encounters, the Acolytes could receive a bonus to relevant tests or even be led straight to their destination (see **The Ossuarian Custodians** and **Hunting the Hunters** on this page).

## THE OSSUARIAN CUSTODIANS

While still in the upper reaches of the catacombs, the Acolytes encounter a patrol of the Ossuarian Custodians. These elite members of the Eulogus Askelline protect the large ossuaries and the upper reaches of the catacombs beneath from all threats, from the ravages of time and nature to the actions of tomb robbers and heretics. Depending on the Acolytes' previous encounter with Lord Pyre, they might even be actively looking for them, either to assist the Acolytes or to bring them back into custody. There are a pair of Custodians in these catacombs, unless they are actively searching for the Acolytes. In the latter case, the Game Master should add extra Custodians using the threat threshold system to create a more challenging (but not likely lethal) encounter for his particular group.

If the Acolytes escaped from Lord Pyre, he sent word that "heretics" might be planning to disrupt the ceremonies. While the increased security is apparent primarily on the surface, the Custodians have increased their subterranean patrols as well. In this case, the patrol is actively searching for the Acolytes. Unlike the Mournful Guard previously encountered, they show little mercy to any whom they perceive as a threat to the ossuaries, and employ lethal force immediately. The fight should be claustrophobic and badly lit, making for an intense conflict.

If the Acolytes reached an understanding with Lord Pyre, the Ossuarian Custodians stop the Acolytes to verify their identities and ensure they are not a threat. They display an **Aggressive Personality** with a **Disposition** of 60; see page 140 for their full profile. If the Acolytes successfully convinced Lord Pyre of the threat of the Inheritors, the Custodians are in fact also actively searching for the cultists. In this case, the Acolytes can convince the Ossuarian Custodians to accompany them, although they prefer to split up and cover more ground.



## HUNTING THE HUNTERS

As the Acolytes search for the location of the Inheritors' ritual site, they might find themselves also being hunted. Once they have entered the catacombs, the GM should secretly make a **Subtlety test** for the warband. If the Acolytes fought their way past the Inheritors guarding the catacombs entrance, apply a -10 penalty. If the warband fails the test, it means that the Inheritors are aware of their presence and take steps to prevent them from interrupting the ritual. Even as the Acolytes attempt to navigate the catacombs, several groups of Inheritor cultists are patrolling, looking for the Acolytes. Unless the Acolytes are actively taking steps to conceal themselves—unlikely, as doing so would slow their progress—one of these groups eventually finds them. When exactly this occurs is left to the GM's discretion, but should be after the Acolytes have made some progress exploring the catacombs.

The group of Inheritors includes a number of Proselytes equal to the Acolytes' number, led by two Disciples. The Game Master should adjust this as needed to create an enemy force slightly below an average threat threshold value for the warband, including any allies the Acolytes might have at this stage. The Inheritors know the tunnels well, and attempt to use this to their advantage by setting an ambush, concealing themselves behind piles of bones, stalagmites, or xenos statuary. The GM should secretly make **Awareness tests** for each Acolyte (with a +10 bonus for any who state they are actively watching for an ambush), opposed by a single **Stealth test** by one of the Disciples. Acolytes who win the **Opposed test** spot the ambush in time; those who fail are **Surprised** during the first round of combat.

If the Acolytes are in disguise, the GM should first call for one of the Acolytes to make a **Deceive test**, opposing one of the Disciple's **Scrutiny test**. If the Acolytes are wearing actual Inheritor robes, give them a +20 bonus to the test. If the Acolytes win this **Opposed test**, the cultists approach them and ask questions in an attempt to verify their identities first. If the Acolytes win by three or more degrees of success, the Inheritors briefly acknowledge their presence (mistaking them for loyal cult members) as the cultists pass by to continue searching elsewhere.



## THE RITUAL COMPLETE

To reach the site of the ritual, the Acolytes descend deep into the catacombs, past the boundaries respected by the Eulogus Askelline since time immemorial. However, they reach the ritual chamber too late to stop the cult, arriving in time to witness the summoning of their dark god. From there, the Acolytes must move quickly and decisively to banish the Daemon Prince before it reaches its full strength and becomes unstoppable.

Once the Acolyte complete the necessary tests, as determined by the GM, they finally reach the ritual site. While the journey covers some horizontal distance, it is clear the Acolytes that they are delving deeper and deeper into Thaur's crust. Before reaching the ritual site, their surrounding environment changes substantially as they pass into the region known as the ebon tunnels.

### THE EBON TUNNELS

There is no clear demarcation of the boundary between the rest of the catacombs and the region sometimes referred to as the ebon tunnels, but the difference is noticeable. As the Acolytes descend deeper into the catacombs, the rough-hewn rock and piles of bones give way to walls of smooth black ridges, like the inside of some great serpent's rib cage. The material, while appearing like polished stone, is oily to the touch.

The region has a strong sense of wrongness to it. The caves seem both unnatural and, at the same time, beyond the means of mortals to create. Although these tunnels are largely barren—one might say pristine—there are occasional statues depicting strangely vague forms, perhaps humanoid, and bizarre patterns of xenos runes inlaid in or projecting from the walls.

By the time the Acolytes reach the ebon tunnels, the mysterious, Warp-caused phenomena that haunt the catacombs should be much more pronounced. This is due both to the advanced stage of the Inheritors' unholy ritual and to the innate corruption of these ancient corridors (see the **Haunted Catacombs** sidebar on page 127).

### THE RITUAL CHAMBER

As the Acolytes draw near their goal, erratic light begins to illuminate the otherwise-dark tunnel. When the Acolytes arrive at the site of the ritual, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Up ahead, the tunnel opens up into a large chamber, lit by sputtering torchlight suffused with an unnatural glow. Well more than two score of robed figures chant in an unholy tongue around a vast pool of liquid. The fluid seethes and twists with unnatural energies, its viscous, purple waves flecked with countless tiny points of light. As their profane words echo throughout the chamber, the flickering light casts brief shadows of inhuman faces on the chamber walls and the waters churn, almost spilling over the edges of the pool before coming back down with a soul-shaking crash.*

Within the roughly four hundred metre square chamber, with one other passage exiting from it, more than fifty robed cultists of the Children of the Inheritance are involved in the ritual, under the lead of Carolus Renthear. As the ritual reaches its culmination and the Daemon appears, however, many of these cultists drop dead to the ground, their minds burnt out from the proximity to the unholy spectacle and blood and cranial fluids leaking from their eyes and nostrils.

Few Acolytes would simply stand by as this terrible rite comes to fruition, of course, and so the GM should be ready for the Acolytes to bring down the Emperor's justice upon the Inheritors without hesitation. Whether they infiltrate the ritual disguised as cultists or storm in and immediately attack, their goal is to stop the ritual (or, failing at that, contain its effects). Unfortunately, by this point, the ritual is too far advanced to stop. Slaughtering cultists merely incites the surviving members to rush to complete the ritual under the guidance of Carolus Renthear. If the Acolytes begin attacking the cultists, a small number of them (one per Acolyte, or a group with a threat threshold slightly lower than the Acolytes' potency should dictate) disengage from the ritual and fight back, holding the Acolytes off as the rest continue to chant and pour more and more of the vile Blood of Izumat into the writhing pool of purple liquid.



# THE REMEMBERED GOD

*“Izumat will awaken, and his blood will spill across Thaur, washing away the unbelievers. We, the faithful, shall inherit the sector and welcome its rightful owners.”*

—Arch-Rector Legatarius Carolus Renthear

In the finale of FORGOTTEN GODS, the Acolytes must face and somehow banish the newly-summoned Daemon Prince Suvfaeras before it can claim the souls of the thousands of pilgrims on the surface above. This scene presents the Acolytes with difficult choices, as they must deal with the remaining cultists, the Daemon Prince, and Carolus Renthear. While they contend with the foul Daemon, Renthear races to the surface to prepare the sacrifice. At the same time, Suvfaeras continues to draw strength from the xenos artefacts scattered throughout the deep catacombs, each object a legacy of its former worshippers. The Acolytes must either banish the unholy creature in combat—no small feat—or destroy enough of the xenos artefacts in the nearby vicinity, which anchor it in the Materium. Whichever path they choose, they must succeed before Renthear readies the sacrifice and renders the Daemon Prince nigh-unstoppable.

The GM should run this scene as a tense and drastic series of running battles, leaving the Acolytes with little opportunity to so much as catch their breath. Not only are numerous enemies arrayed against the Acolytes, but the fate of Thaur, and even the sector, rests on them.

There is potentially a great deal happening during this final scene, and some players might have difficulty dealing with the situation. It can also be quite challenging for the GM, as the Acolytes might split up to both fight the battle below and dash upwards after Renthear. While some groups might enjoy the additional complexity, others might prefer to resolve the encounter where the warband has a more singular battle against Suvfaeras along with Renthear and the remaining cultists, with the knowledge that if the Acolytes fall, no one can stop the Inheritors' leader from sacrificing the thousands of pilgrims above. There is nothing wrong with resolving the scene this way, and as long as the GM keeps the action tense and exciting, it can be just as rewarding for the players and the GM as facing him later.

## THE DAEMON UNBOUND

Whether the Acolytes simply observe or begin attacking the cultists, they only have a few moments before the ritual reaches its culmination. If the warband begins inflicting serious damage to the cultists, Renthear hastens the finale of the ritual. If the Acolytes attempt to slaughter their way through all the cultists, the GM can run several rounds of combat, building the tension as he describes the chanting growing louder and crackling energy enveloping the xenos artefacts. After approximately five rounds of combat, or as soon as the Acolytes direct their attacks against the pool filled with the Blood of Izumat or at Renthear, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*As the chanting reaches a fevered pitch, a man in dark and ornate robes screams out a final entreaty, breaking from the unholy tongue into Gothic: “Izumat, we implore you! Awake!” The pool of Warp-tainted liquid surges once again, splashing over the edges and onto several cultists, who perish in hideous agony as their forms horribly twist and mutate. From within the writhing, purple Blood of Izumat, reality tears open with a sound like a thousand voices screaming just beyond your perception. The waters crash down, slowly ebbing back into the circle. From the pool, a billowing figure of inky shadow emerges, its face a dread visage burning with twin points of violet fire. In a voice that should not be, the thing speaks: “I return.”*

The man in the robes is Carolus Renthear (see page 140), which the Acolytes likely grasp immediately; he starts with an Unhinged Personality and a Disposition of 20. At the appearance of the Daemon Prince, the PCs must each test against Fear (3). The Inheritors, even those engaged in combat with the Acolytes, drop to their knees in supplication or else fall prone, many of their minds destroyed by what they have witnessed. Several of the cultists who retain their faculties fall to the ground weeping in despair, overcome with the realisation of what they have unleashed.

In the confusion, Renthear begins backing away toward the exit passage, opposite the one through which the Acolytes entered, with a group of five Inheritor Disciples. Unless the Acolytes stop him (which would require, at the very least, immobilising him), he runs for the surface with a cadre of two Proselytes per Acolyte (adjusted by the GM to be a number roughly twice the threat threshold appropriate for them to face). This mob is more concerned with protecting their leader rather than fighting the Acolytes, and should not engage them more than a four at a time. Renthear is using a route that brings him directly to the monument of Saint Merusaad, and the last of the Inheritors make a final stand against the Acolytes at the exit of the tunnel. Once he reaches the monument of Saint Merusaad, Renthear's loyal servants protect him as he incites a malefic incantation to prepare the mass sacrifice.

## SUVFAERAS

Though all Daemons of the Warp exhibit unique characteristics, their unholy presence is recognisable to those steeped in such forbidden lore. An Easy (+30) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test reveals “Izumat” as a Daemon, though the Acolytes might have already reached this conclusion based on other evidence. An Acolyte with Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) who succeeds at a Difficult (–10) Logic or Very Hard (–30) Awareness test recognises the blasphemous form as that of the entity known as Suvfaeras, a powerful Daemon Prince that has plagued the sector in the past. When dealing with Suvfaeras, though, skill tests should not replace roleplaying; the GM should only call for them when the Acolytes present a good argument for their cause or say something to suitably impress the Daemon. If needed, its Personality is Unhinged with a Disposition of 10.

In addition, Acolytes who completed the adventure Dark Pursuits faced this same Daemon before. Even for Acolytes who do not possess the psyker's gift, its aura of wrongness and terror is distinctive. Acolytes who faced it in the form of a Daemonhost earlier can make a Routine (+20) Psyniscience test to recognise the Daemon's familiar presence, despite its different form.





If Suvfaeras (as a Daemonhost) previously encountered the Acolytes, it immediately sees through any disguises they might wear and recognises them. Its reaction depends on how their previous meeting unfolded, but presuming the Acolytes destroyed its host form, it is likely to thank them for releasing it from that fleshy prison—though this mocking appreciation will not stay its fell hand in exacting revenge for the humiliation of defeat. If the Acolytes did not manage to destroy its Daemonhost form during the adventure, they can rightly assume that it eventually overcame its bindings to reform its immortal form within the bosom of the Warp. Alternatively, the GM might have it emerge from the pool still as a Daemonhost, taunting the Acolytes to goad them into destroying its fleshy prison.

Suvfaeras is amused to see the Acolytes again, but it is more concerned with regaining its full strength than exacting vengeance at this time. Unless the Acolytes attack it, Suvfaeras ignores them, and moves to begin collecting the xenos artefacts hidden throughout the complex. The pool of the so-called Blood of Izumat, from which Suvfaeras has risen, flows into his body. In addition, the Daemon collects several other small artefacts from remaining Inheritor cultists present in the room, who have fallen into a cataleptic awe before their so-called god. Suvfaeras cares nothing for the fates of its worshipers, and rips the artefacts free with its talons, killing cultists in the process.

Each time it collects one of these artefacts, the object dissolves into the same liquid and is absorbed into the Daemon's body. Each time this occurs, it is clear to anyone observing that the purple Warfire blazing from its eyes grows brighter and brighter.

Once Suvfaeras collects the five artefacts from cultists (at the rate of one each round) it exits the chamber. If the Acolytes also have any of artefacts it will also attempt to collect these as well, and the GM should adjust the overall number of artefacts it desires as needed based on the total number available. Instead of following Renthear or using the path through which the Acolytes came, Suvfaeras takes a third tunnel that opens smoothly in the rock as it approaches a wall. As it departs, Suvfaeras mocks the Acolytes once more. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*“Despair, for all you have sacrificed is too little, too late. Observe, for my power is finally ready to be reclaimed—here, in the darkness, and above, where my pawn will drag countless souls into my grasp with the chains of their own blind faith. Rejoice, for you shall hear this world’s death cry as only I have heard it, echoing across the aeons.”*

If the Acolytes have not already made the decision, they must now choose whether to pursue the Daemon Prince or the cult leader. For the activities of Suvfaeras as he seeks to anchor himself to reality see *The Collection* (page 133), and *The Harvest* (page 134) for details on following and confronting Renthear. The Daemon Prince’s full profile can be found on page 141.



## THE COLLECTION

As Suvfaeras waits for its loyal servant Carolus Renthear to prepare the sacrifices above, it begins collecting the most potent artefacts in the Thaurian catacombs, those that possess a small trace of its power. With each such artefact it collects, the Daemon further anchors itself in the Materium and increases its strength by a small measure. Though the Inheritors recovered many of these artefacts, many more remain undiscovered, hidden in concealed chambers and passages or possibly in the possession of the Acolytes. Daemons possess a long memory, and Suvfaeras manoeuvres effortlessly through the corridors, gliding at full speed through the tunnels which it visited long ago.

Destroying Suvfaeras' physical form is an important step to banishing it to the Materium. Unfortunately, Suvfaeras can regenerate damage to its material body by reclaiming the corrupted xenos artefacts it finds in the tunnels (or in the possession of the Acolytes). There should be an appropriate number of these artefacts (a number equal to the number of Acolytes, or perhaps more, for a greater challenge) spread throughout the nearby tunnels. The Game Master should also make note of any of these artefacts and samples of the Blood of Izumat that the Acolytes possess, as Suvfaeras can always detect these artefacts, and generally moves toward the nearest one. The exact number and availability of additional artefacts is left to the GM's discretion. These are a tool the GM can use to increase the drama and challenge of the encounter, not to make it impossible or frustrating.

The additional artefacts are concealed in hidden chambers and lost passageways. The doors to these chambers are utterly invisible to human eyes, seeming to simply open at the Daemon's presence. Each time Suvfaeras reclaims an artefact, it converts it into the purple fluid, which flows into its injuries and restores its unnatural flesh. Any Acolyte who witnesses Suvfaeras mending itself with an artefact should be able to discern roughly what the Daemon is doing (and the obvious problem it poses to the Acolytes if they wish to banish Suvfaeras by destroying its body). The Acolytes can also destroy an artefact before Suvfaeras reaches it by simply inflicting more than 7 points of damage against it.

Suvfaeras begins the encounter ignoring the Acolytes, moving toward the nearest artefact (unless it happens to be in their possession). Suvfaeras continues doing so until such time as the Acolytes manage to inflict damage on it. At that point, its ire boils to the surface, and the Daemon moves to strike down the Acolytes (focusing first upon those who possess one of the artefacts, which it takes back, then on any Acolyte who successfully damages it). Whenever Suvfaeras is suffering 10 or more wounds (or Critical damage), it shifts its priorities to restoring itself by reclaiming the nearest artefact. Any Acolyte who says he is watching as the Daemon reclaims one of the artefacts into itself notices the creature's eye grow brighter and its damaged flesh healing (an **Ordinary (+10) Awareness test**), but suffers 1 Insanity point as mortal eyes were not meant to witness such sights. If the Acolytes destroy all of the nearby artefacts (or Suvfaeras absorbs them all), the Daemon puts its full attention on obliterating the Acolytes.

*The Catacombs*

—25m



## THE HARVEST

After taking only a moment to revel in the presence of his god, Carolus Renthear heads for the surface and the monument of Saint Merusaad. There, he intends to lead a prayer service, just as the thousands of pilgrims are expecting. What they cannot possibly anticipate is that Renthear's service will instead be laced with dark words of power, a sorcerous spell potent enough to shackle the souls of all those who hear it and allow the Daemon Prince to effortlessly wrench their souls free and covet them for itself, thus returning to its former glory.

Depending on the Acolytes' actions, they might pursue Renthear through the corridors of the catacombs or confront him at the shrine of Saint Merusaad, knowing that is his destination. If the Acolytes pursue him immediately, there is a running battle as they follow right on his tail (with the forces described on page 131). If they hesitate or are delayed, the Acolytes might have to track his presence, using the same methods described under *Navigating the Catacombs* on page 128. They cannot gain any benefits from using xenos artefacts, should they have any, but do gain a +20 bonus now from the sounds of the running mob ahead.

If Renthear reaches the shrine of Saint Merusaad first, the Acolytes find him standing atop a high balcony overlooking the crowd, invoking an abominable prayer to Izumat. For a brief time, the assembled crowd stands bewildered, but by the time the realisation of his heresy begins to dawn on them, they are already held fast, their bodies and souls subdued to his will.

As Renthear conducts his malefic ceremony, he is protected by two Mournful Guardians per Acolyte plus one Ossuarian Custodian (adjusted as needed to provide a threat threshold appropriate for a challenging fight). Depending on when the Acolytes (and any allies) reach the shrine, they might find themselves in the middle of a chaotic battle between the Eulogus Askelline loyal to the Imperium and those loyal to Renthear.

## THE DAEMON'S RETURN

If the Acolytes defeat Suvfaeras prior to confronting Renthear, they might believe the worst is behind them. However, Carolus Renthear carries on his person the most potent of the artefacts, an ancient xenos skull filled with ritually purified Blood of Izumat. As long as he has it, Suvfaeras remains anchored, however, tenuously, in the Materium.

When the Acolytes confront Renthear, the Daemon Prince emerges from below, bursting up through the bone-wrought floor of the shrine and attacking them. If the Acolytes already defeated Suvfaeras, it is in a weakened state, with all of its characteristics reduced to half their normal value. However, if the Acolytes chose to pursue Renthear first, the Daemon uses its normal profile.

If the Acolytes defeat the Daemon, its shadowy form blasts apart, only to reform over the next 1d5 rounds around the artefacts Renthear carries (the GM should freely adjust this to provide an exciting climax). In order to truly banish the Daemon Prince, the Acolytes must slay Renthear and destroy the last artefact—the unholy alien skull. This unnatural object is protected by swirling sorceries, and has a defence value of 15. The character who destroys this powerful xenos relic feels something pull at his soul, tearing away a part of it as it slips back into the Immaterium. He immediately suffers 1d10 Corruption points to represent this terrible loss even at the moment of his triumph.





Though Suvfaeras cares nothing for Renthear, it understands fully that he is its best hope of attaining its full, former power. As such, the Daemon attempts to protect Renthear until he finishes his invocation, at which point—unless the Acolytes stop Renthear or Suvfaeras first—it soars out over the assembled crowd. The pilgrims are terrified yet unable to flee due to Renthear’s spell, and stand helpless as the Daemon unleashes a sorcery of its own, engulfing the assembled crowd in a sudden holocaust of Warp-born fire and consuming their souls. This takes two rounds to complete, during which the Daemon is still vulnerable (again, the GM can adjust this time as desired to heighten the tension and allow the Acolytes one final chance to defeat their unholy foe). Should it complete this consumption, however, the Daemon becomes nigh unstoppable—the Acolytes have lost.

At this point, the GM might have Suvfaeras delightedly taunt the mortals below with curses upon Thaur, or devour Renthear’s soul as a special treat. In this ending, the GM can have all manner of terrible things happen, though if the Acolytes are to continue to live much longer, the Daemon should at some point depart for even richer pastures and more convoluted schemes for its master Tzeentch. This result should result in suitably large losses in Influence for both the Acolytes and their Inquisitor.

The GM might instead chose to have allies emerge to prevent this outcome, such as a large Eldar force or even a squad of Grey Knights to banish it back to the Warp, perhaps even with the Acolyte’s Inquisitor leading them. Suvfaeras might alternatively taunt its foes rather than immediately consuming the souls, and allow the Acolytes extra time to defeat it. Even if the Daemon is defeated, there should also be losses in Influence and other penalties as the Acolytes did not manage the feat on their own.

## VICTORY

If the Acolytes succeed in stopping the heretic Renthear and banishing the Daemon Prince Suvfaeras, they obtain a great victory. Depending on how the events of the final battle unfold, though, they could have to deal with a great amount of immediate fallout.

If the thousands of assembled pilgrims fell under the sway of Renthear’s sorcery or witnessed the Daemon, the Acolytes should hold the responsibility for ensuring they are free from taint. Depending on the views of the Acolytes, the only way to ensure this might be to grant the Emperor’s mercy—after all, if the pilgrims are true devotees of Saint Merusaad, they should be glad to martyr themselves in the cause of purity (see the **Ultimate Sanction** sidebar on this page for one method of handling this).

The Acolytes might call on the aid of the Mournful Guard or other forces in this area, though these will also require screening to ensure they are free from corruption and were not part of the Children of the Inheritance. There may also be stray cultists both on the surface and in the catacombs that require capture, something that should be done rapidly to prevent their escape.

The Acolytes might want to explore the catacombs further, to ensure any remaining cult relics or other heretical items are properly collected or destroyed before others might make off with them, either for local rituals or for offerings in the Faceless Trade.

Game Masters can use these and other actions as springboards for short adventures on Thaur, or combine them with the narratives described in the **Adventure Aftermath** on page 137 to create entire new adventures or augment existing ones.



## ULTIMATE SANCTION

Should the Acolytes decide it is the only way to stop the Daemon, they might choose to destroy the worshipers rather than allow Suvfaeras to claim their souls. Normally, executing such a large number of individuals would be an impossible feat—but the Acolytes could very well have an ally above with a powerful ship, fully capable of destroying the area through orbital bombardment. Of course, aside from the matter of consigning thousands of innocent pilgrims to death, there is the matter of wreaking untold destruction on the Great Ossuaria, something which is sure to earn the enmity of the Eulogus Askelline and of Lord Pyre in particular, regardless of the reasons.

For the Acolytes to even have a chance of convincing Rogue Trader Anzaforr to go through with such a dire task, the Acolytes must have already established a strong alliance with him. Even so, the Acolytes must succeed at a **Hard (-20) Charm test**, or a **Very Hard (-30) Command or Intimidate test**. If successful, and if the Acolytes act in time, the bombardment does kill the pilgrims and prevent Suvfaeras from claiming their souls. However, the consequences should be dire. At the minimum, the Acolytes all gain the **Enemy (Thaur) talent** and lose **2d10 Subtlety**. Other effects might include additional **Enemy talents**, the loss of **Peer (Anzaforr Dynasty)** if they previously gained this talent, and even a loss of **Influence** (and for their Inquisitor as well), depending on how the Acolytes comport themselves both leading up to and in the aftermath of the event.



## CONCLUSIONS AND REWARDS

*"If the humans knew what fate awaits them, surely that damning knowledge would seal their fate. It falls to better minds than theirs to protect the galaxy from the threat of Chaos."*

—Morrinoe, Eldar Ranger

Should the Acolytes succeed in banishing the Daemon Suvfaeras, they have saved Thaur, and perhaps the entire Askellon Sector, from certain damnation at the talons of the same beast that once doomed its previous inhabitants. As is ever the case in their secret war, few if any can ever truly know what they did for the sector. Though they cannot know the full truth, however, some individuals involved in the events know that the Acolytes averted a great catastrophe. Most notable, these individuals include Rogue Trader Aristide Anzaforr, Lord Jeronius Pyre, and even the Eldar Ranger Morrinoe.

Acolytes should earn between 300 and 450 xp for each play session during **Chapter III: Nightmares Remembered**, depending on how well they deal with the challenges presented and portray their characters through roleplaying. If the Acolytes succeed in banishing Suvfaeras and stopping Carolus Renthear on their own, they each gain 5 Influence.

At the GM's discretion, Acolytes who reached good terms with Lord Pyre should gain the Peer (Eulogus Askelline) talent. In truly exceptional cases, Acolytes who sufficiently impressed the Ranger Morrinoe could gain the ability to purchase the Peer (Craftworld Eldar) talent at a lowered cost, though the secretive existence of the actual craftworld within Askellian space should still not be revealed to them—at least not yet.

### REPLACEMENT CHARACTERS

Thaur can provide new characters for those who do not survive the encounter with the cultists and their forgotten god, using the rules on page 109 or the standard the shrine world background. Others, such as the Mournful Guard, Ossuarian Custodians, and even the villagers or worshippers at the shrine could be used as the basis for new Acolytes.

### ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following are some of the possible other adventures the Acolytes might pursue during or after the events in this chapter:

- Within the dungeons of the oubliette is also a group of actual smugglers, caught earlier attempting to travel offplanet with a cache of mindshade ingredients. They were secretly distributing spook on Thaur, something they have so far kept a secret from their interrogators, but openly boast of it should they believe the Acolytes are fellow criminals. The Acolytes might feel strongly about such a dangerous drug, and seek to learn who where the buyers and how the smugglers came to possess it.

- Amongst the villages of Afterlife is a Vestal who deserted his post after witnessing a horrific event. Now as dream-addled as the others, he can be identified from his frayed yet recognisable dress and higher-class manner of speech. Any questions about why he is here only results in catatonic stares while his arms wildly gesture as if to say the things his mind cannot. He might have seen a blood-sacrifice or a minor daemonic summoning, or perhaps even led the event himself. Only weaning him off the mindshade influence might restore his sanity and allow the Acolytes to uncover the mystery.
- Deep within the catacombs, the Acolytes find a collapsed passage with blood spatters along the floor and walls. Plasma burns and advanced shell casings, including a crushed graviton gun power canister, litter the area. Further examination of reveals a hidden passageway that leads to a chamber filled with a bizarre range of items. Within are treasures including xenos weaponry, heretically modified servo skulls, unnatural flora not native to Thaur, and even several other vials of the unholy blood. Investigation is needed to determine if these belonged to the Inheritors or some other cult, perhaps even more dangerous than the one the Acolytes just defeated.





# ADVENTURE AFTERMATH

*"Looks like you had a bit of excitement down here. Tell me all about it over some slow-pyred Mhoxen."*

—Rogue Trader Aristide Anzaforr

If the Acolytes have been steadfast in their faith and righteous in their battles, then they have emerged from FORGOTTEN GODS having won a major victory against forces that would imperil Mankind. A creature that was instrumental in corrupting and destroying an ancient civilisation has been banished back to the Warp. A foul cult has been eradicated, and a major smuggling operation in dangerous xenos items has also been uncovered.

While the Acolytes might feel a suitable celebration to be in order (and Lord-Captain Anzaforr is likely ready for such a soirée aboard the *Oath Unspoken*), the events that transpired should have reverberating aftershocks that the Game Master can use to further develop new adventures. One of the major themes of DARK HERESY is that actions have consequences, and so the actions of the Acolytes should be woven into future campaigns in the Askellon Sector. Many individuals, organisations, and even worlds are now irrevocably changed, and these changes can lead to new ways they interact with the Acolytes and their Inquisitorial master. The GM should take advantage of these consequences to show the players the importance of the PCs' actions, and help anchor the characters to the setting that they have now helped to reshape.

The following represent only some of the possible aftermath areas; there are undoubtedly others that might arise during the adventure based on how each Acolyte warband tackles its investigations and combats. Note that these do not replace the adventure seeds offered in each chapter. Adventure seeds are typically focused on allowing the Acolytes to perform peripheral inquiries tangential to the events in that chapter, or follow up on other clues that were not immediately pressing in relation to their main pursuits. Thus, many of the adventure seeds can be mixed into the aftermath narratives that follow, allowing for even more diversity in constructing new heresies and threats for the Acolytes.

Perhaps the most obvious area that has been impacted is Thaur itself. It is very much a world in shock. A significant number of dead might be strewn around the Great Ossuaria. Carolus Renthear, second in renown only to Lord Pyre himself, has been revealed to be a heretic ready to slaughter the entire world in his insane scheme. The emergence of the Daemon Prince was a horrific psychic event, and likely ignited untold latent psykers on the planet or in orbit. It could also taint native life, perhaps altering corpse-crawler biology into producing a new mindshade strain with psychic side effects. Many other Thaurians, especially those who survived the ritual, might be driven to start new cults of their own to again call forth beings of such terrible magnificence. Whispers of what occurred will leak across the Cyclopea Sub-Sector and beyond, threatening Thaur's role as a pre-eminent burial site. It could be many decades before Thaur recovers. Its populace is also almost certainly to be overly suspicious of outsiders or any not properly conforming to native customs, thus making any new investigations there much more difficult.

Though the Children of the Inheritance was dealt a huge blow, there are undoubtedly survivors on Thaur and perhaps on the *Oath Unspoken* or other worlds, all eager for revenge or to reattempt their unholy resurrection. Tormus Fayne, the powerful cult leader, could use them to strengthen his forces away from Desoleum and grow the Callers of Sorrow. Fayne sees the crippling of the Inheritors as a major victory for himself as well as the God of Decay, and views this as a sign to increase his efforts. This could lead to greater cult activity across Desoleum and the sub-sector, even as far away as Juno itself.

The disruption of the xenos relic smuggling can also have repercussions across the sector. The Trade Sable has had a major operation smashed, and other factions in the Faceless Trade are sure to step up their activities when others slacken. With less control over the trade, amateur smugglers can also arise that spread other proscribed items into wider venues and thus increase psychic outbreaks or other unholy occurrences. This could result in bloody combat between groups both at harvesting locations and distribution settings within hives and other population centres. Whilst the Acolytes should welcome such thinning of the heretical herds, more activity in the Faceless Trade can only lead to more awareness of these forbidden items, and thus ever increase the demand for them.

Rogue Trader Anzaforr has seen a violent clash aboard his ship that might have seen it stolen and destroyed, one of his worst nightmares. Seeing even a glimmer of the true reasons behind these actions or those on Thaur can only strengthen his own personal faith. What was more a show of piety to transport pilgrims, all the while using it to strengthen his dynasty's fortunes, could become a true mission. Now more aware of the real threats that face Mankind, he can also become a valuable ally for the Acolytes. Alternatively, should the Acolytes wind up owing him powerful favours, they might find themselves escorting valued pilgrims, obtaining holy relics, and even spying on or sabotaging his (certainly heretical) rivals.

There is also Morrinoe, the Eldar Ranger. It is possible there are other slumbering gods on Thaur, making her work there even more vital. She has many other tasks across the sector, though, in order to help ensure her people survive the future struggles of which the Craftworld Mianthrothe's Farseers have spoken. There are terrible things coming for Askellon that she fears to contemplate, and only through the actions of herself and the many others who act across the sector will her race endure. It is very possible the Acolytes will encounter her again in the course of her inscrutable duties; given what happened on Thaur, she might choose to explain her actions instead of simply killing them if they unwittingly interfere.

Lastly there is the Daemon Prince Suvfaeras. Impossibly ancient, made immortal long before humanity became a species, the creature bides its time in the Sea of Souls. It has noticed these Acolytes, and will enjoy twisting fate about them for the amusement of Tzeentch. Perhaps foul luck might bedevil them in the future, or extraordinary coincidence spoil their attempts at subtlety. Minor daemonic manifestations could occur more frequently, and iridescent feathers might be found strewn inside locked quarters. Attempts to use psychic powers are now likely to draw unwelcome attentions from the God of Fate. More worrisome, when Suvfaeras emerges back into reality, the Acolytes are sure to be the focus of its intricate and damnable schemes.



## CHAPTER III NPCs

The following NPCs appear in **Chapter III: Nightmares Remembered**, upon the bone-world of Thaur. Some are loyal Imperial citizens, and others are wicked heretics—and one is something far more vile still, a creature of the Immaterium made manifest, the Daemon Prince Suvfaeras.

### JERONIUS PYRE, LORD OF THE WAKE

The Lord of the Wake, Jeronius Pyre, is the most powerful man on Thaur—not only its ruler but also its spiritual leader. While Pyre is desperate to hide his own secrets and blind to the corruption within his own organisation, he is not unreasonable. Should the Acolytes convince him of the importance of their mission and the threat to his world, he makes for a valuable ally. Should they fail, he can be a dangerous enemy indeed.

LORD JERONIUS PYRE (MASTER)					21	
H <sup>4</sup> 01-10		7		WS	BS	S
AR <sup>5</sup> 11-20		8		38	45	33
AL <sup>5</sup> 21-30		8		T	AC	INT
B <sup>5</sup> 31-70		8		33	36	48
LR <sup>5</sup> 71-85		8		PER	WP	FEL
LL <sup>5</sup> 86-00		8		49	54	51
				IFL	68	
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 25		
ARCHAEOTECH LASPISTOL			CLASS PISTOL			
RNG 40M	RoF S/3/-	DMG 1d10+5 (E)				
PEN 3	CLIP 30	RLD 1 FULL	WT 2 KG	AVL UN		
SPECIAL: RELIABLE, TEARING						
CEREMONIAL CANE			CLASS MELEE			
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+6 <sup>3+SB</sup> (E)				
PEN 3	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 3 KG	AVL NU		
SPECIAL: BALANCED, POWER FIELD						

**Skills:** Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +20, Forbidden Lore (Thaur) (Int) +30, Linguistics (High Gothic) (Int)

**Talents:** Halo of Command

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (2)

**Gear:** Heavy and elaborate armoured robes, ceremonial headgear, chains of office, religious and mourning pins, Censer of Mourning

**Censer of Mourning:** One of the most powerful talismans of office the Lord of the Wake is entrusted with is the most holy Censer of Mourning, a small, ancient device worn as a heavy necklace.

It is an important religious symbol for the world, and grants a +20 to any Social skill tests towards loyal Thaur natives. It also contains an force field generator that acts as a Best quality conversion field (see page 168 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook).







## MOURNFUL GUARD WARDEN

In command of the Mournful Guard at the basic street level are the Wardens, experienced officers who have spent many years on the streets and pathways of Thaur, learning the ways of its citizens and the criminal elements at work there. It is said on Thaur that the Mournful Guard are as concerned for the spiritual wellbeing of their fellow citizens as for the safety of their bodies, and the Wardens work hard to prove this to be true.

MOURNFUL GUARD WARDEN (ELITE)					16
H <sup>4</sup> 01-10 8		WS	BS	S	
AR <sup>4</sup> 11-20 8	AL <sup>4</sup> 21-30 8	45	38	36	
B <sup>4</sup> 31-70 8		T	AC	INT	
LR <sup>4</sup> 71-85 8	LL <sup>4</sup> 86-00 8	45	44	30	
		PER	WP	FEL	
		37	42	45	
		IFL	—		
HALF 4	FULL 8	CHARGE 12	RUN 24	THREAT 14	
SHOCKBOW			CLASS BASIC		
RNG 30M	RoF S/-/-	DMG 1d10+4 (E)			
PEN 1	CLIP 10	RLD 1 FULL	WT 5 KG	AVL RA	
SPECIAL: CONCUSSIVE (2), SHOCKING					
SHOCK MAUL			CLASS MELEE		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+3 <sup>SB</sup> (I)			
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 2.5 KG	AVL SC	
SPECIAL: BALANCED, POWER FIELD					
FRAG GRENADES (2)			CLASS THROWN		
DMG 2d10 (X)	PEN 0	WT .5 KG	AVL CM		
SPECIAL: BLAST (3)					

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Inquiry (Fel) +20, Intimidate (S), Parry (WS)

Talents: Counter Attack, Crushing Blow (included in profile)

Gear: Manacles, micro-bead, respirator, flak armour uniform, 1d5 bone-chip coins

**Commanding Presence:** Only the most powerful and effective members of the Mournful Guard are elevated to the position of Warden. These individuals often find themselves in the middle of an explosive situation on the streets, where civil unrest or zealous suspicion might be only a moment from erupting into a full-fledged riot. Once per encounter, a Warden may re-roll a failed Command or Intimidate test.

## MOURNFUL GUARD

The rank-and-file members of the Mournful Guard are known to the citizenry simply as Guardians. These are the intrepid men and women who walk the streets every day, watching out for the spiritual and physical well-being of their fellow citizens. There is still an aura of power and authority around these representatives of the Lord of the Wake, however, and no one on the streets would dream of taking liberties with a Guardian, or acting in any way disrespectful or insolent towards them.

MOURNFUL GUARD (TROOP)					12
H <sup>4</sup> 01-10 7		WS	BS	S	
AR <sup>4</sup> 11-20 7	AL <sup>4</sup> 21-30 7	32	36	30	
B <sup>4</sup> 31-70 7		T	AC	INT	
LR <sup>4</sup> 71-85 7	LL <sup>4</sup> 86-00 7	38	34	29	
		PER	WP	FEL	
		35	32	35	
		IFL	—		
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 8	
SHOCKBOW			CLASS BASIC		
RNG 30M	RoF S/-/-	DMG 1d10+4 (E)			
PEN 1	CLIP 10	RLD 1 FULL	WT 5 KG	AVL RA	
SPECIAL: CONCUSSIVE (2), SHOCKING					
COMBAT TRUNCHEON			CLASS MELEE		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+3 <sup>SB</sup> (I)			
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 2.5 KG	AVL CM	
SPECIAL:					
STUN GRENADES (2)			CLASS THROWN		
DMG —	PEN 0	WT .5 KG	AVL CM		
SPECIAL: BLAST (3), CONCUSSIVE (2)					

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Intimidate (S)

Talents: Double Team

Gear: Manacles, micro-bead, respirator, flak armour uniform, 1d5 bone-chip coins

**Knowledge of the Beat:** Guardians seldom wander far from their assigned beats during their regular duty schedule. Because of this they are usually well-known to all in their area of responsibility. As long as a Guardian is in the pursuit of his lawful duty in his assigned area, he may re-roll one failed Awareness or Investigate test per encounter.



## OSSUARIAN CUSTODIAN

The Ossuarian Custodians make up the branch of the Eulogus Askelline responsible for preserving and protecting the resting places of the countless heroes entombed upon Thaur. They are devoted to maintaining the endless burial sites while protecting them from scavengers, grave robbers, and anyone else who might disturb the well-deserved slumber of these illustrious figures. More spiritual and ceremonial in nature than the largely secular aspects of the Mournful Guard, the Ossuarian Custodians' remit is far more wide-ranging. On any given day they might have to contend with hysterical mourners, repair or rebuild crumbling masonry, apprehend or eliminate tomb robbers, or even clean up after an outbreak of predatory vermin within the resting places.

OSSUARIAN CUSTODIAN (TROOP)					10
H <sup>3</sup> 01-10 6		WS	BS	S	
AR <sup>3</sup> 11-20 6		28	35	31	
AL <sup>3</sup> 21-30 6		T	AC	INT	
B <sup>3</sup> 31-70 6		32	34	34	
LR <sup>3</sup> 71-85 6		PER	WP	FEL	
LL <sup>3</sup> 86-00 6		38	42	39	
		IFL			—
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 8	
<b>OSSUCUN</b>					CLASS BASIC
RNG 20M	RoF S/-/-	DMG 1d10+6 (R)			
PEN 0	CLIP 1	RLD HALF	WT 4 KG	AVL RA	
SPECIAL: SCATTER, PROVEN (4), TEARING					
<b>ADUROGLAIVE</b>					CLASS MELEE
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+7 <sup>+</sup> +SB (R)			
PEN 2	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 7 KG	AVL VR	
SPECIAL: FELLING (2), FLAME, UNBALANCED					

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +20, Inquiry (Fel) +10, Navigate (Surface) (Int), Tech Use (Int)

**Talents:** Blind Fighting, Keen Intuition, Nowhere to Hide

**Gear:** Micro-bead, respirator, armoured Custodian uniform, 1d5 bone-chip coins.

**Righteous Blaze:** An aduroglave normally uses a small promethium reservoir to coat the blade with fire, the better to light the way through the catacombs as well as smite those who should not inhabit these holy depths. In an emergency, though, an Ossuarian Custodian can use his expert skill with the weapon to have it erupt in an inferno. Once per encounter, after normal damage is inflicted in an attack, the weapon can be used to deal an additional 1d10+5 Energy damage that ignores armour. The weapon then loses the Flame quality until the Custodian can spend a day repairing it.

## ARCH-RECTOR LEGATARIUS CAROLUS RENTHEAR, OVERPRAESUL OF THE CHILDREN OF THE INHERITANCE

While outwardly holding one of the highest positions within the Eulogus Askelline outside that of Lord of the Wake, Arch-Rector Legatarius, Carolus Renthear is also the overall leader of the Children of the Inheritance, known as the Overpraesul to his heretical disciples. He is fanatically dedicated to the Inheritor cult, and fully willing to lay down his life for his heretical beliefs. While Renthear might proselytise to the Acolytes even as they engage in combat, he never entertains the idea of surrender.

ARCH-RECTOR CAROLUS RENTHEAR (MASTER)					20
H <sup>3</sup> 01-10 7		WS	BS	S	
AR <sup>4</sup> 11-20 8		38	41	39	
AL <sup>4</sup> 21-30 8		T	AC	INT	
B <sup>4</sup> 31-70 8		45	31	47	
LR <sup>4</sup> 71-85 8		PER	WP	FEL	
LL <sup>4</sup> 86-00 8		55	67	45	
		IFL			55
HALF 3	FULL 6	CHARGE 9	RUN 18	THREAT 32	
<b>AUTOPISTOL</b>					CLASS PISTOL
RNG 30M	RoF S/-/6	DMG 1d10+2 (I)			
PEN 3	CLIP 18	RLD 1 FULL	WT 1.5 KG	AVL AV	
SPECIAL: MAN STOPPER BULLETS (INCLUDED IN PROFILE)					
<b>FORCE SWORD</b>					CLASS MELEE
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+9 <sup>+</sup> +PR+SB (E)			
PEN 7 <sup>+</sup> +PR	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 5 KG	AVL NU	
SPECIAL: BALANCED, FORCE					

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +20, Stealth (Ag) +10

**Talents:** Bastion of Iron Will, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Strong Minded, Warp Sense

**Traits:** Psy Rating (5), Touched by the Fates (2)

**Psychic Powers:** Crush, Flame Breath, Fire Shield, Foreboding, Spontaneous Combustion

**Gear:** Gorgeous ceremonial robes inlaid with optic-dazzling unholy symbols, blasphemous icons, profane texts, and an array of xenos artefacts

**Arsenal of Fate:** Carolus Renthear holds the lion's share of the Inheritor's portable relics. He bears upon his person a pouch containing the dust of an ancient xenos king, a diadem with a single purple gem carved into the likeness of an eye, and a vial of the Blood of Izumat. While he has these items, he can chose to gain an additional Half Action that must be used in that turn to perform a Focus Power test or sustain an existing psychic power. Each time he does this, roll 1d10 and add any degrees of failure he scored on tests in that turn. If the result is 9 or higher, one of the items bursts into an obscene light and is destroyed.



## DAEMON PRINCE SUVFAERAS (IZUMAT UNVEILED)

Suvfaeras is a potent foe from the very depths of the Warp. Older than Mankind itself, it is an extremely powerful entity. The Daemon Prince finds it amusing to appear to its new human worshippers in the grand form it took so many millennia ago, when it ruled and ultimately destroyed the former inhabitants of Thaur. Should it reach its full potency by gorging on the souls Carolus Renthear plans to sacrifice, this Daemon of the Chaos God Tzeentch could become beyond the means of the Acolytes to banish.

DAEMON PRINCE SUVFAERAS (MASTER)					36	
H <sup>2</sup> 01-10		16		WS	BS	S <sup>7</sup>
AR <sup>2</sup> 11-20		16		68	55	52
AL <sup>2</sup> 21-30		16		T <sup>14</sup>	AG	INT
B <sup>2</sup> 31-70		16		73	46	62
LR <sup>2</sup> 71-85		16		PER	WP <sup>7</sup>	FEL
LL <sup>2</sup> 86-00		16		58	58	37
				IFL	58	
HALF 6	FULL 12	CHARGE 18	RUN 36	THREAT 53		
WARP TALONS				CLASS MELEE		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+10 <sup>3+SB</sup> (E)				
PEN 2	CLIP —	RLD —	WT —	AVL —		
SPECIAL: LANCE						

Skills: Athletics (S) +20, Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel) +30, Command (Fel) +30, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +30

Talents: Combat Master, Warp Sense

Traits: Baleful Presence (20), Daemonic (3), Dark sight, Fear (4), Flyer (9), From Beyond, Psyker (PR 6), Size (6), Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (4), Unnatural Willpower (2)

Psychic Powers: Assail, Haemorrhage, Molten Beam, Puppet Master, Smite, Telekine Shield, Warp Speed

Gear: Warp-infused bone armour

**Prince of the Immaterium:** Suvfaeras is a creature of the deepest pits of the Warp, its very flesh anathema to the fabric of reality. The effect this has on human minds nearby is different from person to person, but as reality wears thin around them, none are completely free from its hellish influence. Whenever a character within 15 metres fails a Willpower test, he suffers 1 Corruption point.

**Flood of Unreality:** No mortal being can hope to manipulate the raw stuff of the Warp with the skill of a creature who has bathed in its orphic light for millennia. The Daemon Prince gains an extra Half Action each turn, which it can use in that turn either to maintain its Flying altitude or manifest a psychic power.

**Dark Reclamation:** Suvfaeras can spend a Half Action on its turn to reclaim one of the corrupted artefacts with which it has physical contact. This process melds the artefact back into its daemonic flesh, or destroys the artefact to release its energies, but in doing so heals the Daemon of 1d10 damage.





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## FORGOTTEN GODS

*Deadly smugglers carrying alien relics race for passage on an enigmatic Rogue Trader's starship. Awaiting their arrival are heretical cultists, ready to use these forbidden artefacts to awaken a dead god. If they are not stopped, the Askellon Sector will fall before a vile power that ruled aeons before Mankind existed...*

In FORGOTTEN GODS, Acolytes must uncover the origins of the corrupted xenos artefacts plaguing the sector and the dark cult that seeks these objects to empower its unholy rituals. As they travel across Desoleum's lawless wastelands, the black depths of space, and finally to a mysterious, bone-strewn cemetery planet, it will take all of the Acolytes' skills in both investigation and combat to survive and vanquish these threats!

This full-length adventure for DARK HERESY SECOND EDITION also includes:

- Gazetteer information covering the wastelands of Desoleum, the Rogue Trader vessel *Oath Unspoken*, and the ancient shrine world of Thaur.
- Rules for creating player characters from these three new home worlds.

## FEAR THE PAST

A copy of the **DARK HERESY** SECOND EDITION Core Rulebook is required to use this supplement.

**GAMES WORKSHOP**



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