

BLACK CRUSADE™

HAND OF CORRUPTION™



AN ADVENTURE FOR
BLACK CRUSADE

WARHAMMER
40,000
ROLEPLAY

BLACK CRUSADE™

HAND OF CORRUPTION™

DRAG AN ENTIRE WORLD INTO THE CLUTCHES OF THE VORTEX!

Within this tome is a three part adventure that give players the chance to accomplish the ultimate heresy—damning a whole planet to the perils of the warp.

Towards Penance—While within the tides of the Screaming Vortex, the Heretics learn of a powerful rite to consume a planet. However, first can they survive infiltrating the despotic Imperium of Man?

Revolt and Ruin—Having arrived on the harsh and forboding prison world of Saint Annard's Penance, the Heretics find themselves set against its powerful defenders. To complete their rite, they must lead a planet full of violent prisoners in open revolt!

The Undying Legions—As the planet descends into the depths of the Screaming Vortex, a new foe threatens all the Heretics set out to achieve. Can they triumph while set against enemies on all sides?

Set a world aflame through this thrilling, multi-part adventure!

A copy of the BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook is needed to use this supplement.



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BLACK CRUSADE™

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ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM DARKNESS
OF THE 41ST MILLENNIUM

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GAME MASTER'S BRIEFING

HAND OF CORRUPTION is an epic adventure for **BLACK CRUSADE** presented in three Chapters in a single volume. It takes the Heretics from the swirling depths of the Screaming Vortex to the far reaches of the Calixis Sector to a parched and windswept Imperial penal world called Saint Annard's Penance. This adventure offers ample opportunities for both savvy roleplaying and gruelling combat, and the scenarios contained herein are designed to appeal to a wide variety of group types and play styles. Chapter I and Chapter II are geared toward the more academic or diplomatic types of Heretics like Apostates and Hereteks, and require the Heretics to think their way through their challenges. However, there are opportunities for combat-oriented characters to do their bloody work. Chapter III pits the Heretics against an unstoppable and implacable foe and is largely combat-oriented, allowing Heretics like Renegades, Champions, and Sorcerers to really shine. Even then, though, the foe's defeat may ultimately lie in quick and creative thinking on the part of the Heretics.

CHAPTER I: TOWARDS PENANCE

Chapter I begins on Kurse, one of the Gloaming Worlds of the Screaming Vortex, and is relatively free-form. It is here that the Heretics attain a mysterious book called *De Orbis Mysteriis* and the services of a slave in a game of chance from an ancient and cunning Heretic. The book tells of an Imperial penal world called Saint Annard's Penance that was once part of the Screaming Vortex, a world that can be returned to the roiling bosom of that great Warp storm with the black ritual outlined in its pages.

Through their new slave, a hardened woman born and raised on Saint Annard's Penance, and some research already done by their mysterious benefactor, the Heretics learn that Saint Annard's Penance is not a simple penal world, it is also an important industrial world full of countless manufactorums and a ready workforce already trained in their operation. The Heretics realise that enacting the ritual and drawing Saint Annard's Penance back into the Screaming Vortex would give them a solid foundation upon which to base their own Black Crusade, and plans are put into motion to achieve that goal.

As mentioned earlier, quick wits and a silver tongue are of more use to the Heretics in Chapter I than force of arms. They need to secure transit from the Vortex to Imperial space, infiltrate Port Wander, and secure passage yet again to the isolated and heavily-guarded penal world. All of which is easier accomplished with an open hand than with a closed fist.

CHAPTER II: REVOLT AND RUIN

Chapter II finds the Heretics on Saint Annard's Penance after successfully infiltrating the huge prison complex and establishing a base of operations. The prison is as big as a

medium-sized Imperial city and home to nearly 15 million souls, many of whom are ripe for corruption. The Heretics must gain control of the prison and enact their ritual, both monumental feats.

To kill two birds with one stone, the Heretics hit on the idea of fomenting insurrection within the prison population. If all goes well, this eliminates the Imperial jailers and administration and also covers their blasphemous activities as they prepare the ritual. While certainly powerful and favoured by the ruinous powers, successfully completing a task such as this requires allies, and the Heretics must seek out local leaders and recruit them to the Heretics' cause. Chapter II is fairly linear, its three acts dealing with the gathering of the Heretics' allies, leading the prison population in an uprising, and enacting the ritual. Like Chapter I, Chapter II calls more for guile and stealth than out and out violence. Saint Annard's Penance is a dangerous place, however, and the Heretics are dealing not only with zealous agents of the Imperium but also with violent, hardened criminals. As such, the potential for violent struggle is strong, and there are sections of the Chapter where those Heretics who live by the bolter and chainsword can find much to do.

At the close of Chapter II, the Heretics stand victorious as the Imperial administration is overrun and the planet is pulled into the Screaming Vortex. Their work has just begun, however, as once the world fully transits into the chaotic roil of the Vortex, it reveals a new and terrible secret as Chapter III begins.

CHAPTER III: THE UNDYING LEGIONS

In Chapter III, the Heretics learn the terrible truth about the world they set out to capture. Saint Annard's Penance is an ancient Necron Tomb World, host to many millions of the mechanical xenos waiting for their signal to awaken and retake their world. As the energies of the Warp again caress the planet, antediluvian systems come online, reacting to the danger posed by the Warp. Rank upon rank of the Tombworld's ancient defenders are reactivated and sent forth from their long rest to discover the nature of the threat and eliminate it.

Now the Heretics, dealing with allies betrayed and a penal colony still reeling from both the insurrection and the transit to the Screaming Vortex, face a threat unlike anything they've ever seen. They must now deal not only with the fallout from the successful execution of the ritual that drew Saint Annard's Penance into the Vortex, but also with the innumerable Necrons boiling from the ground. Chapter III focuses on combat and leadership as the Heretics muster what forces they can to contain the Necron threat long enough for them to form a plan to eliminate it entirely. They must fight their way through millions of implacable Necron Warriors and make their way to the very heart of the ancient Necron control apparatus where they do battle with a fabled C'tan Shard, a being no less than the mortal remains of a god.

GAZETTEER: SAINT ANNARD'S PENANCE

"He could have bothered to actually look. There is amazing wealth on this planet and if he'd taken the time to do his job correctly, this system would bear his name instead of mine."

—Rogue Trader Alvis Limoges remarking on his predecessor.

Far out in the rimward wastes of the Malfian Sub-Sector lies the small and desolate Limoges system. Bathed in the wan, guttering light of the Halo Stars, and nearly a standard year from its nearest inhabited neighbour, it was charted early on in the Angevin Crusade by a long forgotten Rogue Trader. The system is composed of six planets in eccentric orbit around an ancient, pale, blue giant star. Of these six worlds; three were blasted, uninhabitable rocks too close to the star to be of any worth; two were brooding, bloated, dusky-hued gas giants far from what little warmth their star could provide; and one, the fourth planet, was recorded in that ancient chart as "marginally habitable." The forgotten Rogue Trader spent little time in the system and recorded precious little information besides its location and a placeholder name — XB-70A. He left, having done the bare minimum to fulfil his orders, and his report was almost immediately forgotten in the centuries of strife that followed.

Once the bloody work of the Angevin Crusade was done and the Calyx Expanse was brought under the heel of the Administratum, the bureaucrats of the newly formed Calixis Sector began their work. On Scintilla, the functionaries of the Imperial Census set about the monumental task of collating the myriad of reports from the Rogue Traders and Explorer vessels that were employed in charting the worlds of the Calyx Expanse in the preceding centuries. An enterprising and eager Rogue Trader named Alvis Limoges purchased the rights to explore and exploit System XB-70A, as well as several others. With the ink on his Warrant barely dry, Limoges set out with a flotilla of voidships to do the work of the God-Emperor among the heathens and make his fortune.

Upon arrival in XB-70A, Limoges set about performing a proper and thorough survey of the lonely system. After six standard months of assiduous augury and cataloguing, Limoges and his team had amassed an impressive and exhaustive survey that, unfortunately, improved little on the previous terse, offhand survey. The system, which Limoges graciously named after himself, was largely barren. Half of its worlds were completely useless, its gas giants contained only the basest, most common gases, and its one habitable planet, now referred to as Limoges IV, was an arid, rocky wasteland with a corrosive atmosphere and precious little water. What the report expanded on, however, was the relative riches just beneath the surface of the fourth planet.

Numerous veins of rare and precious elements were found beneath Limoges IV's blasted surface, along with deep, vast deposits of promethium. Limoges dutifully catalogued the world's vast mineral wealth in his report, never once believing

SAINT ANNARD

Born Annard Nobelac, Saint Annard was canonised by the Calixian Synod nearly four centuries after his death during the Angevin Crusade. A high-ranking official of the Adeptus Arbites and a legal scholar, he was sent to the Calyx Expanse to oversee the formation of the first penal worlds therein. Both politically savvy and highly devout, Judge Nobelac felt that the combination of hard labour and intense, often brutal penance were the keys to salvation. His penal colonies were models of Imperial legal ideals, combining toil in mines and manufacturums with daily prayer, flagellation, and fasting, and he was lauded throughout the Imperium for his numerous writings on imprisonment, penance, and Imperial law. He was killed in a prisoner uprising near the end of the Angevin crusade on a long-lost penal world somewhere in the Josian Reach and his body was never recovered. Upon his canonisation, he was made the patron saint of penitents, prisoners, and slaves, and his teachings on law, penance, and imprisonment are still used today.

that the Calixian Administratum would spend the time or Thrones to send men and materiel out to this God-Emperor forsaken corner of space for one planet's worth of ore. He was mistaken, and within a year of his reports reaching Scintilla, the first of the massive factory ships and mass conveyors arrived to begin the laborious process of stripping Limoges IV of its natural riches.

Now, centuries later, Limoges IV, renamed Saint Annard's Penance, is home to a massive, sprawling penal complex with hundreds of manufacturums, thousands of kilometres of mines, and millions of prisoners.

A LONESOME ROCK

As desolate and God-Emperor forsaken a world as can be found in the rimward regions of the Calixis Sector, Saint Annard's Penance is both an important penal world and industrial hub. The fourth world of the Limoges system, and the only of its six planets remotely inhabitable, is a small, arid, incredibly hot world that shows no sign of pre-Imperial habitation. The topography is a mix of heavily eroded mountain ranges, impossibly deep canyons, eerie ragged badlands, alkali flats, and cracked, dusty plains. The atmosphere is mildly toxic, with a higher than normal concentration of caustic gases and constantly present dust that burn the lungs and sting the eyes of those caught outside without a survival suit or, at the very least, a respirator. There is no water on the surface of the planet, and what water the world possesses lies deep beneath the surface in large, acrid, brackish aquifers that are constantly renewed by the powerful storms that lash the world with torrents of acid rain and howling gales in the winter months. Everything from the bitter, thorny plants that hide in mountain crevasses, to the land, to the very sky itself, is a tawny golden colour; even among the dangerous reptilian fauna there is little colour variation.

There is little in the way of flora on Saint Annard's Penance. What little plant life ekes out an existence among the dust and

stones tends to be poisonous and thorny, and well adapted to the seasonal cycles of flood and drought. The world is, however, home to an abundance of insects and arachnids, the majority both shy and extremely venomous, and a few species of massive, dangerous reptilian creatures that prey on each other and the humans of the penal facility when they can manage it. Everything seems uniquely created to be as hostile to human life, or any life for that matter, as possible, and if it weren't for the great wealth of natural resources just beneath its dusty surface, the world would have been written off as a death world long ago.

The Imperial presence in the Limoges system at large exists solely to support the massive penal colony and its plethora of industry. A major producer of fuel, composites, and war materiel, Saint Annard's Pennance is administered by the Adeptus Arbites and guarded without and within by elements of the Imperial Guard and Imperial Navy. There is a large Ecclesiarchy presence as well, with both priests and members of the Sisters Hospitaller in residence to tend to the spiritual and physical well-being of both the prison and civilian populations.

ORBITAL FACILITIES

Surrounding the dusty world of Saint Annard's Penance is a dense network of satellites, stations, and orbital fortifications maintained by the Imperial Navy. Maintained to keep interlopers out, as opposed to the suppression of any mass insurrection or escape on the part of the inmates. The system

IMPERIAL NAVY ASSETS

The following are Imperial Navy assets in the system.

CASIMIR STATION

Ten kilometres across, Casimir Station is an Imperial Caer class orbital defence station. Home to 50,000 souls, the station serves as the Imperial Navy headquarters and the command centre for the system defence apparatus. It is also here that prisoners get their first taste of prison life in the pre-processing centre where they are disembarked from their ships, catalogued, and herded into shuttlecraft for the trip to the surface. Known colloquially as the Final Destination, the station is the last stop for the prisoners, and for a number of naval careers as well.

SHIPS

Commodore Roland Gilliam commands the squadron of Imperial Navy voidships and assorted intra-system gun-cutters that makes up the backbone of the system's defence. His flagship the *Ardent*, a Dauntless class light cruiser, is in semi-permanent dry dock alongside the station. Other ships in the squadron include *Pious Spear*, a Sword class frigate commanded by Captain Jotham Lentillus, the Falchion class frigate *Samshir* under the command of Captain Galen Fortesque, *Vigilant*, a Viper class scout sloop commanded by the young Commander Aubray Malcolm, and roughly a dozen heavily armed gun-cutters of assorted class and weaponry.



is heavily patrolled by the Imperial Navy and all inbound and outgoing traffic is heavily monitored. Only a few sanctioned ships, the mass conveyors that bring raw materials and take away finished products and the incoming penal transports, are permitted in system. Any non-sanctioned ship that arrives is given one warning to leave and, if the ship does not immediately comply, the system defence craft immediately set upon the intruder.

PLANETSIDE PRISON FACILITIES

The Imperial penal colony of Saint Annard's Penance on Limoges IV lies in the middle of a vast valley close to the planet's equator, surrounded on all sides by dusty foothills that rise up into towering mountains. Since the first years of Saint Drusus' reign as Sector Lord, prisoners from all across the Calixis Sector have toiled to their deaths in the mines and manufactorums here, producing fuel and materiel for the Imperial military machine and the burgeoning civilian markets in the rimward regions of the Sector. The penal colony itself is massive, covering an area nearly one thousand square kilometres in size and surrounded by near impenetrable walls. It is home to roughly fifteen million souls, the majority of whom are condemned prisoners from all corners of the Sector.

WALL DEFENCES

The walls of the penal colony at Saint Annard's Penance are capped with hundreds of guard towers and heavy weapon emplacements to keep both prisoners and savage creatures native to the planet away from the walls. There are also countless pict-recorders equipped with dark-sight and preysense monitoring the area of the complex immediately around the walls.

The heavy weapon emplacements are placed every five hundred metres and consist of a small rockcrete bunker big enough for a weapon team (16 AP for purposes of cover) and are reached via a ladder and locked hatch from within the wall. These weapon emplacements have a 180-degree field of fire into the compound and will contain either a belt fed heavy stubber loaded with dum dum bullets (100m; -/-/10; 1d10+7 I; Pen 1; Clip 240; Rld 2 Full; Unreliable) or a belt fed heavy bolter (150m; -/-/8; 1d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip 240; Rld Full; Tearing, Unreliable).

Every kilometre along the top of the wall is a heavily reinforced guard tower that rises an additional ten metres above the wall itself. Staffed with full squads of ten Arbites Enforcers, these guard towers mount extremely heavy weapons similar to those mounted on fighting vehicles to ward off the dangerous mega-fauna that range at large on the plains outside the prison walls. Each tower is reached via a ladder and locked hatch from within the wall like the smaller heavy weapon emplacements. Similar to the smaller structures, the guard towers are composed largely of reinforced rockcrete (16 AP for purposes of cover). The top level of each tower is the observation and weapons platform. Each platform has a 270-degree field of fire facing outward from the wall and is shielded on all four sides by thick armour-glass (8 AP for purposes of cover). The guard towers mount either an M41 multilaser (150m; -/-/5; 2d10+10 E; Pen 2; Clip 100; Rld 2 Full; Reliable) or an M34 autocannon (300m; S/3/-; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Clip 20; Rld 2 Full; Reliable).

The towers and heavy weapon emplacements are all linked via secure, hard-wired vox, are connected to a larger security network administered from within the wall, mount powerful floodlights, and can be environmentally sealed in the case of an emergency.

BASIC PRISON LAYOUT

Saint Annard's Penance can be divided into three sections. The Central District is where the first prison facilities were constructed when the Imperium first founded the prison. Now it has grown to house the vast hab blocks that hold the teeming masses of the prisoner population. The Adeptus Arbites prefers to keep them in this central location so they are easier to control.

Like spokes on a pinwheel, eight major manufactorum and mining compounds surround the Central District. These bear unimaginative names such as Manufactoria District 1 or Minehead 3. Here the prisoners work during the day, shuttled to and from their work by a mag-train network.

The final section of the prison is the vast network of tunnels that form the mines. The ground beneath Saint Annard's Penance is honeycombed by mining tunnels, some of which stretch more than a thousand kilometres away from their access points. The prevailing thought of this design was that keeping a limited number of access points was a better way to control the prison population—even if some escaped into the mines, they could not reach the world's surface. However, it also means that below-ground is often a maddening maze, and sizable populations of prisoners have made their homes beneath the earth.

THE CENTRAL DISTRICT

The Central District contains most of the notable facilities in Saint Annard's Penance.

COMPOUND WALLS

The entire perimeter of the penal colony at Saint Annard's Penance is enclosed by massive, reinforced rockcrete walls built to keep the prisoners in and to keep the planet's deadly marauding mega-fauna from destroying industrial infrastructure and devouring prisoners. Fifteen metres high and half again as thick, the walls are honeycombed with corridors, maintenance

tunnels, Adeptus Arbites precinct sub-stations, armouries, and defence control centres and topped with guard towers, walkways, and heavy weapon emplacements. The broad base of the walls contain a two-line industrial mag-train of the type typically used to move ore and heavy machinery around manufactorums. The mag-train line within the walls allows the Arbitrators to move quickly between areas of the prison to more easily respond to any disturbances within the massive complex. There are dozens of stops on the mag-train line, and at each one is a guard station manned by 1d5 Arbitrators (see page 128) and one cyber mastiff.

Save for the heavily fortified bastions that allow the maglev trains to pass into and out of the facilities, very few gates pierce the penal colony's walls, as there is little need to leave the complex and travel at large on the planet's surface. All travel to and from the colony goes through the spaceport, there are no other cities or settlements elsewhere on the planet, and what little exploration of the planet that takes place, typically by members of the Adeptus Mechanicus making mineral surveys or taking samples of the native flora and fauna, is done via flyers and skimmers. There are, however, numerous small, man-sized hatches that lead from the maintenance tunnels to the plains outside the walls and the hundreds of maintenance platforms and catwalks that festoon the outer surface of the walls.

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT ANNARD

Made from a tawny native stone shot through with sparkling veins of crystal, the massive cathedral is a testament to the dominating vision of Ecclesiarchal architecture, with tall spires roofed with crimson slate tiles, powerful flying buttresses, and ornate stained glass windows portraying scenes of prisoners, penitents, and the life of Saint Annard. In contrast to the cathedral's exterior, with its architectural flourishes and intricate carvings, the interior of the sanctuary is quite austere

indeed. While it has a mostly traditional layout with narthex, nave, aisles, crossing, transepts, and the like, as well as numerous secluded alcoves and confessionals, the cathedral possesses no apse or altar, and not a single seat or pew is to be found anywhere in the public spaces. Instead, the nave is packed day and night with thousands of prisoners standing facing icons of Saint Annard, Saint Drusus, and the God-Emperor, and performing their compulsory devotions, their raised voices mingling with the constant clamour of industrial machinery and the howling of the wind off the plains.

It is from within these walls that Cardinal Falconer, a severe, one-eyed priest from Scintilla, and his subordinates tend to the spiritual needs of both the prison administration and the prisoners. Aside from the constant praying and singing of hymns in the nave, Cardinal Falconer holds regular masses for the Warden, his household, and all other Imperial officials and adepts in the smaller, and more opulent, chapel beneath the nave.

SPACEPORT AND PROCESSING CENTRE

Like the manufactoria districts that feed it, the spaceport is a bustling hive of activity day and night. The sole point of transit to and from the planet, Saint Annard's spaceport is a sprawling complex of landing pads, fuelling stations, industrial machinery, and massive warehouses that lies just east of Fort Saint Annard. It is here that all incoming prisoners are processed, herded from their shuttles through dozens of imposing buildings staffed with Arbitrators and medicae personnel before being sent to their habs and work assignments. The fruit of the prisoners' labour is also stored here, the riches of Saint Annard's Penance and the sweat of the prisoners' brow made real in the thousands of tonnes of finished goods, refined fuels, and raw materials stored in the great warehouses and shipped from the planet every few standard months. There is also a highly secure area of the spaceport where the Imperial Navy keeps a number of shuttles, trans-atmospheric gunboats, Valkyrie transports, and Vulture attack ships, along with their associated crew and support personnel.

ADEPTUS ARBITES PRECINCT HOUSES

The penal colony at Saint Annard's Penance is broken up by the Adeptus Arbites into hundreds of small administrative districts called precincts. At the heart of each precinct is a precinct house—a massive, blocky structure that resembles an Imperial Guard bunker commanded by a Senior Arbitrator and staffed by dozens, or even hundreds in the case of larger precincts, of Arbitrators, Chasteners, Verispex Operators, and various and sundry functionaries. These Arbitrators are trained within the Fortress Precinct of Scintilla before being dispatched to Saint Annard's Penance. Each precinct house is largely self-sufficient and heavily fortified, with thick walls, armoured windows and doors with retractable shutters, and enough stores of food and ammunition to survive a determined siege lasting weeks.

All precinct houses on Saint Annard's Penance share the same general layout. The ground floor consists of a reception and booking area, holding cells, and interrogation rooms. The second and third floors are work areas where the Arbitrators and Enforcers labour when not patrolling or actively pursuing criminal cases. The fourth floor is given over to living quarters

for those stationed at the precinct house. There are subterranean levels as well that house garage and maintenance spaces for the precinct's patrol vehicles and Rhino armoured personnel carriers, heavily armoured and guarded armouries, shielded communications rooms, and training facilities where Arbitrators can hone their martial prowess.

PRISONER'S HAB BLOCKS

Clustered in the central district, the prisoner's habs are home to the prisoners who call Saint Annard's Penance home. Tall, blocky, aggressively ugly structures of featureless rockcrete and armour-glas, each cruciform tower houses thousands of prisoners packed into cramped cells. Prisoners are segregated by gender and, further, by the manufactorum or mine in which they work. Each floor consists of four wings of cells surrounding a central elevator shaft, communal washroom and shower facility, and dining hall where the prisoners are fed their meagre rations. The cells themselves house six to ten prisoners each and contain a hard bunk for each inmate, a sink, and a commode. Security is, by necessity, quite tight in the prisoners' habs. Each one houses an Adeptus Arbites substation in the ground floor where Arbitrators maintain strict discipline and monitor the comings and goings of prisoners. Hundreds more Arbitrators patrol the corridors of each hab, keeping an eye on the prisoners and enforcing order. Each cell is sealed behind a thick, reinforced door like a ship's hatchway. These lock from the outside and have a small armour-glas window set into them so that the Arbitrators may observe the prisoners within.

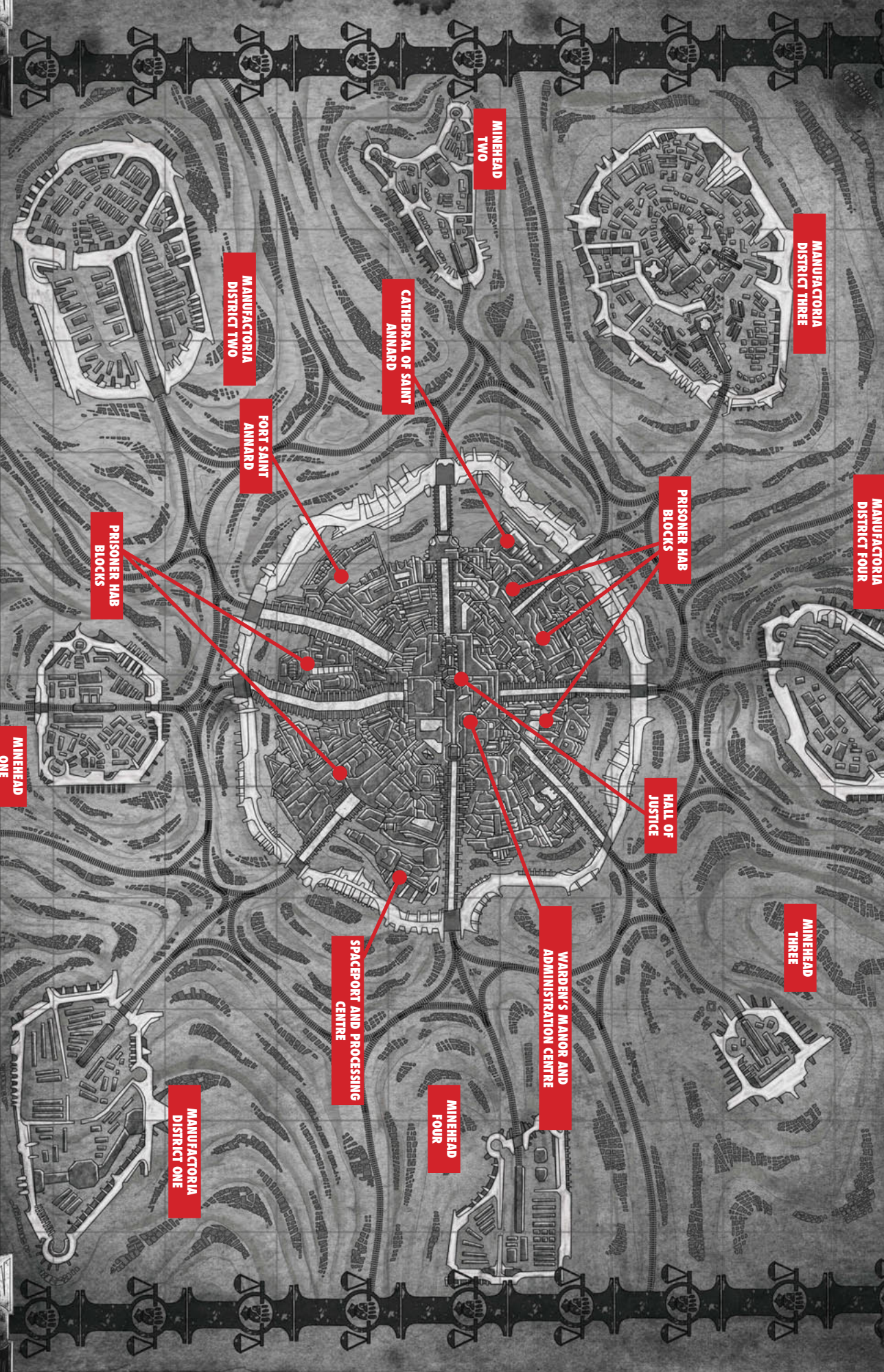
There are no entertainment or recreational facilities, and the inmates are allowed only the barest of essentials. Each is issued a coverall or jump suit, hygiene supplies, a copy of the Imperial Creed, and an abridged copy of the writings of Saint Annard concerning prisoners and penance. The underground levels of the hab blocks contain numerous mechanical spaces, as well as laundry facilities and commissaries where the prisoners' gruel is prepared.

The Mines and the Prison Tunnels

Unbeknownst to the Arbitrators and Imperial Guardsmen stationed on Saint Annard's Penance, many of the prisoners' hab blocks are connected to the played out mine workings below the central district by means of secret passageways and tunnels. These allow certain prisoners to congregate, and have helped give rise to underground communities of prisoners and even rough and brutal societies.

WARDEN'S MANOR AND ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

The manor and administration centre is a sprawling, walled estate within walking distance of the Cathedral of Saint Annard. While the mighty manufactoria district is the beating, fiery heart of the penal colony, this district is most assuredly its brain. Within the ornately carved native stone walls stand a number of important official buildings, living quarters for the numerous Administratum functionaries responsible for the day to day operation of the prison, an Adeptus Arbites substation, the manors of the senior officials, and the Warden's manor itself.





The walls that surround the Warden's manor and administration centre are on a smaller scale than those that enclose the prison entire, but are no less imposing. Standing roughly six metres high and four metres thick at their broadest, the walls are made of reinforced rockcrete faced with burnished steel plates bearing the symbols of the Administratum and the Adeptus Arbites along with icons of Saint Annard and the God-Emperor. Thick, heavily guarded adamantine gates engraved with the selections from the Lex Imperialis and selected works of Saint Annard provide access to the manor from the prison complex at large. Along the top of the wall are fortified fighting positions lining a semi-covered walkway constantly patrolled by sharp-eyed Arbitrators and monitored from the Hall of Justice through countless pict-recorders watching both sides of the wall.

Warden's Manor

This large, opulent manor house is home to Warden Phineas Morn, Warden and chief administrator of the prison colony and head of the Adeptus Arbites who oversee it, his family, and numerous servants and functionaries. Commissioned by a past Warden, the manor is a baroque five floor, multi-wing monstrosity very much in the style of the earliest days of the Calixis Sector. Its awash with soaring columns, turrets, complex gabled roofs and ornate leaded windows, and decorated with copious amounts of carved gothic stonework and statuary. Warden Morn keeps an office here where he meets with his subordinates and the heads of the disparate branches of the Administratum represented here on a regular basis, but does the bulk of his work in the imposing Hall of Justice in the administration centre.

Administration Centre and Hall of Justice

The administration centre is a cluster of official Administratum buildings within the walls of the Warden's manor that houses the nerve centre and bureaucratic functions of the huge prison complex. A small city in and of itself, this Administratum enclave consists of numerous towering habs that house the many adepts and functionaries responsible for keeping the bureaucratic machinery of the prison running smoothly, a small commercial district that provides goods and entertainment for said bureaucrats, and assorted official buildings where they toil away.

Rising from amidst the official buildings is the imposing, brutal, basalt and red-lacquered steel ziggurat of the Hall of Justice. Headquarters of the Adeptus Arbites stationed on Saint Annard's Penance and the seat of the corpse-god's Divine Law on the planet, the Hall of Justice is perhaps the single most important official building in the prison complex. All judgement flows from its echoing halls and the Judges that preside there pass harsh sentences on both bureaucrats and prisoners alike.

MEDICAE CENTRE

The austere marble edifice of the Medicae Centre rises above its squalid surroundings like a mirage. Overseen by the Sisters of Solace, an order of the Sisters Hospitaller, the Medicae Centre tends to the physical and spiritual needs of both the prisoner and civilian populations on Saint Annard's Penance. A massive, fortress-like building of tawny, silver-threaded marble set with bas-reliefs of Imperial saints, the Medicae Centre is composed

IMPERIAL GUARD ASSETS

The following are some of the assets the Imperial Guard has available on Saint Annard's Penance.

GUARD UNITS

The following troops make up the Imperial Guard presence on Saint Annard's Penance. The 10,000 soldiers of the Guard actually come from three separate units, rotated to this relatively quiet duty to offer some time to rest and replenish their ranks before being fed into the meat grinder of the Imperium's endless wars.

- **81st Malfi Light Infantry:** Hailing from the fractious hive world of Malfi, the 81st Light Infantry makes up the bulk of Imperial Guard forces stationed at Fort Saint Annard. Commanded by Major Barl Felthan, the 81st is a light, highly mobile infantry force specializing in skirmishing and urban combat. Guardsmen of the 81st use the Imperial Guardsman stats found on page 130.
- **Drusus' Own Hussars:** The Hussars are a mechanised infantry unit from the hive world Laskin, under the command of Captain Althea Harskin. Specialising in lightning attacks mounted on armoured fighting vehicles, the Hussars make heavy use of the Chimera APC and its numerous variants. Guardsmen of the Hussars use the altered Imperial Guardsman stats found on page 130.
- **9th Canopus Engineers:** The Engineers of the Canopus Heavy Foot Regiment are a highly trained body of veteran Imperial Guardsmen hailing from the bustling hive world of Canopus. Led by the dashing Captain Bail Ordh, the Engineers are masters of fortification and siege warfare with a reputation for professionalism and coolness under fire. Guardsmen of the 9th Canopus Engineers use the altered Imperial Guardsman stats found on page 130.

VEHICLES

The troopers of Drusus' Own Hussars fight from a number of infantry fighting vehicles including the ubiquitous Chimera and its cousin, the Hellhound, that grant the unit mobility and heavy firepower. These vehicles are the lifeblood of the unit and are well cared for by the unit's technomats. Along with their weapons, the Hussar's vehicles grant them an incredible amount of protection from small-arms fire, and can even protect the troopers from attacks by light and medium support weapons like heavy bolters and plasma guns.

To reflect this, each vehicle has two important stats; Armour and Structural Integrity. Like personal body armour, a vehicle's Armour reduces the damage from an accident or attack by the number of Armour Points it possesses. Much like a Heretic's Wounds, any damage that isn't soaked by the vehicle's armour is subtracted from its Structural Integrity. Once a vehicle has taken an amount of damage equal to its Structural Integrity, it is destroyed.

CHIMERA

The robust and versatile Chimera is the premier armoured personnel carrier used by the Imperial Guard. Easy to operate and maintain, it has been in service with the Guard for millennia. With room for twelve Guardsmen and the ability to mount a number of different weapons to its hull, the Chimera can operate in a number of roles and its weapons loadout can be tailored to whatever tactical situation it finds itself in.

The Chimeras in service with the Hussars are equipped with a turret-mounted autocannon (300m; S/3/-; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Clip 20; Rld 2 Full; Reliable) and a hull-mounted, forward facing heavy bolter (150m; -/-/6; 1d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip 60; Rld Full; Reliable). The thick adamantium armoured hide of the Chimera grants anyone taking cover behind it 30 AP to all locations, and the vehicle itself has 30 points of Structural Integrity and has a size rating of Enormous.

HELLHOUND

The Hellhound is a fearsome anti-personnel variant of the Imperial Guard's Chimera. Based on the Chimera chassis and appearing very similar to its troop carrying cousin, the Hellhound trades its autocannon and hull mounted bolter for devastating flame weapons. More heavily armoured than the Chimera and unable to carry troops thanks to the promethium tanks that feed its weapons, the Hellhound is a brutal vehicle in urban combat where its heavy armour can shield infantry and its flame weapons can burn opponents out of even the heaviest cover.

The Hussar's Hellhounds are equipped with a heavy, two-barrelled flamer called an Inferno Cannon in their turrets (50m; S/-/-; 2d10+10 E; Pen 8; Clip 10; Rld 4 Full; Flame, Spray, Devastating (5), Concussive (1)), and a hull-mounted, fixed-forward heavy flamer (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Clip 10; Rld 2 Full; Flame, Spray). The thick adamantium armoured hide of the Hellhound grants anyone taking cover behind it 30 AP to all locations, and the vehicle itself has 25 points of Structural Integrity and has a size rating of Enormous. It is important to note that the inferno cannon can only be fired while the vehicle is stopped due to the risk of back blast from the flames damaging the vehicle and killing its crew.

of four wings of five floors each, defining a rough rectangle surrounding a small courtyard and chapel. Administered by Sister Superior Leona Rak, a stern, iron-willed Sororitas of middle age and a highly competent physician, and staffed by numerous Sisters Hospitaller, nurses, and medicae servitors, the medicae centre offers medical services ranging from preventive care and emergency services to delicate, life-saving surgeries and even the installation of augmetics.

The wings dedicated to the care of the Imperial bureaucrats, functionaries, and military forces are separated from those of the prisoners by heavily reinforced passageways guarded by the Sororitas. The facilities for the military and administration are relatively comfortable and clean, with private convalescent chambers, healthy food, and high-quality care. Patients are free to move about their wards and the common areas of the medicae centre at their leisure, and have access to the courtyard and chapel at all hours if their care and condition permit. In stark contrast, the facilities for ill and wounded prisoners are designed to diagnose and treat them with as little comfort and recovery time as possible. The penal wards are sterile and cold, with four to six convalescents per room. All doors are locked and most prisoners are chained to their beds at night. Prisoner-convalescents are constantly monitored by pict-recorders in every room and corridor and fraternising, even conversing in their rooms, is forbidden. Every day at mid-day, those prisoners who are ambulatory are taken to the medicae centre's chapel for their compulsory worship and penance, then immediately returned to their wards. While every effort is taken to keep the prisoners in working condition in accordance with the tenets of imprisonment laid down by Saint Annard and strictly followed by Sister Rak, the prisoners are neither coddled nor even made too comfortable, and the actual medical care is a step down from what is available to their masters.

FORT SAINT ANNARD

Fort Saint Annard is home to the 10,000 men and women of the Imperial Guard stationed on Saint Annard's Penance to watch over the Imperial facilities. Just to the west of the spaceport, the fortress is composed of a cluster of heavily reinforced bunkers, barracks, and hangars secured behind thick, razor wire topped walls similar to those that surround the administration district and Warden's manor. Currently under the command of General Helena Tarsian, the fortress is, by tradition, administered by a permanent headquarters company and is host to a rotating cast of Imperial Guard regiments from across the Calixis Sector. While garrison duty at Fort Saint Annard is not officially a punishment for the units assigned to it, it is generally seen as such by those who are forced to trek halfway across the Sector to baby-sit a bunch of criminals, and is occasionally used as a dumping ground for inconvenient units or officers.

Garrison duty at Fort Saint Annard is typically uneventful, with the guardsmen relatively idle save for a few perfunctory patrols through the prison to show the colours and support the Adeptus Arbites. Largely, the guardsmen stay behind their walls and attempt to avoid duty as much as possible as their officers try to keep them busy with training, exercise, and daily prayer.

DANGERS IN THE MINES

The mines of Saint Annard's Penance are a dangerous place and many prisoners die in them each month.

MISTMOULD

This bizarre and deadly mould has grown in the mines as long as anyone can remember. Found typically in low traffic areas far from light sources, Mistmould colonies form a thick, velvety mat of mottled green and grey matter that is incredibly soft to the touch. It emits a wan, greenish light and the air around it is always colder than the clammy ambient temperatures. In spite of their lovely appearance and beneficial light, Mistmould is a deadly hazard for anyone working the mines. Mistmould derives its nutrients from decomposing biological matter. To get the required nutrients, Mistmould lures its prey by emitting clouds of spores whenever a warm-blooded creature gets within ten metres. Anyone inhaling Mistmould spores must make a **Hard (-20) Toughness Test** or succumb to vivid hallucinations. In this state, the victim is compelled to lie down in the fungi's velvety bed, and once he has done so he must make a **Very Hard (-30) Willpower Test** or fall fast asleep. Once a victim is asleep the fungus begins to absorb the heat from his body, dealing 1d10 points of Toughness Damage every round until he freezes to death. If found in time, a victim can be pulled from the fungus bed with the proper precautions and revived.

SCARLET CREEPERS

Scarlet Creepers are aggressive, six-legged insects covered in plates of bright red chitin. Roughly the size of a man's thumb, these creatures live in massive hive colonies beneath the surface, coming out at night to feed on refuse and carrion. When surprised, angered, or threatened, Scarlet Creepers attack in dense, roiling swarms of scything mandibles and stinging venom. With their sheer numbers and unbridled, mindless aggression, they can strip the flesh from a man's bones in seconds, and pose a threat to even the massive, lumbering carnosaurus that live on the surface. Find the Scarlet Creeper profile on page 133.

OUTLYING MANUFACTORIA DISTRICTS AND MINEHEADS

Surrounding the Central District, and linked to it by roads and mag-train lines, are the eight major mineheads and manufactoria districts. Each a city in its own right, they contain countless foundries, smelters, ore processors, generators, and all the other facilities of heavy industry.

MANUFACTORIA DISTRICTS

Sprawling around the centre of the prison complex lies the fiery, Manufactoria Districts. These are hundreds of square kilometres of foundries, factories, refineries, and fabricators. Guarded by the

THE COMPACT

"We, the undersigned, do swear to carry out the acts contained herein, and in doing so bring further glory upon our Ruinous Masters. Our word is bond, and we break that bond at peril of our lives."

—The Pledge of Ruination, found in the aftermath of the Hive Solistis Decimation

ARBITRATOR SUB-STATIONS

Sub-stations are scattered throughout each precinct as a way to spread out the Arbites coverage and allow them to respond more quickly to disturbances. They are little more than an office overseen by a junior Arbitrator commander and staffed by a squad of ten Arbitrators. Each one has a communication suite, a handful of holding cells, a small armoury, and a sheltered, secure area for the squad's Rhino. While not designed to withstand sieges or heavy rioting, sub-stations are still relatively well built and sturdy, with armour-glas windows equipped with retractable shutters and heavy, iron bound doors.

THE MINES

A vast, confusing warren of tunnels, shafts, galleries, and deep crevasses in the earth, the mines extend for hundreds (and sometimes thousands) of kilometres in every direction around the prison. These mines are accessed in the various Mineheads scattered around the Central District, each a large manufacturing and smelting facility in its own right.

Only some of the mines are in use at any one time—and these occupied mines are where the security forces maintain their presence. As mines become played out, the prison seals it and moves on to other rock faces or mineral veins.

However, it is impossible to actually seal up the abandoned areas (they are far too extensive for that), and, in truth, the prisoners have opened many mine-shafts without the guards knowing. Now, the entire network is traversable, provided one knows it very well. Indeed, it's said that whole communities of escaped prisoners exist in some of the abandoned tunnels. Working in the mines, like working in the manufacturums, is dangerous and back-breaking work. Along with the threat of collapsing tunnels, pockets of poisonous or explosive gases, lethal chasms, and being caught up in the mining machinery, there are other, less commonplace dangers. In the dark, out-of-the-way tunnels grows a luminescent mould that feeds on warmth and releases choking, hallucinatory spores in the presence of warm-blooded creatures. There are also said to be deadly, venomous, and highly aggressive burrowing insects that live in colonies close to the surface, mindless, shambling mutants thirsty for blood, dark cults, the vengeful spirits of dead prisoners, and even more horrible things.

As discussed in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, on page 269, a Compact is a game mechanic used by the Game Masters and players to help develop their **BLACK CRUSADE** campaigns. Compacts serve two general roles within a **BLACK CRUSADE** game. First, they provide a framework within which the players can operate, furthering the designs of their dark masters and securing for themselves all of the riches and infamy that are rightfully theirs. Secondly, the Compact outlines clear goals for the endeavour itself, as well as for each individual Heretic who is involved. This gives each **BLACK CRUSADE** adventure, no matter its size, a distinct beginning, middle, and end with clearly identifiable waypoints along the way. In regards to this adventure, the structure of the Compact allows the Game Master to run the adventure as he sees fit and offers convenient opportunities to suspend the action or to better integrate the events of **HAND OF CORRUPTION** into his larger campaign. Compacts have a Scope (the general size of the endeavour), a Primary Objective (a number of Secondary Objectives dictated by the Compact's Scope), and numerous Tertiary Objectives set by the individual players in support of their own goals.

In regards to **HAND OF CORRUPTION**, the Heretics should have little need for a Compact until after the events of Chapter I unfold. Once they acquire their copy of the mysterious *De Orbis Mysteriis* and the services of the slave Kahli, the real work begins. The work of travelling into the Imperium and drawing an entire world into the Screaming Vortex, especially one that houses a major Imperial penal colony, requires the setting of very clear goals and expectations. This is where the Compact comes in and, once *De Orbis Mysteriis* is translated by the Heretics, Game Masters and their players should sit down and draw up their Compact before continuing on. The following is a sample Compact for the events outlined in the end of Chapter I and Chapter II. The Game Master and players can use it as is and simply add their Personal Objectives and Complication, or they can use it as a template with which to create their own document that reflects the specifics of their overall campaign.



PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Primary Objectives, as discussed on page 272 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, do not, in themselves grant Infamy Rewards. Instead, Infamy is gained through completion of the Secondary Objectives, which need to be completed to complete the Primary Objective. Each Secondary Objective grants one to three Infamy Points and the rewards for each are listed in the Secondary Objectives section below.

The Primary Objective of the Compact for **HAND OF CORRUPTION** is the acquisition of the Imperial penal world Saint Annard's Penance for use by the Ruinous Powers by drawing the world into the Screaming Vortex using the ritual laid out in the book *De Orbis Mysteriis*.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

The following are the Secondary Objectives for this Compact.

- **Secure Passage from The Screaming Vortex to Imperial Space:** It's not every day that ships pass to and fro between the Vortex and Imperial Space through the Thirteenth Station of Passage (or one of the other, even less known ways of getting in and out of the Screaming Vortex). The Heretics need to find one of these rare vessels and negotiate safe passage to Port Wander, an Imperial Navy station that stands watch over the Koronus Passage from the mouth of the Maw. Infamy Reward: 1 Infamy Point.
- **Obtain Passage from Port Wander to Saint Annard's Penance:** Once at Port Wander, the Heretics need to find passage to Saint Annard's Penance while avoiding the Naval authorities and maintaining a low profile. Infamy Reward: 2 Infamy Points.
- **Infiltrate Penal Colony:** Once the Heretics arrive at Saint Annard's Penance, they need to get to the surface, go to ground, and begin establishing their operation. Infamy Reward: 2 Infamy Points.
- **Make Contacts and Gather Allies:** Corrupting an Imperial penal world and dragging the whole planet bodily into the Screaming Vortex is no mean feat. The Heretics need all the help they can get in this endeavour, and there are numerous power blocs among the prison population that can help them. All they need is to find them. Infamy Reward: 1 Infamy Point.
- **Foment Prisoner Uprising:** With the help of their allies, the Heretics create must unrest in the general population, leading to outright insurrection. Infamy Reward: 3 Infamy Points.
- **Complete Ritual and Draw Saint Annard's Penance into the Screaming Vortex:** The ritual outlined in *De Orbis Mysteriis*, when completed, will cause the entire planet of Saint Annard's Penance to be drawn into the Screaming Vortex where its vast manufactoria can be used to further the cause of the Heretics. It requires quite a bit of work and assorted sacrifices, although the nature of the sacrifices needed isn't entirely clear. Infamy Reward: 4 Infamy Points.
- **Defend the world From Necron Assault:** Unbeknownst to the players, the world of Saint Annard's



Penance is actually the Tomb world of Kalugura, host to a horde of slumbering Necrons. When the world enters the Screaming Vortex, they awaken. The Heretics must overcome the Necron threat, using the most extreme measures available. Note: This Secondary Objective is to be kept secret from the players until the Necrons awake! Infamy Reward: 4 Infamy Points.

Total Infamy Rewards: 17 Infamy Points.

PERSONAL (TERTIARY) OBJECTIVES

Each player must come up with his own Personal Objective. As outlined in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, Personal or Tertiary Objectives are those that are created by the players themselves and are designed to serve the purposes of the individual Heretic and not the group at large. While these Objectives may line up with the overall Primary Objective, many do not. Personal Objectives are kept secret, each one known only to the player who created it and to the Game Master. Below are a number of Tertiary Objectives suitable for use in this Compact. Heretics may choose any one of these or they may create their own as meets their needs and the needs of their larger campaign.

Ancient Technology

Rumours tell of ancient technologies both wondrous and terrible from the Dark Age of Technology hidden somewhere on Saint Annard's Penance. It is even said that they may be

related to one of the desperately sought after Standard Template Constructs. While the rumours are true to a point, the reality of the matter is more practical than wondrous. The ancient technology spoken of is, in fact, the pattern for a long forgotten explosive compound used in mining and other heavy industrial applications. The specific effects of the compound are left to the Game Master's discretion and finding it in the chaos of Saint Annard's Penance requires heavy use of Interaction and Investigation skills. Finding the compound grants the finder an additional 1d5 Infamy Points. This Tertiary Objective is especially attractive to Hereteks as it allows them to use lost Imperial technology to further the aims of their dark masters.

Seduction

Residing on the Penal world of Saint Annard's Penance are a number of Imperial officers who are highly respected and admired both on Scintilla and throughout the Malfian Sub-sector. While it is clearly laid out in the *De Orbis Mysteriis* that the blood and souls of important luminaries such as these are needed to complete the ritual and draw Saint Annard's Penance into the Screaming Vortex, the Heretics may find that one or more of them are more useful alive and corrupt than bleeding to death in a ritual circle. Corrupting Canoness Rak, Warden Morn, Cardinal Falconer, or General Tarsian requires either incredible skills of charm and seduction, powerful dark sorcery, or preferably both.

Doing so grants the seductor an additional 1d5 Infamy Points for each of the Imperial officers turned to the service of the Dark Gods, but makes the Heretics' job harder. For every one of the officers not sacrificed, a suitable replacement must be found (Imperial Guard Officers, Sisters Hospitaler, Arbites, or Ecclesiarchy Priests) in their stead. This replacement may not even be found on the world, and should make the Heretics' job that much more difficult. If a player chooses this Tertiary Goal, the GM should use the available NPCs or invent a new one to find some suitable replacement.

Needle in a Haystack

Before their departure from the Screaming Vortex, one of the Heretics is approached by a contact with a proposition. The contact is an operative of a powerful warlord operating in the Vortex and, recently, his prized and cherished lieutenant was captured by Imperial operatives and sent to the penal colony at Saint Annard's Penance. The Heretics' contact offers them a suitably large reward in wargear and favours for the successful return of this prisoner to his master. Finding this individual among the teeming throngs of prisoners on Saint Annard's Penance is a daunting task indeed, and requires perseverance and a fair amount of skilled investigation.

Successfully finding the lieutenant and returning him to the Warlord in the Vortex grants the Heretics an additional 1d5 points of Infamy, along with the reward promised by the Warlord, the nature of which is left to the Game Master's discretion. Failure to bring the lieutenant back alive means that not only do the Heretics not gain any rewards at all, but they also gain a powerful enemy in the person of the Warlord who hired them.

Blood for the Blood God

If there is an adherent of Khorne among the Heretics, he is told stories by Corbin Worldsbane, or another suitable NPC about a debauched individual on Saint Annard's Penance whose very existence is offensive to any right-thinking devotee of the Blood God. On the penal world of Saint Annard's Penance, a debauched Rogue Trader named Lord Oglanov is gathering a cult of dithering sybarites around him. Oglanov is apparently beloved of Slaanesh, and his death would both greatly please Khorne and distress his ancient enemy Slaanesh.

How the Heretic kills Oglanov is up to him, but it should be suitably gory and violent to gain his god's pleasure. It must also be public enough that word spreads through the prison and beyond. Successfully killing the corrupt Rogue Trader grants an additional 1d5 Infamy Points. If the Heretic fails in his assassination attempt, he instead gains 1d5 Corruption Points and the displeasure of Khorne.

An Orgy of Death

Khorne demands blood, copious amounts of blood, and his followers are more than willing to oblige him. Followers of Khorne among the Heretics can be especially brutal and destructive during the riots, killing hundreds of prisoners and Imperial officials for the pleasure of the Lord of Blood. Along with the additional 1d5 Infamy Points gained by taking on this Objective, the Khornites gain one additional point of infamy for every 100 Prisoners or ten Imperial Officials that they personally kill, especially if done in particularly brutal or spectacular ways. While this obviously brings much favour from the Blood God, it makes the Heretics' job much harder in the third chapter of the Adventure, and all Tests made by the Heretic or any allies clearly associated with him to lead, cajole, or muster allies against the Necrons suffer a -10 penalty.

Hard Won Knowledge

As a major Imperial penal colony, the records kept in the administration compound and in Fort Saint Annard on Saint Annard's Penance offer a treasure trove of information to those who know where to look. If so motivated, the Heretics can uncover priceless and damaging information regarding the operation of the Imperial Guard and Imperial Navy, and the arcane workings of the Administratum as they pertain to the Malfian Sub-Sector in particular and to the Calixis Sector in general. The exact nature of the information is left to the Game Master's discretion, but should include things like military ciphers, troop movements, the deployment of Imperial Navy ships, information on the activities of the Adeptus Arbites, and all manner of extremely damaging intelligence the Heretics could use or sell to others.

Getting this information means gaining access to the libraria and data stacks of the fort and the administration compound, daunting tasks indeed as both places are heavily guarded and generally on the lookout for suspicious activity. Gaining the intel requires both investigation and stealth skills, and the successful recovery of any intel grants the Heretics an additional 1d5 Infamy Points.

Daemonic Vendetta

The Warden Phineas Morn could have, in his youth, fought and defeated a minor daemon of Nurgle with nothing but his shock maul. He still bears the shock maul with him, unknowing that the weapon has a connection to that daemon, Skarathaoritx the Plaguebearer. The warp, however, knows of this bond, and the Heretic may have heard of Skarathaoritx and his embarrassing defeat and banishment at the Arbitrator's hands. If the Heretic was to claim the maul and destroy it, he would gain the Plaguebearer's capricious favour and could summon him to aid him in a task. If, however, the Heretic bound the Daemon within the power maul instead, he would earn Skarathaoritx's undying hatred, but forge a powerful weapon. Any rolls to determine Attributes would use an Infamy of 30 due to the portentous events, rather than a Plaguebearer's normal Infamy of 0. This awards 1 Point of Infamy, not the usual 1d5.

Pirate's Haven

A pirate reaver catches wind of the Heretics' potential plans from Corbin Worldsbane and approaches the Heretic before he leaves Kurse. He offers favours and future transport by his reaver vessel and the vessels of certain other pirates in the future in return for being granted slaves, manufacturing, and supply capabilities once the Heretics have their world pulled into the Vortex. He may even offer passage to Port Wander, allowing the Heretics to sidestep the first part of the adventure. If the GM wishes, the pirate reaver can be Ramla Yang. This may sound like a good deal, but for two facts. One is that the pirate reaver will be very disappointed (perhaps violently disappointed) if the Heretics do not make good on their part of the deal. The other is, once the reaver and others see the wealth brought over on the world, they may decide to try and take it all for themselves unless dissuaded from doing so. This Tertiary Objective does not provide Infamy, but does provide the services of at least one Chaos reaver pirate vessel.

COMPLICATIONS

As discussed on page 273 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, every compact, no matter how well thought out, is plagued with at least some complications. This reflects the fickle nature of Chaos and requires the Heretics to be flexible in the execution of the Compact. The Game Master should choose one Complication from the list found on page 273 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook or, should he so desire, create his own Complication that better suits the tone of his campaign. Below are a few sample Complications that fit with the themes of **HAND OF CORRUPTION**. While Game Masters can use these for ease and convenience, they are encouraged to come up with their own Complications that fit with their game style and the general themes of their larger campaign.

SURPRISE INSPECTION

When the Heretics arrive in the Limoges system, home to the Imperial penal colony at Saint Annard's Penance, they are met with a surprising number of Imperial warships. Instead of the usual small defensive squadron their initial intelligence suggested, a full Imperial Navy battlegroup is at anchor above the penal world. Led by the Gothic class cruiser *Spirit of Wrath*, the battlegroup is composed of a dozen Imperial warships of various classes and has come to Saint Annard's Penance to inspect the orbital defiances there. Due to the close scrutiny of their superiors, the defence squadron and orbital defences are on high alert and even more nosy and officious than usual. Upon transitioning from the warp, the Heretics' ship is immediately ordered to heave to and prepare to be boarded by Imperial Impost agents who will be making an extra thorough search of the ship.

AWAY ON BUSINESS

During the course of their operations on Saint Annard's Penance, the Heretics discover a serious kink in their plans. One of their targets, Cardinal Morgan Falconer, was summoned to Scintilla weeks before the Heretics arrived and is not expected back any time soon. This means that the Heretics need to find an available and appropriate sacrifice to take the Cardinal's place.

TURNED OUT

A powerful rival of one of the Heretics alerted the authorities at Saint Annard's Penance to the Heretics' plans. Once they arrive in the Limoges system, they encounter extra scrutiny from the orbital defences and increased security on the planet's surface. All of their interactions on the surface are made harder as rumour spreads about their plans, and the Imperial forces double their efforts to find the Heretics and any potential allies turn them away for fear of bringing extra scrutiny on them by the powers that be. All Interaction and Investigative Tests made during the course of their mission on Saint Annard's Penance suffer a -10 penalty.

REWARDS

The Compact provides a number of rewards for a successful completion. Experience Points are granted during the execution of the Compact. Completion of each Secondary Objective grants various amounts of Infamy Points toward the completion of the Primary Objective. Primary and Secondary Objective rewards are outlined above. Some of the Tertiary Objectives also include other, more tangible rewards as well, although these are primarily left up to the GM's discretion. However, these are potential ideas and are designed to serve the purposes of the individual Heretic and not the group at large. While these Objectives may line up with the overall Primary Objective, many do not. Tertiary Objectives are kept secret, each one known only to the player who created it and to the Game Master.



TOWARDS PENANCE

A GATHERING
•
AN OPPORTUNITY
FOR INFAMY
•
INTO THE IMPERIUM
•
ON PORT WANDER
•
ARRIVAL ON SAINT
ANNARD'S PENANCE



CHAPTER I: TOWARDS PENANCE

A GATHERING

"A new wind stirs the warp and blows into the Malfian. With it come those destined to be the doom and the salvation of the fools who know only the corpse-god."

—Torestus, 2:2–3

"The ways of Chaos represent the basis for all life in the universe. Without its tender touch, there could be no joy, no anger, and no pain."

—Brother Ruine of the Scarlet Eye

The adventure opens with the characters on a Chaos world within the Screaming Vortex. As they discover the challenges of life amidst its anarchy, they also discover word of a potential opportunity. Their current lives are challenging, even by the standards of Chaos. Every move is a constant battle for supremacy. While each character has long-term goals, surviving through the short term might be easier in a very different environment. As a consequence, it should be relatively easy to persuade the characters of the merit of leaving this location and travelling into the Imperium. The vast opportunities available beyond this world's limited horizons should be more than enough to offset fears of the risks posed by their monumental opponent.

For Game Masters beginning a new campaign, one of the earliest challenges is determining how the Player Characters are linked. If the Heretics have adventured together previously, whether during their histories or as part of a previous scenario, then this issue may already be resolved. However, for some, this volume may be used to launch a campaign from the worlds of the Screaming Vortex into those held by the corruption of the Imperium. In such cases, the GM must work with the players to establish any pre-existing relationships.

Particularly important for a **BLACK CRUSADE** campaign is establishing the degree of trust shared by the different Heretics. If Player Characters have strong devotions to variant Ruinous Powers, this could also provide them with very different methodologies. In many cases, this could be extremely useful, as the alternative approaches and associated skill sets allow the characters to complement one another. However, this is complicated by any lack of trust.

While most Heretics should share a common goal—leading a Black Crusade against the might of the Imperium—their short term goals may vary substantially. During the earliest sessions,

A LARGER SAGA

The three linked adventures presented within **HAND OF CORRUPTION** may be played separately, consecutively, or as part of a much larger story. This adventure presumes that the GM has chosen to run these three adventures consecutively and that they represent the beginning of a campaign. However, this need not be the case. Some GMs may choose to begin the campaign with the **False Prophets** Scenario from the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, the free **BROKEN CHAINS** adventure from www.fantasyflightgames.com, or **Rivals for Glory** included with **THE GAME MASTER'S KIT**. In any of these cases, the introductory scenes presented here may need to be adapted.

Characters who completed **False Prophets** may have travelled to Kurse in response to information that they discovered within the volume *Torestus* (or may simply be fleeing Kymerus). It may be that they came with the expectation of playing out a critical step in their prophecy, which these adventures could certainly fulfil. Further discoveries upon Kurse might be the crucial pieces required to direct the Heretics to Saint Annard's Penance.

If the characters have already completed **BROKEN CHAINS**, it may be that in the conclusion, their vessel crashed upon Kurse. Since that time, they may have been survivors scrambling to live a life upon the harsh environment, while working to satisfy the demands of their dark sponsors. Only recently have they made their way off world to Last Call, hoping to find transport.

Similarly, a GM may choose to break up the three separate scenarios of this volume into a more extended campaign. Saint Annard's Penance is a volatile world filled with corruption. It might be that the characters choose to explore and catalogue some of its aspects prior to leading the revolution and conducting the ritual to transport it into the Screaming Vortex. This could offer a substantial amount of time between their arrival at the end of Chapter I, and their move to find allies at the start of Chapter II.

Alternatively, the GM might choose not to activate the Necrons that signal Chapter III immediately. Instead, the Heretics might believe they have peaceful control over the system for an extended period. This could easily be months or even years. Such a time extension provides the opportunity for the players to become even more invested in the former prison world. In this way, when the Necron assault begins, the Player Characters could have deep ties to some of those slaughtered in the early stages of the assault. While this limits the degree of excitement attained in completing the adventure, it might also lead to the overall emotional impact when the final hand is played out. If the Player Characters fail to acquire the assets of a Necron tomb world, it may also limit their early gain of assets and Infamy, which could allow the GM to extend the game at a power level with which he is more comfortable.

It is important for the GM to consider this and work with the players to establish a style of play that is appropriate for everyone. While some groups may prefer a confrontational approach, where conflict between Player Characters is heightened, others may prefer the game to focus on a greater degree of cooperation. A deliberate choice to maintain the group's focus on shared long-term goals while achieving simpler ones may help to reduce this conflict. Alternatively, for groups who prefer a greater sense of conflict, extended discussions about the specifics of each task could lead to endless confrontations and even violence within the group of Heretics.

Similarly, characters moulded along different archetypical concepts have very different methodologies. Unless the Heretics are willing to trust each other to at least deal with the challenges best suited to their specialities, they have little hope of success over the course of this scenario. It is critical for the GM to address this issue early in the game and make sure that appropriate measures are taken to facilitate it.

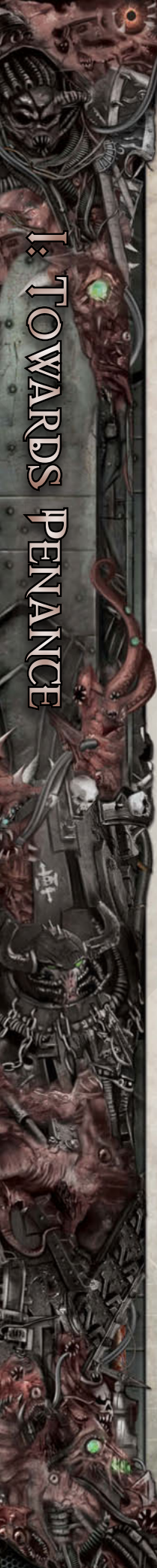
Interactions between characters of Chaos Space Marine and human origin may also be an issue. Differences in outlook and abilities significantly affects how these characters may respond to identical situations, and might also introduce a further element of distrust between the characters. Heavy-handed solutions can be used, but a more effective solution is to simply point out that the characters could all be attempting to use each other to accomplish their common goal. In such a situation, some Heretics may deliberately cede authority to the character they believe is most qualified to overcome a specific challenge. In this manner, every Player Character believes that they are in charge, while a functional state of cooperation is created.

Once the issues of trust and cooperation have been established, the next big issue to establish is considering the notion of a shared background. There are a myriad of different ways that the Heretics might have met. It could be that they banded together during battle on an Imperial world, travelled together on a Chaos Reaver vessel, or simply that they were thrown together during their time within the Screaming Vortex. Consider these possibilities and any others that easily come to mind. The scenario may work most effectively if the Player Characters begin with some shared background that they can use as a basis for their future interactions.

The most essential component is establishing that the characters share the common goal of launching a Black Crusade. Ultimately leadership, methods, and style may remain sticking points. However, as long as the characters continue to focus on that shared objective, the adventure should flow much more smoothly. This adventure offers the characters an opportunity to establish a strong basis for leading their Black Crusade. Gathering the available resources should provide a compelling reason for cooperation.

IN THIS PLACE

The initial scenes of this adventure assume that the characters begin play upon Kurse, one of the Gloaming Worlds within the Screaming Vortex. Basic information about Kurse is presented on page 332 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. Some Game Masters may opt to begin the scenario elsewhere. This is particularly relevant if the Heretics have already been established as active on another world within the Screaming Vortex, Imperial territory, or contested space.



Characters that are newly turned to the ways of Chaos might begin on an Imperial world, possibly even a Hive World. Alternatively, more established characters could have previously travelled to such a world as part of their efforts to gather followers, establish an insurrection, or found a cult dedicated to the Ruinous Powers. In any of these instances, finding transit within the Imperium may be far simpler for them. For these situations, the Game Master should reconsider the means by which the Heretics learn of Saint Annard's Penance. The GM should review the material within an Opportunity for Infamy, and adapt it based upon their existing setting. While they might have a harder time concealing their loyalties, they should have more opportunities to acquire transit to Port Wander.

Other characters might be active on a less established Imperial world, such as a frontier system within the Koronus Expanse or the Jericho Reach. For Heretics in this situation, finding transit away from their current system might pose a substantial challenge. Many such worlds rarely see a warp-capable vessel. Further, such vessels may be reluctant to take on passengers or have a set itinerary that does not stray towards Port Wander. Unless they have access to a vessel of their own or the means to exert their influence over a vessel's captain, their trip could be substantially longer. In such situations, the Game Master might want to create additional scenarios as the characters slowly spread the word of the Dark Gods. In the course of their journey, they might accrue a virtual army of followers amongst the crew or even gain control over the vessel.

Some groups may have begun play within another of the Gloaming Worlds. In instances such as this, transitioning the material presented for Kurse should be fairly straightforward. While the specific environments native to the planet where they reside should vary, the essentials remain consistent. They should face comparable challenges when travelling to Imperial space, and might have similar Encounters along the way. Ultimately, this should just be a matter of tweaking the material presented here.

For Heretics who are particularly far along their path of devotion, it is possible that they might already be active on a world within the Inner Ring or even the Lower Vortex. In these instances, the challenge of finding a vessel that would transport them to Port Wander might be even greater. There are few voidships active in these regions that could dock with an Imperial station without attracting undue attention. At the same time, characters coming from these worlds are likely to be far better established. If that is the case, then they may have more resources to draw upon to begin their voyage. Some might even already control an appropriate vessel or have some other means of travelling from the Screaming Vortex. In either case, this could have a substantial impact on how the adventure begins. The GM should consider this before running the adventure and may need to adapt the opening acts to fit his player's current situation—or ensure his players reach Kurse to begin the adventure.

BELPHAGION

Kurse is the miserable remnants of a planet that was once a shining beacon of civilisation during the Dark Age of Technology. Now, it is a guttering, scarred ember of war, its surface covered in blasted craters and irradiated deserts. At night, a baleful flickering glow

vies with the tendrils of the surrounding warp storm to illuminate the shattered surface. The world's seas burn constantly, any water they once held transformed via ongoing toxic chemical reactions into a toxic and flammable morass. In other places, ancient and unimaginably powerful weapons blasted craters straight down into the planet's molten core. The only creatures that live on Kurse are savage and emaciated predator-forms and the cannibalistic feral humans that hunt them and are hunted in turn.

Despite all this, some still travel to Kurse. Chief amongst these are some of the Dark Magi of Forge Castir who have retrofitted several asteroids in near orbit into life-sustaining habitats. The Dark Magi's goals are to plunder the long buried secrets of Kurse's ancient technology, though the world also proves valuable as a testing ground for various arcane and esoteric weaponry. They regularly send expeditions to the surface to perform these actions, though the attrition rate amongst those sent is high.

However, Forge Castir cares little about who enters their habitats, so long as they bring a gift of supplies and foodstuffs and do not disturb the Dark Magi in their researches. Although this does not go so far as to make Kurse a popular destination, the habitats do see a constant, if slow, stream of voidships and visitors. They come to barter for repairs from the Forge's agents, wager on the constant battles between Kurse's inhabitants and Forge Castir's horrific creations in the habitats' gladiatorial pits, and recruit desperate and dangerous shock troops from amongst Kurse's cannibal and mutant population. The boldest travel to Kurse to descend to the planet's surface and plunder the planet's radioactive ruins for themselves.

Belphegion is one of the largest habitats orbiting Kurse, and thus preferred by many outsiders who travel there. What brought the Heretics to Kurse is up to the GM and his players, but whatever their reasons, it is very likely that they subsequently ended up on Belphegion.

The habitat has very few long-term residents and the population fluctuates substantially. There are several installations built by the enterprising or the desperate—pleasure houses, dream dens, pedlars of the profane and esoteric, blade-taverns, and fortified barracks. Most are constructed hastily from damaged components scavenged from vessels that underwent refit or discards from Forge Castir's ongoing construction efforts. Structures collapse and even vent to the void with an alarming frequency. Fires often break out in the passages and entertainment structures, due to the frequent fights among the volatile population. There are no public services, so the destruction ultimately creates new ruined structures, which may be replaced when another entrepreneur chooses to squat in an area and reconstruct it for his own purposes.

One of the primary locations within the station is an open arena, nearly 100 metres in diameter. This vast space is used by the warlords who control the docked vessels to conduct their recruitment efforts. Different groups follow very different methods, but savage bloodsport is one of the most popular. Those who wish to join a warband fight to the death in the arena, until only the strongest remain to claim their newly earned position.

The testing grounds also provide steady entertainment to those who travel to the voidstation for other reasons. Many bystanders and even some participants gamble heavily on who

may win a particular bout as they partake in strange intoxicants from other worlds in the Vortex or indulge in the hedonistic pursuits of the pleasure houses and dream dens that surround the arena. Weapons, supplies, trade goods, and even slaves are frequently included in the trading, in addition to precious metals and jewels. The gambling frequently leads to extended bouts of drinking in the blade-taverns, as well as many more impromptu combats. Kurse's blade-taverns maintain some small semblance of order by keeping to one law—no projectile weapons allowed. The law is enforced by bound spite-engines purchased from Castir's emissaries and ensures the blade-taverns seldom degenerate into complete slaughter. However, rarely is there a night that does not see at least one fight, with the dead and grievously wounded dragged off by the tavern's proprietors to some unspeakable fate.

Most of those who undertake the tests are natives to Kurse. Many of the planet's savage inhabitants are captured by slavers and transported to Last Call. Sometimes only the youngest members are sold into slavery or committed to joining one of the many warbands wandering the Screaming Vortex. The slavers run a risky business, for many of those who live on Kurse still have some semblance of technology, and more than one overconfident slaver has found himself devoured in a cannibalistic frenzy.

Aside from the slaves and the recruiting groups, most other travellers are crewmembers of the docked vessels. Occasionally a crewmember might jump ship and stay behind, though life on Kurse and its habitats is unlikely to be any easier than that aboard a Chaos Reaver vessel. Others may come as warriors or wanderers, trying to make their luck in Kurse's shattered ruins, or earn a meagre fortune selling trinkets and wares to others.

What the Heretics are doing around Kurse is up to the GM and the party. If the group has already played through adventures such as False Prophets in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, then they may already have assembled as a warband and be working towards certain common goals.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INFAMY

"Change brings endless opportunities for those cognizant of its ways. Always be ready to take action, so that you might grab the prize."

—Ma-Hanitep, The Sorcerer King

The Heretics begin the story anxious to leave Belphegion. The station's cramped environs and dangerous populace are an improvement over the barbarous surface of Kurse, but it is still desperate, dangerous, and limited in inhabitants and resources. The time has come for them to decide upon their next move.

Over the course of this scene, the Heretics discover information about an Imperial prison world named Saint Annard's Penance. A number of different ways to gain the information are presented here. Regardless of the means employed, it should be obvious that this world offers them a chance to assemble a large part of the manpower and resources to become powerful warlords in the Screaming Vortex, or even

launch a successful Black Crusade. The world is a veritable treasure for their purposes and presents an irresistible target. By gaining control over it, they will soon be well positioned to come into their destiny as potent champions of Chaos.

FINE FORTUNE

While the Heretics are in Belphegion, they have many opportunities to enter into games of chance. During one of these games—most likely a common card game known as Spiked Circle—the Heretics play against Corbin Worldsbane, an ancient warlord and prolific gambler. Through their game play, the Heretics have an opportunity to impress him. If they manage to do so, he rewards them by letting them win the information they need to seize control of Saint Annard's Penance, along with a guide to help them with the challenge of controlling it.

Between the brutal bloodsport and the hard reality of life on the station, there are countless means of escapism within Belphegion. While some engage in the debauched pleasures of the flesh or let their souls slowly siphon away in the soporific pleasures of the dream dens, others prefer simpler entertainments. Drinking and gambling are common pursuits in the many blade-taverns, although in the Screaming Vortex even such seemingly mundane pursuits take on bizarre and disturbing twists.

In the Screaming Vortex, the concepts of wealth and riches can be very different from those held by citizens of the Imperium. Although some covet jewels, precious metals, and Imperial Thrones (valuable to those who know the secrets to journeying beyond the Vortex), many trade more esoteric items as well. The skins or skulls of dead foes, slaves, secret knowledge, or even a quarter of one's soul are just a fraction of the items that might be wagered in a game of chance. In this case, Worldsbane has knowledge in his possession.

When the characters enter one of the habitat's blade-taverns, read the following aloud:

As you enter the cave cut into the side of the habitat's main chamber, a spite-engine uncoils from the ceiling and looks you over with five beady eyes. It hisses at you, oily ichor dripping from its iron mandibles. The hulking mutant bodyguard just grunts. "You know rule," he gurgles, his words distorted by the huge tusks protruding from his lower jaw. "No guns. Blades good."

Beyond the entrance, the drinking room is dimly illuminated by the flickering green-tinged light of several braziers of bale-fire. In the shadows of the ceiling, you can just make out the constant writhing of a dozen spite-engines coiling around each other. The patrons tend towards the shadows and all seem to ignore you.

The bartender is so heavily augmented that you cannot see a scrap of flesh underneath his robes. A third augmented hand pours your drinks from steel flasks. Just as you prepare to take a seat, an old man seated at one of the card tables gestures your way. The man is playing with a mutant, who appears to be a mass of writhing tentacles, and a gaunt woman covered in bandages. Neither appear to be doing well. As you approach, the old man says, "You look like one with valuables to lose." He gestures at the pile of adamantium ingots in the pot and the even larger pile of goods—a bundle of skin deeds and glowing purple vials—he has to wager. Then, he motions for you to take a seat and says, "Come join me."

GAMBLING ON BELPHAGION

One of the more popular games in Belphegion, and the game Worldsbane is playing, is a card-based game called Spiked Circle. The game is relatively common amongst some of the more populous Gloaming Worlds (with several variations), and the GM should feel free to allow any of his players' Characters to be familiar with the rules. Its origins are ancient, but unclear. The game depends upon bluffing and showmanship as much as it depends upon luck and strategy. Each hand begins with several rounds of wagering, followed by a final show of cards for those who remained in the game.

For game mechanics purposes, this works as follows:

There are three rounds of wagering during each hand of Spiked Circle. In each round, any participating players may make an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Deceive vs Scrutiny Test** against their opponents (use the Mutant Devotee from page 360 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), plus the profile for Worldsbane found on page 122. Each Degree of Success on any of these tests adds a +5 bonus to a final **Challenging (+0) Opposed Logic Test** to represent the gambling in the hand. If more than one of the Heretics is cooperatively participating in the game, a character may choose to pass the bonus they earn on a Deceive Test to one of the other players for his Logic test.

During any round of bluffing, the characters may instead choose to make an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Sleight of Hand vs Awareness Test**. Each Degree of Success on this test yields a +40 bonus to the final Logic Test. However, on failure, the Heretic is caught cheating. At the start of each hand, roll 1d10 for each participating NPC. On a 1, that character chooses to cheat during one of the rounds of betting.

If anyone is caught cheating, a fight breaks out, with the NPC grabbing any available allies. Use two mutants for each human Heretic or four for each Chaos Space Marine Heretic. If three or more of the mutants are incapacitated, the lead NPC concedes the game and attempts to withdraw from the fight and the tavern.

What ends up being bet (and how much is bet in a single hand) is a matter of roleplaying, and thus is up to the GM and the players. However, in general each wager should be items with matching Availabilities. If one person wagered a data-slate, another could wager a lasgun (both Common), but a knife (Plentiful) would not be an equivalent bet. The individual would have to wager a Significant amount of knives (5-10) to equal the bet. Page 306 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook covers Availabilities and various modifiers in more detail.

Beyond general items and gear, however, there are plenty of stranger items of value that are up for bid in this game of chance. The following is a list of some of the valuables the various players have at their disposal (how many each player has available is up to the GM).

- **Adamantium ingot:** These small bars of metal are valued for construction in many weapons of war and are relatively rare in the Screaming Vortex. Each ingot has a Plentiful Availability, so they are usually wagered in sizeable quantities.
- **Skin deeds:** Tattooed onto human skin, these deeds record favours owed by the sorcerer-technocrats of Q'sal's three cities. The sorcerer-technocrats care little for who holds the deed when they are redeemed. Each skin deed has an Availability of Scarce. When making an Infamy Test to acquire an item from Q'sal, the skin deed can be redeemed for a one-time +10 bonus to the Infamy Test.
- **Vials of essence:** Within these tiny crystal vials is a viscous and luminous purple liquid said to be a distilled portion of a human soul. Drinking it produces feelings of extreme euphoria and pleasure, although this has no discernible in-game effects. Each vial has a Very Rare Availability.
- **Blasphemous icons and statuettes:** This category covers any number of icons and statuettes depicting the Dark Gods and their symbols, used in prayer and worship. Depending on the materials involved in their craftsmanship, their Availability can range from Abundant to Extremely Rare (decided by the GM).
- **Slaves:** Like the previous category, slaves may range in Availability due to their uses. In this game, the most important "slave" is Kahli Corus and her Availability is Unique (being the only individual in the Screaming Vortex the players know about who has both been on Saint Annard's Penance and wants to work with them to capture it).

The old man introduces himself as Corbin Worldsbane. A **Routine (+20) Common Lore (Screaming Vortex) Test** reveals Worldsbane to be a well-known individual and ancient warlord, powerful in his prime, but fallen from his heights in recent years. He is also known to still possess a great deal of personal wealth. At least two degrees of success also indicate that Worldsbane is a prolific gambler and prone to losing.

The other two players can be represented by the Cult Zealot profile found on page 360 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. When using this profile, give them Logic +10 so that they can actually play the game.

Of course, in a lawless place, one must be careful about winning too much. An angry loser may decide to recover

his losses or seek vengeance through less honest means. Even if the opponent is less than a skilled combatant, there are countless mutants and primitives anxious to find their fortune. Many of these could be hired to guard a victor or to recover a precious good that a loser surrendered. Often, it's not winning that's the biggest challenge but surviving to enjoy the rewards of one's success. If guards or attackers are needed, use the Mutant Devotee from page 360 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

During a fight, anyone who attempts to use a ranged weapon is immediately attacked by the spite engines infesting the ceiling. Treat these as a single creature with a Strength of 60 and Weapon Skill of 50 that always tries to Grapple

the offending individual. Once Grappled, the spite-engines always choose to Damage Opponent, dealing 3d5+6 Rending damage with a Pen of 4 and 1 level of Fatigue (instead of normal damage). The spite-engines cannot be killed, but any attack that deals 20 damage to them in a single hit temporarily incapacitates them (causing them to end any Grapples they are engaged in and not attack for one Round). The spite-engines can engage up to four targets at once.

In most instances, the numbers of attackers sent would be directly proportionate to the goods the Heretics might win. While characters are unlikely to encounter anyone wealthy in Belphegion beyond Worldsbane himself, life is cheap there. Very little provocation could lead to an attack that might seem exceptionally deadly elsewhere. Similarly, while nearly everyone cheats at the games of chance, none admit it. See the **Gambling on Belphegion** sidebar for more information.

Corbin Worldsbane (see page 122) initially plays conservatively against the players, preferring to gamble with a supply of adamantium ingots and skin deeds he won over the course of his game. At this stage, the games should go back and forth, with Corbin and the players being the primary winners, and the other two NPC players quickly falling out of the game and leaving as they run out of items of worth. As they play, he attempts to draw their stories from them. He specifically questions them about their loyalties, their hopes, and their allies. His responses to their questions are gruff but proportionate to the tales they tell. If they are trying to be impressive, he acts appropriately impressed. If they try to downplay their past adventures, he accepts their stories casually.

After a few hands, once Corbin learns their story, he encounters a run of bad luck (the GM should either deliberately lose a hand or simply penalise Corbin's rolls to ensure he loses more often, depending on how quickly he wants to move the scene along). After losing his amassed valuables, he attempts to buy back into the game with a book and a map. The old man explains that the book tells of a ritual that can be used to capture a planet with the roiling tides of the warp and drag it into the Screaming Vortex. The map and the book can be used together to identify a planet that might soon reach the crucial alignment necessary to undertake the ritual.

In this case, Corbin is clearly telling the truth and any attempts to discern a lie reveals his honesty. However, with three or more Degrees of Success, they may discover that he is withholding a portion of the story. Ultimately, Corbin is an old man. He realises that his chance for glory has passed. However, he is fascinated by the potential of the book and wishes dearly to see the ritual enacted. While he never successfully completed the ritual, he hopes that another might. The Heretics show the most promise of anyone that he has met since he became stranded on Kurse.

Because he believes that the book and the map are destined for the Heretics, Corbin loses the next hand of cards. He attempts an **Opposed Ordinary (+10) Sleight of Hand vs Scrutiny Test** to ensure his loss. If the Heretics notice his deliberate loss and confront him about it, he reveals the truth only under extreme conditions. Corbin realises that there is no retirement from the life he follows, and he has decided to find a successor to complete the task he once started. He knows the planet is vulnerable, and would rather turn it over



to someone who could hold it against all comers than gain a foothold only to lose it in short order. However, he is too proud to simply give them the book and map, feeling it would make him no better than a weak supplicant.

After Corbin surrenders the map and book, Corbin either attempts to buy back into the game by wagering his slave Kahli or attempts to sell her to the Heretics (the GM should choose which option based on how much his group is enjoying the gambling—if the players are tired of the scene, Corbin should offer a simple exchange from amongst some of the valuables the Heretics won). While they haggle over the slave's value, he points out that she was once a prisoner on Saint Annard's Penance—the reason he purchased her initially. If they choose to follow up on the information in the book and on the map, she could be a valuable asset to completing their plan. Alternatively, if they choose to sell or trade those items, she would certainly enhance the value of the total package.

If the characters manage to secure all of Corbin's prizes, he gracefully acknowledges his defeat. At that point, he offers to recount the contents of the book in exchange for a drink. This should offer an extended opportunity for them to pick his brain and learn more about the ritual. Either way, once the drink is done, Corbin takes his leave. Unless they somehow restrain him, he immediately leaves the planet as well. He specifically does not share his travel plans with the Heretics.

DE ORBIS MYSTERIIS

The book that the Heretics recover is entitled *De Orbis Mysteriis*. It is bound in rough, hide-like leather that appears to have been harvested from the face of some alien creature—vague features are still visible on the cover. The pages are of weathered vellum-like material. The majority of the writing is in a crabbed script, using inks of varied shades from sepia to jet-black. All of the material seems to be written in the same handwriting, but spacing varies between sections. The book is written in a number of different languages, including High and Low Gothic, but also Chaos Marks, Xenos Markings, and even Techna-Lingua. A number of pages have obviously been removed, some have been damaged, and in many places marginal notes have been added in a variety of different handwritings and languages.

Those who peruse the book can quickly discover that the author was a genius, a lunatic, or some combination of the two. A **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (History) Test** reveals that the book is more than 1,000 years old. Two or more Degrees of Success on the test suggest that due to its relative state of preservation, it cannot possibly be older than 2,500 years. A **Difficult (–10) Common Lore (Imperium) Test** suggests that the raw materials probably came from a species of Terran origin due to characteristics of the paper. However, the book is old and worn enough that it would require destructive technological tests to be more specific.

Studying the book's contents requires a week and a **Very Hard (–30) Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test**. Refer to **Table 1–1: Reading the Book** for more information. Any number of characters may attempt to read the volume, but only one may do so at a time. This task requires the characters devoted concentration for more than eight hours of each day in study. Once a character finishes it, they may assist other characters in studying the work. Characters may also make repeated attempts to glean understanding from the volume, so that they might fully appreciate its portents. However, each character can only earn Corruption from it on their first attempt.

Those who come to an understanding of the book should realise that the planet could form a strong foundation for an eventual Black Crusade. Any of the world's inhabitants and their descendants could be converted to the ways of the Warp and turned into an army of devoted fanatics. Its manufacturing base could be converted to use forbidden technology to produce specialised weapons in relatively short order.

Interpreting De Orbis Mysteriis

Having read the *De Orbis Mysteriis*, the Heretics now have a difficult task ahead. The ritual requires a number of exact components and precise actions, each integral to success of the performance (the GM should make this clear to anyone who interprets the text). The Heretics would do well to collect as many of the materials as they can before they set out for Saint Annard's Penance. Those which they can acquire in the Screaming Vortex include:

- Blood of those faithful to the Imperium.
- Powder of tarnished silver.
- The skulls of 8 traitors.
- Candles made of wax, the powdered bones of the valiant slain, and martyr's blood.
- Cord made from human flesh and steel wire.
- A blade of gold.

The Heretics should have little trouble gathering this items, though some, such as the skulls of eight traitors, may be harder than others. The remaining elements of the ritual must all be collected on Saint Annard's Penance itself. These include:

- Four Souls of Charity, Law, Piety, and Security. At this point in the adventure, the Heretics will have no way of knowing who these four are, though the *De Orbis Mysteriis* is quite clear on the notion that they will once they reach the prison world. In point of fact, the *De Orbis Mysteriis* does not intend any individuals in particular. Such are the mysteries of the Warp, that the book describes ideals, rather than specifics.
- Three and sixty fearful and desperate souls. These are simply members of the populace who have been driven mad by their terror. It is likely that once the riot breaks out and the sacrifices are gathered, the prison will be teaming with the desperate and the fearful. Guardsmen, Arbitrators, and prisoners alike are all worthy subjects for this requirement of the ritual.

Once these have all been gathered, then are the Heretics prepared to enact their dark ritual. Once that has been accomplished, then they will have achieved their Compact and earned their Rewards.

THE SLAVE

The Heretics are likely to have a lot of questions for Kahli regarding Saint Annard's Penance. How she responds to their

TABLE 1–1: READING THE BOOK

Degrees of Success	Information Gleaned	Corruption Earned
0	The text is incoherent and indecipherable.	0
1	The Heretic realises that using the materials described, a talented devotee of the Ruinous Powers could cause a planet to physically move into the Screaming Vortex.	0
2	Using the map, the Heretic realises that there is a relatively narrow window of time to conduct this ritual on Saint Annard's Penance. The time frame begins in about six months and concludes in less than a year. He understands that this ritual requires a large sacrifice to the Dark Gods.	1
3+	The Heretic identifies all of the components required to complete the ritual to transition Saint Annard's Penance into the Screaming Vortex. Note that unless he understands the Occult significance of some of these elements, he may not be able to personally conduct the ritual.	2

ALTERNATIVE HOOKS

The introduction to this adventure may not work for some Heretics (whether because the GM wishes to start the adventure in a different location, or because the characters do not possess the necessary Skills to participate). In this case, the game described in *Fine Fortune* is a poor way to introduce the information about Saint Annard's Penance. Here are a few suggestions for alternative ways to provide the characters with the background information:

- If the characters are focused upon research and the occult, they might discover the book and the map while reviewing materials within an ancient library upon Kurse. Such characters might purchase Kahli from a slaver while looking for anyone who had served as a prisoner upon the world. If these characters have played through **FALSE PROPHETS**, the *Torestus* may have directed them towards recovering these artefacts.
- Reversing that notion, the characters might come into contact with Kahli and discover the potential opportunity that control of an Imperial prison world could offer them. Once they had that information, they could find out about the ritual through follow up research or even in the course of questioning others about Saint Annard's Penance.
- For Heretics particularly devoted to one of the Ruinous Powers, they might receive a dream vision of the planet, the book, and the slave. With this information, they might set out to recover the items. Such a group might violently seize these items from Corbin or from a group of Heretics to whom he had lost them in a comparable card game.
- If the group has established a reputation, Corbin might seek them out, offering them all three in exchange for some service. This could be recovering another artefact for him from Kurse's ruins, an assassination—either physical or character—guard duty, or even their assistance in gaining control of one of the planet's warbands. Corbin would see this as a worthy test of their abilities before surrendering his property to a deserving successor.

questioning is completely dependent upon how they treat her. The woman is already in a situation that is completely out of her control. She lived the life of a prisoner and escaped from it only to become a slave once more. After a lifetime of this, she is careful to try to get a feel for her new masters before she determines how best to respond to them.

Kahli initially stands at a **Hard (-20)** Disposition towards the characters for all Interaction Skill Tests (see page 276 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). If they sincerely treat her well, the characters may gain a bonus to their Charm or Command Tests proportionate to the treatment they have given her. Similarly, brutal treatment or convincing lies may gain a bonus to Intimidate or Deception, respectively.

If her disposition is improved to at least a standing of **Ordinary (+10)**, Kahli believes they are reasonably sincere in their approach and attempts to remain within their good graces. She knows the planet's culture well and has some notion of its defences. Refer to the Gazetteer on page 5 for more information. As long as they continue to treat her in a consistent manner to maintain her Disposition, she freely answers all of their questions to the best of her ability.

In order for Kahli to become a willing and helpful ally, they must develop their relationship through Charm or Command. If they are abusive or violent towards

her, she resists assisting them in spite of any Disposition improvement. Throughout the remainder of the scenario, she seizes on any chance for escape. If they choose to bring her with them during her travels, this may lead to inconvenient complications—especially in places where slaves are frowned upon. Further, as she becomes aware of their devotions, this may present her a possibility to betray the party to Imperial forces.

NOTABLE PERSONS

The following NPCs play important roles in drawing the characters into the scenario. Full game statistics for these characters are included in the NPC Appendix on page 121.

Kahli Corus

Kahli was born on Saint Annard's Penance and grew up as a prisoner for the crime of her birth. At her core, the woman is driven by anger and fury—partly due to the horrors of her life, but also in part because a drive for vengeance is all that has preserved her sanity. Kahli escaped Saint Annard's Penance by being drafted as an indentured worker for a warship of the Imperial Navy. Such was the size of the warship's crew that she was able to kill an officer and assume his rank by stealing his uniform, which allowed her to flee the ship when it stopped for provisions. She still wears the tattered remnants of that uniform. Unfortunately, she



was captured by slavers soon after and eventually ended up in the Screaming Vortex. Kahli has been partly broken by the years she spent as a slave after escaping the prison world. She has a detailed memory and a cunning mind, which she employs to remember those who have harmed her and formulate precise plans for obtaining her revenge.

She is initially uncertain about the Heretics, as past experience has taught her that new guards can lead to horrific experiences. Her initial actions tend towards acquiescence, as she tries to establish a relationship that might permit her escape. However, she is only as cooperative as she believes is absolutely necessary. She deeply resents those who hold power over her and craves her freedom. Her every move is towards escaping and taking revenge. These are her core drives, and everything else is secondary.

If the Heretics share their plan to travel to Saint Annard's Penance, she is reluctant until she learns of their plan. She requests an opportunity to take the heads of the guards who harmed her during her incarceration. If they grant this boon, she provides full cooperation in the planning and execution of their scheme. However, if she comes to believe that a betrayal may soon come, she makes every reasonable effort to escape.

Kahli has no particular devotion to Chaos. She hates the Imperium for the life it forced upon her and she is willing to go to great measures to garner some revenge against it. The Heretics may be able to persuade her to willingly join their cause, but this is not a given.

Corbin Worldsbane

More than anything, Corbin is a survivor. At one point, he was a successful warlord with a powerful warband that burned its way across several worlds. However, his ambition overcame him when he attacked the swamp world of Asphodel. Months of combat saw his warband wiped out by the feral Kroot that infest the world. Afterwards, though he maintained a measure of his personal wealth, he was not able to recapture the power and influence that made him a warlord. Through all of this time, he has garnered a broad knowledge of the various factions active within the Screaming Vortex. While he relies heavily upon his luck, he is also a talented manipulator.

Corbin is a capable combatant, but not a particularly willing one. Through the decades, he has watched countless comrades die in unnecessary battles. He prefers to talk his way into and out of situations, using his charm and his knowledge. He still maintains a special enmity for the xenos Kroot, however, and often goes out of his way to hunt a Kroot down, kill it, and consume it like another man might eat a game animal.

Always willing to trade a story for a drink or to enter a game of chance, Corbin's life is fast beginning to deteriorate. He increasingly pursues a hedonistic existence, feeling that if his last days are to be spent in ignominy, then at least he should enjoy them. Though he enjoys gambling and drinking, he is developing more esoteric thirsts, consuming distilled soul essence for the euphoria, and spending hours in dream dens reliving his past glories.

THE 13TH STATION OF PASSAGE

Near the Koronus Expanse edge of the Maw, there is a little-known way station that can be used to transit from physical space into the Gloaming Worlds of the Screaming Vortex. The frigid region of space is littered with the hulls of vessels destroyed in the transition and the countless bodies of those sacrificed to the Ruinous Powers to ensure safe travel. The wails of the lost spirits and the cries of the warp creatures that feed upon them are audible even through a vessel's hull and Gellar Field. Countless vessels have been destroyed attempting to make this trip, but it remains one of the safest options to escape the confines of the Screaming Vortex.

SECURING TRANSPORT

"The bastion of humanity is a false front. Its walls crumble and its defences are porous. Seek the weak point and it may soon crumble beneath our onslaught."

—Archdeacon Gabriel Huang of the Holy Oath

With the information in hand, the Heretics need to travel to the prison world so that they can execute their plan. However, travel from the Screaming Vortex is never simple. Kurse sees a great deal of interworld traffic, but many of these voidcraft only travel between the Gloaming Worlds. They must find a vessel which is capable, and willing, of venturing to Imperial space. This requires a ship and a captain that can blend in amongst Imperial vessels or that can effectively dominate them. Neither of these options is easily available, particularly given their time frame constraints. The Heretics must choose carefully and fully exploit their abilities to find appropriate passage.

Even after they escape from Kurse, they are likely to make other stops along the way. Few vessels visit Saint Annard's Penance. Unless they can travel aboard a known ship, making planetfall could be another substantial problem.

INTO THE IMPERIUM

Before the Heretics can begin to execute their plan, they must first have a means of leaving Kurse. The simplest options, however, are unlikely to be viable solutions. If they have their own warp-capable vessel, then they may simply return to their ship and leave at will. Alternatively, the Heretics could choose to join up with a warband that is preparing to leave Kurse as soon as recruitment and training is complete. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the Heretics have command of a vessel. Similarly, if they were to join a warband, it would not deliver them to their destination within an acceptable time frame.

There are no vessels that travel directly from Kurse to Saint Annard's Penance. Even if a captain could be persuaded to undertake the voyage, unless he had a standing relationship with the system, his ship would likely be shot on sight. As Kahli can

recount, the prison world never accepts unscheduled contact with starships. Only scheduled deliveries are permitted. Others are fired upon by the naval elements present in the system. While those elements are insufficient to deal with a large armada, they are certainly capable of handling anything up to a battleship that might approach the planet.

This means that the characters likely need to make a journey that includes at least two stages. For the first leg of their journey, the characters need to identify a vessel that can transport them into the Imperium. The most common transit point between the Screaming Vortex and the physical realm is the 13th Station of Passage (see page 319 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) within the Maw between the Koronus Expanse and the Calixis Sector. Once they manage to return to physical space, the nearest major Imperial outpost is Port Wander. Once there, the Heretics should be able to secure passage directly, or indirectly, to the prison world. However, transit between the Screaming Vortex and the worlds of the Imperium is never simple.

Many of the great vessels that travel to Kurse lack the knowledge necessary to transition between the Warp and physical space. Instead, these massive vessels travel between the Gloaming Worlds within the Warp Storm. Those captains who know the ways out of the Screaming Vortex guard their secrets closely. Consequently, any ships that lack the capacity to escape the warp storm are useless for the Heretics' needs.

Some groups might decide that simply leaving Kurse and travelling to a more active port within the Gloaming Worlds could be a good first step. This certainly offers them more options for vessels leaving the planet, but does little to simplify the issue in the long run. Wherever they arrive, they discover a limited number of vessels well suited to providing them passage into the Imperium. This is a mission that only the most daring or foolish captains undertake repeatedly. It is a voyage that offers substantial reward, but incurs astronomical risks.

Among the vessels that might plan a return to the physical world, many are also unsuitable. Any vessel that bears the iconography of the Ruinous Powers could never hope to carry passengers to Port Wander. Their mere presence within its system would trigger an overwhelming military response. If a ship's captain could be persuaded to part with a shuttle, they might be able to journey from the edge of the system's space to the station, but this would cost them several weeks of travel time. Even though Port Wander is far from the heart of the Calixis Sector, it is well defended by the ships of Battlefleet Calixis. A lone vessel that lacks discretion has little hope of safely reaching the station.

The alternative option is for the Heretics to find a vessel able to travel within Imperial space. Such a vessel may be a Chaos reaver vessel or other renegade vessel disguised to smuggle proscribed items into Imperial space or raid Imperial shipping. It could also be a fallen Rogue Trader, who still maintains just enough of his tattered reputation to be able to operate in the Imperium.

PAYING THEIR WAY

Finding transit out of the Screaming Vortex is complicated by the fact that the Heretics must find some means to pay for their passage. The Heretics' primary means of payment should be to rely upon their Infamy. They may make a **Difficult (-10) Opposed Infamy Test** to secure passage. They can sweeten

the deal by adding in items which they could barter to help pay for their passage. Game Masters assign bonuses to the Infamy Test based upon the relative Availability of the items bartered. As an example, a Very Rare item might provide a +5 circumstance bonus to the test.

Some Heretics might have the appropriate talents required to pay for their transit through service rather than relying upon barter. If all else fails, many of the vessels need competent guards or members for their warbands. However, unless they are particularly capable or the voidship has a specific need, this might require an extended journey. Such a situation could extend their journey beyond the acceptable time frame required for the ritual on Saint Annard's Penance. The characters must carefully consider their options—including jumping ship at the first Imperial port of call. Such service could provide a bonus to the Infamy Test equal to +5 per person per month served.

Heretics with academic skills might be able to barter teaching, secrets, or time spent in research as payment for their efforts. Those who are capable of effectively proselytising the words of their dark sponsors might convert a voidship's officer to their cause and recover transit as compensation for enlightenment. A talented Heretek might agree to install special modifications to the ship that could enhance its effectiveness, particularly ones that a member of the Adeptus Mechanicus might disdain. The value of these services should add a bonus to the Infamy Test at the Game Master's discretion based upon the rarity of the service offered.

If neither of these options seems appropriate, the Heretics might simply choose to capture a warband or tribe from the wastes of Kurse and trade them into slavery as payment for the journey. While hardly an elegant solution, it is a quick way of securing the necessary Infamy. Undertaking such an act, particularly against a foe of some repute, might also bolster their Infamy.

AVAILABLE VESSELS

Voidships are primarily drawn to Kurse by the gambling and repair yards that Forge Castir maintains in orbit over the planet. Many ships visit here to acquire special modifications and to acquire press-crews from the primitive tribes below. Two examples that might fit the Heretics' needs follow. If neither of these seem well-suited to the game group, Game Masters are encouraged to create alternative vessels that are more appropriate for their play style. Regardless, GMs are encouraged to at least give the Heretics an opportunity to interact with the officers of these different vessels. The interactions may lead the Player Characters to consider their priorities as they prepare for the journey.

RITE OF FORTUNE

Commanded by Dannard Klee (see page 123) the *Rite of Fortune* is a smuggling vessel that engages heavily in the Cold Trade. Klee purports to be a simple Chartist captain, but in actuality he secretly takes his vessel into the lawless void beyond Imperial borders to procure goods from heretical or xenos sources that can fetch a high price in Imperial space from the right buyers. The vast majority of these goods are heretical or proscribed items that could well see them hunted and killed

by the Inquisition. Only Klee and his most trusted crew know the full import of where the *Rite* travels to and the nature of what they deal in—the rest of the crew is kept in line through a combination of fear and enforced ignorance. Consequently, their methodologies require that they avoid undue attention from any security agents. When the Heretics approach the vessel, read or paraphrase the following:

As the shuttle departs from Belphegion, your first vision of the Rite of Fortune is hardly impressive or reassuring. The vessel's appearance is unremarkable in every way. Her hull is painted a drab grey. She bears no iconography on her scarred and pitted prow, and generally seems to be in a state of disrepair. But the rumours you've heard suggest that underneath the boring exterior, she conceals a vast smuggling capacity and features designed to avoid any sort of Imperial entanglements.

As the shuttle docks in the ship's vaulted hangar bay, you see the crew scattering. Most obviously avoid you, while a few grim-eyed armsmen glare at you with barely checked aggression, shotcannon and barb-rifles close at hand. Armsmen and a sweating junior officer quickly lead you through several companionways to the captain's quarters. As you enter, a thin man with a bulky, multi-lensed augmetic for his left eye stands and smiles. "Welcome to the Rite of Fortune. I am Captain Dannard Klee."

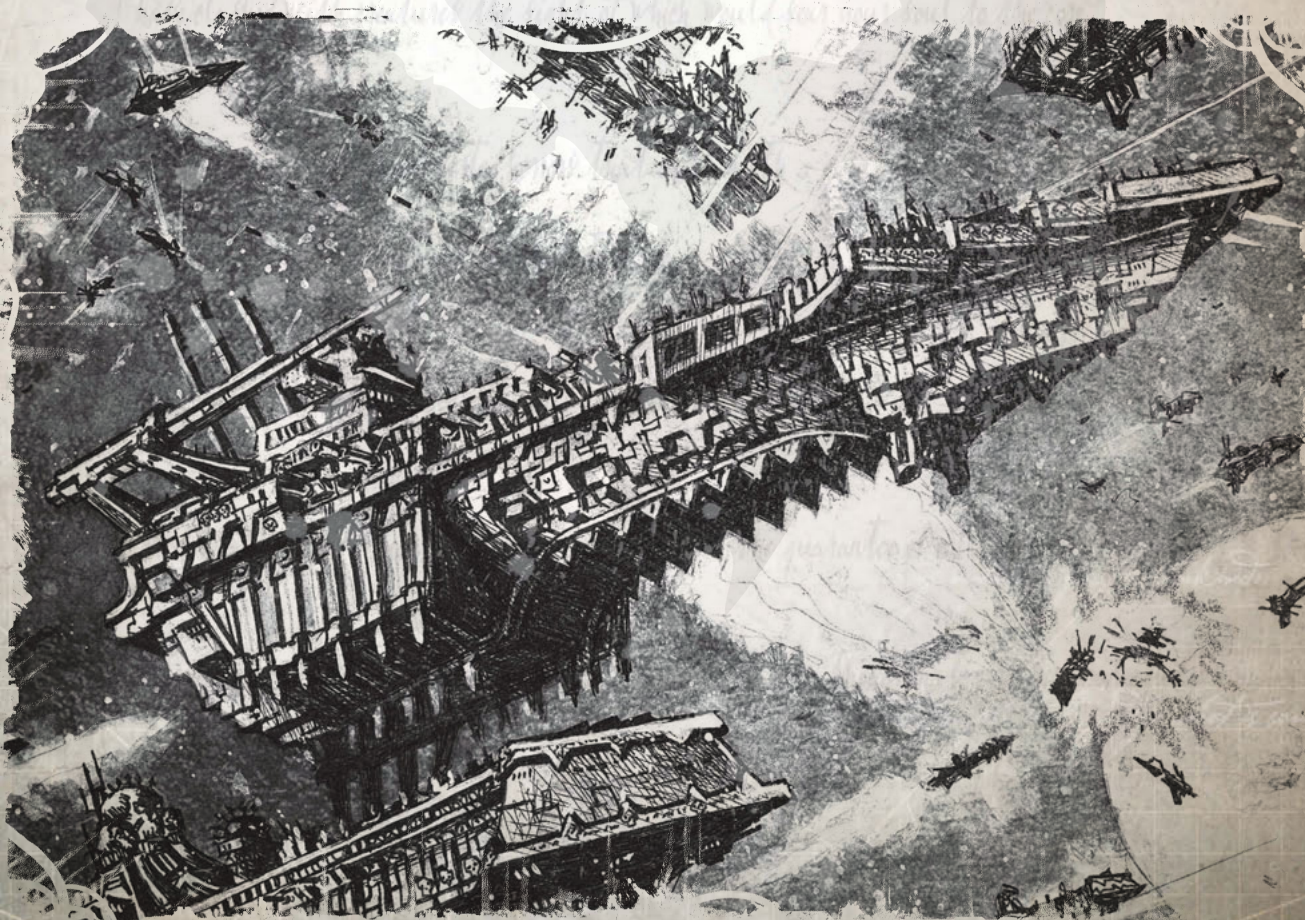
You can't help but notice that he does not come around from his heavy wooden desk to greet you, nor do the armed armsmen who accompanied you here leave the room. Though Klee may be willing to deal with you, it is clear he does not trust you for a moment.

The *Rite of Fortune* travels into the Screaming Vortex via a little-known spin-current that Klee's Navigator has learned how to navigate with some precision. It is only open for a few weeks every several years, allowing Klee to make quick excursions into the Gloaming Worlds for trade. Consequently, he is unaware of the true extent of the Screaming Vortex, but his nonexistent morals mean he is more than willing to transport the Heretics to Port Wander for additional coin.

He is motivated by his personal greed and opposed to any who would deny its fulfilment. Klee stopped at Kurse for final trading, and, from there, is on his way out of the Vortex.

At minimum, Klee demands barter equivalent to one item with an Extremely Rare Availability (or multiple items with a total equivalent Acquisition modifier) per Heretic. However, he's very partial to Imperial Thrones if the Heretics have any (the fee should be several thousand per Heretic), or particularly rare, exotic, or ancient artefacts. The GM is welcome to play up negotiations for passage aboard the vessel if he feels it will be interesting for his party.

The voyage from Kurse to Port Wander aboard this vessel is uneventful. It takes four weeks, but the Heretics need not have any difficulties during the journey. Once they arrive, Klee is capable of guiding them through the void docks to make contact with people who might be able to assist them in the next stage of their journey. Provided they do not cause Klee undue trouble, he does nothing to betray their identities—after all, betraying them may lead to uncomfortable questions about his own activities.



AVOIDING UNDUE ATTENTIONS

For a servant of Chaos, concealment among the drudges of the Imperium is a challenging, but not overwhelming, task. This becomes somewhat more difficult if a group of Heretics are travelling together. When the group contains a mix of humans and Chaos Space Marines, their distinctive appearance makes looking inconspicuous even harder.

At various points in their journey, the characters may be subject to inspections. Unless they have a convincing set of lies and some well-forged paperwork, they are likely to draw some unwanted attention, and more so if they have one or more Minions who are as, or more, mutated or corrupted than they are. None of this should come as a surprise to the Heretics. It may be worth pointing out to the players that this is a concern that their characters would know to address. Here are some possible cover stories that could work for the Heretics, although if the players come up with their own ideas the GM should feel free to use any that make sense.

- **Throne Agents of the Inquisition:** One possible solution is for the Heretics to pose as a group of Throne Agents working for the Inquisition. Their minions can either serve as prisoners or other agents. The advantages of this are obvious—Inquisitorial agents have great freedom in Imperial space, and any Chaos Space Marines may be able to pose as loyalist Space Marines allied with the Holy Ordos. This should work effectively unless the characters make contact with genuine servants of the Inquisition, at which point their powers of deceit shall truly be tested.
- **Tech Priest Magos and Servitors:** A Heretek might be able to disguise some of his more odious modifications in order to appear to be a loyal Tech-Priest. His followers and companions might conceal themselves beneath Adeptus Mechanicus Robes or wear cosmetic implants to appear as servitors or lesser Tech-Priests. The benefits are many, as the Adeptus Mechanicus is a secretive and bizarre organisation, and oddities amongst a group of Tech-Priests are unlikely to be questioned by Imperial agents. In addition, Tech-Priests and servitors may appear in many diverse forms, so even a Chaos Space Marine wrapped in enough oil-soaked sack-cloth and able to shuffle monotonously could pass as one.
- **Loyalist Space Marines:** If a Chaos Space Marine is willing to repaint his armour in loyalist colours, he might maintain the pretence of being a loyal servant of the Imperium effectively (though he may have to remove more obvious additions such as horns, excessive spikes, or Chaos iconography). His companions and minions could then dress as Chapter serfs, human servants of the Space Marines. However, the character must have a plausible cover story for what he is doing. Space Marines are quite rare in the Imperium, and the arrival of one is likely to cause a large stir. Any Imperial agents are going to want to know what the disguised Heretic is doing in the Imperium, and why he is travelling alone without Chapter brethren. It is possible that such a disguise might bring down so much unwanted attention that the Heretic would be better served trying to remain out of sight entirely.
- **A Rogue Trader and Entourage:** In many ways this is the easiest ruse to pull off. There are many Rogue Traders in Port Wander, and they often have bizarre associates. The Heretics should simply be prepared to tell a convincing story as to what happened to their ship.

Dannard Klee

Klee is the captain and owner of his independent vessel. While he has associations and obligations with a number of different criminal groups, he is ultimately a free trader. This grants him a lifestyle choice where he can come and go as he pleases, relying upon his vessel as his home. It also means that he might not have support at any port of call he visits. Within the Imperium, Klee and the *Rite of Fortune* survive on his status as a Chartist captain, a status he constantly exceeds with his illicit activities.

An accomplished con artist and a capable archaeologist, Klee has combined the two arts to build his career in the Cold Trade. He knows the value of appearances and is precise with his own and that of his crew. He realises that often it is far more important that he presents himself as the sort of person that could legitimately possess the forged paperwork he uses. In the same way, he is also perfectly willing to deal in authentic looking artefacts that he can sell with similarly creative paperwork.

THE FINAL PIECE

This ramshackle vessel—best classified as a modified Iconoclast destroyer—has clearly been in the service of many masters. Even to an inexperienced eye, it is obvious that numerous modifications have been made to the raider—many of them major—with little regard for aesthetics or compatibility with other changes. The

Final Piece is a pirate ship that plies the paths of the Koronus Expanse. Her captain is one of the few who knows the secrets of the 13th Station of Passage and thus flees into the Vortex to refit or avoid Imperial pursuit. When the characters approach the vessel, read or paraphrase the following:

The Final Piece is a small voidship, not much more than a kilometre from prow to stern. However, her flanks and bow bristle with macrocannons and defence turrets. As your shuttle comes in over the Final Piece's prow, you see her reputation as a Reaver vessel is well founded. A series of crude scaffolding perches on the top of the armoured prow, decorated with the eviscerated and void-frozen corpses of the Final Piece's victims.

After your shuttle docks in the cramped bay, you're immediately surrounded by a collection of fierce pirates and Reavers, scarred, tattooed, and sometimes mutated men and women bearing an assortment of cruel weapons. The circle parts to let through a giant brute of a man, wearing carapace armour that looks like it's been inlaid with polished bones. Dozens of skulls dangle from chains affixed to his belt, and the gore-caked Eviscerator chainsword on his back leaves little doubt that he harvested them himself.

"I am Ramla Yang," the man growls. "Captain Yang. I hear ye be looking for transport."

The crew is fiercely devoted to their captain, but they show little loyalty to any other cause. The only thing they worship is plunder. All of her repairs are made using components stolen from other ships, while her crew subsists on what foodstuffs they have captured.

Like Klee, Yang is not against taking on passengers for profit, though he has little interest in going near enough to Port Wander (and its large Imperial Navy presence) to drop off the Heretics. To travel to Port Wander, he offers two choices. Either they can pay the barter equivalent of one item with a Near Unique Availability (or multiple items with a total equivalent Acquisition modifier) per Heretic, or they can work their passage and turn over any shares of plunder they would normally earn to him and his crew.

Journeying between Kurse and Port Wander on the *Final Piece* may be an adventure in itself. As a pirate vessel, she attacks at least two other craft during the journey. With each attack, the Heretics are called upon to assist in boarding actions. The details of these events are up to the GM, though if he needs to run a boarding action he can use the Imperial Guardsman or the Bounty Hunter from page 364 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook for opponents, and should only focus on the small conflicts the Heretics are directly involved in, rather than the entire boarding action. Afterwards, they are expected to help move cargo and prisoners (to sell as slaves) back to the raider. The trip takes five months due to the many battles fought along the way. When they reach Port Wander, Yang gladly assists them in making contacts among the station's underworld.

Since the *Final Piece* is an obvious pirate Reaver vessel, it does not travel directly to Port Wander. Instead, it lurks on the edges of the Rubycon II system and drops off a small inter-system shuttle that takes the Heretics to the station. The journey is cramped, unpleasant, and takes several days, but it's the only option available.

Ramla Yang

A barbaric brute of a man, Yang maintains discipline through violence. The skulls he wears around his belt are not those of his victims. Instead, each is a former member of his crew who tried to challenge him for captaincy. Yang killed each in single combat and bears the scars from the fights all over his body.

Yang originated from the slums of Footfall in the Koronus Expanse, where he learned the rudiments of the voidsman's craft. He also joined a localized cult that worshipped Korhien, the Champion of the Arena. Yang embraced this worship and offers the skulls of any he kills in glory to "Kor-hein" in exchange for strength and victory in battle. Though he does not realise it (or think about it overmuch), Yang is a devoted worshipper of Khorne, the Lord of Skulls.

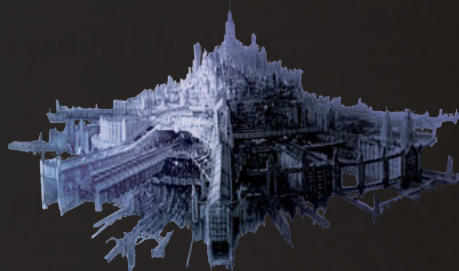
Yang is not a brilliant captain, nor is he a charismatic leader. He maintains his captaincy for two reasons. The first is that he kills anyone who would take the captaincy away from him. The second is that his crew know his moods and desires, how to avoid becoming his victim, and most importantly, know he always leads them to plunder.

PORT WANDER

Official Imperial records indicate that Port Wander is an outpost of the Navy, under the jurisdiction of the Imperial Navy and Battlefleet Calixis specifically. The truth is somewhat more complex. While the Imperial Navy's Provost authorities and the Naval branch of the Commissariat police the Navy population of the station diligently, they are not directly responsible for policing the extensive civilian population. That thankless task falls on the Adeptus Arbites. However, since the Navy holds primary authority of the station, and the two populations are hopelessly intermingled, jurisdictional conflicts and bureaucratic infighting are regrettably common. There is an Inquisition presence on the station as well. Though Ordo Xenos Inquisitor Linetta Res is far more preoccupied with the Cold Trade than several Heretics passing through the station, she would be more than happy to see the Heretics burn if she catches wind of them. Luckily, the factional infighting distracts the station authorities enough to create a thriving criminal underclass the Heretics can take advantage of. They can smuggle themselves onto the station using the same routes as smugglers or heretical cult leaders. Once on board, underworld contacts can provide the Heretics with routes through the station to regions where there are individuals and organisations sympathetic to their interests.

The station sees a tremendous volume of official and commercial Imperial traffic. Though it is far from the political centre of the Calixis Sector, it is at the gateway of the Koronus Expanse. Many pilgrims from either region stop at the station as they travel to sacred sites. Refugees fleeing from worlds within the Expanse often seek passage to more established worlds of the Sector. Settlers from the overcrowded hive worlds visit the station as they try to find a way to reach the frontier worlds of the Expanse. Like an Imperial hive world, the station is packed with people. However, because of their transient nature and diverse cultural backgrounds, few even know the names of their neighbours.

While the Heretics need to remain inconspicuous through most of their stay, they have ample opportunity to restore their supplies and make contact with those who might provide them passage to Saint Annard's Penance. Their stay on the station might also provide them an opportunity to recruit minions who might be more suited to infiltrating an Imperial facility. This could also be a chance to beg, borrow, or steal some Imperial currency from any of the station's countless potential victims. Whether a Heretic can easily move around the station without being identified as such is largely dependent on the Heretic in question. Obviously, those with obvious mutations (or Chaos Space Marines) are hard pressed in that regard, but Humans (especially those good at disguise and deceit) can operate within the station relatively freely.



ONWARDS TO THE PRISON

"A prison world is no different than any other Imperial world. All are mills that grind human grist for the corpse-god's wars. Why shouldn't they grind for me, instead?"

— Magister Khalistim Bhewko

The Heretics are likely anxious to leave Port Wander soon after they arrive. The Imperial voidstation is unsettling, at best, and dangerous as well—a bastion of Imperial power they must navigate by guile. When the characters disembark and enter the station, read or paraphrase the following (this works no matter which way the Heretics arrived at Port Wander):

Docking with Port Wander was a rather byzantine affair, with authorization transmissions and more than a few promises of compensation. That station's multi-level docking system allowed you to arrive in one of the lesser used reception bays, far from the prying eyes of the station's security.

As the pressure seals vent with tiny snaps and hisses of errant atmosphere into the void you can smell the thick odor of unwashed humanity as the environment of Port Wander begins to mix with that of the void lock. One of the ship's more capable voidman speaks up, "I must now go make good on those bribes. The locals are notoriously nervous, so I must go alone. You'll have to fend for yourselves...which I don't think will be much of a problem. I'd suggest keeping a low profile; the Port crawls with Throne Agents."

The omnipresent Imperial heraldry seems to follow you through the station. From the moment you set foot upon the station, it is everywhere, from the reliefs that decorate the walls to the insignia upon the Imperial uniforms of the unwashed masses. You know that many of those who bear it do so out of ignorance, and you long to enlighten them of their mistakes. However, you have no way of knowing which targets might be ripe for corruption and which ones might call for help all too quickly. The only way to survive is to keep your guard up constantly and take the necessary steps to conceal the beliefs you hold dear.

The Heretics need to find at least some temporary quarters. Arranging transport to a prison world is not a simple matter. Characters who travel through Port Wander may visit any of the stations pleasure houses, taverns, and markets to find out more about Saint Annard's Penance. An **Easy (+30) Inquiry Test** soon reveals that, other than prisoner transports, there are very few vessels which travel to the planet. Fortunately, one of the regular transports—*Bellum Commertium*, see below—is currently docked at the station and leaving within the week.

Through their research, the Heretics discover that travel into the system is expressly forbidden. The planet's defensive systems immediately open fire on any unidentified vessels. While it lacks the capability to stop a well-organised fleet, the defences are more than sufficient to destroy a single vessel, even an extremely powerful one. Because of this, the Heretics are unlikely to persuade a vessel to make the journey



explicitly for the purpose of delivering them to the planet. If they somehow manage to overcome all of these challenges, then their arrival is unlikely to be subtle. The prison's guards and defenders would be aware of such a confrontation and on high alert for any landing forces. A full-scale invasion is likely to be counter-productive to their plans.

As the characters travel through the station, for every four hours they are in public on Port Wander, have each character make an **Ordinary (+10) Stealth Test or Routine (+20) (Deceive) Test**. If any character fails, he has drawn some suspicion, and the next Test becomes one Degree more difficult. If he fails by four or more Degrees, he attracts the attention of the port's defenders. A squad of four Arbitrators (see page 128), approach the Heretics with weapons drawn to ask questions. If the characters engage in combat, the Arbites summon the assistance of an additional squad of four that arrives six Rounds later. In order to survive, the Heretics must quickly overcome any opposition and then hurriedly go to ground.

Luckily for the Heretics, the lowdecks of the station are very large, many kilometres of winding, deserted passageways with intermittent electricity and flicking grav-plates. The Heretics could spend their entire stay on Port Wander amongst those twisted halls. If the GM wishes them to quickly move onto Saint Annard's Penance, they can spend their time here uneventfully. However, if he wishes to add something to their stay, he can use the following optional encounter.

THE COURT OF REVELRY AND DELIGHT (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

If the GM would like to extend the Heretics stay on Port Wander they can be contacted by the Court of Revelry and Delight, a group of nobles and powerful merchants whose secret society pulls many strings. The upper echelons worship the Duchess of Fare (an aspect of Slaanesh), but their leader, Borschman, has recently been stricken with an incurable pox. Unwilling to step down, he has grown immensely fat and disease ridden, and has begun great sermons on the nature of his condition, and how it is actually a blessing. A few lesser members of the Court have even begun to listen.

In an attempt to rid the Court of Revelry and Delight of this monstrosity, Lady D'Sumar invites the Heretics to a banquet, so that they might kill Borschman, allowing her to assume power in the wake of his death.

This encounter begins as the Heretics wander around Port Wander's lowdecks. At an appropriately deserted corridor, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

An impossibly thin man steps in front of you, blocking your passage down a darkened corridor. He wears some of the finest clothing you've seen on Port Wander, clearly civilian in function, but heavily influenced by military designs. He does not speak, but he trembles with terror as he raises a hand, as if to beg you to stop. Shaking, he tugs at the fingers of his glove, removing it. His digits each have 4 tightly packed joints each twisted in a different direction. They twist and wave at you for a moment. With a sigh of relief, he realizes that you have not begun shouting "mutant."

Having passed his test, he finally speaks, "My lady wishes an audience with the glorious warriors of the true gods. Should you deign to grant her this audience, she can provide for you many services."

If the Heretics agree, this humble manservant will lead them through an impossible maze of uninhabited corridors and access chutes. They finally arrive at an unremarkable hatchway, marked only with a scuff of green paint. The manservant slips one of his multi-jointed fingers into a socket on the door, and presses a release only his mutated anatomy can reach.

Beyond the door is a room that appears to come from a different world all together. Large golden pillars support a high arched ceiling. Every surface is adorned with portraits of nobility in various acts of debauchery. Polished silver tables, chairs and foot rests have thick velvet cushions surround large silk sheeted beds to the side of the chamber. In the centre, is a banquet table that could easily seat a dozen attendees on each side.

An aging noblewoman sits at the head of the table, which has been laid out with a small variety of sweetmeats, rare delicacies, and a decanter of wine. "Ah, please join me, I hope that we have much to discuss."

THE PROPOSITION

Lady D'Somer is a powerful woman accustomed to dealing with her fellow nobles. She does not underestimate the Heretics, in fact, she treats them as if they are incredibly powerful. She does not prostrate herself, but she is careful not to insult them, and plays towards their pride. She is happy to make small talk, discussing the food or the condition of Port Wander. If the Heretics would rather get down to business, she is equally agreeable.

Over the course of the meal she will casually bring up her current troubles. She tells the Heretics that Borschman, the group's leader, has fallen prey to a terrible illness. He, and a few of his most devoted toadies, have embraced this wasting sickness. She has attempted on two separate occasions to seize control of the The Court of Revelry and Delight, allowing Borschman and his followers to begin a new group, more in line with their devotion. He has refused on several occasions.

Tonight represents her last attempt. A grand ball is to be held, with nearly a hundred worshippers in attendance. During the banquet Borschman has agreed to meet with D'Somer one last time and discuss the possibility of separating the two groups peacefully. If D'Somer cannot achieve this goal, she wishes to have additional muscle there to solve the situation violently.

If the heretics assist her, surely the gods will reward them, and surely their actions will not go unnoticed by those in the know. In addition, D'Somer can help arrange travel aboard the *Bellum Commercium*, as honoured guests who will not be disturbed until their arrival.

If the Heretics agree, D'Somer will provide invitations to the ball, as well as attire appropriate to the occasion. While Chaos Space Marines may appear out of place at the event, she has not qualms about their attendance, and her personal tailor knows a few tricks for creating appropriate tabards and robes for properly presenting the Chaos Space Marines at such an event in their power armour. This added intimidation factor can only help Lady D'Somer in her negotiations.

THE GALA OF SENSE

Arriving incognito, nearly a hundred guests now fill the massive chamber where you met with Lad D'Somer. Small groups of musician-servitors wander about the hall, playing revised versions of popular Imperial hymns. Several of the guests sport obvious mutations and gather a crowd of inquisitive guests who subtly proposition their favour.

D'Somer's manservant appears at ease in this environment, calling the names of each person as they enter the hall. He directs a staff of servants, demanding dishes from the kitchen and seeing to individual guests.

The Heretics may sample much of the food or pleasures present. Those Heretics with visible mutations may even draw a small group of onlookers. Any Heretic with an Infamy score of 30 or more may even draw a devotee who knows of his exploits, and wishes to tell any who will listen of his exploits. Much of the food present is extremely exotic and rare and is chosen for its odd effects. While

TABLE 1-2: THE DELICACIES OF THE GALA

Dish Name	Description and Effects
Pine-Pears	This spiked pear like fruits contain a succulent juice that also functions as a mild anesthetic. When eaten, the spikes pierce the mouth and tongue, allowing quick entrance of the chemicals into the blood stream. While the first bite is painful, each subsequent bite becomes more pleasurable. When a Heretic eats a Pine-Pear for the first time it is a painful experience, but fellow attendees will attempt to convince them to try another. If they do, it is pleasurable, and the Heretic must succeed on an Easy (+20) Willpower Test or continue eating more of the fruit, suffering 1 Fatigue from the anaesthesia.
Sporederves	This greenish meat-like disk comes from an unknown fungus found in the deepest portions of Port Wander. Only the central stalk can be harvested, as the rest of the plant is poisonous. Anyone who consumes Sporederves rolls a 1d10 to determine if they were properly prepared. On a 1-9 the Sporederves were made correctly and the consumer gains a +10 bonus to all Toughness Tests for one hour. On a 10 imposes a -10 penalty on Toughness Tests for one hour instead.
Live Dolorium Throat Crab	Anyone who eats this must succeed on a Challenging (+0) Strength Test or vomit uncontrollably for 1d10 minutes and suffers 1d10 points of damage (not reduced by Toughness or Armour).
Seeker Tongue Kabobs	This long ropey sweet-meat writhes sensually as it is consumed, and sometimes in the belly. If a user eats one or more portions of Seeker Tongue Kabob they gain 1 Corruption Point.
Void-Boiled Inquisitor	This extremely rare treat is offered only to Heretics with an Infamy of 35 or higher. These small delicacies are made from the flesh of Inquisitor Vorax who was pushed from a void lock by several worshippers earlier in the week. He was boiled by the pressure and carved for small finger-delicacies served with a grox-butter dipping sauce. They are delicious.

this will have little effect on a Legionnaire's metabolism human Heretics may suffer some very strange effects. The following delicacies (among more mundane starch-cheeses and cryo-cooked meats) are found in **Table 1-2: The Delicacies of the Gala**.

Some of the more popular guests are met with applause upon their arrival, but the room falls silent when the manservant bellows, "Lord Borschman, and escort." A large bed made from dozens of individual cushions atop a railed platform makes its way into the ballroom, carried by four mutant bodyguards. On the cushions luxuriates an enormous man, easily twice the weight of a Legionnaire. He wears a robe formed from uncut lengths of cloth dyed to match the elongated pustules that cover his skin like a spiderweb.

His servitors carry him to the large banquet table, where he is sat at the opposite end from Lady D'Somer.

The Heretics will find their seats at the main table labelled for them, per their perceived power. The higher their Infamy Heretics will be closer to either Lady D'Somer or Borschman, the lower Infamy Heretics will be sat near the centre of the table.

THE NEGOTIATIONS

The negotiations between Lady D'Somer and Borschman are a very civil affair. Lady D'Somer wishes to split the cult into two parts, one lead by herself and the other by Borschman. Borschman is against dividing their power and wishes to shift the cults focus to the worship of "He who lives in the Veins" (an aspect of Nurgle).

Each Heretic must individually decide (most likely through role playing) which side they are on. During the dinner they can attempt a single Test to sway the outcome one way or another. This Test could come in a variety of forms, based on the players actions, such as Charm (to cajole the power players one way or another), Infamy, Intimidation or any other skill the Heretic can reasonably employ.

At the end of the dinner the GM should roll a d10 to determine how the negotiations went. Adding a +1 for each Heretic who succeeded on a Test in favour or splitting the cult, and a -1 for each Heretic who succeeded on a Test against. On a result of 7+ the Cult decides to split amicably, the higher the result the more power Lady D'Somer keeps in her half. On a result of 4-6 or lower the negotiations have failed, and Lady D'Somer calls for the Heretics to murder Borschman. On a result of 3 or lower, Borschman is insulted and calls for his guards to attack Lady D'Somer and the "uninvited guests."

When representing Lady D'Somer and Boschman, use the Fallen Demagogue profile from page 361 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, with the following changes.

- Lady D'Somer has the Psyker Trait, and a Psy Rating of 3. She counts as an Unbound Psyker. She possesses the powers Lash of Submission and Mind Probe, but does not possess the Fear (1) Trait.
- Boschman has the Psyker Trait, and a Psy Rating of 2. He counts as an Unbound Psyker. He possesses the powers Putrefying Embrace and Choir of Poxes. He also trades his Unnatural Agility (+3) for Unnatural Toughness (+3)

The mutant bodyguards can be represented by the Mutant Devotee found on page 360 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. The remainder of the guests can be represented by the Cult Zealot on the same page, with better clothing and accoutrements, and any Lore Skills that reflect their stations.

If the players succeed on splitting the Cult or defending Lady D'Somer then she is able to get them passage on the *Bellum Comercium* as honoured guests. They will have finely furnished state rooms, and nobody will bother them during the journey, as long as they keep to themselves. They will also each gain 1 Infamy.

AVAILABLE TRANSPORT

The following are two potential ships the Heretics may hitch a ride on to get to Saint Annard's Penance. Of course, the GM is always welcome to invent his own options to provide his players with more choices.

BELLUM COMMERCIUM

The *Bellum Commmercium* is one of the few vessels permitted to make regular trips to Saint Annard's Penance. The massive Chartist transport constantly journeys on a commercial route through the Malfian Sub-Sector. At the space station, it unloads a cargo of supplies for Administratum agents on the station and retrieves additional passengers and cargo. Some of its passengers are destined for the prison world, while others are travelling to more distant locations.

Her journey through the Sub-Sector takes most of a Terran year and requires just over a week's layover at most locations. This cycle has continued for generations. Other than cargo and passengers, the ship often replaces some crew members during its stopovers at the voidstation. While these typically come from press-gangs that the Imperial Navy keep on hand at the station, it may be possible for the Heretics to gain passage as crew members at this time.

Passengers typically include Inquisition Throne Agents or Adeptus Arbites Arbitrators, Administratum adepts, and occasionally those in service of the Ecclesiarchy. However, Imperial nobles seeking additional information, merchants attempting to make arrangements with the manufactories, or even Tech-Priests sent to perform specific repairs or research might travel aboard the ship. Replacement units for the prison world's Arbites and Imperial Guard typically travel aboard *Bellum Commmercium* and her sister ships. All such passengers must undergo routine checks with Administratum authorities. If the Heretics attempt to bluff their way through the process, it requires an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Deceive vs Scrutiny Test** against an Arbitrator (see page 128). Game Masters may choose to apply bonuses if the Heretics create or acquire a well-constructed and accurate background.

The prison world refines raw materials and also assembles them into many of the tools of warfare. However, the Imperium is careful to not arm their prisoners. None of the goods manufactured on the planet include ammunition, complete weapons, or explosives. However, components for a number of weapons are created in addition to military uniforms and various other sundries.

As the prison world's environs are not suitable to Terran agriculture, many of the supplies carried from other worlds of the Malfian Sub-Sector are those required for growing the necessary foodstuffs. These include specialised fertilisers as well

as nutritional supplements for the guards. Of course, as no weapons or ammunition are created on the planet, the supply vessel must carry these supplies for the Arbitrators and Imperial Guard units stationed on the planets. Similarly, any time one of the planet's manufacturums breaks down, the vessel carries the replacement parts supplied and guarded by agents of the Adeptus Mechanicus.

If the Heretics choose to try to gain transit aboard this vessel, their point of contact is likely to be Twanleigh Kohler (see page 126). She is the ship's second mate, and the officer aboard most susceptible to the influence of Chaos. Twanleigh can be persuaded to work with them for the duration of their journey. Groups with exceptionally charming characters might even be able to persuade her to leave *Bellum Commmercium* after its arrival at Saint Annard's Penance. There are a limited number of similar trade vessels that travel throughout the Malfian Sub-Sector also trading agricultural supplies for manufactured goods.

Twanleigh Kohler

Twanleigh handles all relations between passengers of the *Bellum Commmercium* and its officers. She always wears a cheery smile and tries to solve any issues the Heretics have, as long as the solutions cost her or the vessel nothing. She has a low opinion of those who travel to the prison world, but feels bound to her job aboard her ship.

In truth, the woman has already begun the slide away from the staunch discipline of the Imperium. She has acquired substantial gambling debts with a criminal faction among the ship's menial crew and also is addicted to several drugs, most notably Obscura.

Though the legality of this drug varies from planet to planet in the Imperium, Captain Illiv of the *Bellum Commmercium*

prohibits its use amongst his own crew. Twanleigh is

forced to purchase supplies of this drug from

the locations the ship visits and several individuals on Port Wander

know her as a repeat client. Thus, Twanleigh

has two secrets that could jeopardise her position, and the Heretics could learn about one of them before they even go aboard. If the Heretics can discover either of these facts, she can easily be persuaded to provide them with transport in exchange for enough funds to at least temporarily relieve some of the pressure she faces from the crew.

A PRISON SHIP

Several different prison ships, officially commanded by the Adeptus Arbites, deliver prisoners from the entirety of the Calixis Sector to Saint Annard's Penance. These craft are not named, but instead described by a simple series of digits. One of the craft that most commonly stops at Port Wander is 09375326. Her visits to the voidstation are kept brief in the interests of security.

During their stay, the prison vessels typically take on a limited number



of prisoners that proved unacceptable for use in press-gangs. Sometimes they also accept replacement guards for the vessel or the prison world, resupply, and occasionally undergo minor repairs. As with Bellum Commmercium, these transports complete the journey between Port Wander and Saint Annard's Penance in about three weeks. However, their transits take them throughout the Malfian Sub-Sector, so their visits to the station are irregular. One is due to arrive at the voidstation within a week of the Heretics' arrival. The next is not due for at least another month after that.

These vessels are austere, dedicated to their function rather than any concessions to appearance, religion, or comfort. The trained voidsmen and mid-ranking officers are typically originally from the Imperial Navy who committed minor offences and were sent to serve the Arbites as penance. The remainder of the crew (indentured workers and common voidmen) are culled from the prison populations. None are happy in their roles, but the sight of the prisoners they transport serve as a reminder of how much worse things could become.

Other than the prisoners, neither vessel carries passengers. The prisoners are effectively their cargo. They spend the transit in massive, barren holds, dressed in their prison fatigues. There are dozens of these within each vessel, and each is often filled with more than 1,000 prisoners. These holds are located adjacent to the vessel's outer skin. There are only two ways to enter or exit the hold. The first is through a portal, nearly 100 metres over the floor of the massive barren metallic room. Ventilation ducts, supplied by high-speed fans, are also located near these portals. The other means of egress is if the massive exterior wall is opened. There is no airlock for this. When the hold is opened in this way, the entire hold vents into the void.

At the start of the journey, each prisoner is stripped, shaved, and redressed in prison fatigues after a thorough search. They are then lowered into the holds using massive anti-gravity platforms. Once the hold is filled, their only contact with the outside world is when food and water are dropped into the hold each day. Violent cultures tend to build within the holds as the prisoners battle one another for survival and food, while living in an environment that is overwhelmingly filled by their own stench.

When the vessel reaches Saint Annard's Penance, prisoners are extracted using anti-gravity platforms. After the prisoners are removed, the hold portal and ventilation systems are sealed. The hold is then sterilised by pumping plasma from the engines through it. Afterwards, the exterior wall is opened and the ash is vented into the void.

If the Heretics choose to use a prison vessel as transport, they are most likely to do so under the guise of prisoners. The challenge of this travel style is that they have no good means to deliver their equipment to the prison world. Player Characters would need to make some sort of further arrangements for such a delivery as well as consider alternative plans for some of their minions.

Philani Barrett

A guard that serves aboard one of the prison ships, Barrett's sloth is a veritable force of nature. His grizzled, slovenly appearance and casual manner suggest that he has been travelling the void as a ship's crewmember for dozens of years. At the same time, he is almost arrogant in his disregard for every regulation or

force of authority. He cuts every corner as he goes about his business. He cares little for the Imperium or the prisoners he guards, wishing only to better his own standing in life.

Barrett is the guard that the Heretics are most likely to meet during their time on Port Wander. He flagrantly ignores the ship's regulations as he searches the station's taverns for cheap amasec and other alcohol during the craft's brief stopover at the voidstation. He is all too willing to add the Heretics to the ship's prisoner contingent for a modest bribe and even allows them to smuggle in their weapons and equipment. However, he is of little use beyond that for extracting them once the vessel reaches the destination. Unless they have gained some sort of influence over him—a substantial challenge—he is likely to completely forget their presence.

HIJACK A SHIP

Some groups of Heretics may prefer to approach Saint Annard's Penance with full military support. By taking this approach, they would certainly be in a far stronger position to oppose the prison's guard structure. The most likely way to deliver an army to the site is by gaining control of one of the scheduled transports. In this way, they could circumvent most of the system's elaborate security measures. However, even considering the scale of these massive transports, unless they lead a superhuman force, none of the ships have the capacity for a force required to overwhelm the Imperial defences.

The prison world's defences are sufficient to overwhelm any ship the Heretics are likely to take control of. Unless they seize control of a vessel that is recognised by those defensive systems, they immediately attack the craft. If the Heretics should choose to hijack some other vessel, then they would need to overcome those. Unless the vessel is a capable military craft, their attack upon the prison defences might be suicidal.

Trying to capture one of the vessels at Port Wander would be virtual suicide. The voidstation is well defended by its own armaments as well as several vessels of Battlefleet Calixis. While none of the likely target vessels are particularly well-suited for combat, their own defences would be of little concern relative to the vast weapons arrayed against them within this system.

The alternative, then, would be to target them during their journey between Port Wander and the prison world. Such an attack could be made when a voidship nears the edge of a system, far from immediate Imperial assistance. This sort of violent attack might result in the deaths of many crew members. Even if the Heretics replace them, the lack of familiar faces raises questions with security officers once they reach the prison world.

This strategy also requires the Heretics to have the assistance of a cooperative vessel to conduct the attack. For those who can be persuaded, they must learn the precise routes that their target ship travels between the two systems. The gulf between the two places is vast and the travel routes may fluctuate substantially. Finding and targeting the vessel can also be a tremendous challenge, requiring extensive legwork to discover their travel routes and a **Very Hard (-20) Navigate (Stellar) Test** to find the precise path used.

STOWAWAYS

Imperial vessels are several kilometres long craft with tens of thousands of crew. Even the intense scrutiny accorded to the vessels travelling to the prison worlds is imperfect. The Heretics have ample opportunity to infiltrate the ships and join in among the crew on either vessel. However, if spotted entering or exiting one of these ships, they would immediately draw the full attention of each ship's security forces. The response to their intrusions is fully lethal.

Similarly, while the crews are vast, the voidborn who fulfil their responsibilities have their own distinctive subcultures. Many of these idiosyncrasies vary in subtle ways from ship to ship. The Heretics may be hard pressed to blend in among the crew. They must be able to quickly earn the loyalty, or at least the silence, of their mates or suffer the wrath of the vessel's security.

It is, of course, possible as well for the characters to simply hide within the vast ships. In order to do this, they must have the supplies required for a three-week journey, or at least a strategy to secure them without drawing attention once they are aboard. While this strategy avoids the daily contact that they would face if attempting to blend in as crew, it lacks any sort of fallback explanation if they are discovered. While the crew and security forces are unlikely to be as well suited to combat as the characters, the ship's officers might be willing to vent an entire section of the ship to space if it seems a viable solution to deal with the Heretics.

THE JOURNEY

"No man is immune to the forces of corruption. The Warp can prey upon their souls, finding the chinks in the armour of their will."

—Sister Angst of the Unholy Writ

While the trip to Saint Annard's Penance should only take three weeks, the GM does not have to have the trip pass uneventfully. It matters not if they travel with prisoners destined for the world, among the crew of a vessel, or with other passengers journeying to the planet for their own reasons. The Heretics can interact freely with these other travellers and may find complications or even opportunities.

At the same time, they must be wary of discovery. While all of these ships are vast, they cannot hope to hide indefinitely. If they draw the ire of the wrong forces, their journey may be fraught with danger. An early misstep could turn the trip into a constant game of cat and mouse as the Heretics try to hide aboard a voidship. In such instances, the security forces that might seek them would be far more knowledgeable of the environs than the Player Characters could hope to be. No hiding place could be safe for the entire duration of the trip, no matter how much care they took in establishing it.

THE PASSENGERS

Depending upon the means of transit chosen and their place within the hierarchy of that vessel, the Heretics' journey may take on very different styles. The NPCs and associated Encounters in this section present a variety of archetypical

characters the Heretics could interact with and encounter on their voyage. The NPCs' authority and roles should vary within these different contexts. Each is presented with different options and strategies based upon these different environments, and a suggested scene. Game Masters are encouraged to consider various presentations for each character and modify them as appropriate for their group's preferred play style.

THE GUARD (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

This encounter works best if the Heretics have found some means to be passengers aboard a vessel (whether by chartering passage or by stowing away then joining amongst the passengers and crew of the ship). It could be adapted to work if the Heretics are pretending to be prisoners, however, the GM should adjust the encounter and the NPCs' attitudes towards the Heretics accordingly. In this case, the GM could also modify Jake Stovner to be a guard on the prison transport.

Jake Stovner, see page 124, is a bosun aboard whichever ship the players choose to take. Physically, Jake is an imposing specimen. He is young, handsome, in excellent physical condition, and has a glower that can thoroughly intimidate most lawbreakers. He is not an agent of the Imperium, merely a capable voidman. However, he longs to leave the voidcraft and join the Imperial Navy as an officer (even though this is unlikely to realistically happen due to the complex system of patronage and apprenticeship that governs commissioned officers-to-be). He spends every waking moment watching the ship's passengers or prisoners hoping to find some additional sign of heresy; if he can find evidence of malfeasance, he might be able to turn his findings into a promotion. He is a petty man with a small amount of power who longs to parlay it into greater authority.

Jake is fanatically loyal to the Imperium, but unclear on the specifics of his loyalty. His education is rudimentary at best. While he has a low cunning, he lacks the necessary understanding of Imperial law and teachings to always effectively take advantage of it. If the Heretics do anything suspicious, or the GM decides their disguises are less than ideal, he may have Stovner begin to take an interest in the Heretics and begin following them during their day-to-day activities. Jake begins stalking the characters, but tries to observe them in the act of something heretical prior to taking action. At least once per day of the journey, he makes an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Stealth vs. Awareness Test** against one of the Heretics. If the Heretic wins, he spots Jake watching. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Out of the corner of your eye, you notice that one of the ship's crew, a bosun by the looks of the uniform, is not-so-surreptitiously watching you intently. Though he is obviously trying to be discreet, his straight-backed posture and cleanly starched uniform make him stand out amongst the rest of the crew moving through the passageways. You also realize you've seen him following you before.

If Jake does compile enough evidence to present a case to the voidship's officers, there are few consequences. The guard has turned in someone on virtually every journey and none of his accusations have amounted to anything of consequence.

The ship's officers have tired of his endless antics and no longer take his presentations remotely seriously. However, it may mean his superiors start paying more attention to the Heretics, which could also be a problem. Interestingly, the biggest problem for the Heretics could come from them deciding to do something permanent to deal with Jake. If he vanishes, his superiors notice quickly and begin searching for the reason why.

Alternatively, it may be possible for the Heretics to redirect Jake's zeal. They might drop clues to incriminate another passenger or even recruit him to their cause. Jake starts out at a Disposition of **Hard (-10)** for Opposed Charm or Deceive Tests (**BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, page 276). If the Heretics can improve his Disposition to **Routine (+20)**, they can redirect his suspicions towards different passengers or crew on the ship. Similarly, they may be able to convince him that the vessel's officers are part of a grand conspiracy against the Imperium. He could become a valuable asset for the Heretics, as he has full access to the ship's stores, including the vessel's armoury.

The guard has seen hundreds of travellers pass through the vessel, many bound for the prison world. He knows that the world has vast mineral resources and substantial manufacturing capabilities. He believes that very few of the prisoners ever complete their sentences and return to the Imperium. To the best of his knowledge, most prisoners live out their lives in the brutal conditions, trying to make up for their crimes against humanity. He cares not about what crimes they might have committed. Rather, he believes that if the system found them guilty, then surely the punishments issued must be just. In spite of everything he has seen, he maintains his blind faith in the justice of the Imperial system, and trying to dissuade him from this faith may lead to him openly proclaiming the characters as blasphemers.

Even if the Heretics manage to enlist Jake's aid clandestinely, he can do little to help them once they leave the ship. The most he could do once they reach Saint Annard's Penance is ensure the Heretics' equipment is stowed aboard a supply shuttle or forge orders so that the Heretics can pretend to be crew sent down to deliver supplies to the prison.

THE AUDITOR (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

This encounter works best if the Heretics have found some means to be passengers aboard a vessel (whether by chartering passage or by stowing away then joining amongst the passengers and crew of the ship). It is unlikely the NPC would take interest in them if they're masquerading as prisoners.

Mao Fredericks (see page 125) is an adept within Lord Sector Marius Hax's Bureau for Penal Exchequers. An elderly man, he manoeuvres through the corridors of the vessel using a wheeled cybernetic replacement that is attached to his lower torso. Countless streams of ink-laden papers extend out from beneath his cloak. A printing mechanism constantly chatters away within his cybernetics, adding to the reams of paper that flow behind him. Two servitors faithfully follow his every step, collecting the papers that he constantly generates.

As he travels throughout the voidship, he stops regularly to inspect different functions and frequently pulls out a stopwatch that he uses to time the various maintenance tasks he sees the ship's voidmen complete. As he does this, he mutters about efficiency and resource allocation.

Fredericks has two additional guards (use the Imperial Guardsman from page 364 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) assigned to him, but they seldom accompany him as he travels the vessel. Shortly after he departed Scintilla to begin his journey, Fredericks came to the conclusion that the guards were an inefficient waste of manpower. As such, he has instructed the guards to assist with the voidship's overall security. Neither guard is willing to take the risk of disobeying the elderly man, but they are also unwilling to allow him to come to harm. Consequently, the two take turns following his every move as he travels the ship. They try to remain inconspicuous and, due to the man's focus on efficiency and waste, they are generally able to do so.

Adept Fredericks is travelling to Saint Annard's Penance because of irregularities in the reports of their Manufactorum and mining reports. According to the numbers he has received, the plants are using almost a full percent more raw material than they should to generate their manufactured products. That lone percent translates into hundreds of thousands of tons of raw mineral ore annually. He finds the very notion of such waste a complete anathema to his beliefs. He has undertaken this mission under his own authority to see the problem resolved with due haste.

Worse yet, Fredericks fears that this material is being siphoned off for some other purpose rather than simply being wasted. In such a case, someone might not be paying the requisite taxes upon their profits. He despises those who might even consider not paying their due tithe to the Imperium. He plans to fully audit all of the prison's manufacturing and mining records, so that he can see to it that everything has been done above board. He also plans to conduct extensive field audits, taking care to be certain that the bookkeeping accurately reflects the practical reality.

The elderly man believes fiercely in the divine nature of the Imperium and in mankind's duty to live up to its full potential. He is, however, such a fanatic for the notion of efficiency and integrity that he often loses sight of the larger picture. He never questions the status quo; he merely ensures that records are kept properly and that appropriate taxes are paid. When the characters are travelling one of the vessel's halls, read or paraphrase the following:

The rapid chatter of an autscribe echoes through the otherwise quiet passage. Rounding a bend, you find an elderly adept berating two voidmen who are attempting to repaint a stretch of piping the adept is blocking. As you approach, he loudly proclaims, "My writ says that I can make both of you prisoners when we reach Penance. Keep failing to meet efficiency standards and I'll see that it happens." He turns from them, watch in hand, and makes eye contact with you. "And who are you? Are you authorised to be in this section of the vessel?"

Adept Fredericks begins at a Disposition of **Difficult (-10)** for Opposed Charm or Deception Tests. He might be drawn to assist the Heretics if they improve his disposition to **Routine (+20)**. Because of his standing as an Adept, Fredericks has a great deal of authority over the prison's guards. His identification and writ of authorisation from his bureau grants him full clearance to travel the offices, records, and work areas of the prison world. His clearance also grants him the authority to bring guards of his own choosing with

OTHER TRANSIT

These characters are best suited for use as fellow passengers aboard one of the Imperial vessels bound for Saint Annard's Penance. However, the Player Characters might choose to travel in a decidedly different fashion. While none of these Encounters are essential to the scenario, they offer the Heretics a number of options which could simplify their tasks during their time on the prison world. Some Game Masters might want to adapt these characters for use with other types of trips, so that the Heretics could still have a chance to exploit these features. Without these different short cuts, gaining insight and control of the world's population could be decidedly more challenging, especially given the restrictions of their time frame.

The way that the Player Characters choose to travel to the prison world should become clear prior to their departure from Port Wander. If there is a reasonable amount of time between when they finish devising their plan and when they leave, that may be the easiest time and place to introduce these fellow travellers. All of these NPCs must change ships at the voidstation. Consequently, that common stopover point could be a prime opportunity for the Heretics to meet, corrupt, and exploit them.

If the Player Characters have chosen to travel aboard a Chaos vessel, one or more of these characters might be prisoners. Alternatively, they might even have already been turned to rebel against the Imperium by another NPC. In a situation like this, the Heretics would no longer need to corrupt the passengers to gain their assistance. Instead, they would need to draw them to their cause, rather than the cause of some other force.

In a similar vein, it might be that someone had already taken the NPCs' artefacts of interest. The Player Characters might be able to acquire identification comparable to that possessed by Adept Fredericks or Bahli Mercora. Another character might already have a way to get gear and weapons to the surface of the prison world. These NPCs should offer an opportunity for entertaining roleplaying, but even if that cannot be accommodated it is worthwhile to consider allowing the Heretics to acquire the means to more effectively complete their goal of domination.

him during the field research and charges the prison officers to keep him safe at all costs. If the Heretics could subvert him or even recover his papers and impersonate him, they might be able to travel throughout the most secure portions of Saint Annard's Penance with little fear of repercussion.

At the same time, Fredericks is wary of the taint of corruption. He knows that those who have been subverted away from the purity of the Imperial way are the ones most likely to waste the Imperium's assets and typically fail to document any such waste. He believes that every conversation must be recorded and prefers to personally verify the identities—through official paperwork—of everyone with whom he speaks. Presenting falsified paperwork results in an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Deceive vs Scrutiny Test**.

THE FANATIC (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

Sister Bahli Mercora (see page 126) is a missionary belonging to one of the myriad cults of Saint Castor the Obviate, revered by the Calixian Ecclesiarchy as a remover of obstacles and patron of truth. She is travelling to Saint Annard's Penance because she believes that service among those who have turned from the God-Emperor's light is her true calling. She believes the truth is the bastion of her faith, and that her faith purifies and protects her. However, because the Calixian Ecclesiarchy is primarily a militant church, she carries a blessed chainsword, given to her by her order when she left Hive Tarsus on Scintilla.

The religious woman spends little time interacting with the vessel's other passengers or crew. They are most likely to only see her at mealtime, when she quietly takes simple meals, eating them alone. She always dresses in a black and red veil that bears the sigils and inscriptions of her order.

Sister Mercora is a fanatic in her beliefs. Swaying her from them is a monumental task. However, there is one exploitable flaw in her belief, and that is her convictions that the truth is fundamental to her faith. If the Heretics can

change her beliefs as to what "the truth" is, they could warp her beliefs and redirect them to a different allegiance. The nature of her personality is such that she would undoubtedly be every bit as zealous to her new set of beliefs as she was to her prior set.

If the characters publicly discuss anything that might fall under the purview of the Imperial Faith, she approaches them to correct their understandings. Read or paraphrase the following:

A woman wearing a black robe with a red veil approaches you and says, "I don't believe you're interpreting those matters correctly." She gives a small smile and continues, "Would you be willing to discuss this further? I'm sure we could enlighten one another to the God-Emperor's true way." You notice that amongst the gold sigils woven into her robes is the symbol of the Ecclesiarchy with a stylised eye in place of the skull, perhaps the symbol of a specific martyr or saint. You also notice a thick scroll that bears Ecclesiarchy and Administratum emblems attached to her belt—clearly high-ranking travel authority.

The Holy woman begins the Encounter with a Disposition of **Difficult (-10)** for any Interaction Skill Tests. If the Heretics can improve her disposition to **Routine (+20)**, she willingly shares her story and her mission to Saint Annard's Penance. However, if her Disposition falls to **Hard (-20)**, her suspicions become aroused. For the remainder of the journey, she haunts the Player Characters. If she sees them performing heretical actions, she summons a squad of eight armymen (use the Cult Zealot from page 360 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), to capture and imprison them.

Because of her known loyalty to the Ecclesiarchy, Sister Mercora has already been granted permission to travel freely among the prison blocks. A Heretic who gained access to her paperwork could adjust the paperwork to indicate that

it provided clearance for multiple individuals, giving the impression that they were all followers of the Cult of the Sacred Martyr. This requires a **Routine (+20) Security Test**. Each Degree of Success incurs a -10 penalty to any Scrutiny Tests to see through the forgery.

Another important point of her paperwork is that it indicates the bearer is exempt from inspection from the Adeptus Arbites or Battlefleet Calixis on orders of the Adeptus Ministorum. Though intended specifically to get Mercora from Scintilla to Saint Annard's Penance, the wording is vague enough that it could apply to a group of individuals, such as the Heretics. If the Heretics were to acquire this writ—or fall under its protection—they could avoid inspection of any weapons, gear, or cybernetics that they wished to transport to the planet.

Unfortunately, Sister Mercora is difficult to turn from her path. She is fervent in her beliefs and reluctant to hear any ideas that contradict them. Her initial response to arguments against her faith is to retreat from those who would make them. If she has any reason to believe that the Heretics are not true servants of the Imperium, she works hard to avoid them. If sufficiently concerned, she may even ask the ship's security to watch the Heretics.

ARRIVAL

"The whole of the Imperium is simply a prison for mankind's souls, hopes, and dreams. The corpse god devours those dreams just as he shackles their bodies to his engines."

—Dark Apostle Aurelius of the Word Bearers

The system of Saint Annard's Penance is well defended against incursion from Chaos or xenos forces. The manufactories represent a significant asset for the Sub-sector. Many of the world's prisoners also have extensive knowledge about the function and command structure of the Calixis Sector. The Imperium can ill afford for either this information or for those supplies to be used against them. Even to an organisation as vast as the Imperium of Man, a planet full of slave labour and mineral wealth represents a substantial holding that would be hard to replace.

VOID DEFENCES

As mentioned in the Gazetteer (see page 5) several ships operating on detachment from Battlefleet Calixis defend the system. A number of intrasystem defence craft and a well-armed voidstation provide additional support. Unless the Heretics have somehow gained control of a warp-capable starship, there is no way for them to directly confront these defences. Even then, they would need several cruiser class vessels to directly confront the defences, which is outside the adventure's scope.

If the characters travel to the system aboard one of the prisoner transports or *Bellum Commmercium*, then the void defences are likely moot. The defenders recognise all of those vessels by sight and by their clearance codes. They also know the command staff well and recognise the voices of the communications officers who typically operate the vox. These NPCs have been interacting regularly for years. They share an established working

relationship, which allows them to comfortably ignore some of the more stringent security protocols.

Of course, if the Heretics have overthrown the bridge crew, this could pose a problem. While the defenders are reluctant to fire upon their comrades, they are also concerned about what happened to their friends. Unless they are quick to develop a good excuse for why a voice differs or a particular officer is absent, they might attract unwanted attention. This would require a successful **Challenging (+0) Opposed Deceive Test**. Failure result in an immediate attack by the system's full network of Imperial defences. The characters must hurry to a shuttle or salvation pod, and attempt to pilot through the defences to the surface, as their voidship is destroyed (see Silent Insertion, page 40).

Some Heretics who have control of a vessel might choose to attempt to rely upon stealth as they enter the system rather than relying upon deception or brute force. While this may be a safer approach than directly confronting the defenders, it is not necessarily viable. Even if their vessel travels on silent running, the planet's defences maintain a constant active scan. If the Heretics are somehow stealthy enough to penetrate the void defences, they are unlikely to make landfall without some of the planet's defenders becoming aware of their presence. The GM should carefully consider the steps that they have taken to remain unseen.

INSPECTIONS

If the Heretics have chosen to travel all the way to the prison world aboard one of the transports, then they are unlikely to encounter any difficulties from the system's void-based defences. Those vessels are well known to the defenders, and have all of the appropriate security protocols to be safely passed through. However, even these craft are subject to the prison world's standard entry procedures. Each ship is boarded. All passengers, cargo and prisoners are inspected to make certain that nothing untoward is transported to the prison's surface.

The guards are most concerned with the presence of weapons, armour cybernetic augmentics that might have undue combat capabilities, and any contraband. Although many mutants (sometimes referred to as "twists") are sent to the world as prisoners, any excessive or particularly terrible mutations are likely to earn a bolt round to the head. Weapons are seized and may be destroyed. Mutations and cybernetics are removed, with little concern for the prisoner's survival. Therefore, any such items must be smuggled in.

Sargeant-at-Arms Severus Hamil is the security officer seconded from the local Battlefleet Calixis presence, and is the individual the Heretics interact with if they try to enter the planet openly. He personally takes charge of the inspections, and believes in being thorough. Each transport or shuttle set to land on the planet is inspected prior to loading. Prisoners and passengers are then individually checked, as they board transports destined for the surface. Any cargo containers receive a more cursory examination. Typically, if the seals appear to be intact, the security officers are unlikely to open them to search their contents.

If the Heretics stole or forged documents from any of the NPCs aboard the vessel earlier in the act, this is the first time that they would be thoroughly scrutinised. Hamil takes great pride in his work but remains deferential to those who have authority over him. If the Heretics are travelling under an effective cover, he

could go so far as to have his men load cargo that might even be crucial for their overthrow of the prison world. However, if he is able to see through their deception, he makes every effort to bring a potent and lethal response into play against their deception. When they approach Hamil, read or paraphrase the following:

The Navy officer looks as though he just stepped out of an Imperial recruitment poster, his boots shined, greatcoat buttons gleaming, and heavy Naval pistol oiled and cleaned. He nods a bit pompously in your direction. "By the authority of the Emperor and His Holy Navy, I must see your identification and inspect your items before you descend to Saint Annard's Penance." He snaps his fingers and several of the Naval armsmen standing behind him move forward. "Now, please present your belongings and authority for inspection."

Luckily, Hamil is rushed in his inspection of the Heretics' documentation. He makes a **Difficult (-10) Scrutiny Test** to penetrate any deception. If the characters are attempting to smuggle weapons or items on their persons, they must make an **Ordinary (+10) Stealth Test** to sneak them past the distracted and harried guards.

The Navy armsmen handling the inspections (use the Imperial Guardsman from page 364 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) work in six man teams and are dispatched throughout the various hangars, passenger, and cargo areas of the vessel. The inspections are thorough, and typically involve searches through portions of the craft that might have seemed completely abandoned throughout the journey. If the Heretics stowed away and remained hidden from the craft for the entirety of the journey, they must succeed at a **Opposed Challenging (+0) Stealth vs Awareness Test** or they are discovered. Alternatively, even if they have already moved to one of the landing shuttles, the inspectors become suspicious if they find evidence that the Heretics spent an extended habitation in a portion of the craft that should be unoccupied. In this case, the Heretics suffer a -10 penalty to all Stealth Tests.

If an alarm is set off during the inspection or if the inspectors fail to report in at pre-designated intervals, the voidstation and several of the intrasystem patrol craft also enter heightened alertness states. Though neither wants to open fire on a transport, they recognise their obligation to do so if the transport has been identified as a threat to system security. If Hamil and his units enter into combat, any survivors call in an immediate strike as they attempt to flee the transport. This might also lead to the Heretics landing on the surface aboard a life pod or a landing shuttle that they launched at the last possible moment. In such an instance, see Silent Insertion on this page.

Severus Hamil

A young officer recently assigned to Saint Annard's Penance, Lieutenant Major Hamil is a fanatical in his devotion to the Imperium and his faith in the system. He comes from a long line of Imperial Officers, though he is the youngest of a large family. He was assigned to this backwater world because he his family lacked the resources to requisition a more influential placement, but he retains a number of contacts within Battlefleet Calixis. If Hamil can garner a significant success—such as uncovering a nest

of heretics attempting to infiltrate the prison world he is charged with defending—he might gain a promotion to a better berth.

Growing up within the Imperial Navy, Hamil encountered many ranking Imperial nobles and members of the Ecclesiarchy. He has learned to be deferential to these vaunted powers, as he has seen the consequences suffered by those who failed to show the proper respect. These ideas are so thoroughly ingrained in his mind that he is often reluctant to take action against a document that might be forged. After all, there are many worlds of the Imperium and many different formats for the appropriate identification papers. Ultimately, he may rely upon his experience with the nobility as much as he relies on his recognition of the proper forms. If an individual's mannerisms and courtesies are inconsistent with the identity presented, he is far more likely to take action.

LANDING ON THE PLANET

Arrival at Saint Annard's Penance is merely a stop on the Heretics' path towards domination of the world, but it is an essential next stage. The characters must make landfall and begin to develop their network of contacts on the planet. In order to gain some control over the world and to gather the resources necessary for their dark ritual, the characters must become firmly entrenched as members of the prison world's population. This becomes far simpler if they can arrive with their equipment intact and without attracting any undue interest from the planet's defenders.

Conversely, if the characters are the subject of a manhunt or if they have had most of their gear seized, then the entire task becomes dramatically more challenging. It should be in their best interest to make a quiet insertion, preferably under some sort of false identity that would avoid undue attention. This section of the scenario considers the varied approaches that the Heretics might take, and poses complications and solutions for some of the most likely methods.

LANDING SAFELY

Different groups of Heretics invariably take different paths to the same goal. These approaches should suit their talents, but there is merit in considering the best approach for a given task. As the Heretics begin their infiltration of the prison world, some approaches are certain to be far easier than others. Game Masters are encouraged to make certain that the Heretics consider all of their options before embarking on a hasty plan that might have disastrous consequences.

SILENT INSERTION

Chaos often establishes a presence within the Imperium far from the prying eyes of its guardians. Cults thrive within the slums of hive worlds, where both the nobility and enforcers fear to tread. In this way, they succeed by preying upon the weak masses and by avoiding the presence of those few individuals who are too willful to easily overcome. The Heretics might decide that this approach is the most viable one, seeking to avoid the prison world's active guards and working directly with the prisoners.

In order to reach the surface in this way, they would need to make planetfall without attracting any Imperial attention.



This might require a trip aboard a shuttle stolen from the craft that brought them to the planet or in a rescue pod from a damaged vessel. Neither of these have the proper clearance, which could make an inconspicuous landing extremely difficult. The planet is vast, and the major prison structures occupy a relatively tiny portion of its landmass. However, the system's defenders have active satellites and orbital watch installations that safeguard all approaches. Unless they have some means to overcome those defences, they are likely to attract the very attention they are trying to avoid.

One means to overcome this could be to thoroughly analyse the satellites and determine when and where there might be blind spots in their coverage. Finding such a gap would either require access to the system's defence network—most likely gained from the security voidstation—or the time and opportunity to conduct a thorough sensor scan of the system's satellites using the auspex of a starship. Doing so requires a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test**. Alternatively, any of the Imperial landing shuttles possess a link to the defensive satellites, but using it to identify their scanning regions would be exceptionally difficult. Increase the difficulty to an **Arduous (-40) Test** when using a shuttle's systems. Either option takes an hour of time, which may be reduced by 10 minutes for each Degree of Success. If they suffer two or more Degrees of Failure on the test, they trigger a security alarm, which draws the direct attention of a 15 member squad of Arbitrators (see page 128) who meet them at their landing site.

With this information in hand, the characters may attempt to fly a shuttle through such a gap. This is a tricky bit of piloting, as even within these blind spots, an excessive use of the ships engines and piloting thrusters could expand the effective range of any of the satellites' detection systems. Similarly, entering an atmosphere too quickly could generate excess heat which might endanger the passengers and also set off warning alarms on the monitoring satellites from an extended range. Finding the precise middle ground requires a **Hard (-20) Operate (Aeronautica) Test**.

Note that by necessity, none of the gaps in the orbital watch networks are near the prison. Any character who succeeds at an **Easy (+30) Operate (Aeronautica) Test** realises that unless the shuttle travels far beyond the prison's horizon, they are easily visible from the prison's defenders. Because of this, the characters must be prepared to travel overland to reach prison even after they make planetfall. This can add a substantial challenge for the Heretics, as the planet is inimical to human life. Standard shuttles and rescue pods carry adequate supplies to keep the group alive and healthy on the planet's surface for two weeks. Beyond that, the Heretics need to score a number of Degrees of Success equal to the number of individuals in their party on **Challenging (+0) Survival Tests**. Anyone in the party may make these Tests, and these successes may be shared, but any Heretics not benefiting from a Success suffer 1d5 wounds which ignore Armour and Toughness Bonus each day.

Even after they come within visual sight of the prison complex, they continue to face further challenges. As described in the Gazetteer, the prison is walled off from the rest of the planet. No one is expected to roam the wastelands outside. The Player Characters must establish a reasonable plan to infiltrate the prison structures, or else their quiet arrival could be for naught.

One possible strategy is to attempt to travel into the mines through one of the world's labyrinthine tunnels. Through centuries of mining, the prison has created vast catacombs that extend far beyond its surface footprint. Airshafts were required in order to permit the miners to survive deep below the earth. However, most of these airshafts are sealed over to prevent the possibility of escaping prisoners. Many of these shafts have been mined out, and after they were abandoned some collapsed. However, this vast and complex network represents the least defended path into the prison complex. Finding the mineshafts with mapping data that a shuttle or rescue pod compiled during entry is a **Routine (+20) Navigate Surface Test**.

Once the Heretics are on the surface, they have to enter the prison complex itself. This is covered more in the beginning of Chapter II.

OVERT PRESENCE

There are institutions within the Imperium that are considered above reproach. Few dare to question an Inquisitor regarding his actions. It is a rare noble that would dare to question the judgement of an Imperial governor. The Adepts of the Administratum Terra control the ebb and flow the resources that may represent a planet's lifeblood. When Chaos can gain a foothold within an individual or organisation at these high levels, they can truly begin to institute change within the Imperium of Man.

Through their own machinations or by exploiting some of the passengers they met on their journey to Saint Annard's Penance, the Heretics may have gained the appropriate documentation to place them in just such a position. While maintaining such a ruse might be inviable over an extended period, the world's relative isolation works in their favour. Even if some of the Imperial forces become wary of their philosophies and actions, most would prefer be sure in their suspicions prior to taking direct action against them.

The prison does have an Astropath assigned to it, but the world's proximity to the warp storms of the Halo Margins make astropathic communications unreliable. It takes 2+1d5 weeks for the prison's astropath to send a message and receive a confirmation that the Heretics are, in fact, impostors. (Of course, the GM should not let his players know how much time they have before a response comes back, just that it make take several weeks. This should serve to keep the Heretics hurried and under pressure.) Given such a lengthy time frame, the Heretics might be able to completely implement their ritual before their duplicity could be uncovered. Further, unless they make a horrible first impression, the system's Imperial officers would be slow to question the Heretics' authority. After all, the prison world is a backwater far from the cultural centres of the Calixis Sector. Current fashions, philosophies, and practices do vary over time even within an institution as static and steadfast as the Imperium of Man. Alternatively, the characters might simply use this method to infiltrate and then discard their disguises as they vanished among the vast prisoner population.

Because of this opportunity, the Heretics might be able to effectively initiate their infiltration in an incredibly brazen and up front manner. By taking advantage of the privileges of their false identity, they might be able to bypass many of the standard Imperial security protocols, and even attempt to directly requisition some of the planet's military resources. Such an action would be incredibly daring and could have brutal consequences if it were to fail. However, if successful, the characters might soon garner a substantial degree of control over the system without needing to fire a single weapon. This requires several **Opposed Challenging (+0) Deceive vs Scrutiny Tests** against the Arbitrators and the prison authorities such as the Warden and Imperial Guard commander (see page 123 and 127). Any Imperial officials on the planet start with a **Suspicious (-10) Disposition**.

A more conservative approach would be for the Heretics to simply use their identification as a means of entry, working under the auspice of a lower-ranking member of the nobility than one who might have the more grandiose authority. With this approach, the characters could ensure that their gear was transported to the planet without incident and that they avoid the more demeaning inspections. This requires an **Ordinary (+10) Deceive Test**, against Arbitrators (see page 128) with an **Indifferent (+0) Disposition**. This method would also provide the Player Characters with more affluent living conditions during their stay. Finally, they would gain access to the more influential members of the planet's Imperial forces. In this way, they garner an opportunity to gain control of those forces by corrupting them into following the path of the Ruinous Powers.

The most conservative, but potentially most dangerous approach is for the Heretics to simply enter the planet as prisoners. In doing so, there would be little fear of discovery, for their true identities would be consistent with those of the millions of others sent to the world to complete their penance. However, the prisoners have no rights or privileges. The only way they might recover their gear is if a smuggler delivered it to them, but as prisoners they would have no way of punishing a smuggler who failed to fulfil a promise.

Once the Heretics are on the planet, their next moves are covered in the beginning of Chapter II.

THE DIRECT APPROACH

Some groups of Heretics may have the resources or the inclination to simply launch a direct assault against Saint Annard's Penance. Organising and coordinating an action of this magnitude is extremely difficult. Preserving all or most of the planet's resources intact while trying to eliminate the defenders is even more challenging.

This section discusses the difficulties involved briefly. However, this adventure does not cover this in detail, as such events are outside the scope of this adventure.

Naval Elements

The prison world is very well defended. Those defenders are firmly entrenched among the prison population, the manufacturums, and directly above the mining complexes. The attackers would need to first overcome the Imperial Navy's voidstation and its defence craft. For, if the planet were lost to Chaos forces, those vessels would not hesitate to launch an all-out attack against the planet's surface. The Imperium would far rather see all life on the planet lost than see the world and all its secrets change allegiance to the Ruinous Powers.

The Heretics need at least a small fleet of vessels to overcome the Imperial Navy forces already in the system. Some characters might already have such a resource at their beck and call. If so, they would need to accept the fact that they might incur significant losses to any fleet in such an engagement. This battle constitutes a major engagement and might constitute one of the early stages of their Black Crusade.

Ground Elements

Because this is a prison world, security elements are integrally built into every structure of worth. Guards constantly patrol all of the work floors within each manufactorum. The prison's defensive walls are immense structures that are well defended against any sort of escape effort. Guard fortifications are distributed throughout the exterior and interior of the prison, with armouries located for the Arbitrators at each precinct.

Certainly the majority of these structures are built to withstand a rebellion led by poorly-armed prisoners, but they still maintain a significant degree of effectiveness against a better equipped invasion. Similarly, while many of the armaments and defensive systems are designed to prevent escape, with appropriate warning the defenders could reposition these weapons to establish an effective perimeter.

It should also be noted that if the Warden was presented with a full-fledged planetary invasion and potential

prisoner uprising, he might well order the prisoners executed en masse so that he could focus on the invasion from without. Such actions would be exceedingly drastic, as it would cripple the prison's production capability for years or even decades. However, a full planetary invasion could well warrant such a step.

In the end, attacking the prison directly would be little different than attacking any other heavily defended fortress. Even if the Heretics could muster an army capable of taking Saint Annard's Penance, they would have to do so quickly, because the armed forces of the Imperium in the Calixis Sector would quickly respond and crush the Heretics and their army. For these reasons, this adventure does not focus on this course of action.

LIVING CONDITIONS

The means by which the characters infiltrated Saint Annard's Penance dictate the conditions in which they live. Some characters might be forced to contend with the hostile environs as they dwell far from the prison. Other characters could be packed into the prison habitat like sardines, trying to deal with their fellow prisoners and the cruelties of the guards. In stark contrast, some of the more cunning Heretics might have made arrangements to live like nobles as they stay within the governor's palatial estate. These different conditions set an initial tone and strongly influence the characters with whom they interact as they work to dominate their new home.

Inmates

If the characters entered the world as prisoners, then they must contend with difficulties involved in maintaining that cover. Unless they have some extraordinary resources, for all practical purposes they actually become prisoners of the Imperium. They can, of course, attempt to break free, but they are effectively trapped on a prison world. The Arbitrators have them under watch at all time.

That observation represents the biggest challenge for the characters in researching and preparing their dark ritual through the remainder of the adventure. While the Heretics may be able to make the necessary contacts and discover the appropriate information, the Enforcers are nearly omnipresent. Anywhere within the manufacturums and in many portions of the mines, guards are positioned to make certain that prisoners are fulfilling their debt to the Imperium. Certainly the noises within the factory and the masses of prisoners offer some degree of concealment to hold a private conversation, but the Player Characters are hard pressed to find a place and a time to intently study an unholy tome or to draw out the symbols required to prepare their ritual.

Another potential issue is that any equipment beyond their prison garb is likely to have been seized. This includes the book with the background information on the dark ritual and all of their weapons. The Heretics may have made arrangements to recover some of these items. However, even if they have them, they may not have a safe place to stow them. The best way to smuggle equipment into the prison was to conceal it amongst supplies being sent in, in which case the Heretics should have secreted some sort of tracking device with them so they could be located later.

In addition to the cramped living conditions and abject squalor of the prison, the characters may have little control over where they are assigned. If the different Heretics have different physical builds, it is entirely possible that one might be assigned to work in the mines while another is sent to an assembly line. With a prison population of millions, such a separation could mean that they might not see one another for months or years at a time. If the characters wish to remain united and maintain communication with one another, they may need to take extreme measures.

Nobles

Player Characters who acquire the resources to enter the world as nobility, diplomats, or high-ranking merchants have a very different experience on Saint Annard's Penance. These characters are typically housed within the luxury suites of the Governor's Mansion. They are treated as honoured guests. Their gear undergoes only the most cursory of inspections. While they have guards assigned, those guards may be easily bribed to see nothing. Alternatively, they might even be corrupted to follow the path of the Dark Gods.

For characters in this environment, the prison world is an unpleasant place to live, but certainly a lovely place to visit. Their only obligations are meetings to maintain their cover story and social engagements of some sort each evening. Whenever they travel the prison—they may do so freely—guards escort them. In contrast to the life of an inmate, these guards serve to protect them rather than to hold them.



The gravest danger in this approach for the Player Character is if they are caught in acts of heresy. The Arbitrators assigned to guard them are deeply devoted to the cause of the Imperium. The other guests are loyal servants of the Imperium. If things go badly awry, the Heretics could easily be captured and imprisoned among the masses. If that were to happen, continuing their plan would be substantially complicated, as they would subject to even further scrutiny.

Outsiders

Some groups of Player Characters may decide that the best approach is to live apart from the prison complex. The world of Saint Annard's Penance is a barren wasteland. Few venture far from the prison as there are almost none of the resources necessary to survive.

This provides the substantial benefit that the characters are unlikely to encounter any resistance or nosy guards while they prepare their ritual. None of their gear would be seized and they could freely spend time researching and practising the steps as they prepare to perform their great act in the service of the Ruinous Powers. Further, the characters need not worry about other prisoners or nobles betraying them, as none are present.

However, they also have access to none of the resources they need for their ritual or their survival. Unless they somehow acquired all of the necessary components earlier, the characters must travel into the prison compound to gather what they need. Once they have everything assembled, they may need to pass out of the prison. Multiple entrances and escape attempts could soon leave the prison on higher alert and ultimately lead to a much more dangerous series of Encounters with the guards.

The characters must also find some way to survive in the barren wasteland. There are many ancient caverns present, which might offer shelter from the scouring winds. However, their air filters, foodstuffs, and other provisions are finite. The amount of raw materials required to maintain a group of individuals in an environment without food, water, or even breathable air is substantial enough that even transporting it may be a challenge.

CONSEQUENCES

This section of the adventure arc is completed once the Heretics have arrived upon Saint Annard's Penance. Depending upon how they travelled and the conditions under which they made planetfall, the characters could be living in luxury or in squalor. The challenges they face under either set of circumstances vary substantially. Some Game Masters might wish to insert additional scenarios prior to beginning the next act of the campaign. These could focus on the characters adapting to life on the prison world and establishing their network of contacts and even acquiring new minions.

The task of preparing and conducting their dark ritual to transition the planet into the Screaming Vortex continues as part of the next scenario within this adventure arc. The Heretics should consider the limited time frame available to conduct their unholy ritual and the components that they must gather to complete it. If inserting additional activities between these scenarios, the Heretics should keep track of how much time has passed. This may be further influenced by the way they chose to travel to the prison world. While some characters may have

many months to complete their preparations, a few might have scarce weeks remaining before the window closes.

As they continue preparing to conduct their dark ritual, it is also crucial for the characters to consider what assets they have at hand. Those who have accepted internment as prisoners may have only the most limited of resources. In contrast, those who chose to invade the planet may have an army at their beck and call. Game Masters must be prepared to deal with the varied assets in this broad range of possibilities, so that later Encounters are presented in a way that is proportionate to their capabilities. At the same time, no matter their situation, the Player Characters should be challenged to use their assets wisely. Undue squandering of the tools they have acquired could very well be the direct cause of failure.

Crucial to their next steps is how the characters choose to establish a network of contacts on Saint Annard's Penance. The NPCs present them with a broad range of opportunities that can make the task before them far simpler or far more challenging. The characters must focus on deciding whom they should avoid and which targets are the ripest for recruitment to the service of the Ruinous Powers.

REWARDS

Characters who successfully complete this scenario earn Experience points for their service. This Experience is above and beyond what players might normally earn according to In addition to the rewards included here, Game Masters may choose to grant additional awards for excellent roleplaying as indicated on page 266 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

Experience Awards

Characters receive Experience Points for successfully navigating the challenges of this adventure. Consider how the Heretics overcame or avoided each of the following challenges, and award experience as appropriate.

- 150 xp: Finding passage off Kurse with *De Orbis Mysteriis*.
- 50 xp: Acquiring Kahli as a slave from Corbin.
- 75 xp: Escaping the Screaming Vortex and returning to the physical galaxy.
- 150 xp: Successfully infiltrating Port Wander without causing a major incident.
- 150 xp: Arranging transport to Saint Annard's Penance.
- 50 xp: For each NPC passenger corrupted to the forces of Chaos.
- 100 xp: Undergoing the security inspection prior to landing on the prison world.
- 200 xp: Safely landing on the prison world.



REVOLT AND RUIN



THE APPROACH
•
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•
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AFTERMATH



CHAPTER II: REVOLT AND RUIN

"The Dark Gods help those who help themselves."

—Lord Deon Algonnac, Reaver of the Unknowable Void

After their long travel from the Screaming Vortex, the Heretics at last find themselves on Saint Annard's Penance. The work ahead of them is daunting indeed. With little more than an ancient, largely unintelligible book of dubious provenance and the word of a violent, cross-grained slave they must set about the work of enacting a dark ritual that, if successful, will ultimately bring the penal world into the bosom of the Screaming Vortex. The Heretics cannot achieve this alone, however. They need allies, powerful allies who can provide aid and materiel to their dark cause. The teeming, hive-like environs of the penal colony contain some potential allies for the cause. First, the Heretics must find and locate these individuals.

Throughout the unfolding events of Chapter II, the Heretics must accomplish no less than fomenting planetary insurrection against the Imperium of Man. To this end they must sow the seeds of their ultimate triumph by infiltrating the prison population, navigating its dangerous, byzantine social and political structures, making allies, and finally drawing Saint Annard's Penance into the Screaming Vortex. This is demanding work that requires equal parts finesse and brute force. The Heretics must engage in both delicate negotiations and a fair amount of arm twisting and head cracking to get their way. Through it all, the Heretics must avoid the facility's many sharp eyed Arbitrators and the unblinking, all seeing eyes of the countless thousands of pict-recorders that are scattered throughout the colony.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter II begins with the Heretics entering the prison complex proper. The means by which they enter may vary depending on the means of their arrival. Once there, they must ally themselves with one of the factions that controls the prison, in order to foment prison-wide unrest and an eventual riot. They must also scout out the most auspicious location for their ritual to take place. Finally, they must uncover the identities of the four sacrifices they need to make.

Under the cover of the riot, the Heretics have the opportunity to accomplish their true goal. For the ritual to occur, they must kidnap four powerful members of the Imperial hierarchy and bring them alive to the site of the ritual. They must also coerce a number of followers to help prepare the ceremony itself.

Finally, they must conduct the ritual itself, performing it correctly so that Saint Annard's Penance and all its inhabitants are drawn through the warp and into the Screaming Vortex.

THE APPROACH

The challenges the Heretics face are substantial. To conduct the ritual, they must kidnap four prominent leaders of Saint Annard's Penance. They then must conduct the ritual itself (an elaborate and grandiose affair) in a prominent location within the prison, sacrificing these four individuals at the correct moment.

All this makes their task difficult, and also shapes the approach they must take to accomplish it. The Heretics may have arrived on the world of Saint Annard's Penance as prisoners, infiltrators, or even disguised as Imperial officials. Regardless of their methods, they must eventually make their way into the bowels of the prison itself. Only away from the prying eyes of the Imperial overseers can they hope to plan their goals.

Some groups who managed to infiltrate the prison with intact cover stories and are masquerading as Imperial officials may be tempted to try and accomplish all their tasks incognito. Unfortunately, the chances of this succeeding are slim. Each individual is an important part of the day-to-day workings of the world, constantly surrounded by underlings and guards. A successful kidnapping is sure to be noticed and sets off an immediate, all-out manhunt for the perpetrators and the victims. Even if the Heretics manage to kidnap all four individuals, they must still smuggle 63 participants into the correct location for the ritual—the Hall of Justice. They then must hold the top floors of the Tower of Judgement from determined Adeptus Arbites and Imperial Guard assault for several hours, until the ritual is completed. The GM would not be limiting his players by saying this approach fails, he would just be realistic.

Instead, the Heretics must follow a different approach. By gaining access to the prison's population of traitors, mutants, scum, and recidivists, they can foment a prison-wide insurrection. In the chaos of a planet-wide prison uprising, the Heretics have a much better chance of kidnapping their victims and taking control of the Hall of Justice long enough to finish the ritual. In short, they can't accomplish their goals without inside help.

OVER THE WALL

The first thing the Heretics must do is make an entrance into the prisons. As an entire planet devoted to prison complexes, Saint Annard's Penance is cordoned off into a variety of separate locations. There is traffic between the separate locations (for example, prisoners move constantly between their hab blocks, the manufactorums where they work, the Cathedral where they worship, and back to their habs). However, guards, walls, razor wire, and other defences separate where the prisoners work and where they are kept at other times. The Heretics must gain access to the prisoners, and that means breaking into the controlled aspects of the prison.

Kahli offers the suggestion that the Heretics should go to the warren of mines beneath the prison proper to enlist support. She has an old friend who is a veteran of the prison realm, named Jarvis Helliman. Jarvis passes freely between his hab block and the mine warrens via a secret route that gets him down into the mines.

The mine network is far too massive to search for Jarvis. However, Kahli knows he is likely to be found nearest to the



mines around Minehead 3, a large smelting and ore processing complex away from the Central District.

Depending on how the Heretics arrived on the world, they can infiltrate Minehead 3 in one of three ways. These are provided to the GM in order to give guidance, however the GM should adept these to suit any alternate ideas his players may come up with, or to fit changes he created in the plot.

POSING AS PRISONERS

If the Heretics reached Saint Annard's Penance by posing as prisoners, they are first taken through the Processing Centre, and then into Hab Block 2710-1892R in a squalid corner of the prison complex. There, they can look forward to a life of harsh labour followed by an early death.

The following are two ideas to escape Hab Block 2710-1892R, although the GM should encourage any good ideas players come up with.

At certain points during the day (for meals, for example) the Heretics are let out of their cells. During this time, they pass by several secured prison cogitation terminals. If one Heretic could create a distraction (via either an **Ordinary (+10) Deceive** or **Intimidate Test**, or even a simple brawl between prisoners), another Heretic would have a few minutes, enough to try and access the secured cogitator by making a **Challenging (+0) Security Test**. Success means he can change their orders so they're sent to Minehead 3. Failure need not be the end, however, as they can always try again later.

Another possibility is that the hab block the Heretics find themselves in happens to be connected to one of the tunnels leading to the mining network. Finding this hidden entrance requires a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test**, but again this can be made multiple times over the course of several days. The entrance happens to be in the communal washing facility, hidden behind a water spigot. Opening it (without punching one's way through the wall) requires a **Challenging (+0) Security Test**.

Once inside, it takes three days of travel through the warren of passages to reach the tunnels near Minehead 3. Luckily, Kahli knows the way, and can lead them without major trouble. The GM should have each of the Heretics make a **Challenging (+0) Survival Test** covering the duration of the trip. Any Heretic who fails stumbles into a patch of Mistmould (see page 12) at some point during their journey. If at least half the party fails, they instead run into a small Horde of 30 Scarlet Creepers. The Creepers attack when the Heretics are in a small side tunnel about eight feet wide, and pour out of side passages. Unless the Heretics pass an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Stealth** versus **Awareness Test**, they are Surprised.

If the prisoners smuggled materials or items into the prison that they intend to retrieve later, accessing one of the secured cogitators on the prison wing reveals that the crates with the smuggled items ended up in a small storage facility near their Hab Block. They can either direct the system to flag the crates as destined for Minehead 3 (where the Heretics can pick them up later), or if they go through the tunnels, a **Routine (+20) Navigate (Surface) Test** reveals a side-tunnel leading to the storage facility. If the Heretics fail the Test, they still find the side-tunnel. However, they mistime their arrival to coincide with an inspection by two Arbitrators, who must both be silenced before they raise the alarm.

POSING AS IMPERIAL AGENTS

Another means by which the Heretics may have arrived on the planet is by posing as Imperial Agents or other officials with clearance to be on Saint Annard's Penance. If this is the case, they may have another reason to want to make their way into the mines as quickly as possible—their covers may be blown at any time.

Luckily, a plausible story about inspections or investigations (backed by a successful **Routine (+20) Charm** or **Intimidate Test**) can get them a tour of some of the mine facilities—such as Minehead 5. The prison authorities send the Heretics out to the facility escorted by three Arbitrators. No matter how much the Heretics argue, the authorities, including the Warden, are firm on this point. No guests, no matter how senior, can move around on Saint Annard's Penance without an escort to protect them. Once inside the mines, the Heretics must simply eliminate the Arbitrators, and flee deep into the disused portions of the mines (again guided by Kahli). The profiles for the Arbitrators are found on page 128.

BREAKING IN FROM OUTSIDE

The last option is in some ways the most difficult. If the Heretics landed on Saint Annard's Penance outside the prison, they must break in through the walls. Page 7 details

the wall defences. However, first they must reach the facility of Minehead 3, before they can break in.

The Heretics must make a long hike (three days or more, depending on the details of where they landed) to reach Minehead 3. The GM should have each make a **Challenging (+0) Survival Test**. If any of the Heretics fail the Test, at some point during their journey the Heretics are attacked by a pack of 2d5 Flying Saurians. The Heretics should be cognizant of how far away from the prison complexes they are when they fight this attack, as excessive noise close by may alert the guards.

If more than half the Heretics fail their Tests, they are instead attacked by 1d10 Small Saurians and 1d5 Large Saurians (if any of them failed by more than four Degrees, then the GM should roll twice for both values and pick the higher result). The Small Saurians tend towards what they perceive as weaker prey (human Heretics), and the Large Saurians tend to focus on the larger prey (Chaos Space Marine Heretics). If the party is completely made up of Human Heretics, then there should be no Large Saurians. If the party is completely made up of Chaos Space Marines, the GM should have a 2d10+15 Horde of Small Saurians and 1d5 Large Saurians, instead.

Once they reach Minehead 3, they must scale the walls to break in. Details of the walls are found on page 7. To climb the walls, each Heretic must make a **Challenging (+0) Stealth Test** to avoid being seen by the guards or pict-systems, and a **Challenging (+0) Athletics Test** to actually scale the walls. Failing the Climb Test means the Heretic falls a number of metres equal to the Degrees of Failure times three (the worse the failure, the higher he was when he slipped). Failing the Stealth Test means they are noticed by the guards. If this occurs, they must either flee and try again somewhere else, or try and break through into the internal compound before too many guards arrive.

Certain factors can mitigate these Tests. Proper climbing equipment adds +20 to the Athletics Test. Also, if a Heretic can break into one of the rockcrete bunkers or guard towers along the walls and eliminate the guards inside, his fellows gain +20 to their Stealth Tests. If he also passes a **Routine (+20) Security Test** to temporarily shut off the security pict-systems, then they gain +40 instead.



MAKING FRIENDS AND INFLUENCING PEOPLE

"Aye, I know a man who knows a man who may be amenable to doing business. Certainly I could introduce you. What's in it for me?"

— Jarvis Helliman, a prisoner of Saint Annard's Penance

Act II begins with the Heretics having infiltrated Saint Annard's Penance. Now, they have sent Kahli to make contact with sympathetic elements in the prison population, in hopes of finding a starting place to begin their uprising and thus enact their ritual. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

For some days now you have waited for word of Kahli. Once you infiltrated Saint Annard's Penance and found a suitable refuge in which to shelter, you immediately set about learning who among the general prison population was worth talking to. Kahli could prove her worth here, and it was decided to send her into the prison population where she would make contact with old acquaintances, gather information, and return to report her findings. Time and patience grow short however, and there is no sign of the slave. Eventually, Kahli returns with a grizzled, muscle-bound, prisoner in tow.

"This is Helliman," she says with little ceremony. "He can help you find what you need." Helliman runs a hand over his shaved head and considers you with a keen eye.

"Kahli tells me you're wanting information on the bosses around here. Well, you've come to the right man."

After an interminable wait in a comfortless hovel, Kahli has returned to the Heretics with their first contact in tow. Jarvis Helliman is a former Navy man and convicted deserter who has spent decades as a prisoner on Saint Annard's Penance. He has seen gangs and cults and bosses come and go among the general population, and has survived by observing strict neutrality and making that neutrality well known to those in power. He has made quite a niche for himself as a go-between and trusted neutral party, and has even performed services for the Imperial administration when they needed a discreet and deniable agent through whom they could deal with the prison gangs.

Helliman's sterling reputation is well deserved. While short on formal education and the refined graces that play well in rarefied places like Scintilla and Malfi, he is possessed of an incredible amount of integrity, wisdom, and common sense that allows him to safely navigate the byzantine world of prison politics with remarkable skill and safety. He is also an excellent judge of character, and takes an instant disliking to the Heretics for no other reason than they officially own Kahli and he simply doesn't like the look of them.

Getting information out of Helliman requires a collaborative effort between the Heretics and Kahli. Convincing Helliman to help and provide information requires a total of six Degrees of

LOST IN THE MINES

Even with the help of the cartograph and detailed directions from Helliman, it is quite easy to get lost in the mines. Travelling to Colonel Hollum's base requires constant diligence on the part of the Heretic doing the navigating to ensure that the group stays on the right path. There are many dangers deep in the mines, especially in tunnels that have been unused for so long, and a trip through these abandoned tunnels could quickly turn deadly for the inattentive. Once the Heretics get their first Degree of Failure on their Navigation Tests, they become lost and the Heretic with the cartograph must get one Degree of Success on a **Hard (-20) Navigation (Surface) Test** to get back on track. If the Heretic succeeds they successfully realise their error and return to the correct course. If they fail this test, the Game Master should roll 1d5 and consult the following list of possible mishaps. The Game Master should also feel free to substitute some mishap of his own to better suit the theme of his over-arching campaign.

1: Dead End: The Heretics travel 4d10x10 metres along their current path but are brought up short as they find that the way is blocked by an obstacle. Perhaps an ancient cave-in sealed this tunnel, or a massive, immobile rusted iron gate blocks their way, or maybe this is just the end of the line. Whatever the case may be, the Heretics cannot continue on this path and must backtrack along their route and find another way.

2: Cave-in: The braces that support the walls and ceiling in this part of the mine have degraded to the point where it is hazardous to travel through this part of the tunnel. Once the Heretics enter this part of the tunnel the simple act of their passing brings the ceiling down on their heads. Each Heretic must make a **Difficult (-10) Agility Test** to avoid being hit by falling stone and shoring braces. Those who succeed on this Test are able to escape the immediate area of the cave-in with only scrapes and bruises. Those who do not succeed on their Agility Test take 2d10 points of Impact Damage and must immediately make another **Difficult (-10) Agility Test** or be buried beneath the rubble. Heretics who are buried by the cave-in suffer the effects of Suffocation as outlined on page 257 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

3: Gas Pocket: A pocket of suffocating, combustible gas fills this section of tunnel. When the Heretics enter the cloud, those without the protection of gas masks, rebreathers, filter plugs, or sealed armour immediately begin suffering the effects of Suffocation as outlined on page 257 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Rule Book. In addition, each Heretic must make a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test** to avoid inadvertently touching off an explosion as they flee the area. Those who succeed exit the area without further incident. Any Heretic who fails their Agility Test somehow manages to strike a spark which ignites the gas in the tunnel. If this happens, each Heretic takes 2d10 points of energy damage with the Concussive (2) property, and must make a **Difficult (-10) Agility Test** or be set ablaze. A Heretic who enters this area with a readied or unsheathed Power, Shock, or Flame weapon automatically ignites the gas with the above results.

4: Scarlet Creeper Nest: The Heretics stumble upon a nest of angry Scarlet Creepers and are immediately swarmed. Stats for these dangerous little animals are found in the **NPC and Adversary Index** on page 121.

5: Pit: The ground opens beneath the Heretics to reveal a poorly covered pit roughly 10 metres deep. Each Heretic must make a **Difficult (-10) Agility Test** to avoid falling in. Those who succeed are able to avoid falling, those who fail their Test suffer Falling Damage as outlined on Page 257 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

Success over the course of an extended Interaction Skill Test. As they negotiate with the cantankerous old man, each Heretic involved in the conversation can make either an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Charm vs. Willpower Test** or an **Opposed Hard (-20) Deceive vs. Scrutiny Test**. After each Heretic has had their say and made their Tests, tally up the total number of Degrees of Success, subtract from that the total number of Degrees of Failure, and if the result is six or more net Degrees of Success the Heretics succeed in convincing Helliman to tell them what he knows. If the Heretics fail in their Extended Test, Helliman bids them good day, tells Kahli to forget she ever knew him, makes ready to disappear back into the complex. However, the Heretics have one last chance to convince Helliman to work for them. Any of the Heretics can make a **Challenging (+0) Infamy Test** and reveal their true identity and something of their purpose on the world (they can tell Helliman they're here to take over, but they don't have to mention the ritual they want to enact). If they succeed, Helliman not only believes them, but he's heard enough about them that he believes they could do it. He's frightened enough that he won't cross them and betray their identity to the prison. However, in addition to whatever payments he can haggle out of them (see the following) he demands his and Kahli's freedom at the end of the adventure.

Should the Heretics succeed in gaining Helliman's trust, he reveals the following information:

"Well now, there are all manner of lesser punks who think they pull the strings around here, but the real movers and shakers are Colonel Hollum and that freak Oglanov." Says Helliman as he settles in for a long story. "Hollum's former Imperial Guard, a very tough woman and her people are just as hard as she is. She makes her money smuggling weapons components off world. She's also got something going with the Guard garrison here, but I'm not entirely sure what it is."

He pulls a pipe and a small bag of dried Lho leaves from inside his tunic, loads up the pipe, lights it, and in a haze of aromatic smoke he continues. "Oglanov now, he runs drugs. Raw materials out, finished products back. I'd say he's probably got people, both actual employees and sad fools who owe him money, spread throughout every level of the bureaucracy here. Hell, I know one guard personally who works as muscle for him. It's not just drugs, though. He's into something else. Some kind of cult activity. Rumour has it that he cavorts with daemons, but that's probably just a rumour. Still and all, he's a twisted, dangerous little cuss and not to be trusted. So, that's it. You want things done on this planet, those are the people to talk to. I can introduce you if you like."

ONE BAD APPLE

If the Heretics manage to anger Helliman or he is otherwise sidelined, they can still get the information they need through the Arbitrator Zenobia Pike. Pike can be found and brought to the Heretics' lair by Kahli or they can come across her during a patrol or while reconnoitering the prison. She is in the employ of Lord Balthazar Oglanov, one of the two major power brokers on Saint Annard's Penance, and well on her way to serving the Ruinous Powers in her own way. Aside from her connections to Oglanov and her ability to arrange a meeting with him, Pike can also introduce the Heretics to Colonel Hollum's people by way of people in her organisation who are customers of Oglanov.

If the Heretics decide to use Helliman as their go-between, he demands to be paid up front and that there be a written contract that lays out every detail of their agreement. Successful **Challenging (+0) Commerce Tests** convince him to reduce his fee and perhaps, with enough Degrees of Success, get him to waive his contract demands as well. He requires items or valuables that are small and easily concealed on his person. Once terms are agreed upon, he informs the Heretics that he needs around three days to get everything in order, thanks them for the business, and takes his leave. The Heretics now have another nerve wracking wait ahead of them. While caution dictates that they should stay in their refuge and refine their plans, they are free to wander the prison to do their own research if they wish. If the Heretics go wandering, the GM should roll on **Table 2-1: Prison Encounters** for every hour they are out to see what manner of trouble they find.

Once the three days are up, Helliman returns to the Heretics' hideout, true to his word. He has with him a number of handwritten notes introducing the Heretics to both Colonel Hollum and Lord Oglanov and a cartograph loaded with maps to their respective bases along with passwords, responses to challenges, and all manner of information that the Heretics' may find useful. Helliman accepts his payment with a smile, wishes the Heretics luck, and leaves them to their work. He also left information with Kahli regarding the best way to contact him if his services were needed again. Now that the Heretics have their information, it's time for them to get to work.

DETERMINING THE PROPER LOCATION FOR THE RITUAL

One thing the Heretics need to take care of is scouting out the proper location for the Ritual. This requires both a careful reading of *De Orbis Mysteriis*, and consultation with those who know the prison well (such as Jarvis Helliman). Obviously, the Heretics cannot simply wander around the prison asking questions about this.

After discussing the prison layout with Jarvis Helliman (although they don't have to explain why they want to know this information), have any Heretic make a **Difficult (-10)**

Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) or **(The Warp) Test**, or a **Hard (-20) Logic Test**. Success means they have some idea of the nature of the location they should be searching for, and they realize the prison's Hall of Justice (see page 10 and page 74) would be perfect.

If they fail, the Heretics simply have no bright ideas on the subject. However, there is a fall-back option. Lord Oglanov is willing to offer his library as a potential location for the ritual (see page 59). This option works, although it is not ideal. All Tests made in conjunction with enacting the Ritual suffer a -10 penalty in Oglanov's Library, and gain a +20 bonus in the top floors of the Hall of Justice.

THE PROPER SACRIFICES

The other thing the Heretics must determine is whom are to be the proper sacrifices for the ritual. Luckily for them, this is fairly easy to determine. Any significant time spent amongst the prison population allows a Heretic to make an **Ordinary (+10) Inquiry Test**. Success, plus every two additional Degrees of Success, gives the Heretic enough information to determine the identity of one of the following potential sacrifices. These are the following:

- **Canoness Leona Rak:** The Canoness is the leader of the Sisters of Serenity, a sub-sect of the Sisters Hospitaller that can trace its roots to the Adepta Sororitas presence amongst the Angevin Crusade. She is the Soul of Charity.
- **Warden Phineas Morn:** The Warden has long commanded Saint Annard's Penance, and has been a proud member of the Adeptus Arbites all his adult life. He is the Soul of Law.
- **Cardinal Morgan Falconer:** The Cardinal heads the Ecclesiarchy presence on Saint Annard's Penance. He is the Soul of Piety.
- **General Helena Tarsian:** The commander of the Imperial Guard forces stationed on Saint Annard's Penance, General Tarsian is as skilled a bureaucrat as any Adept of the Departmento Munitorium, hence why she has drawn a station far from the front lines of the Imperium's wars. She is the Soul of Security.

If none of the Heretics succeed on the Tests, they can make them again after spending more time (at least several hours) with the prison population. Having Helliman as an ally grants +10 to the Inquiry Test, as the prisoners are more likely to talk around him.

THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS

The GM does not have to make it hard to find the other 63 participants of the ritual. These can be any prisoners who are somewhat or completely insane, culled from Colonel Hollum or Lord Oglanov's cadres, or even just grabbed from amongst the rioting masses once the insurrection begins. A **Routine (+20) Intimidate** or **Command Test** should be significant to get them to obey orders, and realistically, the less they know about what's going on, the better the situation should work out for the Heretics.

TABLE 2-1: PRISON ENCOUNTERS

1d5 Roll Encounter Result

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | No encounter, all clear. |
| 2 | Patrol squad of 5 Arbitrators and one senior Arbitrator. (See page 128) |
| 3 | Attack by 1d5 Flying Saurians. (See page 133) |
| 4 | Caught up in a minor riot between Magnitude 30 Horde of Prisoners and equivalent Horde of Arbitrators. (See pages 128 and 131) |
| 5 | A Scarlet Creeper swarm attacks them if in the mines, otherwise no encounter. (See page 133) |

THE SOLDIER AND THE SYBARITE

"Mine was a political, rather than a criminal conviction. My crime was one of birth, of lack of influence, of competence, and of care for my men and the holy war materiel entrusted to me by the Departamento Munitorium. I was sent here not for dereliction of duty, but for performing the impossible and in doing so making powerful men look bad."

— Nadine Hollum

Now that the Heretics have the lay of the land as it pertains to the political situation on Saint Annard's Penance, they must decide what to do with this information. As they learned from Helliman, the two main power brokers in the prison population are the former Imperial Guard colonel Nadine Hollum, and the disgraced nobleman Balthazar Oglanov. While the Heretics can proceed with their plan on their own, enlisting the assistance of one of both of these groups—along with the influence, muscle, and contacts that come with an alliance—makes their job much easier.

HONOUR AMONG THIEVES

The more powerful of the two power factions on Saint Annard's Penance is that headed by Nadine Hollum. Hollum, formerly a well respected and highly decorated Colonel of the Imperial Guard, maintains her base of operations in an abandoned mine complex that sprawls beneath the southern portion of the penal colony. She has gathered around her a tight cadre of like minded convicts of strong military background, and from her command centre deep beneath the planet's surface she controls nearly all of the weapon and war materiel smuggling to and from the planet using her complex web of Arbitrators, Imperial Guard, and prisoner contacts.

While Hollum's organisation is indeed powerful, and her contacts within the Imperial Guard forces garrisoned on the planet are incredibly useful, hers is perhaps the most difficult faction to deal with. Despite her ill usage by her superiors in the Imperial Guard and her lengthy incarceration here on Saint Annard's Penance, she still has a

deep seated love for the Imperium and believes it to be the last, best hope for mankind. Convincing Colonel Hollum, as she still refers to herself, to support the Heretics in their quest is a daunting task indeed.

COLONEL HOLLUM'S FASTNESS

A thousand metres beneath the surface of Saint Annard's Penance lies the remains of an ancient mine known simply as Shaft 4. Located in a largely abandoned section of the penal complex, full of shuttered, idle manufacturums and slowly collapsing warehouses, Shaft 4 was one of the first driven into the heart of this desolate world. Over the centuries, countless prisoners from all across the Calixis Sector toiled, suffered, and died in this dark place. Eventually the rich veins of ore were tapped out, the prisoners were assigned to other, more lucrative mines, and once bustling shafts were closed, used only by native creatures and as a dumping place for trash and the occasional corpse. Now, though, the shafts and chambers of Shaft 4 hum with life again. For it is from deep within these empty tunnels that Colonel Hollum runs her criminal organisation. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:



The ancient, iron lift rattles its tortured way down its track into the seemingly endless abyss of Shaft 4. For nearly 30 standard minutes you descend into the bowels of the planet, with nothing between you and a plunge to your final reward but a three-metre-by-four-metre platform of heavily corroded metal mesh and a prayer. Eventually the lift bumps to a halt at the bottom of the shaft in a grand chamber lit with faintly glowing beds of moss and littered with abandoned machinery and drifts of rust coloured dross. As you step from the lift your footsteps echo in the massive space and you are reminded to tread lightly, for you have reached the domain of one of the most powerful women on the planet.

Once the Heretics reach the bottom of the entry shaft, they find themselves in a vast chamber hundreds of metres across. The chamber is full of abandoned heavy machinery once used to root the precious ores from their stone beds interspersed with huge piles of worthless slag, broken stones fallen from the ceiling, and dross. Unpowered maglev rails that once moved massive ore carts run to and fro across the floor and out into the numerous black tunnels leading from the chamber, creating a hazard for anyone not attending to where they place their feet. The pervasive darkness and the general clutter make moving through the entrance chamber a dicey proposition. The ground here is considered Difficult Terrain for purposes of movement. All Heretics see their movement halved, and those who move faster than a careful walk must get one Degree of Success on a **Difficult (-10) Agility Test** or fall prone.

Using the cartograph provided by Helliman, the Heretics must now find their way to Colonel Hollum's base of operations. Even with the maps programmed into the cartograph, navigating the twisting, dizzying warren of tunnels, pits, shafts, and caverns is a daunting task indeed. To determine the proper tunnel to follow out of the entry chamber using the data in the cartograph requires a **Difficult (-10) Navigation (Surface) Test**. All that is required is one Degree of Success, and with that the Heretics can begin their journey.

As the Heretics wind their way through the tunnels, the Game Master should require the Heretic carrying the cartograph to make regular **Difficult (-10) Navigation (Surface) Tests** to make sure that they stay on track. As the Heretics proceed, the Game Master should keep track of the

WE ARE NOT ALONE

Astute or paranoid Heretics feel, not without reason, that they are being watched when they enter the abandoned mine. Indeed, many considering eyes are on the Heretics as they pick their careful way through the clutter and rubble of the entry chamber. Any Heretic who gains a Degree of Success on a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test** notices a number of tiny, dim red lights flickering away in the darkness of the chamber. Each light represents the unblinking eye of a pict-recorder watching them and undoubtedly reporting their actions and progress to someone in Hollum's organisation.

number of Degrees of Success and Degrees of Failure they gain. The Heretics need a net total of six Degrees of Success to locate the base entrance, with each Degree of Failure negating one Degree of Success. In addition, if a Degree of Failure is gained, the Game Master should consult the Lost in the Mines sidebar.

The area in which Hollum has built her base is relatively small cavern reached by a single broad tunnel filled with military style barracks. The Majority of Hollum's smuggling business takes place on the surface, and most of her followers still dwell in the hab blocks and toil away in the manufactoria district. Hollum, her lieutenant, a handful of command staff, and a cadre of guards are the only ones who dwell here. Despite its depth and isolation, Hollum's cavern has all the comforts of home—power is provided by a number of repurposed geothermal generators, and running water from a deep well tapped into a clean aquifer. The mines' original ventilation system has been refurbished and provides clean (though cool and damp) air to the compound.

If the Heretics arrive without first arranging a visit through Helliman, they are met with hostility and suspicion. They are challenged immediately upon entering the cavern and if they don't have the proper introductions, or aren't quick witted and silver tongued, they are restrained, disarmed, and imprisoned for further questioning. Heretics who attempt to talk their way into Hollum's Base need to make an **Arduous (-40) Deceive Test** to avoid being thrown into the brig. If the Heretics do have the proper introductions and credentials by way of Helliman, they are led to a bunker where they are greeted by Hollum's second in command, the burly, heavily scarred Yuriy Malkovic. When the Heretics meet Malkovic, read them the following passage:

You are led to a stoutly built bunker, and with little ceremony you are shown into a small meeting chamber. In the room, there is a single metal desk with two metal folding chairs set before it, a low cabinet in one corner with a number of bottles and glasses arranged on its glass top, and precious little else. As you enter a large, burly man stands up from his place behind the desk and approaches you with his hand outstretched and a good natured smile on his battered and scarred face. Short and thickset with close cropped black hair and a thick, bristling black beard streaked with white, the man wears what appears to be some manner of Imperial Guard uniform (sans badges and commendations), and has a number of very obvious augmetics.

"My name is Malkovic," he says in thickly accented Low Gothic as he crushes the first hand offered him in his iron grip. "Welcome. Please, sit. I understand you have a proposition for Colonel Hollum."

The Heretics must now make their pitch to Malkovic, a task that requires a total of three Degrees of Success over the course of an extended Interaction Skill Test. As they lay out the particulars of their plan, at least those particulars that they can reveal without blowing their cover, each Heretic involved in the conversation can make either an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Charm vs. Willpower Test** or an **Opposed Hard (-20) Deceive vs. Scrutiny Test**. While he may not be particularly wise, Malkovic is no fool. As perceptive as the next man,

perhaps more so thanks to his suspicion of the Heretics and his protectiveness of his commander, Malkovic is a hard man to lie to. He is, however, easily charmed and is especially responsive to a pretty face. Any female characters with a Fel of 40 or more gain +5 to all Interaction Tests when dealing with Malkovic. After each Heretic has had their say and made their Tests, tally up the total number of Degrees of Success, subtract from that the total number of Degrees of Failure, and if the result is three or more net Degrees of Success, the Heretics succeed in convincing Malkovic to take their message to his commander.

If the Heretics convince Malkovic to take their proposal to his commander, he bids them to stay in the meeting room while he confers with Hollum. The Heretics may protest, and with an opposed **Difficult (-10) Charm Test** Malkovic relents, allowing them access to the common area but no more. If the Heretics fail in selling the plan to Malkovic, he politely but firmly declines their offer, wishes them good day, and has them escorted from the compound. Should the Heretics push Malkovic or show any aggression, he immediately calls for guards and the Heretics quickly find themselves facing a Magnitude 30 Horde of very determined, highly trained armymen. The stats for Colonel Hollum's personal guard are found in the Defences of Colonel Hollum's Fastness sidebar. Colonel Hollum's Personal Guard use the stats for Imperial Guardsmen as found on page 130 without any of the modifications for the individual Guard regiments.

BARRACKS

Four of these long, low bunkers are crammed in one corner of the cavern. Three are empty and sealed, and the fourth houses the men and women of Colonel Hollum's personal guard force. Gaining entry to a barracks building requires a **Hard (-20) Security Test**, and each consists of a large open room with bunks, foot lockers, and standing lockers for 40 soldiers. There is also a communal wash room with showers, wash basins, and commodes. There is little of obvious value here, but if the Heretics have the opportunity they may

DEFENCES OF HOLLUM'S FASTNESS

The buildings that make up Colonel Hollum's subterranean base were designed to the exact specifications of her second-in-command, an experienced siege engineer and builder named Yuriy Malkovic. Built over a period of years using materiel scavenged from the penal complex or supplied from the Imperial Guard garrison, the slab-sided, whitewashed bunkers are well built and easily fortifiable, if perhaps a bit unlovely. While they make excellent cover, the materials from which these buildings are constructed make breaching walls and forcing entry more difficult.

- **Bunkers:** Squat and unlovely, the thick exterior walls of the bunkers are made of reinforced plascrete (32 AP). Each wall is at least a metre thick and set with doors of heavy, reinforced steel (16 AP). Interior walls are constructed of flakboard (8 AP) set with wood and light steel doors (4 AP).
- **Heavy Stubber Emplacements:** Constructed from sandbags (8 AP) and flakboard (8 AP) these fighting positions are placed here and there throughout the compound at strategic points. Each fighting position houses a tripod mounted, belt fed heavy stubber, has a 180 degree field of fire, and each position is placed in such a way that it can be defended by another. They are crewed by two of Hollum's personal guard, a shooter and a loader. Belt Fed Heavy Stubber (100m; -/-/10; 1d10+5 I; Pen 3; Clip 240; Rld 2 Full; Unreliable).

scavenge among the guards' trunks and lockers. Opening a trunk or locker requires a **Challenging (+0) Security Test**. For every locker or trunk opened, the GM should roll 1d100 and compare to **Table 2-2: Barracks Search Results** to determine the contents.

TABLE 2-2: BARRACKS SEARCH RESULTS

Roll d100	Result
1-40	Nothing of note.
41-47	One Best Craftsmanship Combat Shotgun (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 12; Rld 2 Full; Scatter) wrapped in a blanket and a box of 36 Barbed Rounds.
48-60	A copy of the Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer.
61-73	Six doses of Spur
74-77	An extremely dangerous-looking Inferno Pistol that shows signs of being assembled from numerous weapons of different pattern (10m; S/-/-; 2d10+10 E; Pen 12; Clip 3; Rld Full; Melta, Noxious Discharge, Scavenged).
78-85	A heretical pamphlet outlining the tenets of the Sybaritic Host. This grants anyone who reads it +5 to any Interaction Tests when interacting with members of Lord Oglanov's organisation.
86-95	One bottle of incredibly powerful but poor quality liquor, a set of dice carved from the native stone of Saint Annard's Penance, and a Good Craftsmanship Monoknife (1d5 R; Pen 2; Balanced). Any Heretic foolish enough to drink the liquor must make Difficult (-10) Toughness Test or suffer one level of Fatigue.
96	Two flasks of Purified Plasma.
97-98	A broken Good Craftsmanship Chain Dagger (1d5+1 R; Pen 3; Tearing) requiring a Hard (-10) Tech-Use Test to repair.
99-00	A small, leather-bound book with a dozen names written in it and a Best Craftsmanship Stub Automatic in a holster equipped with a silencer and red-dot laser sight (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 9; Rld Full; Never Jams). The gun is loaded with Manstopper Rounds and there are two additional clips. Four of the names in the book are crossed out. None of the names mean anything to the Heretics or anyone they ask.

ARMOURY

This bunker is quite separate from the others, and stands in a relatively isolated and disused corner of the cavern. Low and squat, it has no windows, a heavily reinforced door equipped with a security system and watched over by a pict-recorder, and walls twice as thick as the rest of the bunkers in the compound. Gaining entry to the armoury requires the pict-recorder to be disabled, a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**, and then a **Hard (-20) Security Test** to bypass the lock. If the Heretic fails his Test, the lock mechanism goes into emergency mode for five minutes. Once this time elapses the Heretic can make another Security Test at the same difficulty. If the Heretic fails the test by three or more Degrees of Failure, the mechanism fuses itself, becoming impossible to bypass, and sounds an alarm. If this happens, the Heretics' best option is fleeing or, if they desperately desire entry into the armoury, shooting or blasting the door open.

The interior of the armoury is packed floor to ceiling and wall to wall with crates marked with the seal of the Departamento Munitorium. Within these crates are enough lasguns, shotguns, frag grenades, grenade launchers, combat knives, entrenching tools, and suits of Imperial Guard flak armour to outfit a small army. There are also crates of explosives, tools, and other accoutrement used in demolition, 1d5 heavy bolters, two lascannons, and an M34 autocannon. Additionally the Heretics should be able to find enough ammunition for their personal weapons to provide them with three additional reloads per weapon. While nothing in the crates is of exceptional quality, all the weapons and gear are of Common Craftsmanship, it represents a significant amount of firepower and makes a statement about the nature of Colonel Hollum's business and her relationship with the Imperial Guard garrison.

If the Heretics have the time and inclination, they may make a more thorough inspection of the armoury. On a successful **Hard (-20) Scrutiny Test**, the Heretics find a locked, matte black foot locker buried in the stacks of crates. The lid of the locker is stencilled with the symbol of the Imperial Guard along with the name J. Maucher. There is also a unit insignia, and any Heretic who makes a **Challenging (+0) Common Lore (Imperial Guard) Test** recognises the unit insignia of the 18th Paolan Dragoons, a heavy infantry unit from the minor hive world Paolia. The locker is locked and requires a **Challenging (+0) Security Test** to open. Within the locker is a sheathed Best Craftsmanship Chainsword (1d10+2 R; Pen 2; Tearing, Balanced), a Best Craftsmanship Bolt Pistol of unknown pattern equipped with a Photo Sight and an Extended Magazine (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 10; Rld Full; Tearing, Reliable), a suit of Best Craftsmanship Heavy Carapace Armour (7 All) bearing the 18th Dragoons' insignia on one shoulder and the rank of sergeant on the other, a pair of Best Craftsmanship Preysense Goggles, numerous bits of personal regalia, and a dog-eared copy of the Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer with the sections on leadership highlighted.

TRAINING BUNKER

Located next to the common bunker, this building houses the training facilities for Colonel Hollum's paramilitary forces. The bunker contains firing ranges, sparring rings to practice armed and unarmed melee combat, and other facilities for strength and endurance training. There is little of interest

TRUE COLOURS

Despite her betrayal and her experiences with Imperial justice, Colonel Hollum is still an ardent believer in the divinity of the God-Emperor and the place of the Imperium as man's last, great hope for survival in a hostile galaxy. Thanks to her lingering loyalties, she has no truck with heresy or blasphemy, and this includes the machinations of a pack of low-bred heretics. The Heretics need to couch their proposal in language that Hollum finds palatable. Perhaps they provide evidence that Warden Morn is in league with daemons, a charge the Colonel is quick to believe, or that somehow aiding the Heretics in their task sees her recommissioned in the Imperial Guard with all of her commendations and seniority restored. However the Heretics approach Hollum, they must do so delicately and with an iron-clad story. If Colonel Hollum gets wind of the Heretics' true nature, they lose the opportunity of gaining Hollum as an ally, and find themselves in quite a bit of danger.

here save the equipment, but this is one of the few buildings the Heretics have access to while they are waiting to hear word from Colonel Hollum.

The training bunker also houses the compound's common area. It is here that those who live in the compound take their meals and enjoy what little non-training recreation that can be found. Alongside the communal dining area and food preparation chambers, there is a room equipped with makeshift gaming tables where the guardsmen play games of chance, and a small reading room stocked with books of scripture, copies of the Imperial Creed, several volumes of the *Tactica Imperialis*, and numerous books and data slates on military subjects.

COMMAND BUNKER

The command bunker is a combination command centre and personal living quarters for Colonel Hollum and Yuriy Malkovic. From here the Colonel heads her vast criminal operation, communicating with her agents in the general population via messengers and secure, hardwired vox communications. A sprawling, heavily guarded bunker reminiscent of an Imperial Guard field command centre, it takes up most of the eastern half of the cavern. Within its walls are a number of work areas where the Colonel's staff toil away keeping the machinery of her organisation running, the Colonel's spartan suite of rooms, Malkovic's equally austere suite, a strategy and planning room, and a currently unoccupied brig with six holding cells. Thick, razorwire topped reinforced plascrete blast walls (32 AP) manned by diligent guardsmen separate the bunker from the rest of the compound, and the approach is covered by four fighting positions equipped with Heavy Stubbers. If the Heretics approach the command bunker without express invitation they are given one warning. If they do not immediately comply they are attacked and an attempt is made to capture them for interrogation.

If the Heretics were able to sell Malkovic on their plan and secure a meeting with the Colonel Herself, they are escorted to the bunker by a squad of guardsmen where they are met at the entrance by Malkovic. With a non-committal air, Malkovic

leads the Heretics to the strategy and planning room for their meeting with the Colonel. As the Heretics enter the room, read the following passage aloud:

As you file into the strategy and planning room, you see the Colonel standing with her hands clasped behind her back at the head of a long stone table opposite the door. She is a small, fit woman with green eyes and close-cropped hair with a grave, considering face and the air of one long used to command. However her most noticable feature are a series of brightly coloured tattoos covering her arms and face. You can feel her gaze upon you as Malkovic invites you to sit, then takes the chair at the foot of the table. Once you are seated the Colonel nods and says,

"I am Colonel Hollum. Yuriy has told me the outline of your proposal and I am interested in doing business. Shall we begin?"

The negotiations with Colonel Hollum are long and delicate, requiring a cool head and a vast amount of diplomatic skill. As with Malkovic, the Heretics now must engage in a collaborative Extended Interaction Action. To convince Colonel Hollum to dedicate troops and materiel to the Heretics' plan requires a total of six Degrees of Success over the course of an extended Interaction Skill Test. As they lay out the particulars of their plan, at least those particulars that the can reveal without blowing their cover, each Heretic involved in the conversation can make either an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Charm vs Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**, an **Opposed Ordinary (+10) Deceive vs Challenging (+0) Scrutiny Test**, or a **Opposed Hard (-20) Intimidation vs Ordinary (+0) Willpower Test**. After each Heretic has had his say and made his Tests, tally up the total number of Degrees of Success,

subtract from that the total number of Degrees of Failure, and if the result is six or more net Degrees of Success the Heretics succeed in convincing Colonel Hollum to support them.

Colonel Hollum did not get where she is today by giving something for nothing, and she has a list of demands that the Heretics must agree to before she will help them. First and foremost, she refuses to take any action against the Imperial Guard garrison and those stationed there as her loyalty to and feelings for the Guard are still quite strong. If the Heretics present their endeavour as a criminal, but not heretical, enterprise, she demands a cut of the take and reassurances that her business on the planet not be unduly harmed. If they convince her that helping her could exonerate her, she demands a pardon for her second along with a handful of her agents, as well as the opportunity to exact revenge on those officers who wronged her. Along with these demands, the Game Master should feel free to place any other conditions or restrictions on Hollum's aid that he sees fit and that are concordant with the overall tone and theme of his campaign.

What she offers in return for her demands is mainly personnel and material aid to the Heretics' cause. She has at her disposal a shocking amount of war materiel, and can outfit the Heretics, within reason, with weapons, armour, and wargear of Common or better Craftsmanship. She can also provide enough armymen trained in urban combat and guerilla tactics to form six Magnitude 40 Hordes that can be deployed however the Heretics' require. At the Colonel's behest, Malkovic can provide a wealth of knowledge regarding the construction and layout of much of the penal colony, as well as his prodigious siege engineering and demolition skills. Along with all of this, the Colonel can also, through her contacts, provide enough inside men and agents provocateur to grant the Heretics +10 to all relevant Tests made during the actual uprising.



DEBASEMENT AND DEBAUCHERY

"I have given myself over to absolute pleasure in service of my lord Slaanesh. I have, through Slaanesh, learned to live my life for the thrill of decadence alone."

—Balthazar Oglanov

Technically less powerful than Colonel Hollum's arms smuggling organisation, Lord Oglanov's ring of narco traffickers, Obscura eaters, sybarites, and cultists is nonetheless a force to be reckoned with on Saint Annard's Penance. Oglanov, a disgraced and deeply corrupted Rogue Trader from a once powerful merchant family, maintains his base of operations within the shell of a shuttered chemical refinery in a run down section of the manufactoria district. From his opulently appointed sanctum he controls not only the flow of the majority of illegal drugs smuggled into the penal colony, but also runs a splinter of the Fellowship of the Sybaritic Host, a cult dedicated to the worship of Slaanesh.

Oglanov's consortium doesn't possess the military prowess of Hollum's regimented and well armed organization, but an alliance with the debauched noble offers many incredible—though less tangible—benefits. As he controls the drugs trade on Saint Annard's Penance, so too does he control those who partake of his products. He exerts an influence on both the general prison population and the Imperial administration that easily eclipses that of Colonel Hollum. Convincing Oglanov to assist the Heretics in their endeavour should be relatively easy. He is a dedicated follower of Slaanesh, and is more than happy to entertain the requests of fellow adherents of the Ruinous Powers, save, of course, for those unfortunates who follow the Lord of Blood. While convincing him is easy, ensuring that he follows through on his promises is yet another thing entirely. Oglanov is fickle and capricious, his list of demands for assisting the Heretics is long, and if not handled correctly (that is, if not treated with an inordinate amount of fawning deference and ego stroking), he will betray the Heretics to the Imperial authorities at his earliest convenience.

LORD OGLANOV'S LAIR

The northern sectors of the manufactoria district were once home to the bulk of the penal colony's chemical and gas refineries. Generations of prisoners toiled here, producing everything from delicate scents sold to fashionable Calixian noblewomen to promethium additives used in the tanks and armoured vehicles of the Imperial Guard. Thanks to reorganisation, accident, and general entropy, most of these refineries are shuttered, held in reserve as the bulk of their production has moved to newer and larger facilities closer to the district's core. Now, with its industrial buildings abandoned and drifts of dust and garbage in the gutters and doorways, this area is a haven for criminal activity. Amid the various degenerates who now call this sector home—killers, madmen, and cultists of all stripe who escaped from their work gangs—lies the command centre of Lord Oglanov's drug smuggling operation and the home of the Fellowship of the Sybaritic Host. Read the following aloud:

True to your hour, you arrive at the meeting place laid down in Helliman's cartograph. The building, a soaring stone edifice once used to produce chemical additives for use in a number of civilian applications, sits abandoned and firmly shuttered in a desolate, unused section of the penal colony within sight of the northern walls. No Arbites patrols come here, and the last living souls you saw were a group of furtive looking convicts ducking into a darkened warehouse some four kilometres past. You knock hard on the expanding gate that covers the old factory's large main doors, and a beam of light stabs down from above, illuminating you. Static crackles from a security panel next to the doors and a tinny voice slurs a challenge in Low Gothic.

When the Heretics arrive at the place shown on the cartograph, they find a grimy, windowless, square shouldered industrial building some 20 metres high and perhaps a half kilometre long. Numerous chimneys rise from the roof, along with other more esoteric machinery related to the work of refining raw chemicals, and every door is triple locked and secured with a thick, retractable metal mesh gate. Using the info provided by Helliman, the Heretics pass the first sentry with ease. If they come to deal with Oglanov without an introduction from either Helliman or Arbitrator Pike, they have to bluff their way in. Talking their way past the first sentry requires a **Difficult (–10) Charm or Deceive Test** or, alternately, an **Arduous (–40) Occult Test** to attempt to guess the password. This, however, presents its own dangers

NO LOVE FOR THE BLOOD GOD

As Lord Oglanov is a dedicated follower of the Lord of Dark Delights, adherents of Khorne are not welcome in his presence. In fact, Khorne worshippers are not allowed on the premises at all, and must wait outside or be left at the Heretics' hide-out. If any Heretic dedicated to the Blood God attempts to gain entry, he is immediately identified for what he is by the psykers loitering on the refinery floor and is barred entry. If the Heretics push the issue or attempt to force their way in, they are met with heavy resistance. Within 1d5 rounds of the sentry raising the alarm, the Heretics are beset by a Magnitude 30 Horde of shotgun-wielding cultists led by 1d5 Sorcerers of the Sybaritic Host. If this should happen, it obviously makes seeking the assistance of Lord Oglanov more difficult, and all Interaction Tests made in dealing with Lord Oglanov or his agents become Very Hard (-30). Stats for Oglanov's followers can be found in the NPC index on pages 129-132.

as it increases the difficulty of bluffing the sentry by one step. Once the Heretics gain entry to Oglanov's lair, read the following passage:

The heavy steel door swings in and a heavily scarred and tattooed cultist stands glaring at you. Bare chested and wild eyed, he has a shoddy looking shotgun slung over his shoulder and an ornate, long bladed knife lashed to his leg in a hide scabbard. He stands blocking the doorway, his eyes darting to each of your faces as if he were memorising you for some future use and asks simply:

"Who sent you?"

He simply grunts in response to your answer, turns his back on you, and retreats into the darkness of the refinery. You mount the steps to the entrance and you can faintly hear low, mesmerising music coming from within. Passing through the doorway, your eyes quickly adapt to the dimness within and see a small security station with a pict-recorder monitor watching the door, a stool, and a small vox playing music. Past the guard post is the building proper. The space is huge, the entire building an open shell packed with tall metal tanks, overhead cranes, esoteric refining apparatus of all sizes, and hundreds and hundreds of kilometres of pipes, hoses, and conduit. The door swings shut behind you and the sentry appears out of the gloom.

"This way," he says, and leads you to the rear of the building.

The Heretics are led by the sentry through the vast refinery, past the idled machinery to where Lord Oglanov has built his sanctum. As they walk, any Heretic who so wishes may make a **Difficult (-10) Scrutiny Test** or **Very Hard (-20) Perception Test** to notice others trailing them or watching from the shadows. Any Psykers or Sorcerers who make a **Challenging (+0) Psyniscience Test** know that many of their mysterious watchers are psykers in their own right. They also know that the entire place seems to be a thin spot between the Immaterium and the physical world.

Eventually, the Heretics reach the living quarters. Once the refinery's offices, this area is now Lord Oglanov's personal sanctum, from which he runs his organisation and wherein he takes his leisure. A single door leads from the refinery floor into the sanctum, and is guarded by two more half naked, shotgun wielding cultists. The door sentry hands the Heretics off to the cultists at the entrance to the sanctum and returns to his post, and the Heretics are ushered inside.

The Heretics pass down a short corridor with plush wine coloured carpet and walls painted a rich, deep red. The walls are hung with works of abstract art in gilt frames, and the only light in the corridor comes from tiny, low powered spot lights in the ceiling illuminating the paintings. After a few dozen metres the corridor spills out into a large round chamber that seems more like an art gallery than a waiting room. The walls are painted the same colour as the corridor, and the floor is highly polished stone. Instead of paintings, the walls are set with stone alcoves, each illuminated from within and containing small objects d'art that are alternately blasphemous, erotic, obscene, or some combination of all three. Statues stand here and there in the room, some of solitary figures, others of daemons or groups of men and women caught in poses of excruciating passion. Among

THE SYBARITIC HOST

Formed in the shadow of the Great Halo Warp Storms on the fortress world of Saldiera Nine, the cult known as The Fellowship of the Sybaritic Host was founded by Major Barad Viess, a debauched and deeply corrupt officer of the Scintillan Heavy Infantry. Viess was a deeply troubled young officer who was much plagued by visions. At first, he claimed these were sent from the God-Emperor to aid him in his struggle against the enemies of mankind. Along with these visions and frequent emotional outbursts, young Major Viess also suffered from a number of compulsions and deep, obscene predilections that he vainly attempted to suppress through regular prayer, fasting, and flagellation. Eventually his madness overwhelmed him and he deserted the Guard. Years later cults sprang up on several worlds in the Koronus Expanse and Calixis Sector, each one purporting to have been founded by a prophet of Slaanesh come to release the people of the Imperium from their bondage through what the so-called prophet called "The Teachings of the Sybaritic Host." The prophet, of course, was Viess. He had fled into the Screaming Vortex where what was left of his mind was shattered and reformed by the energies of Chaos. He returned to the Imperium to spread his teachings of freedom through pleasure. Over the centuries, cults dedicated to the teachings of Major Viess have come and gone. They tend to pop up on worlds suffering long-lasting cultural ennui and spread like wild fire through a populace desperate for release. They are also just as quickly suppressed by agents of the Inquisition and the Ecclesiarchy. Despite these purges, the Fellowship lingers on and remains one of the more popular forms of Slaanesh worship.

the statuary are low, comfortable couches and chairs upholstered in supple chocolate coloured hide. The room is lit by floodlights from the ceiling washing the walls and illuminating the statuary, and dark, sensual music plays from hidden speakers.

An ornately carved door of dark hardwood inlaid with precious metals stands opposite the entrance corridor flanked by two more guard cultists, and two other corridors lead from the chamber deeper into the sanctum. Barefoot, half naked cultists occasionally pass through the entrance chamber, each time smiling benignly at the Heretics, bowing, and making the sign of Slaanesh in the air by way of greeting. If one of the Heretics makes for either of the corridors, one of the guard cultists states that the corridors are off limits, that the Heretics should make themselves comfortable here in the entrance chamber, and that Lord Oglanov will be with them in a moment. As the Heretics wait they may examine the statuary, the paintings in the entrance corridor, and the immense wooden door. A **Challenging (+0) Commerce Test** reveals the art to be quite valuable pieces by famed Calixian artists, some of whom are known Heretics and wanted by Imperial authorities, and a **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Occult, Heraldry, Legend, or Philosophy) Test** reveals the various pieces of to be representative of the teachings of Slaanesh and various heretical philosophers and writers. Once the Heretics have spent a few minutes in the entrance chamber, read them the following passage:

Eventually, a pretty, barefoot young cultist emerges from the doors amid a cloud of music, laughter, and incense, wearing little more than a collection of strategically placed straps and bits of mesh fabric. Upon seeing you, she smiles, bows, and makes the sign of Slaanesh.

"Welcome, brothers and sisters, to the home of Lord Oglanov. I am Anya, Lord Oglanov's Factor. His Lordship is free and will see you now."

Having made her introductions, Anya bids you follow her into the audience chamber.

AUDIENCE CHAMBER

The Audience Chamber is similar in design to the entrance chamber; low ceilinged and dimly lit with wine coloured walls and a polished stone floor. Colourful rugs and piles of plush, silk covered pillows dot the floor between low slung settees and fainting couches upholstered in rich, dark brown hide. Here and there the furniture is arranged in clusters around a low enamelled table upon which sit trays of food, decanters of different spirits and rare wines, and various apparatus used for smoking, inhaling, or otherwise partaking of mind altering substances. The buzz of low, intimate conversation mixes with the music, occasionally pierced by laughter or moaning from the darker corners of the room. Here and there smouldering braziers send up clouds of cloying incense, and the room is full of cultists in various stages of undress partaking of the myriad pleasures of the room. At the far end of the room, on a chaise lounge set upon a low dais, is the recumbent form of



Lord Oglanov, watching over his assembled followers with great complacency. Behind him stands a willowy woman in a hide bodysuit and red apron.

As the Heretics follow Anya, the assembled crowd takes little notice of the newcomers. Heretics with high Fellowship Characteristics, 40 or over are grabbed or pawed at as they pass, and cultists whisper many an indecent proposal into their ears. A cultist displaying the sigil of Slaanesh or any outward Gifts or mutations that mark them as a follower of the Lord of Pleasure are accosted in the same manner no matter what their Fellowship. The cultists take rebuffs and refusals with great magnanimity and return to their business, but physical confrontations are not tolerated, and if the Heretics get too defensive or violent it could cause them great trouble indeed. When the Heretics are within five metres of Lord Oglanov, he turns his strange, beautiful face upon them and welcomes them to his presence. Behind him, the woman simply flashes her teeth and glares at them.

Lord Oglanov himself is bewitching, handsome and lovely at the same time, he seems to radiate both masculine power and feminine sensuality simultaneously. His features are indescribable, appearing slightly different to everyone who looks upon him. His voice is melodious and kind, with an edge of mirth as if he is constantly on the verge of bursting into laughter. A Heretic who succeeds on a **Difficult (-10) Perception Test** senses that something is dreadfully wrong with Lord Oglanov, that perhaps his outward appearance does not match the man himself, but the Heretic cannot pinpoint what, exactly, is wrong. Psykers, however, see right to the truth of the matter and a **Challenging (+0) Psyniscience Test** reveals his true nature. His Lordship is deeply, fundamentally corrupt, his body twisted and reformed by the Lord of Pleasure. He is no longer a man, but an amalgam of man and woman with the features and desires of both genders, and his face is at once horrifying and aching beautiful to behold. Any Heretic who pierces Oglanov's veil of urbanity and normalcy must make a Willpower Test against a Fear Rating of Two.

Oglanov's associate, introduced by His Lordship as El'Leth, is much more obviously frightening and dangerous. El'Leth appears as a handsome young woman, tall and lithesome with an athlete's build and a stern demeanour. Long, dark hair falls to her middle back in thick curls, and her solid blue eyes flash in the low light of the audience chamber.

She is dressed head to toe in a supple, long sleeved, high necked black bodysuit made of black dyed hide secured with oversized silver buckles, and elegant, high heeled boots that reach to her thighs. She wears a red apron that crosses over her left shoulder and is tied around her narrow waist, and a long, wicked looking blade is tied down to her right hip. She remains silent, paying little attention to the Heretics—as if they were beneath her notice—and only replies to Lord Oglanov with grunts, nods, and sighs. Any character who succeeds on a **Difficult (-10) Scrutiny Test** notices that El'Leth's apron is not dyed in a conventional manner, but instead it is dyed red from dried blood, a fact that should surely give the Heretics pause. El'Leth is, in fact, Oglanov's principle torturer and interrogator, and is rumoured to be soul bound to one of the daemons of Slaanesh.

Anya, His Lordship's Factor, makes the introductions, and a bemused and distracted Lord Oglanov bids the Heretics welcome and invites them to make themselves comfortable here. It takes quite a bit of effort for the Heretics to fully get Lord Oglanov's attention, as he is more focused on the pleasing spectacle of his cultists spread out before him than on business matters. A **Hard (-20) Charm Test** or **Very Hard (-30) Intimidate Test** is required to attract Oglanov's full attention, and even with a successful Test Oglanov is petulant, gives short answers, and makes it clear through insinuation and tone of voice that now is not the time for business. If the Heretics insist on having their business conversation immediately, Oglanov orders Anya to escort them back to the entrance chamber where they may regale her with their petty requests. Should this happen, every subsequent Interaction Test made when dealing with Lord Oglanov suffers a -10 penalty. Whether they stay in the audience chamber and partake of Lord Oglanov's unique hospitality or are shown the door in a fit of pique, eventually they are summoned to Oglanov's personal suite where they are invited to make their proposal.

THE SENSORIUM

A series of connected chambers rather than one great room, the sensorium is a sacred place set aside for the use of the Sybaritic Host cultists for, as Lord Oglanov puts it, "individual worship and study." Each of the dozen or so rooms is big enough for perhaps a half dozen cultists and contains a daybed, numerous pillows and bolsters, a small altar and the various occult accoutrements that go along with it. Near the altar sits a small, ornate chest inlaid with the symbol of Slaanesh, full of what the cultists obliquely refer to as ecclesiastical impedimenta. It is in these rooms that the cultists of the Sybaritic Host come to worship Slaanesh with their dark and perverse rites.

The sensorium is also home to El'Leth—her suite within the sensorium is, in fact, Lord Oglanov's interrogation chamber. There are numerous holding cells with integrated systems that allow El'Leth to tailor each cell to play to the fears of particular prisoners. The cells can be outfitted as sensory deprivation cells, filled with vermin or dripping water, or anything El'Leth requires to perform her work. There are also various interrogation tools and torture devices that run the gamut from mundane apparatus typically found

SEIZING THE REINS

Instead of making deals and gathering allies, the Heretics may decide to cut out the middle man and simply seize the power and assets of Lord Oglanov and Colonel Hollum for themselves. This could take the form of anything from mind-controlling sorcery and blackmail to outright murder. Taking control of Hollum's forces is extremely difficult. Her men are fanatical in their loyalty and most will do their utmost to destroy the Heretics if they harm or kill their beloved leader. Deposing Lord Oglanov is easier, and could involve little more than the Heretics simply killing him and declaring that they now control the drug cartel and the Sybaritic Host. If there is a dedicated follower of Slaanesh among the Heretics, the Sybarites immediately cling to him in the absence of their Lord. If the Heretics choose this course of action, the ultimate results are up to the Game Master's discretion, and should fit with the general theme of the adventure as well as any over-arching campaign.

in the hands of the Imperial Inquisition to exotic equipment of obvious xenos or daemonic manufacture. El'Leth works alone here, as she despises the company of Oglanov and his cultists. Rarely sleeping, she is constantly working around the torture chambers, maintaining or improving the equipment or plying its trade on the enemies of Lord Oglanov.

THE LIBRARIUM ESOTERICA

Home to perhaps the most comprehensive collection of occult literature in the Malfian Sub-Sector, Lord Oglanov's library is truly impressive. The librarium contains hundreds of books covering numerous occult and mundane subjects in heavy wooden shelves. There is more furniture like that found in the entrance and audience chambers, a writing desk, and an open area dominated by a summoning circle and an altar dedicated to Chaos carved from native stone. Using the librarium to perform further research on *De Orbis Mysterioris* or the ritual contained therein grants the Heretics +20 to any relevant Skill Tests made to unlock the book's secrets. In addition, the summoning circle is an acceptable place to enact the ritual, though not ideal.

During their studies in the librarium, the Heretics can discover an important fact that they missed during their initial reading of the text. A clearer translation of a hitherto misunderstood passage makes it plain to the Heretics that a very specific set of individuals must be sacrificed for the ritual if they failed to identify these people earlier. Each target embodies what the text describes as one of the four pillars of civilisation. A **Difficult (-10) Logic Test** or a **Hard (-20) Common Lore (Imperium) Test** tell the Heretics that the four are major Imperial officers on the planet, the Warden, the Cardinal, the General in charge of the Imperial Guard Garrison, and the Canoness in charge of the medicae centre. While these four are the optimal sacrifices for the ritual, the Heretics find that it is possible to substitute some or all of those listed with multiple lesser sacrifices (a squad of ten

Arbitrators instead of the Warden, for example), but each substitution reduces the power of the ritual and increases the difficulty for all Tests made to complete it by one step, to a maximum of -30. This revelation may complicate matters for the Heretics in a number of ways, if they did not know that they need to factor the kidnapping of four powerful and well guarded Imperial officers into their plans.

OGLANOV'S SUITE

Lord Oglanov's personal suite is a study in contrasts, and reveals much about the man himself. The walls are painted in splashes of contrasting pastels that, along with delicate light fixtures and other accoutrement give the room an airy, expansive feel. The paintings and objects d'art on display here a jumble of different styles and are equal parts whimsical and obscene. In contrast to the bright colours of the walls and airy feel of the room, the furniture is heavy and dark, much of it in a style that has been out of fashion with Calixian nobility for generations. Aside from a massive, incongruous desk made of brass inlaid hardwood with a baize top the colour of congealed blood, there are numerous cabinets, side tables, overstuffed chairs, credenzas, and sideboards crowded into the room, as if the contents of a Scintillan gentleman's club had been upended into it.

You are finally shown into Lord Oglanov's suite to discuss your proposition. His Lordship receives you in a richly decorated office where he bids you sit, and cultists quickly appear to provide you with refreshments. Apparently Oglanov is still feeling the effects of his earlier debauchery, as his speech is disjointed and distracted and has an unnerving tendency to wander one moment and be directly on point the next. He perches on the edge of a large, ornate desk and turns his beatific smile on you as soon as you've settled in.

"Your proposal is fascinating, quite fascinating indeed. How may Lord Oglanov be of assistance?"

Negotiations with Lord Oglanov are extremely challenging, not because of any diplomatic or negotiation prowess or strength of will on the part of His Lordship, but because of his meandering thought process and the monumental feat of keeping him on task and paying heed during the conversation. Despite the best efforts of Anya, who is in attendance at the negotiations, dealing with Lord Oglanov can be an infuriating experience. As was the case with Colonel Hollum, the Heretics now must engage in a collaborative Extended Interaction Action.

To convince His Lordship to assist the Heretics in fomenting open rebellion among the general population requires a total of six Degrees of Success over the course of an extended Interaction Skill Test. As they lay out the particulars of their plan each Heretic involved in the conversation can make either an **Opposed Hard (-20) Charm Test** or an **Opposed Very Hard (-30) Deceive Test**.

Once each Heretic has had his say and made his Tests, tally up the total number of Degrees of Success, subtract from that the total number of Degrees of Failure, and if the result

is six or more net Degrees of Success, the Heretics succeed in convincing Lord Oglanov to support them.

Despite his flighty, meandering thought process, Lord Oglanov possesses quite a bit of perspicacity, and his list of demands is every bit as detailed and demanding as those of Colonel Hollum. For playing a part in the Heretics' plans, Lord Oglanov demands that he and his cultists be given safe passage from Saint Annard's Penance to the Eye of Terror where he believes the prophet who founded the original Fellowship of the Sybaritic Host resides to this day in decadent luxury. Aside from this demand he asks for little, although the Game Master should feel free to place any other conditions or restrictions on Oglanov's aid that he sees fit and that are concordant with the overall tone and theme of his campaign.

In return for passage to the Eye of Terror and whatever else the Game Master might imagine, Lord Oglanov offers the services of his vast network of contacts to the Heretics. Thanks to his trade in illicit drugs, Lord Oglanov commands the grudging respect, if not outright devotion, of a great many important people throughout Saint Annard's Penance. With a word he can get the Heretics access to the administration centre and Warden's manor, the medicae centre, the cathedral, many of the manufacturums and hab blocks, and even into Fort Saint Annard. He can dictate Enforcer schedules, the number of guards, and even some Adeptus Arbites patrol routes through the unfortunate Zenobia Pike. His influence and friendship can hasten and ease their movement throughout the complex, and make much of their upcoming work easier, granting the Heretics an additional +10 to all relevant Tests made in the execution of their plan.

Much like Chaos, however, Lord Oglanov is inconstant and can only be relied upon to be unreliable. If the Heretics anger him, or even inconvenience him overmuch, he brings the full force of his organisation upon them with shocking ferocity. The Game Master should consider a betrayal by Lord Oglanov as the Complication in the Heretic's Compact (see page 16).

CONSEQUENCES

"There has been more suffering caused in this galaxy by prayers answered than by those that have gone unanswered."

—Archdeacon Blythe Mears of the Church of the Clouded Eye

If the Heretics played their cards right, they are now well positioned to begin the second stage of their grand plan. They have worked hard to form alliances and forge networks of contacts in the prison population. They have discovered important information regarding their mysterious book and the ritual contained therein. Most importantly, they have set in motion a chain of events that promises to not only bring them untold glory and power, but also change the face of the Calixis Sector forever and seriously demoralise the loyalist fools of the Imperium of Man.



TREACHERY MOST FOUL

If the Game Master has chosen Treachery as the complication for the Heretics' compact, and is using Lord Oglanov as the betrayer, now is the time when he should show his hand. As the Heretics make their preparations and move their forces into place, the Adeptus Arbites should be waiting for them. Their contacts should turn against them, and they should be hounded by the Arbites throughout the penal complex. Their faces and descriptions should be in every Adeptus Arbites precinct station, and every Arbitrator should be on the lookout for them. Their status as known and wanted criminals increases the difficulty of all further Interaction Tests by one step, as few people are willing to be seen with them.

The Heretics must take care, however, for theirs is a delicate alliance built on a foundation of mendacity and treachery. Lord Oglanov is, as stated before, inconstant and untrustworthy, and the very nature of their plan hinges on the manipulation and eventual betrayal of Colonel Hollum.

Keeping their allies happy long enough for the Heretics to extract what they need from them is no easy task. Informers and traitors lurk around every corner, and no matter what assurances are given the Heretics could be betrayed at any moment by simply failing to mind details or show the right amount of respect to a new contact. They must tread lightly here, and keep cool heads, or a long stay on the planet or an ignominious death will be their only reward.

NOTABLE PERSONS

The following NPCs play important roles in helping the Heretics get their bearings and learn about the political and power situation on Saint Annard's Penance. Full game statistics for these characters are included in the NPC Appendix beginning on page 121.



JARVIS HELLIMAN

Born between two macro cannon batteries on the gun deck of the Imperial Navy frigate Saint Cecelia, Helliman spent the first decades of life in the void. After years of danger, privations, meager rations, brutal, capricious punishment, and the sickening vagaries of Warp travel, Helliman deserted the Navy at Port Wrath on the eve of his twentieth birthday and never looked back. With an R marked next to his name he was a wanted man, but he felt the risks were manageable. What was one voidman more or less to Battlefleet Calixis? Unfortunately, nearly a year to the day after he deserted, Helliman was picked up by an Imperial Navy press gang on Landunder. He was identified, tried and convicted for desertion, flogged around the fleet, and when he survived the punishment he was sent to Saint Annard's Penance to toil in the manufactoria there until his death.

First and foremost, Helliman is a survivor. Possessed of uncanny luck, Helliman has survived horrific industrial accidents, riots, plagues of gaol fever, and internecine warfare between the various power blocs within the prison population. He even escaped the terrible mutations suffered by much of the prison populace, although exposure to noxious gasses and long work in the mines has sharpened his night vision and toughened him beyond that of most men. With his breadth of experience both in the Sector at large and here on Saint Annard's Penance, Helliman knows a little about nearly any subject, and is quite knowledgeable indeed about the political situation on the prison world. Beholden to no criminal faction in the penal colony, and liked by most who know him, Helliman operates on the fringes of the prison population as a hired emissary. His long incarceration, his uncanny luck, and his very public neutrality make him much sought after by both Colonel Hollum's and Lord Oglanov's people.

Helliman's introduction to the Heretics happens via Kahli, their new slave. An old friend from her childhood, the two share a bond like that of brother and sister. Helliman is very poorly disposed toward the Heretics at their first meeting, as he can sense their wrongness and disapproves of them on looks alone. If the Heretics have treated Kahli well, and if they make an effort to put the man at ease, his attitude softens somewhat, but he never completely likes or trusts the Heretics.

GOING IT ALONE

Should the Heretics find themselves without the support of the penal colony's major power brokers, either through choice or by design, they can still foment their insurrection and proceed with their dark works. However, doing so involves much more work on the part of the Heretics. The easiest way to go about this is for the Heretics themselves to infiltrate the workforce and sow discord by spreading rumours and stirring up unrest. Perhaps they spread rumours that the entire population is soon to be shipped off to a penal battalion where they will fight the dreaded Tyranids, or that one and all are slated to be processed into corpse starch. Whatever their course of action, the Heretics first must get access to some of the manufacturums and the prisoners that toil within.

If the Heretics have the support of Helliman, this shouldn't pose too much of a problem. Helliman can identify select manufacturums that are ripe for rebellion, and can get the Heretics in to the work floors where their rumours can do the most damage. If the Heretics do not have Helliman's support and guidance, infiltrating the manufacturums is trickier, but not impossible. Doing so requires each Heretic to make a **Challenging (+0) Deceive Test** which represents both a disguise and their ability to blend into the general populace. Any time the Heretics are noticed or challenged by Enforcers or guards, they must make an additional opposed **Challenging (+0) Deceive Test** to avoid discovery. Chaos Space Marine characters attempting to infiltrate must make an **Arduous (-40) Deceive Test** to disguise themselves unless they remove their Power Armor, in which case the test is merely **Difficult (-10)**. If any of the Heretics are discovered, they are immediately detained by whomever discovered them, and 1d5 additional Enforcers are summoned to assist in the detention.

To succeed in fomenting insurrection on their own with no allied support, the Heretics need a total of 15 Degrees of Success on a number of Deceive Tests over the course of the 18-day preparation period. This is an extended interaction Test like the one described earlier, and follows the same rules. Once the Heretics work the general population into a frenzy, they are free to slip into the night and go about their business as the riot follows its natural course. While this approach is perhaps less complicated than orchestrating the actions of numerous disparate allies, it does have its downsides. Foremost among these is that once the planet transitions into the Screaming Vortex, the Heretics have no established allies or power structures with which to quell the post-transition chaos and take full control of the prison.

ZENOBIA PIKE

A short, self contained, dark-complexioned woman of indeterminate age, Zenobia Pike is a senior Arbitrator who commands one of the many Arbites sub-stations scattered about the penal colony at Saint Annard's Penance. Known for her intense personality and her frenzied work ethic, Pike has a reputation as a hard-bitten and efficient, if perhaps also difficult and capricious, investigator. It's also an open secret that her current assignment running a sub-station is a punishment handed down by Warden Morn himself for overstepping her bounds as an officer of His law.

Hailing from Malfi, Pike joined the Adeptus Arbites as much from filial pressure as from a sense of duty. Service was a tradition in her family, and as she was an only child she was expected to carry on that tradition. She pursued her training with attentiveness and thoroughness, if not outright zeal. She also developed a serious addiction to stimulants early in her career. Never a good sleeper, and plagued by nightmares from an early age, Pike began taking stims as a way to keep herself awake, to avoid her nightmares and devote more time to work.

Always rash and strong headed, the beginning of her career as an Arbitrator on Malfi was plagued with reprimands and accolades, promotions and demotions in nearly equal measure. Despite her rocky start, she soon settled into her career quite nicely. As she grew more experienced, she developed a talent for interrogation and investigation that allowed her to make a name for herself solving cases that had long grown cold. Unfortunately, during this time her addiction to stimulants began affecting her work. After a number of quite serious infractions and a disciplinary hearing, Pike was reassigned to Saint Annard's Penance, where she would work under the watchful eye of Warden Phineas Morn.

Stung by her punishment and in the depths of her addiction, Pike's transit to the penal world was a trial not only for her but her shipmates as well. She was unable to smuggle much of her daily drug cocktail aboard with her on her journey, and within weeks she had run out and was suffering from withdrawal. The withdrawal symptoms combined with years of sleep deprivation and rage at her punishment unhinged her mind. She flew into violent passions at a moment's notice, fought with fellow passengers, assaulted crewmen, and was eventually confined to her quarters. By the time she reached her new assignment at Saint Annard's Penance, her withdrawal symptoms had ended, but the emotional and psychological damage lingered on. It was a defeated, hollow eyed, cowed Arbitrator Pike who stepped from the ship's boat and took up her badge and her new position in Warden Morn's jurisdiction.

During the first months of her new assignment, Arbitrator Pike was withdrawn and quiet, often sullen, prone to rages, and generally cross grained and unpleasant to be around. Her saving grace was the zeal with which she pursued crimes reported among both the prison administration and its general population. Her disagreeable personality was overlooked by her superiors as long as she produced results, which she did consistently. Eventually her work brought her in contact with agents within Lord Oglanov's organisation, and she quickly resumed her drug habit. As she progressed deeper and deeper into her addiction, Oglanov's people gained more and more control over her as her debts to them mounted. Finally, faced with mounting debts, the unending ache of her addiction, and the constant threat of blackmail at the hands of her supplier and Oglanov's enforcers, she surrendered and clandestinely joined Oglanov's organisation.

Arbitrator Pike has been doing dirty work for Lord Oglanov for many years now, kept in check by the threat of blackmail

and placated with Thrones and regular deliveries of drugs. The work she is assigned by the Oglanov organisation chiefly revolves around covering up drug smuggling, misleading the Adeptus Arbites in their investigations, and eliminating informers, traitors, and other threats to the organisation. In fact, her current position is a direct result of this work, as she recently beat a possible informer to death in an interrogation cell during questioning and was reprimanded by the Warden, demoted, and sent to lord over a sub-station.

Heretics who interact with Arbitrator Pike find an eager and willing accomplice. She is, by this point, quite mad, her wits gone astray thanks to the amount of chemicals she pumps into her system on a daily basis. She is also completely untrustworthy, much like her master, and can turn on the Heretics in a moment, especially if ordered to do so by Lord Oglanov's people. She is a useful tool, however. Her knowledge of the Adeptus Arbites and their work in the prison, along with what she knows of the power blocs within the prison population are a boon to the Heretics, as long as they can find a way to control her.

COLONEL NADINE HOLLUM

Nadine Hollum, formerly a colonel in the 44th Dragoons, an Imperial Guard mechanised infantry unit from the hive world Fenskworld, is the leader of one of the two major gangs that operates in the prison complex at Saint Annard's Penance. A small, compact woman in her middle years with piercing green eyes and close cropped brown hair, Colonel Hollum's cool, professional demeanour masks the bitterness and anger seething in her heart. Once a well respected and highly decorated officer renowned for her courage under fire and her tactical prowess, she was laid low by a conspiracy between her unit's Commissar and her Regimental Commander. In a highly publicised and politically motivated trial, Colonel Hollum was convicted of dereliction of duty and behaviour unbecoming an officer in His Imperial Guard with falsified evidence, stripped of her rank and commendations, discharged the service, and sent to Saint Annard's Penance to serve a sentence of hard labour.

Upon her arrival at the Penal Colony at Saint Annard's Penance, she bore the shame and privation of her sentence with an outward appearance of stoic acceptance. Beneath this façade, however, the seeds of bitterness and hatred were already sown in her heart. She was set to work in one of the penal colony's promethium refineries where it was hoped the deadly working conditions would put her out of her enemies' way permanently. While she toiled away in the refinery, news of her incarceration reached the Imperial Guard garrison on the penal world, where she had many admirers and sympathiser. She was contacted by sympathetic members

of the Imperial Guard, and through bribery and influence her work assignment and living arrangements were changed and changed again until she lived in relative comfort.

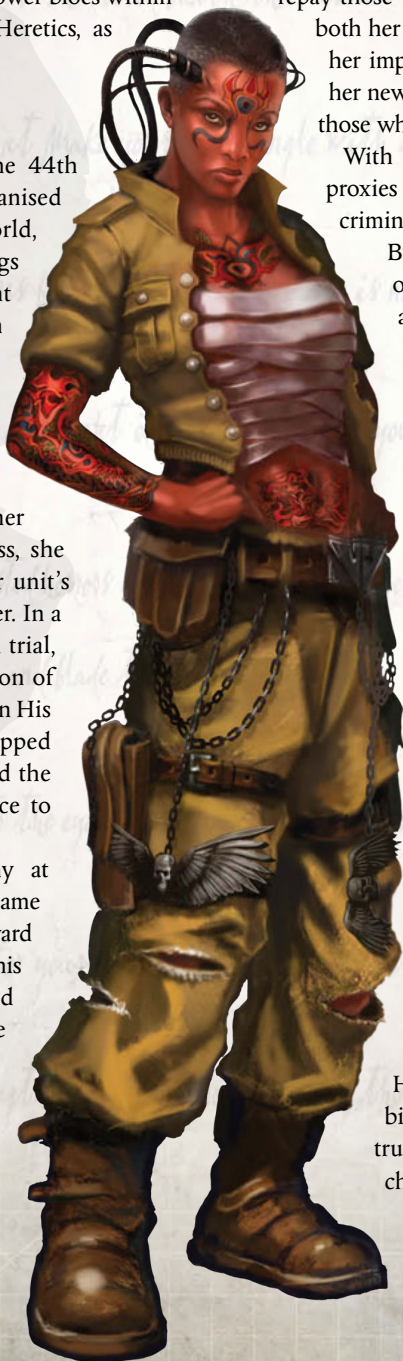
During the numerous changes of work assignments as she was shuffled about the prison complex by her supporters, Colonel Hollum gained knowledge about both the prison's manufacturing capabilities and output, but also of the incredible amount of corruption and smuggling that went on therein. Her constant reassignment put her in contact with numerous gangs, bent guards, and crooked officials who were using the manufacturing power of the penal colony as their personal income stream. Using her connections within the Imperial Guard garrison and among the numerous power groups endemic in the prison population and her natural leadership and organisational abilities, Hollum set about forging these disparate groups into a solid power bloc. At first she had no plans for this network, other than to make her life easier and to repay those who had helped her. Eventually, though, as both her power and her deep bitterness and anger at her imprisonment grew, she hatched a plan to use her new found role as a crime boss to strike back at those who had wronged her.

With her new power and influence, through proxies in the Imperial Guard she hired a number of criminals and killers throughout the Calixis Sector.

By her detailed orders, these undesirables set out on a campaign of blackmail, character assassination, and outright murder. Over the course of a decade those who had betrayed her and those who sat in judgement of her began to be systematically and efficiently ruined or killed in very public and gruesome ways.

Now, after decades of hard work, targeted assassinations, and a carefully-manipulated official record that reports her killed in an industrial accident, Colonel Hollum controls the majority of smuggling to and from the prison world and continues to hunt down her opponents. Her organisation, based in a militant compound deep beneath the planet's surface in a series of abandoned mine shafts, numbers in the thousands. Being legally dead, she enjoys an immense amount of autonomy, and spends her days in study, contemplation, or training. Colonel Hollum leaves the day-to-day operations of her criminal empire to her loyal second, the unlucky Yuriy Malkovic. Hollum still sees herself as a serious, hard-bitten military commander. However, in truth her time on Saint Annard's Penance has changed her more than she realises.

Should the Heretics come to Colonel Hollum for assistance or an alliance, it is a very difficult, but not impossible, task to gain her trust and support. The





Colonel's long years of incarceration and the loss of her military commission have left her disillusioned and bitter. Her criminal enterprise has certainly put her at odds with the Imperial Creed, though she is still deeply devoted to the God-Emperor, if not the political bodies of His Imperium. While certainly corrupt in a number of mundane, purely temporal ways, she is not an adherent to any Chaos cults and abhors heresy and blasphemy as much as any loyal subject of the Imperium. Her belief in her own righteousness, her anger, and her bitterness are her greatest weaknesses, and with the right amount of persuasion and manipulation the Heretics could gain a powerful ally indeed.

YURIY MALKOVIC

A massive, good natured man in the prime of his life, Malkovic is a strange combination of cool competence and utter haplessness. Formerly a senior sergeant in the 1st Sappers and Miners, a planetary defence force unit from Tranch trained in fortification and siege tactics, Malkovic was a career soldier who planned to end his days in the bosom of his unit until a freak accident left him paralysed and blind and a medical discharge left him unemployed. Using Thrones he had saved over his lucrative career and the assistance of his former colleagues in the Sappers and Miners, he was able to regain his sight and mobility through augmetics and long term therapy. Once recovered, to both pay back his friends and to pursue his career as a siege engineer, he set out to become a mercenary in the Koronus Expanse. This decision was the beginning of his downfall.

While he was deployed or in garrison, Yuriy was the very model of a professional soldier. Cool under fire, respected, and highly competent with a deep understanding of the nature of both his profession and the people with whom he served. Unfortunately, this understanding did not extend to civilian matters. Deeply sheltered due to never having left his homeworld and having spent the majority of his life in Tranch's military, Yuriy was ill equipped to deal with the more scabrous side of civilian life. In his travels from Tranch to Port Wander, where he hoped to sell his services to a mercenary company, he encountered nearly every flavour of confidence man, projector, grifter, and gold digger, and fell prey to each and every one of them. His open, good natured demeanour and a sadly displaced trust in his fellow man, combined with a severe underestimation of his understanding of the Galaxy at large, made him an easy target. So much so, that by the time he reached Port Wander, a trip of some years thanks to the vagaries of the Warp and the various pitfalls he encountered, he was down to his last Throne, owed incredible debts all across the Sector, and possessed little more than a second hand stubber and the clothes on his back.

Port Wander was no better. Once he reached the station, with debt collectors and the factors and flunkies of former business associates hounding him, he was unable to secure employment and slowly slid into the seamy underworld of Port Wander. By necessity he took up a life of crime, albeit halfheartedly. Using the knowledge he'd learned as a soldier and siege engineer, Malkovic began providing illegal arms and explosives to criminals and terrorists. Here again, his misplaced trust failed him and his nascent career as an arms

merchant was brought to a quick halt by a client turned informer. He was tried on Port Wander, found guilty, and sentenced to transportation to a penal world. In less than a year of arriving on Port Wander he was on his way for an extended stay at Saint Annard's Penance.

It has been many years since Malkovic arrived on Saint Annard's Penance, and he's put that time to good use. He spent the first decade of his incarceration on a work crew that maintained the prison's buildings under the watchful eye of the prison's Tech-Priests. From that assignment he was moved to a refinery that made the various compounds and chemicals used in military and commercial explosives. It was while working in the refinery that he became entangled with Colonel Hollum's organisation, and after working extensively with her agents supplying them with chemicals he became a full fledged member of the organisation. Thanks to his skills and his knowledge of the prison's infrastructure, Malkovic rose through the ranks and eventually became Colonel Hollum's right hand man, and took on the day-to-day responsibilities of running the gang.

Yuriy is the main contact within Hollum's organisation if the Heretics should choose to ask them for assistance. Convincing him of the efficacy of their plan should be simple if couched in the right tones, and once he's convinced that makes convincing Colonel Hollum easier. While he's not a stupid man—quite the opposite, in fact—he suffers from a lack of wisdom and an overabundance of credulity which makes him easy to mislead, especially if the person doing the misleading has a silver tongue and an honest face.

LORD BALTHAZAR OGLANOV

Balthazar Oglanov, a deeply debauched and corrupt minor noble from Scintilla, is the last scion of the once powerful and respected Oglanov trade dynasty. Possessed of an Imperial Warrant of Trade dated from the Age of Apostasy, House Oglanov made its fortune as respectable merchant traders, buying low and selling high and moving billions of tonnes of cargo through the Empyrean with their green and gold liveried mass conveyors. For centuries House Oglanov plied the spaceways in Segmentum Pacificus. They were among the first traders into the Calyx Expanse, and their massive ships hauled countless tonnes of men and materiel for the Angevin Crusade.

By the time Balthazar was born on Scintilla however, House Oglanov was already deep in decline. Poor management, sloth, greed, and bad decision making had reduced the once proud dynasty possessed of dozens of voidships to little more than a handful of poorly maintained Raider-class vessels and an ancient, permanently dry docked mass conveyor in orbit over Scintilla that served as the dynasty's home. Although much reduced, House Oglanov was still wealthy, and Balthazar grew up in comparative ease and luxury.

A deeply lazy young man with the massive entitlement complex and careless, borderline sociopathic personality common to the children of the wealthy and elite, young Lord Oglanov was always more interested in his personal enjoyment than in bills of lading and the workaday business of running a galaxy spanning shipping concern. He spent money freely, mainly on food, drink, art, and women. He

whiled away his days reading heretical poetry and collecting blasphemous art, which he did more for shock value and to impress his peers than from any real corruption within. Of course, as happens, Lord Balthazar spent so much time looking into the abyss that it began to gaze into him, and he began a slow slide into the worship of Slaanesh.

To pay his mounting debts and to fuel his growing chem habits, he fitted out the best ship in his small merchant fleet as a commerce raider with what little money he had left. With the force of his Warrant he set out into the Koronus Expanse with a half formed plan of allying himself with a wealthy dynasty and remaking his fortunes. Unfortunately, his behaviour had not gone unnoticed, and his free and open enjoyment of proscribed art, literature, and mind altering drugs had attracted the attention of the Holy Ordos. Unbeknownst to him, a handful of his key officers were plants, agents in the employ of an Inquisitor from Scintilla. When, unsurprisingly, Oglanov turned to open piracy in the Koronus Expanse, raiding Imperial Navy convoys as well as those of rival and powerful dynasties like House Chorda and the House of Saul, he was relieved of his command, clapped in irons, and sent back to Scintilla to face trial for his crimes.

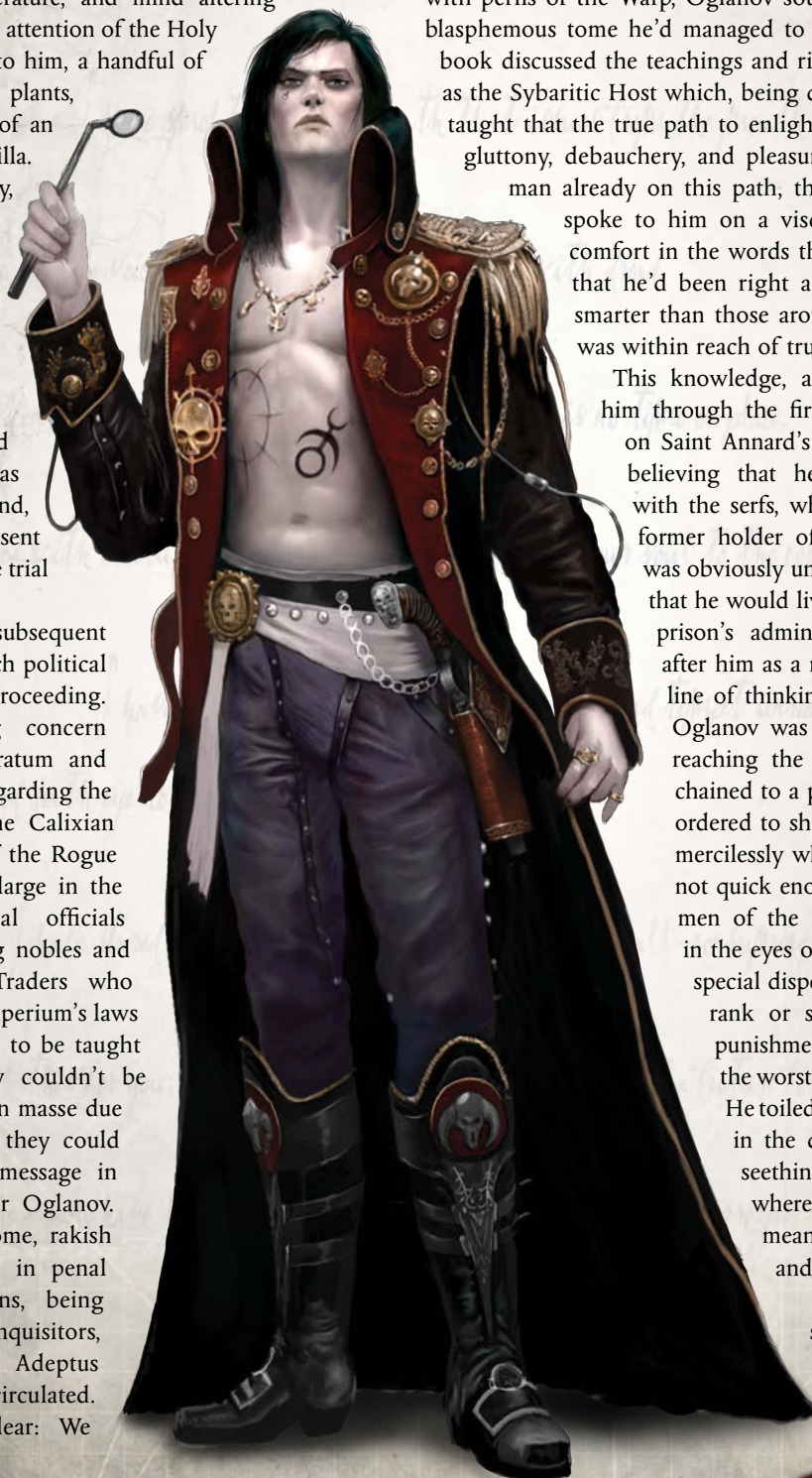
His trial and subsequent sentencing was as much political theatre as it was legal proceeding. There was growing concern among the Administratum and the Calixian Synod regarding the behaviour of both the Calixian Nobility and many of the Rogue Traders operating at large in the Sector. The Imperial officials felt that the scheming nobles and swaggering Rogue Traders who openly flaunted the Imperium's laws with impunity needed to be taught a lesson. While they couldn't be attacked openly and en masse due to political concerns, they could be sent a powerful message in the form of Balthazar Oglanov. Images of the handsome, rakish young Lord standing in penal garb, draped in irons, being savaged by litigants, Inquisitors, and Judges from the Adeptus Arbites were widely circulated. The message was clear: We

made you, and we can break you just as easily. Oglanov was stripped of his titles and holdings, House Oglanov was dissolved, the Warrant voided, and he was sent away to Saint Annard's Penance to serve a lengthy sentence for trafficking in proscribed items, blasphemy, and general moral failings unbecoming a member of the nobility.

While he was merely a dabbler in the occult when he was shipped away to prison, a dilettante interested only in the shock value of his actions, by the time he arrived on Saint Annard's Penance Oglanov was a full fledged adherent of the Ruinous Powers. It was a much changed Balthazar Oglanov who stepped from the stinking shuttle into the blazing sun of the penal colony. Throughout his journey, a transit fraught with perils of the Warp, Oglanov sought solace in a small blasphemous tome he'd managed to smuggle aboard. The book discussed the teachings and rituals of a cult known as the Sybaritic Host which, being dedicated to Slaanesh, taught that the true path to enlightenment was through gluttony, debauchery, and pleasures of the flesh. As a man already on this path, the words in the book spoke to him on a visceral level. He found comfort in the words therein. They told him that he'd been right all along, that he was smarter than those around him, and that he was within reach of true enlightenment.

This knowledge, and little else, helped him through the first few brutal months on Saint Annard's Penance. Never once believing that he'd be put to work with the serfs, which to a noble and a former holder of a Warrant of Trade was obviously unthinkable, he assumed that he would live in ease and that the prison's administration would look after him as a man of breeding. This line of thinking proved wrong, and Oglanov was shocked when, upon reaching the penal world, he was chained to a post in a blast furnace, ordered to shovel coal, and flogged mercilessly when he refused or was not quick enough. To show that all men of the Imperium were equal in the eyes of His law, and that no special dispensation was given for rank or station when figuring punishment, Oglanov was given the worst, most dangerous tasks. He toiled away in blast furnaces, in the deepest mines, and in seething chemical refineries where the slightest mistake meant sure disfigurement and almost certain death.

Amazingly, the man survived these trials with nary a scratch, a feat that he attributed to his



newfound dedication to Slaanesh, who surely loved beautiful and precious things such as Lord Oglanov. In what little free time he could find, Oglanov studied his sole book until the pages fell from the binding. He gathered to him a flock of prisoners who also sought release from their punishment, no matter how fleeting. Oglanov promised them that release and more, and soon had a strong following. Letters to those friends and colleagues who would still speak to him on the outside were smuggled out by corrupt Enforcers sympathetic to the charming Lord, and more books, drugs, data slates, and esoteric occult accoutrement were smuggled back, often hidden in mundane items such as packages of food or books of scripture.

Now, many years later, Oglanov is one of the two most powerful people in the prison population, and his organisation rivals that of Colonel Hollum. Where Hollum is concerned with arms and materiel, Oglanov controls the flow of drugs and occult materials to and from the planet. It is said that he has hundreds of Enforcers on his payroll, many of whom are addicted to the very drugs that they help smuggle in. There are even rumours that some of the Administratum functionaries in the prison's administration are loyal customers of Lord Oglanov. Thanks to his influence among the prison population and the Enforcers and prison administration, Oglanov has carved out for himself a comfortable little fiefdom where he can pursue his dark pleasures, run his organisation, and enjoy his leisure.

If the Heretics choose to approach Lord Oglanov, they need to prove their dedication to the Ruinous Powers before an audience is granted. Even then, no followers of Khorne are permitted in his presence. Indeed, no one who follows the God of Blood is allowed in Oglanov's tower. If and when the Heretics are granted an audience, they meet a lively, energetic, ageless man with beautiful, flawless skin and a serene expression on his face. His voice is soothing and musical, and he is gracious and shows incredible hospitality to his guests. Oglanov is receptive to the Heretics' plans, but his enthusiasm for their scheme is tempered by his concern for the effects on his drug smuggling endeavours. Despite his demeanour and dedication to the Ruinous Powers, Lord Oglanov bears constant watching and is an inconstant ally. He is capricious, flighty, cares only for himself, and he can turn on the Heretics in an instant if he feels it suits his needs.

THE FOUR PILLARS OF CIVILISATION

As stated in *De Orbis Mysterioris*, four specific and powerful sacrifices are required for the successful completion of the ritual meant to draw Saint Annard's Penance into the Screaming Vortex. The text speaks of four souls who represent the four pillars of civilisation: The Soul of Piety, The Soul of Charity, the Soul of Security, and The Soul of Law. Each of the individuals who embody these ideals, the Cardinal, the Canoness, the General, and the Warden, serve important and iconic roles in the Imperium, and their ignominious betrayal and sacrifice at the hands of the Heretics could have quite an effect on the sheep of the Imperium and their benighted masters.

RIOT IN HAB BLOCK NINE

"We're all alone out here, you realise. It's nearly a month long Warp passage to get here, and that's with clear sailing. There's 15 million of them down there, and if these animals ever got it into their heads to revolt I'm not sure that even the Arbites could stand up to them. Luckily, the lash and fear of Him on Earth keeps them in line, so we needn't worry over much."

– Captain Galen Fortesque of the Imperial Navy ship *Fury*

With their allies gathered, a solid plan, and more of *De Orbis Mysterioris* translated, the Heretics are now poised to strike. Fomenting insurrection on a scale such as this, and with stakes this high, presents a number of interesting challenges for the Heretics. Word needs to spread, huge numbers of people need to be put in place, strategic points need to be identified and exploited, and tonnes of materiel needs to be distributed, none of which can happen overnight.

The first section of Scene Two concerns the Heretics and their allies making their preparations for the riot, a process that takes roughly three local weeks or 18 days. In that time, the Heretics must identify a number of manufactorums in which to start their riot, places with particularly harsh and dangerous working conditions and excessively oppressed and unhappy workforces. They must also contact and brief a number of agents provocateur among the workers in the unhappy manufactorums to agitate the workforce and push the prisoners to revolt. There are payments to be made, materiel to be moved, weapon caches to be planted, guards to be bribed, and a thousand small details to be attended to, many that only present themselves at the last moment and demand the Heretics' undivided attention.

To successfully foment a rebellion on Saint Annard's Penance requires a total of 15 Degrees of Success over the course of the preparation period. These Degrees of Success are accrued by the Heretics as they work toward their final goal. As the preparation stage moves along and the Heretics work feverishly to get all of their elements in place, each one should make a **Difficult (–10) Skill Test** that best reflects his personal strengths. Apostates and Champions could meet with agents provocateur and recruit them to the cause using Charm and Intimidate, for example, while Renegades reconnoitre likely spots to waylay Arbitrators with Awareness and Hereteks sabotage infrastructure with Tech-Use. As they make their Tests, the Heretics should describe their actions and what they hope to accomplish by performing them. This makes for a cinematic, montage type of game play that allows the Heretics to control the outcome while the Game Master compresses a few weeks of work into minutes or hours of in game time.

Once each Heretic makes his Test, tally the total Degrees of Success, subtract any Degrees of Failure, and compare the net Degrees of Success. If the Heretics manage to accrue 15 Degrees of Success, the preparations are completed successfully. For every Degree of Success above 15, to a total of 20, the total days needed for the preparations is reduced by one day. If the

A ROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD

As the Heretics go about the work of gathering their sacrifices, they must still travel through the bloody, violent passages and byways of Saint Annard's Penance where all manner of danger awaits them. Every time the Heretics travel between areas of the compound, the Game Master should roll 1d10 and compare it to **Table 2-3: Prison Riot Encounters** to see what manner of trouble finds them. The Game Master should also feel free to create his own Encounters as fits with the overall theme of his campaign. A successful **Challenging (+0) Stealth Test** by all the Heretics in the group can negate this: any successful tests modify the roll downwards by 1, while any failures add 1 to the total instead.

TABLE 2-3: PRISON RIOT ENCOUNTERS

1d10 Result	Result
1–4	No Encounter. The Heretics avoid notice.
5	Several prisoners notice the Heretics and somehow recognise them for what they are, agents of Chaos. They start wailing and chanting, either trying to ward off these “evildoers” or imploring the Heretics to bless them with the Dark God’s favour. Though this is not dangerous, it does draw attention. Unless the Heretics silence them (one way or another), the next time they roll on this chart, they add +1 to the result.
6	A squad of 12 Arbitrators is marching up the street the Heretics are currently travelling on, responding to a nearby disturbance. If they succeed on a Difficult (–10) Stealth Test the Heretics avoid drawing the attention of the Imperials. If even one of the Heretics fails their Stealth Test, the Arbitrators move to engage them.
7	A Magnitude 20 Horde of Arbitrators has rounded up an equal-sized group of unarmed and relatively helpless prisoners and is preparing to execute them. Rescuing the prisoners is worth 100 additional Experience Points and 1 Infamy point.
8	A Magnitude 30 Horde of prisoners armed with scavenged shotguns (30m; S–/–; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Rld 2 Full; Scatter, Unreliable) and makeshift machetes (1d10+3 R; Pen 1; Primitive (7), Unbalanced), mistakes the Heretics for a group of Imperial agents and attacks.
9	An improvised explosive device left behind by one of Hollum’s Agents (2d10 X; Blast (5)). Each Heretic must make a Hard (–20) Awareness Test to spot it. As long as one of the Heretics succeeds the explosive is spotted and can then be disarmed with a Challenging (+0) Tech–Use Test . If none of the Heretics detect the bomb, it explodes.
0	A squad of 10 Guardsmen from the 81 st Malfi Light Infantry are skirmishing with a group of prisoners. See page 130 for details on the 81 st .

Heretics do not manage to reach the total Degrees of Success needed, the preparations take one day longer for each Degree of Success by which they miss their mark, and the Game Master should visit upon them one of the Complications found on page 273 in the Compacts section of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. The delay may also create other complications for the Heretics, and even threaten the entire enterprise if they run too long or are betrayed to the Arbitrators by a traitorous ally. Once the preparations are complete and the appointed hour arrives, the players have only to sit back and watch the seeds sown over the past weeks bear their wicked fruit.

The course the riot takes over the following hours is relatively linear. It begins with the Heretics’ agents inside the manufactoria sabotaging equipment and inciting their fellow workers to revolt. At that point the Adeptus Arbites is mobilised and, once abroad in the streets, those guards and Arbitrators who haven’t been bribed or otherwise encouraged to look the other way are engaged by small squads of Hollum and Oglanov’s people who tie the Imperials up with guerilla tactics. From this point the violence spirals out of control, the Imperial Guard is mobilised, sensitive buildings are fortified, the Arbitrators go into full riot suppression mode, and utter chaos erupts within the prison complex.

This first stage, as the riot catches on and workers from other manufactorums follow the lead of the initial insurrectionists, takes 1d10+8 hours. During this time the Heretics may join the fray if they so choose, supporting their

allies’ forces and hindering the Imperials as far as they are able. While the prospect of joining the mob and engaging the Arbitrators and Imperial Guard forces is certainly attractive to the Heretics, and likely rewarding in the long run, they have little time to spare for fun and games. The time has come for the Heretics to turn control of the riot over to their allies and the favour of the Ruinous Powers, for they have some very important people to visit.

NIGHT OF BLADES

“We have mobs of violent prisoners in the streets armed with lasguns, autoguns, and shotguns. Sectors fourteen, eight, and thirty report barricades overrun and the precinct houses have gone quiet. Numerous reports of fires, explosions, and someone swears they saw a daemon. This is as serious as it gets, people.”

—Arbitrator Jarl Zlatoper, 9th Precinct, Saint Annard’s Penance.

With the riot in full swing, the Heretics must now turn their attention toward gathering the sacrifices required for their ritual. The violence and chaos caused by the revolting prisoners creates the perfect cover for the Heretics work, but there are still many challenges ahead of them. Each of the four targets—the Canoness, the Warden, the Cardinal, and the General—are well-guarded and dangerous in their own right, and kidnapping them requires all of the Heretics’ diverse talents. With the time of the ritual fast approaching



and the real possibility of the Arbitrators and Imperial Guard quelling the riot in due order, kidnapping the four Imperial officers needs done quickly. While it is technically possible for the Heretics to perform their dastardly acts by themselves, doing so as a single group in one night is high impossible. If the Heretics are hell-bent on this course of action, the Game Master should require the Heretic chosen as the Anointed in the Compact to make either a **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis)** or **Logic Test** to realise that going it alone is surely folly and that other, better considered courses of action should be implemented.

There are two of ways to go about this, each with their own inherent pros and cons. One option is to send teams of armsmen or cultists from either of their allies to do their work for them, which allows them to concentrate on preparing for the ritual but necessarily keeps them out of the action. The second option is to split into teams where one or two Heretics leads a squad of armsmen and cultists against each individual target. The first option, sending teams out with explicit instructions, may be the easiest but not the most reliable method. While it allows others to do the Heretics' dirty work for them, there's also the real possibility of catastrophe as they place the trust for a delicate mission in the hands of underlings who may not have the same ability, drive, or follow through as the Heretics themselves. Sending out teams requires the Heretics to make a **Hard (-20) Command Test** for each team to lay out the plans and relay detailed orders of engagement and withdrawal. With one Degree of Success on the Command Test each team has a base 50% chance

of succeeding in their task, and each additional Degree of Success increases the chance of success by 10% up to a total of 90%. Once the kidnapping teams are sent out, the Game Master rolls against each team's chance of success, keeping the results secret until the end of the scene when all the teams reassemble with their prizes.

The second, more hands on approach is for the Heretics themselves to split into small teams with one or two Heretics in charge of a small squad of armsmen and cultists. This allows the Heretics to be present at each kidnapping to ensure the plan goes off smoothly and to better respond to any emergencies that might crop up. When divvying up their forces and picking their squads, the Heretics should take into consideration the particulars of each target and the unique challenges presented by each. For example, Heretics with medicae training find that training comes in handy when infiltrating the medicae centre to kidnap the Canoness, and Renegades may find it easier to gain access to Fort Saint Annard than a psyker or Traitor Legionnaire. However the Heretics choose to go about the kidnappings, they must strike hard and fast to ensure they land their quarry.

CANONESS RAK

Infiltrating the medicae centre during the riot is relatively simple. As the prisoners and Imperial forces clash in the streets of the manufactoria sector, a stream of casualties flood into the grand building. The easiest way for the Heretics to gain entry during the confusion is to pose as a group carrying a wounded comrade to the centre to be

PRECIOUS CARGO

Kidnapping the four Imperial officers is only part of the Heretics' task, albeit a major one. Once they have their prey, the question remains of just how, exactly, they are to transport the officers to the ritual site where they are to be prepared and sacrificed. This is where their allies come in handy, as both Hollum and Oglanov can provide simple ground vehicles, safe houses, drugs for keeping the four sedated, and most other things that the Heretics might need to transport their VIPs through the prison complex.

treated. Whether they pose as prisoners, Arbitrators, or some other Imperial agents matters little, as the Sisters treat all comers with equal care. Each entrance is guarded by a squad of 10 Arbitrators, and there are triage areas set up just inside the entrances staffed by 1d5 Sisters and a number of lay chiurgeons and medicae servitors. To pass through the security requires a **Challenging (+0) Deceive versus Perception Test**, as the Arbites are simply there to keep order and aren't looking for anyone trying to infiltrate the medicae centre for nefarious purposes. Failing the Test means that one of the Arbitrators notice something amiss with the Heretics, and they are detained for closer inspection.

There is a massive crowd in front of the medicae centre. The entire façade is brightly lit with portable floodlights, and hundreds of Arbitrators and prisoners are queuing up to bring in their wounded and dying. As you approach, the distant sound of gunfire and shattering glass mixes with the cries of the wounded in the street and the shouting of the medicae centre's security as they struggle to keep order. Everywhere you look there is blood and chaos, a perfect cover for your coming work.



Once the Heretics pass the Arbites security and reach the triage area, they again face a small possibility of being detected. To avoid detection, they may either attempt to slip away from the triage area in the confusion, requiring each Heretic to succeed on a **Difficult (-10) Stealth Test**, or continue their masquerade until a more suitable time for escape presents itself, which requires a **Hard (-20) Deceive Test** opposed by the Perception of the examining medical personnel. If any of the Heretics have the Medicae Skill trained, reduce the difficulty of the Deceive Test by one step to reflect the Heretics' ability to fake a wound more convincingly. If the Heretics manage to avoid detection, they are shuffled into a waiting area with dozens of other casualties and left to wait, which allows them to slip away into the medicae facility in search of their prey.

Once past the triage areas, the medicae centre is a bustling hive of activity with medicae personnel running from ward to ward, responding to emergencies and shouting orders followed by the numerous plodding servitors. Every floor is a cacophony of shouts, screams, shrill alarms, moans, weeping, and the constant pounding of running feet. The Heretics pass through this chaos largely unnoticed unless they somehow manage to draw attention to themselves, but they are still in the presence of both Arbitrators and trained members of the Adepta Sororitas, and the Game Master should require the Heretics to make **Challenging (+0) Stealth** or **Deceive Tests** to move about unmolested and to answer simple queries by staff and guards.

Unfortunately for the Heretics, due to the scope of the present emergency the medicae centre is on security lockdown. The doorways between the different wards, as well as the doors to every room and to all staircases, are locked and require key cards to access. The lifts that move between the centre's floors are similarly locked and stay on their current floor unless called with a cipher wand or access code. Acquiring a key card from should be a top priority for the Heretics, but finding one without raising an alarm and attracting the attention of the Arbitrators is no mean feat. Their best option is to find an empty workstation, a small alcove where medical personnel file reports and do other paperwork, and rifle through its contents which requires both a **Very Hard (-30) Stealth Test** to avoid detection and a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test** to make the search.

Failing the Stealth Test means that the Heretics are caught snooping about the workstation and are required to answer for themselves, and failing the Awareness Test simply means that no key card is to be found. Succeeding at both Tests means that the Heretics have located a key card and can now move through the medicae centre with relative impunity. The Heretics can also acquire a keycard from a staff member by either sheer force, guile, or sleight of hand, which is more direct but also more dangerous as it runs a greater risk of alerting the guards to their presence. If the Heretics cannot acquire a keycard or don't feel the need for one, they may bypass any lock in the hospital with a **Hard (-20) Security Test**.

Finding Canoness Rak among the chaos of the medicae centre is quite a challenge, as she is moving about the wards tending patients and conferring with her subordinates. Locating her among the swirling mass of staff, guards, and

GUN EMPLACEMENTS

Hastily constructed by the Arbitrators stationed in the administration complex, these ersatz fighting positions create quite a hazard for the Heretics.

- **Heavy Stubber Emplacements:** Constructed from sandbags (8 AP) and flakboard (8 AP) these fighting positions are placed here and there throughout the compound at strategic points. Each fighting position houses a tripod mounted, belt fed heavy stubber, has a 180 degree field of fire, and each position is placed in such a way that it can be defended by another. They are crewed by two Arbitrators, a shooter and a loader. Belt Fed Heavy Stubber (100m; -/-/10; 1d10+5 I; Pen 3; Clip 240; Rld 2 Full; Unreliable).

wounded requires four Degrees of Success on an **Arduous (-40) Awareness Test**. If the Heretics choose to split up, they can make this Test as if it is Assisted, with one Heretic making the Test and the difficulty reduced by one step for each additional Heretic searching. Finding the Canoness is only the beginning however, and once they locate her they must figure out the best way of capturing her and removing her from the premises.

When encountered by the Heretics, Canoness Rak recognises them immediately for what they are, and will do her utmost to stop them, although she is not a fully trained combatant as are the more militant orders of Sisters. She will not fight to the death, and if she cannot overwhelm the Heretics and any other forces they may have with them with guards or medicae servitors she may have at hand, she will retreat to a secured safe room beneath the medicae centre's chapel. From here she orchestrates the defence of the medicae centre or, in the most dire of circumstances, its evacuation. More information on Canoness Rak can be found in the Notable Persons section below, as well as in the NPC index along with the Sisters of Serenity, the medicae centre's medicae servitors, and other medicate centre security personnel.

WARDEN MORN

Infiltrating the administration complex and kidnapping the Warden is an extremely difficult task. Not only do the Heretics need to bypass the walls, but they also must cross the heavily fortified complex within, infiltrate the Warden's manor, deal with his security, and get him out alive. When the Heretics arrive they find a furious battle between a riotous mob of prisoners and the complex's defenders at the gates. The clatter of Arbitrator assault shotguns fills the air along with screaming, shattering glass, and the sharp, hard explosions of grenades. A thick cloud of smoke and choke gas hangs over the crowd, and the prisoners have wrapped cloth over their noses and mouths in an attempt to lessen their effects. It is through this melee that the Heretics must pass if they wish to enter the administration complex and capture the Warden.

As you reach the walls of the administration complex you find it under siege by hundreds of prisoners. The Arbitrators on the top of the wall fire indiscriminately into the throng as the prisoners throw bottles, paving stones, filth, and even grenades supplied to them by Colonel Hollum's agents. The Arbitrators are waging a losing battle however, and for every prisoner they kill two more take their place. In their fury, the prisoners seem not to realise the strength of their numbers, and you can see many of them wavering, milling about and looking for someone to point them in the right direction. It quickly becomes clear to you that with the right kind of leadership it is only a matter of time before the prisoners overwhelm the defenders and push through into the complex.

A **Challenging (+0) Tactical Imperialis** or **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test** tells the Heretics what they need to know about the situation in a glance. The prisoners outnumber the Arbitrators on the walls, but they are confused and demoralised, which makes them easy targets for the panicky and exhausted defenders on the walls. Canny Heretics can use this situation to their advantage by rallying the prisoners and leading them in an organised attack on the gates. If the Heretics wish to lead the crowd of prisoners through the gates, each Heretic should make a **Challenging (+0) Skill Test** that best reflects his strengths. For example, a Renegade could make a Ballistic Skill Test to attack the defenders directly while a Traitor Legionnaire uses Command to rally the prisoners and a Heretek makes a Tech-Use Test to plant breaching charges on the gates. Once every Heretic makes his Test, tally up the Degrees of Success, subtract the total Degrees of Failure, and if the net result is eight or more Degrees of Success the Heretics and the crowd of prisoners manage to push the defenders off the wall, breach the gates, and flood into the complex. This also gives the Heretics a biddable, bloodthirsty Magnitude 50 Horde to command as their own. Failure means that the walls' defenders hold fast, and that another round of Tests must be made, but at a -10 penalty.

Once inside the complex, the Heretics are free to move about at their leisure while the crowd of prisoners floods in to burn and destroy everything they can reach. Moving

AN ALTERNATE ROUTE

The walls of the administration complex connect to those that surround the entire penal colony. If the Heretics prefer a more stealthy entrance into the complex, they can reach it through an access hatch set into the exterior wall that makes up part of the complex's wall. Navigating through the massive outer wall to the correct hatch requires a **Hard (-20) Navigation (Surface) Test**, and opening the hatch itself requires a **Difficult (-10) Security Test**. If the Heretics go through the trouble of finding this alternate route and use it to infiltrate the administration complex and to extract the Warden, the Game Master should award them an additional 100 Experience Points for good planning.

through the complex requires each Heretic to make a **Difficult (-10) Stealth Test** to avoid roving patrols of Arbitrators and sharp eyed gunners in the numerous, hastily constructed fighting positions scattered throughout the complex. When the Heretics finally reach the Warden's manor, they find it heavily guarded by dozens of Arbitrators with a number of Rhino APCs for support.

There are a number of ways the Heretics can gain access to the house. If they have the skills they may attempt to bluff their way past the guards with by posing as Imperial Agents, or even Arbitrators if they've outfitted themselves with Arbitrator equipment and armour, which entails a **Very Hard (-30) Deceive Test**. If they prefer a less dangerous, less confrontational approach, a combination of a **Very Hard (-30) Stealth Test** and a **Very Hard (-30) Security Test** allows them to gain access through a window or temporarily unguarded door.

Once inside, the Heretics find that the house is a labyrinth of chambers, corridors, stairways, and lifts. If they have no maps or other intelligence regarding the layout of the house, locating the Warden requires a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test**. The Game Master should also require a number of Stealth, Deceive, Charm, and Intimidate Tests while the Heretics search, as the house is full of patrolling guards. Eventually the Heretics locate the Warden's office, where he is currently ensconced with a bottle of amasec while he monitors the situation in the prison and takes reports from his subordinates via secure vox. There are six Arbitrators stationed in the corridor outside of the Warden's office, and any disturbance attracts the attention of the Warden himself who comes into the corridor with a weapon in hand to see what is happening.

When the Heretics first encounter Warden Morn he is taken aback, but his astonishment at seeing agents of the Ruinous Powers on his planet does not last for long. Judge Morn spent many decades patrolling the streets on foot and in the back of Rhinos before he ascended to the lofty office of Warden, and his Arbitrator training, while rusty and disused, makes him a formidable opponent. He fights alongside his bodyguards, but if the fight turns against them he orders a retreat into his office where he and his remaining bodyguards go to ground and call for reinforcements from the Arbitrators stationed outside.

If the Warden should make it back into the safety of the office and bar the doors, the Heretics have a very limited timeframe in which to capture the Warden alive, and few options. A quick thinking Heretek can jam the Warden's calls for help with a personal vox and a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test**, which buys the Heretics time to breach the door, a **Very Hard (-30) Security Test** to bypass the lock or a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** to simply blast through the door with explosives. Once inside the Heretics can finish off the Warden's guards, capture the man, and extract him as they see fit. More information on Warden Morn can be found in the Notable Persons section below, as well as in the NPC index along with the stats for the Arbitrators stationed in the complex as guards.

CARDINAL FALCONER

Cordoned off by squads of Arbitrators mounted on Rhino APCs, the area around the cathedral is extremely difficult to gain access to. The Heretics can attempt to bluff their way past the Arbitrators by claiming they're on official Imperial business and succeeding on a **Very Hard (-30) Deceive Test**, or they can attempt a series of **Hard (-20) Stealth Tests** to sneak past the Adeptus Arbites cordon and move through the roughly half kilometre or so of empty streets unseen. Once they reach the cathedral, they are again confronted with on-duty Arbitrators. While the Heretics can attempt to bluff or sneak their way past the many roadblocks and patrols, they would be better served by waiting for a shift change when one group of prisoners is released from their compulsory worship and another is herded in. When this happens, massive, multi-wheeled vehicles carrying hundreds of prisoners pull up in front of the cathedral and the Arbitrators herd them in while the prisoners already in the cathedral are herded back on to the vehicles and hauled away to either work or their habs. To slip into the crowd during the confusion and enter the cathedral that way requires a simple **Challenging (+0) Stealth Test**. Read the following:

As you approach the cathedral you can hear a passionate, ecclesiastical harangue echoing through the streets over the din of the riot. Loud hailers mounted inconspicuously in the cathedral's towers and beneath overhangs broadcast the Cardinal's sermon, and the streets around the cathedral are eerily free of rioters, as both the heavy Arbitrator presence and the constant sermonising from within keep all but the most dedicated anarchists at bay. You hear your quarry bleating and mewling away as the brainwashed sheep packed cheek to jowl in the sanctuary chant their replies in mechanical unison. As you watch, numerous massive land haulers full of prisoners pass through the cordon to deliver yet another group of prisoners for compulsory worship and to take the previous group back to their habs.

Once inside, the Heretics find the atmosphere oppressive and stifling. The air is hot and thick with the smell of incense and unwashed prisoners. Everything is too bright, too loud, and too aggressively holy for those used to the dark ways of the Screaming Vortex, and each Heretic must succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** or suffer -10 to all Skill Tests while in the cathedral due to the distraction and discomfort. The Cardinal himself is easy to find; the Heretics see him in the pulpit as soon as they enter the sanctuary. Capturing him and extracting him for their dark designs is the hard part.



ALTERNATE ROUTE

If the Heretics have allied themselves with Colonel Hollum, they have another safer and easier route into Fort Saint Annard available to them. As part of her smuggling operation, Colonel Hollum maintains a network of tunnels that lead from her various safe houses to the supply depot there. The tunnels are well mapped, well lit, and large enough to move large crates through, but gaining access to them requires a fair amount of duplicity on the Heretics' part. As she stated in her demands, Colonel Hollum refuses to take part in any attacks on the Fort, and Heretics who go against her wishes put both their alliance with the Colonel as well as their lives in danger. If Hollum finds out any part of their plans regarding Fort Saint Annard and General Tarsian, she immediately demands an explanation. If the Heretics can't supply an explanation that suits the Colonel, she immediately breaks off her alliance with the Heretics, and actively works against them for the rest of the adventure.

The Heretics have a number of options available to them here. They could, for example, start a riot or panic among the prisoners in the sanctuary with a **Difficult (-10) Intimidate** or **Deceive Test**, which would cause some fine chaotic confusion and cause the Cardinal to retreat to his chambers. They could pose as Arbitrators or some other Imperial agents from the administration come to escort him to safety to protect him from some nebulous threat against the cathedral itself, which would require **Hard (-20) Deceive Tests**. However the Heretics manage to get close to the Cardinal, they must strike quickly to prevent him from sounding an alarm and do their best to remove him from the cathedral without getting caught.

When confronted by the Heretics, Cardinal Falconer sees through their disguise with a successful **Opposed Challenging (+0) Scrutiny versus Challenging (+0) Deceive Test**, and immediately sounds the alarm within the cathedral. Never a particularly puissant man, Cardinal Falconer is nevertheless a tough and tenacious combatant thanks to his years of adventure. He fights alongside his defenders and, if need be, fights to the death to protect the cathedral and defend the Imperium from the Heretics' predations.

GENERAL TARSIAN

Due to its relative isolation from and general disinterest in the day-to-day affairs of the penal colony, Fort Saint Annard isn't immediately affected by the riots consuming the manufactoria district. General Tarsian and her subordinates are well aware of the danger, however, and the fort is on red alert. The entire fort is bustling with activity as guardsmen arm and ready themselves and their vehicles, and the marshalling yards and parade grounds are awash in guardsmen, lasguns, and armoured vehicles. The Heretics must enter this dangerous hive of alert and bustling guardsmen, pass undetected, kidnap the fortress' commanding officer, and escape undetected with her to their lair, a formidable task indeed. Read or paraphrase the following passage to the players:

The riot hasn't reached as far as Fort Saint Annard yet, and you find it a relatively peaceful oasis amid the chaos of the riots in the manufactoria district. While the fort isn't under siege yet, it is on high alert. The entire compound is lit with massive floodlights, orders are barked from loud hailers, and guardsmen run here and there on errands, marshal in ranks on the parade ground, or stand in groups around idling vehicles or piles of weapons and equipment awaiting further orders.

The direct route is perhaps the simplest, and involves the Heretics bluffing their way past the sentries at the gates and entering the compound in plain sight. This requires some preparation, however. No matter how good their story is, the guardsmen standing sentry at the gates are loathe to allow people on base not wearing an Imperial uniform, and getting in without at least some disguise requires an **Arduous (-40) Deceive Test**. If the Heretics have Colonel Hollum as an ally, they can easily outfit themselves and their team with flak armour, lasguns, and uniforms which helps lend credence to their lies, and can reduce the difficulty of their Deceive Test by one or two steps at the Game Master's discretion, depending on the thoroughness of their disguise. The Heretics may also attempt to bypass the gate by scaling the fort's walls, which requires each Heretic to make both a **Hard (-20) Stealth Test** to approach the wall without being seen and a **Difficult (-10) Athletics Test** to successfully climb it.

Once inside, the Heretics must avoid detection through either stealth or guile, either sneaking past or eliminating sentries or



by convincing them that the Heretics do, indeed, belong there. While inside the compound, the Game Master should require the Heretics to make regular **Hard (-20) Stealth** and **Deceive Tests** to avoid detection, especially when dealing with groups of guardsmen or sentries watching over doorways. Along with attempting to pass as guardsmen, the Heretics must also find General Tarsian, who is currently at large in the compound inspecting her troops and taking reports from her subordinates. Locating the General requires four Degrees of Success on a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test**. If the Heretics choose to split up, they can make this Test as if it is Assisted, with one Heretic making the Test and the difficulty reduced by one step for each additional Heretic searching.

Once the Heretics find the General, they find her in the company of a security detail made up of six guardsmen and a junior officer. When the Heretics accost her she believes that they are simply rioting prisoners, albeit very skilled prisoners to have made it on to her base, and her first reaction is to negotiate her way out of the situation. If the Heretics are quick-witted enough they can convince her to accompany them, perhaps under the guise of being Inquisitorial Acolytes or some other type of Imperial agent, allowing them to extract the general from Fort Saint Annard with little bloodshed.

CONSEQUENCES

"It's an amazing feeling, killing a man. With one stroke you take away everything he's ever had. Pure exhilaration."

—Salthus the Blade

With the prison in flames, the Arbitrators overrun, the Imperial apparatchiks murdered in their beds, and the four most powerful people on the planet kidnapped, the Heretics are now poised to complete their work and reap their rewards. They started a riot that consumed one of the most powerful industrial hubs in the region, did incredible moral, physical, and spiritual damage to the Imperial forces, and are now preparing to sacrifice the leaders of these forces, including a Sister Hospitaller and one of the premier legal minds in the Sector, to their dark gods. This is a triumph nearly unheralded in the Screaming Vortex, and all who hear of these deeds stand in awe. Now all that is left for the Heretics to do is to prepare the ritual, make their sacrifice, and survive transiting into the warp, not on a ship, but on the surface of a planet.

MISSING THE TARGET

Should any of the kidnapping targets slip their nooses through accident or inattention on the part of the Heretics or their allies, all is not lost. Failure does complicate things for the Heretics, however. There is always the option of striking again, but this time the target is on the alert and most likely in hiding or heavily fortified against attacks. The Game Master should take this into account when providing alternate scenarios for capturing the Imperial officers after an initial attempt has failed, and should make the resistance stronger and increase the difficulty of all Skill Tests accordingly.

NOTABLE PERSONS

The following NPCs play important roles in helping the Heretics complete their dark ritual. Full game statistics for these characters are included in the NPC Appendix beginning on page 121.

CANONESS LEONA RAK

Leona Rak, Canoness of the Sisters of Serenity based on Saint Annard's Penance (sub-sect of the Sisters Hospitaller that can trace its roots to the Adepta Sororitas presence amongst the Angevin Crusade that conquered the Calixis Sector) is a lean, hard eyed woman in her middle years with hair run to grey and a face heavily lined and much given to frowning. A prodigious chiurgeon and talented medical prognosticator, Sister Leona runs the penal colony's massive medicae facility, providing care and solace to prisoners and Imperial functionaries alike. Trained in the Sisters Hospitaller cloister on Sentinel, the Drusus Shrine World, Canoness Rak has devoted her long life to easing the suffering of all the God-Emperor's children, including, some would say especially, those who have fallen from His favour. The Sisters of Serenity believe that every human is deserving of His mercy, even those who have sinned, and are known for maintaining the medicae facilities on penal colonies or serving as medical personnel aboard the dreaded Black Ships. Sister Rak is one of the four sacrifices needed to complete the Heretics' ritual, the Soul of Charity. While her rigid, aloof demeanour does not immediately suggest a soul much given to charity, her entire life has been devoted to that pillar of society and her chosen avocation reflects a giving soul.

WARDEN PHINEAS MORN

A sardonic man with an acid tongue and a keen legal mind, Phineas Morn is the Warden and Chief Administrator of the penal colony at Saint Annard's Penance. Morn has been a proud member of the Adeptus Arbites all of his long life, and has risen from a green recruit quelling mob violence on Zweihans World to one of the most highly respected scholars of Imperial Law in the Malfian Sub-Sector. While he always despised crime, his attitude toward those who perpetrate crimes has always been "Hate the sin, love the sinner," and has such gained a reputation for creative sentencing and for rarely sentencing those who come before him to death. Judge Morn has become deeply cynical in his autumn years. He has seen much of the worst side of humanity, and has witnessed first hand the disastrous effect that passing judgement on one's fellow man has on even the hardest and most pious souls. Sickened by both criminals and the agents of Imperial Law in equal measure, here at the end of his long and august career, Judge Morn cares for little save for his research on the works of Saint Annard and his impending retirement. His assignment as the Warden of Saint Annard's Penance is his last, and when it is over he returns to his estate on Zweihans World to live out the rest of his days in peace and study.

Judge Morn is one of the four sacrifices needed to complete the Heretics' ritual, the Soul of Law. The loss of such a respected and admired Arbitrator and legal scholar, especially in such an ignominious manner, is a hammer blow in the

rimward regions of the Calixis Sector. Despite his cynicism and seeming disillusionment with all he holds dear, Judge Morn still fervently believes that Imperial Law is the finest law man has ever known, and this makes his downfall very appealing indeed to the Ruinous Powers.

CARDINAL MORGAN FALCONER

An elderly man with a stern face and one glaring, black eye, Cardinal Falconer seems to epitomize the fire breathing, hell and damnation Imperial priest for which the Ecclesiarchy is so well known. A native of Scintilla, he began his life's work not as a man of the cloth, but as a noted xenobiologist. For decades he travelled the Calixis Sector, and even many worlds in the Koronus Expanse, aboard the Explorator vessel *Foresight*, carefully observing and cataloguing the breathtaking diversity of flora and fauna to be found on the rimward sections of Segmentum Obscuras. Accompanied by a team of Magos Biologis and a loyal guard of Skiitari warriors, Falconer delved deep into savage, feral jungles, plunged beneath the waves of seething oceans of liquid methane, and catalogued and botanized beneath a thousand alien suns. During his travels he encountered untold dangers from debased and forsaken human tribes, vile xenos, and a host of dangerous plant and animal life each more deadly than the last. Always a pious and observant man, his work and his regular exposure to horrors both mundane and fantastical drove him to seek guidance and solace in the Imperial Creed and the teachings of the God-Emperor. Eventually, after decades of traipsing across alien worlds and braving the worst that the galaxy could throw at him, he retired from his scientific pursuits and joined the Ecclesiarchy. Now, after a glorious second career as a priest, he has attained the zenith of his calling and been made Cardinal to guide and watch over the flock at Saint Annard's Penance.

Cardinal Falconer is the Soul of Piety, one of the four souls required to complete the Heretics' ritual. While not as widely known and respected in the Calixis Sector as Judge Morn, he is a deeply pious man whose dedication to the Imperium and his breadth of knowledge is well respected among the Ecclesiarchy. The loss of a Cardinal of the Calixian Synod, especially one who has given so much to both secular and religious scholarship, is certain to strike fear into the church of the corpse-god.

GENERAL HELENA TARSIAN

A woman in her late middle age with a good natured face and the manners of a gentlewoman of the Calixian nobility, General Tarsian has never known a hard days work in all of her long life. Born into a highly respected military family on Malfi, she attended the best schools and academies, getting by on her natural intelligence and charm and a heaping helping of her family's money and influence. Never interested in the martial aspects of military life, thanks to family pressure she nonetheless joined the Imperial Guard, where she found her talents more suited to life behind a desk or at the head of a supply line rather than at the front or in the turret of a Leman Russ. Throughout her career, General Tarsian has gained a reputation as a bureaucrat's bureaucrat, the

epitome of an officious, busy supply officer who knows the difference between a little harmless, well deserved cappar and egregious, treasonous thievery of government supplies. Recently General Tarsian accepted a billet as the commander of the Imperial Guard headquarters garrison at Saint Annard's Penance. Numerous irregularities in the garrison's requisition paperwork caused some concern within the Calixian branch of the Departamento Munitoria, and the General was chosen as the perfect officer to deal with the problem.

As strange as it may seem, General Tarsian is the Soul of Security, one of the four souls mentioned in Punishment's Reward that are required to complete the ritual and draw Saint Annard's Penance into the Screaming Vortex. While not, perhaps, the best representation of security, General Tarsian is still an Imperial Officer of no small standing who commands a garrison of the God-Emperor's finest tasked with the protection of an important penal world. Her death as a blood sacrifice in a dark ritual dedicated to the Ruinous Powers, and the use of her sad death to outright steal so much important industrial infrastructure is surely a blow to the Imperial Guard and to the Calixis Sector as a whole. General Tarsian is, perhaps, the most difficult of the four to reach being secure in the midst of Fort Saint Annard, but the easiest to capture. Despite spending a lifetime dealing with the ever shifting, internecine politics of the Imperial Guard she is still surprisingly taken advantage of by a convincing story and an honest face.

DENOUEMENT

"And with this sacrifice, let us again tread the sublime paths of the Screaming Vortex."

—Text of *De Orbis Mysteryis*

With the prison complex in flames, the administration complex overrun, the Arbitrators and Imperial Guard forces fighting hordes of armed and frenzied prisoners, and the streets running with blood, the time has come for the Heretics to perform their dark ritual and realize their destiny. They have their instructions, translated from the ancient tome *De Orbis Mysteryis*. They have their sacrifices prepared. Now they are ready, and the fate of millions of souls rests in their bloody hands. Once all four of the sacrifices have been collected, the Heretics must still take control of the proper location to perform the ritual. Unless they've decided to use the secluded but less ideal location of Lord Olganov's Librarium, they must take control of the Hall of Justice.

MEANWHILE, AT THE HALL OF JUSTICE

The Hall of Justice is part of the Administratum complex, near the Warden's Manse. In fact, if the Heretics have already moved to kidnap Warden Morn, they may have passed by the Hall of Justice.

A separate basalt and red-lacquered steel ziggurat towering over the remainder of the Administratum complex, the Hall of Justice is a symbol of Imperial authority (and the authority of

the Adeptus Arbites specifically). It looms over the hab blocks, a twenty metre tall black steel Aquilla at its apex glaring at the teeming masses of prisoners around it. Within its cavernous interior is a maze of courtrooms and records archives, the wheels of justice and judgement that decide the fate of 15 million prisoners. On the flanks of the Hall of Justice are the public execution sites; suspensor gibbets, adamantium cages, and racks where that judgment is carried out. These punishments are caught by pict-thieves and broadcast across Saint Annard's Penance, so that all might know the fate of those who defy the God-Emperor.

All of this focus, ceremony, reverence, and bloodshed make the Hall of Justice the perfect place to conduct the ritual in *De Orbis Mysteriis*. More specifically, the central control hub for the Hall of Justice—in the very highest levels of the building—is the single best location on the entire world.

HALL DEFENCES

The Heretics may find getting into the Hall of Justice a difficult prospect. While the remainder of the Administratum complex may well have fallen as part of the Heretics' actions to capture Warden Morn, the Hall of Justice remains inviolate. Like so many Adeptus Arbites facilities, the imposing edifice's construction was laid out with defensibility in mind. The entire ground level is a blank wall of reinforced basalt 10 metres high, and any windows above that level are narrow slits better suited to serve as gunports. The ground level has a guard tower at each corner of the building, (see page 7), and between each one are three heavy stubber weapon emplacements at 50 metre intervals (see page 7). There are four main access points on the Hall. The primary gate is on the Hall's north side, and is wide enough for multiple transports to pass through at once. Inside the gate is a gigantic loading bay, for the transport and moving of prisoners. However, the primary gate has two additional guard towers overlooking it, and the gate itself is a metre-thick slab of tempered adamantium. Entering through this point is extremely difficult.

It may be a better proposition to use one of the three side gates (one at the center of the building's remaining sides). These gates are sized for foot traffic only, and each one is directly below one of the heavy stubber gun emplacements.

However, the doors are only 30 AP, and could be destroyed with explosives or anti-vehicle weaponry. Use the rules for damaging cover found on page 245 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, with the caveat that any weapon that does 10 damage in excess to the Armour Points destroys it utterly (it is a door, after all).

The weapon emplacements have two Arbitrators manning them, a loader and a gunner. The guard towers have four Arbitrators, a loader and gunner and two additional Arbitrators manning the floodlights and pict-viewers. The side gates are guarded by a squad of ten Arbitrators and a senior Arbitrator, while the main gate is protected by a Horde of 50 Arbitrators, three senior Arbitrators, and a senior commander Arbitrator.

Once inside, the Heretics should have little trouble finding their way to the central control hub, even while leading four prisoners and the 63 participants in the ritual. The hub is a 50 metre by 50 metre room filled with banks of control cogitators and hololithic displays. It is accessible through a single armoured door (also 30 AP and following the same rules for the outer doors) guarded by two Arbitrators. Inside the hub are a further six Arbitrators manning the controls, two senior Arbitrators, and one senior commander Arbitrator overseeing operations.

BREAKING AND ENTERING

Entering the Hall of Justice hinges on two factors. The first is getting inside through the outer defences. The second is doing so without raising the alarm. If the Heretics break through the defences but alert the Arbitrator staff in the process, they must fight against a constantly growing horde of Arbitrators as they struggle to reach the top.

However, their task has certain beneficial aspects as well. The Arbitrators regard the Hall of Justice a secure facility (and in regards to rioting prisoners, it is). With the riot threatening the safety of the entire prison, the Adeptus Arbites are quick to pull forces from the Hall of Justice to more dangerous hot-spots. The aforementioned guard forces at the gates are the reduced numbers based on this (if for some reason the Heretics have not instigated a riot, then the numbers double).

However, the Heretics can take steps to further reduce the guards, especially on one of the side doors. By directing the



rioters looting the Administratum complex to either attack the Hall of Justice's main gate directly or leave themselves exposed enough to invite a counterattack, they can convince the Arbitrators to direct their forces to deal with this threat and leave themselves exposed.

Directing the actions of the rioters requires a Heretic with an ability to affect large numbers of people via Charm, Intimidate, or Command Tests (the Air of Authority, Demagogue, or Inspire Wrath Talents, and the loud hailer equipment item all would serve in this regard) to make an **Ordinary (+10) Charm Test**, a **Challenging (+0) Command Test**, or a **Hard (-20) Intimidate Test** (the rioting masses are less likely to be swayed through intimidation than they are charm and cajoling). If he succeeds, he can direct the number affected to either attack the main gates of the Hall of Justice (pulling Arbitrators from the other defences to reinforce the gate), or start attacking other buildings in the Administratum compound in a way that invites counterattack by the Arbitrators in the Hall of Justice. Note that this is a death sentence for the prisoners involved, although this is not likely to bother the Heretics overly much.

If they would like to keep the prisoners alive, a Heretic can make an **Ordinary (+10) Common Lore (War) or Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) Test**, and then take a -10 penalty on the Charm, Command, or Intimidate Test. If he succeeds, the prisoners pursue a strategy of attack or feint in a way that still results in the Arbitrators reacting in the desired manner. If the Heretic fails the first test, the plan still works, but the prisoners involved still end up being massacred by the Arbitrators. If the second test fails, the plan does not work.

If the Tests succeed, however, the number of guards at any of the side doors decreases by half as the Arbitrators martial at the main gate to either sally forth or defend against the prisoner attacks. In addition, any Tests made to bluff the remaining guards gain a +10 bonus due to them being preoccupied.

To enter the side doors, the Heretics can either do it the direct way (explosives) or try to bluff the guards within to open the doors. Bluffing requires an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Deceive** versus **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny Test**. The Heretic performing the Test can gain bonuses for taking

actions that reinforce whatever story he's trying to sell the guards. For example dressing up in the uniform of a dead Arbitrator would be worth a +20 bonus to the Test.

If the Heretics prefer the direct route, they have two rounds to eliminate the guards and the weapon emplacement before someone reports the attack via vox. The weapon emplacement is accessible via a hatch inside the building next to the door. However, the Heretics can use a hand-vox and a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** to jam the signals of the Arbitrator's own hand-held vox sets. The hard-wired vox inside the weapon emplacement would be unaffected. This means the Heretics have to overwhelm the door and the weapon emplacement in a single, coordinated assault, probably using explosives or anti-armour weaponry.

DEFENDING THE RITUAL

As the Heretics enact the ritual, if they chose to perform it in the Hall of Justice, the central command hub comes under increasing attack by elements of the Adeptus Arbites. 1d10 Arbitrators and 1d5-2 senior Arbitrators arrive every ten minutes while the ritual is going on. After 30 minutes, a senior commander Arbitrator arrives to take overall command. This means some of the Heretics will have to defend the ritual while it's being completed. Luckily, the only access point in the room is a single door, and with enough firepower the Heretics can likely hold it for some time. The Arbitrators, not aware of what's at stake, are content to be cautious, pinning down the defenders with sporadic weapons fire while massing their forces for large assaults. This is especially true once the commander arrives. He holds his troops in reserve until he has a Horde of at least 30 Arbitrators to launch an overwhelming assault.

THE DARK RITUAL

The ritual is the final step toward glory. When complete it draws tendrils of the Screaming Vortex into the physical realm to gather Saint Annard's Penance into their embrace like a long lost lover and return it to the Empyrean that it left so many millennia ago. Once there, the Heretics can use the planet's industrial capabilities and ready workforce to forge the foundation of a Black Crusade to rival those of Abbadon himself. This is the end of an important chapter in the Heretics' ascension, but as one chapter finishes another begins, and they have plenty of work ahead of them.

MORN'S SECRET ROUTE

There is one additional way to enter the Hall of Justice. Warden Phineas Morn knows of a secret underground passageway leading from his Manse to the Hall's basement levels. The passageway is protected by a adamantium vault door, and only the prison's Wardens know about it and possess the access code to enter it. However, it would allow the Heretics to enter the Hall of Justice without any problems.

The Heretics might think to ask Morn if there is another way into the Hall. However, the Warden knows what's at stake, and only gives up the information if the Heretics harshly interrogate him and pass a **Hard (-20) Interrogation** versus **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**.

The hour is at hand, the stars are right, and you stand on the precipice of greatness. You smile complacently at one another, and bask in the glory of your achievement. The planet is yours, or nearly enough as to make little difference. The Imperials are falling back, the prison is in flames, and you have dealt the Imperium and its corpse-god a blow from which it may never recover. You are ready for the final step. Say the incantation, take the knife, and accept your destiny.

The first step is the preparation of the space in which the ritual is to take place. A job for the Sorcerers and Psykers



among the Heretics' party, this involves sanctifying the space with prayers and incense and requires a **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test**. Once the space is sanctified, the circle of power must be drawn, the candles lit, and the proper accoutrement laid out and sanctified, all of which requires a **Difficult (-10) Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test**. Once the space is ready, it is time to begin the ritual.

The ritual requires that one of the Heretics be the appointed cantor, the individual who reads the incantation and directs the actions of the other participants. The cantor, ideally, should be the Heretic chosen as the Anointed when the Heretics' Compact was laid out. If the Anointed is not a Psyker or Sorcerer, then the role of cantor falls to one of these and the Anointed simply takes part with the rest.

Black candles spark and sputter in a hazy cloud of incense smoke that carries with it the faint, acrid smell of an electrical discharge. The complex patterns within circle of power, drawn in the powdered bones of Imperial faithful mixed with tarnished silver, gleam in the low, guttering light. You can feel the power of the Dark Gods already flowing into this place like the heady rush of adrenaline. You take the book in hand and turn to the beginning of the incantation, and as you begin your blasphemous chant the circle starts to glow.

While the incantation is being read out, the sacrifices need to be prepared for their part in the ritual. Each sacrifice requires 2d10 minutes to prepare correctly, and requires the services of a Psyker or Sorcerer with the Sacrifice Talent. Once properly

bound, dressed, and anointed with oils, each sacrifice must be laid in the circle. Once the sacrifices are arranged in the circle and all is ready, it takes a Full Round to kill each individual by cutting their throat and allowing their blood to mingle with that of the others in the circle.

The blood of the sacrifices flows from their open throats and pools in the centre of the circle. There is no sound, no outcry from the bound prisoners, only a deep sigh as their soul flees their body and is caught up in the swirling energies of Chaos that fill the room.

Now, as the ritual reaches its conclusion, the veil between the Empyrean and physical space begins to lift. The chamber is filled with flickering, ghostly forms and the faint echo of screams. Disembodied glaring, green eyes appear and disappear, the Heretics' mouths are filled with the taste of iron, the temperature rises significantly, and the blood in the circle begins to bubble as if boiling. As the cantor reaches his blasphemous crescendo the air pressure increases in the chamber and a noise slowly and steadily fills the room, like a powerful choir singing a dirge in eight part harmony.

When the final word of the ritual is spoken there is a mighty crack and the floor where the circle is laid explodes in a shower of stone and purple energy. Each Heretic taking part in the ritual must make a **Very Hard (-30) Agility Test** or take 1d10 points of Energy Damage that ignores both

armour and toughness, and an additional **Difficult (-10) Agility Test** to avoid being knocked Prone. A crackling beam of purple energy erupts from the chasm in the floor, howling like a daemonic host and filling the room with its harsh, violaceous light.

Purplish-black clouds fill the sky like a rapidly spreading bruise. The hot wind screams through the streets of the ravaged penal colony, toppling ruined buildings and fanning the flames burning in the administration complex and manufactoria districts. The ground trembles and stones crack as powerful, unseen forces scabble at the world and pull it in all directions at once. Suddenly, a bright beam of purple light erupts from somewhere in the complex and pierces the thick swirling clouds, scattering them to reveal a seething maw of raw warp energy. Daemons swarm from the blasphemous aperture, and descend into the prison complex to feast on prisoner and gaoler alike. The stones at the very heart of the world scream in protest as the warp slowly envelops this once proud Imperial outpost. There is a sound like the tearing of a great, thick, heavy cloth, a searing flash of bruise-coloured light, and then nothing.

AFTERMATH

In an instant, Saint Annard's Penance is drawn into the madness of the Screaming Vortex. Men and women, prisoners and keepers alike panic in the streets. All is madness. Mutation and death are everywhere, daemons feast upon human flesh, and death stalks unimpeded. No one is spared. Those who do not fall prey to daemons, madness, or mutation fall upon one another in an orgy of shocking and obscene brutality. Nowhere is safe, blood and stinking ichor run in the streets, and the corpse-god's mercy flees in the implacable face of Chaos. This is the glorious hell that the Heretics have wrought, and it is through this, their native element, that they pass, complacent in their seeming victory.

Within the first few hours fully a third of the planet's population are killed or mutated beyond redemption by the maddening energies of the Warp. Those who survive band together to fend off the steady stream of daemons drawn to the planet by the smell of manflesh and the promise of easy prey, as well as the terrifying creatures created from the remains of the possessed. With their leaders dead and the face of the corpse-god turned away from them, there is much gnashing of teeth and beating of breasts among the surviving Imperials and prisoners. Their fate is clear to them, and they cling to anyone who steps forward to make sense of all of this madness as a drowning man clings to a scrap of driftwood. The Heretics have their world now, the glorious prize they've worked so long to obtain, and their ascension is one step closer to reality.

CONSEQUENCES

Once Act II is complete, the Heretics stand triumphant as their carefully laid plans bear fruit and Saint Annard's Penance is drawn back into bosom of the Screaming Vortex. Their victory is short-lived, however. Unbeknownst to the Heretics, an ancient, implacable evil sleeps deep in the heart of the planet. As it enters the embrace of the Empyrean, ancient and unfathomable systems stir for the first time in thousands of millennia. Now, as the Heretics bask in their glory, a threat beyond imagining is burrowing to the surface from subterranean tombs to snatch away their victory.

REWARDS

Characters who survive Act II and successfully complete the dark ritual earn Infamy and Experience for their service. In addition to the rewards included here, Game Masters may grant additional awards for roleplaying as outlined on page 266 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

Characters receive Experience Points for successfully navigating the challenges of Act II. For each of the following tasks that the Heretics completed, reward them with the listed Experience Points.

- 50 xp: Make Contact with Colonel Hollum.
- 50 xp: Make Contact with Lord Oglanov.
- 150 xp: Gain Colonel Hollum as an ally.
- 100 xp: Gain Lord Oglanov as an ally.
- 150 xp: Successfully foment insurrection on Saint Annard's Penance.
- 150 xp: Kidnap Canoness Rak alive for use in the ritual.
- 150 xp: Kidnap General Tarsian alive for use in the ritual.
- 150 xp: Kidnap Warden Morn alive for use in the ritual.
- 150 xp: Kidnap Cardinal Falconer alive for use in the ritual.
- 50 xp: Perform further research on the ritual using Oglanov's library.
- 300 xp: Successfully perform the ritual and draw Saint Annard's Penance back into the Screaming Vortex.



THE UNDYING LEGIONS

THE TOMBS
•
ENTER THE NECRONS
•
WEATHERING THE
ASSAULT
•
ENTERING THE
TOMB
•
AT THE CORE
•
NPC AND
ADVERSARY INDEX





CHAPTER III: THE UNDYING LEGIONS

"The dark gods are not the only doom that sleeps in the shadow of the Imperium of Man. Be wary at all times, for the xenos might slaughter those who champion Chaos as readily as they would lackeys of the corpse-god."

— Archivist Shadowweaver of the Thrice-Damned Vaults

The Heretics' moment of triumph over the Imperium may begin their downfall. Though they have successfully completed their dark ritual, it has triggered unexpected consequences. When the planet transitioned to the Warp, sensors long dormant beneath the planet's dead wastes awoke. Long forgotten sensors detected the taint of Chaos. Defence systems powered up, countless ancient circuits activated, and incomprehensible processes and devices began to awake from their ancient slumber. Beneath the Heretics' feet, a tomb world awakes. Now, an army of Necrons prepares to cleanse the world of all life so that they may reclaim their ancient domain. The Heretics must devise a way to stop the Necron forces, or they must flee the world, surrendering everything that they have earned.

Throughout this final adventure in the story arc, the characters are challenged by a nearly insurmountable Necron force. The Heretics scarcely have a moment to celebrate their triumph when all their work begins to crash down around them. Forces that once ruled the galaxy have returned from their long sleep. Unless the Player Characters can contain them, all their efforts might be for naught.

As the PCs work to consolidate their holdings, the first hints of Necron activity appear. Soon, the Heretics confront the Necrons, when a minor tomb emerges near one of their meetings. As the human death toll mounts, the Player Characters must directly battle their way into the heart of the ancient Necron complex. The Heretics must travel deep beneath the planet's surface, using the prison's extensive mines to reach the tomb complex and find the Energy Core at the heart of the Necron assault. To reach it, they must make their way through countless Necron defenders and potentially uncover the robotic secrets and tools of this ancient culture.

THE NECRON TOMBS

Long before humanity grasped its first primitive tools, Saint Annard's Penance was once a minor world of the Necron Empire. When the War in Heaven concluded, and the Necrons defeated first the Old Ones and then the C'tan, the Silent King of the Necrons chose to order his entire race into a vast hibernation. The entire people would transform their worlds into tomb worlds, to sleep the aeons away until the resurrection of the Necron Empire. The world of Kalugura—now known as Saint Annard's Penance—complied with the

DELAYING THE INEVITABLE

For some game groups, the passage of time presented here may be inappropriate. Either the Game Master or the players may wish to take additional time to explore the interrelations with the different human factions active on the prison world. After Saint Annard's Penance becomes a part of the Gloaming Worlds, the different groups may react to the Heretics in very different ways. If the group wishes to focus on this, the relevant diplomatic discussions could take a substantial amount of time, both in game and to roleplay.

If such a prolonged series of interactions are desired, Game Masters should delay the Necron awakening. Only begin this process once those conflicts begin to wind down. If the Heretics manage to corrupt a substantial number of the human forces, they may face the Necron army under better circumstances in such an event. However, if the Necrons are allowed to grow without the Heretics organising an effective defence, they are likely to reach a point where their capabilities are insurmountable.

directive. Working in concert, the inhabitants built vast tomb complexes beneath the surface, then entered them to join in the Great Sleep.

As the inanimate bodies lay fallow, sixty million years passed. For all that time, the tomb world's systems quietly hibernated. Corrosion caused some systems to fail and, with the failure, many Necrons were lost. Other portions of the tombs collapsed due to the planet's tectonic shifts and the effects of cosmic radiation. However, the planet had more than 50 million inhabitants when it entered the Great Sleep. Even through the losses it sustained, there remains a vast complex of Necron resources deep beneath the planet's surface.

When the planet became a part of the Screaming Vortex, the huge increase in local Warp activity aroused the notice of the ever vigilant master program that governed Kalugura's vast tombs. The labyrinthine processes of the master program decided that the world was in grave danger. With each passing hour, more of the millions of undying Necrons return to consciousness. As they do so, the forces are dispatched to cleanse the world of the living contaminants, to purge the world of the corruption of the warp, and restore Kalugura to its former glory.

The aeons of slumber proved devastating to the tomb world's ancient engrams and restorative operations, however, and one of the tombs to fail was that of the world's Overlord, Hasist, and his royal court; a tectonic surge annihilating the tomb by crushing portions of it with tonnes of falling rock. This eliminated Kalugura's entire ruling leadership in one swift blow. When the master program attempted to restore the tomb world to wakefulness, there was no Overlord to command the master program. Shorn of leadership, it nevertheless faithfully attempted to rally the tomb world's defences on its own, slowly and mechanically waking the legions slumbering under its charge. One of the great tragedies of the Necron race is that only its leadership castes still possess the drives and

personalities of living beings. Those remaining in Kalugura's tombs, the Necron Warriors and Immortals, are hollow shells of the beings they once were, without self-determination or even the barest hints of autonomy. Self identity was a luxury cruelly stripped away when their people underwent biotransference into their new, undying forms. Thus, the master program has automatically taken control of these legions, mindlessly and mechanically acting to defend the world while loyally awaiting the return of its long-dead leaders.

However, not all of the tomb world's leadership caste were killed in the disaster. During the long-ago preparations to transform Kalugura into a tomb world, the Overlord's chief Cryptek, Osiskor, chose not to inter himself with the remainder of the royal court. Osiskor, ever a paranoid individual, chose instead to wait out the aeons in a tomb installed in a hyperspace oubliette of his own design.

His paranoia proved well-founded. Osiskor survived the disaster that destroyed the royal court. However, when he awoke, he found the situation worse than he ever could have imagined. Not only had Kalugura been infested by a lesser race, it had also been drawn bodily into the warp. Now, as the last truly self-aware Necron on the planet, Osiskor is trying desperately to take control of the master program. Unfortunately, its blind loyalty to its dead Overlord means the program resists him at every turn. Meanwhile, the master program that maintained the world during the Great Sleep has seized control of the Necron forces. As each Necron awakens, it receives basic instructions from the master program to arm itself and prepare for war. Over the first few days after its awakening, the master program awakens thousands of Necrons, though being forced to direct them in all but the most basic tasks stretches it to its limits.

The Necron tombs are located in vaults deep beneath the planet's surface. While the Imperium has operated mines for generations upon the planet, none have yet had cause to dig deep enough to penetrate into the tombs. Nonetheless, many of the deposits that the Imperial forces have recovered are, in fact, the remains of the ancient civilisation.

As a fringe world, this planet was never densely inhabited. The Necron cities and structures only took up a small portion of the world, and most of those were not located in the same hemisphere as the Imperial prison. However, their tendrils did extend broadly. Sections that were abandoned as non-vital to The Great Sleep eventually degraded until geological forces left little but veins of unusual minerals in the planet's strata. As the Imperium has mined some of these, they have unwittingly profited from the abandoned works of the Necrons.

OSISKOR, THE HARBINGER OF TRANSMOGRIFICATION

Osiskor was a schemer even before the transference, but afterwards his ambition knew no boundary. The chief Cryptek of Kalugura, he was always ambitious, and chaffed under the command of the Overlord. His interactions with the rest of the court were, at the best of times, terse and resistant to the ideas of others. If it weren't for his unparalleled genius there would have been little tolerance for his petty actions.

A master of tectonic sciences, it was Osiskor who designed the tombs for Kalugura. He oversaw every detail personally and ensured that every aspect met with perfect adherence to his plan. He balked at all questions of his design, as that was to question his mind, which was all that he valued. His arrogance proved correct, time and time again, and soon it was accepted that he was the true master of the tomb world's construction.

The plan was simple enough for lesser minds to grasp. Overlord Hasist would be protected in a separate oubliette from his court, redundant systems would ensure that none of the leadership could ever be harmed. The court could be awoken during an emergency to defend the slumbering Necrons. Great subterranean catacombs were large enough to house an army of the loyal Necron followers, protecting the court's tomb, each held in a timeless stasis field.

Osiskor would be housed in a separate tomb, far enough from the court to provide protective redundancy. There, with his personal guard, he would slumber within a hyperspace oubliette, protected in even the most dire circumstances. This feat of architecture reached through the planet's core, allowing the Overlord and his guard complete access to the Necron's underground tomb complex.

To call Osiskor's plan simple would have been an insult. Each corridor was designed to be defended by the Canoptek servants without need to wake any of the slumbering court. Every pan-dimensional neuro-circuit was placed so that its temporal resonance would touch, but not overlap. This was critical to Osiskor's design and eventual plans. The planet's core was super-cooled and omni-ray pressure sinks ensured that it would not heat up until commanded to do so by the master program.

The tomb world, below the surface, was a wondrous achievement. The integrity of the planet was maintained, despite the labyrinth of hollow caverns and endless passageways carved from the interior. The surface was nearly untouched, only a few well-hidden entrances to the tomb dotted strategic locations above.

This was the beginning of Osiskor's plan. He knew that the Overlord was never without his court, save Osiskor, who was routinely shunned to the outer reaches of the planet so

that his work would be uninterrupted. It came as no surprise, then, when the Overlord demanded that he be entombed with his most trusted Lords and Crypteks. With only facilities for ten Necron leaders, it was Osiskor that was cast out from the honour of sleeping with his peers. He was instead entombed within his own Hyperspace Oubliette, originally designed for the Overlord. Perhaps the Overlord did not trust Osiskor, and with good reason. Osiskor had planned to betray him, but in his genius Osiskor had planned on being suspected and ostracized.

Osiskor had grown paranoid and suspected that the Overlord had instructions to have Osiskor's mind reduced to a shadow of its great glory. All had now come into alignment for the Cryptek, and the Overlord had played right into his plan. The Overlord did not survive the aeons in hibernation, nor did the rest of his court. Just as had been mathematically predicted, the planetary shelf underwent a great tectonic shift and the primary tomb of the Overlord and his court was reduced to rubble. Osiskor was safe in his personal Hyperspace Oubliette, and those who had ignored and dishonoured him were decimated.

Only Osiskor remains now, triumphant but alone. Given time, the master program will accept his rule and Kalugura will belong to him.

AVAILABLE ASSETS

The first Necrons to awaken are the Canoptek Scarabs and the Necron Warriors. See pages 368-370 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook for more information and full game statistics on these units.

As additional Necrons awaken, the master program marshals its available forces to issue forth, investigate the warp contamination, and purge the world with brute strength. See **Table 3-1: Awakening Time Line** for detailed information on this schedule.

As this final portion of the adventure arc proceeds, the Heretics must move to counter the Necron forces in the early stages. If they delay their choices too long or spend too much time trying to marshal their own efforts, they are likely to be overwhelmed. While the Necron resistance is stout from the very beginning, it becomes increasingly powerful as



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TABLE 3-1: AWAKENING TIME LINE

Days after The Warp Ritual	Units Available
5	Hundreds of Canoptek Scarabs and Necron Warriors. Osiskor also awakens, but does not participate in any operations as he is concerned with trying to regain control of the tomb world.
10	Thousands of Canoptek Scarabs and Necron Warriors; Hundreds of Immortals.
20	Tens of thousands of Canoptek Scarabs and Necron Warriors; Thousands of Immortals; Limited Tomb Stalkers.
30	Hundreds of thousands of Canoptek Scarabs, Necron Warriors, and Immortals; Hundreds of Tomb Stalkers; Limited numbers of Lychguard.
40	Hundreds of thousands of all units.

more and more units return to mechanical life. If the central core is given ample opportunity to bring all of its units online and into play, there are simply not enough human assets on the planet to overcome that opposition.

SHORT TERM GOALS

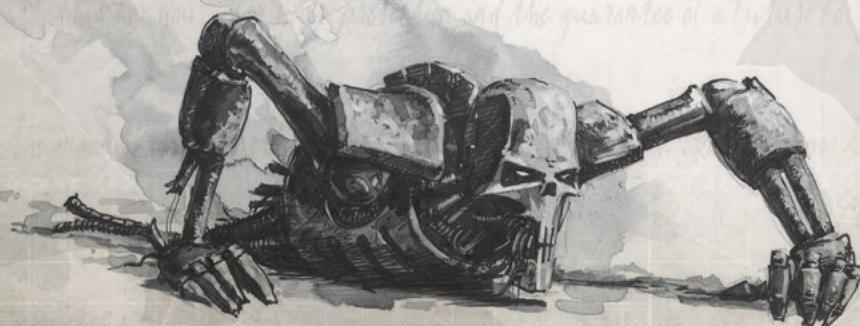
As they are adamantly opposed to the blessings of the warp, the android warriors, forged in bodies of living metal, strive to return their homeworld to the physical galaxy. To them, the warp is anathema, and they rely on their supreme and inscrutable science to accomplish what others would through psychic powers. Consequently, they lack the abilities necessary to directly undo the ritual that transported Saint Annard's Penance into the Screaming Vortex. Initially, the Necrons are unaware of this fact. Their primary goal is to find the threat to the tomb world and eliminate it. However, the master program and those Necrons that have awakened prove to be poor investigators. Their lack of independent thought means the response is simply a constantly escalating series of attacks. When an attack fails, the master program simply orders a larger second attack.

Initial attacks are tightly focused and are simply awkward attacks to take prisoners. This continues for the first ten days after the tomb world awakens. During this time, Necron units

should suffer a penalty of -20 to most actions, as the master program is still not fully aware, and the Necron Warriors are not able to perform well on their own. After the first ten days, the master program begins awakening Necron Immortals, who are able to provide limited battlefield guidance to Necron Warriors and Canoptek Scarabs, at which point the Penalty goes away. These attacks eliminate scouting parties and isolated work groups. Some of the prisoners and guards are slain—their bodies mutilated beyond recognition. Other bodies, however, are missing. These have been returned to Necron facilities where the master program attempts to thoroughly interrogate them.

However, certain Necron units, specifically the Necron Immortals and Lychguard, endured the biotransference process with a greater portion of their mind and personality intact. Though such individuals are still completely loyal to the master program's limited sentience, their skills in war begin to provide more tactical innovation. Once the Necron forces become more thoroughly aware of the situation, the master program begins to focus their attacks more specifically. This takes the Necrons two weeks of research. During this time, additional Necron units have also been awakened to join in the battle. With this knowledge in hand, the Necrons begin to work towards finding the central point of the ritual with the intention of destroying it. They also begin to search out the Heretics specifically—one or more of the prisoners survived interrogation long enough to identify at least one of the Heretics.

Once the site of the ritual is eliminated (which does not expel the world from the Screaming Vortex), the Necrons begin working to cleanse their planet of any organic contamination. This is effectively a war of genocide. They have no tolerance for any of the humans living on its surface. While they might have accepted some allies during the early proceedings, particularly when their forces were limited, their tolerance reaches an end at this time. Any allies are extinguished as the Necrons prepare to restore their planet to its former glory. At this time, ancient Necron construction also begins to emerge from deep beneath the world's surface, pylons and monoliths growing from the barren ground. Most importantly, Osiskor finally takes control of the tomb world's master program and marshals its forces decisively and effectively. At this point, none can stand against the tide of the Necron horde.



CURRENT STATUS OF THE WORLD AND ITS FACTIONS

The Heretics have successfully moved Saint Annard's Penance into the Screaming Vortex. No doubt they have acquired some allies in the process, but their hold upon the planet remains uncertain. Strong Imperial elements are likely to remain a factor. Other factions may also remain. Even those who have pledged allegiance to the Heretics may not be certain allies. Some might now have plans to execute their own rebellion, seizing the world and its resources for their own causes.

The Heretics must now accept the challenge to consolidate their winnings. They must overcome those who oppose them and set up some sort of structure among the humans who remain. Some might be assembled into a warband, while others may be best suited to the lives of slaves: running the manufactories and the mines. This reorganisation must also be done quickly. There are numberless forces on the former prison world, as well, who would oppose them.

The key players in the various factions should be unchanged from those used in the previous adventure, unless the Heretics were directly involved in eliminating those foes. As the conditions have now changed, however, the various NPCs may be more willing to enter discussions with the characters or more desperate to seek revenge. This section sketches out the preparedness and general outlook of the major factions still active on Saint Annard's Penance as this adventure begins.

It may also be worthwhile for the characters to consider how they might maintain their holdings against other forces active within the Gloaming Worlds. There are countless warbands active in this region of the Screaming Vortex. The substantial population, manufactories, and mines represent a significant asset. Unless the Heretics can move quickly, another group might choose to move in to seize control from them. The Player Characters should be well aware of such a threat. This might even offer them the motivation to organise their forces into an effective defence network. An effective command structure assembled for this reason would also be extremely useful in defending against the Necron threat that comes into play as this adventure continues.

PRISONER FACTIONS

During the preparations for their ritual, the Heretics are likely to have allied with one or both of the prison factions active in Saint Annard's Penance. Now, the world is torn out of reality and cast to the swirling currents of the Screaming Vortex and many of the prison's population is driven mad or dead at the hands of foul warp spawn. Suddenly freed from the harsh controls of the Imperium while simultaneously beset

on all sides by horrors beyond their imagining, the surviving prisoners may band together with one of these factions as a last bastion of salvation. Alternatively, they may embrace the madness of the Vortex and form their own bands of marauders, or they may turn to the Heretics as their only hope for survival.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

The first crucial step is to take charge of the surviving prisoners. Many Heretics may have done this during the course of setting up the requirements for their dark ritual. Those who have not should give serious consideration to this option. The world's prisoners, though now much reduced, represent the single largest source of manpower on the planet. Many have prior military training and capabilities. After years of torment at the hands of the Imperium, the prisoners are the easiest forces to convert to the cause of Chaos.

There are several substantial challenges involved in organising the prison population into a cohesive force. The first is that many of the prisoners remain under the sway of the surviving prison guards. If the Heretics have done little to curtail the power of the Arbitrators, then this is a substantial challenge that must be overcome. While the world may be physically under the sway of the Warp, the Adeptus Arbites remain fiercely loyal to the Imperium. Through the transition, they strive to maintain their



TABLE 3-2: PRISON ENCOUNTERS

1d10 Encounter

1	A pack of Screamers (page 356 of the BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook) scenses the Heretics and dives to the attack. The GM should have one Screamer, plus one for each Heretic in the group. The GM can vary this result by using the other lesser Daemons found in the Core Rulebook, such as Bloodletters, Plaguebearers, Daemonettes, or Horrors.
2-3	A maddened pack of mutated prisoners spots the Heretics and violently attacks them. There are 2d10 mutants, using the Mutant Devotee rules from page 360 of the BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook.
4-5	Two Arbitrators on patrol spot the Heretics. Unless they are dispatched, every two combat rounds four additional Arbitrators arrive to aid in the conflict, to a maximum of 10 Arbitrators.
6	A magnitude 25 Horde of prisoners encounters the Heretics. The Heretics may attempt to sway them to their side rather than engage in combat. However, the prisoners do start with a disposition of Difficult (-10) and must be improved to at least Ordinary (+10) . If it drops to Very Hard (-30) , they attack.
7+	No Encounter.

authority. The Heretics must find some way to undermine this if they wish to grant the prisoners sufficient liberties so that they can become servants of Chaos.

Even if the Arbitrator forces are undermined, the prisoners are hardly a cohesive group. There are still millions of prisoners upon this world and they have had little means of communication by the prison's very design. Consequently, even the largest factions of prisoners do not have control over a substantial portion of the millions available. If the characters want to garner complete control, the simplest means may be to seize control of the Arbitrator's own network. If they can somehow replace those guards with others loyal to the Ruinous Powers, then they might be able to maintain the prison world's workflow and even begin to organise an effective fighting force. Without access to such a network, this objective becomes substantially more difficult.

Alternatively, the Heretics may choose to work with allied prison factions to build a new command structure. While far more time consuming, this begins with the premise that the prisoners are far more likely to ally with one of their own. The existing gangs developed within the confines of the prison world, and members of these groups, have a natural affinity with one another.

If the Arbitrator control is eliminated or even reduced, the prison factions may freely communicate with unaligned former prisoners. Such communication could lead to very rapid growth of any of the existing factions. If the Heretics have previously established a functional relationship with these factions, this could become a very valuable asset at this time. However, if the Heretics do not have some degree of control over those factions, then they might choose to split off at this time. Keep in mind that each of the NPCs who lead these factions worked hard to establish their powerbase. They are not likely to easily submit control of their forces to the Heretics. Unless the Heretics have a means to keep them in line, they might soon face a battle on multiple fronts as the prison factions fracture into separate groups with each focused on creating their own fiefdoms.

When having his players interact with the prisoner factions, the GM is encouraged to be creative and also use the prisoner factions detailed in Chapter II. Unless the Heretics have eliminated one of the factions (or they have vanished for some other reason) here are some guidelines as to what they are up to in their new reality.

- **Baron Olganov:** This debauched Chaos worshipper is of two minds concerning his new surroundings. On the one hand, he is free of the grasp of the Imperium and may pursue whatever terrible pursuits his deranged mind can invent. On the other hand, the dangers of the Screaming Vortex means he must work to simply survive. He is willing to work with the Heretics so long as they either placate his ego, and allow him to think he is in authority, or if they utterly dominate him but allow him to pursue his deviant pastimes and hedonistic lifestyle.
- **Colonel Hollum:** The Colonel's pragmatist nature means she is primarily concerned with ensuring that those under her "command" survive the events that have overtaken them. She is likely to work with anyone who ensures the safety of her people. This can work to the Heretics' advantage, but she may also turn to the remaining Imperial Guard or even the Arbites. In the long term, however, Hollum is unlikely to acquiesce to becoming a minion of the Heretics and would take the core of her people and strike out for herself (likely seeking a way out of the Vortex).
- **Helliman:** Jarvis Helliman's goals are similar to Colonel Hollum's (survival) and after the transition he gathers a group of surviving, like-minded prisoners to his side. The chief difference is that Helliman has no particular interest in siding with the Imperial Guard or Arbites, and no long term goal of leaving the Screaming Vortex. He's a survivor and, if the Heretics offer a chance at survival, he'll throw his lot in with them.
- **Various other factions:** Many of the surviving prisoners band together to form factions ranging from a few dozen individuals to thousands. Each may have their own motivations, but the most pressing is survival tied with fear. The Heretics can exploit both of these, either by threatening and coercing these factions to follow them, or promising them safety.

BATTLE READINESS

As a workforce, the prisoners are capable. They are passably well trained for their daily responsibilities and have the tools required to continue this work. Of course, the biggest problem is the manufactorums eventually run out of supplies, as their supply lines have been completely cut. If the Heretics wish to bend this entire world to their will, they must locate

NAVAL ELEMENTS

When the world transitioned to the Warp, the various Naval installations and ships were left behind and possibly destroyed by the tendrils of the warp storm. While these forces are without a doubt looking for Saint Annard's Penance and the Heretics, there is little they can do at this time. This may present a plot hook for future scenarios, but should be reserved until such a time as the Heretics leave the Screaming Vortex. Battlefleet Calixis and almost all Imperial authorities in the Calixis Sector) believes the Screaming Vortex to be uninhabitable and completely hostile to human life.

other sources of supplies—however, that is a long-term issue outside the scope of this adventure. As a combat capable force, however, the prisoners are far more limited. While many have combat training, they are not organised into anything resembling an effective military force. Further, they lack the necessary weapons, armour, and supplies to engage in any sort of combat. If the Heretics wish to use them for this purpose, they must either identify a means to equip them or accept the fact that these forces must use makeshift weapons.

Developing this force of rabble into something more requires time and effort. If any of the Heretics are well suited to conducting such training, they may do so directly. However, the time involved in training unskilled individuals into competent soldiers is long enough that the Heretics cannot do so before they are overwhelmed by Necrons. A more reasonable alternative is to organise at least a portion of the prisoners under those who do have those skills, so that they may present at least a possibly competent fighting force.

If the Heretics want to pursue this goal, they must devote 1d5+1 days to organising any prisoners willing to work with them. Any Heretic participating in the attempt can make a **Challenging (+0) Command, Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis)**, or **Infamy Test**. Once they are finished making the Tests, tally up the total number of Degrees of Success. For each Degree of Success, the Heretics are able to martial 50 prisoners under their direct command. If they have a sizeable portion of the Imperial Guard or Colonel Hollum on their side, the number increases to 100 per Degree of Success.

If any of the Heretics are particularly adept with technology, they may be able to quickly alter the manufactories. While they do not have access to the Standard Templates that would allow them to make complex war-weaponry, they could turn certain systems to making crude melee weapons such as spears and hammers, while a proficient armourer may be able to craft simple stub guns (a primitive ranged weapon from humanity's early history). While hardly the best of armaments, these could certainly represent a substantial improvement over the makeshift gear that the prisoners possess. Make an **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test**. One Degree of Success allows the Heretics to modify manufactory systems to produce simple melee weapons (spears and hammers, see page 165 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Three Degrees of Success allows

them to produce a simple single-shot stub rifle (use the stub rifle from page 154 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, but remove the Accurate Quality), while five Degrees of Success allows the manufacturums to produce autoguns (see page 154 of the **Black Crusade** Core Rulebook). The GM can assume that the prisoners pick up the simple skills needed to use these rudimentary weapons in short order and can wield them without penalties.

GOALS

Unless the Heretics have direct influence over the prison population, the prisoners are striving for survival above all else, but may desire freedom and vengeance as well. As chaos descends, they focus on escaping the influence of the Arbites by any means necessary. Some may flee the shelter and security of the prison complex only to die in the wilds. Others may spend their lives uselessly in poorly planned assaults against Arbitrator fortifications.

IMPERIAL GUARD

The Heretics may have already worked with the Imperial Guard forces as they prepared their dark ritual to transport the planet into the Screaming Vortex. If so, this group could represent a substantial asset as they move to consolidate their control over the world. The Guard forces are integrated with the prison's defence systems. They have access to all of the communications frequencies used by the Adeptus Arbites. These units are also equipped for an extended war effort, as they represent a reserve unit that might be called in to off-world duty in the event of an insurrection.

The bulk of the Imperial Guard units are the 81st Malfi Light Infantry, supplemented by the Drusus' Own Hussars and a small detachment of 9th Canopus Engineers. These units are described in more detail on page 130.

Essentially, these are the most capable human combat troops available on the prison world. If the Player Characters can use them, they represent a substantial asset. However, they also represent one of the smallest Imperial assets present. While they could be extremely useful if properly employed, the force is far too small to represent a substantial threat to the encroaching Necrons. Similarly, working alone, they are insufficient to oppose any significant attack levelled against the planet from the void.

Were the prison world to come under assault from outside forces, the Imperial Guard presence was intended to coordinate their efforts with those of the Imperial Navy and the Adeptus Arbites. As a consequence, their numbers and equipment are intended to work within such a structure. These forces are not a fully functional mixed-forces group as might normally be deployed within an active battlezone. They require the support of other elements to work most effectively.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

With General Tarsian dead in the sacrifice that brought the world into the Vortex, the Imperial Guard have lost their commander and have fractured into their component parts. Unless the Heretics have eliminated certain commanders (or even certain units), here are some guidelines as to what each unit may be up to.

- **Major Barl Felthan and the 81st Malfi Light Infantry:** Although General Tarsian's second in command, Major Felthan proves himself unequal to the task. The horrific daemoniac attacks have left him more than a little unhinged. With ever-increasing hysteria, he's been ordering all of the Guard forces to retreat and hole up in Fort Saint Annard, leaving many isolated and exposed Guard units across the planet cut off and in danger of being wiped out. The majority of the 81st obeys him, even though such static warfare in no way plays to their strengths.
- **Captain Althea Harskin and the Drusus' Own Hussars:** As a rapid response force, Captain Harskin's forces were decimated by the riots, including most of her command staff and Commissariat support. Now she is using her much-reduced forces (as few as several hundred soldiers) to affect rescues of cut off Guard forces and stay on the move and away from serious fighting. If Captain Ordh is successful in reactivating the spaceport, she may be persuaded to join him there. If not, she eventually takes what forces are under her command and flees deep into the desert, in hopes of preserving what forces she still has left.
- **Captain Bail Ordh and the 9th Canopus Engineers:** Quick-thinking Captain Ordh decided to rely on his force's skills as static defence when Penance was sucked into the Vortex. He quickly marshals his entire command and launches an attack on the spaceport, attempting to secure it and hold it long enough to repair enough shuttlecraft to escape the planet entirely. Ordh does not realise that Saint Annard's Penance has been sucked into a warp storm and is expecting the Navy to arrive shortly and regain control of the planet or virus bomb it. Either way, he figures his best option is to meet them in orbit.

The fractured command structure means the Heretics have good opportunities to take control of some or all of the Imperial Guard units. This is especially true if they can turn one or more of the senior commanders to their service. The regimented chain of command in the Imperial Guard means that the Heretics may be able to control entire units through manipulating their senior officers. In addition, if the Heretics have allied with Colonel Hollum, she can command a great deal of influence with the Imperial Guard. Initially, the commanders presented in the previous adventure are loyal Imperialists. However, the Player Characters have ample opportunity to corrupt them and enlighten them to the glory of the Ruinous Powers. Through their careful machinations, the Player Characters could soon have direct control over these military forces. If direct interaction takes place, Felthan starts with a Disposition difficulty of Challenging, representing his basically unhinged nature. Harskin and Ordh both have a difficulty of Hard—see page 276 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

Out of the three commanders, Major Barl Felthan is the easiest to corrupt and turn, as the Heretics can exploit his fear and his growing insanity. Promises of survival in the face of the horror, or simple threats to destroy his very existence, could bully him into working for the Heretics. As far as the other two commanders are concerned, the Heretics may have

to take a more subtle approach. If they do not play up their status as Heretics and Chaos worshippers, they may be able to convince Harskin and Ordh that they must work together to combat a greater evil—such as the Necron menace. Otherwise, personal coercion, psychic domination, or even simple assassination may allow them to take control of any of the Guard officers, which could give them de facto control of their underlings.

As long as they were careful to not show their hand, this corruption could be gradually spread through the disciplined ranks of the Imperial Guard. With careful instructions and deceptions, all of these forces might soon be corrupted. In this way, the soldiers might soon become directly loyal to the Heretics. As their devotions transferred from the Imperium to the forces of the Warp, their devotion might even become more fanatical. While this would not necessarily make them more capable soldiers, it might increase their willingness to undertake battles against overwhelming odds.

In addition, this command structure could easily be used to transform the regiment into a training unit. If the players choose, they could direct these forces to begin inducting some of the prisoners to form additional Imperial Guard forces. This would limit the immediate effectiveness of the established units but could serve as an effective longer term plan to improve the size of their total forces. Because of the systems already in place, the existing units could be doubled in size in less than two months. Further growth would, however, be limited by the availability of weapons, ammunition, vehicles, and other battlefield supplies.



BATTLE READINESS

The Imperial Guard forces on Saint Annard's Penance are the forces best prepared for direct military action. They are well-trained and well-equipped. Their discipline is sufficient that they are prepared to follow their orders even in the face of superior foes. Similarly, because they are prepared to be sent off-planet at a moment's notice, they have supplies laid down that should last for well over a year.

These resources can be employed in multiple ways. Aside from using the Imperial Guard to help train the surviving prisoners, their spare food and clothing might be distributed to some of the prisoners as bribes. Keep in mind, however, that the supplies were only sufficient for a modest emplacement. There are millions of prisoners on Saint Annard's Penance. While a few crates of lasguns could easily be supplied, there are hardly sufficient reserves to supply the entirety of the planet. Anything used in this fashion must be carefully rationed or the integrity of the existing Imperial Guard units could be compromised.

Because of the dedication inherent in the existing command structure, it is unlikely that a change in allegiance would substantially impact their preparedness. The officers in place are all capable of presenting the orders in such a way that the line soldiers might not even realise the change had taken place. This is doubly true if the Heretics have also managed to corrupt some of the Ecclesiarchy forces on the planet. The Imperial Guard units' devotion could be insured by the preaching of the accomplished priests.

GOALS

Unless there is direct Heretic intervention, the Imperial Guard's first response depends on the commander, but it's basically to stay alive and possibly escape the planet. They are uninterested in containing the prison break and restoring order—they see their responsibility as defending the planet against outside threats. With the roaming daemon packs, mutant hordes, and oncoming Necrons, it's a responsibility they are quickly losing against. As social order breaks down and more and more officers die, the Guard's goals quickly transform into simple survival.

ADEPTUS ARBITES

Charged with keeping the prisoners in line, the Arbitrators are likely to represent the largest organised resistance against the Heretics. Due to their blind loyalty to the Imperium and their intense training, these units may not be swayed to the forces of Chaos. As a direct consequence, the Player Characters have no choice but to utterly annihilate these blind loyalists.

Some groups of characters may have taken direct action to eliminate the Arbitrators during the previous adventure. If this is the case, then these forces could be substantially depleted prior to the beginning of this scenario. Otherwise, even after the riots and horrors of the ritual, there are still several thousand armed and organised Arbitrators that could be working against them. This need not be an insurmountable obstacle, but it is a substantial one. The Heretics need to develop some strategy to protect themselves from this well-organised and well-equipped group of loyalists.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

Even with the death of Warden Phineas Morn, the Arbitrators are still fiercely loyal to the Emperor, the Adeptus Arbites, and the cause of the Imperium of Man. With Morn's death, command falls to a dozen senior Arbitrators, including Zenobia Pike (see page 60). Unlike the Imperial Guard forces on the planet, however, the Arbitrators show commendable unity and cooperation in the face of the opposition. All of the Arbitrators are well-versed in the laws of the Imperium and are also cognizant of the chain of command. While they follow the orders that they receive, they question any that might be contradictory to the existing legal system.

Consequently, the Heretics are unlikely to be able to corrupt or coerce any of the Arbitrators, with the specific exception of Arbitrator Zenobia Pike, who has fallen under the influence of Lord Oglanov. Even turning a specific Arbitrator does not guarantee that the Heretics can take command of their underlings, who, as previously stated, are cognizant of their duties and likely to notice orders that would go against the best interests of the Adeptus Arbites.

At the same time, the Arbitrators rely heavily upon vox communications to issue commands and to maintain awareness of the situation on the planet. If the Player Characters were to acquire vox gear from fallen Arbitrators, they might be able to disrupt the communications. Any efforts to redirect an Arbitrator squad using the vox would require a **Very**



Hard (-30) Deceive Test. Every Degree of Success gained by a Heretic could allow them to reassign a single unit of the guards to a different, nearby location. This might be particularly useful if the Heretics needed brief access to a specific location.

Note that these voxes are equipped with encryption that must be updated on a daily basis. Any vox quickly loses its efficacy for broadcasting to the Arbites units. Unless the Player Characters acquire new ones, the frequency that they can attempt this trick is limited. Similarly, if the characters repeatedly attempt this style of misdirection, the Arbites are likely to implement a system of codes and counter codes that they use to avoid such efforts. Deciphering the code system requires an **Arduous (-40) Logic Test**. Prior to attempting such a test, a Heretic would need to have listened to at least three days worth of Arbites communications in order to gather sufficient raw information to crack the code.

Both of these tasks can also be accomplished if the Heretics maintain access to Zenobia Pike. She can use her status as a senior Arbitrator to help move Arbitrators around the prison, lead squads into ambushes, or relay other important information. However, each time the Heretics use Pike, the GM should secretly have her make an **Easy (+30) Deceive Test**, with the Difficulty increasing by one step each time she must make the Test. Failure means the Arbites learn of her deceit. If this happens, they decide to use Pike as a double agent and, guilt-ridden as she is, she agrees. Further information gained via this source is wrong and designed to lead the Heretics into the worst possible situations.

BATTLE READINESS

The Adeptus Arbites maintain a constant level of readiness for battle at all times, and are well armed and armoured. They maintain stockpiles of weapons and light vehicles, such as modified Rhino and Repressor tanks, and are a dangerous threat against the undisciplined hordes of prisoners, or even lone Guard units that turn against the Imperium.

They are, however, not equipped with the heavy armour and artillery so useful in fighting against an organised and well-equipped military force. Against the waking Necron armies, the Arbitrators can put up a stiff defence, but will inevitably fall.

At the same time, the Arbitrator forces are distributed in their precincts throughout the prison's population centres. This grants them the ability to send hundreds of individuals to respond to a crisis in extremely short order. However, if the crisis involves thousands of intruding Necrons, this only contributes to their inability to defend against a large, determined military threat.

GOALS

Presented with their almost certain eventual destruction, the Arbites respond in a way fitting their fanatical devotion to the God-Emperor and the Imperium. They fight to the end, trying to do as much damage as possible and deny any useful facilities to the enemies of the Imperium. Here are some of the actions they may take:

- Defend their Precinct Fortresses to the last, killing as many attackers as they can. The last alive rig time-delayed explosive charges in hopes of both destroying any useful facilities and a few more attackers.
- Sealing off as many different sections of the prison as possible and wrecking the transit systems from one location of the prison to another.
- Sabotaging important facilities, such as power generators and manufactorums. This sabotage won't be subtle—possibilities range from destroying facilities with meltabombs and explosive charges, to overloading power grids, to redirecting smelter outputs to drown entire manufactorums in white-hot tides of molten metal.
- Destroying stockpiles of food and supplies. Many Arbitrators may feel that if nothing else, they can ensure the prisoners slowly starve.

How quickly they accomplish these goals is mostly left up to the GM. In general, though, if the Heretics leave the Arbitrators alone for at least a week they should be able to cause some sufficient sabotage or lasting harm. If left unharmed for two weeks, they have a chance of doing significant permanent damage to the manufacturing facilities on the prison. Eventually, however, they are overrun by either the angry hordes of prisoners or the encroaching Necron armies.

OTHER FACTIONS

There are additional minor factions on Saint Annard's Penance that might serve as helpful allies or staunch opponents. None of these control a substantial military force, but all of them have some influence over those forces. The characters might have gained additional resources through these factions. Alternatively, they might use these groups to develop a plan of treachery against those who remain loyal to the Imperium.

ADEPTUS MINISTORUM

Once Saint Annard's Penance descends into the Screaming Vortex, the Adeptus Ministorum presence on Saint Annard's Penance fractures and splits. Once Cardinal Morgan Falconer is slain in the ritual, along with Canoness Leona Rak, the Ecclesiarchy presence in the prison is utterly bereft and leaderless. It does not remain a unified and coherent whole, with individual confessors, priests, and Sisters Hospitaler splitting up amongst the other Imperial factions (the various Imperial Guard forces and the Adeptus Arbites). The Cathedral is quickly overwhelmed by daemonic and mutant hordes within the first hours of the transfer, and defiled and corrupted beyond redemption.

Thus, it becomes impossible to consider the Adeptus Ministorum as a single faction. However, that does not mean that the Heretics wouldn't want to gain control over individual members of the Ecclesiarchy. Even the loyalists of the Arbitrators listen to the members of the Ecclesiarchy and could be unwittingly swayed into doing something the Heretics find useful.

Another alternative might be to seize control of the world's medicae facilities or at least its supplies. Without the

INTERVIEW WITH A NECRON

Over the course of this adventure, the Heretics encounter hundreds of Necrons of various types. It is even possible, though unlikely, that they may work to capture or otherwise confront an intact specimen in hopes of interrogating or learning more about it. The Game Master should keep in mind, however, that Necrons, unlike living creatures, are inured to pain and coercion. The Necron Warriors are unable to even speak and are single-minded in their determination to follow their orders to the most exacting degree. Any captured by the Heretics continue to attempt to escape and destroy their captors constantly, until they succeed or are destroyed.

Necron Immortals and Lychguard, however, are another story. The Immortals are consummate soldiers, and, though they too cannot be coerced into revealing anything about themselves or Kalugura, they may exhibit some cunning, waiting with the matchless patience of the undying for a chance to escape, then exploding into action without warning. This goes doubly true for the Lychguard, who still maintain a great deal of their former personalities, coupled with unbreakable loyalty. A captured Lychguard should prove almost as dangerous as one faced on the field of battle.

store of supplies contained within that facility, other Imperial forces could require substantially more time to recover from casualties. It might even serve as an impediment towards troop morale when they begin to realise that there are no treatment facilities for grievous injuries.

After the ritual, the medicae facility remains under the control of a small contingent of 40-60 Arbitrators and Adeptus Ministorum staff (unless the Heretics took steps to change this in the previous act). Taking control of it should not be too difficult. However, the Arbitrators have orders to destroy the building with demolition charges should it look like they cannot hold it. Any attempts to control the medicae facility must take this into account.

ADEPTUS MECHANICUS

There are few agents of the Mechanicus on the prison world. Those present work in relative isolation, performing routine maintenance on the massive manufacturums, and occasional routine tasks for the various other Imperial organisations. None are powerful, high level Magos.

Ideally, those Mechanicus Adepts stationed on the planet would respond to a disaster of this magnitude by isolating themselves in their facilities and trying to outlast the chaotic horror. However, in the case of Saint Annard's Penance, one of the primary targets of the uprisings included the manufacturums. Even if the Heretics did not target them directly, the fact that so many prisoners worked in them meant they were quickly lost to the Imperial forces.

Like the Adeptus Ministorum's remaining priests, the remaining Tech-Priests are scattered amongst the last holdouts of Imperial power. In the same vein, this makes trying to control the Adeptus Mechanicus presence on Saint Annard's Penance, as a whole, very difficult.

However, other Imperial servants, especially the mechanically dependant Imperial Guard forces of the Drusus' Own Hussars, hold the Tech-Priests of the Mechanicus in high regard. If the Heretics have one or more Heretek in their ranks, they could pose as a loyalist Tech-Priest and use that ruse to influence or even take command of an isolated force.

On the other hand, the Tech-Priests have complete control over the systems that keep the manufacturums active. These agents could easily trigger catastrophic failures on any portion of these massive machines, which could provide a valuable distraction and even eliminate large numbers of their foes if timed appropriately.

This makes any Tech-Priests who ally with the Adeptus Arbites incredibly important to the Arbitrators' plans of causing as much damage as possible. If the Heretics intend to maintain as many of the manufacturum facilities intact as they can, this should also make these Tech-Priests high-priority targets.

THE WAKING NIGHTMARE

The transition on the planet into the Screaming Vortex has had horrific consequences on the population of Saint Annard's Penance. Fully half the population dies or goes irrevocably mad within the first few hours, as the world forces itself through the warp storm's outer barriers and random packs of daemons materialise and engage in wholesale slaughter before promptly vanishing. Others are beset by waves of spontaneous mutation brought on by waves of warp energy washing across the world. The remaining Imperial and prisoner factions respond to this new waking nightmare in the manners detailed in the previous sections.

All of this does serve to make travel through or between the prison complexes incredibly difficult. Anytime the Heretics attempt to travel through the prison complex, have them each make a **Challenging (+0) Stealth Test** if they want to avoid getting caught in one of the many running battles that plague the prison. The GM should tally and compare the Degrees of Success and Failure from these Tests, then roll once on **Table 2-1: Prison Encounters**, subtracting 1 from the roll for each Degree of Failure, and adding one for each Degree of Success. Alternatively, the Heretics can opt not to try for stealth and take their chances, at which point the GM should roll with no modifiers.

ENTER THE NECRONS

"Major Felthan! All three of our northern listening posts just dropped out of radio contact!"

— Guardsman Koth, Fort Saint Annard

Even as the Heretics consolidate their gains and work to secure their holdings, a new threat stirs beneath their very feet. The Necrons awaken in their tombs and prepare to destroy all traces of humanity. Their earliest objectives are focused on identifying the intruders and capturing them. As the Heretics begin to marshal their forces and focus on consolidating their control, they should have no direct interaction with the Necrons. Rather, they should begin to hear reports of individuals or units going missing. The first attacks begin five days after the world enters the Screaming Vortex.

The losses could come from any faction with which they are allied. Small groups of no more than 20 individuals are targeted, with some captured and others left dead. These groups should not include any key NPCs. Rather, they might be ones sent out to scavenge, continue mining operations, or even sent to initiate a dialogue with a rival faction. At first, this may go unnoticed amongst the chaos of current events. However, something makes these attacks stand out—they occur only in quiet areas of the prison complex, where no fighting is reported.

If the characters send minions or underlings to investigate the disappearances, their followers may recover the mutilated bodies. Unless these actions are taken quickly, scavengers among the prisoner population are likely to have seized any worthwhile gear or commodities that the victims carried. As a consequence, the only way to gather much evidence of the killers would be to inspect the injuries inflicted upon the victims. Any Heretics who check the bodies may identify the characteristic wounds of Gauss Flayers with a **Very Hard (–30) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**. Their knowledge is likely to be limited, but Necron forces under the feared Aetehk the Watcher have existed within the Vortex for some time. Success on the Test reveals the similarities between the wounds inflicted and reports of attacks from Aetehk's forces on other planets. Otherwise, a successful **Challenging (+0) Medicae Test** reveals that the wounds are not caused by any human weapons.

Alternatively, the Heretics might wish to inspect the battle scenes personally. If they do so, it grants a +10 bonus on the aforementioned Tests, as they are able to inspect the bodies before they are disturbed.

If the Heretics wish, they may also attempt to track the Necrons that slaughtered their allies. This requires a **Difficult (–10) Survival Test**. The characters suffer a –5 penalty to this test for each hour that passes before they begin their search. On success, they track a squad of five Necron Warriors to a nearby mine opening. Though the Necrons themselves are long gone, it becomes obvious that they issued from



the tunnels and must be within them. If the Heretics follow them, proceed to Into the Obelisk on page 90. Remember, however, that at this stage it is alright if the Heretics do not know the precise nature of the threat (although they should be rewarded if they do manage to identify it and work to deal with it quickly). Eventually, the growing Necron problem becomes apparent and forces their hands.

Otherwise, losses to Necron forces continue to mount over the first twenty days after the planet enters the Screaming Vortex. In all cases, the groups of humans lost should be 25 members or less. None of the losses are catastrophic. Unless the Heretics directly interact with the bodies, no one can identify the cause of the deaths. Instead, the losses are simply credited to the actions of one of the planet's other known factions.

Unless the Heretics are closely following these losses, they might not notice them. Many small battles take place on Saint Annard's Penance daily. Prisoner riots rage constantly. The losses continue to spiral upwards, as each faction attempts to accomplish its aforementioned goals. Given the general state of strife and anarchy, a few more deaths due to Necron causes could be easily discounted.

THE THREAT GROWS

Unless the Heretics learned of the Necron threat in the first five to ten days and immediately descended into the mines to pursue them, their first major encounter with the Necrons happens eight days after Saint Annard's Penance translates into the warp

(although the GM may increase or decrease this timetable as needed). This encounter is the first time the Heretics confront active Necrons and engage them in combat, and reveals that there are truly more dangerous forces at work on their new world.

NECRON RAIDERS (MANDATORY ENCOUNTER)

Within the first few days of their activation, the Necron forces became aware of the human presence on the planet's surface. While they have interrogated captured prisoners and conducted a number of preliminary exploratory operations, they have not yet confirmed the full strength of the organic threat to their world. As the master program continues to activate units, its engramic matrixes determine it is time to begin systematic and escalating attacks against human forces. As stated previously, the master program is not creative or imaginative in its strategies, and thus must follow very basic strategies to deal with the threat. This strategy basically boils down to escalating attacks. If each attack is repulsed, it increases the size of the next assault and tries again, focusing forces at the sites of greatest resistance. It continues this procedure until it succeeds in eliminating the threat.

Unfortunately for the Heretics, the master program launches one of the first ten forays into their own stronghold. As the Heretics' choice of a location for a "base of operations" could vary wildly depending on their choices previously in the adventure, the encounter is designed to take place in any location the Heretics believe to be "secure."

THE OBELISK

The attack takes place while the Heretics are meeting with their allies and minions. (The GM can take advantage of a meeting the Heretics may call, or have NPCs request a meeting as they choose). The meeting takes place in a bunker surrounded by a walled courtyard within one of the prison facilities. This can either be a defensive outpost along the walls or even a sub-precinct station wrested from the Adeptus Arbites. This meeting takes place eight days after the prison world was moved into the Screaming Vortex. At this stage, the Necron resources remain quite limited. Since this battle is intended to take place within the first ten days of the Necron awakening, remember to apply the -20 penalty to all Necron combat actions, as there are no Immortals available to provide better battlefield oversight or guidance.

As presented, this scene assumes the Heretics are meeting with one or more of the prisoner factions. However, it is possible that they are meeting with Pike, one of the Imperial Guard factions, or another faction that they've managed to corrupt or coerce. In that case, the descriptions may need to be modified. Otherwise, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As you stand within the rockcrete walls of the bunker, you feel the building shake slightly. A moment later, it shakes more wildly, sending suspended lumin-globes swinging and candles flickering. The gathered prisoners mutter and look at each other fearfully, and one rushes out of the room. A moment later, you hear him shouting, punctuated by the whine of lasgun fire. "My lords! We're under attack!"

The Necrons have launched their assault via an obelisk that violently thrust its way out of the ground in the centre of the courtyard, protruding more than 10 metres above the rockcrete surface. The ground around it is cracked and shattered, with deep fissures running all around the Necron structure. The blackened chrome-like metal of the structure glows green with Necron runes and smoke and dust continue to roll off the obelisk. On one side is some manner of door or portal, from which a ranked phalanx of skeletal Necrons march in perfect order.

Ten Necron Warriors and a Magnitude 20 Horde of Canoptek Scarabs (see pages 368-370 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) emerge from the obelisk. There are 1d10+10 prisoners defending the bunker, but they fall in short order to the Necrons unless the Heretics attack. In the subsequent combat, you can either treat the prisoners as a magnitude 20 Horde or simply have half the Necrons direct their attacks against prisoners, drawing fire away from the Heretics.

The ground around the obelisk is difficult terrain for a distance of 5 metres, due to the cracked and shattered rockcrete. The rest of the parade ground should have several crates and barrels scattered around it, providing some light cover (nothing more than 5 AP).

The Necrons fight to the death and count upon their Traits to extend the fight. As per the master program's plan, they attack until they are wiped out. The master program would then muster an exponentially larger attack on the position later.

Once the Heretics defeat the Necrons, the obelisk remains in position, serving as an entry point for future attacks. (Again, this is the master program's limited planning ability at work). Ten hours from the first attack, the master program sends 20 Necron warriors and a Magnitude 40 Horde of Canoptek Scarabs up through each intact obelisk. If any obelisks are destroyed or otherwise sealed, it activates additional obelisks in the same location. The attacks continue in this manner every ten hours, doubling each wave. Each of these obelisks links to a sub-tomb that connects to the main tomb complex via hyper-spatial connections which can be severed if that sub-tomb becomes overrun.

When all of the Necrons are defeated, the Heretics may choose to examine the Necron structure. The hieroglyphs covering the obelisk are indicative of its origin. If any character examines them and succeeds at **Very Hard (-30) Linguistics** or **Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**, they may interpret the writings. Essentially, the scripts identify the obelisk as the entry to the tombs of "Kalugura" though there is nothing present to identify Kalugura as the name of the planet. An opening at the base of the obelisk reveals a shaft that extends more than 50 meters directly down. The shaft is lit only by occasional arcs of electrical energy flowing along the shaft's sides.

INTO THE OBELISK

The obelisk is merely the capstone for a tunnel that descends below the earth to a small Necron stasis tomb. This is the tomb's only external connection. As mentioned previously, the sub-tomb links to the main tomb complex via a hyper-spatial connection that the master program instantly severs should intruders breach the sub-tomb's defences.

The hole that descends from the obelisk to the tomb is three metres in diameter. It is made of a worn, silver metal that is heavily inscribed with Necron hieroglyphics. The walls are covered in metallic cabling that occasionally lights as arcs of energy travel up the walls of the tunnel from below. Necrons ascend and descend the tunnel through a magnetic resonance field. A character with either Ferric Lure Implants or Maglev Coils may use them to descend the tunnel safely (no Tests are required). Any other characters must climb 100 metres beneath the planet's surface along the length of the tunnel. Because of the distance involved, making the descent requires a **Challenging (+0) Athletics Test**. If the characters choose to attempt the climb without ropes or other basic climbing gear, they incur a -30 penalty to the attempt. If they fail the Test, they fall a distance equal to 10 times their Degrees of Failure in metres (a worse failure means they fell from a higher point in their climb). While the arcing energy looks frightening, any characters who come in contact with it suffer no damage.

When the characters reach the bottom of the shaft, read the following aloud:

As you approach the bottom of the shaft, you begin to see a dim green glow. Upon completing the descent, the tunnel opens into a large antechamber, 15 metres square, with walls that slope gradually inwards, with the tunnel forming the peak of the pyramidal structure. The room's walls are coated in black flat black slabs, as solid as stone and as hard as steel. Impossibly, the green light seems to emanate from nowhere in the room, yet it suffuses the very air to illuminate the space with a pallid light. A single doorway opens into a passage three metres wide and three metres tall that leads from the room.

Any of the Heretics may attempt to decipher the hieroglyphics on the walls. Characters that deciphered the text above ground may read this without a test. Others must succeed at a **Hard (-20) Linguistics Test** or **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**. The glyphs identify the location as the "Outer Tomb Hexcrata of Glorious Kalugura." There is nothing to indicate exactly what Kalugura is at this point.

The tomb's structure is quite simple. Through the doorway, the tunnel continues for 15

metres and then splits at a four-way intersection. Those who have deciphered Necron hieroglyphics may review a sign at the intersection. To the left, after another 15-metre hallway, a doorway opens into a room that appears to be some sort of power-generation system. The room is 50 metres long, 20 wide, and 20 high, with ten evenly spaced black obelisks running down the centre. Each flickers with eerie green lightning. Like the lightning in the shaft, this is harmless, but the flickering light does impose a -20 penalty to Awareness Tests.

The sub-tomb is protected by a Horde of 50 Canoptek Scarabs that provide basic maintenance and defence. Currently, they lurk in the power generation room. Once all of the Heretics enter the room, they attack. Have each Heretic make an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Awareness versus Challenging (+0) Stealth Test**. If they lose, they are Surprised in the ensuing combat. The Scarabs fight to the end.

The room to the right follows the same dimensions as the room to the left, but is dominated by a single enormous, glowing green crystalline structure. A phalanx of ten Necron Warriors stands in front of the structure, dormant. However, even as the Heretics watch, the crystalline structure rises into the air, held aloft by invisible forces. Green arcs of lightning stab out from the crystalline structure, infusing and awaking it from dormancy.

If the characters attempt to employ stealth, the benefits from the darkness are somewhat offset by the extensive Necron systems present. This requires an **Ordinary (+10) Stealth Test** to remain hidden from sight. Keep in mind the -20 penalty the newly awakened Necrons suffer if they attempt to penetrate the Heretics' attempts to hide. None of the Necrons leave the stasis chambers until they are dispatched to assault the surface or if intruders are identified. Otherwise, one Necron Warrior awakens every ten Rounds until all ten are active.

The third passageway dead-ends at a "gate," a swirling



green vortex of crackling energy. However, when any of the Heretics approach within five metres of the vortex, it immediately vanishes, revealing a blank black wall and absolutely no evidence that there was anything there in the first place. This is the hyper-spatial connection, severed by the master program to keep intruders out of the main complex.

The surest way to overcome the threat presented by this tomb is to destroy it (especially since there are no assurances the hyper-spatial connection won't be brought back on line). This may be accomplished using explosives or by managing to trigger an explosion within one of the obelisk structural lattices that provide the power for the entire tomb. In order to simply use explosives that they have brought with them, a character needs to succeed at a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test** to properly place the complete contents of a Demolitions Kit or its equivalent (a dozen krak grenades or half a dozen melta bombs; frag grenades are not potent enough to do any major damage). Each additional Demolitions Kit employed provides a +10 Bonus to efforts to destroy the complex. On a Success, the complex, along with all remaining Necrons within it, is completely destroyed. For each Degree of Failure, one of the three tomb structures survives the explosion. On four or more Degrees of Failure, none of the Necron tombs are damaged, but the explosion closes the tunnel to the surface, leaving no way for the Heretics to determine whether or not the tomb was actually destroyed.

UNIFYING FORCES

With new information about the Necron presence on Saint Annard's Penance, the Heretics are likely to be even more highly motivated to try and consolidate their holdings and gain additional assistance from other human factions. In the face of the Necron encroachment, some of the humans may be more likely to ally. Others, however, are every bit as opposed to those who bear the taint of Chaos as they are to the foul Necrons. This section covers a few of the different approaches that the characters might take to negotiate with the other human factions or to discretely manipulate them into fulfilling their needs.

MAKING THEIR CASE

A new major threat, such as the one represented by the Necrons, is more than ample reason to initiate or restart negotiations between various factions. At the same time, not every faction is willing to negotiate with the Heretics. Past actions should also have a substantial impact on any new discussions. If the Heretics brazenly betrayed a faction, then they are far less likely to put their trust in the Player Characters. After all, the Necron artefacts and even their weapons could have been imported from off planet or might even be fabrications.

Refer to Current Status of the World and It's Factions on page 84 for more information about the basic stances and philosophies of the primary factions active upon the prison world. Until the other factions are directly subject to Necron incursions, none of them are likely to change their

basic assumptions or approaches. All are far more concerned with consolidating their own holdings and achieving their own goals than they are with working together to oppose an alien incursion.

This may change if the groups manage to assemble for a detailed series of negotiations. In the event the Heretics choose to send Necron artefacts as evidence of the existing threat, they may receive a +10 bonus to the use of any Interaction Skills for the sole purpose of initiating a dialogue. Essentially, these help to pique the recipient's curiosity, though they need not necessarily make that person more willing to actually establish a working agreement.

A more effective strategy to pursue during the course of actual negotiations is to present evidence of the injuries and deaths sustained during the Necron assault during The Obelisk. If the tomb remains intact beneath the surface, the Heretics might even persuade a potential ally to send characters into its depths to obtain firsthand knowledge of the threat presented. This hard confirmation of the threat is far more powerful than any artefacts they might bring. After all, manufacturing a tomb of the size, capacity, and location is far more difficult than creating a few imitation artefacts. If the characters manage to effectively present this threat, they receive a +20 bonus to any negotiations which might follow a collective analysis of the tomb.

In any such discussions, it is crucial for the Heretics to present what they bring to an alliance as well as to stress what they might gain. While their Infamy may be a factor in establishing a relationship, the assistance of any minions or other allied factions is also crucial to these negotiations. The Player Characters are likely to be most successful only if they can establish a relationship that is mutually beneficial. If the other factions believe that the Heretics are the ones who gain the most, then they may remain reluctant to make any commitments.



THE EXCEPTION

Even in the face of Necron intruders, not everyone is willing to compromise their beliefs. The Adeptus Arbites remain staunchly opposed to those who carry the mark of Chaos. If the Heretics attempt to open negotiations with them, the Arbitrators agree to a meeting as a ruse to attempt to trap them.

The Player Characters are most likely to contact Zenobia Pike, see page 60. If they attempt to meet with her clandestinely to gauge how the Adeptus Arbites would respond to a truce, Pike agrees to meet with them (but must make one of her Deceive Tests, as indicated on page 89). She meets with them in secret in one of the manufacturums in the prison, but informs the Heretics there is no way the Adeptus Arbites would ever work with them. In fact, the Heretics can make a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny Test** to see that Pike is incredibly conflicted about interacting with them at all, and harbours bitter loathing for herself for meeting with them in the first place. A **Hard (-20) Charm Test** or **Challenging (+0) Intimidate Test** can force her to agree to help with some limited re-deployments of Arbites forces (such as pulling guards off a specific location). These Tests gain +10 if the Heretics couch them in terms of being mutually beneficial, as in encouraging the Arbites to consolidate their forces to better resist Necron assaults.

However, if the Heretics insist on trying to form an alliance, or they propose a plan that's obviously going to eliminate the Arbites presence, Pike does not go along with it. She tells the Heretics she needs time to put the plan in place, and asks them to meet her again in another, different manufactorum in the prison complex. She demands that the Heretics attend the meeting without backup and agrees to only bring a number of associates with him equal to the number of PCs. As she continues to negotiate terms of the meeting, the Arbites Judge makes a **Opposed Routine (+20) Deceive** versus **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny Test** against the characters. Those who succeed versus her realise that she is laying a trap for them and has no intentions of following through on a meeting. If they choose to continue the discussions in spite of this, they are attacked by a Magnitude 30 Horde of Arbitrators and two senior Arbitrators, including Pike. The senior Arbitrator ends up revealing her duplicity to her fellow Arbitrators and begs permission to seek absolution by either killing the Heretics in battle and then submitting to judgement, or dying in the process.

If the Heretics have created substantial issues for the Arbitrators through the course of this adventure (or if there are three or more Chaos Space Marines in the party), it may be appropriate to increase the potency of the forces sent to oppose them. Game Masters should consider this issue, increasing the number and magnitude of the opposing forces as appropriate.

UNLIKELY ALLIES

For some groups of Player Characters, the Necrons might become a useful tool for uniting the forces of the prison world under their tyrannical thumbs or even to eliminate their opponents. There are a variety of different strategies that they

might employ to do this. This section presents a few different options and approaches. Game Masters should keep in mind that players might take an approach that differs substantially from the one presented here. These scenes should provide a basis for the Game Masters to adapt appropriate scenes for the less common approaches.

The common focus for the Player Characters at this juncture may be the fact that they have two opponents—the Adeptus Arbites and the Necrons—who are both dead set on eliminating them. In some instances, it may be appropriate to swap out an alternative group for either used in this example. Essentially, any of the factions on Saint Annard's Penance might have acquired reasons to passionately hate the Heretics. The caveat of particular interest for using the two suggested factions is that while they are passionate in their hatred for the Player Characters, they are also driven to eliminate each other.

From the perspective of the Heretics, it is this second hatred that is key. If an opposing faction cannot be converted to an ally, then it may be necessary to eliminate them. If two groups which need to be eliminated for this reason also happen to hate one another, that could present a convenient solution for the Heretics. By carefully manipulating one or both opponents, the heretics might manage to cause them to fight one another.

The potency of battles between the opposing forces and the likely outcomes depend upon how the groups have been affected by prior events. If earlier actions dealt heavy damage to a faction, then they might be less willing to commit to new initiatives at this juncture. If attacked with overwhelming force, their limited resources might also prevent them from inflicting substantial damage. Instead, their forces might be quickly overrun. If a faction can be fully assembled, a direct confrontation against a significantly superior opponent could effectively wipe them out for the remainder of the adventure.

In order for any of these schemes to be effective, the Heretics must develop a plan to effectively manipulate a faction that includes tens of thousands of members. Success with such a scheme requires both careful planning and masterful deception. In order to meet with success, the Heretics must lay an effective trap and use irresistible bait.

ATTRACTING JUDGEMENT

If targeting the Adeptus Arbites and their allies, the Heretics have two particularly effective options that could sorely tempt the wardens. The first option for bait is the Necron force. Up to this point in the engagement, the Necrons have only attacked in limited numbers. If the characters can direct the Necrons to attack an area that is held by the Arbitrators, the Arbitrators respond to the best of their abilities. The second option is for the Player Characters to present themselves as a target, to draw the Arbitrators into a direct conflict with the Necrons. This option involves a more substantial direct risk for the Heretics, but is also certain to provoke an immediate response.

If the region attacked is either a major precinct fortress or the Warden's manse, the Arbitrators go to extreme measures to attempt to hold the locations against the Necron

incursion. The Arbitrators bring in reinforcements from other facilities, with all due haste, and may even go so far as to strip resources to the extent that other holdings could become compromised. The number of Arbites participating in the fight and lost in combat with the Necrons should be directly proportionate to the intensity of the Necron assault. If the Necrons become committed to a major offensive, this could become a brutal battle for both factions. Alternatively, smaller scouting units of Necrons are unlikely to have a substantial impact upon the overall Arbites forces.

The Arbitrators are unlikely to launch a full-scale assault at this stage, having already suffered heavy losses. However, luring the Necrons into an attack on the Arbitrators is fairly easy. Until Osiskor manages to take control of the tomb world, the master program responds to resistance by escalating the forces sent against it. Any of the Heretics can realize this through a **Routine (+20) Common Lore (War) Test**, or an **Ordinary (+10) Logic Test**. To lure the Necrons, the Heretics or their agents must simply locate one of the Obelisks the Necrons launch their assaults through. Assuming this is at least twenty-four hours after the first assault, the waves are likely to be somewhat substantial (remember, each wave doubles in size). The Heretics can launch hit-and-run attacks from the direction of the Arbites target. The Necrons immediately respond by moving in that direction and, once they hit any Arbites positions, they assault without hesitation. If the Arbites destroy the Necron wave, another arrives ten hours later to continue the assault.

Whether or not the Adeptus Arbites are able to fight off the Necrons is left solely in the hands of the GM. If he needs guidance, he should assume that any defensive position the Arbites take allows them to handle an equal number of Necrons (as the undead xenos warriors have far superior technology, but poor tactics at this stage). However, any Arbites position will eventually be overwhelmed.

ENLISTING THE GUARD

A more likely ally at this stage are some of the remnants of the Imperial Guard. The various forces and dispositions of the Guard after the transition are covered on page 86. As mentioned previously, Major Barl Felthan is likely to be the easiest to coerce, especially if the Heretics can offer survival against the new, dangerous threat. The two Captains are slightly less so, but they also have their individual levers the Heretics can press to coerce them into an alliance.

With the onset of the Necron hordes, the Guard do become more open to a temporary truce in the interest of simple survival. Once the Necrons begin their initial assaults, the Disposition of the commanders improves by one step per week of attacks. This modifier, of course, can be adjusted by the GM as necessary.

Another option is to lure the Necrons into assaults on the Guard positions. This works in the same way as luring them into Adeptus Arbites positions. The Heretics can even make alliances with certain Guard factions and try luring the Necrons into wiping others out, or use the Necrons to help convince a commander that a truce is necessary.



WEATHER THE ASSAULT

"The spirits of the ancient past gather to prevent the glories of the future. Only by overpowering them could Tor preserve what is meant to be."

—Torestus, 5:8–9

As the Necrons learn more about the human inhabitants of their planet, Kalugura's master program begins to muster ever greater forces to eliminate the intruders. The longer the Heretics wait to deal with the Necrons, the worse the attacks become. Eventually, the Cryptek Osiskor takes over the Necron armies and reactivates the entirety of Kalugura (see page 83). The Heretics cannot hope to prevail against an entire tomb world. However, before this occurs, they may be forced to deal with several substantial assaults.

EARLY LOSSES

Unless the Heretics have somehow already scouted out the Necron forces, the Heretics are likely to learn the true scope of the alien incursion only as they see the constantly

increasing attacks. Because of this, it is likely that the Necrons can force the Player Characters to react to their attacks. If the human forces are only able to play a reactionary game, their losses can quickly mount. In such a situation, each battle is fought only on the Necron's terms. At the same time, none of the Necrons core assets—the reanimation chambers, the millions of entombed Necrons, and the master program—are even exposed to human attack.

In this way, every successful strike causes substantially more damage to the human population than a successful defence could hope to damage the Necrons. As the human forces lose their core assets, they also lose their abilities to effectively defend themselves. Unless the Heretics deliberately seize control of the situation and initiate a counter offensive, the destruction may soon spin out of control. If the majority of the human prisoners are lost, the other forces lose a recruiting base and the option of an effective force of human shields. Even more importantly, they also lose the manpower to operate their manufacturing base.

DAMAGED MANUFACTORUMS

As the Necron forces are well aware of the essential nature of a manufacturing base, this represents one of the earliest targets for their assault. Even the literal thinking of the master program identifies them as obvious targets and begins to direct forces towards them. Even though these facilities were not designed to support the masses that dwell upon the world, they generate a significant amount of processed goods. Within the Screaming Vortex, these goods are valuable for trade and might even be modified to create products better suited to their current needs.

The first Necron attack upon the Manufactorums begins 15 days after the Necrons begin to reanimate. At this stage, the undying legions number in the tens of thousands. While the mechanical army has fewer total numbers than the human defenders, the combination of technological superiority and the ability to concentrate their forces suggests that they have a substantial edge in these fights.

Similarly, as the attackers, the Necrons are able to succeed in attaining their objectives far more easily than are those who seek to preserve the function of the prison world's manufactorums. Well-placed explosives—possibly even implanted within the building's foundation, deep beneath the earth—are an adequate means of destroying these buildings. Unless the Heretics devise an effective means to prevent these assaults, the enormous manufactorums soon become compromised. Each day, another of these valuable assets is destroyed as the Necrons continue to dismantle the Imperial machinery that kept the planet functioning.

As long as the Necrons continue their offensive unopposed, human forces are unable to initiate repairs on any of the disabled manufactorums. Further, unless human forces reclaim a manufactorum within 48 hours of its fall, the Necrons are able to complete the demolition of the complex, rendering it completely useless.

The Heretics may either choose to directly intervene in the defence of the manufactorums or they may decide to

send an allied faction in to assist with the defences. Of the prison world's major factions, only the Imperial Guard or the Arbitrators have the technology and discipline to effectively defend the manufactorums. Out of the prisoner factions, only Colonel Hollum's group is organised enough to offer a proper defence.

How the defences hold is left primarily up to the GM to narrate. However, a good guidepost is that any facilities held by prisoner factions fall to Necron assaults by day 17. The Arbitrators and Baron Olganov's faction can hold out until day 25. The Guard and Colonel Hollum's faction can hold until day 30, but when Osiskor regains control of Kalugura's master program, they cannot withstand the sweeping wave of soulless horrors that consume them.

One of the ways the GM can encourage player participation and interest is by having the Heretics come up with some broad plans for how their forces are going to defend their holdings (and deciding which parts of their holdings the Heretics will defend and which will be sacrificed). After they've come up with a plan, the GM should have the Heretics each make one of the following Tests. The default difficulty for each test is **Challenging (+0)**.

- **Charm or Intimidate:** Both of these Tests can be made to put backbone into the Heretics' allies, either by rallying them to the Heretics' sides, or filling them with dread at the consequences of failure.
- **Command:** The Heretics can use Command to organise their allies into a unified and credible fighting unit.
- **Common Lore (War) and Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis):** The Heretics use their knowledge of conflict and battles to organise battle plans and lay out strategies for resisting the Necron forces.
- **Forbidden Lore (Xenos):** Any knowledge gleaned on the nature of the Necrons can be used to help understand and defeat them.
- **Commerce:** The Heretics can use this Skill to ensure their forces remain well supplied with both food and ammunition from their dwindling reserves.
- **Tech-Use:** Saint Annard's Penance was a prison world and, thus, is full of defences, many deactivated or damaged after the transition. Reactivating dormant automated defensive systems could help turn the tide of battle.

Tally up the number of Degrees of Success and Degrees of Failure, then subtract the Degrees of Failure from Degrees of Success. The remaining Degrees of Success determine how many days past Day 15 the Heretics forces can hold out against the Necrons. Obviously, they can't be expected to hold out forever, and are wiped out on Day 30 with everything else. This is simply a means to buy time while the Heretics handle the situation directly.

MAKING A STAND (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

This encounter is intended if the Heretics end up participating in one of the defensive actions personally. It is designed to take place in any of the manufactorums or another well-fortified building such as the medicae facility (if the Heretics have taken it). The GM can have a building the Heretics are

NECRON ENCOUNTERS

As the Heretics proceed through the complex, they are likely to encounter additional Necron patrols and guardians. Each hour that the characters travel within the Complex, roll randomly on **Table 3-3: Necron Defenders** on page 102. Game Masters should apply modifiers to the roll based upon the time since the planet transitioned into the Screaming Vortex and whether they are in the Peripheral or Core Complex.

As is often the case with random encounters, the GM should use discretion when utilising them, and should probably use them sparingly. The idea is to keep the players nervous but not exhaust them with constant random encounters. For that reason, the GM can always choose not to roll for a random encounter.

occupying come under attack, or they can be warned about an imminent assault on a building they or their allies control and rush to help defend it.

All of the buildings on Saint Annard's Penance were designed to be easily defended and fortified due to the constant possibility of a prisoner uprising. That means the streets leading to each are narrow, forming choke points with sweeping fire-lanes. The buildings themselves are constructed with thick adamantium and rockcrete walls, heavy reinforced doors, and narrow windows on ground level that can double as fire-ports. On higher levels, balconies are positioned to serve as fortified positions for crew-served heavy weapons.

Of course, the defensiveness of the building depends on how well the Heretics take advantage of it. This encounter assumes they have some allied forces following them, as they alone cannot hold a large position.

As subtlety is not the Necron's strong suit, the Heretics gain an hour's warning about an approaching force. The Necrons advance slowly because they methodically demolish everything in their path, destroying buildings and other facilities as well as fighting opposition, then wading through the flaming wreckage.

Instead of fighting the entire battle, it's assumed the Heretics hold one of the key points and the rest of the battle rages around them. So long as the Heretics triumph, the rest of the battle goes well. The position the Heretics take is a main entrance to the facility they defend, with ten metre high doors and a broad, thirty metre long ramp leading up to them. The Heretics have enough debris available to throw a rough barricade across the ramp and can seal the doors as well. On either side of the door are two narrow windows that can serve as firing ports, and above the door is a reinforced balcony perfect for snipers or heavy weapons. The barricades do not provide more than chest high cover with 5-6 AP maximum. The slit windows provide an additional 16 AP to all parts of the Heretic save the Head, while the balcony provides chest high cover with 16 AP. The door is very solid, and has 30 AP and 60 Hit Points.

The encounter is designed so that even a group consisting primarily of human Heretics can fight from cover and survive the attacks from a large Horde. However, if the warband

primarily consists of Heretics who are not good combatants, the GM should consider offering some help. This could consist of a Heavy Bolter already in place on the balcony, supplies of explosives to rig improvised booby traps, or additional prisoners who fight alongside the Heretics.

The attack begins with a Horde of 40 Necron Warriors marching up the ramp. The Necron Warrior Horde makes one attack against the door each round, attempting to force it, and any additional attacks against Heretics behind barricades or the slit windows. After the fourth Round of combat, they receive support in the form of five individual Immortals and two Hordes of 30 Canoptek Scarabs. One Scarab Horde attacks any Heretics on the balcony, while the other flies in through the slit windows and attacks anyone inside. The Immortals focus on any Heretics outside and bringing down the door.

If the Necrons manage to force entrance into the factory and the Heretics retreat or are incapacitated, then the manufactorum falls. However, if the Heretics manage to hold out, the rest of the manufactorum does as well. The GM can also add an extra 1d5 days onto the maximum time the Heretics forces hold against the Necrons, to represent both the benefits of the stalwart defence, and the inspiration it provides to their allies.



MINE COLLAPSE

(OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

The constant conflict between human factions and Necron intruders soon takes its toll on the world's mines as well. The deep caves were built to follow veins of ore and to bring prisoner mortality to acceptable levels. They were never designed to accommodate safety in the face of the constant weapons fire that has come into play. Explosive charges and heavy weapons have been used extensively within the tunnels and they have begun to have serious effects.

In some places, pockets of natural gas have exploded dramatically when subjected to the high-powered weapons used by either side of the conflicts. In others, roofs of passages and even some of the larger work areas have collapsed, killing many and trapping countless others. While the Necron forces can survive without air and often regenerate from their injuries, the human miners are less fortunate. Important allies may be trapped and killed in these disasters, while their inhuman foes remain unaffected.

If the Heretics have used the mines to travel throughout the adventure, during this scene they fall prey to a tunnel collapse. If they have remained away from them, then an important NPC ally is believed to yet live, but remains trapped kilometres beneath the earth. The Player Characters must either fight their way free from an earthen prison or decide whether to risk the dangers to free an important ally. If the Heretics are the ones subject to the cave-in, read the following aloud:

Travelling the mines always incurs some risk. Kilometres beneath the earth, there are countless tons of stone and dirt held above you only by the questionable structural techniques of desperate prisoners. The tunnels turn and twist, their direction often set by the easiest path of the softest rock an exhausted prisoner could find. Even navigating these tight tunnels is a risk—stories tell of prisoners who have been lost forever due to a single misstep. With the Necron presence, venturing too far from known routes can have even more deadly consequences. As you travel the dark passages, you suddenly hear the sound of a muffled explosion. There must be a battle taking place in one of the mine's other regions. The ground shudders a moment later and then you hear a sharp crack. The ceiling of your mine shaft shakes and begins to fall towards you.

The Heretics must make a **Difficult (–10) Dodge Test** to avoid the collapsing ceiling. Those who succeed manage to dive into the lee of stable structures, avoiding the worst of the falling rock, though they are still trapped by the massive slabs of granite that have fallen. Those who fail are struck by the rock, suffering $1D10 + 2$ I damage per Degree of Failure. Note that armour and Toughness Bonus do apply to reduce the damage.

In either case, the Player Characters must first pass a **Difficult (–10) Survival Test** to assemble the necessary tools to work within the mines and to carefully select the best place to dig. On a Success, the Heretics can safely begin the process of clearing their way free from the depths. On a failure, they are unable to make any progress in their digging. If they suffer three or more Degrees of Failure, they trigger

a secondary collapse. Because of the narrow nature of their prison, they must make a **Very Hard (–30) Dodge Test** to avoid damage. Those who fail suffer $1D5$ I damage per two Degrees of Failure on the test.

Once the Heretics have discovered a safe place to dig, they may make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** to dig their way free. The entire process of escaping requires eight hours of successful digging per Heretic present. Each Degree of Success on the test counts as one hour of successful digging. The Player Characters must succeed on this test repeatedly to work their way free. Any tests that suffer three or more Degrees of Failure trigger a secondary collapse as described above. Such a collapse also causes the characters to lose half of their progress towards escape.

Characters may use vox systems to call for assistance, but this runs the risk of their distress calls being intercepted. If they do so, have a Magnitude 15 Horde of opposition forces attack them once they manage to escape the tunnel collapse. Alternatively, a Necron force might have heard the reverberations of the tunnel collapse. If the characters were deliberately looking for the Necron foes while they were travelling the tunnels, have a squad of Necron Warriors (see page 369 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) equal in number to the Heretics attack them within the tight confines of the collapse. All characters suffer a -10 penalty to Dodge within the tight confines. However, survivors may use the passages that the Necrons dug through the rock to escape their imprisonment.

OUTSIDE HELP

Now that Saint Annard's Penance is physically located within the Screaming Vortex, many characters may wish to draw upon the assistance of Chaos allies to attempt to consolidate their holdings. This could be particularly relevant for Heretics who have a large body of minions that they chose to leave behind during their travels through the Imperium. This section discusses the various ways that the characters might contact their allies and gather additional assistance in their battles against human and Necron foes.

CHAOS SHIPS

The characters may have previously established a strong connection with another faction active within the Screaming Vortex. Some might even be powerful enough to control their own vessel or even a small fleet of ships. In either case, they might have established a plan for reinforcements to join them once Saint Annard's Penance was drawn within the Warp Storm. If this is the case, the largest challenge might be actually identifying the final location where the planet arrived.

Just as the Warp can change, so too can the relative placement of various portions of the Screaming Vortex. As the storm fluctuates, the relative distance between some of these planets may shift. This is complicated by the absence of an astropathic network. Communications between the worlds of the Screaming Vortex are somewhat limited by the

constant flux of the warp storm's influence. Generally, vessels carry messages between the various worlds as they travel from planet to planet. There is no central authority that oversees these communications, so messages between worlds that trade actively might take days or weeks while those with limited interaction could take a decade or more to arrive.

The communication restrictions intensify an existing problem—prior to their arrival within the Warp, they had no way of knowing exactly where the planet would arrive. While the Screaming Vortex represents a small amount of space on a galactic scale, it remains a vast region to try to search. Without some sort of psychic direction, allied vessels are unlikely to quickly find the location.

The challenge, then, for Heretics who wish to establish contact with a pre-existing ally, is to devise a means of creating that contact. Unless the Player Characters take direct action, no allied forces make contact with Saint Annard's Penance until the scenario is resolved. Further, when the planet transitioned into the Screaming Vortex, no space assets came with it. With the exception of a few shuttlecraft capable of landing, none of the human factions based upon the prison world have vessels capable of travelling the void.

That only leaves psychic communication as a means of establishing contact with the worlds of the Screaming Vortex and those that inhabit them. The planet's astropathic choir have been driven mad by their extended exposure to the Warp Storm. If one of the Player Characters has the appropriate telepathic talents, he may establish contact independently. Alternatively, a character might use an appropriate ritual to contact a daemon to fulfil this duty for him, or even conduct an alternative ritual specifically devoted to establishing such a contact.

If the characters do not know such a ritual but wish to find one, they may begin questioning heretics among the prisoners, consulting with visions, and researching through any forbidden tomes they can discover. This requires a **Very Hard (-30) Forbidden Lore (The Warp) Test** to identify the ritual. On Success, they may complete the ritual by sacrificing a swath of followers, the numbers of which are dictated by the Degree of Success on the lore test. On Failure, they make no progress towards researching the ritual. On three or more Degrees of Failure, they found a ritual that looks appropriate, but once the sacrifices are completed, they are unable to establish contact with their desired target.

If none of these options are feasible, and the characters seem desperate for additional help, have a small fleet of Wolfpack Raiders establish contact with the prison world after they randomly discovered it. These forces are willing to aid any of the human factions on the planet, but their services go to the highest bidder. The Heretics have a substantial edge in any negotiations, due to their Infamy, but they must also concede some degree of control over the planet in order to purchase the services of these vessels and their crews. If necessary, use Dannard Klee on page 123 to represent the game statistics of the point of contact for negotiations with the fleet.

In addition to the tens of thousands of crew members present on the Raiders' ships, any orbital assets can also play a crucial role by using their massive cannons against ground-based targets. These massive ships hold the literal high ground in any battle against human or Necron forces.

The Necrons are incapable of preparing void-capable units in the short term, and the Imperial allied forces have lost all contact with their spacecraft. Consequently, such an ally offers an enormous edge in any remaining conflicts and may cut battles short or lead to negotiated settlements with all but the most fanatical of opponents. Also, an ally with a voidship may use it to obtain additional assets from other places within the Screaming Vortex. Heretics with a powerful network of contacts and a high Infamy rating may have virtually limitless resources once this connection is re-established.

SUMMONING DAEMONS

Some Player Characters may choose to take the most inhuman approach possible to the situation by summoning daemons into their service. The wretched creatures of the Warp represent fearsome opponents who can make short work of most human foes and even fight effectively against the Necron forces. While the costs to employ them are unthinkable for most mortals, those Heretics who have embraced the Ruinous Powers may pay them gladly.

Pages 228-230 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook present several example Chaos Rituals that may be used to summon a daemon into the character's service. However, these rituals are intended to summon a single daemon. While that could have its uses within the context of this scenario, just one is unlikely to have a major impact against any of the larger human factions or against the tombs full of countless Necrons.

The solution, from the perspective of a desperate Heretic, is to cut a deal with a daemon. Summoning a single Elite daemon could be merely the beginning. The summoner might choose to enter into negotiations with that daemon in order to attract more of its ilk to the planet. Through a series of negotiations and sacrifices, the character could eventually bring a veritable army of the unholy to use against the planet's defenders. However, such an act requires tremendous sacrifices.

Specifically, the character would need to first discover an appropriate ritual to summon a basic daemon, if they do not already know one. This requires access to the appropriate unholy tomes and a **Hard (-20) Forbidden Lore (The Warp) Test**. Once those have been mastered and the ritual completed, the summoner must successfully seal a pact with the daemon to bring additional daemons into his service. A sacrifice of at least 10 souls for each daemon called to service



would be required, as well as a successful **Ordinary (+10) Opposed Commerce Test**. This test is subject to the same modifiers as a summoning ritual per **Table 6–7** on page 229 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. Each Degree of Success on the test decreases the number of sacrifices required by one, while each Degree of Failure increases it by one. With three or more Degrees of Failure, an inadvertent point of the negotiation sets the daemon free.

The daemons assembled in this manner only stay subservient for the duration of a single task. After that time, the summoner may either negotiate for additional services at the cost of a comparable number of souls or attempt to banish them back to the Warp. While this method could quickly exhaust a substantial portion of the prison world's population, most types of daemons are sufficiently effective combatants that they could effectively do battle with a comparable number of Necrons or a significantly superior number of humans.

CREATING EXPLOSIVES

The characters face forces that vastly outnumber them on all sides. In order to effectively compete with them in battle, they must identify devices that can inflict substantial casualties with minimal risk. The most traditional solution to this problem is the use of explosives. Within the context of a manufactory, there are broad arrays of different chemical and mechanical devices that can be made to explode. If the Heretics choose to pursue this path, they may find a variety of different solutions to the issue. Which one they choose to manufacture is subject to their best judgement, though the supplies available to their allied factions may heavily influence this decision.

Because the manufacturums are not equipped to synthesise large quantities of explosives, using them to make these unstable materials is somewhat risky. Even though the basic formulations are fairly simple, the scales involved and the danger of an inadvertent detonation can both be quite troubling. In order for the characters to manufacture them with the chemicals at hand, they must complete a **Hard (–20) Extended Tech-Use Test**, with a Base Time of two hours, and which requires eight Successes. Each time the Extended Test is completed, the acting character has successfully synthesised the equivalent of 25 kilograms of Demolition Charges (see page 184 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook).

If, over the course of the Extended Test, they ever Fail, all of the supplies used for that attempt are lost, and the attempt must be restarted. If they ever fail by four or more Degrees, they also trigger a detonation. The detonation does 10d10 X damage with a Blast (10) effect. If this happened within the confines of the mines, it also triggers a mine collapse, as detailed on page 99.



ENTER THE COMPLEX

"The Necrons hold their secrets close, but they surrendered to time once before. Time and the warp are enough to overcome them once more."

– Arn-Ord the Merciless

For the Heretics to overcome the Necron forces, they must directly confront and overcome Kalugura's master program and Osiskor the Cryptek. In order to do so, they must first fight their way to them. Once there, they need to destroy the system's existing programming, either by overwhelming it with the biometric engrams of a suitable sacrifice, or destroying it with explosives in a more old-fashioned way.

By the 15th or 20th day after they translated into the warp, the Heretics should understand the enormity of the Necron threat. It should also be apparent where the Necrons are coming from—underneath the Heretics' very feet. If the players haven't picked up on this, at this point, the GM can impart these clues by spreading around stories of entire mines being flooded with Canoptek Scarabs or whole mines going silent with anyone entering them vanishing without a trace.

The main Necron attacks come from the mines to the west of the main prison complexes, and this is where the Heretics must direct their attention.

ENTERING THE MINES

In order to obtain additional information about the Necron presence, the Heretics must directly confront their forces. While some may choose to send their allies to do the brunt of the fighting, ultimately the Heretics must directly investigate any Necron facilities that are uncovered. It should also be readily apparent that any operation they send deep into the tunnels is more likely to succeed if it's small. To reinforce this point, the GM can have a heavy assault on the mines noticed and repulsed in only an hour or so to create a visual object lesson. Alternatively, he can have some prisoners tell tales about how they were able to sneak into the mines and out again without being noticed and how some parts of the mines had been opened to new, black metal corridors with glowing green light.

In addition, as the assaults grow, the Heretics can quickly realize that the main Necron armies are no longer issuing from the Obelisks, but are in fact issuing from the mines themselves. Obviously, the Obelisks are too small to launch serious assaults and the Necrons have created a more direct route. The Heretics could exploit this and hopefully find a direct route back to the major Necron complexes.

Once the Heretics are aware that any major Necron complexes are accessible through the mines, they should prepare to infiltrate them and find the source of the Necrons. As the Heretics prepare to enter the complex, verify what equipment they choose to carry. If they neglect climbing gear, explosives, or other necessary supplies, request an **Ordinary (+10) Survival** or **Logic Test**. Prompt those who succeed to bring these items, as they are typical choices to carry when involved in an extended spelunking expedition.

Once the Heretics enter the mines, they immediately pick up the trail of the passage of large numbers of Necron forces (their trail is so obvious no Test is required). The trail leads west, away from the tomb complex and into the mine workings that run below the nearby mountain ranges. The Heretics can spend almost 24 hours following this trail before it peters out many kilometres away from the outermost prison facilities. Alternatively, once they realize where the trail leads (it's not hard to figure out), they can utilise one of the mine's internal rail systems to get there in two hours. At this point, have them make a **Routine (+20) Survival Test** or **Ordinary (+10) Search Test**. If they fail, they spend an hour fruitlessly searching before they may test again. If they succeed, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As you slip through the abandoned mineshafts and rough-hewn passageways, you find them eerily silent and deserted. There are no prisoners, no workers, and no Necrons. In fact, there are not even any bodies, although occasionally you come across the signs of conflict—charred pits in the wall from gauss weaponry, blackened scars from panicked las-fire, and the brown stains of long-dried blood.

You come to another half-collapsed passageway and are about to turn back when the gleam of black metal catches your eye. It appears that the collapsing roof punched through the mine-shaft floor and into some sort of room below. A few minutes of clearing the debris reveals a ragged hole in the floor with a greenish glow issuing from it.

TABLE 3-3: NECRON DEFENDERS

Roll	Defenders
<1	Tomb Stalker
1	5 Immortals
2	2D5 Necron Warriors
3-4	Magnitude 3d10 Canoptek Scarab Horde
5-7	Gauss turret
8+	No Encounter
Modifier	Situation
+2	Less than 10 days since Transition
+1	11 to 20 days since Transition
+0	21 to 30 days Transition
-1	31 days or more after Transition.
+0	Peripheral Complexes
+2	Core Complexes
+1	Per synthesis chamber or reanimation facility they've crippled or destroyed.
+2	Per Summoning Chamber Destroyed

The room they access is part of the peripheral ring of the Kalugura tomb complex.

KALUGURA'S LAYOUT

The central tomb complex of Kalugura is arranged as a series of concentric rings, forming a facility that's almost 100 kilometres across and two kilometres beneath the planet's surface. The outmost ring consists of numerous minor complexes such as storage facilities and power generation systems, connected by a series of passageways. Four main passageways spaced equidistantly around the ring lead inwards to the next ring.

The second ring consists of chambers designed to construct Necron worker constructs such as Canoptek Scarabs, Canoptek Wraiths, and Tomb Spyders. Due to the malfunctions Kalugura has suffered, these "synthesis chambers" are currently only constructing Canoptek Scarabs. There are eight intact synthesis chambers, with four others destroyed by the same tectonic disturbances that eliminated Kalugura's royalty.

The next ring contains Kalugura's primary tomb facilities. The ring of passages actually only links to the reanimation facilities at the tops of vast tombs—tombs reaching many kilometres into the depths of the world. The reanimation facilities slowly awaken the legions of Necrons and send them forth. There are ten intact reanimation facilities, with two damaged beyond repair.

On the innermost edges of this ring are the three dimensional corridor annexes that Kalugura uses to transport its forces across the entire planet. Each is a gateway to any of the smaller tombs scattered throughout Saint Annard's Penance, and broad corridors link the reanimation facilities and primary tombs to these annexes for rapid transport.

Within this ring are the most important structures of the tomb world. The tomb of royalty is one such structure, although it has been destroyed. Another is a temple-like structure where Kalugura stored a C'tan Shard, under orders from the Silent King. However, the single most vital structure

to Kalugura's continued existence, located in the exact centre of the complex, is the tomb world's energy core.

The passages interlinking this complex are guarded and defended by Tomb Stalkers, Canoptek Scarabs, and other, more esoteric defensive systems. Some of the passageways are reinforced with slabs of black, solid metal and adorned with hieroglyphs, but in other places they are simply bored through the living rock. Some sections of the tomb collapsed and, even now, the master program directs its minions in the process of rebuilding.

FINDING THEIR WAY THROUGH THE COMPLEX

The Heretics should find that moving through the complex is surprisingly simple. The chamber they initially enter has an engraved map of the tomb complex etched on the wall, explaining in relatively simple symbols the layout of the entire complex. If the Heretics succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**, they can learn exactly what the main chambers are. Even if they fail, however, they can get the basic layout and see that the centre of the complex is reachable by one of the four main passages, a passage about two kilometres away from their present position.

As they progress through the tomb, the Heretics come across additional rooms with the same etched maps of the complex. It quickly becomes apparent that the whole tomb is constructed with machine-like organisation and precision.

The interior of the tomb complex consists of dark-walled passages formed out of a black, stone-like material incredibly resistant to scratching or breaking, illuminated by the omnipresent green glow. Occasionally, the stone-like material gives way to banks of strange, incomprehensible machines of obviously alien origin, or stone covered in glowing green Necron symbols. At other points, black material gives way to caverns hewn from natural stone, the rock faces cut to a completely flat surface. The entire facility seems completely deserted, but there is always an omnipresent hum at the edge of the Heretics' hearing.

Unfortunately for the Heretics, reaching any of the passages means they must pass through at least one of the synthesis chambers.

SYNTHESIS CHAMBER (MANDATORY ENCOUNTER)

The synthesis chambers are one of the first types of facilities activated by Kalugura's central program. These relatively small complexes use Canoptek Scarabs to gather resources and synthesise additional Canoptek Scarabs. They mine raw materials from the surrounding region, extracting them at a molecular level from any resource at hand—including organic life. Once these materials are assembled, the tiny robotic forms perform the delicate work of assembling new Canoptek Scarabs, working one atom at a time to build the hardened shells and delicate internal structures.

GAUSS TURRETS

As the characters continue to press inwards from the circle inscribed by the synthesis chambers, the Necron presence becomes more noticeable. The tomb complex has a series of inbuilt defensive systems that the master program brings online to protect itself. These turrets are designed to sense the presence of organic life and destroy it. They are also capable of notifying the computational core of intruders and summoning additional reinforcements in the event of an extended battle.

These "turrets" are actually systems built into the living metal walls of specific passages. If they detect intruders, the wall flows like water, re-forming a gauss projector that fires off crackling beams of green gauss energy at any target within range.

The Gauss Turrets automatically track and fire at any target that comes within 50 metres. They take a Half Action to emerge from the wall and, if they have no targets in range, they sink back into the living metal surface. Each is armed with a twin-linked Gauss Flayer (Basic; 100m; 1d10+8 E; Pen 3; S/2/—; Clip —; Reload —; Gauss, Twin Linked), which it fires at Ballistics Skill 45. Each Structure can be treated as a creature with AP 10 on all locations, 15 Wounds, and automatically recover 1 Wound per Round unless they are destroyed. If they are destroyed, they remain inoperable until repaired by the tomb world's custodians.

These structures are immobile and are found randomly throughout the complex. The GM should use them to punctuate the Heretics' passage through the tomb complex, but not so often that his players grow frustrated with them. Once they have encountered their first gauss turret, the Heretics can make a **Difficult (–10) Awareness Test** to notice certain details about the corridor that may indicate the presence of a Gauss Turret—such as certain Necron symbols or a passageway designed to provide clear fields of fire. If they learn this, the tomb has many parallel passages, so backtracking around a Gauss Turret is not too much of a problem.

In this case, the Canoptek Scarabs from the tomb complex quickly located the mine above them and found them to be a valuable source of raw materials and minerals. The ravenous drones swiftly devoured any human structures or even humans that encountered them. In minutes, a swarm of the robotic Necrons can reduce a servitor or a complex tunnelling device into its component atoms. Metals, and many of the rare elements, are swiftly ferried back to the synthesis chamber so that they may be assembled into new Canoptek Scarabs to help shoulder the workload. They leave behind a puddle of sludge consisting of blood, guts, and offal, those materials useless to the Scarabs.

When the Heretics near the synthesis chamber, read or paraphrase the following:



Searching the passages, you find yourself in more passages of raw stone, and the humming begins to be overlaid by an intermittent buzzing sound. Heading towards the noise, you round a corner, and a wall to your side suddenly disintegrates inward. Behind it, a pale green light reflects off of more black metallic walls—a corridor that looks like it leads into a large, gloomy chamber. However, the light and the ruins distract you for a mere moment before a mass of Canoptek Scarabs descends on the collapsed ruins of the wall, devouring it in mere moments. You have but a moment before the tiny robots turn their attention away from the ore and towards the raw materials present in your bodies.

The Canoptek Scarabs (see page 368 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) are assembled into one Magnitude 50 Horde, which immediately launch an attack upon the Player Characters and any allies present. Ten Rounds into the combat, an additional Magnitude 50 Horde of Canoptek Scarabs emerges from the synthesis chamber to assist with the battle. If the party is not well-equipped to handle that number, the GM can scale the encounter down to Magnitude 30 Hordes (he should probably do so if the party consists primarily of Human Heretics).

When the characters overcome all of the Canoptek Scarabs, they may enter the synthesis chamber, a vast spherical chamber with a catwalk running through the centre. All along the walls are ripples of movement, the chamber's nano-systems constantly working with the Canoptek Scarabs to construct the minions of the tomb world. The Canoptek Scarabs that

attacked comprise all of the ones currently in this location. However, the master program is aware of any events occurring in this location and moves to eliminate any intruders and restore the synthesis chamber to full operations.

The master program can ill-afford to lose any of the synthesis chambers that represent the basis for the Necron manufacturing capability. When the humans gain control of one, the core continuously strives to recover it. Roughly every 12 hours, a Necron force consisting of 20 Necron Warriors and 5 Necron Immortals (see pages 369-370 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) descend upon the facility, attempting to eliminate all organic life. If successful, a Horde of additional Canoptek Scarabs are soon dispatched to resume manufacturing.

The Heretics can attempt to destroy the chamber with explosives, although this can prove surprisingly difficult. Any attempt to place explosives along the chamber walls sees the devices quickly dissolve as the chamber consumes them (breaking them down into component molecules). The same result occurs if they shoot the sides of the chamber (the chamber's "walls" are constructed of a sort of living metal that quickly self-repairs) and, if they are foolish enough to touch the walls directly, they take 1 damage per Round, ignoring Armour and Toughness as the walls consume their very bodies.

The only place to set explosives is along the catwalk. Since there are no obvious places to set a charge, it must be especially large, at least 30 kilograms to completely destroy the chamber. Since there are several chambers, the Heretics may not want to waste time and continue onto the central facilities.

REANIMATION FACILITY

(OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

The first structures within the circle roughly drawn by the synthesis chambers are the primary Reanimation Facilities. These are similar to the small sarcophagus the Heretics encountered earlier (see The Obelisk page 92). However, they are much larger in scale. Small sarcophagi are scattered throughout the planet. Those minor structures represent caches of a few thousand robotic Necrons. In contrast, each of the Reanimation Facilities contains more than a million dormant Necrons awaiting reanimation.

Each of these caverns represents a substantial portion of the tomb world's military resources. Consequently, all are working at capacity to reactivate their forces so that they may be used to purge the planet of its organic contamination. While many of the newly activated Necrons are immediately sent to assist at any of the active battle fronts, a significant reserve is kept to defend each of these stations. If the Heretics stumble upon a Reanimation Facility without additional reinforcements, they face odds that may soon become overwhelming.

However, the Heretics do not have to enter one of the reanimation facilities to reach the central complexes. They can choose to bypass it instead.

The approach to each Reanimation Facility should be guarded by at least two pairs of Gauss Turrets (see page 103). If they defeat or bypass those, when they approach the entry, they should discover 20 Necron Warriors and 10 Necron Immortals (see page 369 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) guarding it. These units represent an initial guard. There are more newly-activated Necrons within each facility.

When the Heretics gain entrance to one of the Reanimation Facilities, read or paraphrase the following:

The passageway's stone walls about hieroglyph-laden walls of another Necron structure. As you enter the complex, you notice that the walls are lit from within by a brighter green light that seems to seep out, flowing out into the darkness and somehow dimming the light sources you carry. The hall opens up vertically to a roof that is lost in the darkness hundreds of metres overhead. A harsh buzzing sound fills the air, which you realise comes from the movement of countless anti-gravitic fields. The cavernous chamber contains hundreds of massive pillars, which are covered in xenos iconography and support the distant ceiling. In the centre, suspended above a bottomless pit, hovers a strange, crystalline structure that pulses with a regular green glow.

The facility is a vast, 100 metre wide circular room with a crystalline structure hovering in the centre. Below the crystalline structure is a thirty metre wide pit that is apparently bottomless (and, in fact, leads to the tombs below). The pit is ringed with blank, black pillars.

The Necron Warriors wait in a perfectly formed phalanx in front of the entrance to the room. The Immortals, however, have taken positions behind the pillars, providing 10 AP cover to their legs and torsos. As soon as the Immortals see any organics, they immediately open fire. However, they do

not retreat from overwhelming attack, nor do they give chase if the attackers break contact. These units are focused on defending their current location.

If the Heretics flee after discovering the overwhelming forces, the defenders communicate with the master program to send out a hunter to eliminate the organic intrusion. This takes the form of a Tomb Stalker (see page 370 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). All Heretics must pass a **Challenging (+0) Stealth Test** to avoid being located by it, if they know they're being hunted in the first place! Otherwise, it erupts out of the one of the stone walls (gaining Surprise) and attacks the party.

The first three Reanimation Facilities that the Heretics discover are currently focused on reanimating Necron Warriors. The Immortals and Necron Warriors that serve as guards were drawn from earlier waves of reanimation. Each reactivation wave requires eight hours of time. When complete, 500 Necron Warriors step forth from the chambers, armed and fully operational. When the characters enter a chamber, determine the number of hours remaining until the next reanimation by rolling 1d5+3. They have that much time to investigate the chamber and shut it down before the force of newly awakened Necron Warriors attack.

There are 8 Reanimation Facilities that have survived the aeons. All are located within the ring of the synthesis chambers, though their storage supplies of inanimate robotic forms extends for over a kilometre into the planet's crust. Two of these are devoted to Immortals and the remaining six focus on Necron Warriors. After the first few are discovered, randomly decide which type of Necron unit is stored within each facility encountered.

Deactivating a Reanimation Facility requires a Heretic to decipher the Necron technology or the liberal use of explosives. Identifying the crucial components and manually shutting things down requires a **Very Hard (-30) Tech-Use Test**, and four hours of time. Each Degree of Success reduces the time required by one hour. Failure uses the complete four hours with no progress achieved. If a character successfully deciphers the Necron hieroglyphics prior to attempting the shutdown, the acting character receives a +20 bonus to the Tech-Use Test. If shut down in this fashion, the facility may be later reactivated either by Necron forces that recover control or by the Player Characters, should they choose to do so.

Alternatively, if the characters prefer a more permanent solution, they may use explosives to completely demolish the facility. Because of its sprawling nature and alien construction, this might require several score tonnes of demolition charges, not a practical option. However, the Heretics could utilise multiple smaller charges to try and collapse the reanimation chamber, while leaving the tomb below intact. Ten kilograms of demolition charges attached to ten pillars around the chamber should do the trick. That requires a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test**.

Characters who study the hieroglyphics uncover a map that indicates the locations of the other reanimation facilities as well as simplifying the deactivation procedure. This requires a **Very Hard (-30) Linguistics Test**. Characters who have previously interpreted Necron glyphs receive a +10 bonus to the test. However, once the first is destroyed,

the master program doubles the guard on the remaining facilities. If another is destroyed, the guard doubles again, and more and more Necrons are dispatched to search for the intruders and eliminate them. Plus, it is possible, though not likely, that the reanimation chambers can be rebuilt. It should quickly be apparent to the Heretics that trying to destroy the tomb piecemeal is not an option. They must eliminate it in one fell swoop.

THE HIBERNATION TESSERACT

(OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

Within the circle created by the reanimation facilities lie the core facilities of the tomb world. One is a temple-like structure—a hibernation tesseract. Although the Heretics may be fooled by its grandiose appearance into thinking it is vital to Kalugura's functions, it is in fact nothing more than a vast prison for one of the most dangerous beings in existence, a C'tan Shard.

After the Necrons turned on their C'tan masters and overthrew them, they shattered their essence into countless Shards and bound them so they might never take control of the Necrons again. These Shards were stored on Necron tombs across the galaxy, and one was placed on Kalugura. The master program has no intention of awakening this being, as it is a puissant and dangerous thing barely held in check by its necrodermis skin. Therefore, it is completely unguarded.

If the Heretics follow the interior passageways to the temple-like complex they've seen on the maps, read or paraphrase the following:

The smell and taste of air that has been stale for countless aeons wafts over you. You detect the sharp tang of ozone, dampness, petrochemicals, and mould. It seems as if the power may have continued to function even as some corrosion began to set in, but unlike the other Necron structures you have investigated, no lights or noises come from within. As you enter the building, you notice that the walls are covered in hieroglyphics once more. These, however, seem to have new characters interspersed with those you've seen elsewhere. As you venture deeper into the structure, the room opens up into an enormous pyramidal shape. Scanning the room with a light, you see that the four sides converge to an apex roughly 150 metres overhead. Massive steps descend from the entry into an open area, roughly 75 metres per side.

The floor is covered with crystalline obelisks, each standing more than five metres tall. They are arranged in concentric circles, each obelisk exactly one metre apart from the others. Although they are perfectly still, they seem strangely insubstantial to your eyes. The circles surround a vast central pillar that runs from floor to apex. Unlike all of the Necron architecture you've seen thus far, this seems to be constructed from a smoke-filled crystal. Even as you watch, you think you see the vague shapes within the crystal slowly shifting.

If characters attempt to translate the hieroglyphics, they may make a **Difficult (–10) Linguistics Test** or **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**. The inscriptions reveal that this is a holding chamber for fragments of the C'tan race.



The hieroglyphics reveal additional information based on the Degrees of Success scored on the test, as shown on **Table 3–4: Lore of the C'tan**.

The C'tan (see page 107) can be reactivated with the assistance of the master program, which it refuses to give. The devices cannot be destroyed with conventional explosives, as the Heretics soon realise that the crystalline obelisks and the central pillar do not fully exist in a physical sense. In fact, they are physical manifestations of the hibernation tesseract and exist in 20 dimensions at once.

Alternatively, the characters may attempt to awaken it by interfacing with the ancient xenotech. This requires five **Punishing (–50) Tech-Use Tests**, each taking 1 hour. The Heretics must gain a total of 10 Degrees of Success on these Tests. The C'tan stored within lashes out like an imprisoned beast as soon as it awakens, and the master program does not have the ability to control it.

This should prove to be a horrible mistake for the Heretics, except for one detail. Awakening the C'tan Shard may be one way to destroy, or at least greatly damage, the entire tomb complex. Even if it does not destroy the tomb before the combined Necron forces recapture or destroy it, it would provide a valuable distraction while the Heretics infiltrate the energy core.

That being said, the C'tan Shard can prove a climatic moment in the final act. Thus, the GM should ensure the Heretics understand just how foolish awaking it can be and should not worry if they try and fail. The C'tan Shard will show itself again.

CORE COMPONENTS

As the Heretics continue to work their way towards the centre of the Necron complex, the structures become increasingly dangerous. However, the additional guardians become less common. The core computer has chosen to depend upon the competency of its foot soldiers and Gauss Turrets to serve as an effective perimeter defence. After the characters overcome those defences, the Necron facilities are more vulnerable to their intrusion. In addition to these buildings being less well defended, reinforcements are also slower to respond as they must travel a greater distance to reach the Player Characters. Note, however, that if the Player Characters have attracted continued attention due to an ongoing violent advance, Necron forces do continue to trail the characters. The Necrons do not surrender their prey just because they have penetrated the perimeter of the complex.

There are six Summoning Cores arranged symmetrically within the ring of 10 Temples. A few kilometres further within that hexagonal arrangement, the Forbidden Archive lies just east of the ring's centre. The Dormant Monolith resides just west of the central point, protecting the tunnel that descends to the Energy Core far deeper within the planet's crust.

TABLE 3-4: LORE OF THE C'TAN

Degrees of Success Information Learned

1	This is the resting place of a creature referred to as a C'Tan Shard. The hieroglyphics indicate that whatever a C'Tan Shard is, it should only be awakened by the Necrons in times of the greatest peril.
2	The C'Tan Shards are fractured fragments of creatures known as the C'Tan, beings of great, almost godlike power and infinite guile and treachery. Even a Shard possesses power beyond the ken of many mortals.
3	The C'Tan once aided the Necron race in a long lost time, fighting with them to defeat the "Old Ones" and win the War in Heaven. The hieroglyphics do not indicate what the "Old Ones" or "War in Heaven" were.
4+	The C'Tan's aid in the War in Heaven was actually vile treachery that destroyed the Necron race as it once was. In response, the Necrons shattered the C'Tan and bound the remnants to their service. Even as the merest fraction of what they once were, however, a C'Tan Shard is an incredibly dangerous and puissant being.

THE DIMENSIONAL CORRIDOR ANNEX

(MANDATORY ENCOUNTER)

As the characters continue their advance through the depths of the Necron tomb world, they may hear the sounds of one or more of the massive dimensional corridor annexes before they come upon them. The level of activity in these massive structures is dependent upon the time line. If the Heretics have chosen to launch their exploration of the Necron complex soon after the planet transitioned into the Screaming Vortex, then these structures remain quiet.

However, if more than ten days have passed since the ritual was completed, then things are decidedly more challenging. At that point, the master program has brought the Summoning Cores online. By this stage, the reanimation process is well under way. Some of the smaller reanimation facilities have already completed the process of reactivating all locally-stored Necrons. The Dimensional Corridor Annexes are nothing less than massive generation facilities that control captive wormholes linking the main tomb complex with the sub-tombs scattered all over the planet. This allows the master program to dispatch its forces to staging areas all across the world, by sending them through the dimensional corridor generated by the captive wormhole. The Heretics have already encountered at least one of these sub-tombs (see page 92). Now, they find out where that mysterious gate led.

While it takes some time for the major reanimation facilities to complete the process of reactivating all units, the master program prefers to also keep the smaller facilities running at full capacity. The resistance to the reawakening process has been stronger than the master program's architects originally envisioned. Consequently, it is attempting to reanimate additional units as quickly as possible so that it might overcome the resistance forces in a timely manner. To aid in this, additional Necron sleepers are transported to the peripheral small facilities so that they may enter the queue for reanimation. All three of the tomb world's summoning cores are brought online simultaneously.

If the characters approach one prior to its activation, it appears as little more than an enormous block of black granite. In order to plumb its depths, they must first blast their way

through the doors. Treat these as though they provide cover equal to Armour Value 35 and must be destroyed per the Damaging Cover rules (see page 245 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). When the Heretics enter the complex, read or paraphrase the following aloud, making adjustments based upon whether or not the facility is active:

Stepping through the passage into the chamber beyond, you find yourself precariously balanced on a narrow balcony. Before you, a massive, slab-sided tower stretches over 100 metres above your heads into darkness and below you as far as your eyes can see. However, just above you, the tower has a cavernous hole bored through the centre. You can just make out a black orb filling the hole, surrounded by crackling green lightning. The inanimate bodies of countless Necrons drift towards the orb on invisible gravitic fields to vanish within its depths.

Although everything is transported through the chamber on gravitic fields, the Heretics can reach the tower that houses the captive wormhole via a manual system. Next to them on the platform is a flickering glass globe inset in the wall. Touching the globe activates it and information begins to scroll across the screen. A successful **Very Hard (-30) Logic Test**, **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test**, or **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** allows the character to interpret some of the symbols. Should he do so, he can extend the platform over to the tower. The platform beneath their feet ripples and flows into a new catwalk as the living metal reforms.

Once across the chasm to the tower, the Heretics find themselves only two metres below the hole. In front of them is a larger version of the globe they interacted with. Information constantly scrolls across it. If the Heretics observe this for any length of time, they should be able to identify the numeric sequence presented and associate it with sequences that they have seen on previous Necron structures. If the players do not make the connection, any Heretic who makes a successful **Routine (+20) Logic Test** realises this fact.

The characters may attempt to seize control of the dimensional corridor's directive engrams. Doing so requires overriding the Necron technology and

disconnecting it from the control of the master program. This is accomplished through an **Arduous (-40) Tech-Use Test** and four hours of time. On a Success, they may enter the hieroglyphics for a certain location on the planet, usually a sub-tomb. However, other characters can aid the character working to reprogram the system by making **Challenging (+0) Logic or Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Tests**. For every successful test, the Heretic can add +10 to his Tech-Use Test. If he fails, he must wait four more hours before trying again. However, each subsequent Test becomes one step less difficult as the Heretic familiarises himself with the system.

Luckily for the Heretics, once they succeed in overriding the dimensional corridor the system is surprisingly simple. They can call up a map of the planet, with locations highlighted that the dimensional corridor can connect to. It does not take any Test to find which locations correspond with the prison complex of Saint Annard's Penance. In fact, if they did not destroy the sub-tomb on page 92, that is one of the locations. It is a relatively simple matter

If the Summoning Core has power and the Heretics have control over the system, they can keep any successfully opened portal available indefinitely. In the event that they have control over one or more of the peripheral Necron locations, this might present a means for them to either exit and return for supplies or to gather reinforcements. However, the master program is likely to notice the loss of control over the facility in only a few short hours. At that time, it would send a substantial force of Canoptek Scarabs and Necron Warriors to investigate the reason for its loss of control.

The Heretics do have the option of leaving the dimensional corridor operating within preprogrammed parameters, then taking control when they find they have need of its transport capabilities. The master program does not take notice unless the annex deviates from programmed norms.

THE REPOSITORY OF ETERNITY (OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER)

Near the centre of the tomb complex lies the informational archive of the Kalugura tomb world, the Repository of Eternity. The earth which once surrounded this grandiose structure has been removed, leaving it at the centre of a massive cavern, hundreds of metres in length. Shortly after the master program came online, the Repository of Eternity reactivated so that the tomb world had full access to its data. When the Heretics reach the entrance to the cavern, read the following aloud:

The passageway opens up into a massive cavern, extending hundreds of metres in every dimension. The cavern is brightly lit by arcs of green-tinged electricity that descend continuously from emitters mounted at various points in the ceiling to massive receivers mounted near the centre of the cavern. Between these emitters, you see a squat rectangular structure, with a tall obelisk at each corner.

The crackle of the energy arcs is offset by the buzz of hundreds of Canoptek Scarabs travelling between the central building and dozens of cave openings along the outer walls of the caverns. As you watch the Canoptek Scarabs and the energy move in an endless procession, something else catches your eye—Tomb Stalkers slither around the perimeter created by the energy receivers. Apparently, the Necrons have chosen to closely guard this location.

Tomb Stalkers (see page 371 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) defend the Repository of Eternity. Their numbers are dependent upon the Player Characters and any allies they have present. See **Table 3-5: Repository Defenders**. If there is more than one Tomb Stalker present, then one is currently Phase Tunnelling through the earth beneath the cavern. As soon as any of the Necrons within the cavern become aware of the Heretics' presence, the Necron Warriors hang back to guard the Repository of Eternity while the Tomb Stalkers move in to attack the Player Characters. The creatures work in close concert and are merciless in their assault, concentrating all of their attacks upon a single target until it is eliminated, and then moving on to the next subject.



TABLE 3-5: REPOSITORY DEFENDERS

PCs & Allies	Tomb Stalkers	Necron Warriors
1-3	0	1d5
4-7	1	0
8-15	2	10
16-24	3	2d10
25+	4	0

The Tomb Stalkers stay within the cavern that contains the Repository of Eternity. If the Heretics flee into a passage, they do not pursue, though the Necrons continue to harry the Player Characters with weapons fire. Under these conditions, the master program dispatches a unit of 20 Necron Warriors (see page 369 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) to track down and eliminate the Heretics. However, these Necrons require at least one hour travelling from the periphery of the Necron structures to the central portion near the Repository of Eternity.

The Canoptek Scarabs that travel through the cavern and surrounding tunnels are noncombatants. If the Heretics attack them, the tiny robots do not defend themselves, but do alert the Tomb Stalkers and Necron Warriors to the presence of the Heretics. The Canoptek Scarabs are scouts, surveyors, and messengers. They carry information about ongoing surveys of the region for missing Necron structures back to the Repository of Eternity. Within the Necron structure, they are also reprogrammed with additional stratagems to try to re-establish communications with missing forces and buildings.

If the Heretics overcome the defenders and make their way to the Repository of Eternity, there are no additional exterior defences. As they get closer, perspective indicates that the squat structure is, in fact, over 20 metres in height and 60 metres in length. The obelisks are roughly 50 metres tall.

The energy transfer that illuminates the room is also used as a communications network between the Repository of Eternity and the various other Necron structures found upon the planet. In addition to transferring data, it transfers a very large amount of energy. While the Necrons are aware of the risks and avoid it, some of the characters might attempt to insert a probe into the energy flow as part of a plan to steal the data. Any character that makes physical contact with the arcing energy suffers 6D10 E for every Round they remain in contact with it.

There are two chambers within the Repository of Eternity, each one accessible through the opposite side of the structure. The larger of the two chambers is a single, narrow passageway, on either side of which are countless rows of black monolithic slabs, marching away to the horizon. In fact, the Heretics who enter quickly realise that the interior of this chamber is much larger (possibly infinitely larger) than the exterior. However, within the chamber is an unwelcome encounter. Osiskor has spent much time here since his awakening. While he is not here currently, he has left one of the tomb world's Lychguard to protect the Repository (see page 136), with orders that none should enter that do not have Osiskor's blessing. When the Heretics enter, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As you stand amongst the infinite rows of monoliths, you at first do not notice the figure far down the passageway. It stands so completely still that at first you think it is simply another part of this fantastic environment. Then it speaks, and you realize it is a Necron. More importantly, it is a type of Necron you have not encountered before.

"Who enters the Repository of Eternity?" the Necron asks. Now that you notice it, you see it is far different from the simple warriors you encountered. It is taller, larger, with gold and brass inlaid into its metallic skeletal form. In one hand, it holds a massive tower shield that hums slightly in the still air. In the other, a curved, wicked blade.

"Do you have the blessing of Osiskor to be in this place?" the Necron asks again.

The "blessing" of Osiskor is a complicated mnemonic encoding transmitted via sub-space quantum frequencies, so it is actually impossible for the Heretics to give it. No matter what they say, the Lychguard attacks them.

The point behind this encounter is to introduce the idea that there is more going on in Kalugura than just a robotic, unthinking machine. If the players quickly defeat the Lychguard, this is fine. It fights to the end, as it was ordered to do. Interestingly enough, it cannot warn Osiskor of the intrusion, as the strange hyperspace oubliette they find themselves within disallows communications in or out.

Inside this chamber is the sum of Necron knowledge that was available to the inhabitants of the fringe world. While much of it has been lost through the aeons—just as the memory engrams of the planet's inhabitants were lost—there remains a vast store of information. The characters can uncover vast stores of Necron knowledge if they choose to take the time to study within this facility. Performing their research here provides a +20 bonus to any Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Tests.

However, the Repository of Eternity also serves as the reassembly and reanimation facility for the world's Tomb Stalkers. The other chamber appears to be a larger version of the synthesis chambers encountered previously. However, as the Heretics enter, they find a half-completed Tomb Stalker seemingly growing from the rippling sides of the living metal wall. In ages past, Kalugura experimented with using living metal as part of the assembly process for the construction of the tomb world's automated drones, and this possibly unique process allows the tomb world to generate new Canoptek Scarabs and Tomb Stalkers very quickly. Unless the Heretics take action to stop the assembly process, an additional Tomb Stalker is deployed from the Repository of Eternity every six hours.

Once the Canoptek Scarabs are overcome, the characters may disable the Tomb Stalker construction process. This requires a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test** to do so without damaging the building's extensive data archives. For each Degree of Failure on this test, core Necron data components are destroyed, reducing the bonus to Forbidden Lore Tests by -5. If the Heretics suffer four or more Degrees of Failure on the Tech-Use Test, they inadvertently redirect the external energy flows into the structure itself. This causes a massive explosion as the entire facility is eliminated. Any characters within the structure suffer 5D10 E damage.

AT THE CORE

"If you doubt the power of Chaos, dare to confront the mightiest of your foes directly. Only then can a follower of the ruinous powers know the strength of their blessings."

— Archdeacon Gabriel Huang of the Holy Oath

Now, the Heretics have finally reached the heart of Kalugura's tombs. As they explored the tomb complex, they should have realised how extensive the Necron threat is. To defeat it, they must strike a single, decisive blow directly at its heart. Fortunately for them, they have the opportunity to do just that. Should they succeed, they can finally claim the prize they've worked so hard to grasp.

Alternatively, the Heretics could fail miserably. The Necron master program is a potent foe with the capacity to regenerate from nearly any attack. It also has millions of battle-ready Necrons that it can commit to destroying the Heretics. However, and far more importantly, to reach the energy core of Kalugura, the Heretics must confront the Cryptek Osiskor. Unlike the unthinking and mechanical master program, Osiskor is an intelligent and capable adversary. Once he realises what the Heretics intend, he stops at nothing to foil their plans. In order to succeed, they must plan their movements carefully and take advantage of every resource at their disposal. Otherwise, the scenario could conclude in decidedly bloody failure.

ONGOING ASSAULT

While the Heretics prepare their final assault on the Necron Energy Core, events continue on the surface of the world that concern them as well. Before discussing the assault on the Energy Core itself, this section deals briefly with the ongoing war on the surface.

As the Necron force continues to grow in size, their forces launch continuous attacks against the beleaguered human defenders. In order for the Heretics to continue their advance within the Necron complex, these battles are essential. Without that distraction, the master program has no reason to continue sending out most of its forces in assaults. If the Necron forces triumph, the Heretics not only lose their entire reason for being on the planet in the first place (as the manufacturums and prison complex are destroyed), they must now try and fight their way through the entire Necron army as it returns to the tomb complex. This certainly represents an insurmountable obstacle for the Heretics.

At the same time, those engaged in battle with the Necrons might well be devoted allies of the Heretics. Each soul lost to the Necrons is one that could have been sacrificed for a ritual or used as a warrior in a Black Crusade against the Imperium of Man. This factor should motivate the Heretics to work quickly to complete their task so that their resources may be preserved. Otherwise, they might find that all their efforts were for naught. Their conquest of the world might leave them with little to show for their efforts if all of the humans were slain and the Necron forces victorious.

The Heretics may need to work with their allied factions to develop techniques to keep the Necrons occupied in combat while minimising losses. The different approaches to sustain such a tactic are broad, but the duration on any of them are finite. To represent the effectiveness of any plans, a Player Character may make an **Ordinary (+10) Common Lore (War) Test** to represent the planning. Every Degree of Success on this test grants an allied faction a tactic that can effectively distract the Necron forces for six hours, during which time they suffer acceptable losses.

Once an appropriate plan is designed, the character may then make an appropriate **Hard (-20) Interaction Skill Test** to persuade their ally to implement it. The skill used is subject to the player's discretion. For characters who maintain an adversarial relationship, this might best be a Command or Intimidate Test.

Alternatively, if the relationship with the NPCs is based upon a business or personal understanding, then Deceive or Charm could be more appropriate. This test is further modified by the Disposition (see page 276 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) of the ally toward the acting Heretic. Every Degree of Success on this test insures that the ally continues the plan as designed for six hours. After that time has elapsed, at the Game Master's discretion, the allied NPC might choose to stop following the plan and withdraw his forces. This could have serious repercussions for the Player Characters within the Necron complex, as a portion of the Necrons troops might be recalled for defensive responsibilities.

Note, this does not count towards the ultimate time that the Heretics' allies can hold out (see page 96). This simply represents how long their allies can maintain a diversionary assault that preserves their forces as well as possible.

REINFORCEMENTS

Some Heretics may have powerful allies either among the prison world's inhabitants or that they have brought to the planet. Some of these forces might be deployed to specifically keep the Necrons occupied far from the Energy Core, but many Player Characters might prefer to keep their associates close at hand during such a climactic battle. This is entirely subject to Game Master discretion.

Some NPCs—even those with deep loyalty to the Heretics—may be unwilling to travel through the mines. These structures are incredibly unsafe and not designed for large groups. Trying to manoeuvre a force of any size through the tunnels is challenging, increasingly so if the individual soldiers are untrained in working below the planet's surface.



The tunnels are also the home to the Necron forces. If a military element becomes separated from the Heretics, it might come under attack by a patrolling Necron unit.

Another issue could be if the characters have a lengthy chain of reinforcements that stretches through the passages—many of which are only barely wide enough for two to walk abreast. Necron units might descend upon the column from any of the countless side passages. In these narrow confines, the hardier Necron troopers could essentially fight a series of small engagements where their physical stamina could offset any ability the human troops might have to concentrate fire against them. While such an Encounter could take some time to resolve, the odds strongly favour the Necrons in such an engagement.

The simplest way to call in reinforcements is using the dimensional corridor. This requires that those locations be online and under the control of the Heretics. Further, to use them for this purpose, some of the allied forces must be capable of operating the platforms, as well as holding the locations against Necrons that might attempt to retake control of the structures.

Alternatively, the Heretics might choose to commit their allies to the defence of the manufacturums and other structures within the prison complex. If some of these allies are from off-world locations, such aid might help in establishing a rapport between their established minions and those newly recruited from the prison world. Similarly, these allied forces might also be better suited to defending the planet's holdings against the Necron attackers than the many of the poorly equipped planetary factions. This could ultimately result in the Heretics gaining control of a world much more capable of providing a power base for their future endeavours.

DORMANT MONOLITH (MANDATORY ENCOUNTER)

When the characters reach the centre point of the Necron complex, they discover an inactive Necron Monolith. This is a massive, obelisk-shaped vehicle often used by the Necrons to aid in planetary invasions. It can hover above the ground using arcane sciences, and in the centre of the vehicle is a captive wormhole similar to the ones used by Kalugura's dimensional corridor annexes. This captive wormhole can be used to travel vast distances quickly or can be used to suck opponents into a temporal vortex from which there is no escape. This massive vehicle remains partly buried beneath the rock of the planet, within a cavern that is more than 50 metres in diameter and 20 metres in height.

In order to protect the energy core, Kalugura's builders left no physical means of reaching it from the rest of the tomb complex. It is another three kilometres beneath the surface, directly below the main tomb complex. Communications were only enabled via quantum resonance systems so sophisticated they could not be blocked or jammed and undetectable by any human sciences.

However, this proved problematic to Osiskor when he needed to reprogram the master program and take control. He needed physical access to the central program. He also

DIGGING DOWN

If the characters decide to forego a battle through the cavern and into the dormant Monolith, they may choose to use excavation equipment to reach the shaft leading down to the Energy Core. In such a situation, they are still likely to Encounter a Tomb Stalker, which is Phase Tunnelling in the region. Mining equipment is so loud that it automatically detects the Heretics' activity. In such a situation, once the Tomb Stalker Encounters the Heretics, other Necron units engage them in the passage that descends from the dormant Monolith.

Needless to say, this option is in no way optimal for the Heretics, as boring a shaft all the way to the energy core takes a great deal of time (likely at least five days of work) and requires incredibly specialized equipment. This equipment can be procured from the prison's mines, but transporting it into the tomb complex and using it while protecting it from the inevitable Necron counter-offensives would be incredibly difficult.

could not use the large captive wormholes in the dimensional corridor annexes, as they were tied to specific locations on the planet. Therefore, after awakening the Lychguard and enlisting them to his cause, he began the laborious process of reactivating one of the tomb world's Monoliths, with the intention of using its smaller captive wormhole to link a dimensional corridor directly to the energy core.

He has just completed his task when the Heretics arrive. Osiskor (see page 137) and his Lychguard (see page 136) stand next to the Monolith's gate when the Heretics enter the chamber. There should be one Lychguard for every two human characters present and an additional Lychguard for each Chaos Space Marine.

Osiskor and the Lychguard are not expecting the Heretics, though taking them by surprise requires an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Stealth** versus **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** by everyone in the warband. Immediately upon the commencement of the battle, the Lychguard close ranks around Osiskor, protecting them with their shields. They advance in a tight phalanx towards the Heretics. As soon as they close to charge range, they break and engage the Heretics in melee combat. If possible, two Lychguard fight together to bring down one Chaos Space Marine and, once these criteria are met, the remainder engage the Heretics as evenly as possible. Osiskor stands back and engages him with his arcane super-science.

Unlike the other Necrons the Heretics fought, Osiskor is not a silent automaton. He shouts at the Heretics angrily, his voice echoing hollowly from his expressionless metal face. "How dare you puny creatures interfere with my work!" "I will see Kalugura resurrected to its former glory!" and "Your corrupted presence disgusts me" are all lines he might utter.

The Necrons work together to try to cut down the Heretics as quickly as possible. With one exception, they do not flee, instead fighting to the last. Unfortunately for Osiskor, he does not have access to the tomb world's limitless forces and cannot call on reinforcements. Should Osiskor lose his last wound,

however, he activates a one-time fail-safe device and is sucked into his personal hyperspace oubliette. There he can attempt to recover from his injuries, and plan his last ditch moves.

Within the open space of the cavern, with little cover available, the characters may be overwhelmed by the Necrons as they launch a simultaneous combination of potent melee and ranged attacks. This should be an extremely challenging combat that thoroughly tests the stamina and determination of the Heretics. Some may decide that explosives or other area effect weapons are their best approach, but even this strategy may be restricted once melee combat begins.

Once the Heretics defeat Osiskor and his Lychguard, they find themselves with an inactive Monolith. Luckily for them, however, Osiskor was almost finished activating it when the Heretics arrive. Certain slabs of armour are removed, exposing some of the inner workings and controls. Any of the Heretics who have successfully interacted with Necron technology previously do not need to Test to activate the Monolith's systems, and quickly figure out what Osiskor was attempting to do. Anyone else should make a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use or Logic Test** or **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** to discover this.

Once they activate the Monolith, it is a simple matter to determine Osiskor's coordinates and activate the dimensional corridor and step through.

DOWN THE SHAFT (MANDATORY ENCOUNTER)

Unfortunately for the Heretics, the corridor opens into the top of a shaft leading to the energy core. This was no problem for Osiskor or any other Necrons, as they could interface with the prevalent gravitic fields to float down the shaft. However, the Heretics do not have the same luxury. When the first Heretic steps through, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You step through the portal into nothingness. There is a blinding flash of green light, then you suddenly find yourself falling. You flail wildly and your desperate hands grasp the edge of a platform. After you heave yourself onto it, you look down. The platform is midway up a large, circular shaft. The shaft appears bottomless. If it weren't for the energy that constantly arcs behind the cavern walls, you might think that it led to the darkest pits of the planet's core. However, the energy is often blinding and suggests that the shaft must have a terminus. As the Necrons defended it so fiercely, there must be something important at the bottom. Perhaps it contains the energy source that animates the Necrons, or maybe the more potent members of the Necron race dwell within, preparing to seize control of the attack against the planet's remaining human defenders.

The wormhole remains open as the Heretics descend, providing a tenuous link back to safety. The climb is a direct vertical slog. If the Player Characters have some means of vision enhancement along with a means to compensate for the passage's irregular lighting they may see the bottom from the very top of the passage. However, it is a very long way down. The Heretics must be capable climbers and have the necessary equipment to make the descent; otherwise their attempt might be a death sentence. At terminal velocity, the fall to the bottom takes more than 30 seconds, which could be ample time for a Heretic to try to save himself.

The first challenge that the characters might face in their effort to descend the passage is simply assembling two kilometres worth of rope and the necessary climbing harnesses. Luckily, the shaft has periodic platforms and protrusions, making a climb possible. Climbing down the shaft requires a **Challenging (+0) Athletics Test**. If the Heretics have proper climbing gear, the test becomes **Routine (+20)**, instead. If they fail the Test, they fall a distance equal to 20 times their Degrees of Failure in metres (a worse failure means they fell from a higher point in their climb).

Some Heretics might wish to return to the surface to assemble the appropriate gear. Unless they leave forces behind that are capable of defending the route to the dormant Monolith, Necron reinforcements are likely to retake the facility in their absence. Alternatively, the characters might use the transit system located within the Summoning Cores to travel between the central and peripheral portions of the

complex. If appropriate, the Game Master is encouraged to assemble a Necron force comparable to the prior defenders, with slight increases in force composition to adapt to whatever strategy the Player Characters used to triumph in the previous battle.

Due to the hundreds of metres that the characters are likely to fall, the damage suffered (see page 257 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) can become astronomical. However, the distance is such that the characters have two Rounds to recover from their fall. This requires either a **Hard (-20) Athletics Test**, the intervention of an ally, or the application of some special ability. If they succeed, they catch themselves at the last moment or manage to grab something further down.

Some Player Characters may have special abilities that enable them to make the descent without incident. Possibilities include implants (such as Maglev Coils) that can interact with the tunnel's magnetic field, wings, a jump pack, or a Disc of Tzeentch. If the Heretics have such devices, do not make them test to climb down the shaft, instead reward their forward thinking or special status by having them reach the bottom without incident.

THE ANCIENT CORE (MANDATORY ENCOUNTER)

The bottom of the shaft opens up into an enormous, brightly lit cavern. When the characters reach the bottom, read or paraphrase the following:

Directly below the shaft opening is a platform attached to a long catwalk. The catwalk is attached by braided metallic posts descending from the ceiling of an enormous open cavern. The cavern extends as far as the eye can see in every direction. The floor—over 100 metres below the catwalk—is covered in sand. Thousands of massive tesla flux emitters, each more than 20 metres in height and at least three metres in diameter—extend from the floor and roof of the cavern, like stalactites. White and green lightning flashes constantly between them, leaving the entire cavern brightly lit.

The catwalk descends directly towards the apex of a massive step pyramid, more than 80 metres in height. The pyramid is assembled from a flat black stone, which seems to absorb all of the light from the flashes of energy. Golden hieroglyphics are carved into much of the structure's surface. Some portions of the structure intermittently glow with a white-green pulse. You are uncertain if the glow comes from within the structure or is merely a reflection of the constant flashes of energy. Even from here, you can see an opening at the pyramid's top where the catwalk ends.

The catwalk represents the last line of defence outside of the Energy Core. The platform directly beneath the tunnel that the Heretics descended is round and slightly broader than the tunnel opening. It is edged by a waist-high railing made of the same blackened metal as the platform, catwalks, and the posts that descend from the cavern ceiling. The catwalk that leads to the pyramid extends 75 metres from the platform to the opening atop that structure.

Determine the order that the characters are treading upon the catwalk before they leave the platform. When all of the

Heretics have left the platform and stepped onto the catwalk leading towards the pyramid, have each Player Character make a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test**. Alternatively, if the characters split up, make this same Test when the lead character is 10 metres from the end of the catwalk nearest the entrance to the Energy Core. Characters who Succeed at the Test hear a soft click. This gives them a half action before the localised gravity reverses and attempts to hurl the Heretics into the ceiling.

All characters must pass a **Hard (-20) Athletics Test** or lose their grip and be hurled towards the ceiling, a height of 20 metres. Once they hit the ceiling, the gravity reverts to normal, and all characters hurled up the shaft must attempt to grab hold of something or suffer falling damage from a height of 20 metres (see page 257 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Grabbing hold requires a **Difficult (-10) Athletics Test**. Characters who gain three or more Degrees of Success may choose to also grab one of their companions to prevent them from falling.

Every time the characters attempt to walk along the catwalk, the trap reactivates. One solution is to carefully maintain their grip as they climb along the walkway's railings, pulling against the gravitic force. After the descent from the Monolith, the climb along the trapped walkway is comparatively simple, once they know to expect it. If the characters still have their climbing harnesses and additional rope, the trip to the Energy Core requires a single **Routine (+20) Athletics Test**. Those without climbing gear suffer a -20 circumstance penalty to the test. Those who suffer three or more Degrees of Failure lose their grip and begin to fall upwards as described previously.

Alternatively, the Heretics may attempt to descend into the field of flux emitters below. This is possible, but there is no access point into the step pyramid from the field, and at least one Heretic must still brave the walkway to rig a line so his companions may climb up.

Although the Heretics are likely to be extremely busy, some of them may notice that the corner of the step pyramid furthest from their entrance is partially collapsed. Some of the cavern caved in, crushing parts of the pyramid. This is actually part of the seismic disturbance that destroyed Kalugura's ruling elite, though there is no reason why the Heretics would know this at this stage.

From The Top

When the Heretics reach the entrance atop the step pyramid, have each make a **Routine (+10) Awareness Test**. Those who Succeed notice that there is a very faint glimmer of an energy field blocking the doorway. Anyone who makes contact with it immediately suffers 2D10 + 5 E damage. Deactivating the field so that the players may safely enter the pyramid requires a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test**. Alternatively, with a running start, the characters can force their way through the field, taking the damage. If any characters suffer three or more Degrees of Failure on the Tech-Use Test, they trigger a massive energy arc from the field, dealing 2D10+5 E damage to everyone within 5 metres. It is also possible to blow their way into the pyramid. This requires a properly set up demolition kit with at least 2 kg of explosives, or four placed frag grenades. Make a **Routine (+20) Tech-Use**

Test, following the aforementioned rules for success and failure (except with the added caveat that success means the field is shut off permanently).

THE INNER SANCTUM

Once the characters disarm, detonate, or bypass the trapped doorway, they may enter the top of the Energy Core. When they do so, read or paraphrase the following:

The interior of the Energy Core is a sharp contrast to the artistry of its exterior. The building's interior architecture seems to be little more than a haphazardly assembled series of mechanical and electronic systems, countless coiled wires, beams, pipes, and strange devices of unknown function, all connected by countless platforms and catwalks and crackling with flickers of green energy.. Hundreds of kilometres of cables—singly and in bundles—are draped at random throughout the structure. Enormous piles of thousands of cloudy, broken, black crystals occupy much of the interior. Fragments of these broken crystals litter the floor and crumble underfoot.

As you work your way to the centre of the structure, you find a neatly-ordered grouping of several thousand crystals glows with a pale green light. Adjacent to these, a dais emerges from the floor of the building. Atop the dais rests a massive golden sarcophagus, which shimmers in the brackish light of the crystals. However, the sarcophagus is partially destroyed, its top crushed in where a massive metal slab came crashing down atop it.

Any of the Heretics may make a **Hard (–20) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**. Those who succeed recognise

the crystalline structures as Necron data storage devices. Based upon their appearance, it is immediately clear that the majority of these were badly damaged in some ancient event. The ones which glow green are the only ones still active. They represent less than five percent of the crystals within the Energy Core.

In addition, any Heretics who either gain two Degrees of Success on their Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test or have passed a Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test in the past are able to interpret the Necron symbols in the vicinity to learn that the sarcophagus contained the Overlord Hasist, glorious ruler of Kalugura. Anyone who looks within the sarcophagus, however, sees that Overlord Hasist met a swift end while he slept, his metal body no protection from the crushing blow that annihilated his head and torso.

Upon this discovery, the Heretics soon realise that the tomb is working on some sort of automation. There is nothing to reason with and nothing to deal with. Kalugura will continue attacking the Heretics until they are destroyed. It also should be apparent (and the GM should explain it to the players through information their characters learn if they don't come to the realisation themselves) that Osiskor is attempting to regain control of the tomb world.

All that is left now is to figure out how to eliminate the threat.

DETONATING THE ENERGY CORE

The Heretics may decide that their best option is to try and destroy the energy core with massive amounts of explosives. Any character may make an **Easy (+30) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** to realise that the facility would recover from any

reasonable application of explosives. Consequently, the viable solution is to use an unreasonable amount of explosives.

There are three suggested ways to eliminate the energy core and, hopefully, the entire tomb. Of course, if the players invent another, particularly creative method that seems at all reasonable, the GM should reward them for their creativity and work with them to bring it about.

- **Imperial explosives or an equivalent:** The first option is to use a massive amount of conventional explosives, strategically places around the step pyramid and the tesla flux emitters outside. Though tricky, if placed correctly, this could set up a chain reaction to destroy the facility.
- **Rare or esoteric explosives, such as atomics, vortex weaponry, or a cyclonic torpedo warhead:** This option is only available if the Heretics have these devices for some reason in the first place. If they do, however, a single one of these doomsday devices should be sufficient if they can get it into the energy core in the first place.
- **Creative use of captive wormholes:** Although the most difficult option of the three, the captive wormholes at the heart of the dimensional corridor annexes present a tremendous and highly dangerous source of power. If the Heretics can unleash them, they could consume the entire tomb in a ravaging maelstrom of gravitic energies.

Ultimately, there are only two possible outcomes from using explosives in the Energy Core. The first possibility is that the detonation is too small, and the master program regenerates from the damage within a few hours. The alternative is that the explosion is large enough to set off a massive chain reaction within the cavern. Such a chain reaction collapses most of the tomb, burying the remains of the Necron structure beneath thousands of tons of unstable rubble.

In order to produce such a detonation, the characters must either obtain or construct an appropriate explosive. There are no ready-made bombs of this magnitude present as part of the prison. The characters could either manufacture the explosives from prison resources (see page 96), gain one from an off-world contact (see page 99), or cobble one together using the abundant xenotech.

If using Imperial equipment, the characters must generate enough explosives to produce the equivalent of 4,000d10 damage (the equivalent of 4,000 kilograms of demolition charges or roughly 700 melta bombs). Placing these requires a **Routine (+20) Tech-Use Test**. If they do not have appropriate climbing gear on hand, they suffer a -20 penalty to this test. Getting such a massive quantity of explosives into place, however, could prove ridiculously difficult.

Any Heretic with the Tech-Use Skill trained, however, knows that they can use some of the systems in the energy core to help fuel the detonation. The power contained within the tesla flux emitters is obvious and, if that can be freed by the proper application of high explosives, then it should destroy the core and the entire complex. This requires only 400 kilograms of demolition charges or 70 melta bombs, each placed next to a tesla flux emitters. The Test to do so, however, does change to **Challenging (+0)** to represent the skill level involved.



Even in this case, procuring the necessary explosives can likely prove difficult. However, the Heretics can use the wormhole within the dormant Monolith to open a brief dimensional corridor to the prison facilities—long enough to procure explosives and bring it into the heart of the tomb complex. Otherwise, they must make the long trek through the mines on foot or using the unreliable mine transit system.

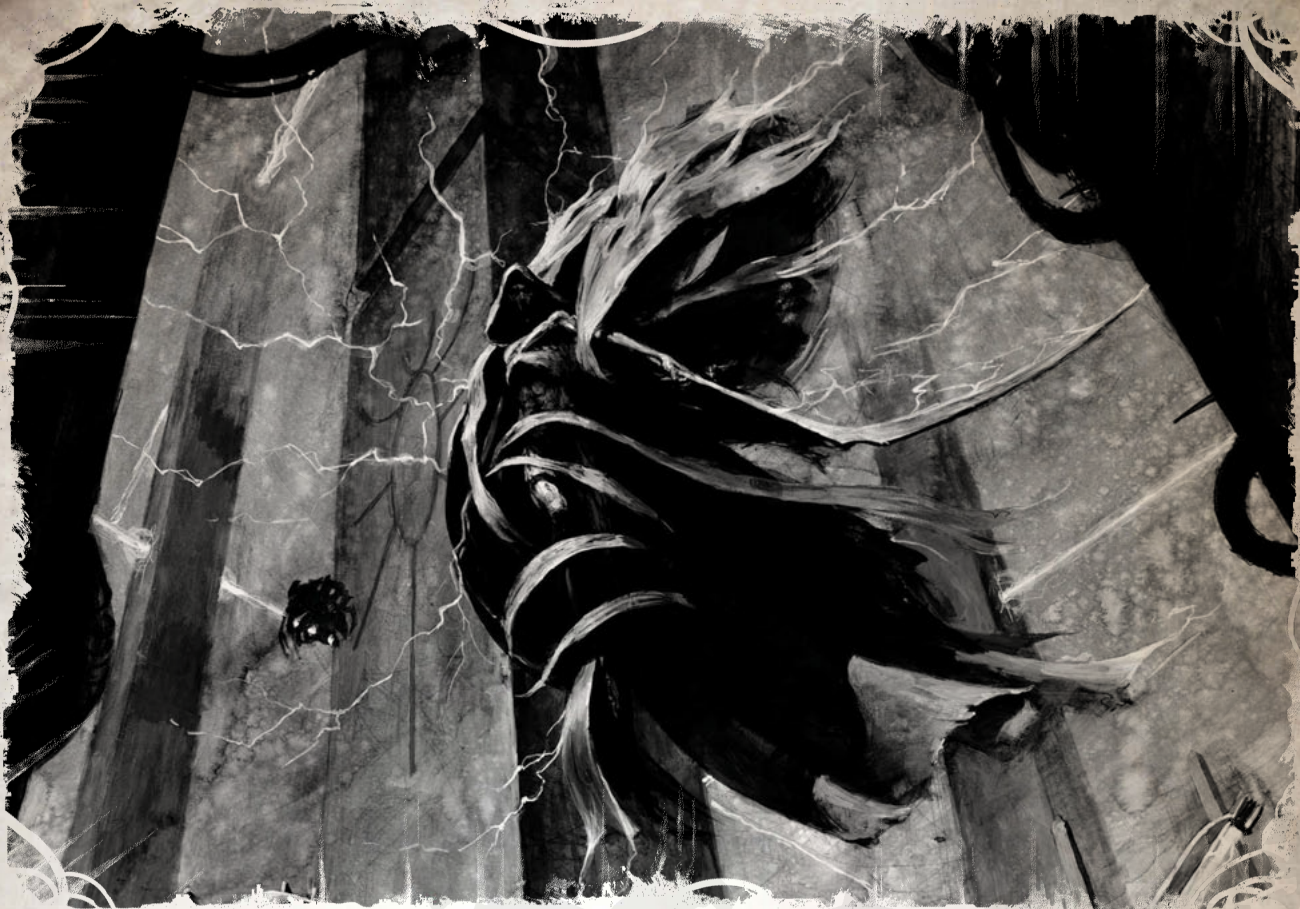
If using off-world resources, the equivalent of a warship's Torpedo (Availability Rare) is sufficient. Placing this requires no Tech-Use Test. However, transporting the enormous device through the tunnel to the Energy Core produces its own set of challenges. The Heretics may have to make creative use of the monolith's captive wormhole generator to teleport such an item from its resting place into the core.

The final option is to destroy the tomb complex using the captive wormholes. This could be through simply unbinding the wormholes and allowing them to consume the complex, although unleashing such energies is dangerous enough that it could destroy the entire planet. Other, more creative options involve opening the wormholes into the furnace heart of Saint Annard's Pennance and obliterating the complex in a tide of magma, exposing the energy core to the open void, or even opening a wormhole into a nearby star.

All this requires an **Arduous (-40) Tech-Use Test**. However, every other character can add a +10 bonus to this test by making a **Difficult (-10) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**. This test suffers an additional -10 penalty if it is the first time the character has attempted to decipher the alien hieroglyphics.

On a Failure, the blast is poorly detonated and does not trigger the necessary chain reaction. The characters must reconstruct the necessary explosives in order to destroy the Energy Core. Five or more Degrees of Failure on the test to place explosives results in a premature detonation. Due to the severity of the blast, the characters have two minutes to try to escape it. Unless they have access to a teleportation system, this is invariably lethal to characters that cannot get away from the epicentre.

However, before the Heretics can finish their plans to destroy the tomb of Kalugura, they must contend with Osiskor one final time.



THE SECOND COMING

"I have waited aeons for my chance to rule this world, as is my right, and I will. Not. Be. Denied!"

—Osiskor, Cryptek of Kalugura

Unbeknownst to the Heretics, after his seeming defeat, the much battered Cryptek Osiskor fled to his hyperspace oubliette to recover his wounds and seek his revenge. Gravely wounded and maddened beyond all reason, his personal Lychguard destroyed at the hands of the Heretics, his control over the Master Program lost, and his cunning plans crumbling around him, he makes one last desperate gambit. Assuming that the Heretics have not unleashed the C'tan Shard, Osiskor travels to the Hibernation Tesseract and unleashes the C'tan. One of the Cryptek's arcane super science devices is a binding mechanism that allows him to temporarily direct the C'tan's actions—long enough, he hopes, to defeat the Heretics and take command once again of the master program. Otherwise, only the now-dead Overlord Hasist possesses the force of will necessary to control the C'tan Shard.

During this time, the Heretics are busy setting their explosive charges and readying the ziggurat for its final destruction, blissfully unaware that the enemy they thought vanquished is bringing nothing less than a god to stop them in their endeavours. When their delicate and dangerous work

is done, read the following passage aloud to the players once they step from the ziggurat:

You step blinking into the actinic, flickering light of the tesla flux emitter chamber and immediately sense a change in the atmosphere. Your ears pop as the air pressure increases; there is a deep, insistent thrumming as if a thousand plasma generators were straining under a heavy load, and your mouths fill with the taste of iron.

Suddenly, with horrible grace, a living nightmare, the C'tan shard, god of the ancient Necrontyr, descends through the shaft on nearly visible gravitic waves wreathed in crackling, skittering lines of green-white energy. At its heels, the battered but undefeated Osiskor frets around it like a nervous dog heeling to its master. The tesla flux emitters flare in unison as the C'tan shard floats down among them temporarily dazzling you, and blue-white fingers of energy reach out as if in supplication to caress its gaunt and nightmarish form. It floats there in deadly contemplation, turns its head this way and that, then fixes its ancient gaze on you. It raises its arms, each of you hears a booming voice in your head say "I am with you," and in an instant it unleashes a massive, powerful thunderbolt from its outstretched hands. As the rolling thunder of the energy discharge dies away, you can hear Osiskor's maddened cackling in the distance.

The C'tan Shard makes its presence known as the Heretics emerge from the step ziggurat, floating down through the shaft and across the field of tesla flux emitters. Osiskor is in tow, just maintaining control of the ancient god-being via his binding mechanism. The C'tan shard will start combat floating above the tesla flux emitters at Medium Range from the Heretics. It opens

with its Transdimensional Thunderbolt attack in an attempt to neutralize the Heretics' wargear and scatter the group about the face of the ziggurat. Any Heretics who attempt to close to melee range during this first onslaught via jump packs or other flying or hovering powers are immediately targeted for a Thunderbolt and the C'tan Shard glides gracefully out of harm's way. After a few salvos of Thunderbolts, wherein it concentrates its attacks on the most powerful Heretics in the group such as Chaos Space Marines and any foolish enough to close with it, it then closes to melee and attacks with its massive, Necrodermis encased fists.

Fighting the C'tan shard in melee is a daunting task. It towers over the Heretics, floating, twisting, and dodging in an incredibly disconcerting fashion. Its nature and otherworldly form, encased in powerful living metal and wreathed with arcane energies begotten from the ancient super-sciences of the Necrons, are unsettling to even the most hardened Renegade or Chaos Space Marine. Its touch is death to both man and machine, as it can kill with a blow or crumble the strongest metals and composites to dust with even the lightest brush of its fingers.

In melee, the C'tan Shard grapples Chaos Space Marines in an attempt to neutralize their power armour and weapons, and tends to swat at and bat aside lesser enemies. For unknowable reasons, it has a particular seething hatred for Hereteks, and will concentrate many of its most powerful attacks on these players.

During the chaos of the beginning of combat, astute Heretics have the opportunity to notice something very telling about the relationship between the C'tan Shard and Osiskor. The first time the C'tan Shard takes wounding damage, have each Heretic make a **Challenging (+0) Perception Test**. If any pass, read the following passage aloud:

Your blow strikes home, striking sparks and shards of Necrodermis from the C'tan Shard's living metal hide. It pauses for a fleeting moment and howls, not in pain, but more in anger or indignation. It turns its attention away from you momentarily and glides toward Osiskor. The Cryptek shouts something unintelligible at the C'tan Shard and frantically manipulates the buttons and dials on the device it holds in its hands.

Slowly, as if with extreme force of will, the C'tan Shard turns back to you. Before it resumes its task, you notice that its motions are jerky, its hands are twitching, and its typically implacable face is contorted in a grimace of seething, malevolent rage. Osiskor shouts again, the C'tan Shard composes itself and presses its attack.

It becomes quickly obvious to the Heretics that Osiskor has only the merest control over the C'tan Shard thanks to his super-science binding mechanism. While the binding mechanism is powerful, it is not nearly powerful enough to keep the C'tan Shard fully in check, and in his desperate gamble to regain control of the master program and have his revenge on the Heretics, he released a monster that he can barely control. Once the Heretics cause damage to the C'tan Shard, it becomes enraged and attempts to wrest control from Osiskor. Throughout the combat, whenever the C'tan Shard takes damage, it attempts to break free from Osiskor's control while the Cryptek struggles to keep control via the binding mechanism.

To reflect this monumental battle, the Game Master should make an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Tech-Use** versus **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**. If Osiskor succeeds on his Tech-Use Test, he retains control over the C'tan Shard and it presses its attack. If Osiskor maintains control of the C'tan Shard for the duration of the combat, everything proceeds along the previously described lines. They struggle for control, the C'tan Shard does its best to destroy the Heretics, and Osiskor hovers in the background calling the shots and taunting the Heretics. Eventually, if the C'tan Shard is destroyed Osiskor escapes once again to his Hyperspace Oubliette and will eventually be destroyed in the explosion set off by the Heretics. If The C'tan Shard should ever succeed on its Willpower Test and beat Osiskor's Tech-Use Test however, which it surely will eventually, read the following passage aloud.

Once more the C'tan Shard turns on Osiskor and bellows in rage. Again, the Cryptek frantically manipulates his binding mechanism, but this time something has gone dreadfully wrong. The device explodes in Osiskor's face in a shower of sparks, crackling energy, and green flames as if it were a Photon Flash Grenade.

The Cryptek howls in pain and despair and clutches his face as the charred remains of his device rain down around him. The C'tan Shard, now free from the binding mechanism, raises its arms as if in victory and howls, the power and rage in its otherworldly voice shattering the tesla flux emitters directly around it and sending gouts of flame and crackling energy shooting roiling about the chamber. In a flurry of robes and static discharges, it rushes Osiskor.

The Cryptek raises his ruined, smoking, sparking face and opens his arms as if to embrace the oncoming Shard. As you watch amazed, the C'tan shard tears Osiskor limb from limb as if he were no more than a child's toy, his body coming apart in a shower of living metal, bits of arcane machinery, and mysterious black fluids. The C'tan Shard tosses some of the pieces of Osiskor's dismembered form to the ground and consumes others in a way that turns even your hardened stomachs. As quickly as it started, the gruesome scene comes to an end. The C'tan Shard turns toward you, its torso and arms dripping with Osiskor's life's blood and still clutching one of the Cryptek's arms like a club, it screams in rage and comes for you once more.

Now, without the guidance of Osiskor and his binding device, the C'tan Shard is completely mad. It viciously attacks anything in its reach with no consideration for its own safety. At this point in the combat, the Shard engages only in melee, either not caring to use its Transdimensional Thunderbolt or completely forgetting

THIS ISN'T ABOUT YOU

It becomes quickly and clearly obvious to the Heretics that while they are fighting desperately for their lives against the C'Tan Shard they are also spectators to a completely different and monumental struggle in which they have little influence. Once they realize what is going on, they can take steps to assist either the C'Tan Shard or Osiskor if they should so choose. Of course, choosing sides in this conflict is a losing proposition, as no matter who comes out the winner, the Heretics always come out the losers.

A CHANGE OF PLANS

If the C'Tan Shard was already awakened and destroyed by the Heretics, the GM can still have final battle by having Osiskor arrive with a Magnitude 100 Horde of Canoptek Scarabs. Alternatively, the climax can be the Heretics fleeing the core just before it explodes and Osiskor attacking them at the last minute to try and stop them.

the fact that it can do so. It lashes out with fists and Osiskor's arm (treat as an Improvised Weapon (1d10+17 I; Unbalanced)) and continues to grapple, toss, and bat away anything or anyone that comes near. The Heretics need to make short work of the C'tan shard whether or not it is under control of Osiskor, since they are sitting on tonnes of explosives timed to detonate in short order. Once the C'tan Shard is dealt with and Osiskor is either dead or fled to his Oubliette again, the first of the explosives detonates, starting the chain reaction that the Heretics hope will destroy the Necron complex forever.

ESCAPING THE DESTRUCTION

This begins the mad rush to escape the blast and return to the surface before the Heretics are buried under countless tonnes of stone and crumbled Necron architecture. As the explosions begin, read the following passage aloud to the Heretics.

With a last scream of indignant dismay, the light goes out of the C'tan Shard's eyes and it crumples like a deflating bladder. You have just enough time to draw a shuddering breath and wipe the blood and sweat from your eyes before a massive explosion rocks the chamber. One whole side of the ziggurat dissolves in a gout of fire and stone and the entire structure lists drunkenly, throwing you to your knees.

This explosion is followed quickly by another, and another, as the charges you set start their chain reaction. The room is now constantly shaking, as if in the grips of an earthquake. The tesla flux emitters on the ground explode one by one, releasing a rippling storm of writhing green energy, and huge chunks of stone and spitting tesla emitters fall from the chamber's ceiling like deadly rain. The time has come for you to leave, and quickly, before you are entombed here in the bowels of this world.

Once the chain reaction begins in the power core, escaping the crumbling Necron tomb is a daunting task indeed. They are hundreds of kilometres beneath the surface of the planet, at the bottom of a nearly un-climbable shaft in the midst of a catastrophic explosion that promises to tear a hole in the planet itself and destroy the last remnants of the Necron tomb. As the Heretics scramble to escape, the Game Master should require them to make numerous **Challenging (+0) Dodge Tests** to keep their feet in the trembling, roiling chamber and **Challenging (+0) Dodge or Parry Tests** to avoid falling debris. Any Heretic struck by falling debris takes 2d10+5 points of Impact Damage.

If the Heretics have access to teleportation technology (unlikely, as no such devices were present on Saint Annard's Penance), they could teleport free. Another, more viable option, is to reprogram one of the dimensional corridors (either in one of the annexes



or in the inactive Monolith) to allow them to travel back to the prison complex. They could also attempt to set a long enough timer on the explosives that they have time to get clear of the blast radius. However, the blast radius promises to be in the many hundreds of kilometres, and the longer the timer is the more time the master program has to notice potential sabotage and stop it.

Once the Heretics have made it clear of the tomb complex and the explosive detonates, read aloud or paraphrase the following (this is intentionally left vague as to the Heretics' means of escaping the tomb itself, since there are several options. The GM should feel free to personalize the read-aloud text to reflect his players' choices):

After so long in the Necron tombs, the light on Saint Annard's Penance seems a harsh, overwhelming glare. Nevertheless, it is far preferable to the gloomy green twilight you spent so long contending with. You turn your eyes westward, to the distant mountains that loom in the distance.

Suddenly, a brilliant flash, brighter than a star, blinds you and an explosive percussion wave of sound knocks you to your knees. As you straighten, hands shielding your eyes and helmet auto-senses straining to compensate, you see a wall of light rising behind the mountains, as solid as a wall. Then the roiling clouds of dust and sand boil over the intervening mountains and sweep across the plains, overwhelming the prison complex. However, you have no need to see your handiwork to know that you have finally won.

CONSEQUENCES

"And now, we stand at the cusp of a new age, an age where we shall rise up and consume the galaxy in flame."

— Unknown Heretic

Once the Heretics have stopped the Necron assault upon Saint Annard's Penance, this adventure arc is essentially completed. The characters certainly continue to face additional challenges and questions, but those exceed the scope of this adventure arc. Game Masters are encouraged to explore additional relationships between the Heretics and the prison world's factions. Of course, just as their new base of power may draw others to them as potential allies, it may create additional enemies. By achieving their goal, the Heretics may have drawn the ire of the very powers they sought to escape when they undertook this Compact; the forces of Chaos are a jealous lot, after all.

Indeed, while Saint Annard's Penance is an impressive achievement and a mighty boon to the Heretics, it is also far from operational after the ordeals of translation into the Screaming Vortex. Before the prison planet is ready to return to full capacity, the Heretics have much to do.

The losses to the planet's inhabitants during translation were catastrophic, totalling nearly two thirds of the world's already meagre population. While the industry of Saint Annard's Penance remains largely in working order, the population can no longer support the labour necessary for the facilities. The Heretics need to replenish the numbers of their new subjects before they are able to put their war industry to full steam.

As well, beyond the walls of the prison and the manufactorums, Saint Annard's Penance is an inhospitable world, little equipped to sustain even a few thousand hungry soldiers, inmates, and slaves. Before the Heretics got involved, the world only survived due to Imperial bureaucracy and supply. Now that the Heretics have stolen it away, far from the supply ships and grain tithes of the Imperium of Man, they will have to somehow provide for their new subjects, to say nothing of the raw materials the

manufactorums require for their operations. The Heretics may make uneasy alliances with other Chaos Warbands, providing some service in return for captured slaves, devoted supplicants, or even just for food and resources. The Heretics may also take it upon themselves to spread their empire in the Vortex, that they might conquer worlds rich with resources and inhabitants.

Besides jealous rivals and waning resources, far more unfathomable powers threaten the Heretics' accomplishments. There are Necrons active within the Screaming Vortex and they are likely to demand the return of a planet that contains a veritable storehouse of their technologies; demand or take back in force.

Indeed, if the GM wishes to continue in this vein, it is perfectly likely that the tomb complex that the Heretics destroyed was not the only one of its kind beneath the surface of Saint Annard's Penance. Another tomb on the planet might contain a recovery beacon, signalling the far flung forces of the Necrons. Indeed, one might even contain a functional eternity gate, capable of acting as a gateway through which the planet could be assaulted. This could lead to an ongoing conflict between the Heretics and such opponents.

Regardless of which powers within the Vortex take notice of the Heretics' achievement, the Heretics, themselves, would do well to fortify their new planetary fastness. Even though the Necrons have fallen, the characters are unlikely to have gained complete control over Saint Annard's Penance. There certainly remain many who are loyal to the Imperium. There are also likely to be others who might hate the Imperium but remain unwilling to submit to the authority of the Heretics. These rebellious elements could prove disastrous for a Warband new to its power and influence. As the Heretics should well know, a mighty bastion is little defence against the festering corruption of sedition and defiance. The characters need to resolve these issues as well.

It is up to the Players and the GM to decide just how far they want to take these sorts of considerations. The GM may wish to make it fairly easy for the Heretics to subjugate the inhabitants of their new world, in order that he might allow them to continue their rise to dark majesty from a relatively secure seat of power, free from the day to day minutiae of policing the local populace. On the other hand, the available plot opportunities of the situation are nearly endless and, as such, GMs and Players alike are encouraged to explore these options.

REWARDS

Characters who successfully complete this scenario earn Experience for their service. In addition to the rewards included here, Game Masters may choose to grant additional awards for excellent roleplaying as indicated on page 266 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.



EXPERIENCE AWARDS

Characters receive Experience Points for successfully navigating the challenges of this adventure. Consider how the Heretics overcame or avoided each of the following challenges and award experience as appropriate.

- 75 xp: Each Prison World Faction with which the Heretics establish an alliance.
- 50 xp: Defeating the Necron attack from the Obelisk.
- 75 xp: Exploring and overcoming the Necron Sarcophagus beneath the Obelisk.
- 75 xp: Recruiting additional allies from beyond the planet.
- 50 xp: Each Synthesis chamber or Reanimation Facility captured or destroyed through direct action.
- 100 xp: Deciphering and using the teleportation devices within the Summoning Core.
- 50 xp: Successfully conducting research within the Repository of Eternity.
- 200 xp: Destroying the Energy Core.

INFAMY

With the completion of the adventure, the Heretics should have completed the Compact they set out on. Now, they should receive the Infamy from this Compact's Secondary Objectives, plus the additional Infamy from any completed Tertiary Objectives.



NPC AND ADVERSARY INDEX

"I like to get to know my enemies. For some reason, it makes their inevitable defeat at my hands all the sweeter."

— Captain Korgan, The World Reaver

The NPC and Adversary Index contains the NPCs and adversaries players may encounter while they play through **HAND OF CORRUPTION**. All profiles for this adventure can either be found here or in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. If the profile is in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, then it may be noted here.

NPC and adversary profiles are grouped into several categories. Within those categories, they are organized in alphabetical order. The categories are the following:

- **Named NPCs and Adversaries:** These are the major characters the Heretics interact with during their adventures, with the exception of the Necron Osiskor, who is in the Necron section.
- **Minor Adversaries:** These are minor Adversaries the Heretics encounter, not worth noting on an individual basis.
- **Beasts and Creatures:** Saint Annard's Penance does have a small but deadly ecology, which the Heretics may encounter.
- **The Necrons:** All of the Necrons (including Osiskor) can be found in this chapter.

If the NPCs' gear is not listed as a specific Craftsmanship, the default is Common.

NAMED NPCs AND ADVERSARIES

These are the major characters the Heretics may interact with or fight against (or both) during the adventures in **HAND OF CORRUPTION**.

BALTHAZAR OGLANOV

A deeply corrupt Rogue Trader and adherent of the teachings of Slaanesh who cares only for pleasure. Lord Oglanov is first encountered in Chapter II, but may still play an important role in Chapter III.

Balthazar Oglanov Profile (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
48	44	40	35	50	30	36	30	60	31

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 30

Armour: 5 (Body)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel),

Commerce (Int), Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Administratum, Imperial Creed, Imperial Navy, Imperium, Koronus Expanse) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Archeotech, Daemonology, Heresy, The Inquisition, Navigators, Pirates, Xenos) (Int), Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Imperial Codes, Mercenary Cant, Underworld) (Int), Navigation (Stellar) (Int), Operate (Voidship) (Int), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Astromancy, Bureaucracy, Heraldry, Imperial Warrants, Imperial Creed, Judgement, Occult) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Explorator) (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Blademaster, Blade Dancer, Counter Attack, Crippling Strike, Furious Assault, Heightened Senses (Taste, Touch, Smell), Jaded, Killing Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Peer (Mortal Followers of Slaanesh), Precise Blow, Radiant Presence, Step Aside, Sure Strike, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee).

Traits and Gifts: Dark-sight, Fear (2).

Armour: Best Craftsmanship Mesh Vest (5 Body).

Weapons: Rapier of the Sybaritic Host (1d10+11† E; Pen 7; Balanced, Flexible, Razor Sharp), Q'Sal Glass Dagger (1d10+6† R; Pen 6; Toxic (1)), House Oglanov Bolt Pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Rld Full; Tearing, Tainted).

Gear: Sigil of Slaanesh, three doses of Rose, data-slate, Good Craftsmanship Displacer Field (PR 55).

Gifts of the Gods: Face of Slaanesh, Hermaphrodite, Illusion of Normality, Blessing of the Lord of Lies.†

†Balthazar Oglanov has Slaanesh's blessing and, like an overindulgent parent with a spoilt child, the Dark Prince does not let his favoured son come to harm. Oglanov constantly benefits from having a Force Field with a Protection Rating of 65 that cannot overload.

CANONESS LEONA RAK

A master chiurgeon and gifted at the art of medical prognostication, Canoness Rak is known more for her skill with a scalpel and a medi-kit than her bedside manner. Canoness Leona Rak plays a key role in Chapter II.

Canoness Leona Rak Profile (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	40	30	30	41	52	45	50	45	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 16

Armour: 4 (All)

Total TB: 3

Fate Points: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Administratum, Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed, Imperium) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Heresy, The Inquisition) (Int), Inquiry (Fel), Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Logic (Int), Medicae (Int) +30, Scholastic Lore (Chymistry, Imperial Creed, Judgement, Legend, Philosophy) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority, Bolter Drill, Demagogue, Foresight, Hardy, Jaded, Master Chiurgeon, Meditation, Nerves of Steel,

INFAMY, FATE POINTS, AND NON-HERETICS

In previous Warhammer 40,000 Roleplay games, the role of Infamy Points was taken by a similar mechanic called Fate Points. In **BLACK CRUSADE**, certain Imperial Characters do possess Infamy Characteristics (they are infamous to the Heretics, if nothing else). However, instead of Infamy Points, they have Fate Points, signs of the God-Emperor's blessing. These work mechanically the same as Infamy Points, and may be used as if they were Infamy Points at level 2 (providing the +1 Degree of Success, 1d5+1 wounds, or re-roll failed Tests). In addition, NPCs with Fate Points may permanently lose one Fate Point (rather than burn Infamy) to survive otherwise deadly situations—although GMs should be wary of using this if it doesn't fit the plot!

INFAMY FOR NPCs

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

Peer (Ecclesiarchy, Adeptus Sororitas), Rapid Reload.

Traits and Gifts: Touched by the Fates (3).

Armour: Flakweave Robes (Arms 4, Body 4, Legs 4).

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Blessed Bolt Pistol (30m; S/2/—; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Rld Full; Tearing, Reliable, Sanctified).

Gear: Data-slate, Ecclesiarchal robes.

Blessed Sister: Canoness Leona Rak is a bastion of faith in the God-Emperor, faith that can physically protect her and lend mighty blows to her attacks. Rak may spend a Fate Point as a Free Action to gain the benefits of a Force Field that cannot overload. Her Force Field's Protection Rating is equal to her Willpower. In addition, all her Ranged and Melee Attacks deal Energy damage and gain +5 damage against anyone with 10 or more Corruption for the remainder of the encounter.

CARDINAL MORGAN FALCONER

A severe, fire and brimstone preacher from Scintilla with a hatchet-like face and one glaring black eye, Cardinal Falconer is a true believer in absolution through hard labour.

Cardinal Morgan Falconer Profile (Master)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
35	45	35	53	31	42	37	58	45	—	—

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Armour: 5 (Arms, Body, Legs).

Total TB: 5

Fate Points: 3

Skills: Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Xenos) (Int) +30, Intimidate (WP) +20, Inquiry (Fel) +10, Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Scholastic Lore (Biology, Imperial Creed, Occult) (Int) +30, Scrutiny (Per) +30.

Talents: Air of Authority, Cold Hearted, Demagogue, Inspire Wrath, Iron Discipline, Inspire Wrath, Into the Jaws of Hell, Radiant Aura, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Strong Minded, Unshakeable Will.

Traits and Gifts: Touched by the Fates (3).

Armour: Best Craftsmanship Flakweave Ecclesiarchal Robes (Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5).

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Hand Flamer loaded with High-Grade Promethium (30m; S/—/—; 1d10+4 E; Pen 2;

Clip 2; Rld Full; Flame, Spray, Reliable), Best Craftsmanship Sanctified Digi-Melta† (3m; S/—/—; 2d10+5 E; Pen 12; Clip 1; Rld Full; Melta, Reliable, Sanctified), Best Craftsmanship Power Mace (1d10+10 E; Pen 4; Power Field, +10 to Parry).

Gear: Book of Scripture, priestly vestments, Rosarius (counts as a Best Craftsmanship Conversion Field without the Photon Flash Grenade effect, see page 178 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook).

†**Digi-Melta:** The Cardinal's sanctified ring of office conceals a powerful, miniaturised melta weapon within its jewel-encrusted shell. Used by the wealthy elite throughout the Imperium, these incredibly advanced weapons replicate the function of select pistol class weapons. Typically cast in the form of gaudy, heavy rings, digital weapons are useful mainly as emergency or back-up weapons. Their size limits their ammo capacity to one round, and also makes reloading them an arduous process. Cardinal Falconer's digi-melta is cast from solid adamantine chased with gold in the shape of the seal of the Ecclesiarchy, and is festooned with precious stones.

In His Name! Cardinal Falconer can infuse his allies with wrathful fervour. As a Full Action, Cardinal Falconer can spend a Fate Point to give all allies within earshot the Frenzy Talent for the remainder of the Encounter.

CORBIN WORLDSBANE

A canny and knowing Heretic with broad experience, Worldsbane is a fount of information for those who can sit through his anecdotes.

Corbin Worldsbane Profile (Elite)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
42	48	40	45	33	41	45	40	47	15	

Movement: 3/6/9/12

Wounds: 16

Armour: 6 (All)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, Imperium, Screaming Vortex, War) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Heresy, The Inquisition, Pirates, Xenos) (Int), Intimidate (WP), Linguistics (Chaos Marks, Low Gothic, Mercenary Cant, Underworld) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int) +20, Operate (Surface) (Ag) +10, Parry (Ag), Scholastic Lore

(Legend, Occult, Philosophy) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Survival (Per) +30, Trade (Explorer).

Talents: Die Hard, Iron Jaw, Jaded, Nerves of Steel, Paranoia, Quick Draw, Rapid Reaction, Rapid Reload, Resistance (Poisons), Street Fighting, True Grit, Unarmed Warrior, Wisdom of the Ancients.

Armour: Heavy Carapace (All 6).

Weapons: Plasma Gun (90m; S/2/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 10; Clip 20; Rld 5 Full; Maximal, Overheats), Best Craftsmanship Bolt Pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Rld Full; Tearing, Reliable), Chainsword (1d10+6† R; Pen 2; Tearing, Balanced, +5 WS).

Gear: Data-slate, micro-bead, void suit, preysense goggles, rebreather, medi-kit, auspex/scanner, cartograph, chrono, combi-tool.

Gifts of the Gods: Steel-Hearted: Fear effects caused by any other servant of Chaos are counted as a further Fear level lower.

DANNARD KLEE

A cunning free trader with a taste for the Cold Trade. Klee is encountered in Chapter I.

Dannard Klee Profile (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	40	38	45	40	48	50	38	45	10

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 12

Armour: 5 (Arms, Body, Legs)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Commerce (Int) +20, Common Lore (Imperial Navy, Imperium, Koronus Expanse, Tech) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +20, Forbidden Lore (Archeotech, Navigators, Pirates, The Warp, Xenos) (Int) +10, Inquiry (Fel), Intimidate (Wp), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Trader's Cant, Mercenary Cant) (Int), Navigate (Stellar) (Int), Operate (Voidship) (Int), Scholastic Lore (Astromancy, Cryptology) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Voidfarer) (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority, Hotshot Pilot, Iron Discipline, Jaded, Light Sleeper, Paranoia, Quick Draw.

Bionics: Good Craftsmanship Mind Impulse Unit, Good Craftsmanship Bionic Respiratory System, Good Craftsmanship Embedded Auspex.

Armour: Light Carapace (Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5).

Weapons: Hand Cannon with Laser Sight (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5, Rld 2 Full), Chainsword (1d10+5† R; Pen 2; Tearing, Balanced).

Gear: Chrono, combi-tool, data-slate, common craftsmanship void suit, lascutter, micro-bead, voxcaster.

EL'LETH

A cunning woman, soul-bound to a Slaanesh daemon and possessing a taste for inflicting pain, she serves Lord Oglanov to assist in his occult activities. El'Leth is quite dangerous. El'Leth first appears in Chapter II, but may still continue assisting Lord Oglanov in Chapter III.

NPC WEAPON TRAINING AND WEAPON DAMAGE

In the cases of all NPC profiles, the GM should assume that they are proficient in any weapon they are equipped with. There may be some NPCs where it makes more sense for them not to be able to use a weapon they are carrying, but in general any weapon an adversary possesses is one he's prepared to use.

In addition, all NPC weapon profiles have any damage bonuses from Talents, Strength Bonus, cybernetics, or other augmentations included.

El'Leth Profile (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
45	08	40	45	50	35	44	50	55	--

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 20

Armour: 6 (Arms, Body, Legs)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +30, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag)+20, Inquiry (Fel) +20, Interrogation (WP) +20, Intimidate (WP) +20, Medicae (Int) +10, Psyniscience (Per) +30, Scrutiny (Per) +20, Stealth (Ag) +10.

Talents: Mimic, Psy Rating (6), Swift Attack.

Traits and Gifts: Dark-sight, Soul Bound, Corruption 50.

Psychic Powers: Acquiescence, Lash of Submission, Symphony of Pain, Abhorrent Ward.

Armour: Xenos Hide Bodyglove (6 Arms, Body, Legs).

Weapons: Hedonist's Blade (1d10+8 R; Pen 4; Balanced, Razor Sharp), Sybarite's Lash (1d10+10 R; Pen 3; Flexible, Razor Sharp, Tearing, Unwieldy).

Gear: Torture implements, blood-spattered apron.

GENERAL HELENA TARSIAN

Commander of the permanent Imperial Guard headquarters garrison at Saint Annard's Penance, General Tarsian is a bureaucrat first and a soldier second.

General Helena Tarsian Profile (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
35	42	38	37	35	50	47	40	50	--

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 24

Armour: All 6

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +30, Common Lore (Imperium, Imperial Guard, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag) +10, Inquiry (Per) +10, Linguistics (High Gothic, Imperial Codes, Low Gothic), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Bureaucracy, Cryptology, Tactica Imperialis) (Int) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +10.

Talents: Air of Authority, Foresight, Iron Discipline, Polyglot, Paranoia, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Step Aside, Technical Knock.

Traits and Gifts: Touched by the Fates (2).

Bionics: Good Craftsmanship Bionic Respiratory System, Good Craftsmanship Mind Impulse Unit.

Armour: Best Craftsmanship Light Carapace (All 6).

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Plasma Pistol with Photosight (40m; S/2/-; 1d10+7 E; Pen 8; Clip 10; Rld 3 Full; Maximal, Reliable), Power Sword (1d10+8† E; Pen 5; Power Field, Balanced).

Gear: Micro-bead, 2 vials of purified plasma.

Take it Down! Tarsian is a Guard commander as well as bureaucrat, and can direct her soldiers' fire to great effect. As a Half Action, Tarsian can make a **Challenging (+0) Command Test** to designate one target she can see to all Imperial Guardsmen allies in earshot. These allies gain +20 to their next Ballistic Skill Test against that target.

Move! Move! Move! Tarsian can motivate her troops with the same zeal as any senior sergeant. As a Half Action, Tarsian can make a **Challenging (+0) Command Test** to grant all Imperial Guardsmen allies within earshot Unnatural Agility (+2) until the beginning of her next Turn.

First Rank, Fire! Second Rank, Fire! Tarsian can direct her troops in disciplined small-arms fire. As a Half Action, Tarsian can make a **Challenging (+0) Command Test**. If she succeeds, all Imperial Guardsmen allies within earshot may make two actions with the Attack subtype on their turn, as long as they are firing Basic weapons.

JAKE STOVNER

An eager and tenacious, if not overly bright, ship's bosun who is suspicious, inquisitive, and tenacious in his pursuit of wrongdoers, whom he sees everywhere. Stovner makes his appearance in Chapter I.

Jake Stovner Profile (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	35	36	38	41	30	45	40	33	--

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 14

Armour: 5 (Arms, Body, Legs)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +20, Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Imperial Navy, Imperium) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Inquiry (Int) +10, Interrogation (WP) +20, Intimidate (WP), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Parry (WS), Scrutiny (Per) +10, Security (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +10.

Talents: Iron Jaw, Nerves of Steel, Paranoia, Street Fighting, Unarmed Warrior, Unshakeable Will.

Armour: Light Carapace (Arms 5; Body 5; Legs 5).

Weapons: Hand Cannon (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Rld 2 Full; Reliable), Shock Maul (1d10+5† I; Pen 0; Shocking, +5 to WS).

Gear: Micro-bead, data-slate, multikey, chrono, auspex/scanner, tarnished Aquila.

JARVIS HELLIMAN

A canny prisoner whose mind is sharper than his thuggish looks would suggest, Helliman is an old friend of Kahli and a fount of knowledge about the power structures of Saint Annard's Penance. Jarvis Helliman is encountered first in Chapter II, but is present throughout Chapters II and III.

Jarvis Helliman Profile (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
45	28	53	50	41	35	35	45	48	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 11

Armour: 1 (Arms, Body, Legs).

Total TB: 5

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +30, Charm (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperium, Imperial Creed) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Mutants) (Int), Inquiry (Int) +20, Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +20, Security (Int) +20, Sleight of Hand (Ag) +10, Stealth (Ag) +20, Survival (Per) +10, Trade (Labourer) (Int).
Talents: Catfall, Hardy, Infused Knowledge, Street Fighting, Total Recall, True Grit, Unarmed Warrior, Unarmed Master, Unshakeable Will.

Traits and Gifts: Touched by the Fates (2)

Armour: Poor Craftsmanship Mismatched Leathers (Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1).

Weapons: Combat Knife (1d10+4† R; Pen 2; Balanced, Mono), Poor Craftsmanship Scavenged Compact Stub Revolver† (20m; S/-/-; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 5; Rld 2 Full; Unreliable).

Gear: Lock picks, line and grapnel, photo-visior, book of lewd poetry.

† **Helliman's Revolver:** The stub revolver that Helliman carries is an ancient, much battered five-shot stubber of unknown pattern that's been heavily modified so that Helliman can easily conceal it about his person. Its barrel is cut very short, reducing its effective range, the trigger guard and hammer are ground off, and the handle is shaved down and wrapped in friction tape. Anyone searching Helliman suffers a -20 penalty to any relevant skills to find concealed items.

KAHLI CORUS

Born on Saint Annard's Penance, her calm exterior hides the seething fury in her heart. Kahli first arrives in Chapter I, but is present throughout all three chapters.

Kahli Corus Profile (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	35	40	41	40	32	35	40	30	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 13

Armour: None

Total TB: 4

Skills: Athletics (S), Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Parry (WS), Stealth (Per) +10,

Survival (Per) +20.

Talents: Catfall, Heightened Senses (Hearing), Leap Up, Light Sleeper, Street Fighting, Unarmed Master, Unarmed Warrior.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Fists (1d10+4 I; Pen 0)†.

Gear: Slave Collar, tattered Imperial Navy bosun's uniform.
†This is based on Kahli's Unarmed Master Talents. Needless to say, she cannot ever lose these weapons or be disarmed.

MAO FREDERICKS PROFILE (TROOP)

An elderly and dedicated bureaucrat whose only loves are officiousness and efficiency. Fredericks makes his appearance in Chapter I.

Mao Fredericks Profile (Troop)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
16	15	20	24	25	41	43	34	30	--	

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 6

Armour: 4 (All)

Total TB: 2

Skills: Common Lore (Administratum, Imperial Creed, Imperium) (Int) +20, Inquiry (Int) +20, Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Logic (Int), Scholastic Lore (Bureaucracy, Heraldry, Imperial Creed, Judgement, Numerology) (Int) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +10, Trade (Bureaucrat) (Int) +30.

Talents: Cold Hearted.

Traits and Gifts: Machine (4), Unnatural Intelligence (2).

Bionics: Bionic Locomotion (wheeled chassis), Bionic Arms (Both), Bionic Respiratory System, Mechanicus Assimilation, Good Craftmanship Cerebral Implants, Good Craftmanship Mind Impulse Unit.

Armour: None.

Weapons: None.

Gear: Data-slate, auto-quill, scribes' tools, writing kit, chrono.

NADINE HOLLUM

Embittered and disgraced, this former Colonel of the Imperial Guard commands a fair amount of respect among the prisoners of Saint Annard's Penance. Hollum first appears in Chapter II, but also plays a part in Chapter III.

Nadine Hollum Profile (Master)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
45	53	44	40	45	41	46	40	45	--	

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 30

Armour: 4 (All)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, Imperium, Tech, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Astartes) (Int), Interrogation (WP), Intimidate (WP), Linguistics (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Imperial Codes, Mercenary Cant) (Int),

Navigation (Surface) (Int), Operate (Surface) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Imperial Creed, Legend, Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Survival (Per), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority, Cold Hearted, Combat Master, Crack Shot, Disturbing Voice, Double Team, Foresight, Iron Discipline, Iron Jaw, Jaded, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Strong Minded, Unarmed Master, Unarmed Warrior.

Traits and Gifts: Touched by the Fates (2).

Bionics: Interface Port.

Armour: Good Craftmanship Guard Flak Armour (All 4).

Weapons: Good Craftmanship Plasma Pistol (40m; S/2/-; 1d10+7 E; Pen 8; Clip 10; Rld 3 Full; Maximal, Overheats, Reliable), Best Craftmanship Monoknife (1d5+5† R; Pen 2; Balanced, +10 WS to use, +10 Parry).

Gear: Chrono, de-badged Imperial Guard uniform, data-slate.

Take it Down! Hollum is an accomplished commander and can direct her soldiers' fire to great effect. As a Half Action, Hollum can make a **Challenging (+0) Command Test** to designate one target she can see to all allies in earshot. These allies gain +20 to their next Ballistic Skill Test against that target.

Move! Move! Move! Hollum can motivate her troops with the same zeal as any senior sergeant. As a Half Action, Hollum can make a **Challenging (+0) Command Test** to grant all allies within earshot Unnatural Agility (+2) until the beginning of her next Turn.

PHILANI BARRETT

An ancient voidman possessed of countless anecdotes and a near suicidal disregard for naval regulation, Barret is perhaps the laziest voidman in the Calixis Sector.

Philani Barrett Profile (Troop)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
35	40	35	34	30	38	41	28	37	--	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 13

Armour: 5 (Arms, Body, Head)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Imperial Creed, Imperial Navy, Imperium) (Int) +10, Commerce (Int), Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Mutants, Pirates, The Warp, Xenos) (Int) +10, Inquiry (Int), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes, Mercenary Cant, Underworld) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Survival (Int), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Voidfarer) (Int) +20.

Talents: Catfall, Die Hard, Hardy, Iron Jaw, Infused Knowledge, Jaded, Light Sleeper, Paranoia, Technical Knock, True Grit, Unarmed Warrior.

Bionics: Bionic Arm (Left), Good Craftmanship Cybernetic Eye (Heightened Senses [Sight]).

Armour: Light Carapace (Arms 5; Body 5; Legs 5).

Weapons: Common Craftmanship Hand Cannon (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Rld 2 Full), Voidman's Marlinspike (1d10+4† R; Pen 4; Primitive (8), Unbalanced).

Gear: Voidman's bag, void suit, flask of grain alcohol, lho sticks, chrono, combi-tool, data slate, magnoculars, micro-bead.

RAMLA YANG

A vicious pirate captain who relishes one-on-one combat. Yang is encountered in Chapter I.

Ramla Yang Profile (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
50	38	50	50	40	35	45	50	30	14

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 15

Armour: 4 (Body)

Total TB: 5

Skills: Awareness (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperial Navy, Imperium, Koronus Expanse, Tech, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Pirates, The Warp, Xenos) (Int), Intimidate (WP), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Traders' Cant, Mercenary Cant), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Bureaucracy, Cryptology, Imperial Warrants, Judgement) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Voidfarer) (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority, Bulging Biceps, Cold Hearted, Combat Master, Counter Attack, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Die Hard, Disarm, Furious Assault, Infused Knowledge, Iron Jaw, Jaded, Pity the Weak, Precise Blow, Street Fighting, Sure Strike, Takedown, True Grit, Unarmed Master, Unarmed Warrior.

Bionics: Common Craftsmanship Bionic Eye with Preysense.

Armour: Common Craftsmanship Mesh Vest (Body 4).

Weapons: Common Craftsmanship Eviscerator (1d10+18† R; Pen 5; Tearing, Unwieldy, Roll of 96-00 to hit means the wielder hits himself).

Gear: Void suit, flask of amasec, data-slate, auspex/scanner, chrono.

SISTER BAHLI

Sister Bahli is wide-eyed and naïve, and her ignorance of the galaxy at large is a danger both to herself and others. Sister Bahli is encountered in Chapter I.

Sister Bahli Profile (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
25	15	30	28	35	35	35	45	48	--

Movement: 3/6/9/12

Wounds: 5

Armour: None

Total TB: 2

Skills: Charm (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Administratum, Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed, Imperium) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Heresy) (Int), Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Medicae (Int) +20, Scholastic Lore (Imperial Creed, Judgement, Legend, Occult, Philosophy) (Int), Scrutiny (Per).

Talents: Air of Authority, Demagogue, Foresight, Hatred (Heretics, Renegades, Apostates), Meditation, Peer (Ecclesiarchy), Resistance (Psychic Techniques), Strong Minded, Unshakable Faith (Counts as Unshakeable Will).

Bionics: None.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Blessed Chainsword (1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Tearing, Balanced, Sanctified, Grants +5 to WS Tests).

Gear: Data-slate, robes, holy icon, Ecclesiarchal orders.

TWANLEIGH KOHLER

A cheerful ship's officer, Kohler's charm and good nature hide a dark and troubled heart and a tendency toward Chaos.

Twanleigh Kohler Profile (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
24	29	30	35	35	41	28	29	40	--

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 9

Armour: 4 (Body)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Administratum, Imperial Creed, Imperial Navy, Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Inquiry (Int), Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Scholastic Lore (Bureaucracy) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Voidfarer) (Int).

Talents: Polyglot.

Armour: Common Craftsmanship Mesh Vest (Body 5).

Weapons: Common Craftsmanship Hand Cannon (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Rld 2 Full).

Gear: Data-slate, micro-bead, playing cards.

YURIY MALKOVIC

Colonel Hollum's loyal second-in-command, Malkovic is a former Imperial Guard sapper and mercenary who found his way to incarceration on Saint Annard's Penance through a series of strange and unfortunate events. Malkovic first appears in Chapter II, but also plays a part in Chapter III.

Yuriy Malkovic Profile (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
41	43	45	50	35	29	50	34	40	--

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Armour: 6 (All)

Total TB: 7

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperial Guard, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (WP), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Scholastic Lore (Chymistry, Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Security (Int) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +30, Trade (Armourer) (Int) +20.

Talents: Air of Authority, Armour-Monger, Fearless, Foresight, Iron Jaw, Jaded, Mastery (Tech-Use), Nerves of Steel, True Grit, Unshakeable Will.

Bionics: Good Craftsmanship Cybernetic Eyes with Close-Up Sight and Preysense, Good Craftsmanship Cybernetic Ears, Good Craftsmanship Bionic Legs, Good Craftsmanship Mind Impulse Unit.

Armour: Heavy Carapace (6 All).

Weapons: Las Carbine (75m; S/2/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Rld Half, Reliable), Power Sword (1d10+9 E; Pen 5; Balanced, Power Field).

Gear: Chrono, combi-tool, data-slate, demolition kit, demolition charges (4), micro-bead, siege auspex†.

†**Siege Auspex:** This scanner can see through walls, allowing the user to locate stress fractures, reinforcements, hidden compartments and passageways, power conduits, and other items of interest to someone laying siege to a structure. It has a range of 20 metres and adds +10 to any Demolitions or Tech-Use Tests when attempting to breach fortifications or sabotage a structure.

WARDEN PHINEAS MORN

A deeply sarcastic man, Warden Morn has a sharp legal mind and precious little patience for fools. Warden Morn features prominently in Chapter II.

Warden Phineas Morn Profile (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
55	55	40	50	35	40	50	40	40	--

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Armour: 7 (All)

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Administratum, Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (The Inquisition, Pirates) (Int), Inquiry (Fel), Interrogation (WP) +30, Intimidate (WP) +30, Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Imperial Codes, Underworld) (Int), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Bureaucracy, Imperial Warrants, Imperial Creed, Judgement) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +20, Survival (Per), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority, Cold Hearted, Demagogue, Die Hard, Disturbing Voice, Double Team, Furious Assault, Hatred (Heretics, Prisoners), Iron Jaw, Iron Discipline, Jaded, Pity the Weak, Street Fighting.

Armour: Best Craftsmanship Heavy Carapace (7 All).

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Assault Shotgun (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 12; Rld 2 Full; Reliable, Scatter, Spread Limiter), Best Craftsmanship Plasma Pistol (40m; S/2/-; 1d10+7 E; Pen 8; Clip 10; Rld 3 Full; Maximal, Overheats, Reliable).

Gear: Data-slate, Arbites uniform.

Living Icon of Punishment: For the majority of the prisoners in Saint Annard's Penance, Warden Morn is a figure of terrifying authority who holds their lives in his hands. Warden Morn counts as having Fear (1) against any prisoners or former prisoners of Saint Annard's Penance, including named NPCs. (This does not apply to the Heretics, however, even if they infiltrate the world by pretending to be prisoners.)

ZENOBIA PIKE

Pike is a senior Arbitrator on Saint Annard's Penance who, while a loyal enforcer of His law, is skirting the edge of damnation. Pike is first encountered in Chapter II, but may make another appearance in Chapter III.

Zenobia Pike Profile (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
45	50	43	43	40	35	55	35	40	--

Movement: 4/8/12/16

Armour: 6 (All)

Wounds: 25

Total TB: 4

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Administratum, Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed, Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Inquiry (Fel) +30, Interrogation (WP) +20, Intimidate (WP) +20, Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Imperial Codes, Underworld) (Int), Logic (Int) +20, Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Imperial Creed, Judgement) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +30, Survival (Per), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Air of Authority, Cold Hearted, Crack Shot, Disarm, Double Team, Iron Discipline, Pity the Weak, Rapid Reload, Street Fighting, Takedown, True Grit.

Armour: Common Craftsmanship Heavy Carapace (6 All).

Weapons: Common Craftsmanship Assault Shotgun (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 12; Rld 2 Full; Scatter), Best Craftsmanship Hand Cannon with Red-Dot Laser Sight and Extended Magazine loaded with Amputator Shells (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+6 I; Pen 2; Clip 6; Rld 2 Full; Reliable, +10 BS to hit), Common Craftsmanship Shock Maul (1d10+4† I; Pen 0; Shocking) Common Craftsmanship Arbites Riot Shield (1d10+3† I; Pen 0; Primitive (6), Defensive).

Gear: Data-slate, Arbites uniform, micro-bead, respirator, photo-visior, torture implements.

We Are The Law: The senior Arbitrators of Saint Annard's Penance can exhort their fellow Arbitrators to impressive feats. Once per combat, all Arbitrators within earshot of this character generate Zealous Hatred on a 8-10 until the end of this character's next Round. This is a Free Action.

Guilty Conscience: Zenobia Pike is plagued by a guilty conscience due to the influence Olganov holds over her. If her secret has been discovered, Pike may snap. During combat, at the beginning of each Round, Pike should make a **Routine (+20) Willpower Test**. If she passes, she acts as normal. If she fails, she loses a Half Action during her Turn. If she fails by 3 Degrees or more, she goes into a suicidal frenzy instead, gaining the Frenzy Talent and does not make any more Tests for the combat.

MINOR ADVERSARIES

These are the profiles for unnamed adversaries or NPCs the Heretics might encounter or fight during the adventures in **HAND OF CORRUPTION**.

ARBITRATOR

These men and women keep the prison colony's streets safe and its prisoners in line. These individuals feature in Chapters II and III.

Arbitrator Profile (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	40	40	40	40	35	35	30	30	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 11

Total Armour: (All 6)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites) (Int), Interrogation (WP) +10, Scholastic Lore (Judgement) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Bolt, SP), Disarm, Melee Weapon Training (Shock, Primitive), Pistol Training (Bolt, Launcher, SP), Takedown.

Armour: Carapace Armour (All 6).

Weapons: Persecutor-pattern Combat Shotgun (35m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 20; Rld Full; Scatter), Shock Maul (1d10+4 E; Pen 0; Shocking).

Gear: Micro-bead, photo-visor, 2 combat shotgun magazines, manacles, auspex, rebreather, suppression shield†.

†**Suppression Shield:** Common equipment for the Adeptus Arbites, Suppression shields are massive ceramite slabs used both for defence and for striking. They count as one handed melee weapons with the following profile—including the Arbitrator's Strength bonus (1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Defensive, Recharge, Shocking). The shield has the Recharge Quality, since the shock-plate built into the centre takes a while to recharge. On rounds during which the shield is recharging, it loses the Shocking Quality and gains the Primitive Quality. A suppression shield requires one hand to use, and provides +4 APs to that arm and the torso of the wielder. It also includes a light source and a weapon lock clip, allowing the user to fire a shotgun one-handed without penalty.

ARBITRATOR, SENIOR

These individuals are commanders amongst the Adeptus Arbites that lead their fellows in battle. These individuals feature in Chapters II and III.



Senior Arbitrator Profile (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
45	45	40	40	40	38	40	35	35	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 11

Total Armour: (All 6)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites) (Int), Interrogation (WP) +10, Scholastic Lore (Judgement) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Basic Weapon Training (Bolt, SP), Disarm, Melee Weapon Training (Shock, Primitive), Pistol Training (Bolt, Launcher, SP), Takedown, Two Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ballistic).

Armour: Carapace Armour (All 6).

Weapons: Hand Cannon (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Rld 2 Full), Power Maul (High Setting—1d10+9 E; Pen 4; Power Field, Shocking or Low Setting—1d10+5 E; Pen 2; Shocking).

Gear: Micro-bead, photo-visor, 2 combat shotgun magazines, manacles, auspex, rebreather, recoil gloves, suppression shield†.

†**Suppression Shield:** Common equipment for the Adeptus Arbites, Suppression shields are massive ceramite slabs used both for defence and for striking. They count as one handed melee weapons with the following profile—including the Arbitrator's Strength bonus (1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Defensive, Recharge, Shocking). The shield has the Recharge Quality, since the shock-plate built into the centre takes a while to recharge. On rounds during which the shield is recharging, it loses the Shocking Quality and gains the Primitive Quality. A suppression shield requires one hand to use, and provides +4 APs to that arm and the torso of the wielder. It also includes a light source and a weapon lock clip, allowing the user to fire a shotgun one-handed without penalty.

ARBITRATOR, SENIOR COMMANDER

The Arbitrators known informally as senior commanders on Saint Annard's Penance form the Warden's senior staff, taking command of large portions of the Adeptus Arbites. Once Warden Morn dies, the senior commanders collectively take command of the Adeptus Arbites on Saint Annard's Penance. These Arbitrators feature in Chapter II and the first part of Chapter III.

Senior Commander Arbitrator (Master)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
48	48	40	40	40	40	55	35	40	--	

Movement: 4/8/12/16

Armour: 6 (All)

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Administratum, Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed, Imperium) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Inquiry (Fel) +30, Interrogation (WP) +20, Intimidate (WP) +20, Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Imperial Codes, Underworld) (Int), Logic (Int) +20, Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Imperial Creed, Judgement) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +30.

Talents: Air of Authority, Cold Hearted, Crack Shot, Disarm, Double Team, Iron Discipline, Pity the Weak, Rapid Reload, Street Fighting, Takedown, True Grit.

Armour: Common Craftsmanship Heavy Carapace (6 All).

Weapons: Common Craftsmanship Assault Shotgun (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 12; Rld 2 Full; Scatter), Best Craftsmanship Hand Cannon with Red-Dot Laser Sight and Extended Magazine loaded with Amputator Shells (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+6 I; Pen 2; Clip 6; Rld 2 Full; Reliable, +10 BS to hit), Common Craftsmanship Shock Maul (1d10+4† I; Pen 0; Shocking) Common Craftsmanship Arbites Riot Shield (1d10+3† I; Pen 0; Primitive (6), Defensive).

Gear: Data-slate, Arbites uniform, micro-bead, respirator, photo-visior, torture implements.

We Are The Law: The senior Arbitrators of Saint Annard's

Penance can exhort their fellow Arbitrators to impressive feats. Once per combat, all Arbitrators within earshot of this character generate Zealous Hatred on a 8-10 until the end of this character's next Round. This is a Free Action.

CYBER-MASTIFF

Used extensively by the Arbites, these loyal constructs combine the finest points of living predatory companion animals and the high machine arts of the Priesthood of Mars. These individuals feature in Chapters II and III.

Cyber-Mastiff Profile (Troop)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
45	--	40	30	40	15	50	25	--	--	

Movement: 7/14/21/42

Wounds: 6

Armour: 6 (All)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Stealth (Ag) +20, Survival (Per) +20.

Talents: Fearless, Heightened Senses (Smell).

Traits and Gifts: Dark-Sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Machine (6), Natural Weapons (Claw, Bite), Quadruped, Size (Weedy 3).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Bite (1d10+4 R; Pen 0; Tearing).

Gear: Preysense implant, data uplink, filter plugs.

DEFENDER OF THE SYBARITIC HOST

Heavily pierced, tattooed, and scarred, these fanatical prisoners maintain discipline amongst Oglanov's Sybaritic Host. These individuals feature in Chapters II and III.

Defender of the Sybaritic Host Profile (Troop)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
35	40	35	31	32	27	36	28	30	--	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Armour: 4 (Arms, Body, Legs)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (WP), Linguistics (Low Gothic), Parry (WS), Scrutiny.

Talents: Combat Master, Double Team, Frenzy, Furious Assault, Street Fighting, Nerves of Steel.

Armour: Flak Armour (4 Arms, Body, Legs).

Weapons: Scavenged Assault Shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 12; Rld 2 Full; Scatter, Unreliable), Monosword (1d10+3 R; Pen 2; Balanced).

Gear: Sigil of Slaanesh.

IMPERIAL GUARDSMAN

The Imperial Guard stationed on Saint Annard's Penance are actually from several different regiments from throughout the Calixis Sector. This profile is reprinted from the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook for ease of use. Following the basic profile are modifiers for this profile. Each modifier represents one of the specific Guard regiments on Saint Annard's Penance. These individuals feature in Chapters II and III.

Imperial Guardsman (Troop)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
35	35	35	35	35	28	31	25	2	5	-

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Armour: 4 (All)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per), Athletics (S), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Takedown.

Weapons: Guard Issue Lasgun (Basic; 100m; S/3/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full, Variable Setting), Combat Knife (1d5+3; Pen 0), 3 Frag Grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

Armour: Guard Flak (4 All)

Gear: Guard Uniform, micro-bead, respirator, 4 clips for lasgun, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer.

81st Malfi Light Infantry

Hailing from the fractious hive world of Malfi, the 81st Light Infantry makes up the bulk of Imperial Guard forces stationed at Fort Saint Annard. Commanded by Major Barl Felthan, the 81st is a light, highly mobile infantry force specialising in skirmishing and urban combat. Guardsmen of the 81st use the Imperial Guardsman stats presented previously without modifiers. However, one in 10 Guardsmen may be armed with a Grenade Launcher loaded with Frag Grenades (Basic; 60m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 6; Rld 2 Full; Blast [3]), a Flamer (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 2; Clip 6; Rld 2 Full; Flame, Spray), or a Long-Las (Basic; 150m; S/-/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 1; Clip 40; Rld Full; Accurate, Felling [4]; Reliable). Two in 10 Guardsmen may form a Heavy Weapons Team armed with a Heavy Stubber (Heavy; 100m; -/-/8; 1d10+5 I; Pen 3; Clip 75; Rld 2 Full), or Heavy Flamer (Heavy; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Clip 10; Rld 2 Full; Flame, Spray).

Drusus' Own Hussars

The Hussars are a mechanised infantry unit from the hive world Laskin, under the command of Captain Althea Harskin. Specialising in lightning attacks mounted on armoured fighting vehicles, the Hussars make heavy use of the Chimera APC and its numerous variants. Guardsmen of the Hussars use the Imperial Guardsman stats found previously with the following alterations: replace the standard Lasgun with a Las Carbine (75m; S/2/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 40; Rld Half; Reliable), add the skill Tech-Use, and add +20 to the Operate (Surface) Skill. One in

10 Hussars can be armed with a Grenade Launcher loaded with Frag Grenades (Basic; 60m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 6; Rld 2 Full; Blast [3]), a Flamer (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 2; Clip 6; Rld 2 Full; Flame, Spray), or a Meltagun (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 2d10+10E; Pen 12; Clip 5; Rld 2 Full; Melta).

9th Canopus Engineers

The Engineers of the Canopus Heavy Foot Regiment are a highly trained body of veteran Imperial Guardsmen hailing from the bustling hive world of Canopus. Led by the dashing Captain Bail Ordh, the Engineers are masters of fortification and siege warfare with a reputation for professionalism and coolness under fire. Guardsmen of the 9th Canopus Engineers use the Imperial Guardsman stats found previously with the following alterations: add the Tech-Use Skill at +20, the Trade (Building) Skill at +20, and equip them with Demolition Charges and Demolition Kits found on page 184 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. One in five Guardsmen may be armed with a Meltagun (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 2d10+10E; Pen 12; Clip 5; Rld 2 Full; Melta), or a Plasma Gun (Basic; 90m; S/2/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 10; Clip 20; Rld 5 Full; Maximal, Overheats). Two in 10 Guardsmen may form a Heavy Weapons Team armed with a Heavy Flamer (Heavy; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Clip 10; Rld 2 Full; Flame, Spray), a Heavy Bolter (Heavy; 150m; -/-/6; 1d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip 60; Rld Full; Tearing), or a Missile Launcher armed with Krak Missiles (Heavy; 300m; S/-/-; 3d10+8 X; Pen 8; Clip 1; Rld Full; Concussive [3], Proven [2]).

MANUFACTORIA SKITARII

Highly trained and heavily armed, these loyal troops of the Priesthood of Mars have been trained (and some could even say "constructed") to protect the Mechanicus's interests on Saint Annard's Penance. They can be found guarding important machinery and facilities throughout the manufactoria district. These specific Skitarii are trained to operate as squad forces, with certain Skitarii carrying heavier weapons. These individuals feature in Chapters II and III.

Manufactoria Skitarii Profile (Troop)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
40	40	46	41	34	36	42	29	15	-	-

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Armour: 9 (All)

Total TB: 7

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (War) (Int) +10, Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (WP) +20, Logic (Int), Operate (Surface) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Stealth (Ag) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Arms Master, Ambidextrous, Blind Fighting, Cold Hearted, Combat Master, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Die Hard, Fearless, Hip Shooting, Iron Jaw, Nerves of Steel, Orthoproxy, Prosanguine, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Street Fighting, Strong Minded, Technical Knock, True Grit.

Traits and Gifts: Machine (3), Unnatural Toughness (+3).

Bionics: Autosanguine, Good Craftsmanship Bionic Arms, Good Craftsmanship Bionic Legs, Good Craftsmanship Bionic

Respiratory System, Good Craftsmanship Cybernetic Eyes with Telescopic Vision, Preysense, and Photo-Visor, Good Craftsmanship Cybernetic Ears with Micro-Bead, Good Craftsmanship Mind Impulse Unit, Mechanicus Assimilation (3).

Armour: Heavy Carapace (6 All).

Weapons: Hotshot Lasgun (70m; S/3/-; 1d10+4; Pen 7; Clip 30; Rld 2 Full) and Cog-Halberd (1d10+6 R; Pen 2; Unbalanced). One in ten Skitarrii can carry a Plasma Gun (90m; S/2/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 10; Clip 20; Rld 5 Full; Maximal, Overheats) and Power Sword (1d10+9† E; Pen 5; Power Field, Balanced).

Gear: Data-slate, combi-tool.

MEDICAE SERVITOR

These four-armed monstrosities serve the healing Sisters of the medicae centre, assisting in the workaday tasks of the hospital with their implanted medical implements. These hulking servitors can move surprisingly quickly and may be reprogrammed to fight in combat. These machines feature primarily in Chapter II.

Medicae Servitor Profile (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
30	--	50	40	20	15	35	15	05	--

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 20

Armour: 8 (All)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Medicae (Int) +20.

Talents: Fearless, Master Chiurgeon.

Traits and Gifts: Dark Sight, Size (5) Hulking, Machine (8), Multiple Arms (4).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Razor-sharp and painful medicae implements (1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Razor Sharp, Toxic).

PRISONER

The dregs of Imperial society, these prisoners pay off their debt to the Imperium with the sweat of their brows. These individuals feature very prominently in Chapters II and III.

Prisoner Profile (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
30	21	30	30	26	24	25	20	20	--

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 7

Armour: None

Total TB: 3

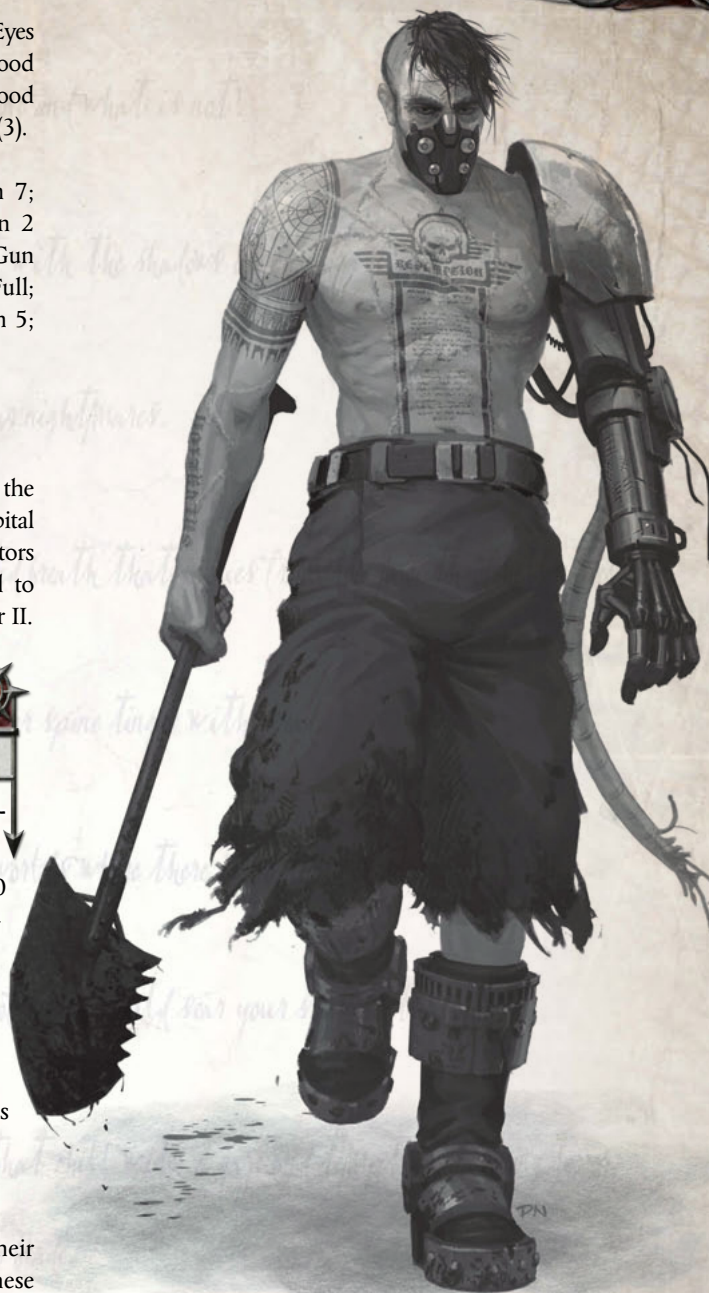
Skills: Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel), Concealment (Ag), Deceive (Fel), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Labourer).

Talents: Jaded.

Traits: Mutation (see "Mutations amongst the Prisoners").

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5 I; Pen 0; counts as unarmed), or sharpened entrenching tool (1d10+3; Pen 0; Primitive [8]).

Gear: Ragged clothing, tools for specific job, chains, rough augmetics, primitive rebreathers.



Mutations among the Prisoners

Thanks to the enormous amount of pollution, ambient radiation, and the lack of protective equipment, many of the prisoners on Saint Annard's Penance have some amount of mutation. These mutations can vary wildly depending on where the prisoner works and what their job entails.

Game Masters should pick 1d5 of the following mutations for any mutated prisoners with which the prisoners come in contact: Addiction, Blood Substitution (Slaanesh), Blasted Senses, Boneless, Cyclops, Emaciated, Featureless Face, Grossly Fat, Limb Loss, Pervasive Miasma, Projectile Attack (Nurgle), Strange Voice, Strange Walk, Tail (Tzeentch), or Tentacle.

It is important to note that these are mutations brought on by constant exposure to industrial toxins and not caused by Corruption or exposure to the Warp. Information on these mutations can be found on pages 288–303 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

SISTER OF THE ORDER OF SERENITY

Sisters Hospitaller are members of the Adepta Sororitas in the healing arts rather than those of war. However, they are still dangerous individuals practiced in the use of their bolt pistols. These individuals feature mostly in Chapters II.

Sister of the Order of Serenity Profile (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	40	35	35	42	40	40	40	34	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 12

Armour: 4 (All)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Administratum, Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed, Imperium) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Heresy, The Inquisition) (Int), Inquiry (Fel), Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Medicae (Int) +10, Scholastic Lore (Chymistry, Imperial Creed, Judgement, Legend, Philosophy) (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Bolter Drill, Demagogue, Foresight, Hardy, Jaded, Master Chiurgeon, Meditation, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload.

Armour: Best Craftsmanship Flakweave Robes (All 4).

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Bolt Pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Rld Full; Tearing, Reliable).

Gear: Data-slate, Ecclesiarchal robes, medi-kit.

SORCERER OF THE SYBARITIC HOST

These thoroughly debased psykers lead the faithful of Lord Oglanov's Sybaritic Host in debauched orgies of excruciating ritual pleasure. The Sorcerers of the Sybaritic Host play roles in Chapters II and III.

Sorcerer of the Sybaritic Host Profile (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
30	25	30	35	35	43	40	45	31	--

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 9

Armour: 4 (Arms, Body, Legs)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Deceive (Fel) +20, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Psykers) (Int) +20, Interrogation (WP) +10, Psyniscience (Per) +30, Scholastic Lore (Occult) +20.

Talents: Blasphemous Incantation, Catfall, Child of the Warp, Heightened Senses (Touch), Jaded, Meditation, Psy Rating (4), Sacrifice, Warp Sense.

Traits and Gifts: Dark Sight, Corruption 40.

Psychic Powers: Abhorrent Ward, Acquiescence, Compel, Foul Cage, Gift of Chaos, Hellshriek, Lash of Submission.

Armour: Flakweave Robes (4 Arms, Body, Legs).

Weapons: Tainted Good Craftsmanship Ritual Knife (1d5+10† R; Pen 3; Razor Sharp, Balanced, Tainted), Scavenged Common Craftsmanship Autopistol (30m; S/-/6; 1d10+2 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Rld Full; Unreliable).

Gear: Ritual accoutrement, ceremonial robes, silver sigil of Slaanesh on chain.

Gifts of the Gods: Blood Substitution, Wreathed in Chaos.

TECH-PRIEST OVERSEER

These red-robed priests of Mars tend to the fickle industrial machinery in the manufactoria district. These individuals feature in Chapters II and III.

Tech Priest Overseer Profile (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	40	42	51	26	45	36	44	19	--

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 18

Armour: 5 (All)

Total TB: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Tech) (Int), Logic (Int) +30, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +30.

Talents: Cold Hearted, Disturbing Voice, Ferric Lure, Ferric Summons, Luminen Blast, Luminen Shock, Master Engineer, Mastery (Tech-Use), Mechadendrite Use (Weapon, Utility), Orthoproxy, Prosanguine, Resistance (Psychic Techniques), Technical Knock, Weapon-Tech.

Traits and Gifts: Machine (5), Mechanicus Implants, Unnatural Toughness (5), Unnatural Intelligence (4).

Bionics: Autosanguine, Good Craftsmanship Bionic Arms, Good Craftsmanship Bionic Legs, Good Craftsmanship Bionic Respiratory System, Good Craftsmanship Cybernetic Eyes with Telescopic Vision, Preysense, and Photo-Visor, Good Craftsmanship Cybernetic Ears with Micro-Bead, Good Craftsmanship Embedded Auspex, Good Craftsmanship Mind Impulse Unit, Good Craftsmanship Neural Implant, Mechanicus Assimilation (5), Manipulator Mechadendrite, Servo-Arm, Utility Mechadendrite.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Plasma Pistol (40m; S/2/-; 1d10+7 E; Pen 8; Clip 10; Rld 3 Full; Maximal, Overheats, Reliable), Best Craftsmanship Omission Axe (2d10+4 E; Pen 6; Power Field, Unbalanced).

Gear: Data-slate, combi-tool, sacred oils.

BEASTS AND CREATURES

These are the profiles for some of the creatures and wildlife characters might encounter during the adventures in **HAND OF CORRUPTION**.

SAURIAN, FLYING

Numerous different species of these flying creatures live on Saint Annard's Penance. These creatures may be encountered in the end of Chapter I and the beginning of Chapter II.

Flying Saurian Profile (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	--	43	41	45	09	51	21	--	--

Move: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 13

Armour: 2 (All)

Total TB: 6

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Survival (Per) +20.

Talents: Fearless, Heightened Senses (Sight, Smell), True Grit.

Traits: Bestial, Dark Sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Flyer (10), Natural Armour (2), Natural Weapons (Teeth, Claws), Size (6 Enormous), Toxic, Unnatural Strength (+3), Unnatural Toughness (+2).

Armour: None (All 4).

Weapons: Bite (1d10+6† R; Pen 2; Toxic), Claws (1d10+6† R; Pen 0).

Venom: A typical flying Saurian's saliva contains a powerful blood-borne neurotoxin that quickly paralyses its victims, allowing the creature to feed at its leisure. If a flying Saurian makes a successful attack on a Heretic, that Heretic must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test**. Those who succeed take 1d5 points of temporary Ag damage and gain a level of fatigue. Those who fail are wracked with pain and suffer 1d10 Agility Damage per round. If a Heretic isn't treated quickly with anti-venom and a **Hard (-10) Medicae Test**, he loses all of his Agility Points and becomes paralysed. Once all of the victim's Agility points are gone, he takes 1d10 Toughness Damage per round as his organs fail. Once all Toughness points are gone, the Heretic dies.

SAURIAN, LARGE

Stupid and aggressive, these massive, lumbering brutes attack anything that moves. These creatures may be encountered in the end of Chapter I and the beginning of Chapter II.

Large Saurian Profile (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
32	--	65	63	36	14	50	45	--	--

Movement: 8/16/24/48

Wounds: 45

Armour: 5 (All)

Total TB: 10

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +20, Survival (Per) +20.

Talents: Fearless, Heightened Senses (Sight, Smell), True Grit.

Traits and Gifts: Bestial, Brutal Charge (5), Dark Sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (5), Natural Weapons (Teeth, Claws), Quadruped, Size (7 Massive), Stampede, Unnatural Strength (+5), Unnatural Toughness (+4).

Armour: None (5 All).

Weapons: Teeth (1d10+11† R; Pen 0; Tearing), Claws (1d10+11† R; Pen 0; Primitive (7), Tearing).

SAURIAN, SMALL

Vicious bipedal carnosaurus the size of an Ork, they are highly intelligent, tireless, and always hungry. These creatures may be encountered in the end of Chapter I and the beginning of Chapter II.

Small Saurian Profile (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	--	45	53	40	16	50	34	--	--

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 16

Armour: 3 (All)

Total TB: 5

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Survival (Per) +20.

Talents: Fearless, Heightened Senses (Sight, Smell), True Grit.

Traits and Gifts: Bestial, Dark Sight, Deadly Natural Weapons (Teeth), Natural Armour (3), Natural Weapons (Claws), Size (5 Hurling), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (+3).

Armour: None (3 All).

Weapons: Teeth (1d10+7† R; Pen 0; Tearing), Claws (1d10+7† R; Pen 0; Primitive (7), Tearing).

SCARLET CREEPER

Scarlet creepers are unpleasant insects that sometimes swarm through the mines eating everything in their path. These creatures are not intended to be used in a Horde, as they are already a Swarm. These creatures may be encountered as the Heretics make their way through the prison mines in Chapter II and possibly Chapter III.

Scarlet Creeper Profile (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
35	--	11	12	35	08	40	15	--	--

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 30

Armour: None

Total TB: 1

Skills: Awareness (Per), Athletics (S), Survival (Per).

Talents: None.

Traits and Gifts: Bestial, Crawler, Dark Sight, Natural Weapons (Mandibles), Quadruped, Size (Miniscule 1), Swarm, Toxic (4).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Mandibles (1d10+1 R; Pen 1d5; Tearing, Primitive (7)).

Scarlet Creeper Toxin: Whenever a Heretic suffers damage from a Scarlet Creeper attack, they must immediately make a **Difficult (-10) Toughness Test**. With one Degree of Success, the Heretic shrugs off the effects of the creature's venom. With a Degree of Failure, the Heretic takes an additional 1d5 points of Energy Damage every turn for 1d5 turns as the fiery venom courses through their veins and burns them from within. This damage ignores both Armour and Toughness.

III: THE UNDYING LEGIONS



THE NECRONS

Threats abound within the galaxy in the 41st millennium, yet it is an enemy which has existed for countless aeons which now threatens the Heretics. Deep within their tomb worlds, Necrons have lain dormant since before mankind took its first, stumbling steps. These proud monstrosities now rise to reclaim the great empire over which they once held dominion; stirring from their ancient sepulchres after sixty million years to crush the upstart races of flesh and once again take their rightful place as lords of the galaxy.

The legacy of the Necrons begins in a time beyond history, when life was new among the stars and even races thought ancient today were little more than distant possibilities. Born to a world buffeted by stellar winds and solar radiation, the Necrontyr—those who would one day become the Necrons—were a cruelly short-lived species of sickly flesh and corrupt souls. Seeking a reprieve from their hellish, world they sought solace across the stars. Alas, even far from the cancerous gales of their home world, the Necrontyr were beholden to their legacy of death. Despite their short, painful lives, their drive for immortality spread them ever-wider across the void, expanding the boundaries of their empire until they held the great swathes of the galaxy in their sickly grip.

Soon enough, the unity of the Necrontyr was stretched to breaking, and they began to war amongst themselves. For thousands of years, conflict raged among the dynasties of the galactic empire, threatening to tear it asunder, until a common enemy was found. The Old Ones, the first life to stride across the stars and beings possessing immense power and eternal life, had ever been the subjects of the Necrontyr's jealous hatred. Seeking to unify their people once again, the leaders of the Necrontyr declared war on the Old Ones, little expecting the doom that act heralded.

The war was short lived, with great losses borne on both sides, and in time the Necrontyr came to realize the folly of their actions as the Old Ones crushed them. However, the flame of envy and hatred burned fiercely within their frail hearts. It was then that the Silent King—the lord of the doomed Necrontyr—made an alliance with an ancient evil, a powerful but treacherous race of beings known as the C'Tan. These star gods had also gone to war with the Old Ones and been defeated, though they assured the Silent King that, together, they could find victory once and for all. To further entice their would-be allies, the C'Tan promised immortality in the form of metal bodies, which would know no disease, frailty, or death.

The Necrontyr accepted this gift eagerly, though they quickly came to regret their decision. The cost of their immortality was paid with their souls, devoured by the C'Tan during the transference into their new metal shells.

A hollow and soulless people, the Necrons—for they were the Necrontyr no longer—completed their task and defeated the Old Ones beside their C'Tan allies. The Silent King, however, had no intention of ignoring the star gods' treachery. While the C'Tan, invigorated by the souls of the Necrontyr, set about crushing the Old Ones, the Silent King committed only sparingly and marshaled his forces for the battle that was to come. When the war was won and the star gods had spent their last reserves of power, the Silent King set upon the C'Tan and shattered their corporeal forms. Unable to annihilate them utterly, the Necrons set about containing and imprisoning the remnants of the C'Tan throughout their empire.

With their wars won, the Necrons were now masters of the galaxy once again, but at a terrible cost. As the C'Tan had been weakened by their war with the Old Ones, so too had the Necrons become weakened by their war with the C'Tan. Knowing that his people lacked the strength to hold their great empire, the Silent King ordered his people to lay down in a great slumber, to hide from prying eyes and would-be usurpers for sixty million years. Remorseful, the Silent King ordered millions of Tomb Worlds sealed and buried beneath the surface on as many planets throughout the galaxy. Within these tombs the Necrons have slept, for countless generations, as men, Eldar, and other, fouler things raised cities and civilizations on the lands above them; biding their time until the time when they would rise and take their place as lords of the galaxy once again.

THE NECRONS

These are the profiles for the Necrons that the Heretics will encounter during the adventures in **HAND OF CORRUPTION**. Some Necron profiles have been reprinted from the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook to make referencing simpler for the Game Master. All the Necrons are encountered in Chapter III.

CANOPTEK SCARAB

The tiny worker drones of the Necron legions, these metal constructs swarm about the ranks of Necron foot-soldiers. In the tombs of Kalugura, the Scarabs were some of the first constructs awakened, robotic drones that helped in gathering raw materials and defending the tomb when necessary.

Scarab (Troop)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
35	05	10	20	35	05	20	20	05	-	-

Movement: 4/8/16/32

Wounds: 40

Armour: 4 (All).

Total TB: 2

Skills: Stealth (Ag) +20.

Talents: Swift Attack.

Traits: Hoverer (4), Size (2), Machine (4), Deadly Natural Weapons (Disruptor Field), Swarm.

Weapons: Disruptor Field (2d10+1 R; Pen 1d5, Gauss).

Repair: Scarabs can swarm over Necrons, assisting their

reconstruction efforts. Any Scarab Swarm may choose to assist all Necrons within 8 metres in this way as a Full Action, raising the Necron's Regeneration Trait by +5.

C'TAN SHARD OF KALUGURA

A piece of an ancient god trapped in a body of living metal, the C'tan Shard is a horrific engine of destruction. This particular C'tan Shard was entombed on Kalugura aeons ago, possibly at the command of the Silent King, then the supreme overlord of the Necron race.

C'Tan Shard Profile (Master)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
60	50	17	17	40	40	45	55	12	—	—

Movement: 8/16/24/48

Wounds: 80

Armour: 0

Total TB: 17

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Intimidate (WP) +30.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Counter Attack, Crushing Blow, Furious Assault, Hammer Blow, Street Fighting, True Grit, Unarmed Master, Unarmed Warrior.

Traits and Gifts: Dark Sight, Entropic Touch†, Fear (4), From Beyond, Hoverer (6), Immune to Natural Law, Regeneration (5), Size (6 Enormous), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (+10), Unnatural Toughness (+10), Unnatural Agility (+2), The Stuff of Nightmares, Writhing Worldscape††.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Fists (2d10+17 I; Pen 6; Deadly Natural Weapons, Power Field), Transdimensional Thunderbolt††† (75m; S/—/—; 3d10+10; Pen 8; Clip —; Rld —; Concussive (3), Haywire (4), Recharge).

Necrodermis: The C'tan Shard is bound by a living metal Necrodermis that both protects and contains its essence. This grants the C'tan its Regeneration Trait and also provides it with more potent protection. This works as a force field as described on page 178 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook with a Protection Rating of 50.

† **Entropic Touch:** The merest touch of the C'tan Shard's blasphemous, living metal Necrodermis destroys the molecular bonds in lesser metals and alloys, causing them to break down and eventually crumble into dust. When parrying an attacker's weapon, the C'tan Shard may, instead of dealing damage, use its counter attack to damage its opponent's weapon. If the Counter Attack Test is successful, the opponent's weapon sees its Craftsmanship Rating reduced by one step. Once a weapon is reduced to Poor Craftsmanship, or if it began the combat at that Craftsmanship Rating, a subsequent Entropic Touch Attack shatters the weapon, destroying it outright.

The C'tan Shard can also target ranged weapons with its Entropic Touch attack. This requires the creature to make a successful Melee Attack against the weapon, and has the same effect as it does against melee weapons with the added effect of granting the weapon the Unreliable Trait after the first successful attack. In addition, the attack can be used against armour and even cover. When used against armour, the armour loses one Armour Point for every successful attack until its AP

are exhausted and the armour becomes useless. When used against cover, attacks that penetrate the cover's AP reduce the cover's total AP by half the C'tan Shard's WS Bonus.

Immune to Natural Law: The C'tan Shard's very existence is anathema to natural law and it is not bound by petty rules such as gravity or the solidity of matter. The C'tan Shard ignores penalties for difficult terrain and can move through material such as solid rock without penalty (use its Hover speed). The C'tan always Hovers when it moves.

†† **Writhing Worldscape:** The very ground rejects the presence of the C'tan Shard, and bucks and writhes in its passing. An area 20 metres across, centred on the C'tan Shard, becomes Difficult Terrain, imposing all movement penalties as outlined on page 245 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. As it is centred on the C'tan Shard, the area of Difficult Terrain moves with the creature.

††† **Transdimensional Thunderbolt:** The C'tan Shard fires these crackling beams of green energy from the palms of its hands. They are incredibly destructive, but due to their immense power draw they can only be fired once every other round.

IMMORTAL

These towering soldiers of silent death are monuments to the destructive technologies of the Necron legions. Standing over two metres tall, in life, Immortals were sent out to the stars to fight the Necrons' wars. Now, in death, they form the fighting core of the undying legions.

Immortal (Elite)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
30	45	10	10	55	35	40	30	40	15	—

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 30

Armour: 8 (All)

Total TB: 10

Skills: Intimidate (S)+10, Logic (Int)+20, Tech-Use (Int)+20.

Talents: Crack Shot.

Traits: Size (5 Hulking), Machine (8), Unnatural Strength (+5), Unnatural Toughness (+5), Regeneration 5.

Weapons: Gauss Blaster (100m, 2d10 E, Pen 5, S/4/—, Gauss). Weapon Blade (1d10+10 R; Pen 2; Unwieldy).

WEAPON QUALITY: GAUSS

Gauss weapons are terrifying examples of advanced technology. Gauss weapons generate Zealous Hatred on a 9 or 10, and if they would not deal damage when generating Zealous Hatred, they deal 1d5 Wounds instead of 1 (see **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook page 242). In addition, they generate Zealous Hatred against vehicles on a 9 or 0, even if they do not deal damage.

LYCHGUARD

Elite warriors and peerless melee combatants, Lychguard are implacable and consider their movements very carefully. They were originally the bodyguard of Kalugura's overlord Hasist, but, since his destruction, follow the commands of the Cryptek Osiskor. They are utterly loyal.

Lychguard (Elite)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
45	45	55	55	35	30	40	40	15	--	

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 30

Armour: 8 (All)

Total TB: 9

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Intimidate (WP) +20, Parry (WS) +30.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Blade Dancer, Blademaster, Counter Attack, Crippling Strike, Fearless, Flesh Render, Hammer Blow, Precise Blow, Sure Strike, Swift Attack, True Grit, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee).

Traits and Gifts: Dark-Sight, Machine (8), Regeneration (5), Size (5 Hulking), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (+4), Unnatural Toughness (+4).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Hyperphase Sword (1d10+14†R; Pen 5; Balanced, Power Field) and Dispersion Shield (1d5+9 I; Pen 0; Defensive, Dispersion Field†).

†**Dispersion Field:** The massive dispersion shields carried by the Lychguard on Saint Annard's Penance are possessed of an ancient Necron technology known as a dispersion field. Dispersion fields operate much like force fields used by mankind, with a Protection Rating of 60. What makes them unique, however, is their ability to turn aside projectiles and energy blasts. Whenever the Field save blocks a ranged attack that directly targeted the Lychguard (being caught in the blast from a Blast weapon or the cone of a Flame weapon doesn't count), the Lychguard may spend its Reaction and make a Standard Ranged Attack against a single target within 30 metres. If he succeeds, the target is hit by the ranged attack instead.

OSISKOR THE CRYPTEK, HARBINGER OF TRANSMOGRIFICATION

Cunning mechanists, artificers, and techno-sorcerers, Crypteks hold the ancient secrets of their peoples' technology. Osiskor was the Cryptek of Hasist, following his master's orders but secretly lusting after power.

Osiskor Profile (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
45	45	45	45	40	55	50	50	30	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 25

Armour: 8 (All)

Total TB: 8

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

Talents: Master Engineer, Luminen Blast, Luminen Shock, Technical Knock.

Traits and Gifts: Dark Sight, Machine (8), Regeneration (5), Unnatural Intelligence (+5), Unnatural Strength (+4), Unnatural Toughness (+4).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Tremorstave (2d10+8 E; Pen 3; Power Field, Special).

Gear: Seismic Crucible†, Harp of Dissonance††.

Tremorstave: Osiskor's Tremorstave is capable of unleashing a blast of seismic energy in a ripple of fluctuating matter states, causing solid matter to flow like water for a brief wave of commotion. This functions as a ranged attack with the following profile, (300m, 1d10+5 I, Pen 5, Blast 10, Quake). The Quake ability causes anyone hit by the blast (even if they are undamaged) to make a **Hard (-20) Acrobatics Test** or fall prone.

†**Seismic Crucible:** The Cryptek is surrounded by a field that creates localised tremors and spacial disturbances. This operates as a force field, acting as a Best Quality Power Field as listed on page 150 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook against melee attacks.

††**Harp of Dissonance:** A single tone emitted from this device can shatter even the most sturdy objects. This functions as a ranged attack, but, if it hits a target, it shakes the targets equipment and armour apart. All of the targets equipment gains the "Unreliable" quality until repaired, which usually requires an **Easy (+20) Tech-Use Test** and an hour of time. In addition, any armour worn by the target halves its protective value until repaired.

TOMB STALKER

During their epochs-long dormancy, the god-masters of the Necrons left their sepulchres guarded by silent, tireless machines, one of the most fearsome of which is the Tomb Stalker. The Tomb Stalker is an enormous mass of living-metal carapace teeming with flashing legs and possessed of a murderous will. Easily the size of a dozen men, this centipede-like construct makes use of arcane phase-generators, allowing it to stalk the tomb worlds of its slumbering lords, burrowing through solid ground. It uses its powerful senses to trail its prey from miles away and can sense the frenzied rhythm of a panicked heartbeat through hundreds of metres of solid stone. The Stalker's immense size combines with its natural capacity for regeneration to create a nearly indestructible creature. On Kalugura, the Tomb Stalkers remained awake throughout the aeons, protecting their masters' tombs. Now that the tomb world stirs, the Tomb Stalkers continue their vigil even as their ranks are replenished by new crawling horrors.

Tomb Stalker (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
55	30	60 ¹²	60 ¹⁴	55	30	30	30	05	-

Movement: 5/10/20/40**Wounds:** 90**Armour:** 8 (All)**Total TB:** 14**Skills:** Intimidate (S)+10, Logic (Int)+20, Stealth (Ag)+20, Tech-Use (Int)+20.**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Gunslinger, Independent Targeting, Swift Attack, Two Weapon Wielder, Whirlwind of Death.**Traits:** Crawler, Dark Sight, Size (6 Enormous), Regeneration (5), Machine (8), Sturdy, Unnatural Senses (150), Unnatural Strength (+6), Unnatural Toughness (+8).**Weapons:** Brutal Blades (2d10+12 R; Pen 12; Razor Sharp), Crushing Legs (1d10+12; Pen 6), Two Gauss Flayers (Basic; 100m; 1d10+8 E; Pen 3; S/2/—; Clip —; Reload —; Gauss).**Phase Tunnelling:** Tomb Stalkers can erupt from anywhere, attacking from walls or the ground. Tomb Stalkers can move through solid, inert (unliving) matter at their regular speed, burrowing and boring holes even in solid rock and collapsing the tunnel behind it. It never suffers penalties for difficult terrain.**Multi-target Protocols:** The Tomb Stalker has advanced targeting routines and may use both Gauss Flayers with Two Weapon Wielder (Ballistic) as if they were pistols. It may also target any two targets in range, as per the Independent Targeting Talent.**A Thousand Legs:** As a Half Action the Tomb Stalker may make one attack with its Crushing Legs against every target in melee. These attacks follow all the rules for Standard Attacks except they gain a +0 bonus instead of the standard +10 bonus. It may still make an attack with its Brutal Blades as a second Half Action (an exception to the normal rules to multiple attack actions).

WARRIOR

The Warriors of the Necrons once were the common citizenry of the Necron Empire. Now, they are, each and every one, transformed into soulless fighters, the limitless ranks that make up the undying legions. On Kalugura, there are perhaps millions of Necron Warriors, each waiting to wake and begin war anew at their master's command.

Necron Warrior (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
30	45	45 ⁸	45 ⁸	25	25	30	40	15	-

Movement: 3/6/9/18**Wounds:** 20**Armour:** 6 (All)**Total TB:** 8**Skills:** Intimidate (S)+10, Logic (Int)+20, Tech-Use (Int)+20.**Talents:** Crack Shot.**Traits:** Size (5 Hulking), Machine (6), Unnatural Strength (+4), Unnatural Toughness (+4), Regeneration 5.**Weapons:** Gauss Flayer (Basic; 100m; 1d10+8 E; Pen 3; S/2/—; Clip —; Reload —; Gauss), Weapon Blade (1d10+8 R; Pen 2; Unwieldy).

PLANETARY DATAFAX: LIMOGENES IV (SAINT ANNARD'S PENANCE)

Population: Estimated 15 Million

Tithe Grade: Exactus Tertius

Special Notation: Penal World for Malfian Sub-Sector prison influx plus Gulganna Reach overflow.

Geography/Demography: Hot/Desert; primary planetary climate is extremely arid with high temperatures and a higher than average concentration of caustic alkaline dust and mild toxins. Climate windy and dry in general, with intermittent violent precipitation and constant high winds. Temperatures range from 24 degrees to 32 degrees Celsius in summer cycle, and -10 degrees to -15 degrees Celsius during winter cycle. Standing water supplies limited to alkaline-concentrated subterranean reservoirs. Landscape dominated by dust planes punctuated by mountain ranges covers the surface. Iron and low-grade adamantium ore veins found in deep strata (see Trade/Economy). Biosphere limited to lichen/grass level flora, with abnormally large saurian predator-forms.

No indigenous population. Planetary population consists primarily of prison inmates, with remainder split between prison support staff, Adeptus Arbiters Arbitrators, and Imperial Guard garrison. Early onset lung/skin cancer and respiratory failure common amongst population. Life expectancy 25% lower than majority of Calixis Sector planets of comparable Tithe Grade.

Government Type: Adeptus Arbiters Administration.

Imperial Commander: Warden Phineas Morn.

Adept Presence: High; the Adeptus Arbiters maintain a substantial enforcement and administrative staff. Additional Adeptus Terra presence includes Departmento Munitorium Imperial Guard garrison, Administratum staff, and minor Imperial Navy support activity—limited to rotating Navy warships, system defence vessels, and orbital support voidstations.

Military: Departmento Munitorium maintains Imperial Guard garrison consisting of roughly 10,000 soldiers, though this number fluctuates depending on troop deployments.

Trade/Economy/Addendum: Saint Annard's Penance is a major Sector manufacturing centre for 9-70 entrenching tools, lamp packs, socks, laspistol holsters, lasgun blessed sight calibrators, Morius MkVIII respirator filters, body bags, Triptech M401 Transporters, Category CVII Hull Plating, .5 litre canteens, and Mk 01145-5b Power Couplings. Mining facilities produce constant supply of steel and adamantium, though most used in indigenous industry.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE SCREAMING VORTEX

The Limoges System is dangerously near the Screaming Vortex, a factor that makes warp travel to it difficult and time consuming. In fact, some Imperial Adepts have theorized that the system may have been scoured by upwellings in the Vortex at some point in its past, resulting in the inhospitable climate and lack of native life beyond ferocious saurian creatures. Some have even argued that the only way for the abnormally large saurians to evolve on a world with such primitive plant life would be through the warp's mutating influence.

Although all these facts makes Limoges seem a poor place for human habitation, they do make the planet ideal for a prison. Isolated from much of the Calixis Sector and next to impossible to escape from, Saint Annard's Penance has quickly become a valuable Penal world for the Malfian Sub-Sector and Gulganna Reach.



... and let not the worlds of light swell away from darkness. Let them, instead, be bathed in the flame of cloying shadows; be called by the beckoning tendrils of Empyrean fire; be lured from the Void by the hungry shades of Symmaterysm. To call forth the wraiths of flame and shadow, blood and darkness, the disciples must swear a compact; must act as one, their minds turned to one purpose. Let them swear their service in blood, not their own, but of the innocent, the righteous, and the unspoilt. From among them, from those sworn to this service, the Cantor must himself be chosen; the black soul whose voice will rise above his brethren in the words of power, supplication and sacrifice; he who will call the powers of darkness forth to swallow the worlds of the unfaithful.

Beside the devout shall mass the ranks of the fearful and the desperate. Souls numbering three and sixty, who might add their ragged voices to the choir of damnation. Atop a great height shall the faithful be arrayed, that their tell supplications might be heard beyond the boundaries of reality; carried by winds of madness through the infinite oceans of the Symmaterysm. About them shall be laid the circle of power, its construction utter madness and sheer perfection. Let no errant sigil mar its form, allow no deviation. The hallowed circle shall be drawn with the blood of the corpse-god's own faithful, tarnished silver mixed throughout.

As the star of Chaos has eight cardinals, so too shall the circle; each marked with the fleshless skull of a traitor, sworn. Atop each skull shall rest a candle, a taper of wax, the powdered bones of the valiant slain, and the

blood of martyrs. Their balefire shall illuminate the sacrifice and the light of the Empyrean shall flay the souls of the sacrificed. Upon the ground shall there lay the Souls of the Sacrificed. Four their shall be, to appease the Gods in turn. The Lords of the Symmateria demand their toll and for each shall be apportioned one soul. Charity to Khorne, who takes from all; Law to Tzeentch, who twists the galaxy to his whims; Piety to Slaanesh, who reveres naught but himself; Security to Nurgle, who brings low all in time.

Let these souls be bound in cords of flesh and steel that they shall know helplessness before the Gods of Darkness. Let them be laid before the Cantor, that his prayers might fall upon them and cause them to tremble. And when the last prayer is uttered, let their throats be cut with a blade of gold, that their blood might spill upon the runes of power and send the supplications of the Cantor screaming to that place of Empyrean light and warpture. This done, the daemons shall surely know the Cantor for their own and shall draw him and his world into their dominion; and with this sacrifice, let us again tread the sublime paths of the Screaming Vortex...

Could it be? Could this rite truly pull a world into the Screaming Vortex?