



DARK HERESY™

ENEMIES BEYOND™

THE ORDO MALLEUS
OF THE ASKELLON SECTOR

WARHAMMER®
40,000
ROLEPLAY



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ONLY IN SERVICE TO THE EMPEROR IS A SOUL AT PEACE.

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You are sure this is the room? Where the Daemon's trail began?" Isen droned from the vox-grill covering his lower jaw. The Tech-Priest displayed a worn auspex showing nothing but the glowing emerald icons representing the three Acolytes, even as his primary mechadendrite continued to shine a wide-beam stablight around the dark interior.

Nasi ignored him and the auspex. Her eyes followed the beam in search of targets, twin bolt pistols still smoking from the final clash that got them into Lord Kotromahn's inner demesne.

Their initial search of the lavish state room had uncovered only a pair of eviscerated servants amidst torn furniture; after what the trio had witnessed earlier, no one batted an eye at the corpses. The room itself seemed just as dead, unlit like the rest of this level of Hive Desoleum and quiet save for the soft liquid sounds of a silverfall curtain along one wall.

Sophronia turned, though, and glared at the red-robed Tech-Priest. "As much as can be," she snarled, golden fire quickly forming a corona around her grey-haired head. "The Warp doesn't allow for the precious 'certainty' you worship." She caught herself, and gave a long sigh. "My apologies, Isen," she said, pulling the flames back within her. "It's been a trying day."

That was an understatement, Nasi thought, but kept silent. They were all in bad shape after fighting through a hive gone mad.

"Your intent was perhaps to insult, but your statement is still accurate." Isen's mechanical voice continued, calm as ever. "As is your reflection on recent events. We are indeed less than optimal."

"Quite." Sophronia even managed a slight smile. "But yes, the Warp spoor is oldest in this room. Whatever emerged and went downhive began its rampage from within this room."

Nasi decided they needed more light, and tossed a glowglobe onto a tall cabinet. Now the disarray was more apparent, a tiny echo of the devastation that had ripped through Desoleum in just hours. The slaughter-filled eruptions alone might have been ignored if it were not for the other reports their Inquisitor intercepted. Shrines dissolving into amethyst ooze, oath-cogs deforming into obscene shapes, icons growing teeth and biting their bearers—and these were just from within upper levels within the Apex itself.

Luckily (for whom, Nasi was not certain), the warband had been still in the hive following up a lead on the arch-heretek Somnius Halbrel. The local Sanctionaries were at a loss, but Isen had quickly connected the curving vertical path of the reports. Inquisitor Karlzan commandeered a squad of Arbitrators to follow the trail downwards, where the instances were freshest. The three Acolytes had gone upwards, following the trail of deaths and worse.

As they moved uphive, each new level revealed new horrors, nightmares of flayed skin, barbed flesh, and melded bones. The worst, though, were the crazed hivers still alive, and the excessive force needed to bring them down. The further up they went, though, the drier the blood and the colder the bodies. Now they were at the origin of it all, if Sophronia's Warp-senses were true. Thousands dead, ten times that ruined. All from a single Daemon.

"Interesting. So this is her parlour," Isen noted. They all looked as he indicated the huge portrait dominating one wall. Lady Cassia Kotromahn, infamous first daughter of one of Hive Desoleum's rulers, as perfect, elegant, and deadly as the xenos blade held in one velvet-gloved hand. Even they had heard the hive tales of her many duels. She never lost, she never repeated the intricate scars she sliced into her opponents, and she always ensured each new scar she left was more memorable than the last.

Nasi turned and found herself staring at the silverfall curtain. She hadn't seen one of these rare archaeotech devices since she'd abandoned her own Apex life here for downhive excitement and then service to Karlzan. It was entrancing as it flowed like soft fabric, and even more so as she thought of the elaborate power fields needed to liquify and guide the metal. *Wait a second. Power?*

"Power's dead on this level," she said worriedly. "How is this silverfall still working?" Her reflection in the liquid mirror stared back at her, then suddenly broken into a smile and shifted into a face Nasi had only seen once before, moments ago. On a portrait.

Nothing human could have emerged intact from the terrible stress of the power fields driving the silverfall, and nothing human did. Its purple-hued flesh flexed under thin strips of cloth that dripped like magenta rivers, and twisting horns tangled with amethyst masses of hair that swayed as if underwater. One hand was a huge serrated claw, while the other melded with the xenos blade, the flesh gnawing along the alien material and the weeping gems along the hilt. The liquid silverfall metal stretched around it as it sinuously came forth, as if repelled by the unnatural flesh.

"Playthings," it said, each syllable rippling through the air like a lash. "I saw you from within. How nice of you to come to me."

Any other day, the Acolytes might have collapsed or run, but not today, not after what they had faced earlier. Sophronia brought her arms up, weaving auric flames into a protective shield. Nasi and Isen fired as one, her heavy pistols and his massive hand cannon disgorging chunks of rubbery flesh with each hit.

The creature only laughed, a horrid melody that tore at their ears. It moved in a blur, and an arc of the blade sent Isen's arm sparking to the floor, still gripping his gun. A powerful backhand from its clawed arm hurled Nasi and Sophronia into a far wall.

Nasi raised herself up, dazedly seeing the scene reflected in the silverfall curtain, but then noticed there was something missing. "In the mirror..." she uttered. "The thing casts no reflection!"

"She is elsewhere," the creature said, gliding forward and smiling again with too many daggered teeth. "My own reflection emerged from my favourite silverfall for my ultimate duel. We were perfection together, and such was our dance that my Prince gifted me with a new form to enter the mirrored lands. I, in turn, gifted my new sister with a hive to dance with." It made ready to leap.

"Not dancing any more." The words came from the doorway. Inquisitor Evangelyne Karlzan's normally impeccable attire was a ruin, revealing cracked and ichor-stained power armour, but her thrice-blessed power sword still gleamed its purity. Her voice was hoarse, and Nasi knew it must have come from the draining rites of daemonic banishment. That their Inquisitor was here, though, and another Daemon was not, made Nasi believe for the first time today they might actually live through this.

"My thanks, Acolytes, for leaving the trail of bodies," Karlzan continued. "It always makes it easier to find you."

The creature spat something that burned into the floor, its perfect face growing contorted. "I know of you, lackey-pet," it hissed. "They whisper of you within the mirror. Yours will be a very slow, very exquisite end."

"Brave words, little Daemon," Nasi said strongly, surprising herself—and Karlzan, she imagined—with the conviction. She saw Isen remove the hand cannon from his severed arm to ready it, and Sophronia glow with the Emperor's Light. Her Inquisitor strode to her side, power sword crackling with energy, and Nasi drew her chainsword. "Last duel for you. Nobody messes with my hive."

INTRODUCTION

"They are beyond comprehension, beyond mortal flesh, beyond even time and mortality. They are beyond many things, but never my hate!"

—Inquisitor Lias du Ortise, Ordo Malleus

There is perhaps no more horrid foe to humanity than the Daemon, for it is the bane of all that lives. The Daemon is not merely a heretic to be hunted and killed, or an alien to be captured and eradicated. Each is the creation of one of the four terrible Gods of Chaos, brought into existence to carry out the commands of its lord, though perhaps the worst are those who were once mortals and were elevated to daemonhood as the ultimate reward for their service. No matter the form it takes or the methods it uses, it is a creature of lies and pain, whose very existence is anathema to reality itself.

Mortal minds cannot process the aberrance of a Daemon's nature, for it is utterly unnatural. It reaches back to primordial nightmares that predate humanity's sentience, a visceral response to something that should not share the same reality as living beings. Reason falls to madness when faced with such a creature, and even the staunchest of warriors collapses to trembling knees with sanity forever shattered.

These dangers also come from the very place each Daemon is birthed: the Realm of Chaos, where raw emotions swirl in maelstroms of power and assume mockeries of sentience. It is a restless domain, with terrible Warp Storms that consume entire systems and plunge worlds into morasses of madness. Souls are taken in such places, or through infernal bargains and base conquest. For this is what makes the threat of the Daemon so terrible to humanity: that it is not sanity or body, but to the soul.

It is the duty of Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes to stand against these threats from beyond. Unlike the battles against human heretics or alien species, theirs is a war that must be waged in secrecy. Mankind uses the Warp both for travel and communication, but widespread knowledge of its true nature and the ravenous beings that dwell within would plunge systems into anarchy and surely destroy the Imperium. It is also a war that can never truly end, for these foes exist outside of time and rational existence. Even so, those who fight against such threats know their efforts are utterly essential not just for Mankind's survival, but the survival of reality itself.

Enemies Beyond reveals more of the secrets of the Ruinous Powers and their actions within the Askellon Sector, and is divided into three chapters:

CHAPTER I: MALLEUS

The Warp and those who dwell within it have long been a part of Askellian history, dating to before Mankind arrived in this region of space, but growing ever more intertwined with the Pandaemonium's raging fury across the millennia. In this chapter, players can learn more of the nature of Daemons and their realms, and how these creatures seek to devour all of reality. It also illuminates the activities of Ordo Malleus Inquisitors and their Acolytes within the sector, including the hidden quest to uncover the secrets that tie the origins of Askellon to the raging Warp Storm known as the Pandaemonium.

CHAPTER II: THE WAR FOR SOULS

The struggle against the denizens of the Warp ever requires new fighters, and in this chapter players find new options for creating Acolytes as part of this war, from new character creation options to new talents and psychic powers. They can wield new weaponry and armour, or even discover some of the terrible Daemonic Remnants that are the basis of many dark myths throughout the Askellon Sector. Players can even learn the secrets of creating Daemonhosts, conducting exorcisms, brokering Dark Pacts, and other means of fighting the Enemies Beyond—often with tools that would brand their characters as foul a threat as any Daemon.

CHAPTER III: TERRORS FROM THE IMMATERIUM

The Ruinous Powers extend their foul touch upon worlds across Askellian space, and this concluding chapter examines several locations and the daemonic terrors they face, along with new player options to create Acolytes hailing from each. The four daemonic pantheons are also covered, including their roles across the sector's history and the Daemons who wage their war for souls. Game Masters also gain support for running Ordo Malleus themed adventures, representing the taint of the Warp during encounters, developing clues linked to the Warp and its horrid creatures, and even creating new Daemon Princes to act as supreme threats for characters fighting the Enemies Beyond.





CHAPTER I: MALLEUS

If the Ordo Xenos guards the body of humanity from the invading threat of the alien, and the Ordo Hereticus guards humanity's mind from its own false, weak, and seditious thoughts, then the Ordo Malleus has the hard and heavy task of defending the Imperium's soul. A soul is a terrifyingly fragile thing to protect, and an elusive thing to fight over. Strengthen the body and educate the mind, yes, but fortifying the soul against damnation is no simple matter of exercising it like a muscle, schooling it in a new skill, or inuring it to a mundane toxin. No human has the strength to engage with the Warp and keep his soul intact, and the Inquisition has learned through bitter experience that allowing oneself to believe otherwise is one of the most dangerous forms of hubris. Charlatans, traitors, and deluded optimists claim otherwise, but their inevitable failures bring worse consequences than simple disappointment, exposing not only themselves but uncounted loyal Imperial subjects to catastrophe.

The only way to keep humanity from the slide into damnation is to barricade any Warp contamination away, seal and quarantine it, and to burn away all trace of contact should the quarantine ever slip. Through battle, banishment, and destruction the Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes work to keep the Daemon at bay, and where it appears, their unflinching duty is to purify the point of contact and scour away any remaining spiritual pollution.

Such a defence is out of the question for Inquisitors themselves, who must seek out and confront the incursion of the Warp in order to spare the species as a whole. Inquisitors deny the Warp a hold on themselves with will, faith, and dogma, walling off the human weaknesses through which corruption finds its way into them. Even so, to take up the seal of the Hammer is an implicit acceptance of the possibility, some say the certainty, of madness and spiritual destruction.

This is the damning paradox of the Inquisition. The Ordo Malleus is pledged to defend humanity's soul even as they must cut themselves off from humanity itself, taking on a dread responsibility that stains their own hands red with the blood of their fellow humans for the rest of their lives.

Every Inquisitor must find his own answer. Some take refuge in unthinking enactment of their duty, sealing away conscience with all their other weaknesses; some try to reason their way through it and weaken themselves on the poisoned fruit of doubt and guilt. Others deny the paradox's necessity, believing they can find a way to carry out their work without paying the cost in blood and spirit. Such naïve thoughts are often the first steps on the twisting downward path into Radicalism and destruction.

PROTECTING SOULS

"I can see you, you know. No, not that clammy plug of flesh you're imprisoned in. I see you. The light that the meat can't hide. I look at you and I see the moment it ignited and made you. I see the moment when it gutters out. And I will taste it, little thing, and I will adore it, and oh, are you weeping? What a dear little will-o-the-wisp you are!"

—The Daemonhost Morthelio,
during the shriving of the Black Ship *Sharema Requii*

The psyker strain has grown stronger with every generation in the Imperium's ten-thousand-year existence. The human soul glows in the Warp like a bonfire-spark, but the psyker burns bright as a star—or perhaps the beacon-light marking an open door. For the mind of a psyker pushes open a pinhole link into the Warp, offering the predators of the Realms of Chaos not only a vulnerable essence to feed on but a crack into reality through which they can manifest.

The Warp is an endless, blasting sea of power, entropy, will, contradiction, and emotion. Its extremes are marked by the four great god-storms known as the Ruinous Powers. These Chaos Gods—Khorne, Tzeentch, Nurgle, and Slaanesh—are locked in endless conflict throughout their timeless existences. They war on each other not only with their own essential natures and powers but through their servant creations, little bundles of coherent will and purpose tied off from their masters and sent out to do their bidding. At their crudest, these simple creations act on instincts barely more sophisticated than those of a plant turning toward the sun, or one amoeba enclosing another. At their most sophisticated, they are warlords and princes of their hellish dimension, imbued with intellect, knowledge, and raw power to match any hero or demigod of human mythology. These are the Daemons of Chaos.

Daemons do not confine their constant war to the Sea of Souls. Crucially, they are able to enter material reality, granting their parent god a way to extend its will into the mortal world and there attack, entangle, degrade, and defile its inhabitants.

This is the relationship of the Daemon to the mortal, that of predator, conqueror, and an implacable spiritual threat, capable of not just murdering a mortal body but corrupting its mind and consuming its soul. They are more alien than the most exotic of xenos, birthed in a reality that is infinitely malleable not by crude force but by will, imagination, and emotion. Daemons experience space, time, and causality in ways incomprehensible to material creatures. To humans, the Warp is a sanity-shredding entropic delirium; to Daemons, our universe is a parched, suffocating coffin, desirous only because of the souls to be devoured within.

The fluid existence of Daemons is both their greatest strength and their most devastating weakness. They can wrap around human minds like a tenacious parasite, shaping themselves to the worst terrors or most hidden desires of their prey. But their exquisite sensitivity to human emotion and thought also makes them vulnerable. Abstract concepts like "faith" and "meaning" can injure or repel Daemons like a weapon, or bind them the way physical laws bind mortals. Many rituals and wards use the vulnerability of Daemons to pattern and belief as a tool to master them or a bulwark against them. Such techniques are full of physical and spiritual danger, but they are the foundation of humanity's defences when the denizens of Chaos invade.

BURROWING WORMS IN THE FLESH OF THE REAL

Daemons enter the mortal world where the order of reality is disrupted and the madness of the Sea of Souls wells up like a hidden aquifer through broken ground. Just as that water might soften the earth into marsh, the Warp seeps through threadbare-thin reality to create strange, haunted places where the grip of physics slips and phantasms awaken in the corner of the eye. Such soft places are unsafe, certainly, but they pale beside the hell of an open Warp rift.

Where a rift forms, the Immaterium comes boiling through into reality like a geyser struck from the living rock. Rifts can form spontaneously, as fierce Warp storms just beyond the material veil tear their way through reality for a time. Such rifts are more common in the empty gloom between systems, where the distant gravity wells of stars and planets are less able to keep the fabric of space pressed into place. They can also be opened "naturally," if such a word can apply, by great calamities that unite millions or billions of living minds in rage, rapture, or anguish, churning the Immaterium into a frenzy that splits reality.

On the other hand, the breach can be as small as a single mind. Human psykers create a circuit between their material body and the bright flare of the soul anchored to it. While they use that power to distort reality around them to potent and miraculous effect, it is only a matter of time before it betrays them. Powerful psykers eventually pull enough Immaterial power through their minds that reality erodes like a breached seawall, condemning themselves to an agonising death as body and mind burst and the Daemons pour through. Weaker psykers face a more insidious but just as frightening danger, a soft contamination seeping through the fault line in their minds, gradually dissolving their own thoughts and personalities, emptying their bodies out into vessels ripe for daemoniac possession.



INQUISITOR QUIXOS

The tale of Inquisitor Quixos is the quintessential tragedy of Inquisition, the fall of a great hero into the trap of hubris, corruption, treachery, and damnation. A great champion and protector of humanity in his prime, it was Quixos' cursed fate to be wounded by a Daemon that left a fragment of itself near his heart, slowly twisting him from within. Quixos did not resist the change but chose to embrace it, foolishly believing that he could channel and master the power leaking into him.

By the time Inquisitor Gregor Eisenhorn tracked him to his lair, Quixos was corrupted beyond physical recognition, surrounded by insane psykers and pet abominations he had bound into Daemonhosts and even into the sword he carried. He had lost all sight of his calling, spreading treachery within the Inquisition and committing atrocities such as the Spatian Gate disaster to further his aim of accumulating psykers and Warp-tainted artefacts. And yet even at the moment of his execution, Quixos insisted to Inquisitor Eisenhorn that he alone was on the right path, able to turn the Warp back on itself and save the Imperium.



IN THE SERVICE OF THE HAMMER

"My oath of service will be the death of me. If I do not give up my life in battle, then to become worthy I must become something that means the death of the man I am now. I have seen that change in my mistress, and it haunts me. And my fear of it is what shows me I am still unfit to carry on her work."

—Jerren Oberzin, Acolyte to Inquisitor Diala Endenvarr

It is bad enough that unrestrained psykers and raw natural disaster can birth a daemonic invasion, but the Ordo Malleus must also combat the most heinous crime against humanity, and against all mortal life: the deliberate conjuration of Daemons. The heretics who indulge in such works take advantage of existing weaknesses, seeking out foul shrines in Warp-haunted places or subjecting psykers to bloody torments to force open their connection with the Immaterium. But there are also ways to create such weaknesses and faults, exploiting the Warp's ability to be shaped by will and pattern. Carefully ritualised acts honed over millennia of arcane studies focus mundane obscenities and atrocities into a battering ram against reality. A simple murder might cause a brief flurry in the Warp; a homicidal betrayal by a trusted friend, carried out at the culmination of a long period of ritualised torment, including patterns and fetishes that hold meaning for the Ruinous Powers, reverberates through the Warp like a thunderclap.

Once it manifests in the material realm, a Daemon's days as a physical entity are numbered. However it resembles flesh, blood, bone, or armour, it is simply a knot of force, a pattern pressed into reality and filled with energy bled from the Warp. The Daemon instantly starts to dissipate in the lifeless environment of real space like an ice carving melting in the blazing sun, soon to weaken and soak back into the Immaterium if it cannot sustain itself somehow. A creature of Chaos must seek out more power from the Warp to prolong its material existence, so as to more fully accomplish its creator-god's desires. Thus an apparently unstoppable daemonic invasion may suddenly pause in its conquests to engage in unhallowed ceremonies or create specially-defiled places.

With lengthy manifestations so hard to maintain, the possession of a living host offers an alternative foothold. Once again, the Daemon exploits the nature of humans as a psychically-gifted species: except for the soulless Untouchables, even the bluntest of human minds generates a small spark in the Warp and so hosts a tiny flicker of soul. In possession, the Daemon overwhelms that spark and replaces it with its own foul light.

Possession offers the Daemon a solid form, one which does not require an exhausting labour of will to continue existing outside of the Warp. Even with such a home, however, its position is still precarious. Human vessels are a fine fit, but the Daemon is still an intruder, and given enough time its power distorts, degrades, and consumes its stolen body. A Daemon relying on possession to remain in reality must take care not to break its vessels and may have to possess human after human to survive. The creators of Daemonhosts, meanwhile, often deliberately restrain their foul creations from using their full power, trying to keep the mortal and daemonic halves of their servant in some kind of equilibrium.

In theory, the remit of the Ordo Malleus is simple. Wherever the Daemon seeks entry to reality, deny it; wherever the Daemon sets foot in reality, destroy it; wherever the Daemon leaves a trace of itself in reality, obliterate it. In practice, this war is maddening, thankless, and never-ending. Even its victories are often as cruel to the Imperial servants who win them as to the enemies they vanquish.

The saying that knowledge is power has never been truer than of the daemonic. The other Ordos confront humans with different beliefs or aliens with different biology, but the Ordo Malleus battles an enemy from a different reality defined by utterly foreign and unnatural laws. Part of that difference is that knowledge of the daemonic is not a neutral thing: it is active, animate, and works on the minds and souls of those who study it. But while there are stories of staunchly Puritanical Inquisitors who try to maintain a safe ignorance by filtering knowledge of the enemy through data engines and expendable servants, the fact remains that without understanding the unique powers and weaknesses of the Enemy Beyond, the war against the Daemon is doomed to fail.

The Ordo Malleus works to expand its knowledge in many ways. The most basic is to comb through the vast accumulated history of the Imperium, picking out evidence from humanity's millennia of experience against this enemy. This is still not a simple task. The Imperium's obsession with documentation has created insane quantities of records and archives, whole landmasses and even planets being given over to storing them. At the same time, it is shockingly callous about burning gigantic datavaults and executing regiments of scribes and clerks to suppress the most trivially inconvenient facts. Neglect, incompetence, and the simple inertia of the vast Adeptus Administratum bureaucracy also compounds the damage wrought by malice and active error, but still there are many gems of data to be found amidst crumbling mountains of parchment, dataslates, and scrolls.

Inquisitorial agents also study the sites of incursions. Even when a daemonic manifestation has gone, there is valuable information to gain from forensic analysis, psychometry, and possibly from the ravings of victims and witnesses before they are released into the Emperor's Grace. Inquisitors and their Acolytes even travel outside the Imperium's borders on such missions, drawing information from xenos relics, degenerate human cultures, or strange quasi-natural Warp-signs. Most perilously of all, some are drawn into acquiring and studying works of outright heresy, obscene treatises created not as a guide to combating the daemonic but as a tool for Warpcraft.

The Ordo Malleus puts this knowledge to use by creating weapons and techniques to employ in battle. The creation of such specialised equipment is challenging without some knowledge of its eventual use, so the Ordo Malleus struggles to commission equipment from Imperial sources—there is much lore it does not even entrust to the Adeptus Mechanicus, or only parcel out in fragments too small to reveal their true purpose. As a result, the Ordo Malleus has become expert at creating its own wargear, and secretive forges produce force weapons, Warp-deflecting Aegis Suits, and other devices to combat the daemonic threat. Meanwhile, its Inquisitors labour under the burden of their sanity-stretching knowledge to better understand how to thwart, repel, and banish their enemies.

Open battle with the Daemon is the final calling of the Ordo Malleus, and every last one of its Inquisitors must be prepared to sacrifice life, soul, and sanity in confrontation with the Warp if needed. Because they cannot trust or educate any outside the Ordo Malleus on the true threat they face, many Daemonhunters specialise in combating their foes face to face—either on their own, or leading a force of the Ordo Malleus' Chamber Militant, the Grey Knights.

A GREAT AND TERRIBLE BURDEN

Knowledge of the Daemon is infection, not information. It does not remain passive in a human mind, but gnaws at its carrier's thoughts and desires, and tries to spread itself to new hosts. To those who do not understand this, the Ordo Malleus' brutal suppression of such knowledge seems barbaric; to those who do, it is a necessary sin which sits heavy with those who act as the Emperor's Will.

After an incursion has been vanquished and all the Warp's mortal vessels and instruments have burned, the Ordo Malleus must carry out the sombre work of concealment, cauterising Imperial society at the contact point. Any who witnessed the manifestation of daemonic forces with enough clarity to understand what they were seeing are granted the Emperor's Mercy. Those further removed—they who saw the aftermath, or only a scrap of the manifestation that they cannot understand or explain—may well be rounded up and killed alongside the closer witnesses, but such sentences have been known to be commuted. Inquisitors may also eliminate those who try to protect or comfort any survivors.



Valued assets such as Space Marines or Officio Assassinorum agents (or possibly novice Acolytes not prepared for such truths) might be mind-wiped, although the fierce debates about how effective this is are unlikely to ever end, for while the mind may not remember, the soul can never forget. Harsh as this is, the archives of the Ordo Malleus record too many times when soft-heartedness undid an Inquisitor, a hive, or an entire world. Whether it is a single round through the skull of a pleading witness, or the Exterminatus of a world of billions, those of the Ordo Malleus must be prepared to drench their hands in blood.

PURITANS AND RADICALS

"I am familiar with the arguments. They utterly appal me. Radical thought is heretical."

—Attributed to Inquisitor Gregor Eisenhorn
(in his younger years)

It is the oldest and most fundamental temptation of the Inquisitor: to harness the psyker, enslave the Daemon, use the power flowing from the Warp as a weapon against the very entities who manifest from that power. The feud between Puritan dogma and Radical experimentation has defined the Inquisition since its inception. Treatises and debates on the matter could fill a whole planet of libraries—indeed, somewhere in the Imperium it undoubtedly has.

The work of the Ordo Malleus distils the temptation to Radicalism into an almost mythic clarity, making every aspect of it brighter and more vivid: the impossibly high stakes, the grandeur of the power and success it offers, the horror of the consequences of failure. All this comes during a lifelong war against an enemy whose merest touch is enough to taint human judgement and subtly distort the moral compass. Small wonder, then, that even Inquisitors who fiercely cling to the Puritan path can end up unbalanced at best, or obsessive and deranged extremists at worst.

Few Inquisitors fling themselves headlong into Radicalism at the outset of their careers—neither the Ordo Malleus or the Inquisition as a whole could have survived without learning how to police its new and aspiring members. While some cunning Radicals have succeeded in advancing their equally far-gone protégés to become Inquisitors themselves, by and large the Ordos have kept their new members within stable and orthodox bounds. A taste for Radical thought is more likely to develop as part of the work of the Inquisition itself.

Even setting aside the poor souls who fall victim to daemonic weaponry (such as the tragic and infamous wounding of Inquisitor Quixos), the Daemon is cunning and protean, able by its nature to flow into shape around its adversary's mind. Anger, pride, ambition, despair, vengeance—all offer cracks through which wonderful enticements are glimpsed. Some see the power to destroy the enemy with its own energies. Others feel the pride saying that those who succumbed and fell were weak, that this time it will be different, that they are only taking a small step and are still in control. The Daemon needs only the slow turn of morality, so that simple knowledge and curiosity seem innocent, free of consequence or moral dimension; even the lure of noble self-sacrifice is a deadly weapon, when fanned into false and selfish fantasies of heroic martyrdom.



THE TAXONOMY OF RADICALISM

Inquisitors' careers are as unique as their often-extreme personalities, but the trajectory into Radicalism within the Ordo Malleus tends to follow broadly recognisable stages, even if only in hindsight as a fallen Inquisitor's colleagues pick over the evidence of his life.

A very common first step is simply the acquisition of knowledge. The virtuous pursuit of the small, clean, and ignorant mind is a luxury that Inquisitors must set aside before they assume their position—all must know their enemy. It is a rare Inquisitor who can stick to the narrowest reading of that saying, learning only the broadest generalities, having Acolytes strip each new observation of context so that a growing body of knowledge cannot bewitch their minds with the promise of secrets. Most Inquisitors find it essential to their calling to know daemonic marks and names, and to study infamous case histories and treatises.

Often, it does not stop there, for it is a basic human urge to understand, to fit experiences into the framework of a known and knowable world. Once an Inquisitor has witnessed the transformative power of the daemonic at first hand, there comes the terrible instinct to try to make sense of it, reduce the unknowable blasphemy of the Warp to something that sits within a sane worldview. During this search for understanding, the first drops of forbidden knowledge feel very right. They seem to recast the enemy into something rational and controllable, even as that enemy's influence begins to distort the Inquisitor's judgement and rot his mind.

When knowledge is power, the short step from acquiring such lore to using it seems perfectly rational. If an Inquisitor would not balk at using a Daemon's true name to drive it back into the Immaterium (and very few would), then employing slightly more esoteric divining practices to discover that true name would seem a small and sensible compromise. When that research also uncovers a way to foresee the Daemon's next manifestation, then how many members of an organisation that prides itself on ruthless pragmatism for a higher cause would decide that the end justifies these means? With this, the steps begin to lead downward.


GREGOR EISENHORN

One of the most famous Inquisitors currently active and one of the most controversial, Eisenhorn began his career in the Ordo Xenos until his encounter with the alien Warp-grimoire known as the Necroteuch brought him onto the trail of the corrupted Inquisitor Quixos. Eisenhorn pursued and unmasked the deranged Inquisitor, finally killing the traitor in single combat.

That was many years ago, however. Once respected, even lionised, Gregor Eisenhorn has himself drifted into Radicalism within the Ordo Malleus, and exists only in the fringes of Imperial society. He is known to consort freely with the Daemonhost Cherubael, an entity he once considered a mortal enemy, and is believed to have added Warpcraft to his already formidable psychic gifts. His fellow Inquisitors now wonder if his agenda, whatever it may now be, is leading him to become every bit the danger that Quixos once was.

GIDEON RAVENOR

A former Acolyte of Gregor Eisenhorn, Ravenor's body was all but destroyed in the Spatian Gate atrocity that was the catalyst for Eisenhorn's pursuit of Quixos. While his physical self was reduced to a husk of flesh cocooned in a sophisticated life-support chair, Ravenor's brilliant mind and powerful psychic gifts were untouched. He went on to a long career as an active Inquisitor, battling both daemonic manifestations and cabals of human traitors, and also became known as a philosopher, scholar, and poet. Despite his many distinctions, Ravenor has never quite escaped the shadow of his former master. While it appears that the two have parted ways and have even clashed over their growing differences, Ravenor is widely believed to still be in contact, and possibly in league, with Eisenhorn, and the deepening suspicions concerning Eisenhorn are starting to spread to his protégé as well.



After abstract knowledge comes concrete practices and forbidden artefacts. While Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes diligently study how to obliterate the creations of the Warp, inanimate as well as “living,” many artefacts come into their hands that for whatever reason they cannot simply destroy. Some are made so powerfully that it is beyond the Inquisition's abilities to unmake them, while some are too dangerous to destroy—there are cases on record of such efforts going horribly wrong, freeing bound Daemons or creating rifts into the Immaterium. Such items must be kept safely sealed away. But just as with knowledge, such things eat at the memory, becoming a source of fascination. From burning books and sealing away artefacts, an Inquisitor starts to rationalise sparing Warp-tainted trappings from destruction, then keeping them for study, then secretly hiding them from his colleagues, and then adding items to his Warp-touched collections by increasingly foul means.



Inquisitors easily rationalise the collection of a heretical library, or the addition of an unhallowed device or ritual to an arsenal. Only a few are driven by extremity or drawn by their own dark thoughts into the final descending arc of Radicalism, though—actual trafficking with the creatures of the Warp. There are many known ways to trap and bind a Daemon, and the Radicals who utilise them of course defend such tactics. They point to the power it grants them to battle these enemies, even claiming a sort of symbolic justice in this. They also claim that a bound Daemon is a tiny sliver of strength stolen from the Ruinous Powers, weakening them just that little for as long as it is unable to return to the Warp and reunite with its master. Those straddling the line between Radicalism and outright heresy even say that unbound Daemons are a mixed threat, convincing themselves that Inquisitors can treat with and learn from such entities as though they were simply another kind of mortal principality. Inquisitors who reach this point, no matter how they protest their superior insight and higher goals in defence of humanity, have surely lost the last traces of their kinship to the human race and are walking into the maw of damnation.



TO BE AN ACOLYTE

"I've seen Xenos and Hereticus emblems on those who come here to take away my best and bravest, and I square my shoulders and bid my students goodbye. But seeing the hammer sigil on that seal still chills my blood. Not because I'm sending them to die. They'll all die. But I know what they will face before they die, and that is a cruel thing to know as I watch them walk out those doors."

—Mamzel Lynga Jehanne, Schola Progenium Mistress

Because the chosen enemies of the Ordo Malleus strike directly at the soul and the sanity, an Acolyte's most vital weapon is not physical or mental but moral: an ironclad will, the determination to believe nothing but the received truths of his indoctrination, and to allow the seduction of the Warp no entry. Such a simple thing, such a profound thing, but those Inquisitors who act as Daemonhunters have argued and fought over this for thousands of years.

Must faith be received as a blessing, or can it be earned? The debate is unending over whether it is best to recruit those with the requisite spiritual strength and impart the skills an Acolyte needs, or to recruit gifted experts and hammer their souls into the requisite hardness. The question might seem excruciatingly trivial, but how an Inquisitor answers it can reveal a great deal about the worldview that guides his work.

Inquisitors who take on skilled Acolytes—in the belief that strong will can be trained into them—act on a very particular belief that human nature is improvable, and that faith and fortitude are attainable. That belief seems fatally dangerous to the pessimists who believe human nature to be inherently and irredeemably weak, but their view—so the argument goes—rejects the perfectibility and nobility of the human spirit, which is to blaspheme against humanity's divinely-ordained place in creation. More practically, those who hire the capable criticise the other side for recruiting iron-willed fanatics irrespective of aptitude, leading to zealous but possibly incompetent retinues who cannot meet the rigorous demands of the Ordo Malleus, fit only to die with their mission records as clean and unmarked as their souls.

To this other side, to those who hope to teach their recruits the necessary skills, the strength to withstand the daemonic is a transcendent thing, granted as a benediction of the Emperor to those humble enough to look outside their flawed and imperfect selves. Their counter-argument holds that every heretic ever to fall to the clutches of the Warp once believed the daemonic was easy to resist, and that optimism about human improvability flies in the face of whole libraries' worth of evidence going back to the founding of the Inquisition itself. Filling a warband with adept but weak-spirited Acolytes, they say, risks not only defeat but disasters such as daemonic possessions or worse.

An Inquisitor whose primary requirement is ironclad faith might seek recruits from the crucible-like training environments of organisations such as the Adeptus Ministorum, the Adeptus Arbites, and the Astra Militarum Officio Prefectus. Such Acolytes have the aggressive martial skills their Inquisitor so needs, but without careful balancing of recruitment, a warband can become too blunt an instrument, expert at savagery but devoid of finesse.

Inquisitors who recruit for expertise and train for spiritual fortitude could have more conventionally-balanced warbands capable of combat, scouting, espionage, and political dealing, but such groups might also rely on a solid core of Ecclesiarchy confessors, drill abbots, and indoctrination experts. Their presence is testament to the importance of steeling new Acolytes' resolve, and sometimes like-minded Inquisitors might even jointly support and share a particularly capable training cadre.

A somewhat more straightforwardly controversial issue is the recruitment of psychic Acolytes, whether to use their abilities in battle or to detect daemonic incursions too subtle for mundane methods to perceive. This cuts to the heart of the Puritan-Radical divide, with every Inquisitor drawing his own line as to what he permits. The staunchest of Puritans would refuse all compromise, tolerating no psychically-active Acolyte in their employ. Outside this zealous fringe is a far broader spectrum of Inquisitors who accept the broad Imperial consensus: that properly conditioned and monitored psykers are a form of gifted human who may be used without repercussion or blame. Inquisitorial authority is very useful for plundering psykers of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, especially those seconded to the Astra Militarum.

The more Radical end of the spectrum draws in recruits with less care for their safety or orthodoxy, and interested only in their immediate utility. Radical Inquisitors often seek unsanctioned psykers from an outlaw life, without forcing them through the testing and conditioning of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica—if they can earn the Inquisitor's trust. Such Ordo Malleus Inquisitors might monitor esoteric cults or trawl primitive worlds for shamans and seers, looking for a flicker of genuine sensitivity that they can draw out and weaponise. Some are even reckless enough to use their rank to draw directly from the raw human cargoes of the League of Black Ships. Others actively seek out recruits who have touched the Warp and now might bear its mark—ship crews who have survived Warp storms, soldiers who have confronted daemonic force in the field, survivors from Daemon worlds, or mere Imperial citizens who have witnessed an incursion and responded to it in a manner that earns them a stay of execution. Some dark rumours even persist of Radical Inquisitors permitting—or even engineering—Warp manifestations in order to refine a particular population down to a solid core of resisters ripe for recruitment.

But even this is not the furthest extremity of Radicalism, for there is the threshold where an Inquisitor's followers are no longer human at all. These Radicals capture or even conjure Daemons to bind into physical hosts, enslaving or bargaining them into service. Only the most arrogant, desperate, or insane of Inquisitors would take a creature of the Warp under his wing in this way...but there are enough within the Ordo Malleus who are enough of all three that such practices are not likely to end.



SECTOR OF THE DAMNED

"Calling forth the Daemon is a simple thing indeed. Casting it out is the true challenge."

—Farryn Kex, Exorcist to Lord Mylack

If all the many evils that bedevil the Askellon Sector, from cults and conspiracies to xenos infiltrations, the greatest, truly existential threat to every mortal soul residing upon its many worlds has always been Chaos. The taint of the Ruinous Powers is all-pervasive, ranging from forbidden knowledge and sorcery to the horrors that can befall a world as one rogue psyker brings about a daemonic incursion. Even these perils pale in comparison to the dire hazard for which the region was once well known, and which even now causes its name to often be erased from many Navigational archives—the Pandaemonium, the veil of the Abyss drawing across the void and swallowing the very stars with its passing. It is the gateway to the Immaterium, beyond which the four Great Gods of Chaos slaver for the very souls of humanity.

It is against the anarchic, soul-consuming backdrop of the Pandaemonium that the doom of Askellon is acted out. The storm's fell, flickering hell-light is cast across the light years and upon the surfaces of hundreds of worlds, and none can escape the taint of the beyond it brings. Regardless of the countless means by which the other enemies of Mankind would plot the sector's downfall, the machinations of the Ruinous Powers remain the direst threat.

It is the duty of the Ordo Malleus Inquisitors and their Acolytes within Askellon to resist this threat, a task that has claimed innumerable souls, both courageous and craven, and can never end. While it remains the duty of every servant of the Emperor, the task of combating the daemonic in Askellon falls to those pledged to the service of the Ordo Malleus, a calling that few escape with their mortal souls intact.





A CHAMBER DIABOLIS

For as far back as the fragmentary annals of the Askellian histories relate, Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus maintained a sizeable presence in the region. This is hardly surprising, for the Warp storms plaguing the sector have been a concern for as long as the Imperium has ruled the region, their proximity giving rise to countless Warp-cults and psyker conspiracies with the attendant risk of daemonic incursion. For many centuries, these and other Inquisitors operated openly across the worlds of the sector, though as with all representatives of Terra, there were constant sources of friction between them and the notoriously detached nobility of the ancient sector.

To better interact with the sector rulers and the other nobles of the ancient Askellian lines, millennia ago a group of Ordo Malleus Inquisitors began referring to themselves as the Askellios Vigilant to disguise any hint of their Inquisitorial leanings (or even their true offices in many cases) when dealing with the lords who ruled Askellon. This title often became known in spires and palaces to represent what the lords thought were roving confessors or itinerant exorcists, and many of the Vigilant were respected and welcomed in the highest settings across the sector. Some of the Lords of Askellon even held them in superstitious awe, as if the lords and ladies knew that even they could not escape damnation and only the true servants of the Emperor could save their wretched souls. This only fed the growing suspicions that many of these Inquisitors held concerning the lords and the origins of the sector, and drove them to increase the levels of interaction so as to prize more of the sector's secret histories from the grip of its elite.

Thus, Ordo Malleus Inquisitors operating under the guise of the Askellios Vigilant worked to penetrate the insular circles of the Lords of Askellon, and in a far more effective manner than other Inquisitors. Those of the Ordo Hereticus often operated too bluntly to ingratiate themselves with the ancient ruling families, and those of the Ordo Xenos had more pressing matters, launching new Wars of Purgation to eradicate newly discovered species or stamp out any resurgence of existing alien empires.

As the centuries ground on, this coalesced into something approaching a formal arrangement. Agents of the Askellios Vigilant evolved to fill consular roles in the courts of numerous sector, sub-sector, and planetary rulers, as well as those of successful mercantile interests. Such roles were never fulfilled by actual Inquisitors but by their Acolytes, though several of the latter went on to attain high rank later in their careers.

In the main, these advisers were to counsel the Lords of Askellon in matters pertaining to the ebb and flow of the Pandaemonium, as well as aiding in sector administration and the rendering of tithes and the psyker cull according to the laws of the Imperium. Through a variety of means, from readings of the Emperor's Tarot to direct soundings of the turbulent Sea of Souls, the counsellors were able to offer advice on which worlds were at risk of becoming lost to the storms and which trade routes might be afflicted by its tides. At times, large sections of a world's population were evacuated on their word, while at others worlds were settled on their declaring it safe to do so.

In this role, these Acolytes became nigh indispensable to the ruling houses, and were able to carefully observe more and more of the noble lineages in ways not even the most artful of coercive interrogations would reveal. Hints concerning the origins of many of these powerful ancestries, and of the truths that had been deliberately replaced by comforting legends, were unravelled from countless generations of layered deceptions. The more that was uncovered, especially links between the founding houses and the Pandaemonium, the more they increased their efforts.

At length, these consular agents achieved a high level of integration with the intricate power structures at play within the Askellon Sector. Such integration was previously unheard of, for no other representatives from distant Terra had been able to truly penetrate the web of intrigue and mystery cloaking the ruling houses. Individual counsellors even began to marry into the lower tiers of the Askellian nobility, an achievement that had taken countless centuries.

Only two decades after the first such marriage, the entire region was turned on its head by the Vaxi Atrocity. Though it would only become apparent after years of scrutiny and investigation, the two events—the marrying of Inquisitorial operatives into the Askellian nobility and the outbreak of the Atrocity—were determined to be intimately and tragically inter-related. Despite its many centuries of indirect effort, the work of the Askellios Vigilant and the Ordo Malleus was to be undone.

TORQUEMADA COTEAZ

This infamous Inquisitor trusts no authority or judgement but his own, using his rank, ruthless will, and fearsome intelligence to build a sector-spanning army of military forces, spy rings, and material resources all personally loyal only to himself. Coteaz is a notoriously stern Puritan who burned his master for the most superficial researches into Warp manipulation, but what no one knows is that even his adamantine resolve has started to weaken. His shadowy private empire has been the work of a lifetime, and some worry that even Coteaz might be tempted with unnatural means to extend his life and service, no matter the cost to his soul.

THE ATROCITY ERUPTS

The Vaxi Atrocity is an event that looms large in the bloody histories of the region, for it marks the point at which many Inquisitors who operated in the sector ceased openly walking the worlds of Askellon. Thereafter, Inquisitors and their Acolytes would more commonly go about their works in secret, ensuring an invisible balance between competing interests was maintained. The Atrocity ignited when the notoriously bombastic Lord Inquisitor Spiron Hark of the Ordo Hereticus announced to his peers his intent to rid the sector of the myriad ills that plagued it, purging it by fire if necessary. Hark claimed that the end result of such unchecked ills could only be the calling forth of the Daemon, ending in a sector-wide daemoniac incursion.

Gathered in council, Hark's peers objected vociferously, but the Witch Hunter was determined to launch a massive crusade. They did not push back simply because he was counted a Puritan and they Radicals; rather, it was because one group among their number had inherited the centuries-long task of insinuating agents and proxies into the complex and introverted web of blood and fealty that was the Askellian nobility. A mere two decades earlier, that long-dreamed-of plan had finally, after generations of distant oversight, culminated in the marriage of several Acolytes into the bloodlines, and the time to reap the rewards of that generational conspiracy was almost at hand. Soon, certain rivals of Hark in the Ordo Malleus knew, their proxies would inherit the keys to unlock the inner secrets of the Lords of Askellon and cast the light of the Emperor upon their benighted souls.

The secret work of centuries was, however, about to be undone. Inquisitor Lord Hark gathered his hosts and set forth towards the sector's core worlds, his rivals doing likewise in his wake, determined to stop his untimely invasion, by force if needed. The ensuing Inquisition War consumed entire systems, but it was at Vaxi in the Rubicon Sub-Sector that matters came to a pass. Foolishly, the Sector Praefect sought to oppose the invasion, and in so doing gave the impression of declaring the sector's secession from the Imperium. In a trice, the embattled lords and ladies of the Inquisition ceased their internecine war and turned upon the sector lord, their gathered hosts making planetfall at Vaxi where the sector's own armies massed, and slaughtering them utterly.

Even as the ashes of the funeral pyres stained the skies of Vaxi black for all time, the rival Inquisitors gathered. It was immediately clear to all that a terrible sin had been allowed to come to pass, and so all present agreed that such inter-faction rivalries must never again render an entire sector completely defenceless should invasion or insurrection afflict it. Whether those Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus belonging to the Askellios Vigilant informed Lord Hark and his allies of their centuries-long marital conspiracy to infiltrate the bloodlines of the Lords of Askellon and thereby unlock their secrets remains unknown.

Many of the Vigilant long kept any such affiliation a secret, even from their fellow Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus. On one thing, though, most Inquisitorial accounts agree: Lord Vhinjet Romonav VII, the Sector Praefect whose declaration of secession had united the warring Inquisitors, was wedded to an agent of one of the Askellios Vigilant Inquisitors central to the effort to penetrate the secrets of Askellon's rulers.

Some hold that Lady Romonav used some manner of alchemical-based mental domination to force her husband to declare the sector's secession. In doing so, they say, she brought the costly Inquisition war to a halt before it could lead to the decimation of Askellon's Inquisitors, albeit at the cost of untold millions of the sector's finest troops and nearly the entire population of Vaxi itself. Others relate that she engineered the slaughter for other purposes, perhaps to deny dark gods the ritual fodder needed to bring forth a mammoth daemoniac incursion on that world, or that she may have been acting under the command of enigmatic aliens who foresaw the need for these human deaths to prevent their own harm in the future. Even more terrible, some dare hint that she was never there at all, having been replaced by a fell power who pulled the hidden strings that led to the massacre for reasons mere mortals could never comprehend. She was never seen again after Lord Romonav's horrid poisoning a year later. This added more credence to theories that there were forces far darker than imagined behind the Atrocity, buried deeply in layers of conspiracy and deception, and perhaps leading, as is the case for so many horrors, to the Ruinous Powers.



AFTERMATH OF THE ATROCITY

The Inquisition in the Askellon Sector seemed to disappear from open view in the aftermath of the Vaxi Atrocity. In most cases, the reality was that they determined that to do their Emperor-given duties properly, they would be best served operating from the shadows or through Acolytes and other proxies, only openly revealing their presence when no other course presented itself. This was certainly the case with the Inquisitors of both the Ordo Hereticus and the Ordo Xenos, who often preferred to operate in the region through their Acolytes. For those of the Ordo Malleus, however, things are more complicated.

Prior to the Vaxi Atrocity, the secretive group of Ordo Malleus Inquisitors acting as the Askellios Vigilant had worked to slowly penetrate the lineages of the Lords of Askellon with cadres of agents and informants, and it is likely that many hundreds of loyal Acolytes gave their lives to building it over the years. Despite the vow sworn to Lord Hark and their peers as they stood upon the ash-strewn wastes of Vaxi, these Inquisitors could not, and therefore would not, withdraw from active work in the region. To do so would be to abandon centuries of work as well as the ultimate goal of that mission.

That goal was to prove a link between the Lords of Askellon and the Pandaemonium, for these Inquisitors had long suspected that the two were somehow intertwined. The generations of effort that their agents had undertaken as counsellors to the powerful had only grown any initial suspicions; this grindingly slow approach was the only one that would illuminate what millennia of darkness had kept buried and forcibly forgotten. Their Warp-savants seemed to offer proof that the Great Storm appeared to wax and wane in response to the prosperity and power of several of the most ancient of Grand Worlds, as if it had a malefic sentience and was goaded by tortured souls screaming for vengeance, perhaps drawing on the power of the Warp to drive their fury. Other Vigilant sages devoted to the many dark histories of the region suspected that the Lords of Askellon had made some manner of pact with forbidden forces linked to the Pandaemonium, binding themselves and their sector together for all time. These Inquisitors knew that proving any manner of link, though, would be the work of many lifetimes, and the truth of it would only be known long after their own deaths. Nothing, even a solemn vow sworn to another bearer of the Inquisitorial Seal, would divert these Ordo Malleus Inquisitors from their goal.

And so, in the wake of the Vaxi Atrocity, the Inquisitors of the Askellios Vigilant brutally expunged and then painstakingly rebuilt their hidden network in the Askellon Sector. In this they were aided by circumstance, for the sector was plunged into an age of anarchy and uncertainty as numerous, individually insignificant wars and conspiracies blossomed, serving together to mask their activities from otherwise distracted eyes. As so many Inquisitors appeared to abandon the sector, so those of the Ordo Malleus became even more entrenched. Entire networks of perfectly loyal servants and agents were purged so that, over a period of years, the entire structure could be rebuilt without other Inquisitors ever knowing of it. In the last decades, this necessarily brutal process has been completed and now many thousands of contacts, hundreds of Acolytes, and as many as a dozen hidden Inquisitors are insinuated within the sector—all without the slightest hint of their presence.



The purpose of this sprawling network is to remain secret until such time as its most deeply-insinuated agents finally unlock the last inner chamber of the Lords of Askellon and learn their darkest secrets, and the true nature of the Pandaemonium and what drives it. In all likelihood, this can only take place in the midst of star-spanning bloodshed that might see much of Askellon incinerated to prevent even greater soul-devouring carnage, and so these Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus prepare for what they have every cause to regard as the war to end all things. For the architects of this great conspiracy, some of whom are said to slumber in protective cold, stasis-shielded crypts at the core of a hidden fortress long thought lost, that is exactly what it represents.

THE XABINI CONFESSION

Many decades after the Vaxi Atrocity, a long-lived and highly experienced Inquisitor Lord known as Xabani lay upon his deathbed at the summit of a reclusive spire-hab on Terra, his body finally unable to bear the latest of countless rejuvenate treatments. Lord Xabani called his inner circle to attend him, many his former Acolytes who were now powerful and influential Inquisitors in their own rights. In the final hour of a long life littered with deeds that laid heavy upon his soul, the Inquisitor confessed the sin that weighed the heaviest. As death drew near and his strength left him, Lord Xabani claimed that he had been present at the Vaxi Atrocity and complicit in its coming about, a deed for which he craved forgiveness above all others he had undertaken in the service of Mankind.

That deed, so Lord Xabani claimed, was the deliberate engineering of events so that the millions of deaths committed in the Atrocity would precipitate a singular surge in the Pandaemonium. That, he claimed, would have subsumed vast areas into unreality. Billions of souls would be torn asunder, each serving as the ingress point into the material realm for an infernal denizen of the Warp. When prompted to reveal the name or names of whoever had instigated this effort to turn an entire world into a sacrificial altar, Xabani grew sorely agitated and was gripped by a seizure so violent that blood streamed from his eyes as crimson tears. Who was responsible for this heinous attempt to damn the sector, Xabani's confessors pressed, understanding that the old Inquisitor's life was ebbing away before their very eyes.

With his last breath, Lord Xabani exclaimed that there had been no mere attempt, but a success—the Atrocity did exactly what they had planned and prayed it would. With that, Xabani passed, his final words turning into an echoing death rattle before any could press him for further explanation.

ENEMIES OF THE ASKELLIAN DAEMONHUNTERS

Countless infernal threats plague the Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus, and their Acolytes forever confront a terrifying array of enemies whose infractions into the forbidden could very well bring about the doom of entire worlds. Across dozens of planets in every sub-sector in Askellon, countless cults and conspiracies plot the downfall of the planet, the sector, and the entire Imperium. Such groups rarely have any real conception of the reality of their deeds, or any idea what terrible fate awaits them should their schemes prove even partially successful. Most imagine that they can call some distant and unknowable power to their world, a power that can cast down their oppressive rulers in a heartbeat and gather the conspirators—the blessed, chosen ones—into a new and ascended plain of existence. The reality, of course, is death on a planetary scale, the burning of entire worlds and the eternal damnation of the cultists' mortal souls. It is to summon forth the Daemonic Legions of Chaos, calling down the death of entire worlds and the devouring of billions of souls.

THE GREY KNIGHTS

These Space Marines of the Ordo Malleus' Chamber Militant are amongst the mightiest soldiers, and deadliest psykers, that humanity has produced. So puissant are the Grey Knights that they more commonly operate not in companies but in individual squads. The Chapter only masses in greater strength to meet the direst calamity, such as the Daemon Primarch Angron's manifestation in the First Armageddon War. The Grey Knights are the swiftest spear and the keenest sword at an Inquisitor's call. Although the vainer among the Ordo Malleus might tell themselves they have this Chapter at their command, the truth is that they are extending invitations to the knights of Titan, not issuing summons.

The forms that the enemies of the Ordo Malleus of the Askellon Sector take are manifold and their sins as varied and numerous as the Daemons of the Warp. The end result should any of their heresies ever reach fruition is invariably the same, however, and the journey each takes towards such an end depends greatly upon which of the four great powers of the Immaterium the cult chooses to beseech for the power to achieve its invariably deluded goals. While entire forbidden libraries of past, present, and even future heresies exist, their essential characteristics boil down to which of the four Ruinous Powers is the source.



THE BELLE OF LOST SOULS

Over the last century, Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus have become increasingly concerned by tales that a new saint has risen in the sector, one not devoted to the pious and the powerful as so many others are, but to the outcast, the corrupted, and the dispossessed. The saint is known to those who seek her blessings as the "Belle of Lost Souls," and with every retelling of the tale many Inquisitors grow ever more concerned of what she might represent.

Several Inquisitors have traced the emergence of her cult to a Hospitaller of the Adepta Sororitas who served for half a century amongst the cargo-helots of Hulee V. Long after her death, the Hospitaller continued to be much adored amongst the communities she had aided, so that in time she was forgotten as a person and came to be worshipped as a saint.

Over the long decades, though, her worship took on darker and more disturbing aspects. The oppressed lowlies and dregs seeking her intercession offered up terrible sacrifices in her name; this seemed to bring her attention, with disruption of local rulers and those on high brought low. Emboldened, her worshippers spread word of her name, and it was no surprise that the new saint proved extremely popular amongst the oppressed. Her worshippers are known to revere statues of their patron, claiming these hand-made figurines shift and glow during their devotions, and that they can feel her power roiling through them—to what final ends, though, none can say.

Some within the Ordo Malleus suspect that the Belle is actually a Daemon of Tzeentch, and perhaps even began this masquerade long ago merely to instigate the present situation. Others fear the saint's devotees dragged the soul of that long dead Sister Hospitaller from the depths of the Immaterium, and twisted it into a daemonic being wrought by their own crazed beliefs. What woes she might now call down upon the sector and perhaps even the wider Segmentum Obscurus remain to be seen, but already there are those calling for the intervention of the Grey Knights.



KHORNE—THE BLOOD GOD

The sole aim of Khorne is to bring about violent conflict and destruction on a galactic scale, an ambition readily fulfilled among the bloodthirsty and callous Lords of Askellon. Unlike others among the Ruinous Powers, the Blood God does not kill in order to bring about a further aim, but rather for the simple, visceral act of killing. In a sector where humanity has long been at war both with itself and with nigh every alien it encounters, there is no shortage of blood, pain, and anger, all of which flow directly to the foot of Khorne's throne of burning brass and thereby swell his power within the Realm of Chaos. Of all the four Great Gods of Chaos, Khorne is the one that exerts the greatest influence over the material universe, for war is universal and has been since the moment the first sentient being raised a hand against another. This is no less true in the Askellon Sector, which is as steeped in conflict as any other region in the Imperium.

Those dedicated to the Blood God often organise themselves into martial orders, and in the Askellon Sector the long-established and deep-rooted noble classes are riven with such groups. The bulk of the members of many such orders have no idea what the group represents. Most represent themselves as pillars of virtue dedicated to upholding the ideals of honour, courage, skill, strength at arms, and other notions. Though outwardly positive and virtuous, such things are easily perverted into excuses for violence and conflict for its own sake. Ordo Hereticus Inquisitors have uncovered many warrior cults dedicated to the act of spilling blood, groups whose activities revolve around the gruesome offerings of skulls in an effort to earn Khorne's blessings.

In late M41, a warband of Acolytes working for an Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor operating on Snope's World successfully infiltrated what appeared to be a nihil-cult dabbling in Warpcraft. It rapidly became evident, however, that the group was attempting to summon the daemonic foot troops of the Blood God, their aim to wash away what they regarded as the corrupt regime that ruled their world. The Acolytes intervened and slaughtered the entire cult, an act that tragically provided the offering the Blood God demanded. The warband's Inquisitor suspects a Warp-breach occurred; what emerged, however, is still unknown.

As a direct result of further investigations into the blood-cult of Snope's World, a wider conspiracy was detected, and one that has yet to be fully investigated. It appears that the group's ritual offerings were stirring certain tendrils of the Pandaemonium in very specific ways, and in a manner some savants likened to blood spilled upon the surface of a bowl of oil—or worse, to blood spilt in the waters of ravenous sharks. Since then, a number of similar perturbations in the Great Storm have been observed, each hinting at the existence of yet another blood-cult pursuing its grisly ends somewhere within the borders of Askellon. Tracking down and eliminating all of these groups before they bring about a sector-wide incursion has thus become of paramount concern to many Ordo Malleus Inquisitors and their warbands operating in the Asphodel Depths.

TZEENTCH—THE CHANGER OF THE WAYS

While known by innumerable different names across the length and breadth of the Askellon Sector and throughout all of the region's history, most of them entirely unpronounceable, the Great Power most frequently named Tzeentch is the power behind change and intrigue, each of which Askellon has known in abundance throughout its long existence. Tzeentch embodies unending and wild mutation in every possible permutation, and as such is the power behind many of the crimes of sorcery, conspiracy, and ambition committed by the sector's most darkly ambitious masters.

Like all of the Ruinous Powers, Tzeentch can be imagined as a vast concentration of Warp energy so intense and active that it has coalesced into a point of unknowable consciousness. Some claim that the storms afflicting the sector are some manner of offshoot of this greater tempest. Many foolish Askellians make obeisance to this vast will in order to attain their goal through guile and strategy, or to learn ancient secrets or forbidden lores. The thought that Tzeentch ever grants any genuine boon to mere mortals is a common and fatal error, for only the most potent soul would even draw an iota of scrutiny, let alone be judged worthy of true blessings by such a being. In reality, those who beseech Tzeentch find themselves overwhelmed by more power than they can possibly contain, or else aided in ways that have unimaginable or unpredictable outcomes not aligned with their ambitions. Others who draw the attention of the Changer of the Ways find their bodies and souls too weak, and are overcome by rampant mutation, transformed into thrashing masses of boiling flesh and condemned to a short, brutal existence as a Chaos Spawn.

Askellon is plagued with mortals who believe themselves capable of harnessing the power of the Changer of the Ways to their own ambitions. These deluded individuals take many different forms. Many seek to utilise the forbidden arts of sorcery, either to gain dominance in the sector's sprawling ruling structure or to wield the raw power of the Warp as a weapon. Others seek the intellectual power to spin impossibly intricate webs of conspiracy and to ensnare their foes in lethal traps that are untraceable to their source. Such individuals often become embroiled in increasingly complex schemes to gain ascendancy over their rivals, built up over many years and drawing in countless co-conspirators. The Askellon Sector has been infected with countless such conspiracies over the millennia, and the Ordo Malleus has enacted scores of purges in response, some overt, others disguised as disaster or war.

As with so many of Mankind's interactions with the powers of the beyond, it is rare indeed for those dedicated to Tzeentch to harness the power of Chaos to their own advantage, at least without a terrible price to pay. Invariably, Man's ambition overreaches his ability and he is destroyed along with all his dreams of power, as the entire edifice of his hubris comes crashing down upon him. Tzeentch has no concern whatsoever for the fate of the Askellon Sector, but should the power of change find an egress point through the Pandaemonium, the entire universe might be transformed into an impossibly complex and anarchic web of power constructed as a dark mirror of the riotous currents of the Warp.



NURGLE—THE PLAGUE FATHER

It is the essential nature of the Ruinous Power known as Nurgle to bring down all by decay, and to cause rampant and chaotic regrowth to sprout from the ruins. Countless times throughout the history of the Askellon Sector, the influence of Nurgle has been spread in a very literal sense, as plagues born not simply of microbial life, but of strains tainted by the fell touch of the Warp, have spread like wildfire throughout a population and brought about the end of millions. Those afflicted by the “blessings” of Grandfather Nurgle might escape death if they demonstrate their willingness to embrace all that the Plague God stands for, welcoming their sickened flesh and allowing their bodies to become ambulatory hives of Warp-borne corruption. Such was the case when one of the orbital necropoli of Ossuar fell to Warp contagion; the dead of millennia rose from the void-tombs and demanded adoration from the horrified mourners until an Ordo Malleus Inquisitor and her warband gave their lives to cast the entire structure burning through the shrine world’s atmosphere. Some of these plagues have proved so destructive that cities have been transformed into crumbling ruins jutting up into sickly green air from swamps of living corruption, requiring the final fate of the cleansing fires of Exterminatus.

In the Askellon Sector, Inquisitors have long measured the inexorable ebb and flow of Nurgle’s power. Observations made over many centuries liken the waxing and waning of the power of the Pandaemonium to the cycle of infection, decay, and rebirth for which the Plague God is so well known. As the storms rise, so the taint of the Warp, whether it takes the form of a spiritual or physical malaise, takes root, slowly spreading throughout a population before exploding in an epidemic. All that remains is ruin and corruption, and a period of deceptive calm sets in as unseen life stirs below. Inevitably, disease erupts from the ruins, beginning anew the cycle of life and death.

Those who dedicate themselves to the Plague God seek to sow the seeds of corruption—or, as they see it, bestow the blessings of their beneficent lord—upon their fellow man. Though they court the most hideous forms of decay, they do not necessarily bear the outward signs of their taint; some exist in plain sight, seemingly pure in every way yet seething inside with the blessings of their Grandfather. Others are so hideous in form and appearance that they dare not show their faces at all, lurking in the shadows and living in the cracks until such time as the call to rise up and spread their contagion comes. On each occasion of death and rebirth, the power of Nurgle increases an iota more than it decreases, so that incrementally, throughout the ages, the Plague God’s power grows, all but unseen except by the servants of the Ordo Malleus and by the Plague God’s own hidden worshippers.

SLAANESH—THE PRINCE OF CHAOS

Slaanesh is the Ruinous Power associated with excess, transgression, and depravity, all of which are vices that have tainted the souls of mortal men since time immemorial and by which the Lords of Askellon have long been enslaved. Though none are immune to such sins, the indolent and the idle rich, of which there are many among the higher echelons of the sector’s ruling class, are highly likely to become ensnared in the embrace of the so-called Dark Prince of Chaos. Countless numbers of the Imperium’s worlds are ruled by such a class, the nobles enjoying a life of unimaginable luxury and privilege while those who toil to support it suffer short, miserable lives of back-breaking labour. The Askellon Sector is said by some within the Ordo Malleus to be overrun with such a class, a sector-wide stratum of society riddled with sin and corruption of every conceivable variation.

But it is not only the bored scions of the lords and ladies of Askellon who find their souls ensnared by the Dark Prince. Those who seek perfection in their craft or trade might also fall victim to Slaanesh in what amounts to a faint echo of the long-passed doom of the Eldar species. Artists are often driven souls, and the most obsessive can be tempted to seek ever greater expression and thereby find themselves exploring paths no sane mind can comprehend. Warriors too can find themselves so entrapped, a fate said to have befallen so lauded a class as the III Legiones Astartes—the Emperor’s Children—during the Horus Heresy. Across the sector, countless warrior confraternities hone their martial skills, seeking unattainable heights of perfection. From savage feral worlders to the duelling clans of the high-hive aristocracy, warrior classes gather, often in secret, to master their calling, invariably driven to attain perfection in the quest to defeat their foes. Inevitably, this crosses the line into obsession, following which the mores of normality are cast aside and all barriers are torn down. In the grips of transgression, the damned soul is already dedicated to Slaanesh, whether he knows it or not.



INQUISITOR COVENANT

The driven and charismatic Covenant is the foremost of a movement of young firebrand Inquisitors emerging from the Ordo Malleus conclaves of the galactic South, focused not on the broad Imperium but upon the ranks of the Inquisition itself. Initially dismissed as over-zealous novices promoted too early, Covenant and his colleagues have answered this cynicism with brutal purges of their brethren. Rumour has it that their crusade through their own corridors of power is a reaction to a series of betrayals along the southern rim, where Inquisitors gave in to despair in the depths of the Second Tyrannic War and turned to forbidden arts to combat the menace of Hive Fleet Kraken. There are even claims of a secret pact wherein the young and hot-blooded Inquisitors swore to punish the crimes of the old and misguided, and that Covenant renamed himself for that pact to honour it. But he and his fellows refuse to discuss their pasts, only the work they have yet to do and the justice they have yet to mete out.

THE VAXIAN SUNDERING

"Woe to he who hears the word of the Infernal Denizen of the Great Abyss, for his soul shall be tainted for all eternity. Better to die in eternal ignorance than to burn in the eternal fire."

—from *The Apocrypha of the Seventh Seal*

For almost all of the Inquisitors in the Askellon Sector, the Vaxi Atrocity was a horrible error. For those of the Ordo Malleus who secretly investigated the sector's ruling families, though, it holds a special significance. For them, the great tragedy is that a renewed wave of blasphemy and abomination swept through the sector's populations. By design, the bulk of their resources in the sector were committed to re-establishing their hidden networks and to infiltrating the Askellian aristocracy. With their resources thus devoted to what they considered their most important—yet distant—goal, however, their enemies established themselves as major powers in the sector.

Thus, many of the Ordo Malleus Inquisitors in the Askellon Sector were visited by a tragedy known only to themselves, one dubbed by those that bore witness to it as the "Vaxian Sundering." It was an age when much that they had achieved was undone, for while the undercover networks were built, the worship of Warp entities and the seeking after forbidden knowledge went all but unchallenged. Even more threatening, schisms within the Ordo Malleus itself emerged, and factions that would have once been eradicated immediately festered and grew.

THE CHIALISTICA

It was a mere year after the Vaxi Atrocity that a new and highly-divisive faction formed amongst Ordo Malleus Inquisitors active in the sector. Exactly what triggered the appearance of this group is not yet certain; some Inquisitors claim it represents nothing more than the rantings of broken men whose minds and souls were pushed beyond the limits of sanity by the terrible scope of the horrors they witnessed. Others, however, claim that the Chialistica, as it has come to be known, has existed in some manner since the very dawn of the sector's formal establishment as part of the Imperium, and possibly even since the first settlers arrived in Askellian space.

The Chialistica appears similar to other strands of mysticism found across the Imperium, obsessed with the notion that Mankind is drawing towards a time of ending. Such creeds are known to wax and wane throughout the domains of humanity, in particular at the closing of centuries and especially at the turning of millennia. This instance is even more powerful, however, for the Chialistica's adherents look forward to the closing of the ten thousand year period since the Emperor ascended the Golden Throne.

These Askellian Inquisitors hold that the Emperor's period of rule is drawing to a close, and after it there shall come an eternity of Chaos. None have ever openly declared membership in this most apocalyptic of sects, yet a plethora of evidence suggests that some cleave to its nihilistic philosophies. Many in the sector have spoken out against the faction, claiming that any Inquisitor who shares its beliefs is a traitor to his calling, for regardless of how he does so, it is an Inquisitor's most sacred task to stand sentinel over the future of Mankind.

In secret, however, the Chialistica hold that the Emperor has fulfilled a prophecy spoken millennia ago, and must soon either descend from his throne or transcend it, and thereby usher in a new, final, age. In their beliefs, the Chialistica veer dangerously close to several existing factions known to hold sway within the Inquisition, leading some to conclude that they are a still more extreme offshoot of another Radical philosophy, one that has gone beyond even the sins of the Iststvanians and abandoned all pretence of rebirth in favour of a final, galaxy-wide apocalypse.

THE CARNIVORATION OF CEL

Warp-cults rarely pay any heed to worlds such as Cel, one of the most productive agri-worlds in the Askellon Sector. This is exactly what occurred in late M40, though, and it was only by the timely intervention of an Ordo Malleus warband operating under the direction of one Inquisitor Eldrik that a sector-wide calamity was averted.

Long the source of meat considered by many as the finest of delicacies, Cel ships mhoxen flesh across the sector and beyond, its produce found upon the tables of Askellon's highest classes. Over the centuries, a coterie of epicurean fanatics had developed in appreciation of the delicacies of Cel, a group that to many appeared akin to a cult and which on several occasions drew Inquisitorial attention. Each time, however, the group was found innocent of any crime other than its obsession with the meat of the mhoxen and—thanks to its connections with the highest nobles in the sector—was always able to avoid censure.

The terrible scope of this obsession was revealed when it was discovered that members of three noble houses had insinuated themselves into nearby planets, and over the course of decades tampered with the prey creatures below mhoxen in the food chain. For twenty years, the mhoxen had been fed creatures injected with a substance the cult had crafted from the rendered cranial tissue of kidnapped and ritually slaughtered Navigators, intending to grant themselves a purity of senses that would allow them to fully appreciate the exquisite flavours of their favourite courses. However, it also led to a rampant mutation in each house that was increasingly impossible to hide. Undercover Acolytes within the houses passed word to Inquisitor Eldrik, who realised with horror that the Warp-tainted substance could also make the scions of these three houses easy targets for daemonic possessions or Warp-breaches.

The solution was simple, and one which Eldrik is known to have taken some personal satisfaction in enacting. Calling upon her Acolytes and other resources across the sector, Eldrik oversaw the creation of a hunter-killer genophage keyed to the genetic signatures of the three noble houses, and insinuated this into the already compromised food chain.

Shortly after, all three houses were extinct, their epicurean scions slumped dead at the tables of their great feasting halls.

THE CATALIXIAN HERESY

The Catacalixian Heresy appeared in the Askellon Sector soon after the Chialistica, though the two are not believed to be linked in any way beyond the fact that the Vaxi Atrocity paved a way for their emergence in the sector. The Heresy takes the form of a series of coded warnings relating to the imminent collapse of the Imperium's power across the entire Segmentum Obscurus, warning that such a fate has already befallen several unnamed nearby sectors and shall soon come down upon Askellon. This aberrant philosophy appears to be spreading along the worlds of the region by way of trans-sector shipping, suggesting that travellers coming into the sector from neighbouring regions are preaching their warning to others they encounter along the way.

Of particular concern is the fact that the Catacalixian Heresy appears not to have taken hold of the greater masses, as so many doomsday sects do, but instead has swept through the upper echelons of the region's adepts. It has found a home of sorts in the hearts of those whose existence or station grants them a perspective denied to most men, such as starfaring Chartist Captains and Rogue Traders, senior adepts of the Adeptus Ministorum and the Adeptus Administratum, and, most disturbingly, some Inquisitors. There are plenty who hold that when such highly-ranked servants of Terra believe that doom is descending upon the Imperium, then surely the end is at last nigh.

THE STORM MASTERS

Little is known of this faction of Recongregators, even within the ranks of like-minded Radical Inquisitors; some believe it might even pre-date the Atrocity. Like all Recongregators, they seek to rebuild the Imperium into a better form by purging weak and corrupt elements—through extreme violence if necessary. These Inquisitors, though, seek to harness and direct the power of the Pandaemonium to their ends, and purge Askellon before directing the Great Storm across the galaxy. Rumours within Ordo Malleus conclaves whisper that their efforts might be growing in success, and that they have somehow tapped into the raging fury that fuels the storm. No one has ever claimed membership, and some wonder whether the faction is but a tale designed to obscure even greater heresies involving the Warp and what creatures dwell within.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE DIVINE HOST

This sect of Ordo Malleus Inquisitors emerged scant years after the Atrocity, as an offshoot based on the Thorian outlook in the sector, which grew increasingly frustrated in finding a suitable Divine Avatar for the Emperor's spirit. Viewing the horrors at Vaxi as a sign that the Emperor's guidance was needed more than ever, they delved deeply into heretical lores concerning the crafting of Daemonhosts in order to better ready mortal flesh for the Emperor's essence. Now steeped in the most Radical of thinking, these "Preparers" operate from hidden facilities within forgotten asteroids and underhive dens using Gellar-shields to prevent the detection of their creations. They ritually prepare hosts using captured bodies and even each other, their original goals long forgotten as they grow ever more obsessive with the study of Daemon-infused flesh. Those who survive the process often realise their manifold sins, and renounce the sect to become staunch Puritans against any taint of the Daemon.

THE EXORCISTS

The Chapter of the Adeptus Astartes known as the Exorcists have a long and storied history, having fought to great effect in campaigns such as the Badab War and the Third War for Armageddon. However, sealed records and astropathic echoes speak of a dark secret. Apocryphal writings and whispered legends say that each Battle Brother of the Exorcists undergoes a controlled daemonic possession and ritual exorcism. The result is a Space Marine inured to the temptations and predations of the daemonic, and perfectly suited to hunting Daemons. If there is any truth to these rumours about the Chapter's origins and induction methods, they must speak to the actions of a powerful cabal of Radical Inquisitors.

THE ABYSSIAN WITNESSES

The Abyssian Witnesses are a small and highly secretive conclave of Warp-savants and hell-seers devoted to the study of the Pandaemonium. They first came together when one of their number—a one-time disciple of Lord-Savant Dyrulli by the name of Lorn Kecimii—noted a disturbance in the ebb of the Warp Storms during the Inquisitorial attack on Vaxi. Some say that Kecimii studied the Pandaemonium longer than prudent and, as he peered into its depths, so something peered back at him. Certainly, Kecimii appeared to have gleaned some level of understanding of the shifting Warp-energies no savant before him had ever attained. A number of Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus soon joined him to study his arcane teachings concerning the Great Storm and its links to other occurrences in Askellon's history—especially to the secretive origins of the sector's rulers.

Ordinarily, the activities of the Witnesses would undoubtedly have been discovered and denounced by an Inquisitor of a Puritan bent. In the aftermath of the Atrocity, however, the conclave went about its studies all but undetected, for the majority of the Ordo Malleus Inquisitors were engaged in setting up their network of infiltrators across the sector. With attentions focused elsewhere, the Abyssian Witnesses swelled in number from a handful of Warp-blasted seers to a large confraternity of many dozens devoted to the study of the Pandaemonium and the recordings of their founder Lorn Kecimii. These texts became part of an ever-expanding library maintained by Kecimii's inner circle, an archive ensconced within the cored heart of a rogue dwarf planet drifting through the stellar void spinward of the Thaur system, on the very verges of an encroaching front of the Great Storm.

From its precarious vantage point, the order's hell-seers are said to stare in rapture into the void, as if able to see beyond the umbral black of space and into the roiling vortex of the Warp that lies beyond the overstretched veil of reality. At times, the veil peels back and light-years-long tendrils of empyreal unreality slither

forth to coil about the planetoid, and each time it does so the order bears witness to some new morsel of terrible knowledge. It is said that Kecimii and the most senior of the order watch the Great Storm through a vast mechanism at the summit of the so-called Tower of Heeding, utilising an orrery-like arrangement of rune-etched lenses to peer directly into the Immaterium while a cadre of attendants transcribe their every word. From these transcriptions and the annotations provided by Kecimii himself, the order has built up its staggering archive of knowledge relating to the Pandaemonium and to the Warp in general. In all likelihood, this body of work, allowed to amass unseen by the rest of the Inquisitors within Askellon, represents one of the most dangerous archives of forbidden knowledge not just in the sector, but in the entire galactic region—perhaps rivalled only by the twelve sanctums of the Gethsemane Reclusium in the sheer weight of abominable texts held within.

To what end the Witnesses are amassing their library has yet to be understood, but it is known that extracts of their writings have turned up in the hands of heretics and madmen throughout the sector. Portions are being utilised as elemental formulae in dark rituals and blasphemous masses by those who would commune with, or even summon, the inhabitants of the Warp, turning foolish dilettantes and Warp-dabbles into genuinely dangerous threats.

The danger posed from the Witnesses is only beginning to be appreciated by leading voices within the Ordo Malleus, who have yet to gain firm evidence despite several missions to locate the conclave's hidden sanctuary. Most of what those Inquisitors opposing the sect know of their target are the scraps of Warp-lore left in the wake of attempted summonings or found in the possession of those with only tangential connections to its members and activities. Almost all of these pages describe the nature of the Pandaemonium and purport to be a translation of the storm's origins, cause, and how it is inextricably linked to the fate of the entire sector. These words, if true, represent horrors beyond those threats that even the most suspicious of the Inquisitors investigating the origins of Askellon and its rulers can imagine.

THE LOKHART RESURGANCE

Port Lokhart has long been the regional seat of the Imperial Navy in the Askellon Sector, but not without a longstanding series of threats against its existence and those who serve on it. None can fathom the cause for such tenacity against the port, though many link this to the unknown alien civilisation that constructed the ancient orbital used to house the many naval personnel therein.

The most recent action of many occurred when a cell of Warp-worshipping cultists insinuated themselves into the port's officer cadre over the course of several years through a number of staggering bribes. Established in key postings and roles, the heretics set about sabotaging the Warp drives of the war ships on which they served. Three frigates were abruptly lost after departing the port and translating into the Sea of Souls, never to be heard from again—each event causing the loss and eternal damnation of tens of thousands of souls.

What gorged itself on such a feast is the cause of much worry within the Ordo Malleus, for the port shuddered and a huge surge in the Pandaemonium was observed soon after on the other side of the sector.

Another series of attacks was traced back to a small core of ancient but lowly houses whose primary holdings were once located in the Lokhart system. Each house was sequentially purged by a single Callidus Assassin over the course of several months, but despite this many more groups have since attempted to infiltrate or even violently ram their ships into the port for reasons unknown. Some Inquisitors theorise there is something linked to the Warp buried within the station that these seemingly unrelated groups are all desperately questing after—or that whatever is lurking within the structure is calling to them in a voice they cannot resist.

THE ABYSSIAN FRAGMENTS

The scattered texts recovered by the Ordo Malleus identified as the work of the Abyssian Witnesses have collectively been dubbed the “Abyssian Fragments,” and each has been assembled into what amounts to a sizeable tome of collated heresy. It is one of the largest such collections within the sector, rivalling even the thrice-stasis shielded Carmine Crypt orbiting a long-dead star in deliberately uncharted, empty space Rimward of the Vouxis System, or the infamous Leather Tomes said to reside somewhere in a collapsed sub-spire underneath Hive Desoleum detailing many millennia of daemonic activities in the Cyclopia Sub-Sector.

Some Ordo Malleus Inquisitors fear that in allowing the Fragments to be collated at all they are compounding the sin of Lorn Keciimii and his fervent disciples, and so the recovered pages are held not in one location, but across several strongholds and data-vaults spread throughout Askellian space. As a consequence, only select Inquisitors have been afforded the perspective to appreciate the full horror of exactly what the writings describe, and the appalling fate they purport to be in store for Askellon.

The oldest of the texts relates a vision that Keciimii received during a very early rite, one in which he appears to have seen a time long before the coming of the Imperium to Askellian space, aeons before Mankind arrived. In language barely transcribable by the sane mind and via frames of reference entirely alien to human existence, the account claims that the volume of space and all of the stars within it are cursed in some manner, the closest explanation any have proffered being that the veil between the material universe and the Immaterium is somehow compromised or even breached. When worlds in the region birthed life, it was equally as tainted, even the basest forms somehow cursed and steeped in the unnatural energies of the Warp. As more complex organisms evolved here, so the taint became more evident.

Later still, Keciimii was granted visions of hideous, malformed creatures stalking the surface of blighted worlds under the baleful light of cursed stars, and of the first storms to emerge from beyond reality. These descriptions fit no beings listed in Imperial bestiaries and no trace remains to prove they ever existed, but the transcribed accounts are so vivid that few who have read them doubt they describe anything other than actual beings from countless aeons in the past.

Later Fragments describe the establishment of numerous star-spanning Askellian civilisations across the long millennia, each rising to great heights of power and domination before abruptly disappearing. Some departed for other systems, but most collapsed from within—their hearts cored out by decay, decadence, war, or conspiracy until each species collapsed to dust and ashes, torn down by the weight of their own corruption.

Ages passed, and at length the generation ships from distant Terra arrived during a long period of calm in Warp storms, and humanity seeded itself across the worlds of what would become the Askellon Sector. Here the transcriptions become all but unintelligible, almost as if the being revealing the tale to Keciimii was toying with him, allowing nothing more than tantalising glimpses of this era. For the grand human empire established here thrived like none before.

Perhaps there was something about these early Askellian settlers that made them more receptive to the destructive power that had ended other species, or perhaps all Mankind is enamoured to the horrors of the Warp at some deep level. Hints in the Fragments show bitter and decisive battles amongst the settlers, with betrayals and deceptions that nearly destroyed the founding. The houses that established rule over the region became ever more powerful, even as the Great Storm raged in terrible fury at their actions.

Lorn Keciimii's subsequent notes grow uncertain, and though his revelations show the ruling Askellian houses somehow surviving through the Age of Strife, the words are obscure concerning what they did to placate the horrors of that time. When the Imperium discovered the region, the visions relate, the events of Compliance became twisted until none could tell who fought who and for what cause. As the Imperium forged the sector and anointed its rulers anew, the Pandaemonium roared as if it was powered by betrayed souls screaming in the Warp, perhaps now also stirred by the greatest betrayal Mankind has ever known. It was the beginning of a cycle that rages to this day, the Great Storm waxing and waning with the ebb and flow of Askellon's wars, conspiracies, and sins. Each time it rises, powered by the last great treachery, it attains still greater heights and the heresies unleashed by the corruptions it bestows are more horrid—but the cycle cannot go on forever.

The final Abyssian Fragment is a foretelling of the sector's doom. It describes how the Pandaemonium is to rise a final time and completely devour the worlds of Askellon. Those judged worthy are to be carried up into tempest, but those whose souls are judged unworthy shall be cast down, burned to ashes and the remains cast to the void. The entire sector, so the visions claim, is destined to become the domain of the ever-raging storm, and the gods of the abyss shall rule it for all time. This can only happen once the final betrayal is enacted, a terrible act greater than any in Askellon's treacherous and secretive history.

This final revelation is unknown to all but a handful within the Ordo Malleus, for while many regard it as just one more example of the apocalyptic doomsaying that is rife across Askellon, others see in it a dire warning indeed and hold its words to be true. Already, myriad portents of the doom that is foretold in the Abyssian Fragments are coming about, and these Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus know that the final reckoning must soon follow.





CHAPTER II: THE WAR FOR SOULS

Tizens everywhere in the galaxy know of the many wars the Imperium fights to preserve humanity, on battlefronts ranging from titanic sieges on war worlds, to naval clashes around dying stars, to cleansing actions against planetary invaders. They know of the ravaging aliens, heretical uprisings, and turncoat armies that threaten the Imperium each day. There is another war, however, one very few have the strength of will to comprehend, let alone fight in. It is the most dangerous and vital war, and takes place within every human on every world, even those who live outside the Imperium's borders. It is the war for souls, against enemies that defy reality itself in their quest to devour all that exists.

To better fight in this war, players now have new options for their Acolytes, including powerful weapons and talents for overcoming the acts of the Ruinous Powers. They can draw on Daemon weapons and even unholy Daemonic Remnants left behind when these foul creatures return to the Warp. Those who draw power from the Immaterium can use the new Sanctic and Malefic psychic power trees. New rules address the horrors of daemonic possession, and the faint hope of exorcism for such unfortunates. Those fallen to Radicalism or desperation can now create Daemonhosts, fashioning powerful creatures often more dangerous to their "masters" than they are to foes. Lastly, there are Dark Pacts, for those who dare to truck directly with Daemons for power, favours, or other gifts—either for their own selfish reasons, or to aid in the unending battle against the Enemies Beyond.

BANISHING DAEMONS

"You weep, for you lost an arm in battle. My soul was torn apart, yet I weep only in thanks that the Emperor stood with me in a battle you cannot imagine."

—Jayla Darwan, sole survivor of the Errido Incursion

Warring against the fell beings who dwell outside of reality is more than a matter of armaments—it is a matter of will. This might come from faith in the Emperor, or the knowledge of what failure means for Mankind. To banish these creatures, an Acolyte's will must be fierce and strong—lest bolter fall and armour fail when the Daemon appears, hungry for souls.

In this section, players find new character creation options as their Acolytes battle against the denizens of the Warp. Acolytes could have come from twisted Daemon worlds, gained freedom from penal colonies, or escaped from quarantine worlds. They might have lived through the terrors of daemonic possession, or feel the call of righteous combat as a Crusader. Some psykers might take on the elite advance of Astropath to become lynchpins of interstellar communication across the Imperium. Acolytes can also call upon new reinforcement characters such as the psychic anathema of the Culexus Assassin, while those far gone into Radicalism could seek out a profane Daemonhost.

NEW HOME WORLD: DAEMON WORLD

Dread secrets kept by the High Lords of Terra and the Inquisition; these worlds have bathed in the foul essence of the Warp, and are never trusted again.

"To say that a planet that has been lost to the Warp is horrifying is a severe understatement. It is every sin, fear, and desire of the human psyche made real."

—Confessor Berenice Chartrand, *Manifestations of the Fallen*

Citizens of the Imperium hail from all manner of dangerous planets and locations, but none rival the horrors of Daemon worlds. Chaos rules in these locations, and creatures of the Warp roam twisted landscapes made of nightmare and insanity. These hell-worlds are created by immersion in the Immaterium from Warp Storms. Some are even brought into life through deliberate machinations, the acts of those who keep the Left Hand of the Emperor ever watchful. Daemon worlds require investigation to seek the seeds of the Ruinous Powers' evil harvest, so that it can be prevented elsewhere—for once a world has been steeped in the stuff of Chaos, it is never the same again. Regardless of their origins, these planets are twisted parodies of reality, where the improbable is often made manifest and corruption infuses the land. Those who live there are often reduced to amusing prey or tortured slaves for the Ruinous Powers, and survival is more than just staying alive—it is also a struggle to stay human.

LIFE ON A DAEMON WORLD

Most Inquisitorial visits to Daemon worlds are short-lived and matters of dire necessity. This makes useful information regarding how a planet bathed in Warp energies appears or behaves very rare indeed. The few reliable accounts, however, detail that survival comes at a high cost and a portion of one's soul is almost always the first down payment. Tales of being hunted by Daemons over changing terrain are common, confrontations with one's worst fears frequent; seeing friends and loved ones die is a prevailing theme. Natural laws cease to be constants. Rocks bleed or cry out when picked up. Some tales speak of mortals having to reassemble their bodies every morning in order to get up. There is no shortage of madness on these worlds.

DAEMON WORLD RULES

A character from a Daemon world applies the following benefits during character creation:

CHARACTERISTIC MODIFIERS

+ Willpower, + Perception, – Fellowship

FATE THRESHOLD

3 (Emperor's Blessing 4+)

HOME WORLD BONUS

Touched by the Warp: A Daemon world native begins with one Rank in the Psyniscience skill. Should he gain this skill again in a later step of character creation, he instead gains one additional Rank in the skill. Note that he cannot purchase more Ranks of this skill unless he acquires the Psyker aptitude. This character also begins with 1d10+5 Corruption points.

HOME WORLD APTITUDE

Willpower

WOUNDS

A Daemon world character starts with 7+1d5 wounds.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUNDS

Adeptus Astra Telepathica, Adeptus Ministorum, Exorcised, Outcast

RANDOM SELECTION

If using Table 2–1: Random Home World from page 31 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook, a Daemon world can be generated on any roll where the results of the two d10 dice add to a sum of 8.

Some sages of forbidden lores postulate that either those trapped on these worlds control some of the makeup of the world or that the Daemons rely on the constant stream of emotional output to ensure the survival and continued propagation of their “guests.” Though other ideas are shopped among the halls of the greatest daemonologists, what is very clear is that there are very few human beings strong enough to survive the barrage of horrors these worlds create. The few who have survived, and who have been able to tell their tales, have commented that the luckiest among them are those already dead.

Some Daemon worlds are devoted to a single Chaos God, or ruled by a powerful Daemon Prince, but many are cauldrons of unending war where no individual or faction dominates. While not improbable, places where Daemons can find stability outside of their nightmare realm are a rare commodity, and thus attract much competition from other denizens of the Warp. Many of the explored Daemon worlds are eternal battlegrounds, where any human inhabitants are caught in the daemoniac crossfire.

DAEMON WORLD CHARACTERS

When a planet is classified as a Daemon world, it is present in realspace or has been at some time. It is in these rare moments that Imperial agencies such as the Adeptus Astartes might be tasked with reconnaissance of the location. Occasionally, along with lost relics and new insights, survivors are found with sanity and souls intact. The blessed individual who has withstood the horrors of a Daemon world offers the Inquisition unique opportunities. Since most others who are still alive are certifiably insane or catatonic, they are a source of somewhat reliable information which is all but impossible to obtain any other way. Though always sequestered after rescue to ensure safety, many of these people have skill sets far too valuable to leave dormant behind locked doors. Those who make it off these accursed worlds often come from backgrounds that lend themselves to withstanding the horrors of the Warp.

One characteristic that many of these survivors show is a stronger connection to the Warp. They are forever attuned to disturbances and entities from the other side of the veil. While this skill only seems to be active in realspace, this sensitivity allows them to know when daemoniac entities or psychic phenomena are nearby. Those few capable of explaining how it works for them indicate that it is an infusion of colour and brilliance in what is largely a grey world. These rare individuals come to an Inquisitor's service bearing the scars of exposure. Odd compulsions, night terrors, and paranoia are common among these survivors. Many display wills of steel, forged in their daily resistance to their daemoniac homeland, or possess humour bitter and dark to reflect the horrors they have lived through. Knowing this, Inquisitors using Acolytes from a Daemon world maintain a short leash on these individuals, for the threat of corruption is always strong.

SAMPLE DAEMON WORLD: INFRACTUS

Infractus is a small planet close to the far Rimward edge of the Thule Sub-Sector. A former research colony, the equatorial band of the planet is now a single Warp rift that circumnavigates the orb. Vox transmissions coming from the rift have drawn the attention of the Inquisition, as the dating codes on them seem to be from during the Great Expansion and the time of the Heresy. Attempts to research the emissions have proven to be fruitless thus far as the surface of the landmasses seems to be in constant flux near the rift. Inquisitor Rolf Sortjarl maintains his orbiting listening post trying to decipher the meaning of the messages, but refuses to send anyone to the surface. Despite this, multiple individuals have claimed, even under excruciations or psychic probes, to have come from this world. How they escaped, or who (or what) aided them, is still unknown.



NEW HOME WORLD: PENAL COLONY

Holding the dregs of society and the most dangerous of criminals; these planets serve as little more than holding pens for bitterness, hatred, and violence, but stand ready as future tools for the Imperium's hands.

"Welcome to Allegro! You are here because you have failed in the eyes of the Emperor. Any chance for redemption starts now!"

—Warden Abel D'Arce's announcement to new inmates

Where most world classifications stem from the types of terrain or lifeforms found there, penal colonies are defined by strict Imperial Law. In every expansion, there are recidivists, looters, murderers, and thieves who appear in its wake. The most violent or persistent offenders, if not granted summary execution at the time of apprehension, may be shipped off-world to facilities designed to house them permanently. These purgatories made real are often ruined worlds left forgotten due to their lack of strategic importance or natural resources. Buildings are repurposed and retrofitted to accommodate massive numbers of inmates, and automated defences are brought in to keep the new residents in line. It is here that the lawbreakers are left to wither and die—though some survive to escape their sentence, and fight for the Emperor on other fronts.

LIFE ON A PENAL COLONY

Life on many penal colonies is extremely regimented and heavily monitored. Daily menial labour maintaining the grounds—or more rarely, mining or extracting resources—is designed to tax even the heartiest individual's energy levels, thereby reducing the incidence of violent encounters. Food is largely bland and heavily processed to inhibit muscle growth and dull the senses. Constant lockdown when not working or eating all but eliminates the ability to hope for a better day. These calculated practices break the wills of the inmates, but even with all of that working against them, human nature knows no limit to its baser instincts.

PENAL COLONY RULES

A character from a penal colony applies the following benefits during character creation:

CHARACTERISTIC MODIFIERS

+ Toughness, + Perception, – Influence

FATE THRESHOLD

3 (Emperor's Blessing 8+)

HOME WORLD BONUS

Finger on the Pulse: One survives a penal colony by instinctively knowing who is in charge and who is a threat. A penal colony character begins with one Rank in the Common Lore (Underworld) and Scrutiny skills, and starts with the Peer (Criminal Cartels) talent.

APTITUDE

Toughness

WOUNDS

A penal colony character starts with 10+1d5 wounds.

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUNDS

Adeptus Administratum, Adeptus Ministorum,
Imperial Guard, Outcast

RANDOM SELECTION

If using Table 2–1: Random Home World from page 31 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook, a penal colony can be generated on any roll where the results of the two d10 dice add to a sum of 13.

When the demand for expendable soldiers is highest, Lord Generals send word back along the worlds they have conquered and request additional troops from all planets capable of sending them. Penal colonies are often able to send viable troops who seek little more than a final taste of freedom and redemption in service to the Golden Throne. Founding Tithes for war efforts are rare on these planets, for such penal legions are difficult to control, but the flood of inmate volunteers continually feeds the insatiable, unending Imperial war machine on fronts across the galaxy.

While this represents the majority of these “colonies,” others are so far removed from the rest of the Imperium that they are merely dumping grounds for what the sector or sub-sector governments consider human refuse. On these worlds, transport fleets often arrive in the system festooned with one-way drop pods filled with convicts. Once in orbit they fire off all the pods and then depart for a hasty transition back to the Warp, leaving the accused to fend for themselves. On some of these worlds, a single established bastion provides updates or provides the basis for rounding up and honouring a Founding Tithe. In others, those who survive form their own tribal groupings and struggle to exist with the remains of their pods and any gear they were given.

PENAL COLONY CHARACTERS

Those hailing from a penal colony fall mostly into one of two camps: either inmates or their progeny. A few others come from the ranks of guards, gaolers, and wardens who oversee these wretches. Regardless of which group they fall into, those living on a penal colony develop survival strategies to inure themselves to the horrors around them. Many prisoners band together in gangs to provide support, protection, and strength; some rely on intimidation or reputation to keep potential threats at bay. Those unable to cope find their way to their graves, or end up more deeply imprisoned by servitude to fellow inmates. The few able to survive and emerge from this environment stronger and more defined are often the kind needed by both Inquisitors and the Imperial Guard.

Individuals who have skills and talent outside the norm are often noticed by those with a keen eye for such abilities. Wardens are tasked with readying prison recruits for duty in penal legions as required. At times, an Inquisitor might seek out those with the capacity to move in the world of shadows and depravity, and there are few better places to find those with the resolve and ability than in prison. Working for an Inquisitor brings significantly more freedom, but infinitely more danger than even the highly terminal nature of their service in the Imperial Guard. Still, very few reject an offer made by someone who can make a warden cower.

Penal colonies hold all kinds of criminals and therefore also all kinds of hidden talents. While most doomed to such a world are rough thugs or insane killers, some inmates are gifted thinkers, skilled procurers, rousing orators, or budding technomats who were captured and incarcerated for activities that local rulers deemed heretical or revolutionary (or simply bothersome). Once imprisoned with others of their ilk, they might hone their skills or develop new ones. If ever unleashed upon the Imperium, most are eager to share their new abilities with unsuspecting enemies on the direction of their Inquisitorial masters.

SAMPLE PENAL COLONY: JUBILUS

Toward the Spinward side of the Asphodel Depths lies the prison planet of Jubilus. Originally designated as a barren dumping ground for the worst specimens of humanity, the reclamation of the planet has seen it become a recruiting ground for one of the most infamous penal legions in Askellon: the Jubilan Sandrats. The Sandrats are known for determination and grit, completing any task set before them even at the cost of every man available. This often leads generals to call on Jubilus to muster troops for particularly deadly missions. Colonel Brigit Venskul is the current commander, instilling in her troops the drive to achieve one final deed to right their previous wrongs. Their distinctive discipline collars also provide a filtration mask that covers the nose and mouth, giving rise to the regiment's name. To this date, the Sandrats have saved more battles single-handedly than any other current penal regiment in the sector.

NEW HOME WORLD: QUARANTINE WORLD

Condemned by Holy Imperial Writ and blockaded by the Imperial Navy, though possibly resource rich and habitable; any foot that has trod these mysterious surfaces is one marked for execution.

“By decree of the Lords of Askellon and the most Holy Inquisition, this world is now deemed to be under Imperial Quarantine. Any who violate this edict are considered Perdition and their lives deemed forfeit.”

–Final words of an Askellian Writ of Quarantine

Quarantine worlds are marked as forbidden for visitation, settlement, or contact of any kind. Some might be seemingly benign verdant spheres, others might be foreboding rocks, but the Imperium has determined there is some terrible threat that outweighs any possible usefulness they might contain. Such threats range from biological agents to xenos species infiltration, and even to possible Warp-taint and other unholy threats. Whatever the catastrophe, potential or historical, it is viewed as a far greater risk than any reward it could bring.

Once the edict is given, the Imperial Navy provides the military and defence systems the situation requires, from message buoys at the outskirts of the system to patrolling ships and orbiting weapons platforms. No unauthorised craft is allowed anywhere near the space and any found are generally destroyed without question. In case of extreme risk to the sector, the human population is often annihilated to prevent any potential escape attempts. Regardless of whether anyone survives this culling, no one is allowed to set foot on those planets without proper authorisation. To be discovered breaking a writ of quarantine is a death sentence.

QUARANTINE WORLD RULES

A character from a quarantine world applies the following benefits during character creation:

CHARACTERISTIC MODIFIERS

+ Ballistic Skill, + Intelligence, – Strength

FATE THRESHOLD

3 (Emperor's Blessing 9+)

HOME WORLD BONUS

Secretive by Nature: Those who manage to leave a quarantine world learn how to keep secrets. Whenever the warband's Subtlety would decrease, it decreases by 2 less (to a minimum reduction of 1).

APTITUDE

Fieldcraft

WOUNDS

A quarantine world character starts with 8+1d5 wounds

RECOMMENDED BACKGROUNDS

Adeptus Arbites, Adeptus Mechanicus,
Imperial Guard, Outcast

RANDOM SELECTION

If using Table 2-1: Random Home World from page 31 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook, a quarantine world can be generated on any roll where the ones digit is a zero.

LIFE ON A QUARANTINE WORLD

Details of life on quarantine worlds are scarce, as most who could provide them are trapped on the surface or captured and likely put to immediate death if found to have escaped. Tales whisper of worlds covered with psychic storms that can burn sanity like firewood, or where ethereal remnants of dead races still stalk the ruins of once-grand temples, or simply where events occurred so terrible that the Imperium insists they remain secret forever. Populations might vary from teeming masses unknowingly tainted with a Warp-based plague to the wretched survivors an alien invasion deemed too spiritually contaminated to be allowed outside contact. Though Inquisitors often seek to interrogate such individuals for information about the world they came from and how they were able to escape from it, most captains readily dispose of them through an airlock should any official investigations draw near their ship.

On some quarantine worlds, the remaining inhabitants are perhaps unaware of their status, knowing only that travel from their planet has been dormant for long generations and such is the way the Emperor has decreed. On others, where the populace knows of their fate, many lose hope quickly and sacrifice themselves in an attempt to thwart any spread of the threat. A few, however, may be motivated to find a way to beat the odds and counteract the threat, whether it is killing the creature or pathogen or containing and eradicating Warp contamination. There are no records of any world ever being released from quarantine, though many planets have petitioned for generations, claiming that they have freed themselves of any taint.

Escape from a quarantine world, however, is very different. Leaving under one's own power is usually met with death at the hands of gunners or interceptor pilots. Any craft detected leaving the planet's surface is hailed once and then eliminated. Stationed forces, however, must conduct reconnaissance themselves, whether by scans from orbit or aerospace drones and aircraft doing more in-depth sensor sweeps and visual checks from within the atmosphere. It is in these instances that the local populations may attempt to commandeer or stow away aboard these craft, seeking a one-way ticket to the larger orbiting ship where they can hopefully disappear within the ship's crew.

QUARANTINE WORLD CHARACTERS

Characters from worlds marked for quarantine face immeasurable odds in getting off planet and staying free. Whether the individual lived there at the time of the event, was born afterward, or has been to the surface "liberating" inhabitants or scavenging for ancient relics, anyone who has been past the restriction points of the edict lives on borrowed time. Depending on the nature of the quarantine and the amount of ordnance preventing departure, those who flee risk capture and execution, and therefore must remain on the run. It is no surprise that they seldom ally themselves with any singular group for too long.

Anyone can come from a quarantine world, for it is the nature of the world or the accident that determines the need for enforced segregation, not the people. Adeptus Mechanicus research stations, agri-worlds, hive worlds...all of these have been the victims of such accidents, condemning their inhabitants to lives of gradual decline and eventual extinction. Those who survive and escape are some of the most versatile and resourceful people in the galaxy. They are also some of the least trusting and secretive, relying on themselves and often willing to strand comrades in order to stay one step ahead of the authorities. In the rarest of circumstances, the Left Hand of the Emperor finds these individuals and offers them a chance to stop running in exchange for their services. It is a very brave or very foolish person who refuses such an offer.

SAMPLE QUARANTINE WORLD: VAPAUS

In the middle of the main Warp corridor between Juno and Pellenne lies the Vapaus System, a formerly prosperous mining hub and trading post, now a mere husk. It boasted over ten billion people and a bustling starport, and was a stable layover between the two processional worlds until all communications went offline abruptly sixty years ago. Trade ships that ventured into the system found no activity and most of the inhabitants in a lax, vegetative state. Thus far none have awakened, and those who have dared venture to the planet without fully sealed voidsuit protection have suffered similar fates. The Adeptus Administratum on Juno has declared it a quarantined system and has begun the march of ordnance and defence platforms to the system to ward off traffic; this has not stopped Faceless Traders and hereteks alike from attempting to land and learn more of a possible weapon or secretive life form.

NEW BACKGROUND: EXORCISED

Forever tainted in body and soul by their unholy experience; possessing unique knowledge of the Enemy Beyond, they make for excellent—if never fully trusted—servants of the Inquisition.

“A Daemon once possessed your body and held sway over your soul, but no longer. Now both belong to me. Serve me and suffer for the sin of your weakness.”

—Inquisitor Blithia, to her newest Acolyte

Even in a galaxy where the natural order is routinely mocked by warping influences from beyond and rendered near-meaningless to those who suffer each cruel twist of fate, some circumstances have outcomes that are seemingly immutable. Possession by a Daemon is such a doom, perhaps the most terrible of any imagined. Though possession nearly always results in the death and eternal damnation of the mortal who is dominated by the Daemon, it is not always the case. Some few—perhaps fortunately, perhaps not—are freed from their torment as the Daemon is cast out of them, only to face lifetimes of horrors remembered from the experience. These rare mortals are constant reminders of the terrors that await Mankind should the Ordo Malleus fail and Chaos triumph.

ROLE WITHIN THE IMPERIUM

Weakness of spirit, corruption of character, misuse of psychic powers, and befoulment of the body are among the myriad of causes for a crack to appear in a mortal man's defences against the predations of the Warp and those malign entities that dwell therein—and a crack is all that is needed. Through the veil of the Immaterium, they spy the shadows of the soon-to-be-damned and reach forth into reality to pry apart the crack, widening it until the creatures can spill their foulness wholly into their victims. The process of possession can take seconds or years. The effects last from a lifetime to an eternity.

A mortal possessed by a Daemon is torment made flesh. Destruction surrounds this poor soul and misery follows in his wake. Family, loyalty, and even love of the Emperor are cast aside for the amusement of the Daemon. Some Daemons delight in blazing a path of destruction as wide and hot as possible. Others attempt to sow the seeds of sorrow through subtle manipulation. Most possessing Daemons are banished back to the Warp when found, but some face a different fate—exorcism. Even should the soul of one who was possessed be reclaimed from Chaos, the horrific process almost always entails a succession of suffering and pain that ends in the blessed release of death. A few do, however, survive the rituals and must begin to walk a dark new path.

Freed from the shackles of subservience to a Daemonic master, the Exorcised often finds himself bound by lifelong service to a new cause, short though that life may be. A lucky few select this cause for themselves. They may turn their weakness into a new strength by spending their remaining days as a hunter of Daemons and other corrupted souls, or by filling volumes with their knowledge of the malefic so that others might learn to better combat the denizens of the Warp.

EXORCISED RULES

A character with the Exorcised background applies the following benefits:

STARTING SKILLS

Awareness, Deceive *or* Inquiry, Dodge, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology), Intimidate *or* Scrutiny

STARTING TALENTS

Hatred (Daemons), Weapon Training (Solid Projectile, Chain)

STARTING EQUIPMENT

Autopistol *or* stub revolver, shotgun, chainblade, Imperial robes, 3 doses of obscura *or* tranq, disguise kit *or* excruciator kit, rebreather, stablight *or* glow-globe

STARTING MALIGNANCY

An Exorcised character starts with one Malignancy chosen from **Table 8-15: Malignancies** (see page 290 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook).

BACKGROUND BONUS

Touched by a Daemon: An Exorcised character counts his Insanity bonus as 2 higher for purposes of avoiding Fear tests (see page 289 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook). Additionally, he can never again become possessed by the same Daemon that once possessed him.

BACKGROUND APTITUDE

Defence *or* Knowledge

RECOMMENDED ROLES

Assassin, Sage, Hierophant, Seeker

For others, the option to choose their own path is denied them. Some are caged and studied, probed psychically and physically in order to find out what flaw left them open to domination. Still others are conscripted to fight against horrors that would terrify any mortal who had not already experienced such a harrowing assault. A few with sufficient strength of will or other useful abilities are indentured to the one who banished the Daemon and reclaimed their souls, often an Inquisitor. These are prized Acolytes for some within the Ordo Malleus, especially those of a more Radical bent.

EXORCISED CHARACTERS

The Exorcised often have insights into the workings of the Warp and its denizens that no other beings have. They have more than stared into the abyss: they have been fused with it, consumed by it, and dragged back from its bowels by the indomitable will of the mightiest of Imperial servants. Secrets known only to Daemonkind are theirs to share; concealed plots whispered in their ears are theirs to speak aloud to any who will listen.

This drives many Exorcised mad. The knowledge of their own weakness, a failing that allowed them to be possessed in the first place, competes with memories of the atrocities they committed against cherished loved ones as well as their Emperor—each vying to be the reason that Exorcised hurl themselves from the highest pinnacle they can find.

Some, their minds comparatively stable, wander the galaxy, using their secret knowledge to their advantage, though always taking care to not reveal its source. They might work as guides for Rogue Traders, revealing hidden paths through dangerous Warp storms that not even a Navigator may know of. They could act as dowsers for Faceless Traders, verifying the presence of Warp-taint in items. Others might become Witch Hunters, scouring any who display psychic talents before others can invite possession, or use their personal knowledge of the Ruinous Powers to become expert scholars of the malefic.

Some Exorcised can even draw remnants of the daemonic power that inhabited their bodies to probe weak minds, gleaning knowledge that they can sell to interested parties. Many simply seek out a righteous death, throwing themselves into battle as part of Ecclesiarchal penitent forces or penal legions.

In the end, though, often their sin threatens to consume them. Their spirits desperate for redemption, they throw themselves into service of the Emperor they betrayed. These are the Exorcised who make the best candidates to serve the needs of an Inquisitor, but their fervour can make them unreliable. Their need to cling to even the faintest of praise that lets them deaden their pain also leads them to invent mysteries and relate imagined tales of betrayal. An Inquisitor must discern truth from well-meaning lies. He must be able to pluck the essence from the ravings of an Exorcised and put the knowledge gained to use in the purging of heretics. In the end, he must know when the time has come to utterly sever the lingering connection between mortal shell and otherworldly influence, through hammer, bolter shell, or flame.

SAMPLE EXORCISED BACKGROUND: "THE EVERDAMNED"

Its existence a hushed whisper within Askellian Ordo Malleus circles, this group of hardened survivors is bound in service to the Inquisitor who expelled the Daemons that once inhabited their forms. Many Radicals have sought out its numbers to gain personal insight into the Ruinous Powers. For some of the Everdamned, this service is an act of repentance, to seek out the Emperor's Forgiveness for their weakness. Other members seek out vengeance against denizens of the Warp, every hopeful that they might encounter their own Daemon to inflict as much pain on it as they themselves suffered. For their mistress and saviour, Inquisitor Miranda Blithia, each is merely one more weapon in her arsenal, to be used and expended in her endless battle against the Enemy Beyond.



NEW ROLE: CRUSADER

Righteous warriors who battle the Daemon and heretic in single combat with blessed blade and power sword; they guard their allies with faith and shield, standing firm against the unholy tide.

"The Emperor is my shield, and I am His sword."

—Brother Aegin Rorhst, before the Scouring of Fayrel

Against the predations of the Daemon, faith is the ultimate bulwark. Crusaders are stalwart defenders against the denizens of the Warp, righteous warriors who battle against the unholy with sword and shield. Skilled as they are with a blade or hammer, it is their strength of will that allows Crusaders to stand against the Daemon where others falter. While hell-forged blades and wicked claws can rend flesh and end lives, the greatest threat the Daemon poses is to the soul. To enter the fray against the denizens of the Warp, Crusaders must have faith as unyielding as adamantium. Crusaders possess such faith and the strength to battle the unholy forces of the Archenemies of Mankind in heroic combat, inspiring their allies with their courage and skill at arms.

THE ROLE OF THE CRUSADER

The Crusader protects his allies from the unholy enemy, both with his martial abilities and the strength of his faith. He can serve an important role in any warband, bearing the brunt of the enemy's assault in order to protect allies, but is invaluable when facing daemonic adversaries. Resilient and focused as much on protection as on attack, as shown by the large shield he likely favours, a Crusader is a paragon of righteous battle. Standing strong against the enemy, a Crusader absorbs blows and gives back in equal measure against his foes, daemonic or otherwise.

A Crusader excels in single combat, taking the fight to the foe to neutralise the threat or buy time for his allies to complete their mission. Although heroic single combat is where he shines, a Crusader can also hold the line against the gibbering tide of horrid foes. A Crusader's strong defence allows him to survive outnumbered where others would fall. However, even if it means sacrificing himself, a Crusader stands firm so that the side of righteousness wins the day. Often, an inspirational death can turn the tide of a battle as surely as any cleaving strike or accurate shot, and the Crusader knows the true importance is the final defeat of his unholy nemeses, for to lose against such foes is more than mere defeat—it can spell the doom of entire world's worth of souls.

The Crusader lives to battle the unholy enemies of humanity. One serving in a warband is certain to receive numerous opportunities to test his skills against heretics and deadly xenos. Perhaps the greatest calling for a Crusader is to serve an Inquisitor from the Ordo Malleus, pitting his sword against the Archenemies of Mankind. A sanctified blade is a potent weapon against the daemonic, at least in the hands of a skilled warrior. But even the greatest swordsman is of no use against the Daemon, should he succumb to fear or falter in his faith. A Crusader's resolve is as strong as his sword arm, ensuring the mental and spiritual fortitude to see the fight through and stand against the unholy foe.

CRUSADER SPECIAL RULES

A Crusader character gains the following benefits:

ROLE APTITUDES

Knowledge, Offence, Strength, Toughness, Willpower

ROLE TALENT

Bodyguard or Deny the Witch

ROLE BONUS

Smite the Unholy: In addition to the normal uses of Fate points (see page 293 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook), a Crusader character can also spend a Fate Point to automatically pass a Fear test with a number of degrees of success equal to his Willpower bonus. In addition, whenever he inflicts a hit with a melee attack against a target with the Fear (X) trait, he inflicts X additional damage and counts his weapon's penetration as being X higher.

Almost without exception, the Crusader is a master of melee combat, favouring a sanctified sword, axe, or mace to purge the daemonic. He is likely to eschew ranged weapons altogether. Many Crusaders view it as the ultimate show of faith and courage to take the fight to the Daemon in personal combat. In a warband, a Crusader fulfils the role of front-line melee combatant. He does not sneak or shirk from the foe, but faces it head-on. Such displays of courage and faith inspire other Acolytes, giving them the resolve to fight on against otherworldly enemies.

CRUSADER CHARACTERS

Although many Crusaders have ties to the Adeptus Ministorum, they can come from any background. Many are drawn from the ranks of the numerous Frateris Militias across the Imperium or Adepta Sororitas Orders, all of which ensure they have a properly fervent hatred for their enemies. Others can come from noble families—especially those with proud traditions of honourable martial combat—or Imperial Guard regiments already inured to unending war and the foes that Mankind faces. A zealous Arbitrator might find herself drawn to the life of a Crusader, already expert in acting as the final line of defence against enemies who would overthrow humanity. Even a member of the Machine Cult might live to pit his mighty Omnissian power axe against the vile creations of hereteks, replacing his weak flesh with machine to render body and mind impervious to the predators of the Warp.

A Crusader does not have to have been forged from a martial background, however. A simple pilgrim who faces down a heretic—or worse—might launch a crusade against the unrighteous and the daemonic, and make it his life's purpose to seek out such combats wherever he ventures in his travels. An Adeptus Administratum functionary who uncovered ancient records of an incursion from beyond could take up sword and shield to prevent a reoccurrence, having deciphered glyphs indicating the Warp is ready to erupt shortly, and without her actions a hive might fall—even though she does not expect to live through the conflict herself.

What defines a Crusader is his dedication to battling the unholy. Consequently, many Crusaders can trace their oath to a single defining event, or have always known their calling to be battling the enemies of the Emperor. A Crusader might be witness to a daemonic incursion, or even hail from a Daemon world. Such an individual who comes through the experience alive and with his soul and sanity intact is profoundly changed, and he might well dedicate his life to combatting the scourge of the Daemon.

SAMPLE CRUSADER: CASSARA NOVIA

Sergeant Cassara Novia served for many years as an armswoman aboard the Navy cruiser *Unyielding Triumph*. During this time, she pitted her shock maul and suppression shield against pirates, alien raiders, and even Chaos reavers. In each battle, she fought with courage and skill, leading her squad to hold the corridors of the vessel against boarders, or leading attacking forces to take enemy ships. Her greatest test, however, came with the most feared of events that might befall a voidship—a Gellar field failure. As Daemons of the Warp swarmed the ship, many of the crew succumbed to madness and mutation even before falling to the unholy claws and blades of the attackers.

Most of the *Unyielding Triumph*'s crew were helpless against the daemonic onslaught. Yet Novia's faith held firm, and she rallied her armsmen to defend the ship's enginarium as Enginseers and Tech-Adepts frantically beseeched the Omnissiah to restore the protective Gellar Field. Novia held the line against the unholy creatures long enough for a strange group of passengers to reach the enginarium, powerful individuals who were able to hold back the daemonic tide with esoteric weapons and abilities as the Tech-Priests completed their work. In the aftermath, many of the crew faced mind-wiping or execution for what they had seen, but the intimidating leader of the mysterious group offered Novia another path. Now, she travels the sector, pitting her faith and shield against the Daemon wherever it may be found.



CRUSADER SAMPLE PATHS

For many Crusaders, the only way to properly serve the Emperor is to seek out and smite Daemons and witches at every opportunity. This especially holds true whenever single combat is possible, as here a Crusader can pit himself and his skills against the foulest of Mankind's enemies. To create such a character, the player should look to advancing the Crusader's martial skills, but also ensure the character knows the dangers his enemy poses and can withstand the terrifying nature of these foes.

RECOMMENDED ADVANCES:

Characteristics: Strength, Weapon Skill, Willpower

Skills: Awareness, Dodge, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Psykers), Parry

Talents: Counter Attack, Hatred (Daemons), Killing Strike, Resistance (Fear, Psychic Powers)

Some Crusaders view their position in the warband as bulwarks against the daemonic, and act as protectors when investigations draw the Acolytes against the forces from beyond. Thus protected, their comrades can safely conduct banishment rites, close Warp breaches, and destroy heretical artefacts. In fashioning this type of Crusader, players should look towards defensive abilities and improvements so the character can absorb punishment. These Crusaders also benefit from improved healing skills, as well as ways to inspire or at least terrify their charges into resisting these enemies.

RECOMMENDED ADVANCES:

Characteristics: Fellowship, Toughness, Willpower

Skills: Athletics, Command, Medicae, Tech-Use, Trade (Armourer)

Talents: Bodyguard, Combat Master, Die Hard, Iron Jaw, Shield Wall, Sound Constitution

NEW ELITE ADVANCE: ASTROPATH

Though starships often act as courier vessels and carry vital messages requiring personal delivery, Astropaths provide the Imperium's only viable means of interstellar communication. As such, they are vital to the Imperium's survival, and their services are in high demand by the Imperial Adeptus. Even an Inquisitor cannot always count on ready access to an Astropath. Consequently, some Inquisitors see fit to permanently requisition the services of an Astropath, ensuring that they or their Acolytes are able to communicate with and warn each other regarding the threats to the Imperium they uncover.

Astropaths are rare among sanctioned psykers in that they have undergone the Soul Binding, an ancient and hallowed ritual whereby the individual is imbued with a small portion of the Emperor's power. This enhances their abilities and grants the strength necessary to communicate telepathically between the stars, while also protecting Astropaths against the attacks of Warp entities. They must transmit critical messages and dark secrets, and so must be strong of will to fulfil their duties. Although Astropaths suffers the permanent loss of their sight as a result of the Soul Binding, their psychic senses are increased. To Astropaths, though, it is those who rely on their eyes who are truly blind.

ASTROPATH TALENTS

The following talents are available only to an Astropath character, and are purchased in the same manner as other talents.

BOUND TO THE HIGHEST POWER

The Astropath's connection to the Emperor protects him from the dangers of the Warp and the predations of its unholy denizens. Imbued with only a minuscule fraction of the Emperor's power, it is enough to safeguard the Astropath's soul and protect his allies.

Tier: 3

Prerequisites: Warp Lock

Aptitudes: Willpower, Defence

Effect: The Astropath may spend a Fate Point to ignore a result on Table 6-2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook) he has rolled (including a result of Perils of the Warp), completely negating its effects. Doing so requires him to distance himself from the Warp, and he cannot use the Focus Power action or sustain psychic powers until the start of his next turn.

SUPREME TELEPATH

The Astropath is a potent psyker and master of mental powers. When turning his psychic gift to the art of telepathy, the Astropath can push his powers beyond their limits, saved from danger by his bond with the Emperor.

Tier: 3

Prerequisites: Fellowship 40, Willpower 50

Aptitudes: Fellowship

Effect: Before making a Focus Power test to manifest a power from the Telepathy discipline or the Astropath elite advance, the Astropath may spend a Fate point to increase his psy rating by an amount equal to half his Willpower bonus (rounded down) for that test.

ASTROPATH SPECIAL RULES

The Astropath elite advance has the following rules:

EXPERIENCE COST

300 xp

PREREQUISITES

- **Sanctioned Psyker:** A character must possess the Psyker elite advance and the Adeptus Astra Telepathica background in order to gain the Astropath elite advance.
- **GM Guidance:** The Astropath elite advance is generally most appropriate for starting characters. Becoming an Astropath is a gruelling and lengthy process that usually occurs as part of a psyker's Scholastica Psykana training. It is extremely rare for a psyker to become sanctioned and to later become an Astropath, and to do so would require a journey to Holy Terra in order to undergo the ritual of Soul Binding. However, Acolytes are exceptional individuals by their nature, and an Inquisitor could arrange for a psyker amongst his Acolytes to undergo the process to become an Astropath.

INSTANT CHANGES

- Gains the Soul Bound trait. Rather than choosing a side effect, the character permanently loses his sight.
- Gains the Unnatural Senses (X) trait, where X equals the Astropath's Willpower characteristic.

UNLOCKED ADVANCES

An Astropath character gains access to a special set of talents and psychic powers. These talents and psychic powers are only available to an Astropath character, and are purchased with experience in the same way that regular talents and psychic powers are purchased. The psychic powers do not belong to a discipline, but can require certain discipline powers as a prerequisite.

SECOND SIGHT

With practice and focus, the Astropath has honed his psychic senses and extended his unnatural sight. Even bereft of eyes, the Astropath sees more than a normal man.

Tier: 2

Prerequisites: Perception 35

Aptitudes: Perception, Willpower

Effect: The value of the Astropath's Unnatural Senses trait increases to twice his Willpower characteristic.

SOUL WARD

Soul-bound to the Emperor, the Astropath's mind and body are shielded against the Warp, even as he draws from it to fuel his own abilities. When the vagaries of the Warp and the assaults of its denizens threaten the Astropath, he relies on his mental and spiritual fortitude—and the Emperor's Grace—to protect himself.

Tier: 3

Prerequisites: Strong Minded, Willpower 50

Aptitudes: Defence, Willpower

Effect: The Astropath may re-roll Willpower tests he must make due to results on Table 6–2: **Psychic Phenomena** or Table 6–3: **Perils of the Warp** (see pages 196 and 197 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**), tests to avoid gaining mutations, and tests to resist daemonic possession.

WARP AWARENESS

The Astropath's psychic senses are unparalleled, perceiving the ripples of the Warp as easily as a normal man sees light and dark.

Tier: 2

Prerequisites: Warp Sense

Aptitudes: Perception, Psyker

Effect: The Astropath may use his Psyniscience skill in place of his Awareness skill for Awareness tests.

ASTROPATH PSYCHIC POWERS

The following psychic powers are available only to an Astropath character, and are purchased with experience in the same manner as regular psychic powers. These powers do not form a new discipline or belong to a discipline tree. Some powers do require certain discipline powers as prerequisites.

ASTRAL TELEPATHY

Although the true practice of astrotelepathy involves long and complex rituals unique to each Astropath, these psykers often evince the ability to communicate telepathically at a distance unseen amongst other telepaths. A practiced Astropath can communicate with even non-psykers at orbital ranges.

Value: 200 xp

Prerequisite: Telepathic Link, Willpower 40

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Hard (–20) Opposed Willpower test

Range: 1,000 kilometres x psy rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: The psyker chooses a person he is aware of within range who resists the power with a Willpower test. This can be someone the psyker has met personally, or someone he is aware of by description. If the power succeeds, the psyker can transmit a brief verbal message of no more than 5 seconds x psy rating.

If the target is aware of the psyker's action, he may choose to fail the Willpower test, counting as having rolled a 100.

TELEPATHIC BOND

Some Astropaths hone their abilities to better communicate with non-psykers. The ability to hold a silent telepathic conversation is invaluable for the servants of an Inquisitor. Without betraying their position or intentions, the psyker and his allies coordinate their plans and achieve their mission.

Value: 200 xp

Prerequisite: Telepathic Link, Fellowship 35

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Opposed Willpower test

Range: 20 metres x psy rating

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: The psyker establishes a telepathic bond with a number of individuals up to half his psy rating, who resist the power with a Willpower test. As long as the bond is held, the psyker and targets can send and receive messages telepathically. This does not grant full awareness of all of the characters' thoughts, but allows each character to choose what messages to send. All characters involved in the bond receive all messages.

If a target is aware of the psyker's action, he may choose to fail the Willpower test, counting as having rolled a 100. If a character moves out of range of the psyker, the power ceases to affect him.

MIND SCAN

Exhibiting his full psychic potential, the Astropath strips back the layers of his target's psyche, exposing truths even unknown to the victim. With each passing moment, more truths are revealed, until the Astropath gains unfettered access to his target's mind.

Value: 300 xp

Prerequisite: Fellowship 40, Telepathic Bond, Willpower 50

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Hard (–20) Willpower test

Range: 1 metre x psy rating

Sustained: Full Action

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: The psyker chooses a target within range and line of sight who resists the power with a Willpower test. The target may attempt to resist each round the power is sustained. If the target wins, the psyker is repelled from his mind and gains no further information. The information the psyker learns corresponds to the number of rounds he successfully sustains the power:

- **First Round:** The psyker learns basic information, including the target's name, mood, and general state of health.
- **Second Round:** The psyker accesses the target's surface thoughts and learns his number of Insanity points and number of Corruption points.
- **Third Round:** The psyker successfully gains access to the target's short-term memory and learns of any mental disorders.
- **Fourth Round:** The target's subconscious is revealed.
- **Fifth Round:** The target's mind is laid bare for the psyker to plunder at will, from the target's happiest memories to his darkest secrets.

THOUGHT SHIELD

Drawing on the strength of the Emperor Himself, the Astropath summons a shield of Warp power, the better to protect his mind and soul from psychic and daemonic attack. Many Astropaths attribute such an ability to their strength of faith.

Value: 300 xp

Prerequisite: Strong Minded

Action: Reaction

Focus Power: Hard (–20) Willpower test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: The psyker can choose to use this power when he is the target of a rival psyker's mind-influencing ability, a Daemon's attempt to possess him, or any creature's attempt to subvert his control of himself. If the power succeeds, the psyker successfully shields his mind from the influence or possession attempt, which immediately fails.

NEW REINFORCEMENT CHARACTERS

The following reinforcement characters are in many ways diametric opposites. One is mortal, yet was born with a horrible void where his soul should reside, and kills in the name of the Emperor. The other is flesh infused with daemonic spirit and Warp energies, its form housing a foul entity eager to corrupt and devour souls. Both are viewed as abomination, and perhaps only the most Radical or desperate Inquisitor would ever call on them for aid.

CULEXUS ASSASSIN

Influence Minimum: 60

Influence Cost: 11

Peer (Officio Assassinorum) talent reduces Influence Cost by 2

The Culexus temple is perhaps the most sinister of all the Assassin temples. Its operatives are skullhelmed harbingers of death, night-invisible terrors whose merest touch can extinguish the victim's soul. Even amongst the upper echelons of the Officio Assassinorum, this temple is always viewed with extreme caution. This is not because of the way that the Culexus operate, nor because of any particularly hideous methods they use to kill their targets. It is because of the Assassins themselves, who are chosen because each is an Untouchable with no reflection in the Warp. Each is without a soul, a horrid outcast to humanity. Through extensive training, though, these abominations are transformed into Assassins.

Unlike other Imperial Assassins, those of the Culexus temple rely primarily on their own innate nature as the primary source of inflicting death. Through the strengthening of their soulless state, their very touch can drain the life from anyone they touch. They also wear an Animus Speculum, a skull-like helmet. Primarily used to dampen the vile aura of these Untouchables en route to targets, its polarity can be reversed in order to magnify the soul-draining horror of their wearers to lethal levels to those around them and fire lethal blasts of negative Warp energy.

CULEXUS ASSASSIN					20
H ⁸ 01-10 14		WS 66		BS 62	S ⁶ 41
AR ³ 11-20 9	AL ³ 21-30 9	T ⁶ 40	AC 51	INT 53	
B ³ 31-70 9		PER 61	WP 61	FEL 12	
LR ³ 71-85 9	LL ³ 86-00 9	IFL 34			
HALF 5		FULL 10		CHARGE 15	
RUN 30		THREAT 31			
FISTS			CLASS MELEE		
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+6 ^{SB} (I)	
PEN 0		CLIP —		AVL —	
SPECIAL: LIFE DRAIN					
PSYK-OUT GRENADE (3)			CLASS THROWN		
RNG 18M ^{SB}		RoF S/-		DMG 1d10 (X)	
PEN 0		CLIP 1		AVL ER	
SPECIAL: BLAST (3), SMOKE (3)					

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (S) +20, Parry (WS) +10, Survival (Int) +20

Talents: Ambidextrous, Assassin Strike, Catfall, Combat Master, Constant Vigilance, Counter Attack, Deathdealer (Melee), Deny the Witch, Exotic Weapon Training (Animus Speculum), Hatred (Psykers), Inescapable Attack, Killing Strike, Temple Assassin, Unarmed Specialist

Life Drain: Damage from a Culexus Assassin's unarmed melee attack is not reduced by armour; and any successful hit automatically triggers Righteous Fury. If the target has the Psyker or Daemonic trait, this damage is also not reduced by its Toughness bonus.

Temple Assassin: A Culexus Assassin has supreme physical and martial training, allowing him to re-roll any Acrobatics or Athletics tests. Additionally, he has a number of additional Reactions each round equal to his Agility bonus (5) that can only be used to make Evasion tests. He can still only attempt to Evade a given attack once. At the GM's discretion, this talent also allows him to attempt

Evasion tests when they might not otherwise be possible and letting him Dodge massive explosions, a descending Warlord Titan's foot, or an invisible psychic attack.





Psychic Abomination: A Culexus Assassin is an Untouchable (see page 91 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook) and possesses all of the Untouchable talents.

Traits: Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), From Beyond, Phase, Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (2)

Gear: Animus Speculum, Etherium, personal medi-kit, pict-recorder, synskin bodyglove, vox-caster

Fate Points: 2

Animus Speculum: While active, the Animus Speculum dampens the unsettling aura surrounding the Untouchable, and any attempt to detect his soulless state suffers a -30 penalty. Only those with the Untouchable elite advance and Culexus temple training can make use of the special helmet. The helmet also incorporates a rebreather and omni-scope, plus two special devices:

- **Culexus Psyooculum:** This scanner allows the assassin to detect that which is obscured by psychic powers, and grants a +20 bonus to Awareness and Scrutiny tests used to locate a psychically hidden individual or object.
- **Arcane Eye:** The Animus Speculum can be used to fire a deadly beam of negative Warp energy, designed to eradicate creatures connected to the Immaterium. This blast of potent negative energy inflicts terrible damage on psykers, Daemons, and other psychically active entities, but causes no harm to other targets. It draws energy from psykers, becoming more powerful with every nearby Warp-connected creature. Against targets with the Psyker or Daemonic trait, the Arcane Eye fires with the following weapon profile:

ARCANE EYE				CLASS	PISTOL
RNG 50M	RoF S/-†	DMG 1D10+6 (E)			
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT —	AVL NU	
SPECIAL: ACCURATE, WARP WEAPON					

†When used in Full Automatic mode, the Arcane Eye fires a number of shots equal to the number of characters with the Psyker trait within half of the Assassin's Perception characteristic, rounded up (31 metres).

Etherium: This highly advanced layer of techno-arcane circuitry is built into the Culexus' synskin, and allows the wearer to shift out of phase with realspace. This makes his physical appearance even more horrific, a spectral figure absent in physical as well as spiritual form.

The Etherium grants the Culexus Assassin the Phase trait. It also enhances his baleful aura while he is Incorporeal; when a character would choose the Incorporeal Assassin as his target for an Attack action, he must make a Challenging (+0) Willpower test. If the would-be attacker fails, that character flinches, and must choose a different target or take a different action.

THRICE-BOUND DAEMONHOST

Influence Minimum: 50

Influence Cost: 5

The PC who calls for this Reinforcement Character must possess the *Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)* skill at the Trained level, and gains 1d5 Corruption points.

A Daemonhost is a Daemon bound by unholy rite and ceremony to the body of a mortal, often intended to serve cult leaders or even Radical Inquisitors. It is a terrifying combatant, able to manifest all manner of otherworldly abilities in its master's service. Yet, for all the power it offers, it is perhaps an even greater threat to any who would create it. A Daemon does not serve willingly, and the chains and wards to bind one into the host body can never be perfect. Should a Daemon break free of its binding, it takes great delight in avenging itself upon any nearby—especially the one who sought to fetter it. The more powerful the bindings, though, the less powerful the Daemonhost, making a thrice-bound creation the weakest but most controllable of these unholy creatures.

THRICE-BOUND DAEMONHOST										41
H 7 01-10		15	WS		BS		S 9			
AR 7 11-20		15	AL 7 21-30		58	32	61			
B 7 31-70		15	T 8		AG	INT				
LR 7 71-85		15	LL 7 86-00		50	14	43			
					PER	WP	FEL			
					66	68	41			
						IL	39			
HALF 2		FULL 4		CHARGE 6		RUN 12		THREAT 37		
CLAWS						CLASS MELEE				
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+13 ^{4+SB} (R)						
PEN 4		CLIP —		RLD —		WT —		AVL —		
SPECIAL: RAZOR SHARP, TEARING										

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Deceive (Fel) +30, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Heresy, the Warp), Psyniscience (Per) +20

Talents: Warp Sense

Traits: Baneful Presence (30), Daemonic (3), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons (Claws), Fear (2), From Beyond, Hover (4)[†], Size (5), Psyker (PR 4), Unnatural Strength (3)

†A Daemonhost is a being of unnatural power, unconcerned with certain laws of physics. It does not need to use any Movement actions in order to remain hovering.

Psychic Powers: Assault, Cursed Earth, Flame Breath, Psychic Shriek, Warp Perception

Gear: Rune-inscribed flesh armour, numerous binding chains and warding icons

Fate Points: 2

Daemonic Origin: The Daemonhost could have additional special rules, weapon qualities, and psychic powers (or lack thereof) depending on its patron god. As such, the GM and players are encouraged to use the Daemonhost creation rules on page 62 to craft a unique Daemonhost Reinforcement Character for the Acolytes to call on, and perhaps to become a recurring campaign Nemesis (as described in the **DARK HERESY** GAME MASTER'S KIT).

DAEMONIFUGE

"I have banished you six times in the past. What makes you think I cannot do it again?"

—Inquisitor Dilantha Alwis

Those that follow in the path of the Ordo Malleus know all too well that the weapons of man pale in comparison to the unnatural entities that spill into the material plane. From psycho-conductive ammunition and handcrafted wards, to gilded armour and mighty Daemon Hammers, such sanctified items shielded against the Warp's machinations allow humanity's protectors to stand a chance against the forces of Chaos.

This section covers devices either used by or heavily associated with the Ordo Malleus. It also includes Daemonic Remnants: unknowable and corrupting items originating from the Warp itself.

RANGED WEAPONS

Often handcrafted to exacting levels of perfection, Daemonhunter ranged weapons seek not to damage foes, but to rip them from reality and return them to the nightmare realm whence they came.

ABYSSAL CHARGE

An insidious device made from standard explosives and material touched by the daemonic, each abyssal charge retains a splinter of Warp energy, enough to corrupt that which it does not kill.

ARGENT GLOBE

Ordo Malleus agents often use these perfect spheres of gleaming silver against groups of daemonic foes. Against mortal targets the sudden blast of Truesilver filaments wounds like a frag grenade, but against Warpspawn the consecrated blast leaves even the mightiest Daemon smouldering in agony.

HELLRIFLE

Extremely effective weapons frowned upon by more Puritanical Inquisitors, hellrifles are intricate weapons that fire impossibly sharp shards of an unknown material. Speculated to be daemonic in origin, the true nature of this ammunition remains a mystery to the Adeptus Mechanicus, who have yet to recover even a single example for study.

NEW WEAPON QUALITIES

The following qualities can be found on weapons designed to banish foul Daemons back to the Warp, or channel their unholy powers at the cost of Corruption to one's soul.

DAEMONBANE

Some weapons receive blessings that give them a level of power against the minions of the Dark Gods, but there are special Ordo Malleus rites that go beyond mere sanctification. When used against targets with the Daemonic trait, weapons with this quality gain the Vengeful (8) quality and their damage is not reduced by the target's Toughness bonus.

TAINTED

Permeated with the power of the Warp, these weapons draw out the inner darkness of their wielders. Weapons with this quality inflict additional damage equal to the value of the user's Corruption bonus or Daemonic (X) trait value (whichever is higher).

INCINERATOR

Usually gifted to Ordo Malleus Inquisitors of rare skill, incinerators use psychically impregnated promethium that burns mortal flesh and unholy skin with equal ferocity.

An Incinerator ignores any protective benefits granted by psychic powers, and targets in its area of effect suffer a -10 penalty on Agility tests to avoid the flames for each point of the wielder's psy rating.



Table 2–1: Ranged Weapons

NAME	CLASS	RANGE	RoF	DAM	PEN	CLIP	RLD	SPECIAL	WT.	AVAILABILITY
Bolt Weapons										
Psycannon	Heavy	120m	–/2/5	2d10+5 X	5	40	3 Full	Daemonbane, Reliable, Tearing	20kg	Near Unique
Flame Weapons										
Incinerator	Basic	30m	S/–/–	1d10+6 E	6	10	2 Full	Daemonbane, Flame, Spray	3kg	Extremely Rare
Exotic Weapons										
Hellrifle	Basic	300m	S/–/–	1d10+4 R	4	–	–	Felling (2)	10kg	Very Rare
Silverseine Launcher	Heavy	60m	S/–/–	1d10 I	0	1	2 Full	Blast (4), Reliable, Sanctified, Snare (2)	25kg	Very Rare
Grenades										
Abyssal Charge	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	1d10+4 X	4	1	–	Blast (3), Crippling (2), Tainted	0.5kg	Extremely Rare
Argent Globe	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	2d10 X	2	1	–	Blast (3), Crippling (3) [†] , Sanctified	0.5kg	Extremely Rare
“Ironfaith” Incense Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	1d10 X	0	1	–	Daemonbane, Sanctified, Smoke (3)	0.5kg	Rare
Psyk-Out Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	1d10 X	0	1	–	Blast (3), Smoke (3)	1kg	Extremely Rare

[†] Only against targets with the Daemonic trait.

“IRONFAITH” INCENSE GRENADE

Filled with vials of blessed waters and purified ashes of Askellon’s saints, these grenades burst open with thick clouds of fragrant incense. For the impure and tainted, the sanctified smoke tears at their unholy forms and burns their wretched souls.

Whenever a character suffers a hit from this grenade, enters its smoke, or begins his turn within the smoke, he suffers Energy damage equal to his Corruption bonus or his Daemonic (X) trait (whichever is higher), ignoring armour and Toughness bonus.

PSYCANNON

Seen only in the hands of influential Daemonhunters, psycannons fire explosive shells tipped with Truesilver. Capable of smashing through psychic defences, each shell contains a small latticework of psycho-conductive fibres that allow the user to channel some of his own psychic power into each bolt.

Psycannons have integral suspensor technology, granting the wielder the Auto-Stabilised trait while in use, and are always of at least Good craftsmanship. They ignore all protective benefits granted by psychic powers and inflict +2 additional damage for every point of the wielder’s psy rating.



PSYK-OUT GRENADES

These grenades disperse a cloud of psi-refractive particles thought to have been created as a by-product of the processes that sustain the Astronomican, and disrupt a psyker’s connection to the Warp.

Whenever a character with the Psyker trait suffers a hit from this grenade, enters its smoke, or begins his turn within the smoke, he must make a Very Hard (–30) Willpower test or have his psy rating temporarily reduced by 1 for every degree of failure.

If the character fails the test by two or more degrees of failure, he must also immediately roll on Table 6–2: *Psychic Phenomena* (see page 196 of the *DARK HERESY* Core Rulebook). Every six hours, a psyker automatically recovers 1 point of psy rating lost this way. Additionally, any attempt to manifest a psychic power from within the cloud automatically fails.

SILVERSEINE LAUNCHER

A specialist class of weapon designed to subdue and capture Daemons, silverseine launchers fire sheets of wiring laced with Truesilver. The nets rarely needs to hold Daemons for long, though, as the sanctified metals painfully eat away at their flesh and helps banish them back to the Warp.

Silverseine launchers double their Snare value against characters with the Daemonic trait. Any such adversary trapped in a silverseine net must also test for Warp Instability at the start of each round.



MELEE WEAPONS

In keeping with the highly martial nature many display, Ordo Malleus Inquisitors and their followers might wield some of the most destructive melee weapons in existence, each one a match for even the mightiest of Daemons.

All the melee weapons listed in this section require one hand to wield unless otherwise noted.

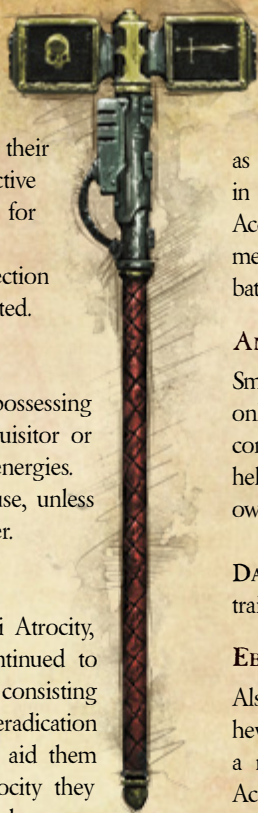
FORCE HAMMER

A common item for those of the Ordo Malleus possessing psychic powers, these weapons allow an Inquisitor or Acolyte to smite Daemons with the purest of energies.

A force hammer requires two hands to use, unless the wielder has a Strength bonus of 5 or higher.

HAMMERS OF ILLYRICUM

Despite the vowed secrecy following the Vaxi Atrocity, one group of Ordo Malleus Inquisitors continued to operate openly. The Conclave of Illyricum, consisting of five Inquisitors, shared a single goal: the eradication of the Pandaemonium and all it spawns. To aid them in this monumental task, soon after the Atrocity they commissioned a series of specialised nemesis hammers, each suited to one member's preferred method of combat.



Only two of them would live to see their weapons completed; one was lost to the Ruinous Powers in its first battle and now exists only as a Daemonic Remnant (see page 48), never to be replicated. Many decades later, the original hammers, as well as new ones made from the surviving four patterns, exist in the hands of Inquisitors, artefact collectors, and even honoured Acolytes. As for the Conclave of Illyricum, it still exists with new members secretly selected to replace those lost in the never-ending battle against the Ruinous Powers.

ANIMUS

Small of stature, Inquisitor Rufinius acted as the conclave's only psyker. Cursed with a wide range of psychic abilities, his commissioned hammer incorporated a crystalline matrix that helped to calm and centre his power. A potent force weapon in its own right, Animus is the most powerful type of Illyricum hammer.

An Animus hammer acts as a psy-focus (see page 177 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook). If the wielder possesses the Psyker trait, the weapon adds +1 to his psy rating.

EBENUS

Also known as the Black Maul, this peculiar weapon has a rough-hewn haft of reinforced obsidian and a squarish head made from a rare, light-absorbing metal. Originally wielded by Inquisitor Actius, the youngest of the conclave and a man with little patience for psykers, Ebenus drains nearby Warp energy giving its wielder a significant advantage against psychic foes and the daemonic.

Table 2-2: Melee Weapons

NAME	CLASS	RANGE	DAM	PEN	SPECIAL	WT.	AVAILABILITY
Force Weapons							
Animus Hammer	Melee	—	2d10+10 [†] E	4	Daemonbane, Force, Power Field, Unwieldy	8kg	Near Unique
Force Hammer	Melee	—	2d10 R	0	Force, Unbalanced	10kg	Extremely Rare
Nemesis Daemon Hammer	Melee	—	2d10+1 [†] E	8	Daemonbane, Force, Power Field, Unwieldy	10kg	Near Unique
Sanctus Hammer	Melee	—	2d10+6 [†] E	4	Balanced, Concussive (4), Daemonbane, Force, Power Field	6kg	Near Unique
Tempus Hammer	Melee	—	2d10+4 [†] E	6	Daemonbane, Force, Power Field, Unwieldy	14kg	Near Unique
Low-Tech Weapons							
Rune Weapon (Sword)	Melee	—	1d10 R	0	Balanced, Tainted, Tearing, Vengeful (8)	3kg	Near Unique
Stealth Claw	Melee	—	1d10+4 R	4	Felling (2), Razor Sharp, Sanctified	1.5kg	Very Rare
Wailing Trident	Melee/Thrown	6m	1d10+8 R	4	Balanced, Crippling (3) ^{††} , Felling (3), Sanctified	9kg	Very Rare
Power Weapons							
Ebenus Hammer	Melee	—	2d10+6 [†] E	10	Daemonbane, Power Field, Unwieldy	16kg	Near Unique
Ordo Malleus Power Glaive	Melee	3m	1d10+8 E	5	Balanced, Power Field, Proven (4), Sanctified	4.5kg	Extremely Rare
Power Shield	Melee	—	1d10 E	1	Defensive, Power Field	6kg	Very Rare
Thunder Hammer	Melee	—	2d10+4 [†] E	10	Concussive (2), Power Field, Unwieldy	16kg	Very Rare

[†] Add the user's SBx2 to the damage.

^{††} Only against targets with the Daemonic trait.

As the only living member of the original assembly, Actius is now too old to use his weapon, so he often loans it and its reproductions to trusted servants acting in the conclave's interests.

An Ebenus hammer acts as a null rod (see page 177 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook) and grants the wielder the Deny the Witch talent.

SANCTUS

Inquisitor Augustine commissioned Sanctus to amplify her and her followers' considerable martial skills. Crafted from unusually lightweight materials, each long-handled hammer still packs the same punch as its heavier cousins. Beyond its use in melee, each Sanctus hammer holds a secret within: a small chamber loaded with purified promethium that gives the hammer a hidden burst of explosive might.

A Sanctus hammer is a two-handed weapon. It also includes an exterminator cartridge (see page 163 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook) loaded with Incinerator ammunition (see page 40).

TEMPUS

Completed years after its owner's death under a cloud of suspicions concerning its desired purpose, Tempus contains a rare stasis device that generates pulsing waves of anti-chronal energy. The Core Thetan Magi that created the pattern consider it so dangerous that there is a large bounty for the return of any working example, yet so few exist and there have been no sightings in decades. Some within the conclave fear that the Tempus weapons have followed the first Illyricum hammer into the hands of the Ruinous Powers.

Once per game session, as a Full Action, a character wielding Tempus may smite the ground, causing a blast with a radius of 2d10 metres. Each other character in this area must make a Hard (-20) Agility test or lose a Half Action during his next turn; if a character fails with two or more degrees of failure, he loses his Full Action instead. This is a two-handed weapon.

NEMESIS DAEMON HAMMER

No single weapon encapsulates the Ordo Malleus quite like the nemesis hammer. Each handcrafted weapon is unique in some way, displaying fine artistry and destructive brutality in equal share. Consecrated and warded in a complex series of rituals that take years to complete, it is anathema to the daemonic; a single blow is often enough to send a Daemon screaming back into the Warp.

A nemesis hammer is a one-handed weapon, but when used with two hands it gains the Concussive (X) quality, where X equals the user's psy rating.

ORDO MALLEUS POWER GLAIVE

Whilst the hammer may be the symbol of the Ordo Malleus, its agents must stand ready to face a variety of foes, some of them too fast for the sluggish swings of a crackling thunder hammer. The power glaive, a weapon longer than a man is tall, features an elegant silver blade and a haft warded against the corrupting influence of the Warp.

An Ordo Malleus power glaive grants the wielder an additional +10 bonus to Parry tests, and is a two-handed weapon.

STEALTH CLAW

Whilst many Ordo Malleus Inquisitors stride into battle wielding potent symbols of destruction, there are times where the paths of subterfuge and stealth yield greater results. The stealth claw, a weapon easily hidden inside robes or heavy sleeves, allows Acolytes to stay well armed without alerting cultists and other enemies to their presence.

A stealth claw has the Compact modification (see page 162 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook). When a character successfully inflicts a hit as part of an All Out Attack action using a stealth claw, he inflicts additional damage equal to his psy rating.

POWER SHIELD

When encased in a power field, these large shields offer excellent protection against attacks that would rip apart mundane armours. Ordo Malleus Inquisitors and their Acolytes often adorn their power shields with heraldry showing the foes banished back to the Warp and other previous victories.

A power shield adds 4 Armour points to the wearer's Body and the Arm holding the shield.

RUNE WEAPON

A theory based on conjecture and the tales of madmen, many believe that these are Daemon weapons freed of their unholy inhabitants. Blackened and scarred, these weapons seem to function normally, yet each still keeps a little of the daemonic essence that once filled it with terrible power.

A rune weapon can take the form of any Low-Tech melee weapon; it uses the profile for that weapon, with the Primitive quality removed if it was present. It gains the Tainted, Tearing, and Vengeful (8) qualities and cannot be destroyed by a weapon with the Power Field quality. Whenever a character wielding a rune weapon triggers Righteous Fury, he gains 1d5 Corruption points.

THUNDER HAMMER

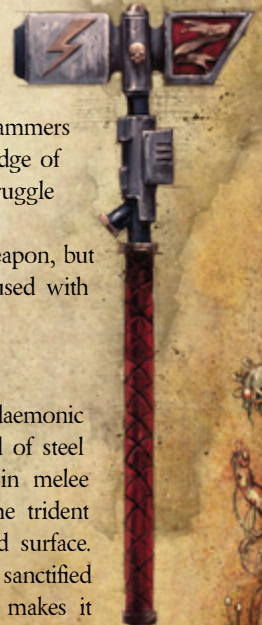
Thunder hammers incorporate large capacitors that constantly build a charge that is violently released on impact. As the symbol of the Ordo Malleus, thunder hammers are more than just weapons—they are a badge of office, and a symbol of their unending struggle against the Dark Gods of Chaos.

A thunder hammer is a one-handed weapon, but it inflicts an additional +2 damage when used with two hands.

WAILING TRIDENT

A weapon used against the largest of daemonic entities, a wailing trident is a sanctified rod of steel coated in Truesilver etchings. It is used in melee combat but also can be hurled at foes, the trident screaming as air rushes across its engraved surface. Once imbedded in a Daemon's flesh, the sanctified metal excruciates the unholy creature and makes it vulnerable to close-ranged attackers.

A wailing trident is a two-handed weapon.



SPECIAL AMMUNITION

The Askellian Ordo Malleus often calls upon ancient pacts with numerous forge worlds to provide psychically charged rounds and Warp-disrupting shells to help combat creatures that laugh at even the most dangerous of conventional weaponry.

ABYSSAL BOLTS

A refinement of the crude Abyssal Charge grenade, and used by only fearless Radicals, Abyssal Bolts use embedded shards of corrupted metal to shred not just the flesh, but also the soul.

Effect: A weapon using this ammunition gains the Crippling (2) and Tainted quality, but loses the Reliable and/or Sanctified qualities (if the weapon has them).

Used With: Bolt weapons, crossbows.

NITIDUS ROUNDS

Made in secret by a number of Askellian Tech-Priests with hidden ties to the Ordo Malleus, these shotgun shells contain small, Warp-attuned crystals that burst into a bright sphere of light on impact, creating a psychic vacuum that is anathema to psykers and Daemons alike.

Effect: When a psyker suffers damage from this weapon, he must make a Difficult (-10) Willpower test or be Stunned for a number of rounds equal to his degrees of failure. When a target with the Warp Instability trait suffers damage from this weapon, it must immediately test for Instability with a -10 penalty.

Used With: Combat shotguns, shotguns.

PSYBOLTS

Psybolts lack the potency of true psycannon ammunition, but can still blast lesser Daemons to pieces with a few well-placed hits.

Effect: The weapon using this ammunition gains the Daemonbane and Sanctified qualities, ignores all protective benefits granted by psychic powers, and inflicts +1 damage for every point of the user's psy rating.

Used With: Bolt weapons.

PSYFLAME

Manufactured in a similar manner to the fuel that powers the Ordo Malleus incinerator, psyflame ammunition allows Daemon hunters to upgrade even basic flamers for anti-Daemon work.

Effect: A weapon using this ammunition gains the Sanctified quality and ignores any protective benefits granted by psychic powers. Targets in its area of effect suffer a penalty to the Agility test to avoid it equal to 5 times the psyker's psy rating.

Used With: Flame weapons.

Table 2-3: Special Ammunition

NAME	AVAILABILITY
Abyssal Bolts	Very Rare
Nitidus Rounds	Very Rare
Psybolts	Extremely Rare
Psyflame	Very Rare

ARMOUR AND WEAPON UPGRADES

Daemons fear virtually nothing, and contemptibly look upon the mundane works of man with a merciless, unnatural gaze. It is the constant struggle against these uncaring and nearly unstoppable creatures that drives Askellian Daemonhunters to turn simple blades and sheets of armour into holy weapons and warded barriers. These upgrades operate in the same way as Weapon Modifications (see page 162 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook), including the maximum of four upgrades per armour or weapon.

PENTAGRAMATIC WARDS

One of the Ordo Malleus's most closely guarded secrets, these wards come about through a complex and arcane process of occult rituals, holy symbology, and the application of lost aerythmetical formulae. When complete, pentagramatic wards block Warp entities, and are often so potent that even approaching one is enough to damage or banish a Daemon.

Effect: Whenever a character with the Daemonic or Warp Instability trait becomes engaged in melee with the warded armour's wearer or begins his turn engaged with the wearer, that character must make a Hard (-20) Willpower test. If the character fails, he suffers 1d5 Energy damage per degree of failure (ignoring armour and Toughness bonus). If the character scores 4 or more degrees of success on the test, however, the pentagramatic ward shatters and the armour permanently loses this upgrade.

Used With: Any armour.

SACRED INCENSE BURNER

Filled with blessed herbs and spices, a sacred incense burner sends billowing clouds of strong-smelling smoke in all directions. Daemons find the holy odours repulsive, leaving them weakened and disoriented.

Effect: A sacred incense burner must be affixed to a backpack, helmet, or similarly worn item. Setting it aflame requires a Half Action and it can burn for 1 hour. While the burner is alight, any creature with the Daemonic trait within 3 metres of the bearer suffers a -10 penalty to Weapon Skill tests and a -10 penalty to Warp Instability tests.

Used With: Any armour.

TRUESILVER

Truesilver consists of small woven bands of sanctified silver and iron. It is surprisingly versatile in its application, and its effects upon the daemonic are immediate and striking.

Truesilver can be used to upgrade armour, melee weapons, and ranged weapons in the following ways:

TRUESILVER FILIGREE

Woven through armour, Truesilver filigree is much more than decoration. Light that reflects off of the artful carvings can cause Daemons to flinch, opening them up to crippling counterattacks.

Effect: While engaged in melee with the wearer of Truesilver-filigreed armor, any character with the Daemonic trait suffers a penalty to Weapon Skill tests equal to 5 times the wearer's Willpower bonus.

Used With: Any armour.

Table 2-4: Armour and Weapon Upgrades

NAME	WEIGHT	AVAILABILITY
Pentagramatic Wards	—	Extremely Rare
Sacred Incense Burner	+3 kg	Rare
Truesilver Filigree	—	Very Rare
Truesilver Gilding	—	Very Rare
Truesilver Weaving	—	Extremely Rare
Unguent of Warding	—	Common
Warpleech Canister	+1 kg	Very Rare



TRUESILVER GILDING

Weapons with Truesilver gilding have an inexplicable sturdiness in the face of unnatural foes, almost as if the mere presence of the sanctified silver was enough to turn aside ensorcelled blades and deflect daemonic talons.

Effect: A weapon with Truesilver gilding grants its wielder a bonus to tests to Parry the attacks of foes with the Daemonic trait equal to 5 times the wielder's Willpower bonus.

Used With: Any Low-Tech melee weapon.

TRUESILVER WEAVING

More costly and time-consuming than the more traditional uses for Truesilver, some artisans thread tiny strands of Truesilver across the surface of bullets, quarrels, and even some explosives. The amount used is insignificant, but the effects on the daemonic can be quite dramatic.

Effect: Truesilver weaving does not upgrade the weapon, but the ammunition the weapon uses. The modification requires a skilled artisan and upgrades one clip at a time. Whenever a target with the Daemonic trait attempts to Dodge an attack made with a weapon using ammunition upgraded with Truesilver weaving, the target suffers a penalty to the Dodge test equal to 5 times the attacker's Willpower bonus.

Used With: Any Launcher, Low-Tech, or Solid Projectile ranged weapon.

UNGUENTS OF WARDING

Unguent of Warding grant the bearer robust protection against Warp entities and psychic attacks, but take considerable time and skill to apply.

Effect: Working the unguents onto armour takes roughly one hour, and empties one container for each hit location treated. As part of the process, careful rituals must also be performed to inscribe runes and litanies into the armour. This requires a Hard (-20) Scholastic Lore (Occult) or Forbidden Lore (Imperial Creed) test for each location; failure means the unguents must be cleaned off that location and the ritual started again. For each hit location treated with Unguent of Warding, the armour grants its wearer a +5 bonus to tests to resist Fear caused by characters with the Daemonic trait and to resist psychic powers. The effects of the unguents last for one month (or less due to wear and tear or contamination, at the GM's discretion).

Used With: Any armour.

WARPLEECH CANISTER

A warpleech canister coats each expended round with a liquid of unknown origin, giving each shot added potency against the Daemons of Chaos. Some believe the liquid comes from the distilled blood of the exorcised, whereas others postulate more sinister origins.

Effect: A weapon with this upgrade gains the Crippling (2) quality against targets with the Daemonic trait. Each canister contains enough liquid to last for 40 rounds.

Used With: Any Solid Projectile weapon without a silencer.

PROTECTIVE GEAR

Fighting Daemons requires more than steeled nerves and sanctified weaponry. Armour, blessed and warded against the unnatural power of the Warp, is also essential to protect both the body and the soul from the predations of the Ruinous Powers.



HEAVY POWER ARMOUR

Granted to but a few outside of the elite Adeptus Astartes and the Adepta Sororitas, power armour has been a part of the Imperium since the Emperor's conquest of Terra. Inquisitors, and sometimes their most honoured of Acolytes, are on occasion granted these ancient protective suits when facing the most powerful of foes.

Heavy power armour grants the wearer the Auto-Stabilised and Unnatural Strength (1) trait, and increases the value of his Size (X) trait by 1. When used with the detachable helmet, it is environmentally sealed with its own oxygen supply and vocaster systems. Its power supply can operate for 2d5 hours before recharging or refueling is needed, and while powered the suit's weight does not count towards the user's carry limit (see page 248 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook).

ICON OF THE JUST

A proud, glowing symbol of Inquisitorial might, each Icon of the Just projects a personal force field strong enough to block both mortal weaponry and the devastating attacks of daemoniac entities. Often stylised as small hammers or symbols of the Inquisition, few except the Ordo Malleus' most trusted and devoted Daemonhunters receive these blessed devices.

Each Icon of the Just also contains holy wards that repel Warpspawn. Opponents with the Daemonic trait suffer a -10 penalty to attack tests and Focus Power tests against the wearer.

OBSIDIAN PLATE

Extremely heavy and seemingly primitive, obsidian plate armour dulls the effects of psychic powers; the records of numerous Askellon Inquisitors show its efficiency especially in fighting entities aligned with Tzeentch. Its bulky nature—and the efforts to ensure it does not fall into the bloodstained hands of cultists who worship the Skull God—though, act to prevent obsidian plate from being more widely distributed in the sector.

A character wearing this armour gains the Resistance (Psychic Powers) talent, or an additional +10 to tests to resist psychic powers if the character already has this talent. Obsidian plate counts its listed Armour points as triple against hits inflicted by Psychic Bolts. A psyker wearing obsidian plate cannot push his psychic powers, and reduces his psy-rating by 3 (to a minimum of 1).

Table 2-5: Protective Gear

NAME	LOCATIONS COVERED	AP	MAX AG	PROTECTION RATING	WT.	AVAILABILITY
Heavy Power Armour	All	8	35	—	65 kg	Extremely Rare
Icon of the Just	—	—	—	55	0.5 kg	Extremely Rare
Obsidian Plate	Body	6	35	—	35 kg	Very Rare

WARGEAR

Beyond the destructive weaponry and grandiose suits of armour, Ordo Malleus Inquisitors use all manner of strange and arcane devices that all play a part in the eradication of the daemonic.

BANISHING ROD

Made of darkened iron slabs enscribed with hallowed parchment and curled purity seals, banishing rods do not subdue the Warp so much as calm it. When held aloft or even jammed into the ground, they create an area where psychic energy flows sluggishly. In groups, such devices can ward large areas, aiding in exorcisms and impeding the advance of malefic entities.

Psykers within 5 metres of one or more banishing rods cannot push psychic powers, and reduce the result of any rolls they make on Table 6-2: **Psychic Phenomena** (see page 196 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**) by -20 (to a minimum of 1). Characters with the Daemonic trait treat this area as a treacherous environment (see page 246 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**). When used in an exorcism (see page 70), each rod placed around the target of the exorcism grants a +5 bonus to the Daemonic Mastery test.

CONSECRATED SCROLLS

Soaked in sacred oils and covered in illuminated texts of devotion, consecrated scrolls offer a small measure of protection against the machinations of the Warp.

Before making a Focus Power test, a character possessing one of these scrolls may choose to burn a single one as a Free Action; this destroys that scroll. Should the user have to roll on Table 6-2: **Psychic Phenomena** (see page 196 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**) as a result of the subsequent Focus Power test, he may re-roll the result.

EMPYREAN BRAIN MINE

Thought to be created using forbidden technologies found on a ghost world, these objects latch onto a victim's body and send disruptive energies directly into the brain, rendering the target temporarily catatonic.

A brain mine must be attached to an enemy through a successful Grapple action in melee combat. At the start of his turn for the following 3 rounds, the target must make a Hard (-20) Agility test. If successful, he can perform a Half Action; otherwise he is unable to perform any actions, including Reactions, that round. The mine deals 1d10+5 Rending damage that is not reduced by armour if forcibly removed, but after 3 rounds, it burns out and dislodges from the target.

Table 2-6: Wargear

NAME	WEIGHT	AVAILABILITY
Banishing Rod	8kg	Very Rare
Consecrated Scrolls	1kg	Scarce
Empyrean Brain Mine	1kg	Very Rare
Psyocculum	1.5kg	Rare

PSYOCCULUM

An arcane assemblage of strange lenses and scarcely-understood ætheric sryers, a psyocculum tracks the Warp signatures of psykers and Daemons alike. Although cumbersome to wear and draining to use, the device leaves those infused with Warp power no place to hide as they become highlighted in a corona of white light.

As a Half Action, the wearer may make a Challenging (+10) Awareness test to detect psykers and characters with the Daemonic trait without the need for normal lighting until the end of the encounter. While these targets are illuminated in this way, the wearer gains a +10 bonus to his Ballistic Skill tests against them. The psyocculum distorts standard vision, however, imposing a -20 penalty to all other sight-based tests made while it is used. It also cannot be used at the same time as another piece of headgear, such as a helmet, and requires a Half Action to both put on or take off. Using a psyocculum causes the wearer to gain one level of Fatigue for every 5 minutes of operation beyond the first minute.

rites of sanctity

When arrayed before the denizens of the Warp, the most crucial aspects of any given weapon often fall short. The sharpness of a blade or the explosive force of a grenade means little to creatures that defy reality itself. The Ordo Malleus, as well as elements of the Ordo Hereticus and the Adeptus Ministorum, all maintain a number of rituals that take ordinary weapons and purify them for use against these unspeakable adversaries. Some rare individuals even know how to imbue a higher level of purity during a weapon's construction. Finding anyone capable of administering these rites is difficult, but well worth the cost when the alternative is the loss of one's soul.

The following new Services use the rules on page 178 of the **DARK HERESY Core Rulebook**. Like all Requisitions, the GM should determine the final Availability based on the warband's current location and situation. Sanctification, for example, might even be more easily achievable on a serene shrine world than normal, but would likely be much more difficult to acquire in an uncivilised underhive during a mutant uprising.

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification of a weapon involves elaborate liturgies performed along with the anointing of blessed oils. It has an Availability of Very Rare and requires an Influence of 40. This service takes at least a day for completion, and grants the weapon the Sanctified quality or removes the Tainted quality from the weapon.

PURIFIED CONSTRUCTION

Purified Construction is similar to Sanctification, but instead the craftsman completely takes apart the weapon and rebuilds it piece by piece, with complex cleansing rituals along each step of the process. This has an Availability of Near Unique, requiring an Influence of 60 and reducing the character's Influence by 1d10. This service takes several days or even weeks to complete, and grants the weapon the Daemonbane quality.

DAEMONIC REMNANTS

Objects left in the wake of daemonic incursions often hold a power more terrible than any blasphemous symbol or alien artefact. Coveted by only the foolish or the damned, these Warp-spawned relics twist the minds and bodies of any who look upon them and to use one is to sell one's very soul to the Dark Gods.

This section describes only a few of the many Daemonic Remnants that disturb Askellon. With the exception of Balestone, each is unique, and Acolytes do not acquire them via the usual methods of Availability and Requisition. Instead, they must locate, contain, or wrest them from the hands of demagogues, possessed madmen, and Faceless Traders, often as the major plot for a campaign or Inquest (as described in the **DARK HERESY** supplement **ENEMIES WITHIN**). Their rules include additional narrative effects and suggestions for other ways they can be used; Game Masters are encouraged to alter them as desired. GMs are also encouraged to create their own Daemonic Remnants, for there are innumerable other items of sinister malevolence—such as the Burning Crown, the Grimscald Tome, or the Pale Shroud—ready to become the basis for new investigations.

BALESTONE

Many Askellian Daemonologists believe Balestone to be the desiccated remains of banished Daemons. Grey and porous, it seems to constantly generate heat but crumbles to ash when touched. Numerous warbands seek to recover and isolate patches of Balestone, but many Chaos cults possess small caches of the vile substance, using it to create summoning circles, coat weapons, and even to cover exposed flesh—always with horrific results.

CONTAINING THE CORRUPTION

In high demand across the sector, most Balestone is merely the ash from charred corpses; the genuine item can only be found in areas of recent daemonic incursion or recent summoning sites. Balestone needs to be stored in stasis to counter its effects, but the unclean heat the substance emits eventually destroys any container.

USING THE REMNANT

Any ritual to summon Daemons gains a +30 bonus when enacted within a circle or symbol of Chaos composed of Balestone. Coating a weapon with Balestone grants it the Overheats and Tainted weapon qualities, and permanently removes the Sanctified quality, while covering skin with it grants the Daemonic (X) trait for X minutes, where X equals half the character's Willpower bonus. Any character who uses Balestone gains 1d5 Corruption points per minute of exposure, and suffers a -20 penalty to any resulting Malignancy and Mutation tests. Balestone could also be used for increasing the power of Malefic psychic powers (see page 57), or to heighten the chances or effects of Psychic Phenomena.

CURSED CARILLON

A legendary object said to predate Imperial Compliance, the Cursed Carillon is a herald of woe. Said to appear without warning near towns and cities across the sector, and always shrouded by clouds of green smog, the Carillon's bells ring gently even in utterly still air. Over time, the noise builds to a nauseating barrage capable of sending the sanest man into a pit of despair and madness.

CONTAINING THE CORRUPTION

No one is sure what the Cursed Carillon actually is, other than reports that stretch back thousands of years describing it as a series of bells surrounded by rotted parchments. Several Inquisitors postulate that it is some form of Nurgle instrument, as towns visited by the bells usually succumb to famine, disease, and a form of obsessive madness. The smog that accompanies the Carillon quickly overwhelms any who approach, even when they are equipped with sealed armour.

USING THE REMNANT

When the Cursed Carillon appears it could stay for several weeks. It might move by itself to a nearby location, and seems to vanish in a haze of smoke when attacked directly, only to appear nearby a few moments later. A character must take a Willpower test at the end of every hour of exposure to the Carillon, with a -10 penalty for each day the Carillon has been present, gaining 1 Insanity point for every degree of failure. Mental disorders gained from the Carillon are always Obsession/Compulsion disorders focused around cataloguing innocuous and unrelated items. A cloud of smog with a radius of 20 metres surrounds it, which increases by 5 metres per day; any living creature within the smoke suffers the effects of suffocation after 30 minutes of exposure (see page 243 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook) regardless of sealed armour/breathing apparatus. The cursed bells can alternatively be the source of quavering breaches in reality or even befoul Gellar Fields into puddles of tainted energies. It could also attract the attention of the Daemon who lost it aeons ago, and wishes to reward the unfortunate mortals nearby for finding its prized possession.

HOUND'S TEETH GAUNTLET

Supposedly ripped from the mouths of slain Flesh Hounds during the Seventh Cleansing of Juno, the gauntlet is a misshapen collection of huge fangs arranged around a skeletal brass glove. Not a weapon in the traditional sense, the limited records of its sightings indicate that the gauntlet acts as a focusing tool that allows the user to locate and track people through the Warp, much like Flesh Hounds themselves.

CONTAINING THE CORRUPTION

Tied to a number of extremely high profile assassinations throughout Askellian history, the gauntlet's reported powers make it a prime goal for many different organisations. Pirates, Faceless Traders, and even some fringe elements of the Askellian Adeptus Mechanicus all see a potential use for the blighted glove. A number of leading Askellian Inquisitors dedicate their lives to putting an end to the corrupted device, although several Xanthite cabals seek the object to aid in their unscrupulous endeavours.

USING THE REMNANT

A character could use the gauntlet to track targets across almost any distance, or find a path through unknown areas. The gauntlet grants a +30 bonus to any Navigate and Psyniscience tests, and Survival tests for the Tracking special use. Each time the character makes such a test, he gains 1d5 Corruption points, plus 1 additional Corruption point per degree of success on the test. The GM can have it turn on its wearer should he use it too much, sending packs of Flesh Hounds (see page 107) after him for daring to use their power, or even turning inwards to devour his hand whole.

In melee combat, the gauntlet acts as a sword and has the Tainted and Unwieldy weapon qualities. Other possibilities for the gauntlet include it enraging anyone it touches into frenzied attacks, or inflicting bleeding wounds that are impossible to staunch.

REALITUS

The first Daemon Hammer created for the Conclave of Illyricum, Realitus saw only one battle before it was lost to the forces of Chaos. Brandished proudly by Lord Inquisitor D'thosius, a towering Herald of Khorne killed the vainglorious Inquisitor in a single blow and plucked the hammer from the Inquisitor's grasp before the conclave's leader could even swing.

CONTAINING THE CORRUPTION

Changed fundamentally by the Herald's touch, Realitus is no longer just a weapon but a shifting conduit of Warp energy that acts as a lightning rod for unholy malice. Passing through the hands of both Daemon and mortal in the years since its transformation, no attempt to recover the hammer has ever met with success. Many fear that one day its pernicious presence will spark an unstoppable tide of daemonic ruin.

USING THE REMNANT

Characters wielding Realitus could gain the Baneful Presence (X), Daemonic (X), Phase, and Warp Instability traits, where X equals the character's Willpower bonus. Those who already possessed the Daemonic trait would lose the Warp Instability trait (should they have possessed it) as the hammer now sustains their physical presence. Characters who did not previously possess the Daemonic trait gain 1d10 Corruption points for every hour they wield the hammer; other characters without that trait who come within 10m of the hammer must pass a Hard (-20) Willpower test for each hour they remain within this radius or gain 1d10 Corruption points for each degree of failure. Realitus could also grant the Command skill at Rank 4 and the Halo of Command talent, and in melee combat function as a Nemesis Daemon Hammer with the Tainted quality in place of the Daemonbane quality. The unholy hammer might also draw the attention of the Blood God, eager for its return to battle, or even be used against Khorne's Daemons as the hammer remembers its first failure and is eager for vengeance.

SPECTRAL FLAME

Last seen during the Blight of Rhodin IV some three dozen years ago, the Spectral Flame is a vile artefact that actively works against anyone foolish enough to use it. Sketches depict it as an ornate stand holding a seemingly mundane candle, with an unending, unnatural flame. The fire reshapes itself endlessly into daemonic faces, grasping claws, lost friends, and other terrors beyond imagination.

CONTAINING THE CORRUPTION

The writings of Inquisitor Berenika Turchi document the item's long history and the poor souls that fell under its influence. Her words hinted that the flame almost has a mind of its own, and promises forbidden knowledge to any who could withstand its gaze. Sadly, the Inquisitor's writings give no indication of how to extinguish the fire, and recount the tales of those who tried and failed, and the sheer madness they descended into for even looking upon the flames.

USING THE REMNANT

The flame can gift those who look closely into the twisting fires with any desired Rank in one chosen Lore skill, up to Rank 4, after performing a Willpower test with a penalty equal to ten times the desired Rank (Rank 3, for example, would inflict a -30 penalty). This lasts for a number of days equal to the degrees of success on the test, but the user also gains 1d5 points of Corruption per Rank gained. Failing the test results in 1d10 Intelligence damage for each degree of failure. The flame can attract the attention of Daemons, eager to cavort with the unnatural fire or even seeking to reclaim it back to the bosom of the Warp. Staring into the flame could also inflict Insanity points on the weak, as their minds collapse from the terrible secrets revealed to them.

VOID TALON

Easily one of the Askellon Sector's most feared objects, the Void Talon brings with it the very power of the Warp. Many fear it is actually a Daemonette's severed claw, held in the material plane by ancient and long-forgotten rituals. While too delicate for combat, it is sharp enough to rend the veil of reality and open doorways directly into the Immaterium.

CONTAINING THE CORRUPTION

There are few relics in the sector that garner as much Inquisitorial attention as the Void Talon. Even the faintest of rumours is enough for an Ordo Malleus Inquisitor to abandon decades of vital research in the hope of finally destroying the detestable device. The cults that somehow obtain the talon usually know nothing of the scale of the horror they unleash, and are often the first victims to the torrent of terror they unwittingly bring about.

USING THE REMNANT

Anyone might use the Void Talon to tear a literal hole in reality, opening up a direct gateway to the Warp. Those brave (or foolish) enough to stay near the opening must pass a Hellish (-60) Willpower test every minute or gain 1d10 Insanity and Corruption points for each degree of failure. A tear lasts for 6 minutes, in which time raw unreality pours through the opening, corrupting everything nearby. The GM may also have Daemons (especially those of Slaanesh) emerge as desired, launch Psychic Phenomena out of the tear, or even cause Daemonic Possessions in nearby mortals.



DAEMON WEAPONS

"I have spitted countless heretics and banished Daemons with this blade. A weaker man might listen to its whispered promises and lies, but I am strong of will and remain pure. You have no right to judge me."

—Inquisitor Vullwrath

A Daemon weapon is an instrument of warfare with a Daemon of the Warp bound within. The creature within rages against its confinement, even as its unholy essence suffuses the weapon, granting it powers and abilities far beyond any mundane armament. Daemon weapons are amongst the most potent weapons in the arsenal of the followers of the Dark Gods—and of the Inquisition. Each is a unique creation possessed of malign intellect, almost as dangerous to its wielder as to his foes.

Most Daemon weapons contain minor Warp beasts or Lesser Daemons, yet they are nonetheless incredibly potent. The most powerful versions, those housing Heralds or mighty Daemon Princes, perhaps even Greater Daemons, are impossibly deadly and evince capabilities that beggar belief.

The following rules govern the use and creation of Daemon weapons. Acolytes might find themselves facing such deadly weapons in the hands of dark cultists and Daemon-worshipping sorcerers, but those of a Radical nature might take up such weapons from defeated foes. The most resourceful and brazen of Radical Inquisitors and Acolytes might even engage in the creation of Daemon weapons, forging these tools to combat the heretic and Daemon, for Daemon weapons are amongst the most effective weapons with which to strike at the creatures of the Warp.

WIELDING DAEMON WEAPONS

Daemon weapons display an endless variety of forms, based both on the method of their construction and the nature of the entity within. However, all share certain aspects in common. Daemon weapons are highly dangerous, much more so than an ordinary weapon of their type, and unnaturally durable. The defining feature of all Daemon weapons is the malevolent entity trapped inside, one which desires nothing more than to be free of its prison to wreak havoc in the material universe.

Most Daemon weapons take the form of archaic melee weapons—swords, axes, mauls, and the like. Even a simple steel blade bound with a powerful Daemon is more potent than a power sword. However, some skilled artificers and magisters are capable of binding a Daemon within a more complex device, be it a bolter, plasma gun, or even more esoteric weapon.

Lethality: In addition to any other powers and abilities they grant, these weapons are unnatural, hungering things that delight in slaughter and destruction. Daemon weapons with the Primitive quality lose it, and all add the bound entity's Willpower bonus to their damage and penetration values. In addition, due to their blasphemous nature, weapons that originally had the Sanctified quality lose it permanently when turned into Daemon weapons. Damage from Daemon weapons negates the benefit of the Daemonic trait. Finally, any ranged Daemon weapons lose their original clip and reload values—the Daemon within produces the ammunition, and consequently the weapon need never be reloaded, although it also cannot use any other type of ammunition.

Uncanny Resilience: Regardless of their appearance and apparent construction, Daemon weapons are extraordinarily difficult to damage. They count as innately having 20 Armour points, and are not destroyed if used to Parry or are Parried by weapons with Power Fields or similar effects. If a Daemon weapon is somehow destroyed, though, roll immediately on Table 6-3: **Perils of the Warp** on page 197 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook. On any result that indicates a daemonic manifestation, it is the Daemon within the weapon that is released, at which point it attempts to slaughter every living creature it can find—starting with the weapon's bearer.

The Beast Within: All Daemon weapons, by their nature, contain within them a bound and enslaved Warp entity, subjugated to the will of its wielder. In most Daemon weapons, this creature is relatively weak, incapable of anything but instinctive fury and unending bloodlust. However, more ambitious artisans have been known to bind more powerful Daemons into weapons, resulting in legendary and terrifying weapons. The more powerful the bound Daemon, the more potent the weapon, yet the greater the risk to the wielder.

In order to wield a Daemon weapon, the user must first succeed in a Difficult (–10) Daemonic Mastery test (see page 59). The Daemon suffers a penalty to this Opposed test equal to –5 x the Binding Strength, determined when the weapon was created. Success cows the weapon into obedience. After this point, should the wielder's concentration slip—should he be Stunned or forced Unconscious, or should his Willpower fall below that of the bound Daemon—then the entity again attempts to assert control, forcing another Daemonic Mastery test. If, at any point, the wielder fails a Daemonic Mastery test, the Daemon takes control of the wielder. Once the Daemon enslaves him, he is under its control until the weapon is removed from his grasp. At the GM's discretion, the controlled wielder may attempt a further Daemonic Mastery test when conditions change. If the character does break free of the Daemon's control, he gains 1d5 Corruption points.

CREATING A DAEMON WEAPON

The act of creating a Daemon weapon is gruelling and dangerous, requiring forbidden knowledge that can damn even the purest of souls. Each stage in the process has its own perils, but those who successfully forge a Daemon weapon possess a uniquely deadly implement, one which can prove a great boon to the work of an Inquisitor or Acolyte who dares to wield it.

To obtain a Daemon weapon, an Acolyte must either wrest it from the hands of an enemy or rival, or create one anew. Daemon weapons are so rare and potent that they are simply unavailable for sale or trade. As such, obtaining a Daemon weapon should come about as a result of the plot, not a simple Requisition test.

PREPARATION

Before one can set about creating a Daemon weapon, he must acquire two things: the knowledge of how to do so, and a suitable weapon. The rites of daemonic summoning and binding can be found in certain tomes of forbidden lore, learned from a master daemonologist, or even bartered for as part of a Dark Pact (see page 72), all of which might inflict Corruption points. Regardless of how the Acolytes obtain this knowledge, doing so should be no simple task, requiring roleplaying and some degree of difficulty.

Although almost any weapon can conceivably contain a Daemon, masters of forbidden lore know that certain objects are better suited to the task. It is less difficult to coax a Daemon into an appropriate vessel. There are two primary categories of weapon suited for the creation of a Daemon weapon: those wrought specifically for that purpose, and those with a legacy of slaughter. A weapon of Poor craftsmanship, or one that is damaged, can never be forged into a Daemon weapon.

WROUGHT FOR PURPOSE

By engraving a weapon with profane sigils, crafting it with a form pleasing to the Daemon, or even inlaying it with a Daemon's True Name, an artificer can create a weapon well-suited to housing a Daemon, perhaps even a specific Warp entity. This process follows the crafting rules on page 97 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook. Crafting such a weapon is a tremendous undertaking, and should require many days of work. In addition, crafting such a unique item imposes a difficulty of Very Hard (–30) to crafting skill tests. As most Daemon weapons are original designs based on simple weapons, Trade (Armourer) is the most appropriate crafting skill. However, for more advanced weapons based on existing patterns, the GM might instead require the Tech-Use skill to be used.

Before crafting the weapon, the character must first make a Difficult (–10) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test. Some conditions, such as using instructional tomes of forbidden lore or having daemonic tutelage, modify this test, and at the GM's discretion a different Acolyte may make this test than the one actually crafting the item. For each degree of success on the Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test, crafting skill tests to create the weapon receive a +5 bonus, while each degree of failure imposes a –5 penalty.

LEGACY OF SLAUGHTER

Each time a weapon takes a life, it leaves a psychic imprint, forging an emotional link that resonates with the Warp. For this reason, weapons with a history of death and destruction are naturally more amenable to Daemons. A weapon must have a truly notorious past, though, to be enticing to a creature of the Warp.

It is unlikely that even a seasoned Acolyte has such a weapon, and finding such a weapon may well require many months or years of searching. Once a candidate is in hand, a character must perform a Very Hard (–30) Psyniscience test to confirm the presence or absence of a suitable emotional charge. With 2 degrees of success on the test, he learns the strength of the emotional charge (approximately how many the weapon has slain) and with 3 or more degrees of success, learns whether the weapon resonates with a particular Chaos God or Daemon.

SUMMONING

Before the Daemon can be bound within the weapon, it must be summoned. The rules for summoning a Daemon can be found on page 59. It is important to determine the type of Daemon summoned, as the Daemon's Willpower affects the abilities of the Daemon weapon. The specific ritual determines the type of Daemon, or specific Daemon summoned. Depending on the ritual, the GM might select the profile for a Daemon NPC from this book or pages 415–417 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook, or might generate characteristics randomly using Table 2-14: Daemon Characteristics on page 64.

BINDING

Having successfully summoned the Daemon, the character must now ritually bind it within the weapon. This requires not only forbidden knowledge of the necessary rites and actions, but a contest of wills against the Daemon, for no creature of the Warp would willingly subject itself to such a fate.

To imprison the summoned Daemon within the weapon, the summoner must succeed at a Daemonic Mastery test (see page 59). The difficulty of this test is Hellish (–60), modified according to Table 2-7: Forging Ritual Modifiers. As with all Daemonic Mastery tests, this is an opposed Willpower test against the Daemon. Daemons despise being trapped within a weapon, stationary and helpless, more than perhaps any other fate. If the Daemon knows it has been summoned to be bound within a weapon, it receives a +20 bonus to its Willpower test.

The summoner's degrees of success on the Daemonic Mastery test determines the maximum Binding Strength of the Daemon weapon. The summoner can choose to create a less strongly bound weapon if he desires, trading safety and control for greater power.

DETERMINE ABILITIES

Once bound into the weapon, the Daemon is trapped, unable to free itself and forced to serve whoever wields and can master it. The weapon gains the abilities described under **Wielding Daemon Weapons**, on page 50, and a number of Daemon Weapon Attributes equal to the Daemon's Willpower bonus minus the weapon's Binding Strength, to a minimum of one. All Daemon weapons may have attributes from Table 2-8: General Attributes on page 52 but only Daemons aligned to a particular Chaos God can roll on the god-specific tables on pages 52 and 53. For each attribute, the GM may either select which of the two tables to roll on, or determine one randomly. A Daemon weapon can have attributes from both tables. The GM should also apply a powerful Subtlety modifier for warbands carrying Daemon weapons; note that even if these weapons are well hidden, psykers might still detect their unholy presence.

Table 2-7: Forging Ritual Modifiers

RITUAL CIRCUMSTANCE	MODIFIER
Weapon has never taken a life	–30
The weapon's creation or history reflects the nature of a god opposed to the Daemon	–20
Weapon is of Common craftsmanship	–10
Weapon is Best craftsmanship	+10
Weapon is a Low-Tech melee weapon	+10
Legacy of Slaughter: Killed 1,000 or more	+10
Legacy of Slaughter: Killed 10,000 or more	+20
Weapon is wrought for purpose	+20
Legacy of Slaughter: Killed 100,000 or more	+30
The Daemon's True Name is known	+30

DAEMON WEAPON ATTRIBUTES

Daemon weapons might display an almost limitless variety of different powers and attributes, which the beast within grants grudgingly to the wielder, or generates as a simple side-effect of its potent presence. The following illustrate just some of the possibilities, and GMs are encouraged to assign different weapon qualities or create their own unique abilities.

If desired, the weapon can also take on a personality based on its host Daemon. Table 2-13: *Daemon Personalities* on page 53 can be used to generate these, or the GM can create new ones to better match the specific type of Daemon involved.

Table 2-8: General Attributes

1d5 ROLL	ATTRIBUTE
1	Voidchill: Each time the weapon inflicts a hit, the target suffers 1d10 Toughness damage.
2	Howling: While the weapon is drawn, the wielder gains the Fear (1) trait, or increases his existing Fear trait by 1.
3	Wounding: The weapon gains the Crippling (X) quality, where X equals the bound Daemon's Willpower bonus.
4	Vicious: The weapon gains the Tearing quality. If it already possesses this quality, it instead gains the Razor Sharp quality.
5	Accursed: The weapon's damage is increased by an additional 1d10, and it gains the Felling (4) quality.

Table 2-9: Khorne Attributes

1d5 ROLL	ATTRIBUTE
1	Bloodlust: Upon drawing the weapon, the user must make a Challenging (+0) Willpower test or become Frenzied, per the Frenzy talent, as a Free Action.
2	Thirsting: Each time the weapon inflicts a hit, the target gains 1 level of Fatigue.
3	Null: Any psychic power targeting the wielder suffers a -20 penalty to the Focus Power test.
4	Fury: The weapon grants a +10 bonus to all attack tests its user makes with it.
5	Skulltaker: When making a Called Shot action against the target's head, the wielder can do so as a Half Action with a difficulty of Challenging (+0). The weapon also counts as having the Vengeful (8) quality when used for the Called Shot action.



Table 2-10: Tzeentch Attributes

1d5 ROLL	ATTRIBUTE
1	Illusory: The weapon appears to be a normal weapon of its type unless the observer passes a Hard (-20) Awareness test. The weapon imposes a -10 penalty on all Evasion tests to avoid its attacks.
2	Mind Eater: Each time this weapon inflicts a hit, instead of dealing damage as normal, the target suffers Intelligence damage and Perception damage equal to half of the weapon's damage value (rounded up).
3	Spellbound: The weapon confers upon the wielder a single psychic power, chosen when the weapon is created, that is manifested using the characteristics of the Daemon. The Focus Power test requires the normal action for that power, and suffers a -10 penalty for every 100xp the power costs after the first.
4	Warp Flame: The weapon gains the Flame and Warp Weapon qualities.
5	Sorcerous Force: The weapon gains the Force quality, which the wielder always activates using the Daemon's Willpower and psy rating (instead of his own).

Table 2-11: Nurgle Attributes

1d5 ROLL	ATTRIBUTE
1	Bile-Quenched: A creature wounded by this Daemon weapon loses a Half Action in its next turn. This does not affect creatures with the From Beyond, Daemonic, or Machine traits.
2	Enfeebling: Each time the weapon inflicts a hit that causes damage, the target suffers 1d10 Strength damage.
3	Plague Carrier: Each time this weapon inflicts a hit, it infects its target for the next 7 rounds. At the beginning of each of his turns, an infected target must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer 2d10 Impact damage (ignoring armour and Toughness bonus). Any living creature that an infected target touches also becomes infected for 7 rounds (and suffers the effects listed above as well). The bearer of the weapon is immune to this infection.
4	Stream of Corruption: The weapon can be used make a ranged attack as a Basic weapon with a range of 30m, dealing 2d10 plus the Daemon's Willpower bonus in Impact damage, with the Felling (2), Corrosive, Spray, and Toxic (3) qualities.
5	Pestilent Stench: While the weapon is drawn, all creatures within the Daemon's Willpower bonus in metres, except for the wielder and those devoted to Nurgle, suffer a -10 penalty on Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Agility, Intelligence, and Perception tests.



Table 2-12: Slaanesh Attributes

1d5 ROLL	ATTRIBUTE
1	Envenomed: The weapon gains the Toxic (X) quality, where X equals half of the Daemon's Willpower bonus.
2	Lashing: A melee weapon with this attribute gains the Flexible quality and the weapon's Range becomes a number of metres equal to the Daemon's Willpower bonus. A ranged weapon instead gains the Snare (X) quality, where X equals half the Daemon's Willpower bonus.
3	Swiftness: When drawn, the weapon grants the wielder the Unnatural Agility (X) trait, where X equals half of the Daemon's Willpower bonus (rounded up).
4	Soporific Musk: All creatures except the wielder within the Daemon's Willpower bonus in metres suffer a -20 penalty on Perception and Agility tests.
5	Entrancing Aura: A melee weapon with this attribute allows the wielder to use the Feint action as a Free Action once during each of his turns. A ranged weapon with this attribute instead imposes a -10 penalty to Dodge tests that targets of attacks using it make.

Table 2-13: Daemon Personalities

1d5 ROLL	ATTRIBUTE
1	Vulgar: Whenever the warband's Subtlety would decrease, it decreases by an additional 1d5.
2	Jealous: After the user performs an attack using another weapon, the Daemon weapon loses all of its daemonic attributes and acts as a regular version of that weapon until the end of the encounter.
3	Prideful: This Daemon weapon cannot be used to Parry attacks.
4	Vindictive: Whenever the user fails an attack roll using this weapon, it bites him and he suffers 1 point of Rending damage that ignores Toughness bonus and armour.
5	Overbearing: Whenever the user would gain 1 or more Insanity points, he gains that amount plus 1 instead.

THE DAEMONOLOGY DISCIPLINES

"O mighty corrupter of mortals and slaughterer of worlds! I beseech thee, appear!"

—From the *Maleficum Auspicus*

The discipline of Daemonology is perhaps the most dangerous of all psychic disciplines, and certainly amongst the most specialised. Most psykers who wield such powers are already servants of the Ordo Malleus, for the sole purpose of Sanctic Daemonology is to combat the Daemon—a task to which only select psykers are suited.

The dark mirror to the Adeptus Astra Telepathica's Sanctic Daemonology is Malefic Daemonology. This forbidden art is concerned with the summoning of Daemons and strengthening their unnatural forms. As such, it is the domain of heretics, as well as the most Radical of Inquisitors and their servants.

Daemonology is thus divided into these two opposed disciplines, Sanctic and Malefic. Characters may select powers from these new disciplines in exactly the way as those in the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook. However, the use of Malefic Daemonology is the gravest heresy to the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, the Imperium at large, and all but the most desperate and anti-Puritan of Inquisitors. Selecting this discipline should not be done lightly, and players should consider the roleplaying consequences for such a decision. In addition, players and GMs should work together to come up with an in-game explanation for the Acolyte's access to the discipline, such as discovering a tome of forbidden lore, or even as the result of a Dark Pact (see page 72).

TO INVITE CORRUPTION

Practicing Malefic Daemonology and invoking the daemoniac leaves an indelible stain on a psyker. A character who uses his full power or pushes consequently opens himself even further to the Warp, while one that holds back minimises the taint on his soul.

Each time a psyker successfully manifests a power from the Malefic Daemonology discipline, he gains Corruption points equal to the psy rating used to manifest the power. This is gained after the power's effects are resolved.

SANCTIC DAEMONOLOGY

The practice of Sanctic Daemonology is amongst the most difficult arts a psyker can study, and amongst the most potent. Few have the necessary will to excel in this discipline, which is the purview of the legendary Grey Knights. Many who have attempted to master the discipline have lost their sanity or succumbed to the temptation offered by the darker branch of Daemonology.

BANISHMENT

Speaking words of banishment, the psyker draws on his faith and reaches out to sever the cords tying a Daemon to reality. Its hold in realspace broken, the Daemon is cast back into the depths of the Warp.

Value: 300 xp

Prerequisite: Psy rating 3

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Hard (–20) Willpower test

Range: 10 metres x psy rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Effect: The psyker selects a target in range and line of sight, which must possess the Warp Instability trait. The targeted Daemon must immediately make a Willpower test, with a –5 penalty for each degree of success on the Focus Power test. The target suffers 1 point of Energy damage per degree of failure on the test, ignoring Toughness bonus and armour. If this would deal damage equal to or in excess of the target's remaining wounds, it is immediately cast back into the Warp.

CLEANSING FLAME

The psyker projects his purity in a great gout of holy flames. The azure fires burn hotter than any mundane flame, blazing with the righteousness of the Emperor. Heretics and Daemons cannot hope to stand against the purifying flame.

Value: 300 xp

Prerequisite: Psy rating 4

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test

Range: 5 metres x psy rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Effect: When a character is set on fire by this power, the damage he suffers from the flames counts as having the Sanctified quality.

CLEANSING FLAME

PSYCHIC BOLT

RNG 5M x PR

DMG 1d10+PR+WPB (E)

PEN 0

SPECIAL: FLAME, SANCTIFIED, SPRAY

Sanctic Powers

Psychic Communion

PERCEPTION 35

Increase Initiative
for self and allies

100 XP

Word of the Emperor

FELLOWSHIP 30

Enemies suffer penalties
to attack user

200 XP

Exorcism

WILLPOWER 40

Inflict damage
on Daemon

200 XP

Purge Soul

WILLPOWER 35

Target foe using
Willpower

200 XP

Hammerhand

PSY RATING 3

Imbue self and
allies with
Unnatural Strength

300 XP

Banishment

PSY RATING 3

Hurl daemonic target back
into the Warp

300 XP

Cleansing Flame

PSY RATING 4

Target enemies with
Holy damage

300 XP

Sanctuary

WILLPOWER 45

Allies gain force
field protection

400 XP

Holocaust

PSY RATING 5

Burn surrounding enemies
with Warpfire

500 XP

EXORCISM

Many psykers who follow the path of Daemonology know that the best weapons against the Daemon are faith and psychic powers; only with the energies of the Warp is it truly possible to fight the Warp. Bolstering his ritual with psychic current, the psyker prepares to exorcise a Daemon.

Value: 200 xp

Prerequisite: Willpower 40

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Opposed Willpower test

Range: 5 metres x psy rating

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Effect: The psyker selects a single target character with the Daemonic trait, which opposes the power with a Willpower test. If the psyker wins the opposed test, the character suffers Willpower damage equal to the user's psy rating for each degree of success on the psyker's test.

HAMMERHAND

Imbuing his muscles with psychic force, the psyker brings down the wrath of the Emperor of Mankind in powerful strikes that shatter ceramite and plasteel.

Value: 300 xp

Prerequisite: Psy rating 3

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower test

Range: 5 metres x psy rating

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: The psyker selects a number of allies within range equal to his psy rating (which may include the psyker). While the power persists, the affected characters gain the Unnatural Strength (X) trait where X is equal to the user's psy rating, or increases their existing trait's value by 4. This benefit ends if a character moves out of range.

HOLOCAUST

The psyker ignites his very soul in a devastating conflagration that washes out from him in all directions. It is said that the flames of this power burn not only flesh, but the very souls of the psyker's enemies, destroying them utterly—and that the psyker risks consuming his own soul in the process.

Value: 500 xp

Prerequisite: Psy rating 5

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Hard (–20) Willpower test

Range: Self

Sustained: Full Action

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Effect: Each round the psyker sustains Holocaust, he emits a psychic blast centred on himself. He is not affected by the blast, but each turn the psyker sustains the power he suffers 1d10+psy rating Energy damage, ignoring armour and Toughness bonus.

HOLOCAUST		PSYCHIC BLAST
RNG SELF	DMG 1d10xPR (E)	PEN 0
SPECIAL: BLAST (PR), FLAME, WARP WEAPON		

PSYCHIC COMMUNION

Establishing a psychic link with his allies, the psyker ensures that they act in concert, the better to deliver righteous judgement on the Emperor's foes.

Value: 100 xp

Prerequisite: Perception 35

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Ordinary (+10) Willpower test

Range: 10 metres x psy rating

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: The psyker selects a number of allies up to psy rating within range. While the power persists, the psyker and his affected allies add +2 to their Initiative. This can change an already established Initiative order.

PURGE SOUL

Using the corruption in his target's soul as kindling, the psyker ignites an inner fire, burning away the target's tainted soul.

Value: 200 xp

Prerequisite: Willpower 35

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Opposed Willpower test

Range: 10 metres x psy rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Effect: The psyker chooses a target within range and line of sight, who opposes the power with a Willpower test. If the psyker wins the Opposed test, the target suffers 1 point of Energy damage per degree of success on the test, plus an amount equal to the target's Corruption bonus, ignoring armour and Toughness bonus.

SANCTUARY

The psyker summons a barrier of holy force, pushing back the Daemon and deflecting the blows of heretics.

Value: 400 xp

Prerequisite: Willpower 45

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test

Range: Self

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: The psyker selects a number of allies up to psy rating (which may include the psyker) within 10 metres x psy rating. For the duration of the power, each affected character benefits from a force field with a protection rating of 5 x PR and no overload chance. In addition, Daemons must pass a Challenging (+0) Willpower test in order to move toward an affected character.

WORD OF THE EMPEROR

The psyker speaks with the very voice of the Emperor, causing his enemies to cringe in pain and terror. Bolstering his denunciations and catechisms of hate with psychic resonance, the psyker ensures that heretics and Daemons must struggle past his holy words in order to lay hand or claw upon him.

Value: 200 xp

Prerequisite: Fellowship 30

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Willpower test

Range: 10 metres x psy rating

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: Whilst the power remains in effect, whenever a character within range takes an Attack action targeting the psyker, the attacker must pass a Challenging (+0) Willpower test or suffer a –5 penalty to his attack roll for each degree of failure.



MALEFIC DAEMONOLOGY

Malefic Daemonology is not viewed as a psychic discipline by the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, but as the gravest of sorcery and Warpcraft. To practice this discipline is to invite corruption and, should it be discovered, the branding of Excommunicate Traitoris.

CURSED EARTH

The psyker calls forth crackling tendrils of dark energy to imbue an area of ground with the power of the Warp. This area of cursed earth helps Daemons sustain their grip in reality, weakening the veil between realspace and the Warp. Those who step on the cursed ground feel revulsion and terror, recoiling from the unnatural presence.

Value: 100 xp

Prerequisite: Willpower 40

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower test

Range: 1 metre x psy rating

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: The psyker selects an area of ground with a radius in metres equal to psy rating. While the power is sustained, Daemons standing within this area increase the value of their Daemonic trait by half psy rating and receive a bonus of +5 x psy rating to Warp Instability tests. In addition, psychic powers used within the affected area add +10 to Focus Power tests and rolls on Table 6-2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook). Those in the presence of the Cursed Earth may experience disturbing Warp phenomena at the GM's discretion (see Table 3-2: Warp Phenomena on page 137).

DARK FLAME

Drawing on his own corruption, the psyker projects a gout of dark Warp-fire. The unnatural flames burn with the fires of the psyker's own damnation, consuming the souls of his enemies as surely as their bodies.

Value: 100 xp

Prerequisite: 10 Corruption points

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test

Range: 5 metres x psy rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Effect: Any character who suffers damage from Dark Flame must succeed at an Easy (+30) Willpower test or gain 1 Corruption point for each degree of failure.

DARK FLAME		PSYCHIC BOLT
RNG 5M X PR	DMG 1d10+PR+CB (E)	PEN CB
SPECIAL: FLAME, SPRAY		

INFERNAL GAZE

The psyker opens his soul to the Warp, his eyes reflecting a dark vision of the Realm of Chaos. Those who witness this sight are seared to the very soul.

Value: 200 xp

Prerequisite: 15 Corruption points, Willpower 45

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower test

Range: 5 metres x psy rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Effect: This power affects all characters within range and line of sight, friend and foe, who do not possess the Daemonic trait. Each affected character opposes the power with a Challenging (+0) Willpower test. Any character who fails suffers Energy damage equal to the user's psy rating plus Corruption bonus, ignoring armour and Toughness bonus, and gains Insanity points and Corruption points equal to half the user's psy rating.

INCURSION

Not content with merely summoning Daemons forth into reality, the psyker bends his unnatural powers toward the cowing of these unholy entities. Channelling the stuff of the Warp from which they are made, the psyker binds Daemons to his will.

Value: 100 xp

Prerequisite: Willpower 45

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: As long as this power remains in effect, the psyker gains a bonus to his Daemonic Mastery tests (see page 59) of +10 x psy rating.

POSSESSION

For most psykers, the possibility of a Daemon of the Warp possessing their body is their greatest fear, a fear that they must contend with each time they use their unnatural powers. For some, however, it is merely another path to power. Confident in his own strength of will, the psyker allows a minor Warp beast to temporarily enter his flesh, imbuing him with unholy resilience and strength.

Value: 200 xp

Prerequisite: 20 Corruption points

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: While the power is sustained, the psyker gains the Daemonic (X) and Unnatural Strength (X) traits, where X equals half his psy rating, as well as the Deadly Natural Weapons trait. In addition, the psyker must succeed at a Challenging (+0) Willpower test each round the power is sustained or enter a Frenzied state per the Frenzy talent (see page 127 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook). While Frenzied, the psyker must continue to sustain the power (in a special exception to the prohibition on using psychic powers while Frenzied).

Psychic Phenomena: A result of Psychic Phenomena when using this power means that a more powerful Daemon, as chosen by the GM, has taken the psyker's invitation. The psyker must succeed in an Opposed Willpower test against the Daemon or become possessed (see page 69).

Malefic Powers

Summoning

WILLPOWER 35

Gain bonus for
summoning Daemons 50 xp

Cursed Earth

WILLPOWER 40

Daemons and psykers
gain benefits in region 100 xp

Dark Flame

10 CORRUPTION POINTS

Target enemies with
corrupting fires 100 xp

Incursion

WILLPOWER 45

Gain bonus to Daemonic
Mastery tests 100 xp

Infernal Gaze

15 CORRUPTION POINTS, WILLPOWER 45

Inflict damage
non-Daemon foes 200 xp

Sacrifice

WILLPOWER 45

Gain bonuses to cast powers
after wounding foes 100 xp

Possession

20 CORRUPTION POINTS

Gain daemonic
powers 200 xp

SACRIFICE

The psyker uses the flesh and blood of a willing or unwilling victim to fuel his dark powers. Whether ending a life or merely opening a vein, the sacrifice calls out to the Warp, drawing the attentions of Daemons and bolstering the psyker's malevolent abilities.

Value: 100 xp

Prerequisite: Willpower 45

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Ordinary (+10) Willpower test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: This power can only be used if the psyker has inflicted damage on a target (possibly himself) since the beginning of the previous round. If the Focus Power test succeeds, the psyker gains a +5 bonus to his next Focus Power test for each point of damage inflicted (after reductions for armour and Toughness bonus) with the preceding attack. This bonus must be used within 1 hour.

SUMMONING

Drawing on his Warp-born powers, the psyker weakens the veil twixt reality and the Immaterium, paving the way to summon forth its unholy denizens.

Value: 50 xp

Prerequisite: Willpower 35

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: As long as this power is sustained, the psyker gains a bonus of +10 x psy rating to Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) tests made to summon Daemons.

DAEMONIC SUMMONING

Several Malefic Daemonology psychic powers affect the summoning of Daemons. This almost always requires a ritual, which benefits from the use of certain psychic powers. The summoner is not required to be a psyker, but sorcerers are undoubtedly best suited to summoning and controlling Daemons. The forms summoning rituals take are innumerable,

as Daemonologists and Warp dabblers have dredged ever more insane rites from the depths of the Warp down through the millennia. The two things they all have in common are their indelible stain on the soul of the summoner and no small amount of danger, for summoning a Daemon and controlling it are two distinct matters.

LEARNING THE RITUAL

All rituals are unique, although many share certain qualities or bear similar aspects. Before a character can attempt to summon a Daemon, he must learn a ritual or develop one through original research. There are numerous ways a character might obtain knowledge of a daemonic ritual, such as consulting malefic tomes, learning under an accomplished practitioner of the dark arts, or striking a bargain with a Daemon.

Regardless, learning a ritual should be a major event in a campaign, one involving a great deal of roleplaying and challenge. A ritual exists to summon either a specific Daemon,

in the case of Daemon Princes, Heralds, and other powerful Daemons, or a certain type of Daemon, in the case of Lesser Daemons. For each type of Daemon a diabolist wishes to summon, he must learn another ritual, or modify an existing ritual based on his own knowledge and experimentation. In either case, the process should involve roleplaying and at least one Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test. Finding such information could even form the basis for an Inquest (see page 62 of the **DARK HERESY** supplement **ENEMIES WITHIN**) or an Explication (see page 64 of **ENEMIES WITHOUT**).

PERFORMING THE RITUAL

The details of a summoning ritual vary greatly, and might include tortuous incantations, hallucinogenic drugs, human sacrifice, bloodletting, orgiastic celebration, dark artefacts, and more. The specifics of the ritual are left to the GM and player to determine, but should almost always require some material component, such as blood, a living sacrifice, ash, candles, or a profane relic. Acquiring the necessary items for a ritual might pose a challenge in itself, or might be resolved with a Requisition test.

Conducting the ritual requires a Hellish (–60) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test. In addition to the use of psychic powers, this test might be modified based on the quality of the material components, the number of assistants or cultists helping the summoner, the time spent preparing a ritual circle, the power of the Daemon, or any number of other factors.

If the summoner knows the True Name of the Daemon, he gains a +30 bonus to the test. The ritual should take at least an hour, and as long as several days, depending on the nature and power of the Daemon and the origin of the ritual. The GM should modify the time spent based on the summoner's degrees of success on the test.

Should the summoner succeed on the Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test at the culmination of the ritual, he summons the intended Daemon. Depending on the ritual, this might take the form of the Daemon stepping through a rift in reality, possessing the flesh of a sacrificial victim, or bursting forth from the body of one of the ritual participants.

Any character who participates in (or even witnesses) a dark ritual should gain Corruption points, as described on page 289 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook.

THE DAEMONIC MASTERY TEST

Summoning a Daemon does not necessarily mean controlling it. Once the Daemon appears, the summoner must succeed in a Daemonic Mastery test in order to control it. Otherwise, the Daemon is free to act as it wills, which most likely means attacking the summoner. A Daemonic Mastery test is an opposed Willpower test against the Daemon.

The base difficulty for this test is Very Hard (–30), as Daemons are loath to serve mortals. If the summoner is a servant of the Daemon's patron Chaos God, he receives a +10 bonus to the test. If the character knows the Daemon's True

Name, he receives a +30 bonus to the test. The GM may allow additional bonuses based on the circumstances of the ritual, as described above (and the Daemon's Baneful Presence trait).

If the summoner wins the Opposed test, the Daemon is bound to serve him for one hour per degree of success. At the end of this time, the summoner can attempt another Daemonic Mastery test to extend his control. If at any time the Daemon is ordered to act against its nature, a further Daemonic Mastery test is necessary, with a –30 penalty.

TO SCOURGE THE DAEMON

"Have faith and fear not; the Emperor is with us."

—Preacher Esiar Kayne

To confront and banish the Daemon, an Inquisitor or Acolyte must be strong of faith and resolute of will. Of all the enemies of humanity, Daemons pose the greatest threat to both body and soul. Those who would hunt such creatures must possess distinct abilities to come through these trials with sanity and soul intact.

The following new talents are available to all Acolytes who meet the prerequisites. Acolytes can select these new talents in exactly the same fashion as those in the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook, by paying the xp cost determined by the talent's tier and the character's number of matching aptitudes.

TALENT DESCRIPTIONS

The following presents each new talent, including its effects, prerequisites, and aptitudes.

BODYGUARD

The Acolyte has trained to protect his allies or superiors, prepared to even throw himself in the way of a bolt shell or whirring chain blade if necessary.

Tier: 1

Prerequisites: Agility 35

Aptitudes: Agility, Defence

Effect: After an enemy makes a successful attack against an ally, the character may use a Reaction to move up to his Half Move distance in order to interpose himself between the attacker and target. The attack is then resolved against the character instead of the original target. In the case of a melee attack, the character may also attempt to Parry the attack as part of his Reaction.

BULWARK OF FAITH

The Acolyte's faith is both a shield and a weapon. So filled with righteous fervour is he that Daemons recoil from the blinding light of his faith, their unholy forms sundered.

Tier: 2

Prerequisites: Willpower 45, Iron Faith

Aptitudes: Defence, Willpower

Effect: When the character passes a Fear test caused by a Daemon, the Daemon suffers 1 Energy damage ignoring armour and Toughness bonus for each degree of success on the Fear test.

DAEMONHUNTER

Through years of experience and countless encounters that would blast the sanity and soul of a lesser man, the Acolyte has honed his abilities to uncover and destroy the Daemon wherever it may be found. He knows and recognises the spoor of the Daemon, and his righteous anger ensures that his blows land squarely on the unholy adversary.

Tier: 2

Prerequisites: Forbidden Lore (Daemonology), Willpower 40

Aptitudes: Offence, Willpower

Effect: The Acolyte may re-roll failed Awareness and Psyniscience tests to detect the presence of Daemons. In addition, his attacks against Daemons gain the Proven (3) quality.

DAEMONIC DISRUPTION

The Untouchable's very presence is anathema to Daemons, and only the strongest can threaten him. Creatures of the Warp that lay claw upon the Untouchable must struggle to maintain their hold in reality, lest mere contact hurl them back into the Immaterium.

Tier: 3

Prerequisites: Bane of the Daemon, Willpower 50, Untouchable elite advance

Aptitudes: Willpower

Effect: Whenever a creature with the Warp Instability trait makes a successful attack test against this character, it must immediately test for Warp Instability after resolving the attack.

DAEMONOLOGIST

The Acolyte is practiced in the dark arts, and knowledgeable in the strengths and vulnerabilities of Warp creatures. He is especially skilled at banishing Daemons—or harnessing them—through the use of his psychic abilities.

Tier: 2

Prerequisites: Psy rating 3, Willpower 45, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)

Aptitudes: Psyker, Willpower

Effect: When the character takes the Focus Power action and the target of the psychic power is a Daemon, he gains a +10 bonus to the Focus Power test. At the GM's discretion, this bonus may apply to other tests, such as rituals to summon or bind a Daemon.

DARK SOUL

Whether through devotion to the Emperor, sheer willpower, single-minded dedication to his duty, or the blessing of some dark power, the Acolyte's internal corruption remains outwardly invisible. With no mutations to mark him as accursed, the Acolyte can continue his radical work without detection.

Tier: 3

Prerequisites: Hardened Soul, 20 Corruption points

Aptitudes: Toughness, Willpower

Effect: When the character would test to gain a mutation as a result of increasing Corruption, he may choose to automatically pass the test. If he does, he also gains a Malignancy and increases his Corruption total by 1d10.

HARDENED SOUL

The Acolyte knows that he must sacrifice his own salvation in order to safeguard humanity, but that he must resist the corruption for as long as possible. Through practiced meditation, self-flagellation, prayer and fasting, force of will, or even sorcerous rites, the character staves off the effects of his growing corruption, delaying the inevitable.



Tier: 2

Prerequisites: Willpower 35, 10 Corruption points

Aptitudes: Defence, Willpower

Effect: Whenever the character would gain Corruption points, he may reduce the amount gained by half (rounded up) and gain Insanity points equal to the amount reduced.

INSPIRING AURA

The Acolyte's strength of will inspires those under his command and his comrades in equal measure. Looking to his faithful example, his allies can overcome their own fear in order to do the Emperor's work.

Tier: 2

Prerequisites: Halo of Command

Aptitudes: Leadership, Willpower

Effect: The character can affect allies of any kind—not only subordinates—with the Terrify special use for the Command skill (see page 101 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook). This need not represent threats and intimidation, but might represent inspiring words, encouragement, or sheer steadfastness in the face of terrifying foes.

INSTRUMENT OF HIS WILL

The Acolyte strikes down daemoniac foes with holy fury, his blows landing as if guided by the hand of the Emperor Himself. The keen edge of his faith and hatred presents the true threat to the Daemon, not his physical strength or the potency of his weapon.

Tier: 3

Prerequisites: Willpower 50

Aptitudes: Offence, Willpower

Effect: After making a successful attack against a Daemon (this can include striking it with a psychic power), the character may spend a Fate point to increase the damage of the first hit he inflicts as part of that attack by an amount equal to twice his Willpower bonus. This additional damage ignores armour and Toughness bonus.

IRON FAITH

The Acolyte's faith is as unyielding as plasteel, and it protects him against the unnatural aura of the daemoniac. With the strength of his conviction, he faces down the otherworldly terrors of the Warp the way a lesser man might look down the barrel of a lasgun.

Tier: 3

Prerequisites: Iron Resolve

Aptitudes: Defence, Willpower

Effect: The character is immune to the effects of the Baneful Presence trait.

IRON RESOLVE

The Acolyte is inured to the terrors of both combat and the Warp, knowing that he must control his fear in order to face foes that threaten both body and soul. When confronted with the machinations of heretics, threats to life and limb, and even the otherworldly creatures of the Warp, the Acolyte stands firm.

Tier: 2

Prerequisites: Resistance (Fear), Jaded

Aptitudes: Defence, Willpower

Effect: After failing a Fear or Pinning test, the character can re-roll the test with a -10 modifier.

ONE-ON-ONE

The Acolyte is a master of single combat. Without the distractions of multiple opponents, he fights at his best, taking every opening and leaving none.

Tier: 2

Prerequisites: Weapon Skill 40

Aptitudes: Finesse, Weapon Skill

Effect: When fighting a single enemy in melee combat, the character scores extra degrees of success on successful Weapon Skill tests equal to half of his Weapon Skill bonus (rounded down).

rites of Banishment

In battle against the daemoniac, the Acolyte ceaselessly intones sacred rites and invocations against the Daemon, calling on the Emperor to cast the abominations back into the Warp. These holy words disrupt the Daemon's hold in the material universe, weakening its malefic form.

Tier: 2

Prerequisites: Common Lore (Imperial Creed) +10 or Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)

Aptitudes: Offence, Willpower

Effect: Once per round as a Half Action, the character may speak the litanies and invocations to disrupt Daemons. Until the beginning of his next turn, Daemons within a distance equal to twice the character's Willpower bonus in meters suffer a -10 penalty to Willpower tests.

SANCTIC PURITY

Sanctic Daemonology is often considered the most pure of psychic disciplines. Practitioners can seem beyond the dangers of the Warp that all too often plague other psykers. Such mastery is taxing, but an experienced Daemonologist can resist the influence of the Warp where other psykers would succumb.

Tier: 3

Prerequisites: Daemonologist, Favoured by the Warp, Willpower 50

Aptitudes: Psyker, Willpower

Effect: When the character triggers Psychic Phenomena when manifesting a power from the Sanctic Daemonology discipline, he may spend a Fate point in order to negate the result entirely.

SHIELD WALL

The Acolyte is a master of the art of weapon-and-shield combat. Forgoing the offensive abilities of a second weapon or the advantages of ranged weaponry, he proves the superiority of this most ancient and honourable of fighting styles. His shield seems to always be in the right position to block his foe's strike, leaving his target open for the inevitable counter.

Tier: 3

Prerequisites: Ambidextrous, Weapon Skill 40

Aptitudes: Defence, Weapon Skill

Effect: When armed with a shield, the character can re-roll one failed Evasion test to Parry an attack per round.

DAEMONHOSTS

"Scream for me, Master."

—Zabrathiel, newly freed Daemonhost

The Daemonhost is amongst the most terrible of entities an Acolyte might encounter during his time serving the Golden Throne. Yet, some Acolytes and Inquisitors seek to create such a foul creature as a tool to use in their battle against Chaos. A Daemonhost is a powerful Daemon ritually bound into the living flesh of a human. Although a Daemon can possess humans, particularly psykers, such occurrences happen of the Daemon's choosing, and are temporary affairs. The Daemon within a Daemonhost is bound against its will, and the effects are permanent until the creature is destroyed, banishing the Daemon back into the Warp.

ON THE NATURE OF DAEMONHOSTS

A Daemonhost is an almost indescribably foul entity. Here, a Daemon is bound into the—most likely unwilling—flesh of a human, held captive in the material universe where it is often able to still work its evil. Only the most debased cultists and most Radical of Inquisitors and Acolytes might contemplate creating such an abomination. A Daemonhost can be a powerful, but dangerous tool. Even the most tightly leashed is still a mighty creature, stronger and more resilient than any human and with potent psychic abilities. Each is also immensely knowledgeable, often more so than the most learned of malefic scholars, for a Daemon is not bound by the limits of reality. As a denizen of the Warp it knows the ways of the Immaterium and can see into the depths of men's souls.

Despite the numerous risks, there are still many reasons to create a Daemonhost. Cults might create a Daemonhost as an act of worship, or to grant the daemonic object of their veneration a method to walk amongst its followers. A cult might bind a Daemonhost as a way for its magister to show his power and favour in the eyes of the gods, or simply as a weapon to use against the servants of righteousness. Inquisitors and their servants could craft a Daemonhost for their own reasons. One Inquisitor might create one as a powerful weapon to wield in his fight against Chaos, believing that only another creature of the Warp can stand against its kind in battle. Another might bind a Daemon purely in order to interrogate the wily creature, plumbing the depths of its impossible knowledge for secrets to aid him in his work, or for insight into the activities of his enemies.

A Daemonhost, like all Daemons, is a liar. Although bound through powerful eldritch rites to serve its creator, a Daemonhost constantly plots and schemes against him and, depending on the strength and nature of its bindings, might cajole and threaten him. A Daemonhost might prefer to play the role of the obsequious servant, for example, biding its time until the opportunity arrives to break its fetters and wreak vengeance on its summoner. Regardless of how it behaves, no Daemon willingly serves a human. Each Daemonhost despises and loathe its binders and masters, and seeks constantly for some way to change the state of affairs.

A Daemonhost is a powerful creature, the walking embodiment of the Warp. With few exceptions, the Daemon bound within a host is potent, on the level of a Herald and Daemon Prince, because the wards and bindings that enslave a Daemonhost also fetter its power. A lesser Daemon bound to a host is weaker than that Daemon would be otherwise, and seldom worth the risk of summoning and binding in the first place. A Daemon Prince, Herald, or other potent Daemon, however, even when bound, is almost unbelievably powerful. However, one who would create a Daemonhost faces a choice, as the more tightly bound a Daemonhost is, the less powerful, while the more loosely bound, the more free it is to resist its master and the more likely to escape its bindings altogether.

DAEMONHOSTS IN CAMPAIGNS

There are two primary ways a Daemonhost might enter a DARK HERESY campaign. The GM might introduce a Daemonhost as an NPC as part of his ongoing plot, or the Acolytes might create one through their own actions, possibly to call upon as a Reinforcement Character (see page 39). In the former case, the Daemonhost might serve as an ally or an opponent, depending on the inclinations of the Acolytes. The latter case marks the Acolytes as dire Radicals at best, torch-worthy heretics at worst.

The leanings of a warband's Inquisitor are of great importance when introducing a Daemonhost as a potential ally. A Radical Inquisitor might introduce such a creature into a warband that is not prepared for it, causing strife and demoralisation at the prospect of working alongside such an abomination. Conversely, a warband that creates a Daemonhost without regard to its master's views is likely to find itself declared Excommunicate Traitoris.

A Daemonhost can be one of the most powerful foes Acolytes might face, or amongst their strongest—and most duplicitous— allies. A Daemonhost could easily serve as a recurring Nemesis (as seen in the DARK HERESY GAME MASTER'S KIT), or as the ultimate weapon in the warband's arsenal. In either case, the presence of a Daemonhost in a campaign can have notable consequences, and Game Masters should carefully consider the results before introducing such a creature.

The creation of a Daemonhost speaks to the resources of a cult, or the extreme Radicalism of an Inquisitor. If the Acolytes take it upon themselves to bind a Daemonhost, they must first possess damnable knowledge, the acquisition of which could form the basis for entire adventures. The creation of a Daemonhost marks the Acolytes as Radicals—heretics in the eyes of most—and the foul act is a turning point from which there is no coming back.

DAEMONHOST GENERATION

The following rules allow Game Masters to create a Daemonhost for use as an NPC, or to represent the results of a binding ritual performed by the Acolytes (see page 66). To randomly generate a Daemonhost, complete the following steps: determine binding strength, generate characteristics, assign traits, assign skills and talents, determine special rules, and assign psychic powers. GMs should feel free to select a result rather than determine randomly wherever it seems appropriate or if a specific Daemonhost is desired for purposes of the campaign.

BINDING STRENGTH

Although the exact wards and bindings vary, a Daemonhost is broadly categorised into four levels of binding strength. If the GM is creating a Daemonhost as an NPC, he chooses the binding strength. If the Acolytes take it upon themselves to create a Daemonhost, the binding strength is determined by the success of the ritual (see page 66).

Unbound: The result of a ritual gone wrong, a Daemonhost who has broken its bindings, or the creation of a truly mad individual, an Unbound Daemonhost suffers no master and are free to utilise its full, incredible power as it sees fit. Each is the Warp made manifest.

Once-Bound: A Once-Bound Daemonhost is apocalyptically powerful, but only barely contained.

Twice-Bound: More tightly bound with powerful wards, a Twice-Bound Daemonhost uses its formidable powers as instructed, yet always plot against its master.

Thrice-Bound: The most strongly bound from of Daemonhost is the least able to rebel against those who would control it, yet still possess inhuman strength and power.

DAEMONHOST CHARACTERISTICS

To determine a Daemonhost's characteristics, a GM has two options. He can generate characteristics randomly based on the Daemon's alignment, or if he knows a specific Daemon or kind of Daemon, (e.g., a Bloodletter, or the Daemon Prince Hazarad), he can begin with those characteristics and modify them based on the Daemonhost's binding strength. If the GM prefers to generate characteristics randomly, use Table 2-14: **Daemon Characteristics** on page 64.

A Daemonhost's abilities are affected by the strength of its bindings. After determining the residing Daemon's base characteristics, determine the characteristics of the Daemonhost based on its binding strength according to the values from Table 2-15: **Characteristic Modifiers** on page 64.

DAEMONHOST TRAITS

The traits a Daemonhost possesses depend on its binding level:

Unbound: Baneful Presence (X)[†], Brutal Charge (3), Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons (Claws)^{††}, Fear (4), From Beyond, Hoverer (5)^{†††}, Size (5), Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength (5)

Once-Bound: Baneful Presence (X)[†], Brutal Charge (3), Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons (Claws)^{††}, Fear (3), From Beyond, Hoverer (4)^{†††}, Size (5), Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength (4)

Twice-Bound: Baneful Presence (X)[†], Brutal Charge (3), Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons (Claws)^{††}, Fear (3), From Beyond, Hoverer (3)^{†††}, Size (5), Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength (4)

Thrice-Bound: Baneful Presence (X)[†], Brutal Charge (3), Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons (Claws)^{††}, Fear (2), From Beyond, Hoverer (2)^{†††}, Size (5), Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength (3)

† The value of a Daemonhost's Baneful Presence trait is equal to half its Willpower characteristic.

†† A Daemonhost's natural weapons have penetration 2 and inflict Rending damage.

††† As an unnatural being of the Warp, a Daemonhost does not need to expend any Actions in order to remain hovering.

Table 2–14: Daemon Characteristics

CHARACTERISTIC	DAEMON OF KHORNE	DAEMON OF TZEENTCH	DAEMON OF NURGLE	DAEMON OF SLAANESH	UNKNOWN DAEMON
Weapon Skill	40+3d10	20+3d10	25+3d10	30+3d10	25+3d10
Ballistic Skill	30+3d10	30+3d10	25+3d10	25+3d10	25+3d10
Strength	40+3d10	25+3d10	30+3d10	30+3d10	30+3d10
Toughness	30+3d10	30+3d10	40+3d10	30+3d10	30+3d10
Agility	30+3d10	25+3d10	20+3d10	40+3d10	30+3d10
Intelligence	25+3d10	40+3d10	30+3d10	30+3d10	30+3d10
Perception	30+3d10	30+3d10	30+3d10	40+3d10	30+3d10
Willpower	35+3d10	50+3d10	40+3d10	40+3d10	40+3d10
Fellowship	10+1d10	25+3d10	5+1d10	40+3d10	30+3d10
Influence	25+3d10	30+3d10	25+3d10	25+3d10	20+3d10
Wounds	25+2d10	25+2d10	25+2d10	25+2d10	25+2d10

DAEMONHOST SKILLS

All Daemonhosts possess the following skills: Awareness, Deceive, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Heresy, Warp) +30, and Psyniscience +20. In addition, a Daemonhost possesses skills based on its patron god. GMs should feel free to add additional skills, particularly Lore and Linguistics skills, as Daemons are knowledgeable far beyond the ken of mortals.

- **Khorne:** Athletics +10, Dodge +10, Intimidate +10
- **Tzeentch:** Deceive +20, Psyniscience +30
- **Nurgle:** Intimidate +20, Medicae +10
- **Slaanesh:** Awareness +10, Charm +20, Deceive +10, Dodge +10

DAEMONHOST TALENTS

All Daemonhosts possess the Warp Sense talent, and also possess a number of additional talents based on their patron god. GMs should feel free to modify these lists of talents to create unique adversaries and allies for their Acolytes.

- **Khorne:** Ambidextrous, Combat Master, Deathdealer (Melee), Devastating Assault, Crushing Blow, Frenzy, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Master, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee)
- **Tzeentch:** Constant Vigilance (Intelligence), Favoured by the Warp
- **Nurgle:** Thunder Charge, True Grit
- **Slaanesh:** Constant Vigilance (Perception), Hard Target, Preternatural Speed

Table 2–15: Characteristic Modifiers

CHARACTERISTIC	UNBOUND	ONCE-BOUND	TWICE-BOUND	THRICE-BOUND
Weapon Skill	+5	+0	+0	–5
Ballistic Skill	+0	+0	+0	+0
Strength	+10	+5	–5	–10
Toughness	+10	+5	–5	–10
Agility	+0	–5	–5	–10
Intelligence	+5	+0	+0	+0
Perception	+0	+0	–5	–10
Willpower	+0	–5	–10	–15
Fellowship	+0	+0	+0	+5
Influence	+0	–5	–10	–15
Wounds	+5	+0	+0	+0

DAEMONHOST SPECIAL RULES

A Daemonhost receives one or more special rules based on its patron god.

KHORNE

A Daemonhost of Khorne gains the following special rule:

Bloodthirsty: The Daemonhost's natural weapons gain +2 penetration and the Tearing quality. In addition, any attack roll that scores 3 or more degrees of success causes the target to gain the Blood Loss condition. A Daemonhost of Khorne can enter a Frenzy per the Frenzy talent as a Free Action.

TZEENTCH

A Daemonhost of Tzeentch gains the following special rule:

Innate Sorcerer: The Daemonhost may re-roll any failed Focus Power test. However, if the result of either die on the second roll is a 9, it causes Psychic Phenomena. If Psychic Phenomena would be triggered regardless, each 9 instead adds +10 to the result from Table 6-2: Psychic Phenomena on page 196 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook.

NURGLE

A Daemonhost of Nurgle gains the following special rule:

Aura of Decay: The Daemonhost's natural weapons gain the Toxic (3) Quality. While within 10 metres of the Daemonhost, all weapons, armour, and equipment function as if they were of Poor craftsmanship, regardless of their actual craftsmanship, unless they possess the Sanctified weapon quality. Other items may also be immune to this rule at the GM's discretion.

SLAANESH

A Daemonhost of Slaanesh gains the following special rule:

Torturous Caress: The Daemonhost's natural weapons gain +1 penetration and the Shocking quality. In addition, its attacks impose a -20 penalty to Evasion tests.



DAEMONHOST PSYCHIC POWERS

All Daemonhosts other than Daemons of Khorne possess psychic powers. A Daemonhost's psy rating is based on its binding strength, as follows:

Unbound: Psy rating 7

Once-Bound: Psy rating 6

Twice-Bound: Psy rating 5

Thrice-Bound: Psy rating 4

Daemonhosts are masters of the powers of the Warp, and the abilities they evince are near limitless. A Daemonhost can possess powers from any psychic discipline without meeting the prerequisites or following the discipline tree. GMs should select appropriate powers based on the Daemon's patron god and the nature of the Daemon itself. As a guideline, a Daemonhost possesses 2000 xp worth of psychic powers.

Note that Daemonhosts of Khorne do not possess a psy rating, for sorcery is anathema to the Blood God.

UNHOLY CHANGES

All Daemonhosts are marked by the unholy creature bound within. As time goes by, the fleshy prison of a Daemonhost warps and twists to better reflect its occupant. GMs should feel free to embellish a Daemonhost's disturbing physical appearance, from contorted limbs and glowing eyes to vestigial horns, weeping sores, and bloated flesh. In addition, roll on Table 2-16: Unholy Changes to determine what game effects a Daemonhost's form has. Generate one Unholy Change for a Thrice-Bound Daemonhost, two for a Twice-Bound or Once-Bound Daemonhost, and three for an Unbound Daemonhost. If the GM prefers, he can select appropriate results for the specific Daemon, or apply additional Traits to create a unique terror.

Table 2-16: Unholy Changes

1d10 ROLL	ATTRIBUTE
1	Beweaponed Extremities: The Daemonhost's limbs fuse into bony blades or other weapons. Its natural weapons inflict 2d10 damage.
2	Wings: Leathery, bat-like wings or pinions of sinew and bone sprout from the Daemonhost's back. It gains the Flyer (X) trait, where X equals twice its Agility bonus.
3	Warp Fire: The Daemonhost burns with unholy fire. Its natural weapons' damage type changes to Energy and gain the Flame quality.
4	Charred Form: The Daemonhost's body is charred and smoulders from within. It is immune to Energy damage that does not come from psychic or Holy sources.
5	Maddening Vapours: The Daemonhost exudes an unholy mist that breaks the minds of mortals. Its attacks gain the Hallucinogenic (3) quality.
6	Insect Hive: Beneath the Daemonhost's skin burrow colonies of Warp-born vermin. It gains 1d10 Wounds.
7	Serpent Nest: The Daemonhost's body writhes with unnatural serpents or even fouler creatures. It gains the Toxic (4) trait.
8	Horns: Great bestial horns sprout from the Daemonhost's head. It increases the value of its Brutal Charge trait by 3.
9	Armoured: The Daemonhost is protected by reptilian scales, bony plates, an insect-like carapace, or Warp-hardened flesh. It gains the Natural Armour (5) trait.
10	Seeming Normality: Discard any other Unholy Changes. Aside from the instruments of its binding (brandings, tattoos, etc.), the Daemonhost appears utterly, perfectly normal. Increase its Fellowship by 1d10.

ON THE CREATION OF DAEMONHOSTS

The creation of a Daemonhost is a laborious and dangerous process that requires specific and forbidden knowledge. Although Daemonhosts might be created by malefic cults, they are also, in rare cases, the work of the Inquisition itself. This section presents guidance for the process of Acolytes or Inquisitor PCs creating their own Daemonhost.

DAMNABLE KNOWLEDGE

Before one can bind a Daemonhost, the would-be master must first know the necessary rites and processes, as well as the Daemon to be bound. There is no single ritual for binding a Daemonhost, as scholars of the malefic have developed—or more accurately, discovered—many throughout the millennia. In many cases, a ritual goes hand in hand with a particular Daemon, the rites and steps being tailored to that entity. In other cases, the steps to properly prepare a host body are divorced from the process of summoning a Daemon.

Before a warband—or an Acolyte operating on his own—can create a Daemonhost, the Acolytes must obtain the requisite knowledge. There are many ways they might do so, and the act of acquiring the information might form the basis for an adventure in itself. The two most likely sources are a tome of forbidden lore or a tutor learned in the dark arts. Such a book is without price, and merely possessing one is grounds for excommunication from the human race. Scholars sufficiently expert in the ways of Daemonology are even rarer than the texts they consult, for few men can engage in such study and maintain even a shred of their sanity. The secret of Daemonhost creation might even come as the result of a Dark Pact (see page 72), for some Daemons find great enjoyment in seeing their rivals consigned to a prison of flesh and bone.

Obtaining the knowledge to create a Daemonhost should never be a simple matter of making a Requisition test, although one indeed might be part of the process. The availability of a text on the creation of Daemonhosts should rarely be easier than Unique, for such books—and their owners—are purged by the Imperium whenever found. Such a text might contain instruction in the preparation of host bodies alone, or might include the True Name of a daemonic entity and the specific steps to bind it to a prepared host.

PREPARING THE HOST

The creation of a Daemonhost requires a living human, whose soul is consigned to an eternity of torment upon completion of the ritual. Preparing the host body is gruelling, and agony for the likely-unwilling host. Arcane glyphs and forbidden runes must be applied to the host's skin. Although temporary measures are possible, to better aid in confining the Daemon and to ensure against damaging the marks before the ritual can be completed, it is better to brand or tattoo the body with the words of binding.

As well as words of power, many rituals call for the use of sanctified pins to pierce the flesh of the host, and warded chains to wrap it. Such objects cow the Daemon within, trapping it and inflicting the equivalent of pain on the Warp beast. Depending

Table 2-17: Binding Modifiers

RITUAL CIRCUMSTANCE	MODIFIER
The Daemon's Influence (should it have one) is higher than the binder's	−10
Each degree of failure when preparing the host for the Daemon	−5
Each degree of success when preparing the host for the Daemon	+5
The binder has previously encountered this particular Daemon	+10
The Daemon's True Name is known	+30

on the nature of the ritual and its developer, different symbols are called for. For disciples of the Dark Gods, these include the eight-pointed Star of Chaos, either branded in flesh or applied as an iron casting, as well as other profane symbols and runes. Inquisitors and their ilk are likely to apply symbols of faith or of the Inquisition itself as further measures against the Daemon.

Preparing a host takes 2d10 hours minus the ritual leader's Intelligence bonus, to a minimum of 1 hour. At the end of this period, the person leading the preparations makes a Very Hard (−30) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test. The GM can modify the difficulty of this test based on the quality of the instructions followed. Every degree of success on this test provides a +5 bonus to the test to bind the Daemon (see below), while each degree of failure imposes a −5 penalty.

SUMMONING AND BINDING THE DAEMON

Once the host is prepared, the next step is to summon the Daemon to inhabit it. This is perhaps the most dangerous part of the process, for an uncontrolled Daemon wants nothing more than to rend its summoner limb from limb. The rules for summoning a Daemon are explained on page 59.

Once the Daemon is summoned, the summoner must succeed at a Daemonic Mastery test (see page 59). The difficulty of this test is Hellish (−60), modified according to Table 2-17: Binding Modifiers above. As with all Daemonic Mastery tests, this is an opposed Willpower test against the Daemon.

The result of this test indicates the highest level of binding possible, as shown on Table 2-18: Binding Strength on page 67. The character leading the ritual may select any binding level up to that maximum. For instance, a character who scores 3 degrees of success could create an Unbound, Once-Bound, or Twice-Bound Daemonhost, but not a Thrice-Bound Daemonhost.

If the summoner fails the Daemonic Mastery test by 3 or more degrees of failure, the Daemon is not bound to the host at all, and is free to do as it will—which almost invariably means punishing the foolish mortals who sought to bind it. An Unbound Daemonhost is physically contained but uncontrolled, and likewise free to enact retribution on its summoner, except in those extraordinarily rare circumstances of a willing Daemonhost—not that such a creature can be trusted to keep its word.

Table 2-18: Binding Strength

TEST RESULT	MAXIMUM BINDING STRENGTH
1–2 Degrees of Failure	Unbound
1–2 Degrees of Success	Once-Bound
3–4 Degrees of Success	Twice-Bound
5+ Degrees of Success	Thrice-Bound

USING DAEMONHOSTS

There are two primary ways to utilise Daemonhosts created by the warband: as NPCs or as Reinforcement Characters. An NPC Daemonhost might accompany the warband on its missions, likely remaining in hiding until such time as its powers are needed. A Reinforcement Character Daemonhost would likewise probably remain in a secluded, even shielded, spot except in direct circumstances. Having a Daemonhost nearby can cause many problems, as such creatures are almost never subtle. Utilising a Daemonhost marks the Acolytes as heretics and enemies of the Imperium in the eyes of most Inquisitors and others who know of such abominations, such as the Grey Knights.

Daemonhosts make for uneasy allies. The GM should keep in mind that the Daemonhost likely harbours nothing but ill will towards the Acolytes, and seeks to intentionally misinterpret orders to the greatest extent it can. It might alternatively be bemused as it has foreseen the horrible fate that awaits its “masters” as a result of his actions. The lesser its degree of binding, the more latitude a Daemonhost has in its behaviour and idiosyncrasies; this applies both to acting on orders and to voicing its own thoughts. A Thrice-Bound Daemonhost might be stoically silent and act only when ordered to, while a Once-Bound Daemonhost might cajole or taunt the Acolytes and take the initiative in situations—either to the warband’s relief or detriment.

DAEMONHOST REINFORCEMENT CHARACTERS

A Daemonhost makes an unusual Reinforcement Character not only because it is a Daemon, but because it may very well be something the warband created. Whether the Acolytes went through the rituals of summoning and binding themselves or call upon a Daemonhost created by an ally (perhaps even their Inquisitor), it makes for an ideal Reinforcement Character. Powerful and dangerous, it is usually unleashed only when the situation is exceptionally dire—and even if using a Daemonhost successfully resolves the matter, the cost might continue to haunt the warband for many years to come.

Table 2-19: Daemonhost Reinforcement Characters

BINDING STRENGTH	INFLUENCE MINIMUM	INFLUENCE COST
Unbound	70	10
Once-Bound	60	8
Twice-Bound	55	7
Thrice-Bound	50	5

A Daemonhost’s Influence minimum and cost are based on its binding strength. However, GMs should feel free to modify the Influence minimum or cost if the warband goes through the process of creating the Daemonhost themselves. In this situation, a GM should consider waiving the Influence minimum and reducing the cost by as much as half.

For guidelines for Influence minimum and cost for Daemonhosts created using the rules in this section, see **Table 2-19: Daemonhost Reinforcement Characters** above. Unbound Daemonhosts are included, as some characters might enter into a pact with such an entity or otherwise find means to call upon its services. An Unbound Daemonhost is not under the Acolytes’ control: it might be an ally, but never a servant.



DAEMONIC POSSESSION AND EXORCISM

"There is something inside me, getting stronger. It speaks to me in my dreams, of great and terrible things. I tried to end myself today, but it won't let me die. It says it has plans for me."

—From the secret journals of Heriah DuClarke

One of the greatest threats posed by the Enemy Beyond is possession. Entire worlds have fallen to ruin when a single important leader succumbed to daemonic possession. Possession is insidious, and a Daemon might lurk within a host for some time before the tell-tale signs reveal its presence, working its foul plans. Psykers are amongst the most vulnerable to daemonic possession—part of the reason the psyker cull each world owes to the Imperium is of such dire importance. A possessed psyker can be catastrophically powerful, and might be the precursor to a full-blown daemonic incursion.

POSSESSION IN A CAMPAIGN

As it poses such a dire threat, possession is a major concern for Acolytes serving an Ordo Malleus Inquisitor. Although it is inevitably a temporary state of affairs, a Daemon with a mortal body to work its evil can do immense damage during a short time if it goes undetected. Acolytes must learn the signs of possession and act decisively. Those who have encountered the possessed often develop paranoid tendencies, and might see hints of malefic influence where there are none.

In **DARK HERESY**, possession might enter the campaign in a number of ways. Acolytes might find themselves facing a daemonically possessed foe. If this is an important individual, it may be difficult for the Acolytes to act against him or confirm their suspicions. In other cases, strange events may point to a daemonic influence, leaving it up to the Acolytes to uncover the possession and end it before the Daemon's plan comes to fruition.

Perhaps the greatest ramifications for a campaign occur when an ally or even one of the Acolytes succumbs to possession. A trusted NPC or member of the warband is in a position to do great damage. A possessed Acolyte has important consequences for the campaign, as the character might work to hide his secret while undermining the efforts of the group—if he is even aware of the possession.

Although an Acolyte is most likely to become possessed due to events beyond his control, such a large and far-reaching change to the character should not be beyond the player's control, and should not occur without the player's agreement.

THE NATURE OF POSSESSION

Consistency is anathema in the Realm of Chaos, and so it is that no two daemonic possessions are identical. The effects of the possession vary based on the nature of the Daemon and how the possession came about. Some possessions are sudden and overwhelming, the Daemon taking full control of its host and twisting the mortal's body into unnatural and horrifying forms. Others are subtle, with the Daemon slowly corrupting its host over time, unbeknownst to the victim.

Unlike the creation of a Daemonhost, possession is temporary, with the host almost invariably destroyed one way or another. If the Daemon's actions do not bring it into conflict with others and lead to the host's destruction, eventually the Warp energies suffusing the possessed individual consume him, releasing the Daemon within. Very rarely, an individual may survive the possession thanks to an exorcism. Unlike a Daemonhost, a possessing Daemon is not bound under the control of a mortal, and is free to do as it pleases. The goals of Daemons are manifold, and they might seek to simply sow destruction and chaos, or follow subtler plans, depending on the creature's nature.



Scholars of the forbidden and Ordo Malleus Inquisitors have spent countless hours studying and researching the myriad forms of possession in an attempt to catalogue and comprehend them. Although completing such a task is impossible, daemonologists often broadly and roughly categorize possession into two types, total possession and seed possession. Either type of possession can come about as an opportunistic attack by a Daemon or from a purposeful ritual enacted by mortals. Amongst researchers of the forbidden and arcane, these descriptors allow for the study and categorization of specific instances of possession. Of course, such research is fragmentary and must by its nature be conducted in secret. Consequently, few scholars of malefic lore agree on the specifics, and many have their own terms and systems of study.

TOTAL POSSESSION

In total possession, the Daemon fully inhabits its host, existing in reality by wearing its victim like a suit of meat and bone. The possessed mortal is under the utter control of the Daemon, his consciousness locked away in a small corner of his own mind and forced to witness the horrific actions of the possessing entity. The possessed may exhibit immediate mutations as his body struggles to contain the Warp energies within. Heedless of pain or damage to the host, the Daemon can push the host's body beyond its limits, benefiting from unnatural strength and resilience.

In a total possession, the Daemon has full control. The possessed character adds +10 to his Strength and Toughness and gains 1d10 wounds, as the Daemon is injured to pain and cares little for damage inflicted to its host form. The Daemon uses its own Intelligence, Perception, Willpower, and Fellowship, and can utilise any psychic powers it possesses. It also benefits from the Daemonic trait. At the GM's discretion, the possessed character might benefit from other traits or abilities the Daemon possesses.

SEED POSSESSION

In this type of possession, the Daemon remains within the Warp while suffusing the body and soul of the host with a small part of its essence. Over time, the Daemon further corrupts the host, forming a bridge between the Warp and reality. At first, the host is likely completely unaware that anything is happening. As the seed of the Daemon's essence grows, it exerts further influence upon the host, altering his behaviour or even temporarily taking control of his body. The host might find himself with gaps in his memory, or find himself troubled by strangely realistic nightmares of dark deeds. As time goes on, physical changes may manifest on the tainted flesh of the host, and a seed possession ultimately culminates in total possession.

For the game effects of seed possession, see the *Possessed Acolytes* on this page.

OPPORTUNISTIC POSSESSION

Possession can occur when a Daemon takes advantage of a mortal's weakness to sink its claws into his soul. This is most likely to happen to a psyker, particularly when he draws upon his unnatural powers. However, the souls of nearly all humans burn in the Warp, and anyone could potentially attract the dread attentions of a Daemon. Possession is no simple task for a Daemon, however, requiring a

great deal of energy and an emotionally vulnerable or spiritually weak host. Possessions are mercifully rare, but when they do occur, they usually involve a powerful Daemon and a host in a position to further the Daemon's plots.

A Daemon may reach out to a potential host in dreams or whisper to him in times of weakness, offering power, knowledge, or anything he desires. If not strong of will and faith, the mortal may heed such promises and, knowingly or not, allow the Daemon to gain purchase in his soul. From there, the Daemon can begin the process of possession.

RITUAL POSSESSION

Rarely, malefic cults or even Radical servants of the Inquisition might purposefully invite a Daemon to possess a host. Such a dark deed requires involved and blasphemous rituals designed to coax an entity from the Warp to inhabit a vessel, willing or otherwise. Depending on the purpose and goals of the ritual, the process might take any number of forms. A cult might prepare a host for the Daemon it worships, so that it might walk amongst its followers. Some radical Inquisitors have been known to summon a Daemon to possess an Acolyte purely so that he can be exorcised, yielding an effective tool for future struggle against the daemonic—should he survive the process (see *Surviving Possession* on page 71).

Possession might also come about as the result of a Dark Pact (see page 72). As one of the conditions of the pact, the Daemon might require the mortal petitioner to allow it to infuse him with part of its essence, sometimes taking control of the mortal like a puppet.

POSSESSED ACOLYTES

During the course of a *DARK HERESY* game, it is possible for an Acolyte to succumb to daemonic possession. Although this is most likely to happen as a result of a psyker causing the Perils of the Warp, it can also come about as a progression of the ongoing story. A daemonic Nemesis might target an Acolyte for possession, or a character who delves into tomes of forbidden knowledge might open his soul to daemonic intrusion. When a result on **Table 6-3: Perils of the Warp** from page 197 of the *DARK HERESY* Core Rulebook indicates daemonic possession or it arises as a result of the narrative, the player of the Acolyte and the GM can discuss whether the following rules to represent the daemonic possession for that character.

Possession has immense consequences for an Acolyte, and more likely than not ultimately leads to his destruction, quite possibly at the hands of his fellow Acolytes. Because of the major changes to both the character and the impact on the campaign, possession should not occur without the agreement of the player. Additionally, both the GM and player should carefully consider the consequences before beginning down this dark road.

When an Acolyte succumbs to possession, the player and Game Master should work together to determine what Daemon is inhabiting the character. This might be obvious from the situation, or may be left to the vagaries of the Warp. The GM has the final say on the game profile of the Daemon, and should either select a Daemon NPC from this or another *DARK HERESY* supplement, or generate a profile randomly using **Table 2-14: Daemon Characteristics** on page 64.

EFFECTS OF POSSESSION

By their nature, Acolytes are strong and fated individuals, and therefore seed possession is appropriate, as Acolytes are less vulnerable to an immediate total possession (see page 69). At first, an Acolyte might not even be aware that he is possessed (although the player should be). The Daemon's initial assaults on the Acolyte's body and soul are subtle, and the Acolyte maintains control of himself. As the Acolyte's Corruption total increases, the effects of the possession grow more pronounced and the Acolyte loses further control to the Daemon. Eventually, the Warp energies suffusing the Acolyte consume him, releasing the Daemon within.

Upon becoming possessed, the Acolyte gains 2d10+10 Corruption points. This can cause the character to gain Malignancies and mutations as normal. The slow-burning effects of possession are shown on Table 2–20: The Possession Track. As the Acolyte's Corruption total increases, the Daemon takes ever-greater control, as exhibited in his unnatural abilities. In addition, a possessed Acolyte is suffused with the power of the Warp, and the presence of the Daemon progressively twists both his mind and body. While the Acolyte is possessed, he must re-roll any successful test to resist gaining Malignancies and mutations.

UNLEASHING THE DAEMON

Although the Daemon is always within the Acolyte, most of the time its presence remains hidden. At certain times, however, particularly when the Acolyte's emotions wax strong, the Daemon bubbles to the surface in a blazing display of Warp-born power.

A possessed Acolyte can unleash the Daemon a limited number of times per game session, as shown on Table 2–20: The Possession Track. The Daemon can be unleashed in one of two ways. The player of the possessed Acolyte can choose to unleash the Daemon, which may or may not represent the Acolyte calling upon the Daemon, depending on whether or not he is aware of it. Alternatively, the Game Master can choose to unleash the Daemon at an appropriate time, usually when the Acolyte is under great duress (such as when the Acolyte fails a Fear test, suffers a terrible setback, or is otherwise badly shaken). Unless the Acolyte is aware of the Daemon and consciously invites it, he resists the effects with a Willpower test, the difficulty of which depends on his Corruption total, as shown on Table 2–20: The Possession Track. If the Acolyte succeeds on the Willpower test, he fights off the Daemon's influence and maintains control. If he fails the test, or chooses to invite the Daemon, the Daemon is unleashed.

When the Daemon is unleashed, the Acolyte immediately gains the Fear (2) trait. In addition, he may substitute any number of the Daemon's characteristics for his own, as well as gain any of its skills, talents, traits, and special abilities, such as a Daemonette's Soporific Musk or a Plaguebearer's vomit attack. Although the Acolyte likely has no say in the matter, the player chooses which abilities to gain, with input from the GM, who has final say on what skills, talents, traits, and abilities are available.

During narrative time, the effects of unleashing the Daemon last for one skill or characteristic test, or for the duration of one scene at the GM's discretion. In structured time, the effects last for a number of rounds equal to the Acolyte's Corruption bonus. Each time an Acolyte unleashes the Daemon, he gains 1d5 Corruption points, +1 for each characteristic he substitutes and for each talent, trait, skill, or other ability he gains.

While unleashed, the Daemon has full control of the Acolyte. Depending on the needs of the game and the specific situation, the GM may take control of the Acolyte during this period, or may allow the player to continue controlling his character, with input from the GM on the Daemon's actions and intentions, if not on its true goals and motivations. In many cases, the Daemon seeks to preserve its host—for the time being—in which case its actions might well line up with the desires of the Acolyte.

SUCCUMBING TO THE DAEMON

A possessed Acolyte is likely to be mercifully slain by his comrades or, if very fortunate, exorcised once his condition becomes apparent. However, if by some chance the Acolyte survives and his Corruption total reaches 100, he succumbs utterly to the Daemon within. In a blaze of Warp fire or a ripping and twisting of flesh, the Acolyte is destroyed and the Daemon emerges in his place, while the unfortunate Acolyte's soul is consigned to eternal damnation.

EXORCISM

Although most mortals who succumb to Daemonic possession meet their fates heaped on the pyre or consumed by the Warp entity within, a rare and fortunate few undergo an exorcism—and survive the ordeal. In an exorcism, the possessing Daemon is driven out during an arduous ritual, leaving the exorcised individual free of possession but forever changed. An exorcism is a gruelling and dangerous process for all involved. An exorcism is likely to fail, enraging the Daemon and risking the souls of the exorcist and anyone else present. It is for these reasons that exorcisms are only attempted under exceptional circumstances.

Table 2–20: The Possession Track

CORRUPTION TOTAL	POSSESSION TRAITS	UNLEASH THE DAEMON	RESIST THE DAEMON
01–30	Daemonic (1), Unnatural Strength (1)	1 time per session	+0
31–60	Daemonic (2), Unnatural Strength (2)	2 times per session	–10
61–90	Daemonic (3), Unnatural Strength (3)	3 times per session	–20
91–99	Baneful Presence (10), Daemonic (4), Fear (2), From Beyond, Dark-sight, Undying, Unnatural Strength (3)	No limit	–30

ROLEPLAYING POSSESSION

While possessed, although he retains primary control of his body and faculties, an Acolyte is nonetheless under the influence of the Daemon coexisting within him. The GM and player should work together to determine how this might influence the PC's behaviour and goals. An Acolyte might occasionally black out as the Daemon temporarily takes control. He might find his own motivations and desires subtly twisting as the Daemon manipulates him towards its own ends. His personality could change, subtly at first and ever more pronounced as the possession runs its course. The Daemon might even speak to the Acolyte, whispering taunts or promises that only he can hear, or perhaps appearing to him in dreams and visions. There are no end to the possibilities of the Acolyte's slide into damnation, and the player and GM should work together to ensure a memorable and dramatic journey.

PERFORMING AN EXORCISM

As is always the case with the occult, there are many forms an exorcism might take. Some are dark and debased rites calling on forbidden knowledge, others are acts of faith and purity that drive out the Daemon with the light of the Emperor. Whatever form the ritual takes, an exorcism ultimately comes down to a contest of wills between the exorcist and the Daemon. In most cases, the exorcist is another individual, either an ally of the possessed or someone recruited expressly to perform the exorcism. However, at the GM's discretion, a possessed individual may attempt to exorcise himself.

The preparations for an exorcism can be quite involved, with the specifics depending on the particular exorcism ritual selected. Most exorcisms call for sacred incense, symbols of faith, and a consecrated location. Practitioners of the dark arts might instead utilise profane runes and even human sacrifices.

During the ritual, the exorcist speaks loudly and firmly, though the words might be prayers and invocations of the Emperor's name, or admonitions in the name of the Chaos Gods, depending on the nature of the rite and the exorcist. Regardless, most exorcisms involve appeals to a stronger power to cast out the Daemon. However, it is ultimately the will of the exorcist that must overcome that of the possessing Daemon.

Before beginning the exorcism, the exorcist makes a Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test. For each degree of success on this test, he gains a +5 bonus to the subsequent Daemonic Mastery tests. During the exorcism, the Daemon's presence rises to the surface of the possessed, revealing the entity that was otherwise hidden, and the Daemon's Fear and Baneful Presence traits apply.

The exorcism is resolved as an Extended Daemonic Mastery test, with each test taking 1d5 hours. The base difficulty of the Daemonic Mastery test is Very Hard (-30). Table 2-21: Exorcism Modifiers below lists some example modifiers for the test. To successfully banish the Daemon, the exorcist must obtain total degrees of success in excess of the Daemon's Willpower bonus plus the possessed individual's Corruption bonus. Each time the exorcist fails a test, he suffers 1 level of Fatigue for each degree of failure. If this causes the exorcist to lose consciousness, he gains 1d10 Corruption points and the exorcism is a failure.

Once the exorcist obtains the requisite degrees of success, the Daemon is cast out of the possessed individual. Ripping away the unholy essence takes a great toll on the possessed individual, however, who must pass a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or die (the character may burn Fate Threshold to survive, as normal).

Table 2-21: Exorcism Modifiers

EXORCISM CIRCUMSTANCE	MODIFIER
The possessed individual is also the exorcist	-10
The exorcist does not have the proper tools (e.g., holy tomes, sacred symbols, incense)	-10
The Daemon's Influence (should it have one) is higher than the exorcist's	-10
The exorcism occurs where the veil is weak, such as on tainted ground or aboard a ship in the Warp	-10
Each degree of success on the Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test	+5
The exorcism occurs on sacred ground	+10
The exorcist is a servant of the Daemon's patron Chaos God	+10
The Daemon's True Name is known	+30

SURVIVING POSSESSION

If the possessed individual survives the exorcism, there are lasting consequences from such an unnatural experience. Having one's essence fused with that of a Daemon is a unique circumstance that forever alters the possessed in both body and soul. Although the possession is mentally and physically scarring, it also acts as a sort of inoculation against further exposure to the Warp.

A formerly possessed individual experiences several changes. He gains 3d10 Insanity points, the Resistance (Psychic Powers), Resistance (Fear), and Iron Faith talents, and the Forbidden Lore (The Warp), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology), and Psyniscience +10 skills. His Fellowship and Toughness characteristics are permanently reduced by 1d10. Whenever he gains Corruption or Insanity points, he reduces the amount gained by half, and can no longer gain mutations. Finally, having learned the secrets of the entity that once occupied his flesh, he can never again become possessed by that same Daemon again. Note that these rules differ somewhat from the Exorcised background (see page 32), representing that here the character's primary background was not determined from his earlier, life-changing daemonic encounter.

DARK PACTS

"I have gained power beyond measure, yet as the years go by I begin to doubt the cost. This thing which the One Beyond now commands me to do is almost too terrible to contemplate—yet what choice do I have?"

—From the journal of Kamilan Vorhess

Throughout the Imperium's history, Daemons have tempted men with offers of knowledge, strength, power, and other desires. It was the whispered promises of the Ruinous Powers that seduced Horus and tore the Imperium apart in its earliest days. Though all Daemons are liars, the energies of the Warp can fulfil such promises—yet the price is high. A man who enters into a bargain with a creature of the Warp damns himself and betrays Mankind.

Inquisitors and their servants are not immune to the temptations of Daemons; as individuals of power and authority, they are prime targets—particularly those affiliated with the Ordo Malleus. An Acolyte seeking to banish a Daemon might receive whispered offers from a rival creature of the Warp, or an Inquisitor desperate for ancient lore could receive dreamlike messages of how he might gain such knowledge. Such deals are Dark Pacts, and they can serve as powerful additions to a campaign.

DEALING WITH DARKNESS

There are many reasons an Inquisitor or Acolyte might be tempted into a Dark Pact. For some, it could be a lust for vengeance or personal power. Others might view it as yet another tool in their arsenal, sacrificing their own souls to gain a Daemon's aid against others of its kind, for the good of humanity. Some might be convinced that their own shrewdness or willpower is enough to deal with a Daemon and preserve their sanctity and sanity.

In **DARK HERESY**, a Player Character might enter into just such a Dark Pact during the course of the game. Such an act should be carefully considered by both the player and GM, as it has serious ramifications for the ongoing campaign. A Dark Pact should always grow naturally out of the narrative and the motivations of the PC, and not be used simply as a way to improve the character. While a Dark Pact can indeed grant an Acolyte new strengths and abilities, more importantly, it represents a great narrative opportunity and twist in the character's ongoing story.

Because a Dark Pact involves a deal with a daemonic NPC, the availability of such is always at the GM's discretion. A GM should give careful thought before allowing a PC the option of entering into such a bargain, as it can also impact the warband itself. If discovered, it could cause the other Acolytes to turn on the PC who dealt with the Daemon, or result in the character being branded a heretic and hunted down by other servants of the Golden Throne—possibly including the warband's Inquisitor. Should the GM and players agree on this new direction, though, it could make for interesting new adventures as the Acolytes strike off on their own, fighting the Enemies Beyond without any support and facing Inquisitorial condemnation or worse should they be uncovered.



DRAWING ATTENTION

Before an infernal bargain can be struck, the character must gain the attention of a Daemon. There are many ways this might come about, depending on whether the Acolyte actively seeks out a daemonic patron, or an opportunistic Daemon approaches the PC. Conditions favourable to a Dark Pact usually evolve naturally in the course of a campaign, and the possibilities are limitless. The following are some of the ways an Acolyte might make contact with or come to the attention of a Daemon.

For Acolytes who intentionally seek a Daemonic patron, doing so could become a focus of gameplay. It might involve the entire warband, whether because they are likewise radically minded, or through deception. Finding the necessary information or a suitably tainted place to make contact could even form the basis of an adventure, or an Inquest or Explication (per the **DARK HERESY** supplements **ENEMIES WITHIN** and **ENEMIES WITHOUT**).

PSYKERS

Psykers are more likely to come to the attention of a Daemon than other humans, for their souls burn brightest in the Warp. However, a psyker cannot simply drop his guard and hope a powerful Daemon makes him an offer—he is much more likely to be ravaged by a Warp Beast or possessed by a Daemon. Psyker characters should, though, have an advantage when it comes to gaining a daemonic patron's attention. GMs can represent this narratively, or provide a bonus of +10 x psy rating to any tests made to gain the attention of a Daemon. In some cases, a Daemon might even tempt a psyker as a result on Table 6-3: **Perils of the Warp** from page 197 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook, at the GM's discretion.

FORBIDDEN LORE

Those who research the nature of Daemons and the Warp risk attracting the attentions of the very entities they seek to study. Scholars might feel as if they are being observed, or may experience strange phenomena. Such experiences are not of the imagination, for the Warp responds to mortal emotions and thoughts. A particular passage in a forgotten tome, dark runes inscribed in a journal, or a Daemon's True Name—all might draw fell attentions.

ACCURSED REGIONS

In places where the veil is thin, unholy things lurk and listen just beyond perception. A petitioner for daemonic aid might seek out an area of unholy ground, a haunted manse, or other places considered ill-omened and accursed. A psyker can sense where the veil is thin with a Challenging (+0) Psyniscience test, but strange phenomena might make this proximity to the Warp clear even to a non-psyker (as described in *The Warp and Realspace* on page 136). Such regions have the “benefit” of allowing Warp denizens to more easily communicate with mortals. Here, a Daemon might call to a mortal who it senses is vulnerable or avaricious, and those seeking to deal with a Daemon might be more readily answered.

DARK SUMMONING

A practitioner of the dark arts might summon a Daemon forth with the intention not of subduing or binding it, but bargaining with it. Summoning a Daemon for this purpose follows the guidelines on page 59, but the summoner parleys with the Daemon rather than attempting a Daemonic Mastery test. This follows the normal rules for social interaction. Of course, this is assuming the Daemon chooses to hear the character out, rather than immediately eviscerate or incinerate him.

STRIKING THE BARGAIN

In order to enter into a Dark Pact, a character must have something to offer a Daemon. There is one thing that any character can offer—his soul. A petitioner might have another offer in mind, however, particularly if he contacts a specific Daemon he has researched. This could include providing a vessel for the Daemon to inhabit, punishing the descendants of one who previously banished it, or even arranging for other souls to be sacrificed to the fell entity. If a Daemon reaches out to the character, it likewise might have a specific payment in mind. For more on the cost of a Dark Pact, see *Paying the Price* on page 75.

As with any high-stakes deal—and the stakes are seldom higher—careful negotiation is necessary when dealing with a Daemon. Whether a character has the luxury of such is another matter, and depends on the particulars of the situation and especially the desperation of the situation. Some Daemons, such as those of Khorne, might bluntly state their offer, unwilling to negotiate with mortals, while others, particularly those of Tzeentch, might enjoy long and complex discussion.

Bargaining with a Daemon can be played out much like any other social interaction, and the GM might call for the use of Interaction skills as appropriate. The thoughts and motivations of Daemons are incomprehensible to mortals, and most such tests should be at least Hard (–20). The GM may wish to assign or develop a Personality for the Daemon, following the rules on page 277 of the *DARK HERESY* Core Rulebook. Even when bargaining

with one, every Daemons hates and despises mortals, and are unlikely to do as they desire—especially if it should give the outward appearance of subservience or a desire to render aid. A Daemon's Disposition begins at 15+ the character's Corruption total. It is not necessary for the Daemon to pass a Disposition test in order to conclude the bargain, only for it to conclude the bargain in a way that (mostly) complies with the PC's understanding of such.

However helpful and agreeable a Warp denizen might appear, it can never be trusted. A Daemon readily grants a mortal his desires as per the bargain, but also twists them if at all possible, ensuring things come about in the worst possible way or to the greatest amusement of the creature.

PACTS AND THEIR EFFECTS

The possibilities for the effects of Dark Pacts are as endless as the tides of the Warp. Ultimately, it is up to the GM to determine what effects a pact has based on the requests of the PC. A number of factors impact the results of a Dark Pact, including how successfully the character deals with the Daemon, how carefully he words his terms, and the nature of the character and of the Daemon, including its patron Chaos God.

The following are some example pacts and effects. These are only a starting point, and GMs should feel free to combine attributes from different pacts or create new effects tailored to the PC and his daemonic bargain. A pact might have any number of effects, but the more positive effects it has, the greater the cost, which might include negative side effects or other requirements (see *Paying the Price*, on page 75). Each type of Dark Pact lists both Boons and Banes, for a mortal seldom gets quite what he bargains for when dealing with a Daemon. In addition to beneficial Boons that correspond to the character's request, the GM should assign appropriate Banes, representing negative side effects of the deal with darkness. A GM should use his judgement in determining how many and which Banes to assign, based on both the number and value of the Boons gained.

PACT OF SURVIVAL

Foolishly, some individuals are willing to sacrifice their immortal souls in order to preserve their mortal lives. The Daemons of the Plague Lord are often called on to grant such a boon, but at a grotesque cost.

BOONS

Infernal Vitality: The character is immune to poisons and the effects from the Toxic quality or trait.

Leech Life Force: Whenever the character kills an opponent, he recovers 1d10 damage.

Timeless: The character slowly returns to the physical appearance and status of his prime, and thereafter does not age. In addition, the character need only spend 2 Fate points, rather than Burn Fate Threshold, in order to survive death.

Unsettling Recovery: The character always heals all damage (including critical damage) within 24 hours, although this does not restore lost limbs or restore him to life should he die.

Unholy Resilience: The character gains the Unnatural Toughness (2) trait.

BANES

Deathly Pallor: The character develops a sickly appearance and is as pale as a corpse.

Diseased: The character develops the symptoms of plague, but remains unharmed.

The Hunger: The character is always ravenous, especially for fresh, dripping meat.

Verminous: Flies, maggots, rats, or other vermin always seem to be found around the character.

PACT OF DOMINION

Men commonly desire power over their fellow man, and the fell inhabitants of the Warp can grant it. The Daemons of the Architect of Fate can turn a man's destiny toward great things, but the ripples in the stream of fate could doom worlds.

BOONS

Dark Favour: The character increases his Influence characteristic by 15. In addition, he may substitute his Corruption total in place of his Influence characteristic for Influence tests.

Destiny Writ in Shadows: When the character spends a Fate point, he may roll a test using his Corruption total. If successful, he regains the spent Fate point.

Commanding Presence: The character is treated with respect by everyone he meets and never suffers a penalty on any Charm, Command, or Intimidate tests he makes.

Unquestionable Order: The character may affect characters who are not technically his subordinates using the Command skill.

BANES

Ill Fortune: Bad luck follows the character and his allies wherever they go. The GM can interpret this through adding extra degrees of failure to tests they fail, or increasing test difficulties by a random but minor amount.

Skins of Destiny: As an indirect result (or cause) of the Boons the character gains, someone close to him or a large population suffers immensely.

Subverted Doom: Whenever the character burns a Fate point to prevent his death, a non-PC friend or ally dies instead.

Vicissitudes of Fate: When the character spends a Fate point, roll 1d10. On a result of 9, the character spends the Fate point, but does not gain the desired effect.

PACT OF VENGEANCE

When a man cries out for revenge, his obsession echoes in the Warp. Such vengeance can take many forms, from the rage-fuelled murder that Khorne can provide to the cold and complex payback Tzeentch favours.

BOONS

Call and I Shall Come: One time, the character may call upon his patron Daemon to appear and wreak terrible vengeance upon his foes.

Death by a Single Word: When striking the pact, the character specifies a single individual, who dies within 1d10 days, unless protected by a higher power.

Ruin: Upon striking the pact, the character specifies a family or organisation, which suffers utter financial and social ruin.



Slayer: When attacking the target of his vengeance (either a specific individual or a member of a certain group), the character's attacks gain the Vengeful (7) and Tearing qualities. The character also counts as having the Inescapable Attack talent when targeting the subject of his vengeance.

BANES

No Matter the Cost: The character becomes violent toward any who hinder his vengeance, gaining the Hatred talent against them.

Obsession: The character becomes obsessed with the target of his vengeance, and concentrates on nothing else until he completes it.

Paid in Kind: The character's vengeance leads an ally of the target to swear equally terrible vengeance upon him.

PACT OF DESIRE

To gain their heart's desires, some mortals would sacrifice salvation in the name of obsession. The Daemons of the Dark Prince, Slaanesh, are all too eager to grant such wishes, and to urge a petitioner on to ever-greater desires.

BOONS

Adoration: The character chooses an individual or a group, who comes to love and adore him unconditionally. The GM may represent this with one or more ranks in the Peer talent.

Perfect Undertaking: The character specifies a single work or object, such as a painting, musical piece, or weapon, and succeeds in its creation to a degree that it can only be considered "perfect."

Property and Chattels: The character specifies an object, title, deed, or quantity of wealth and comes into its possession.

Unparalleled: The character gains a single skill at Rank 4 (+30) and the Mastery talent pertaining to that skill.

BANES

Addiction: The character becomes addicted to the object of his desire or something related to it, such as a food he associates with a certain time in his life, or a drug that he thinks helps him in some pursuit.

Dark Fixation: The character becomes intensely fixated on an activity related to his desire, such as creating art, pursuing the subject of his adoration, or maintaining his weapons.

Escalation: After achieving his desire, the character develops an uncontrollable craving for more.

PACT OF KNOWLEDGE

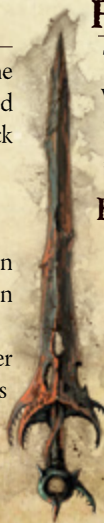
The institutions of the Imperium hold that ignorance is a virtue, for the thirst for knowledge leads to dark places. The Great Conspirator knows and sees all, and his Daemons can grant comprehension beyond mortal means.

BOONS

Blasphemous Knowledge: The character gains a single Forbidden Lore Skill at Rank 4.

Dark Genius: The character increases his Intelligence characteristic by +5 or more.

Seer: The character gains the ability to receive clairvoyant visions, such as of distant or hidden people, places, things, or events, or of the future. The character might or might not have any control over how or when these visions appear.



True Savant: The character may attempt any Common Lore, Scholastic Lore, or Forbidden Lore skill as if he possessed the skill at Rank 1. If he has training in the skill, he may re-roll failed tests made with that skill.

BANES

Detached: The character's Fellowship characteristic is reduced by 10.

Terrible Truths: The character gains 1d10 Insanity points.

Unquenchable Thirst: The character becomes obsessed with seeking forbidden knowledge, to the detriment of all else.

PACT OF MIGHT

Some mortals crave physical strength and martial prowess. Daemons of Khorne are particularly likely to answer such calls, perhaps requiring merely that the petitioner use his new abilities to reap skulls for the Blood God.

BOONS

Mighty: The character gains the Unnatural Strength (2) trait.

Lord of Battle: The character increases his Weapon Skill characteristic by +5 or more.

Reaver: Once per turn, the character may re-roll a failed Attack test. In addition, he gains the Frenzy talent.

Unassailable: The character gains the Combat Master, Counter Attack, and Step Aside talents.

BANES

Aspect of War: The character develops unnaturally large and bulging muscles, a vaguely bestial countenance, claw-like fingers, or some other subtle but disturbing feature.

Blood Rage: Whenever the character enters combat, he must enter a Frenzy as his first action, if able.

Bloodthirsty: The character must succeed at a Challenging (+0) Willpower test to let a vanquished enemy live.

PACT OF POWER

Some who are not born with the gift of the psyker covet such power. A Daemon of Tzeentch, the Lord of Magic, might gift a mortal with the psyker mutation, or grant forbidden sorcerous knowledge to enhance existing abilities.

BOONS

Familiar: The character's patron Daemon bestows upon him a familiar, which might take the form of a small creature or a daemonic humanoid of Size (3) or smaller. The familiar does not fight, but grants the psyker a +10 bonus to Focus Power tests when it is within 5 metres of him. In addition, the familiar and psyker can communicate telepathically up to a distance of 1 kilometre.

Power Untold: The character gains 500 xp (or possibly more) worth of psychic powers, which cannot include powers from the Sanctic Daemonology discipline.

Sorcery: The character increases his existing psy rating by 1. In addition, he now counts as an Unbound psyker.

Wyrd: The character gains the Psyker trait and Aptitude.

BANES

Corruption Manifest: The character develops a mutation.

Favoured of Tzeentch: When making a Focus Power test, the character generates Psychic Phenomena if either die result is a 9.

Magister: The character sees the use of foul sorcery as the favoured solution to all of his problems, even when a more mundane action would suffice.

Warp-Touched: Whenever the character would gain 1 or more Corruption points, he gains that amount plus 1 instead.

PAYING THE PRICE

In addition to the Banes that accompany all Dark Pacts, Daemons almost always expect additional payment for their services—although some treacherous Warp entities might present their bestowments as “gifts,” with the cost only becoming apparent later. The price for a Dark Pact should be tailored to the individual bargain and based on the Daemon and Acolyte. The pact can also alter the warband's Subtlety. Word that a member is trafficking with Daemons might spread amongst others who deal in the dark arts or to Puritanical Witch Hunters, for example—possibly spread by the Daemon itself, for its own amusement. In other cases, the Boons of a pact might include improving a warband's Subtlety, for many Daemons are adept at masking their interference from mortal eyes. Should a mortal seek to (or fully) renege on a Dark Pact, the GM of course should also feel free to create suitably terrible retribution for the mortal (and any around him) to suffer. No Daemon allows a mere mortal to escape its clutches, and an Acolyte might gain an ongoing Nemesis (see the **DARK HERESY GAME MASTER'S KIT**) if he tries to trick his way out of payment.

The following are some of the possible costs a mortal might pay in a Dark Pact. In addition to any other costs or effects, a character who makes a Dark Pact gains 2d10+10 Corruption points.

SERVICE

A mortal who enters into a Dark Pact might swear himself to the Daemon's service. Instructions might come often, or years apart, and could arrive through a number of occult means, from omens to dreams. The deeds required of the character could range from horrifying to seemingly benign. In some cases, they might be easily concealed, or even in line with the character's normal duties against rival creatures of the Warp.

SACRIFICE

Daemons often demand a sacrifice in exchange for their services. The character might be required to offer up a living sacrifice in the Daemon's name, corrupt the soul of another, or perhaps remove a part of his own body or suffer a mutation or Malignancy pleasing to the Daemon.

OBSERVANCE

The Daemon might require the character to undertake certain rituals and dark rites that give power and succour to the unholy entity. Such observances might be required on a regular basis, and hiding them from his fellow Acolytes could prove challenging.

DAMNATION

A character who enters into a Dark Pact is forever beyond the Emperor's Light, and could face numerous other consequences at the GM's discretion. The character might be unable to manifest Sanctic psychic powers, benefit from certain faith-based talents, or remove Insanity points through prayer and pilgrimage.



CHAPTER III: TERRORS FROM THE IMMATERIUM

The Warp both sustains and poisons the Imperium, and is a constant source of tension for all who know of the Immaterium's true nature. The Warp is a realm utterly abhorrent to living beings and rational thought, and is the home of entities that are anathema to Mankind, foes far more ravenous than any alien and more subversive than any cult. The denizens from beyond do not seek mere enslavement or conquest—they demand souls and the utter destruction of not just humanity, but all of reality. Yet the Imperium must rely on the Warp for its continued existence, for without it there could be no practical communications or travel between the stars. To deny the use of the Warp would see the Imperium collapse into a new Dark Age from which it might never recover.

Askellon not only shares this terrible dependence but has been forever intertwined with the Sea of Souls since before Mankind ever knew of the Warp's existence. Alien races rose here aeons ago, leaving behind only ichor-stained dust, inhuman ruins, and ancient carvings denoting the horrid powers and duplicitous gods that led to their endings. As humans arrived, their terrible actions roiled and empowered the Immaterium and its denizens to new heights among these stars, the Warp becoming ever more terrible with the passing centuries. The Pandaemonium screams with the fury of a million million betrayed souls, and Daemons stalk tainted worlds. It is a sector permeated with Chaos, and only through the actions of the Ordo Malleus can its final fate be averted.

This chapter delves into Askellian worlds which have witnessed the corrupting influence of the Immaterium. The prison colony of Nexum holds wretches and convicts from the region, but also harbours the taint of the daemonic. Ossuar, on the other hand, is one of the most revered of shrine worlds and is the site of pilgrimages from across Askellon, yet some fear there are unholy remnants within its revered stasis crypts. The void station known as *The Emperor's Song* has been a firm relay beacon of the Astronomican for long millennia, its shining brightness in the Warp engaging in a never-ending battle against the darkness of the Pandaemonium's rage. Tuchulcha represents the foulest of locations, for the Immaterium engulfed this system and created not only a Daemon world, but a breach into an impossibly vast region where madness rules. Less dangerous but more suspicious, the forbidden world of Kul was once submerged in the Warp but now has returned to realspace—though what effects this had on the planet and its people is still under fierce debate.

In this chapter, Game Masters gain investigation templates for developing new adventures in these locations, as well as greater details on the Warp's daemonic pantheons and its influences in adventures. This chapter also contains advice for running Ordo Malleus-themed adventures and guidance on using Daemon NPCs, as well as rules for creating Daemon Princes to craft memorable enemies and campaigns to challenge Acolytes across Askellon.

A SECTOR CURSED FROM BEYOND

"Mortals name it Askellon. I name it my playground, and I am ever-eager to play there."

—Suvfaeras, Daemon Prince of Tzeentch

The Warp is a pure distillation of the horrible fate that awaits Mankind should Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes fail in their duties. It is an eternal realm of madness and horror made real, where insane emotions congeal into nightmare forms. Whenever it spills into reality, even the smallest of drops can serve to reinforce the horrors of the DARK HERESY setting and help set the stage for enthralling adventures in the 41st Millennium. As such, Game Masters should strive to weave elements of the Immaterium into games, even if the focus is not fully concerning the Enemies Beyond.

The worlds, void stations, and other locations within Askellon are always fitting for such themes, as the Pandaemonium is an omnipresent concern no matter where the Acolytes might be investigating. Merely travelling to a new planet could offer the Game Master an opportunity to introduce threats from the Immaterium, when a flickering Gellar field or possessed Astropath turns a routine voyage into an adventure of its own. A GM can introduce these threats in almost any setting, though, as they can emerge anywhere. Daemons might claw open the fabric of space to possess emergent psykers or as forbidden tomes are read aloud. Other Warp entities might be entrapped within ancient weapons or other arcane relics, ravenous to emerge and make up for centuries of confinement. A GM could also run a campaign originally involving cult activity or xenos rituals, only for it to evolve into themes of Warp activity and daemoniac invasion in which the Acolytes must hurriedly react to combat this unexpected threat.

These threats are not just limited to actual daemoniac entities, though—they can consist of the Warp itself. The GM can use areas where foul rituals, bloodstained clashes, virulent plagues, or other terrible actions created regions where the borders between realspace and the Immaterium are weakened. Here, reality succumbs to madness and raw Warp energies permeates locations, leading everything from nightmares and whispered voices to mutation, spiritual corruption, and the emergence of wild psykers.

The threats from beyond are not just for Mankind as a whole but personally for each Acolyte, and can lead to perhaps the most horrid of the consequences for those who battle in the unseen war. Cults and aliens might merely kill or enslave, while Daemons can possess flesh and devour souls—something that a GM should reinforce where possible through the Acolytes coming across the remains of daemoniac encounters, or discovering tainted parchments relating tales of possession. Not all Acolytes might be fully aware of these threats, though. It is very possible that some Acolytes of an Inquisitor within the Ordo Hereticus or Ordo Xenos may not know much of the ravaging entities that exist within the Warp, for their master (perhaps wisely) has chosen not to burden them with such dread knowledge—ignorance and a closed mind are ever a blessing.

THE WORLDS OF ASKELLON

Each of the locations in this chapter includes new rules for using it as a home world as part of character creation, as well as a location-unique investigation template for the Game Master. This allows it to be used as both a setting for adventures as well as an integral part of an Acolyte's history.

HOME WORLD RULES

The new home world rules included as part of each location are designed to replace the Home World Bonus used in creating a new Acolyte. This allows a player to pick a specific home world within the Askellon Sector rather than the archetypal setting, such as using Ossuar instead of the standard shrine world rules from page 40 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook. This is particularly useful when the warband adventures on that planet, and either a new player joins the group or a player's existing character does not survive and he requires a replacement.

INVESTIGATION TEMPLATES

An investigation template is a short adventure outline that features the inhabitants and themes for each of the worlds in this chapter. A Game Master can insert a template into an ongoing campaign to offer a variation on the current investigative focus, or provide an alternate type of adventure as a change of pace for the warband. Each template could also be expanded into a full adventure on its own, or launch a new campaign to more fully immerse the Acolytes into the heresies each world contains.



KUL

"Warning, approaching vessel: this planet is quarantined and has been declared perditionem in aeternum by order of the Office of the Praefectrix, the Holy Askelline Synod, and the Ordos Askelline. You are entering a nominated exclusion zone and will be fired upon by vessels of Battlefleet Askellon if you continue on your current course. Turn about, say again, turn about... Warning, approaching vessel: this planet is quarantined..."

—Automated warning signal from
Kul Exclusion Zone Orbital XVIII

Kul is an arid, empty desert world, haunted by sandstorms and dust devils that skitter across its crumbling surface. The planet is covered in rough sandstone; the deserted ruins of moderately sized frontier settlements and ghost-towns dot its surface unevenly, their streets empty of all save the winds and the merciless light of Kul's white-gold star. Kul idles at the end of a winding, fading cul-de-sac Warp route that branches away from a score of uninhabited systems. In the ordinary course of events, the world would have been left to its own devices, allowed to stagnate, been forgotten. However, in light of its tragic, eldritch, and horrific history, Kul has been soberly appraised as a clear and present danger to the moral and spiritual well-being of the entire sector.

As such, Kul has been quarantined and blockaded, locked away from the ordinary starfarers of the region by a number of orbiting defence platforms and the attentions of a small and increasingly strained Battlefleet Cyclopia taskforce. Now, the attentions of the sector's most opportunistic recidivists turn to the dead world like moths to a flame by persistent rumours of Warp-flotsam of incalculable value. These greediest and most rapacious practitioners of the Faceless Trade thoughtlessly dice not only with their own souls but with the souls of countless others across Askellon, for the taint that settled upon and destroyed Kul may yet claim other worlds.

DRAGGED SCREAMING TO HELL

Kul's early history is lost to antiquity. From its earliest recorded days, though, it had an unimpressive reputation as a frontier backwater with little strategic value; even after thousands of years of occupation, its inhabitants achieved little to advance their world. The populations's failure to cultivate worthwhile exports did little to endear the system to any outside agency. Such records pertaining to Kul's early history that do exist are universally scornful regarding the planet's inhabitants; their appearance, morals, and intellect apparently having been something of a low jest in the Cyclopia Sub-Sector.

A factor in the planet's unsavoury reputation may have been its relationship with the local Warp conditions. Always unpredictable, even by the terrifying standards of the Askellon Sector, the Warp tides around Kul were particularly prone to bizarre surges, rendering interstellar navigation to the system a tricky proposition at the best of times, forcing ships to exit the Immaterium far from the normal translation points. Ships that traversed these fluctuations found that these voyages invariably coincided with increases in shipboard mutant births and violent crimes, contributing to the planet's dire standing. Over millennia, the isolated planet became perceived among Askellian powers, rightly or wrongly, as an unsightly stain undeserving of attention or support.

HOME WORLD: KUL

Players can adopt Kul as their home world when creating a new Acolyte, especially as a replacement character while adventuring in that location. Characters from Kul follow the quarantine world rules (see page 30), but with the following new Home World Bonus instead of the usual one:

HOME WORLD BONUS

Myth Made Truth: A character from Kul has seen childish tales and superstitions take on terrifying forms to stalk the surface of his cursed planet, and has instinctive insight into the Immaterium. He counts as having the Forbidden Lore (The Warp, Daemonology) skills each with a number of Ranks equal to half his Intelligence bonus (rounded down), unless the number of Ranks would be higher otherwise.

As if commenting sardonically upon this perception of Kul, nearly a millennia ago, after a period of relative inactivity lasting two centuries, the Pandaemonium suddenly snapped into life, turning and thrashing like a great ocean predator, throwing shipping across the entire region into disarray. The veils of reality around Kul shattered, and the entire planet was drawn into the Warp in a matter of seconds. This anomalous event caused tremendous consternation among Askellon's rulers on Juno; while Kul and its people were of no moment in and of themselves, the fear of a similar event happening to a world that actually mattered concerned them gravely. However, in a sector where new threats arise all the time, this event was quickly forgotten, and not a thought was spared for the population of the world.

Roughly a hundred years later, a remote Adeptus Mechanicus monitoring station within the Cyclopia Sub-Sector reported that transit photometry of Kul's star revealed the presence of an anomalous planet in orbit. Kul had returned.

THE TAINTED WORLD

A hastily-arranged scouting force from Battlefleet Cyclopia investigated and discovered that the prodigal planet had been irrevocably altered by its sojourn in the Warp. It appeared at first glance depleted of life, a world of vast dustbowl deserts and stagnant oceans. Most townships were in ruins, but some areas appeared frozen in time, with plates full of still-fresh food carefully set on tables and eating utensils embedded in dripping meats, meals interrupted forever. Old, clotted bloodstains mark other surfaces with signs of struggle and violence; evidences of gunfire, extensive weapon discharges, but no sign of what was responsible for the carnage. The world overall retained a hellish and unsettled psychic aura of atrocity, fear, and horror.

Disquietingly, no survivors could be located in the first sweeps, though anomalous distant fires, unsettling screams in the night, and uneven footprints dogged the footsteps of the Naval ground teams. Bafflingly there were bodies—thousands of them—but they were not of the native Kuln.

Instead of the expected remains of Kul's citizens, scouts found the horrifically twisted corpses of the Jakaan 11th, a regiment of the Astra Militarum lost in the Warp centuries previously. Their bodies, some as fresh as the day they died, others mere bleached bones, were alternately left fresh and unmarked, scarred beyond recognition, or melded together in the most nauseating fashion. To see such insanity was enough for the armsmen of the Navy, and they retired in haste to their vessels. Their missives alarmed the Sector Praefect, and grand-sounding orders were placed decreeing that the world be sealed eternally against intruders of all stripe, *"lest the doom brought upon Kul be brought upon other worlds of our domains."*

Originally a trio of cruisers led the blockade, but over the centuries there has been a serious degrading of the squadron's capabilities. Now only a single Naval vessel guards the Warp-approaches to the system, the slow and underpowered Askellian *Sica*-class corvette *Righteous Custodian*, with twenty poorly-maintained servitor-operated defence platforms guarding the inner approaches to the world.

Kul is now quarantined, a ghost world of bone and dust. What few know is that there were indeed survivors, both in mortal and spirit form, that hide themselves amidst the remains of their old homes and the inhospitable reaches filled with the decayed, tortured bones of long dead soldiers. The living are few, but they still retain their hardy, frontier ways. Most were driven insane or mutated beyond belief in what seemed like only a moment's exposure to the terrible energies of the Warp, but the communal spirit remains strong, and they refuse to abandon anyone. All know that certain death faces them should the Imperium discover their existence. Some still manage to make their way off-world—often by paying their way with the tainted items that were washed up upon Kul from its time within the Immaterium.

THE SHORES OF THE SEA OF SOULS

The peculiar circumstances of the world's demise have acted as a siren call to those scavengers, heretics, and Warp-dabblers entranced by the leavings of the sickening entities that lurk beyond. Those with a working knowledge of the ways of the Sea of Souls recognise in Kul that rarest of Askellian Warp-phenomena, the Eye of a Warp Gyre.

The Warp is often likened to a planetary sea, and the comparison is apt if simplistic. The Warp has tides, currents, and predators. Also, like a normal sea, its great tides occasionally give up their treasures, washing up artefacts from within their unknowable depths upon the shores of reality. These "shores" are rare and transitory; where they appear on a permanent basis, they are known as the Eyes of a Warp Gyre. Kul, haunted as it is, is such a place, a tainted tidal pool of the Warp, and great treasures, in the form of ancient Warp-detritus, can be found washed up upon the banks of realspace.

Like an ocean floor littered with the wrecks of ancient maritime vessels, Kul is dotted with artefacts from every era of human Warp-faring history, both large and small: archaeotech, acidic lengths of glistening tentacles, dataslates of ancient texts in languages long forgotten, daemonic remnants foul and obscene, still-smouldering footprints burned into solid rock, gleaming starships sunken into gigantic deserts, and other forbidden treasures. All lie waiting for discovery on the surface of the planet, and for those who risk anything to retrieve them.



THE VAR KAVAS

The Faceless Trade is the Askellian term for the black market in items prohibited by the laws of the Imperium, a vast smuggling network of loosely-connected traders and interlinked criminal empires. Many of the Faceless content themselves with bartering in items which are commonly banned at the local, planetary level (dangerous narcotics, slaves, human organs, and the like), but the most powerful and dangerous of these organisations deal in more exclusive contraband such as xenos artefacts and technology, psykers, or the sale of Warp-tainted artefacts.

The Var Kavas are an old, inbred clan of voidborn nomads and traders who have been operating throughout Askellon for much of its history. Their contempt for the Imperium seems to date back to the origins of the sector, and is such that they readily gather forbidden artefacts from the surface of doomed worlds like Kul and trade them on the open market. Cunning and gifted in the ways of smuggling, the Var Kavas can vanish for decades at a time, retreating from the space lanes to avoid Imperial scrutiny, only to reappear at some neglected outpost to trade unsanctioned material of the deadliest kind. They have become adept at rendering their vessel undetectable to the meagre Kul blockade squadron by cutting all power, except the most basic life support, for weeks at a time. On a regular basis they make silent runs to the surface, broadcasting fake friend/foe signals to the ancient and malfunctioning orbital defence platforms. Occasionally, the Var Kavas leave behind small communities in orbit about Kul to hunt for the priceless Warp-flotsam, unknowing (or uncaring) of the tremendous spiritual dangers these settlers face here.

Periodically, the most daring and desperate are shuttled to the surface, clad in shabby survival suits to protect themselves from energies they cannot hope to comprehend, there to search for items of interest to heretics on a dozen worlds. These “bonepickers” are little more than dupes for their Faceless Trade masters, poorly equipped, and ignorant of the dangers of the Warp-tainted artefacts they harvest. However, they fight to the death to retain their deadly trinkets, fearing the wrath of their sinister clan chieftains.

VAR KAVAS BONEPICKER (TROOP)									
9									
H ³ 01-10		6		WS		BS		S	
AR ³ 11-20		6		38		35		30	
AL ³ 21-30		6		T		AC		INT	
B ³ 31-70		6		39		34		29	
LR ³ 71-85		6		PER		WP		FEL	
LL ³ 86-00		6		34		28		27	
				IFL		—			
HALF 3		FULL 6		CHARGE 9		RUN 18		THREAT 6	
HAND-LASLOCK								CLASS PISTOL	
RNG 25M		RoF S/-/-				DMG 1D10+4 (E)			
PEN 0		CLIP 6		RLD HALF		WT 2 KG		AVL RA	
SPECIAL: MAXIMAL, UNRELIABLE									
HONOURBLADE								CLASS MELEE	
RNG —		RoF —				DMG 1D10+3 ^{SB} (R)			
PEN 1		CLIP —		RLD —		WT 1.5 KG		AVL RA	
SPECIAL: BALANCED									

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Int) (Underworld, Askellon Sector, Chartist Captains) +10, Linguistics (Int) (Var Kavas trade-cant) +20, Navigate (Int) (Surface, Stellar), Operate (Ag) (Aeronautica)

Gear: Lead-lined trunk, maps marked with locations of previous finds, old and heavily-patched void suit, rations, unreliable compass, vox-caster

REMNANTS OF THE LOST SOULS

At the time of its descent into the Warp, around fifteen million humans inhabited Kul. As the planet fell into the Warp, many were sundered into scraps of agonised psychic energy, an atrocity that left its echoes in the very fabric of the world. The original armsmen who investigated Kul's return reported bizarre manifestations of this psychic trauma. Called the Warpwisps by those still sane enough to converse after an encounter, they appear to be the incorporeal embodiments of dying settlers from their final moments. They are described as screaming corpses that emerge from dust devils and sandstorms, burning and blackening with invisible fire. Hooting, howling, and screeching, they claw at their own sightless eyes and mindlessly attack the hated living with charring, disintegrating hands that can tear flesh despite their insubstantial form.

WARPMHISP (TROOP)						9
H 01-10 5		WS 25		BS —	S 35	
AR 11-20 5	AL 21-30 5		T ⁵ 46	AC 34	INT 05	
B 31-70 5		PER 25		WP 29	FEL 07	
LR 71-85 5	LL 86-00 5		IFL —			
HALF 3		FULL 6		CHARGE 9		
RUN 18		THREAT 10				
CLAWS AND TEETH					CLASS MELEE	
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+3 ^{SB} (R)		
PEN —		CLIP —		RLD —		
WT —		AVL —				
SPECIAL: WARP WEAPONS						

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Psyniscience (Per) +10

Traits: Baleful Presence (10), Brutal Charge, Daemonic (1), Fear (1), From Beyond, Incorporeal, Warp Instability, Warp Weapons

Fleeting Horror: The Warpmisp is an insubstantial and fleeting presence, and cannot sustain itself in the mortal realm for long. The entity takes double the normal damage under the Warp Instability rules on page 139 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook.



SSS'ELGIAGIN, HERALD OF THE DARK PRINCE

Conceived from madness, born into atrocity, and spun from the souls of Kul's inhabitants as the planet sank into the Warp, Sss'Elgiagin is a powerful and deadly Daemonette of Slaanesh, and a herald of her dark master's numberless legions. Formed in a manner similar to her patron from the collective unconscious of Kul's human settlers as they were smothered, she represents the unspoken lusts, terrors, and desires of the dead of an entire planet, given alluring and terrifying form. The Kuln were predominantly rustic and primitive peasants who retained many peculiar traditions from the long-forgotten, overcrowded hive from which they were plucked one day to settle their new home. Strange folk-tales abounded among Kul's peoples regarding a legendary night-terror, Sally Sixsouls, a beautiful witch-woman who could literally steal the hearts of her lovers, leaving empty, soulless husks in her wake.

For generations, tales of her exploits grew and grew by the firesides of Kul's frontier folk, beginning as simple tales to frighten children, and growing into darker epics to titillate and terrify their descendants. Whether this tradition caused Sss'Elgiagin to emerge, fully-formed, upon Kul's descent into the Warp may never be known. Sss'Elgiagin now haunts her birthplace as a conscious, calculating atrocity, an ancient legend given flesh by the death of all who believed in her. She now seeks to expand her influence and power beyond Kul, and lays temptations in the path of those who would venture to the planet's surface, hoping to ensnare them in complex, languorous intrigues.

SSS'ELGIAGIN, DAEMON HERALD (MASTER)					33		
<div>H³ 01-1013</div>		<div>WS66</div> <div>T¹⁰49</div> <div>PER55</div>			<div>BS51</div> <div>AG⁹66</div> <div>WP⁸59</div>	<div>S7</div> <div>INT58</div> <div>FEL30</div>	
<div>AR³ 11-2013</div>		<div>AL³ 21-3013</div>					
	<div>B⁶ 31-7016</div>						
<div>LR³ 71-8513</div>		<div>LL³ 86-0013</div>				<div>IFL66</div>	
HALF 11		FULL 22		CHARGE 33		RUN 66	THREAT 50
QUIVERBLADE						CLASS MELEE	
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+14 ^{7+SB} (R)			
PEN 2		CLIP —		RLD —		WT 5 KG	AVL UN
SPECIAL: SHOCKING, HALLUCINOGENIC (2)							

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +30, Athletics (S) +20, Awareness (Per) +20, Parry (WS) +30, Psyniscience (Per) +30

Talents: Combat Master, Counter Attack, Deathdealer, Hard Target, Whirlwind of Death

Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Daemonic (4), Fear (3), From Beyond, Psyker (PR 6), Size (6), Soporific Musk (see page 121), Unnatural Agility (3), Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (2), Unnatural Willpower (3)

Psychic Powers: Dominate, Enfeeble, Hallucination, Terrify

Gear: Soul-forged armour

Embodiment of Excess: Sss'Elgiagin is a Herald of Slaanesh, and displays the seductive and maddening presence of her liege. Any character without the Daemonic or Machine trait who is within 10 metres of Sss'Elgiagin suffers a -10 penalty to his Willpower tests.

INVESTIGATION TEMPLATE: FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

Overview: The Acolytes follow an investigation of Warp-tainted items from a crime scene to the quarantined world of Kul, where their attempts to halt the trade in these forbidden items become a fight for survival on the haunted surface. There, they are forced to cooperate with the very heretics they have been pursuing in order to escape the deadly Warp-shadowed planet. In the course of their attempted escape, though, they discover that the forbidden treasures on the planet's surface are being used by a sinister daemonic entity to lure the foolish to Kul, allowing it to spread Warp corruption across the sector.

This template can be introduced as part of an ongoing investigation into Faceless Trade activities, or between other adventures in a campaign while the Acolytes are taking respite on a hive world or other established Imperial setting. It offers the players opportunities for dealing with enemies they cannot merely kill if the Acolytes are to survive, and deadly combat with the remains of those lost when Kul fell into the Warp.

ACT I: STEM THE TIDE

The Acolytes are summoned to the scene of a ghastly atrocity on a heavily-populated hive world. There, they are shown evidence that a local Chaos cult used a Warp-tainted weapon as part of a slaughter in a local hab, and are tasked with discovering the weapon's source. After tracking down the cult and likely engaging in violent questioning of its members, the Acolytes learn more of how the cult came to have the weapon. Investigations across the system uncover evidence of similar horrors, and the PCs ascertain the common link between these incidents: the presence of an ancient transport belonging to a clan of voidborn traders, the Var Kavas. The Acolytes must locate the Var Kavas vessel, infiltrate or shadow it, and locate the source of these deadly items.

ACT II: FALLING ANGELS

The Acolytes pursue the Faceless Traders to the orbit of Kul; here, with the assistance of the Battlefleet Cyclopia blockade ship, they can attempt to seize the Var Kavas ship. However, in the ensuing battle the Traders' ship is badly damaged; the Acolytes are forced to abandon ship, hurtling to the planet's surface in a saviour pod from either the Var Kavas vessel or the blockading corvette. Once they reach the planet's surface, the PCs encounter a group of Var Kavas bonepickers and shortly realise that each party lacks the resources to survive alone. In order to survive, the two groups will need to work together to repair the Var Kavas' faulty shuttle and get back into orbit.

Assaults by Warpwisps in growing numbers drive home the necessity of this course of action. The Acolytes must repel these assaults and decide how to deal with the Var Kavas, either overcoming their laudable loathing in order to work with the Faceless Traders, or obeying their first instincts and negotiating solely through lasbolts and chainswords.



ACT III: THE GREATER THREAT

In the course of negotiating this tense standoff, the Acolytes discover a priceless treasure of the Askellon's past dating back to the founding of the sector: the Broken Sword of Saint Valerius. The Acolytes can uncover similar items through searching nearby ruins, but the bonepickers do not take kindly to the PCs' claiming such items. A growing sense of doom permeates the air; those with Warp-detection abilities realise that unholy essences are rising—and that Kul itself might soon return to the Immaterium.

A beguiling Daemon of Slaanesh emerges from the sands, which the group must defeat in short order to have any hope of departing Kul. The bonepickers, though, quickly fall to its allure, turning from allies into rabid enemies. The Traders, for their part, seek only to steal back any of the discovered treasures, even destroying them in the process as their daemonic master smiles at their fervent cravings. Removing any of these artefacts could make for a more difficult process than imagined, and the Acolytes might choose to leave them behind in order to effect their escape before more Daemons arrive. Even once in orbit, the warband could face a seductive Herald of Slaanesh eager to tempt the Acolytes with glimpses of other treasures to be found below, enough to buy a planet of their own if only they give in to their desires.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- The Acolytes encounter a small group of survivors, also eager to escape from Kul. They have many artefacts to offer in exchange, as well as knowledge and expertise concerning daemonic foes, but aiding them would violate Askellian decree and possibly allow Warp-tainted souls to be released upon the sector.
- The Acolytes' fevered psyches are tested on the surface by a series of unearthly and enticing visions sent to them by the denizens of the Warp. Hallucinations of peace, glory, fame, and more appear before the Acolytes as powerful temptations, and they must suppress their innermost desires in order to fulfil the mission.
- The Acolytes manage to recover an ancient heirloom from Kul, and relay it to its rightful owner (possibly a Space Marine Chapter Master, Adeptus Mechanicus Arch-Magos, or even their Inquisitor). However, unknown to the Acolytes, this relic has been subtly poisoned by contact with the Warp. Within days of delivering the artefact, they receive word that the custodian has fallen to Chaos, and they must travel to confront him and destroy the tainted artefact forever.

NEXUM

"Two shifts, one of fifteen hours, one of six. The longer one's for working, the shorter one's for sleeping. Avoid the gangers, they'll kill you soon as look at you. Rise and run to the robing bays quick, dawdlers get the leaky suits and die soonest of lung-rot. Eat everything they give you, as you won't get much. There's only one escape: death. Don't allow yourself any hope. We don't do hope here."

—A veteran inmate explains Nexum VIII to a new arrival

A brittle, rocky world, Nexum VIII is a penal colony which lies on a stable but neglected minor Warp route less than eight months' travel from a cluster of civilised Tributary systems Coreward of Snope's World. The sole surviving planet of its system, it orbits a vast dying star known as Medea. For the recorded history of the Askellon Sector, this deadly star has flickered and flared like a guttering candle in the night sky of dozens of surrounding systems; on primitive and civilised worlds alike, Medea is a sign of ill omen, a harbinger of dark times ahead. For millennia, the sector's inhabitants have known that the star is doomed to collapse someday under its own tremendous weight and explode into a supernova, obliterating Nexum and devastating or irradiating every star system within a dozen light years. During the long-faded Dark Age of Technology, humanity may have had means of predicting when this dire event would occur with precision; in the 41st Millennium even the most sagacious Magos Astronomica is unable to offer anything but vague estimates as to when the hammer could fall.

Spinning through the cold, outer reaches of its system, lashed by the occasional streams of pure plasma blasting from the dying monster at its heart, lies Nexum VIII, its seven planetary siblings having already been consumed by Medea. Nexum would be utterly ignored by the wider Imperium were it not for the presence on its surface of certain rare and precious minerals and elements which, when properly processed, are essential for the production of ceramite. Ceramite is a complex compound of great resilience and used in a variety of functions, most famously as a component of Adeptus Astartes power armour. The presence of these minerals on the surface of Nexum would render it a useful mining world in the ordinary course of events; however, given the planet's hazardous location, in the orbit of a supernova-imminent star, it has long been neglected.

Navigators abhor the system. Quite aside from the looming supernova, they are aware that the relative ease with which Nexum can be reached arises from the permeable local barrier between reality and the Warp. The Navigator families of the Askellon Sector understand that in certain regions, the madness of the Sea of Souls seethes closer to the surface of the realm of mortals than in others. No Navigator can travel to Nexum without feeling the cold caress of insanity pressing distantly against his psyche, or without hearing the muttering of distant voices chanting the names of obscene, forbidden deities. The entire stellar region is a psychic sponge echoing, amplifying, and reflecting the emotions of its inhabitants; in an area of peace and prosperity, this would make for a pleasant and refreshing environment. On Nexum, this psychic feedback generates a spiralling vortex of negative emotion where the incarnate stuff of the Warp quietly bleeds into the lives of the inhabitants, with horrific consequences.

HOME WORLD: NEXUM

Players can adopt Nexum as their home world when creating a new Acolyte, especially as a replacement character while adventuring in that location. Characters from Nexum follow the penal colony rules (see page 28), but with the following new Home World Bonus instead of the usual one:

HOME WORLD BONUS

Find the Weak Spot. Whenever a character from Nexum inflicts Critical damage, he may add +1 when determining which result to apply from the appropriate Critical Effects table.

BLEAK IN BODY AND SPIRIT

Nexum is a grim silicate world whose surface consists entirely of jagged black shards of rock and the shattered, scoured spines of mountains that jut knifelike into the belly of the sky. It is a harsh planet, unsuited to the comfortable accommodation of human life. Although it possesses an atmosphere of sorts, the air is harsh and unsavoury, taking the form of vicious winds, rich in microscopic, flinty slivers of the local black rock, which painfully abrade and scour away the lining of lungs after only a few minutes of exposure. Protective filtering devices are essential for sustained operations on the surface, though many are forced to repurpose rough cloth and rags should their equipment fail.

Nexum is also occasionally scourged by vast tendrils of plasma that stream from the raging furnaces of its sun. This same sun, Medea, hangs in the sky, looming and pulsing with a terrible red light, an ever-present reminder that all life on the world faces imminent destruction. There is no water on the world save that which can be carried there by visitors from more clement planets. What human habitations there are on the planet are usually hermetically sealed, often buried as far below ground as possible.

There are few structures on the surface of the world. Prior to the arrival of the Imperium in recent centuries, the only structures at all were a series of a dozen or so peculiar dolmens carved from the local rock, arranged in concentric circles or henges, linked by straight channels or trenches in an eccentric and apparently random fashion.

The only occupied structures on the planet are the prisons. There are several dozen, each a titanic fortress, typically a gigantic networked system of underground bunkers, mines, and dormitories. These structures cluster around great, hermetically-sealed orbital landing domes prefabricated by the Adeptus Mechanicus. Each prison is utterly dependent on the shuttles which intermittently deliver supplies from Snope's World. Cast from the local rock, powdered and rendered at great speed into great walls of crude black cement, these prisons are forbidding and deadly locations, epicentres of misery whose psychic emanations reverberate powerfully indeed, given the strange local conditions of the Warp.

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Nexum was apparently discovered during the sector's early history, judging by certain star charts of ancient provenance, though such specific records mark it purely in terms of being a stellar navigational hazard. Certain references in the fragmentary data pertaining to the dark years following the Great Heresy mention Nexum explicitly in the context of a list of local worlds "purified" during the series of brutal wars and running battles known as the "Great Scouring," but what they were purified of is tantalisingly unclear, like much of Askellon's early history.

For several thousand years the world lay quiet and ignored, its resources left untapped. However, the looming threat of the Pandaemonium has engaged the desperate predatory instincts of the sector's cynical merchant class, instituting a new culture of greater commercial risk-taking. As part of this process, worlds previously deemed too dangerous or unstable to utilise were examined anew.

Three centuries ago, a particularly well-connected group of merchants formed a complex legal entity in the Askellian commercial courts entitled the Nexum Combine, dedicated to the exploitation of Nexum's mineral resources. Only desperation could have led to mining a world orbiting a star known as a potential supernova, a measure akin to building a home next to an erupting volcano.

Naturally, one does not obtain volunteers for such insanely hazardous work; slave labour was the answer. Workers were sourced from a dozen local worlds: bonded serfs, contract-bound timesmen serving periods of indentured servitude to atone for familial sin-debts, and the dregs of dozens of prisons and penitentiary camps were quietly purchased and dragged to the planet in chains.

Now the Nexum Combine's sinister agents comb the surrounding systems within the Asphodel Depths every few months, bargaining cold-heartedly in the currency of human lives with callous and tyrannical planetary governors, who see an opportunity to be rid of disruptive and dangerous elements within their own societies. Innocent and guilty alike are now transported to Nexum, its population growing year on year.



Thus, paradoxically, a world known to be doomed has become one of greater utility to the Askellon Sector than many which are not. The vast investment in a world which is destined to face imminent destruction is characteristic of the insane risk-taking and desperation endemic among Askellon's rulers.

Dozens of vast prisons now dot the surface of the planet, each one a model of efficiency when judged by their own cruel standards. They generate vast profits for the mercantile concerns that operate behind the scenes, concerns that are not in the least troubled by the deaths of hundreds of prisoners worked to death in the lethal mines every day.

A WORLD OF CONFINEMENTS

Nexum is dominated by the vast prison-fortresses which define its value to the Imperium. Each prison is a world in and of itself, cloistered away from the eyes of outsiders, its masters left to run their affairs as they see fit. Although formally an Imperial domain, and as such subject to the oversight of the Adeptus Administratum, Nexum is nominally ruled on that organisation's behalf by the High Warden, an official selected from among the prison warders based upon the profitability of his facility.

Most prisons on Nexum are effectively work camps, where prisoners live in cells or dormitories during their brief rest periods. They don crude, repeatedly-patched, and unreliable breather suits and are herded (usually at a run) towards the surface of the world where they hack raw minerals from the bare rock.

There are about thirty prisons of various sizes on Nexum. Each is like a city, with its own internal culture, society, and purpose. The largest are the six main confinement and processing work camps adjacent to the planet's meagre central starport. Operated directly by the Nexum Combine, tens of thousands of prisoners are brought to these largely subterranean facilities for assessment as candidates for more specialist gaols every month, each operated by various sinister Imperial agencies. Such facilities include Processing Centre Theta-Kappa 686, an Adeptus Mechanicus structure which actively seeks out physically healthy but mentally infirm prisoners, with the purpose of converting them into more useful servitors through a series of operations designed to remove higher brain functions and integrate the prisoner into specialist mining equipment. Theta-Kappa's "product" is then returned to work, newly efficient; this is humanity reduced to its bare functionality, a Mechanicum ideal, and the facility is widely respected and emulated throughout the Askellian Adeptus Mechanicus. Prisoners fear relocation to the facility above all else, and commit the vilest and basest acts to ensure that others transfer in their place.

Other notorious prisons include "the Pit," a gigantic open cast mine seven kilometres across and two kilometres deep, bordered by a broad, spiraling ramp which lazily circles into the steaming heart of the mine. Along this ramp creeps "the Beast," a mobile ore-processing facility crudely repurposed into a nightmarish prison by the use of dozens of cell-trailers dragged behind it on vast carriages. With a dozen tracks the size of battle tanks, the Beast is an ancient wonder—a filthy, stained, priceless treasure from humanity's technological past. Every work cycle, thousands of prisoners are routed from within their cages by use of shock-chain flails, handed picks, and propelled past the Beast into the heart of the pit, there to hack away at the face of the excavation until their hearts give out.

Over the centuries, small numbers of prisoners have escaped into the wilds, scratching out desperate and short lives, subsisting upon the scraps discarded by the great prisons. Existing as a despised class of tinkers and traders in crudely dug burrows and trenches, these outcasts and their offspring represent the true natives of Nexum. That a growing number appear to display the psyker curse is something none of the planet's rulers know of yet, but the High Warden's Astropath has begun to suffer hideous nightmares in recent times and has begun to cast his unnatural sight outwards in search of the cause.

WORST OF THE WORST

Gang culture dominates most of Nexum's prisons. In every Imperial prison, those brutal enough to exploit the weakness of their fellow prisoners rise quickly within the veiled hierarchy of the various work camps, sacrificing their humanity in order to survive. Even those born and raised here, who under Nexene law inherit their parent's sentences, throw off familial connections if it means greater power within an inmate faction. On Nexum, where the walls between the Warp and realspace are thin, sacrificing one's humanity can be a far more literal experience than elsewhere.

To those who can perceive the currents of the Warp, Nexum's prisons are hellish places. The anger, despair, and yearnings of the incarcerated are tangible forces that bleed into the very fabric of the facility, tainting it more and more over time. This process has somehow changed and warped the psyches of many inmates. In recent years, warders have reported explosions of violent gang activity of various peculiar strands within Nexum's prisons; few months now pass without spontaneous murders of the vilest kind.

In Camp Takkrid, a Departmento Munitorum-run facility that processes both disgraced guardsmen and physically gifted civilian psychotics into Astra Militarum penal legionaries, there have been hundreds of murders within the past year, far above the average. Many of the victims have been decapitated; others show signs of having participated in ritualised combat to the death. This has not, though, stopped new platoons of Nexene regiments every several decades who go off to fight and die (and even sometimes manage to escape) on worlds across the sector.

In the medical wing of Nexum's largest prison, General Population Processing I, a respected physician of over forty years' service was caught injecting patients with horrid chemicals of his own devising. Subsequent investigations linked him to seventy deaths over the course of his time on the planet.

Many of these peculiar happenings are attributed to "snake," a sinister prison-brewed narcotic that appears to have its origin on the planet. First encountered three years ago in the Moral Deviant wing of the High Security isolation prison Camp VI, this drug appears, horrifically, to have been created from the harvested adrenal glands of prisoners subjected to bizarre tortures in their final hours by their as-yet-unidentified murderers. It is highly addictive, and its use is known to be gradually spreading across the surface of the planet and even to other worlds.

Other guards discount snake as the cause of the recent upswing in anomalous violent activity, citing instead the appearance of a new Emperor-worshipping mystery cult which appears to have spontaneously manifested overnight among the notoriously superstitious deep-excavation prisoners of the Low Gulag. Known as the Servants of the Iridescent Aquila, these cultists are ostensibly fanatical in their worship of the God-Emperor, but are known to scheme incessantly against other prison congregations; there are rumours that their doctrinal differences have occasionally spilled over into outright violence.

Finally, the Turnkeys, Nexum's interrelated fraternity of hereditary guards and Enforcers, have not been immune to the growing violence. This traditionally tight-knit and insular society has for centuries policed the planet, herding prisoners from bunk to mine with a flick of the chain-whip. However, their social cohesion is now breaking down in the face of escalating gang violence, and more and more of the deaths on Nexum can be attributed to heavy-handed and brutal policing of the worst kind.

NEXENE INMATE

The wretched and desperate individuals who make up the vast bulk of Nexum's population are known by a variety of titles depending upon the institution they are incarcerated within. In the Pit, they are simply "inmates," but in Theta-Kappa 686 they are known as "subjects." Whatever their title, the prisoners of Nexum are all survivors at heart, or they would not still cling to life against all odds. Typically half-starved, dressed in a variety of garish prison uniforms, and stumbling to or from a work shift, all have the sickly sheen of desperation in their eyes. They are willing to do anything to leave Nexum, and do not hesitate for a second to take advantage of any opening that even hints at the possibility of escape.

NEXENE INMATE (TROOP)

8

H¹
01-10
4

AR¹
11-20
4

AL¹
21-30
4

B¹
31-70
4

LR¹
71-85
4

LL¹
86-00
4

WS	BS	S
32	29	36
T	AG	INT
32	31	30
PER	WP	FEL
33	29	31
	IFL	—

HALF 3
FULL 6
CHARGE 9
RUN 18
THREAT 3

SHIV
CLASS MELEE

RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+3 ^{SB} (R)
PEN 2	CLIP —	Wt .5 KG
	RLD —	AVL PL

SPECIAL: PRIMITIVE (6)

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Underworld) (Int)
Gear: ID tags punched through earlobe, item of illicit contraband, poor quality breather suit (respirator), inmate garb
Hidden Death: An inmate inflicts a -20 penalty upon any tests to detect any concealed items he is carrying.

NEXENE GANGER

Even amongst the hardest criminal filth, there are those who are feared, those who prey upon their brethren through extortion, intimidation, and threat of brute violence. On most penal colonies, these scum rise to the top, criminal masterminds of the lowest kind, petty warlords and kings of their own unimportant domains.

On Nexum, however, something strange is happening to the gang members. They are acting in a peculiar fashion, engaging in odd, ritualistic behaviour, hearing voices from within the walls of their prison, flinching at shadows but laughing at certain death. This might be due in part to the pressure of a constrained life finally cracking their mental defences, or the abuse of illicit substances. Some external factor, though, is clearly battering down their psyches and replacing them with thoughts and ideas more at home in the darkest recesses of the Warp itself.

NEXENE GANGER (ELITE)

12

H³
01-10
6

AR³
11-20
6

AL³
21-30
6

B³
31-70
6

LR³
71-85
6

LL³
86-00
6

WS	BS	S
38	35	30
T	AG	INT
39	34	29
PER	WP	FEL
34	28	27
	IFL	—

HALF 3
FULL 6
CHARGE 9
RUN 18
THREAT 6

STUB REVOLVER
CLASS PISTOL

RNG 25M	RoF S/-/-	DMG 1d10+3 (I)
PEN 0	CLIP 6	Wt 1.5 KG
	RLD 2 FULL	AVL PL

SPECIAL: RELIABLE

CHAINDAGGER
CLASS MELEE

RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+3 ^{SB} (R)
PEN 1	CLIP —	Wt 1.5 KG
	RLD —	AVL RA

SPECIAL: BALANCED

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Underworld) (Int) +10, Dodge (Ag), Intimidation (S) +20

Talents: Devastating Attack, Hatred (All)

Gear: Customised prisoner garb, improvised body armour, gang markings and colours, poor quality breather suit (respirator), 3 doses of snake

Hidden Mutant: The thin barrier to the Warp within some of the lower reaches of the prisons has inflicted mutation on a number of gang members, many of whom wear their disfigurements with pride. Any one gang member in a group can have any one of the following traits: Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Sonar Sense, Sturdy, Toxic (1), Unnatural Strength (1), or Unnatural Toughness (1). If desired, the GM can also impart results from Table 8-16: Mutations (see page 292 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook) to create very powerful mutant gangers.

TURNKEY

Despite its precarious position in orbit around a doomed star, Nexum's prisons have now been occupied for centuries. In this time, it has built up a small enclosed community of Enforcers and guards who have come to regard this virtually uninhabitable hellhole as their home. Generations of these prison guards, who bear the chained-sun emblem of their craft and go by the self-appointed title "Turnkeys," have now lived and died on the world, knowing nothing other than the harsh glare of Medea and the drudgery of penitentiary life. Many roles within the prison system have now become entirely hereditary, passed from father to son to grandson in turn. While many have been brutalised by their role, or tainted by the peculiar Warp conditions of Nexum's stellar environs, others are devoted family men and women, content to carry out their duties to the best of their ability, ever watchful for the assault of a snake-crazed inmate, the intermittent klaxons signifying an imminent plasma storm, or, even worse, the constant klaxon heralding evacuation of key personnel and equipment in the face of Medea's final death throes.



NEXENE TURNKEY (ELITE)										10
H ⁴ 01-10		7		WS		BS		S		
AR ⁴ 11-20		7		38		37		33		
AL ⁴ 21-30		7		T		AG		INT		
B ⁴ 31-70		7		37		30		30		
LR ² 71-85		5		PER		WP		FEL		
LL ² 86-00		5		36		31		29		
				IFL		—				
HALF 3		FULL 6		CHARGE 9		RUN 18		THREAT 6		
HAND CANNON REVOLVER								CLASS PISTOL		
RNG 30M		RoF S/-/-				DMG 1d10+E (I)				
PEN 2		CLIP 6		RLD 1 FULL		WT 3.5 KG		AVL SC		
SPECIAL: RELIABLE										
SHOCK-CHAIN FLAIL								CLASS MELEE		
RNG 3M		RoF —				DMG 1d10+5 ^{2+SB} (R)				
PEN 0		CLIP —		RLD —		WT 4 KG		AVL RA		
SPECIAL: FLEXIBLE, SHOCKING, TEARING										

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Nexum) (Int), Command (Fel), Intimidate (Str) +10, Scrutiny (Per)

Talents: Constant Vigilance, Disarm, Takedown,

Gear: Chain-braid armour vest over survival suit, enclosed helm with integral microbead and respirator, large bundle of manacles and keys, 6 rounds dumdum bullets, 12 rounds regular ammo

SNAKE

Snake is a horrific drug made from the harvested adrenal glands of murdered inmates who—all unknowingly—were mutants on the cusp of unveiling psychic powers. Using methods not fully understood by Nexum's apothecaries, these glands are steeped in foul liquors smuggled into the prison, dried, and then rendered into a pale pink powder that can be smoked or inhaled. It induces a hallucinogenic trance state characterised by alternating lassitude, mania, and sadistic thought patterns of the darkest kind. How the prisoners learned to make it remains a mystery, though several "snake-handlers" insist the recipes came to them in colourful dreams that were more vivid than waking reality.

Snake has an Availability of Very Rare and is Addictive. Upon taking the drug, the user gains the Unnatural Agility (1) and Unnatural Perception (2) traits for 1d5+5 rounds. Afterwards, he becomes pliant and docile, suffering -10 Willpower damage and gaining 1 Corruption point.

INVESTIGATION TEMPLATE: CHAINS OF SUPPLY

Overview: A nightmarish new Warp-tainted drug is sweeping through Askellon's underhives, and the conflict draws the Acolytes into a covert war against the suppliers of this heinous product. The Acolytes follow the chain of addled addicts, psychopathic suppliers, and ruthless smugglers to the dreaded penal colony of Nexum VIII. In order to ascertain the origin of the drug, the Acolytes must devise a method of covertly breaking in to one of the worst prisons in the Imperium.

There, concealed amid tens of thousands of murderers and worse, the Acolytes discover a creeping Warp-taint poisoning the souls of Nexum's inhabitants, and come face to face with the ghastly source of the drug. The Acolytes must flee the madness at the heart of Nexum, escaping the inescapable confines of the penitentiary cities and defending themselves against the insane attentions of the inmates and their jailers.

This template can be used to draw the Acolytes from what begins as an illicit drug investigation into the realm of daemonic activity, with a strong mix of investigations and combat as they follow the drug to its source. It could also be used when they are delivering captured prisoners to Nexum for incarceration—possibly on the orders of their Inquisitor, who might have his own reasons for examining the planet.

ACT I: THE SERPENT'S COILS

The Acolytes are summoned to investigate a deadly new drug, snake, that is sweeping through the hives of Askellon, a drug whose users become violent, hallucinating sadists. They learn that the drug is tainted with the stuff of the Immaterium, spreading Warp-taint wherever it goes. They must travel to one of the recent scenes of destruction caused by this drug (which could be their current location), there to work their way into the drug's supply chain from the ground up.

The Acolytes begin with shadowing low-level dealers and purchasers of the drug, dodging the world's Enforcers and protecting themselves against the violent and unruly snake addicts who stalk the planet's underworld. Working back through smugglers and mid-level dealers, the PCs uncover an interplanetary trade in snake. Tracing this network of dealers back to its source, the Acolytes secrete themselves aboard the smuggler's vessel, or make their way on their own, and travel to the source of the drug: Nexum VIII.

ACT II: ADRENALINE RUSH

Once arrived, the acolytes must make their way from their orbiting vessel to the surface of Nexum and infiltrate the prison system, whether in the guise of prisoners, guards, or some mix of the two. Alternatively, they might adopt loud guises, such as visiting dignitaries or representatives of the Combine, or even operate openly as agents of an Inquisitor. They must explore the benighted corridors and dormitories of the worlds' prisons, navigating the nightmarish minefield of gang politics.



On their first night locked in their cells or investigating the darkened halls of the vast prisons, they experience first-hand the twisted Warp phenomena bleeding into realspace through the thinning reality surrounding the prison. Here the GM may want to use Table 3-2: **Warp Phenomena** on page 137 to introduce suitably disturbing events. A gang fight erupts just before dawn, as inmates (some possibly mutants) driven mad by the powers of the Warp seek to tear apart anyone around them. The battle—or investigations in coming days—leads the Acolytes into one of the drug-rendering dens, thus revealing the horrific source of the Warp-tainted drugs sweeping the sector: the inmates themselves.

ACT III: THE GREAT AND TERRIBLE ESCAPE

Having uncovered evidence of Warp-taint and the source of the drug, the Acolytes have several options.

They might destroy any traces of the drug-creation centres, or alert other authorities of the situation. If the Player Characters had been posing as prisoners, they might need to reveal themselves, or attempt a prison break into the wilds and safety. A riot might cover their escape, but might also allow the gangs to finally take over the prisons.

The wardens might also care little for stopping the drug operation—perhaps getting a healthy slice of the profits—and the Acolytes might need to get off-planet quickly as they could face not only inmates but also guards turning against them. The PCs must work quickly in any case, for the entities that are secretly behind the spread of snake do not rest when mortals dare to upset their schemes.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- A higher-ranking gang member recognises one or more of the Acolytes from previous activities, either as a fellow criminal from a disguise used to infiltrate a criminal cartel, or as an actual agent of an Inquisitor. The Acolytes could need to recruit the prisoner to their mission, continue any previous disguises used with him, or even ensure his permanent silence—which might set off a gang war if discovered.
- The Acolytes discover that one of the wardens has uncovered ancient texts describing how to offer souls to Warp-entities in exchange for powerful favours. When confronted, though, the warden insists his ongoing actions have been necessary to prevent Medea from exploding.
- Fleeing into the wilderness areas surrounding the prisons, the Acolytes discover enclaves of escaped prisoners openly displaying psychic abilities and drawing the attention of Daemons. Alternatively, the Acolytes might arrive too late and find one native who allowed himself to become possessed in order to gain revenge against the prisons and the sector that allowed his imprisonment.

OSSUAR

"Your Eminence, I have recovered a most peculiar note amongst the late bishop's effects."

—Preacher Laine, shortly before his mysterious disappearance

Often considered the most holy place in all of the Thule Sub-Sector, and one of the holiest in all of Askellon, Ossuar is home both to the Ecclesiarchy's Sub-Sector Synod and the remains of some of the sector's greatest saints, such as Pavonar, Genthis, and that most trusted servant of Saint Valerius, Kesal. It is a world devoted to the Cult Imperialis, a planet entirely given over to the worship of the Emperor and the adoration of Askellon's saints. Ossuar is a shining world, where the bright sunlight glints off of stained glass and marble statuary. It has been this way since the dawn of the Imperium, yet this sacred world hides dark secrets that, if revealed, could bring damnation upon it.

Millennia ago, it was Lord Commander Valon Cordius who decreed that Ossuar would be the final resting place for the greatest heroes to meet their end during the dark days of the Horus Heresy. The decree, so he said, was based on a vision granted by the Emperor Himself. Many decades later, Saint Cordius would be laid to rest on Ossuar. In the following centuries, the world was entrusted to the nascent Adeptus Ministorum, which turned the planet's already considerable resources toward the task of honouring the Emperor and the earliest Askellian saints.

Ossuar is governed by the Creed of Remembrance, the world's Adeptus Ministorum diocese. Arch-Cardinal Bavarus Konseig is both the leader of the Creed of Remembrance and the highest-ranked Ecclesiarchy official in the sub-sector. This also makes him one of the most influential individuals in the entire sector, particularly considering Thule's current lack of a Sub-Sector Praefect. The Arch-Cardinal has held his position for more than a century, and has solemnly and piously attended to his duties during that time. Like all priests of the Creed of Remembrance, Konseig is obsessed with the past, and specifically with the myths and legends of the sector's saints.

As the seat of power in the Thule Sub-Sector, Ossuar is a critically important world for the Adeptus Ministorum. From here, the Ecclesiarchy coordinates the activities of the diocese across this region. As befits such an important world, Ossuar is spectacularly appointed with grand cathedrals, triumphal arches, colossal statues, gleaming bell towers, and a hundred other splendours to celebrate the glory of the Emperor and Askellon's saints.

Life on Ossuar revolves around the honouring of Askellon's past. From the grand statues of generals and clerics to the tombs of the saints, reminders of history are everywhere. The cathedrals and basilicas of Ossuar house numberless relics, collected from across the sector throughout its history. The surface cannot contain them all, and so there are also orbiting necropoli and hollowed-out asteroids to display the remains of the sanctified dead and treasures from earlier eras. Likewise, the past is often the topic of the sermons of Arch-Cardinal Konseig and the world's many priests, who exhort the world's citizens and visitors to emulate the heroes and saints of old in these troubled times. The Arch-Cardinal's sermons are vox-cast across the planet, in order that all of Ossuar's citizens and pilgrims might hear his words and draw inspiration from them.

HOME WORLD: OSSUAR

Players can adopt Ossuar as their home world when creating a new Acolyte, especially as a replacement character while adventuring in that location. Characters from Ossuar follow the shrine world rules (see page 40 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook), but with the following new Home World Bonus instead of the usual one:

HOME WORLD BONUS

Absolute Faith in the Past: In addition to the normal uses of Fate points (see page 293 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook), once per encounter a character from Ossuar may spend a Fate point after he fails a Fear test to count as having passed it with 1 degree of success, but also gains 1 Insanity point.

Each year, millions upon millions of pilgrims travel to Ossuar on routes known across the sector. Such pilgrimage routes are often targets for raiders, but Ossuar's influence and proximity to Port Lokhart ensure considerable Naval protection. Nonetheless, daring piratical attacks, both human and xenos, are an increasing danger. These pilgrims come from all across the sector, and some spend their entire lives making the journey. So massive are the crowds traveling to see the Grand Cathedral that the journey from landing pad to cathedral takes years. Many pilgrims do not survive this final stage of the journey, succumbing to old age, being trampled underfoot, or even dying of dehydration amidst the press of bodies. Merely to live out their last days on the sacred ground of Ossuar, so close to the saints, is a great blessing worthy of the long journey.



THE MAUSOLEUM OF REMEMBRANCE

Ossuar is a world of towering cathedrals and macro-statues imported from Vouxis Prime, but its greatest feature is the Mausoleum of Remembrance, a massive structure that covers much of the world's main continent. It is here that the bodies of the saints reside, and that countless pilgrims flock in a never-ending current. The mausoleum is truly massive in scale, its arches and towers rising high above the flagstones amidst colossal statues and stained glass murals hundreds of metres across. Awestruck pilgrims gaze up at the sight; many claim to receive ecstatic visions upon arriving at the mausoleum.

Within the mausoleum, pilgrims pass under great archways in order to gaze upon the perfectly preserved remains of some of the Askellon Sector's most revered saints. Through ancient compacts, the Adeptus Mechanicus maintains the ill-understood stasis fields that preserve the mortal remains of some of Askellon's most revered saints. Thanks to these archaeotech devices, the saints remain largely untouched by the ravages of time, allowing pilgrims to gaze on their beatific countenances just as they looked in life. The stasis-shielded saints are one of the great miracles of the Askellon Sector, pride of both the Adeptus Ministorum and the Adeptus Mechanicus.

In addition to the stasis-protected saints, the Grand Mausoleum and its many sublevels and catacombs are home to the remains of thousands upon thousands of priests from throughout Ossuar's history, as well as other heroes and worthies from across the sector. The living members of the Creed of Remembrance move amongst the deceased, practicing ancient rites to honour their memories. Regular ceremonies are held in the presence of the stasis-guarded saints, with pilgrims crowding the halls of the mausoleum until some are crushed in the press of bodies.

THE CONVENT OF THE SHINING BLADE

As a key Ecclesiarchy holding in the sector, it is no surprise that Ossuar is home to a convent of the Sisters of Battle of the Adepta Sororitas. Canoness Liona leads more than 300 Battle Sisters of the Order of the Shining Blade, who stand ready to defend the shrine world against any threat. At any time, the Sisters of the order are spread across Ossuar, watching over pilgrims and guarding shrines, resplendent in their white and gold armour. The site of the convent adjoins the Mausoleum of Remembrance, and one of the Sisters' primary duties is guarding the mausoleum and shepherding pilgrims through its grand corridors.

At the behest of Ossuar's sitting Arch Cardinal, the Battle Sisters of the Shining Blade have participated in numerous actions across Askellon in the millennia since the order's founding as a successor to the Order of the Ebon Chalice. Squads of Battle Sisters have fought heresy and insurrection as far afield as Desoleum and Cel. Such deployments are typically in response to requests from other dioceses, but some actions, such as the Quelling of Hive Suzzum, have been at the behest of the Adeptus Administratum.

THE DARKEST SECRET

For all that the Creed of Remembrance honours and reveres the past, so much of it has been forgotten—in some cases, willfully so. The stories told of the sector's early days and first saints are fragmentary and often contradictory. The founding of Askellon—and much of the following millennia—is known only through apocryphal tales and scattered and incomplete records. For the faithful, this is more than enough evidence of Askellon's glory, for ignorance is a blessing and a virtue.

There are many legends and stories surrounding the life and deeds of Saint Akalrus of Ossuar, who was canonized some centuries after his death. It is commonly known that Akalrus rose to the rank of cardinal in life some two millennia ago, and that numerous miracles were attributed to him, which led to his sainthood. However, official records of Akalrus are lacking and contradictory. Sources disagree on when exactly he was canonized, or what deeds earned his sainthood. Such discrepancies are not uncommon when dealing with the vast bureaucracy of the Imperium and the passage of time, but the level of discrepancy amongst the records on a single world and dealing with such an important figure is remarkable.

Although no pilgrims and few priests would contemplate the matter deeply, it is strange that Akalrus was canonized so long after death, considering his preserved body sits behind one of Ossuar's few and immensely valuable stasis fields. Monks and scholars who have considered the matter believe that Akalrus was perceived as a saint during his life, hence his internment behind a stasis field after his death, even though official recognition of sainthood came later. It is true that such instances are not unheard of, for stories of miracles spread quickly, and the Ecclesiarchy's massive structure and the vagaries of astropathic communication lead to great delays. Discussions amongst cardinals on whether an individual is worthy of sainthood can easily stretch into the centuries.

The reasons behind these discrepancies and questions, however, are much darker than any would dare dream possible. Cardinal Akalrus was an ambitious man who craved power and influence, and his ascension through the ranks of the Creed of Remembrance was nothing less than meteoric. There were whispers and rumours, but none of his fellow priests dared suspect the truth until it was far too late.

Akalrus' ambition and lust for success outweighed his faith and his will, and this weakness became known to a foul Daemon of the Warp. The creature, a Daemon Herald of Tzeentch known to mortals as Ch'phor'tca, the Speaker in the Darkness, began to slowly twist Akalrus' ambition, turning him from the path of righteousness. Insinuating itself into his dreams and thoughts over the ensuing years, the Daemon nourished the cleric's ambition while undermining his faith and loyalty. Finally, a dark bargain was struck, granting Akalrus success and influence in life in return for eternal damnation. Whether Akalrus' warped mind recognized the true price of the deal, none can ever know.

Over the ensuing decades, Akalrus rose swiftly through the ranks of the Creed of Remembrance, reaching the rank of cardinal within his first century of life. Akalrus became known for his fiery sermons and his unparalleled oratory skills. Many who heard him claimed such inspired and enrapturing sermons could only come through the grace of the Emperor Himself—they could not be more wrong. He cemented his reputation with miraculous demonstrations—healing the sick, casting out unclean spirits, and even foretelling future events.

THE DARKNESS REVEALED

Akalrus received everything he wanted in his unholy pact, attaining the rank of cardinal and being hailed as a living saint. Yet, the Speaker in Darkness had much grander plans than to merely claim the soul of one man. At the appointed time—though surely much sooner than Akalrus anticipated—the Daemon claimed its due, swallowing Akalrus' soul and taking possession of his body. Now, a blasphemous Daemon of Chaos walked the holy ground of Ossuar, clad in the flesh of a cardinal of the Adeptus Ministorum.

From its lofty position, the Daemon set into motion the next stages of its unfathomable plan. The full extent of the damage wrought to the souls of Ossuar's pilgrims and citizens can never be known, as the Daemon laced its sermons with subtly blasphemous thoughts and foul sorceries. At the Basilica of Saint Barome, the thing that wore Akalrus led its congregation in a foul ritual that culminated in the mass sacrifice of the attendants and the opening of a tear in the fabric of reality—a Warp rift.

Daemons of Chaos poured through the hole in space and time, descending upon the countless pilgrims gathered at the Mausoleum of Remembrance. The possessed cardinal cackled as pious men and women were rent apart or consumed in sorcerous fire. Perhaps the Daemon did not anticipate the zealous faith and fortitude of Ossuar's defenders, or perhaps the true endgame of its plan has yet to reach fruition, but Ossuar did not yield that day. While countless pilgrims and Ossuarians fell to Daemons or succumbed to madness, preachers rallied and fought back. Ossuar's saviours, however, were the Battle Sisters of the Shining Blade. These warriors of the Adepta Sororitas, shielded by faith, banished the wretched Daemons back to the Warp with bolter, flamer, and blessed blade. Yet the order suffered hideous casualties—and a spiritual scar from which it has never recovered.

The faith and battle prowess of the Sisters of Battle scoured the Daemons, vanquishing their tenuous hold in reality. Yet the powerful Ch'phor'tca remained, blasting power-armoured warriors apart with gouts of sorcerous energy, shielded by daemoniac magic. The Sisters could not destroy the Daemon, but with the help of the surviving preachers, they drove it back, and with holy incantations they bound and subdued it long enough to erect a stasis field, rendering the Daemon trapped and powerless.



THE TRUTH HIDDEN

It was one of the greatest calamities of the Askellon Sector's tragic history, yet the Akalrus Incursion has been all but obliterated from history, known now to only a few. Rather than being condemned as a heretic or cursed for the destruction he wrought, Akalrus is revered as a saint. This is thanks to the actions of Ossuar's ruling clerics in the aftermath of the daemoniac assault. Knowing the unspeakable had occurred, the priests solemnly decided to scour the incident from history, lest their world and the faith of the people be forever tainted. Knowledge of Daemons could not persist, nor could it be known that such a revered cleric was a pawn of the Ruinous Powers.

The Sisters of Battle who survived the ordeal swore to silence, each taking the vow of the Repentia. Witnesses were put to the sword or burnt, lest they reveal what had transpired or succumb to festering corruption. The grounds on which the Daemons had trod were re-consecrated, and the priests all swore to take the knowledge of what had happened to their graves, for the good of Ossuar and the citizens of the sector.

In time, the dark events which Akalrus brought about were forgotten, while his earlier accomplishments were remembered. None would dare suspect that his endeavours and miracles were the result of unholy influence. Today, Akalrus, one of Askellon's greatest heretics, is revered across the sector as a saint. Were the stasis field to fail or be deactivated and the Daemon released, the horrifying truth could bring the sector to its knees.

SAINT AKALRUS/CH'PHOR'TCA (MASTER)										40
H 9 01-10		WS 44		BS 33		S 58		8		
AR 12 11-20		AL 12 21-30		T 56		AC 35		INT 66		
B 12 31-70		PER 54		WP 67		FEL 37		8		
LR 12 71-85		LL 12 86-00		IFL 71						
HALF 3		FULL 6		CHARGE 9		RUN 18		THREAT 66		
CLAWED FISTS										CLASS MELEE
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+8 ^{SB} (R)						
PEN 1		CLIP —		RLD —		WT —		AVL —		
SPECIAL: VENGEFUL (8)										

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Charm (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +30, Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (All) (Int) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +30

Talents: Bastion of Iron Will, Constant Vigilance (Intelligence), Favoured by the Warp, Swift Attack, Warp Sense

Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Blessing of Tzeentch (see page 111), Daemoniac (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons (Fists), Fear (3), Psyker (PR 7), Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength (3), Unnatural Willpower (2)

Psychic Powers: Fiery Form, Fire Shield, Infernal Gaze, Inferno, Molten Beam, Spontaneous Combustion, Telekine Shield

Gear: Priestly robes, shattered aquila

Innate Sorcerer: The Daemon may reroll any failed Focus Power test. However, if the result of either die on the second roll is a 9, it causes Psychic Phenomena. If Psychic Phenomena would be triggered regardless, each 9 instead adds +10 to the result.

Arch Corrupter: As a Full Action, the Daemon gloats and uses its beatific appearance as a saint to undermine the faith of its foes. The Daemon makes a Challenging (+0) Deceive test. Those who hear the blasphemous sermon oppose it with a Challenging (+0) Willpower test or gain 1 Corruption point for each degree of success on the Daemon's test.

THOSE WHO REMEMBER

Despite the best efforts of those who survived the daemonic incursion that Akalrus brought about, some slivers of truth have survived, passed down amongst the clerics of the Creed of Remembrance. The Keepers are a small secret society amongst the priesthood who know what truly dwells behind the stasis field that encompasses Saint Akalrus. This dark knowledge weighs heavily on the Keepers, who swear potent oaths to both guard the secret and ensure the Daemon never escapes to resume its infernal work. Members are selected for their strength of will and devotion, for only the strongest can continue in their duties and preserve their faith after learning the truth.

For decades, the Keepers have been locked in a hidden conflict with the Recollectors of Akalrus, a blasphemous cult that survives amongst far too many of both the clergy and laity of Ossuar. From member to member, the Recollectors pass down a twisted version of the true story of Akalrus, on which the beliefs of the cult are based.

The Recollectors claim that the Emperor's divinity is a lie, and that a mere corpse sits on the Golden Throne, no more alive than the dead saints that sit on gilded seats in the Mausoleum of Remembrance. They believe that the only source of otherworldly power and of miracles is Chaos. The Recollectors do not see Akalrus as a unique case—they believe that many so-called saints were actually in league with the Ruinous Powers. This has even led to some embracing Chaos itself as their minds fracture upon such revelations. These perversions of faith are precisely what the priests of Ossuar had hoped to avoid by burying the truth.

Of all the Recollectors' crimes, though, perhaps the worst is their ultimate goal: to bring down the stasis field trapping Akalrus and show the masses the awful truth behind their convictions. Thus far, the Keepers, with the aid of their allies amongst the Tech-Priests who tend to the ancient stasis shrines, have thwarted the cult's attempts. However, a single moment of laxity could bring about Ossuar's doom and undermine the faith of a sector.

RECOLLECTOR

The Recollectors hide in plain sight amongst the priests and citizens of Ossuar, wearing masks of piety and obedience that conceal their blasphemous beliefs. The cultists' faith and sanity have been broken by the dark truths they have learned, and they are now possessed of a madness held in check only by their dedication to the cult's mission. Each knows that to openly speak their views would lead to a massive purge, to being burnt as heretics. The cult needs proof enough to shatter the faith of others, and for that they need to awaken the Daemon vessel that lies trapped at the heart of the most sacred mausoleum. Until then, they bide their time, lurking and scheming among the masses of faithful that oversee the shrine world.

RECOLLECTOR CULTIST (TROOP)										12
H ¹ 01-10		4	WS		BS	S	T		AC	INT
AR ¹ 11-20		4	34		37	36	34		35	38
AL ¹ 21-30		4	34		35	38	41		37	45
B ¹ 31-70		4	41		37	45	—		—	—
LR ¹ 71-85		4	LL ¹ 86-00		4					
HALF 3		FULL 6		CHARGE 9		RUN 18		THREAT 8		
COMPACT LASPISTOL							CLASS PISTOL			
RNG 20M		RoF S/2/-			DMG 1d10+1 (E)					
PEN 0		CLIP 20		RLD HALF		WT 1 KG		AVL AV		
SPECIAL: RELIABLE										

Skills: Charm (Fel), Deceive (Fel) +10, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology), Stealth (Ag)

Talents: Face in a Crowd

Gear: Priestly or common robes

Blasted Faith: The Recollector's faith has been shattered and reforged from their terrible revelations, and now the threat of pain and death is nothing. A Recollector can re-roll Willpower tests to resist threats and physical pain, including uses of the Intimidate and Interrogation skills.

INVESTIGATION TEMPLATE: AWAKENING DARKNESS

Overview: The Acolytes are drawn to the lauded shrine world of Ossuar, where they become aware of a secret order within the Creed of Remembrance that governs the planet. In the course of their investigation, the Acolytes are drawn into a conflict between two hidden groups, both with knowledge of the secret of Saint Akalrus—the Keepers and the Recollectors. To save Ossuar and preserve the sector's faith, the Acolytes must discern friend from foe and stop the Recollectors from releasing the Daemon vessel—or banish it before the truth spreads.

This template offers an opportunity to explore the faiths that drive Askellon, and interact with Ecclesiarchical forces in both social and combat settings. Learning more of the Askellian saints might also drive the Acolytes to delve deeper into the sector's history and the many secrets therein, something that many powerful agencies and individuals would do anything to prevent.

ACT I: WORLD OF SHRINES AND SECRETS

The reasons for the Acolytes to visit Ossuar depend on the ongoing campaign; they might be seeking a blessed relic weapon, searching for an expert in occult lore, or simply wishing to pay homage at the stasis-shrines of the saints. Alternatively, their Inquisitor might order them to investigate whispers of a secret society or cult amidst the world's clergy, or of a daemonic presence in the world's past. Regardless of their reasons, after arriving, the Acolytes must contend with massive crowds of pilgrims that hinder movement. If any Acolytes openly wear symbols of the Inquisition or Ecclesiarchy, they are likely to be mobbed by adoring pilgrims eager to confess or denounce others. Eventually, the Acolytes hear rumours of secret meetings in the dark recesses of the Mausoleum of Remembrance. Further investigation amongst the clergy meets with recalcitrance and obfuscation, but careful questioning, observation, or outright intimidation yields clues that a secret group exists among the ranks of the Creed of Remembrance, engaging in unsanctioned activities in the Mausoleum of Remembrance. What the Acolytes are unlikely to realise at this point is that there are in actuality two distinct and opposed groups—the loyal but secretive Keepers and the heretical Recollectors.

Infiltrating the Mausoleum during the night, the Acolytes might locate a meeting of the Keepers (use the Preacher profile on page 390 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook), as they discuss the increasing sabotage attempts on the Stasis Shrine of Saint Akalrus. It should initially be unclear to the Acolytes if the Keepers are planning sabotage, or planning to stop it. If the Keepers discover they are being observed, they may take desperate action to preserve their secrecy.

ACT II: A HIDDEN STRUGGLE

The Keepers are unwilling to share the truth of the saint with strangers, and it is likely the Acolytes believe they are dealing with a heretical cult of some kind. How they learn more depends entirely on the Acolytes' methods. They might capture and interrogate one of the preachers involved, or research Saint Akalrus. Researching the saint yields many contradictions and much missing information, and particularly successful skill tests might discover fragmentary reports of a great disaster at the time of the saint's death.

By cooperating with or spying on the Keepers, speaking with the Tech-Priests that maintain the stasis shrine, consulting records, or even interrogating a captured Recollector, the Acolytes learn of the repeated sabotage attempts against the stasis field surrounding Saint Akalrus over the years. Depending on how well they do, they might also learn that only the actions of the Keepers have prevented the attacks from succeeding. Now, the question is just why someone would want to bring the field down, and why it is so important.

Examining the stasis-shrine of Saint Akalrus can also yield clues. Psyniscience tests might reveal a powerful Warp presence emanating from within. Acolytes skilled in an applicable Forbidden Lore might detect that the holy icons, purity seals, and devotional scripts that adorn the shrine and the body of the "saint" indicate not veneration or worship, but binding and warding.

Even as the Acolytes investigate, both the Keepers and Recollectors continue in their respective missions. If the Acolytes fail in a Subtlety test during their investigations, one or both groups might begin to covertly observe them, or even attack. Members of either group might attempt to neutralize the Acolytes by declaring them heretics and spurring the faithful to act against them.

ACT III: THE DAEMON REVEALED

Finally, the Acolytes should earn—or demand—the cooperation of the Keepers, successfully interrogate a member of either group, or discover an ancient journal. From one of these sources, the Acolytes learn at least some of the truth of Saint Akalrus, including that he was responsible for a daemonic incursion.

The current leader of the Recollectors, Prelate Ynnin Narlos, plans to have his followers bring down the stasis field while he conducts a ceremony in honour of Saint Akalrus, with thousands of pilgrims and Ossuarians in attendance. The Acolytes could learn of this plot from a captured cultist, by infiltrating the group, or by working in conjunction with the Keepers, or they might hear of the upcoming ceremony and realise the opportunity it represents.

On the blessed day, a huge number of heavily armed hidden cultists surge forward from the assembled preachers and supplicants to storm the stasis shrine, even as Prelate Narlos' sermon takes a blasphemous turn. The Acolytes must hold back the heretics with the help of the Keepers. If the stasis field should come down for even a moment, it releases the Daemon vessel Akalrus. The Acolytes must then contend with not only a powerful Daemon, but thousands of morally compromised witnesses. Should the truth spread, it is certain to have dire consequences.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS:

- Arch-Cardinal Konseig is a member of the Keepers, and turns Ossuar's full resources to stopping the Acolytes' interference—perhaps even deploying a unit of Battle Sisters against them.
- A group of pilgrims is somehow infected with Warp-taint, turning several into horrid abominations and unleashing psychic blasts throughout one of minor basilicas. How this occurred amongst such a devout assembly leads the Acolytes to uncover a heretical sect seeking to destroy one of the saints interred on Ossuar, a saint tied to Askellon's hidden past.
- The Recollectors use their dark knowledge to summon Daemons against the Acolytes, or even allow one of their own to become a Daemonhost to guard their main gathering hall.

THE EMPEROR'S SONG

"Such majestic beauty...the work of thousands of sculptors...all wasted on blind Astropaths and joyless Tech-Priests who will never appreciate it!"

—Rogue Trader Saorise Romalla, upon her first visit to the station

Shining in the darkness of Askellon is the Astronomican Relay Station *The Emperor's Song*. This mighty fortress has been a fixture of the Cyclopa Sub-Sector for over four thousand years, established in a past age to enhance the Emperor's Light in this troubled area of space. While Askellon is within the range of the Astronomican, the presence of the Pandaemonium and other unstable Warp fields hampers the strength of the ætheric beacon. *The Emperor's Song* aids in overcoming these hazards to allow for fewer dangers in Askellian Warp travel.

Construction on the station began when the Navis Nobilite realised that seemingly malevolent pulses from the Pandaemonium caused a number of vessels to end up wildly off course (with some vanishing altogether). Growing the wealth and importance of Askellon required stable travel, and the only way to ensure this was to establish a relay station that could amplify the strength of the Emperor's Holy Light. The Navigator Houses in Askellon approached the Adeptus Astra Telepathica and began negotiations to create the relay station.

As is often the case within the Imperium, the plans to create this station met with many delays and bureaucratic hold ups, taking nearly three decades to move forward. Debates raged on everything from the shape of the station to the materials that would be used; these delays caused a number of ships to be lost and eventually the Adeptus Administratum overruled all and *The Emperor's Song* became a reality.

A SHINING JEWEL IN THE NIGHT

The purpose of *The Emperor's Song* is for its hosted Astropathic Choir to strengthen the Astronomican's beacon throughout the darkness of Askellon. By combining their talents, these initiates boost the signal emanating from Holy Terra and ensure that it reaches as much of the sector as possible.

The many psykers stationed on the *Song* are members of the Choir, learning how to use their powers and discovering what a great gift their abilities are for the Imperium. A triumvirate of Chosen, members of the full Astronomican, aid and amplify the abilities of the psykers and oversee their day-to-day care. These specially selected individuals view this service as another step on their eventual path to serving on Terra in the Chamber of the Astronomican.

HOME WORLD: THE EMPEROR'S SONG

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

HOME WORLD BONUS

Attuned to the Warp. A character from *The Emperor's Song* gains the Deny the Witch talent.

Over five thousand psykers serve on the station, with roughly a thousand at any given time devoting all their energy to boosting the signal of the Astronomican. The remainder of the psykers see to the everyday operation of the station and spend their time in prayer and contemplation, preparing for their turn among the chorus. While not nearly as intensive as serving in the true Chamber of the Astronomican on Terra, the mental fortitude required to boost the signal in Askellon is still quite significant. Many psykers perish every month due to the psychic strain, and the Adeptus Astra Telepathica regularly supplies the station with fresh recruits.

Running the station is the Council of the Song. Composed of five individuals of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, it oversees operations and coordinates with the station's Adeptus Mechanicus presence for repairs and other needed work. The Council consists of Baul Illur, Nagama Pradaam, Cator Sevil, Errol Dreil, and Greil Samak. Samak is the High Illumaster of the council, selected by his regional superiors on Juno to run the station.

Greil Samak is something of an anomaly among his peers in the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. Where most members of the prestigious order care only for service, Greil has deeper ambitions—he wants to rise in power and control as much as possible of the order and the power they wield. His placement here on the fringe at *The Emperor's Song* is a setback to the ambitious man, and he is convinced that rivals higher up in the order had him sent here to remove him from influence on Terra. Taking the placement in stride, though, the master Astropath is convinced that he can win favour from the many Rogue Traders and other movers and shakers here in Askellon. He has worked closely with Magos Sigmun Lornan, leader of the station's Machine Cult, to form a strong bond between his supporters and the Adeptus Mechanicus. It is only a matter of time before this relationship pays off.

GREIL SAMAK (MASTER) 12

H 1 01-10	3	WS	BS	S
AR 2 11-20	4	25	23	28
AL 2 21-30	4	T	AC	INT
B 4 31-70	6	25	30	40
LR 2 71-85	4	PER	WP	FEL
LL 2 86-00	4	50	55	33
		IFL	36	

HALF 3 FULL 6 CHARGE 9 RUN 18 THREAT 14

CUSTOM LASPISTOL CLASS *PISTOL*

RNG 20M RoF S/3/- DMG 1d10+3 (E)

PEN 2 CLIP 30 RLD HALF Wt 2 KG AVL VR

SPECIAL: RELIABLE

FORCE STAFF CLASS *MELEE*

RNG 3M RoF — DMG 1d10+5^{PR+SB} (E)

PEN 5^{2+PR} CLIP — RLD — Wt 2 KG AVL ER

SPECIAL: FORCE

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Deceive (Fel), Scrutiny (Per)

Talents: Peer (Adeptus Astra Telepathica), Resistance (Psychic Powers), Warp Sense

Traits: Blind, Psyker (PR 3), Soul Bound, Unnatural Senses (50)

Psychic Powers: Erasure, Psychic Shriek, Telepathic Link

Gear: Armoured robes, psy focus

THE NIGHT EYE

The Warp-intrusion known as the Night Eye appears to be nothing more than a somewhat worrisome curiosity. It does not remain open for more than a few hours, posing little danger that enemy forces could use it as a transit point into this area. In the past, other breaches of this nature have been recorded throughout the sector, though the regularity and clockwork precision of this breach provides the Adeptus Mechanicus with a great deal of data.

Unbeknownst to all, the Night Eye is a much more insidious threat than anyone would suspect. Drawn by the power of the Choir and the Astronomican, the Eye allows the Daemon Prince Suvfaeras, a vile power from Askellon's history and perhaps also a personal foe of the Acolytes (from the **DARK HERESY** adventure **FORGOTTEN GODS**), to observe the activities of the station and its surroundings, furthering some unknown, grand plan. Horrors and other Daemons of Tzeentch serving this dark prince have attempted to enter through the Eye, but so far they have been unable to maintain their coherence outside of the Warp without additional energy. The forthcoming Adeptus Mechanicus probe may provide just what it needs to move its plan to the next stage.

THE CHOIR

The power of the Choir resonates throughout the station and the surrounding space. Such directed power of the Astronomican produces a physical manifestation—for those who are unfamiliar with the power—in the form of a constant hum or buzzing behind the eyes of anyone walking the halls. For psykers who travel to the station, the buzz is gone, replaced by majestic singing and an unearthly cacophony that reaches deep into the core of their being. The psykers on the station have trained for years to block out the song of their brethren; if they did not do so, they would be driven mad by the constant sounds.

Throughout the Cyclopia Sub-Sector, travellers speak of a sense of calm and comfort they feel when passing through the area. In fact, the worlds nearest to the station have unusually low occurrences of heresy and violence. The Ecclesiarchy is quick to spread the word of these “miracles of the Emperor,” though Askellian Tech-Priests claim it is purely anecdotal evidence and not based on any fact. There have been reports that this inner peace is detrimental to the Imperium, however, as tithes from within the sub-sector to the Imperial Guard have lessened in quality. Some military commanders leading wars in this region consider the station a bad omen for such reasons, despite that it basks in the Emperor's Holy Light.

Over the centuries, a number of Imperial Agents have attempted to investigate tales of strange happenings within and without the station, including unsettling voices on secure vox channels, unholy ichors dripping from ventilation outlets, and even mysterious runes appearing on the outside of viewing portals. On all occasions, Samak has resisted these agents with great zeal, stating that his Astropaths are entirely too precious for outsiders to disrupt their daily actions. Though most of these stories are dismissed as taproom claptrap, many believe things are not right on board the *Song*, and more individuals are beginning to take notice of these reports.





MACHINE CULTISTS AND THE SONG

Magos Sigmun Lornan and his Tech-Priests reside on *The Emperor's Song* to study stellar phenomena in the vicinity. At any given time, nearly three-dozen members of the Adeptus Mechanicus make the station their home. Their agreement with the Adeptus Astra Telepathica requires them to maintain the systems of the station in exchange for their residence and workspace.

The primary mission of the Adeptus Mechanicus here is to study the nearby stellar feature known as the Night Eye, an intermittent Warp incursion that erupts roughly every two hundred days. Appearing like an eye opening in the darkness, it appears, remains for approximately six hours, and then closes again. The Tech Priests study the build-up of aetheric particles before its eruption and after its closure to try to understand what causes this breach into realspace.

So far their investigation has yielded few tangible results, but a great deal of speculation and conjecture from the Tech Priests. The Magos is planning on sending a probe manned by servitors to the event horizon of the Eye when it next opens, for additional study. Lornan believes that he has acquired all the data possible from their current studies and that only by exploring the actual rift can their understanding be furthered.

In addition to studying the spatial anomalies, the Cult Mechanicus has a second, hidden purpose about *The Emperor's Song*. Magos Lornan has long been fascinated by psykers and their powers, and his proximity to such a large group of these gifted individuals allows him to conduct a great deal of unauthorised research. The Magos and his team have set-up a number of aether-auspexes and other devices to try to quantify the abilities of the Choir on the station. In recent months, a small number of Astropaths have gone missing on the station. What has befallen these individuals is unknown.

INVESTIGATION TEMPLATE: THE RED MONK

Overview: For centuries, visitors to *The Emperor's Song* have mentioned interactions with a strange, robed individual found walking the halls. Many believed this to be just another member of the Choir; this unknown wanderer, however, has vanished abruptly or passed through bulkheads, leading to tales of a ghostly apparition that haunts the station. Even more unsettling, there is word that psykers who power the station's beacon go missing on occasion, never to be found again. The Acolytes are tasked with investigating the matter, perhaps directed by their Inquisitor, through readings of the Emperor's Tarot, or as a favour to an Astropath who visited the station. The PCs themselves might trigger the investigation, following up on tales overheard in a nearby station or on a transport ship and deciding the issue deserved their attention. They might even be drawn into the situation when a ship they were travelling on needed to stop at the station to make a transfer of replacement psykers and other supplies.

This template presents a horror setting for the Acolytes, where they might be trapped on a space station without support. Within the station, they must face spectral figures, mad psykers, and forbidden researches that could allow Daemons free entrance from the Warp.

ACT I: BUMP IN THE NIGHT

As the Acolytes arrive at *The Emperor's Song*, they are greeted by High Illumaster Samak and shown to spartan quarters on the station. A minor grav-quake from a settling collapsed star shakes the station later when they are resting, and draws them out and into an unfamiliar section lined with ancient artwork, statuary, and ornate carvings. Soon after the station settles, the Player Characters find themselves face to face with a monk-like figure in crimson robes walking the corridor. His large, voluminous hood obscures any facial features, and he walks with a meandering gait through the halls.

When approached, the monk is silent and keeps on his course, ignoring the Acolytes. He passes by them and stops at the end of a corridor. In a second he is gone. Investigations of his last position reveal nothing, but any characters with psychic abilities or the Psyniscience skill feel a residual presence of something that once was there.

Later that night (or on a subsequent night), one of the PCs is visited by the mysterious figure again, this time in his quarters. The apparition motions for the Acolyte to follow and leads the Acolyte throughout the station, stopping at various points to simply stare at a statue or other piece of art. Finally, he takes the character to the end of a corridor that leads to the Adeptus Mechanicus section of the station and vanishes before the large, double doors with a wail.

Before the Acolytes can investigate this further, an alarm goes off, alerting them to a problem within the Choir. Upon investigation, they discover that one of the station's Astropaths has experienced a form of psychotic break and has murdered one of his fellow sanctioned psykers. This madman has barricaded himself in a room with two other of the Choir, screaming of the things taking his fellow psykers in the night. The Acolytes must overcome this dangerous threat and restore the station's function, lest Warp travel across the region be disrupted.

ACT II: WHAT LIES BEYOND

The monk vanished into the main Adeptus Mechanicus facilities on the *Song*, off-limits to all but the station's Tech-Priests and their servants—even High Illumaster Samak cannot grant entry. The Acolytes could use their Inquisitor's influence to attempt entry, or connections to the Machine Cult. Even then, the priests of Mars are loath to share their research with outsiders, and go to great lengths to show only what is necessary.

Creative Acolytes could instead infiltrate on their own, but security is quite extensive. They must avoid detection from minor adepts and servitors on patrol. Luckily, these individuals are not very watchful for intruders, but the Acolytes should face at least one skirmish that they must end quickly and quietly if they are to proceed. Searching through the area, the PCs come upon a hidden section of the station under the direct control of Magos Lornan and his most trusted Tech-Priests. This area is home to four laboratories used to study areas most would consider both forbidden and criminal, as the Acolytes soon discover.

ACT III: DARKNESS UNCOVERED

Within Lornan's labs are a number of missing sanctioned psykers who are being contained within fluid-filled tanks, undergoing hideous experimentation. Another member of the Choir lays dissected on an examination table, while Tech-Priests study his neural chemistry. Conduits of arcane-energies arc across the shielded facility and into the brain of one of the still-living psykers.

After the Acolytes enter this area, the monk reappears and psychically imprints his tale upon the PCs, drawing on the energies running throughout the lab. The spectral form is the remnant of a former Choir member. The rogue Magos is trying to unlock the secrets of psychic ability and specifically the secrets of the Astronomican, and one of his experimental devices has somehow pulled the essence of this lost psyker back from the Immaterium and trapped him within the station. The monk simply seeks his much deserved rest, but confinement has spiralled his power out of control; Daemons are being drawn toward the station and will tear into reality unless he can be dissipated quickly. The Acolytes must stop the Warp-spirit (either through psychic banishment or by destroying the machines tethering the soul to the station). To do this, though, the PCs must first overcome the Tech-Priests and their combat servitors, who wish only to see the Acolytes vented into the void surrounding the station.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Greil Samak is utterly paranoid, and views all outsiders as possible threats. He unleashes a carefully-groomed sect of death cult psykers (represented using the Warp-caller profile on page 409 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook) upon the Acolytes in the midst of their explorations of the station.
- The power of the Astronomican is amplified greatly through the work of the Choir, and one of Lornan's devices accidentally increases the beacon exponentially—drawing the attention of Warp-denizens, and perhaps even a Space Hulk from the Sea of Souls, pulled out of the depths by the shining brilliance.
- One of the psykers undergoing experimentation lurches abruptly, clutching his bleeding skull even as he fires powerful psychic bolts at any Tech-Priests fighting the Acolytes. A Daemon is attempting to possess him, but ending his life to prevent this might tip the fight away from the PCs.

TUCHULCHA

"It was madness given form, where war never ended."

—Inquisitor Ronan Borel

Centuries ago, the Tuchulcha system was wiped from the star charts. Cut off from the rest of the galaxy by the rages of the Pandaemonium, the system succumbed to the ravages of the Warp, becoming forever home to the forces of the Dark Gods. Like a world trapped behind glass, Tuchulcha appears to be stuck out of time and space. Orbital factories and space stations hang in orbit above the planet, rumoured to hold the riches plundered by the Rogue Trader houses that initially funded the expeditions to the worlds beyond this system. Foolish are those who dare pluck these treasures, though. The world roils and surges as the Dark Powers battle for dominance, but they eagerly pause to toy with mortal visitors. While many consider the planet unreachable, Tuchulcha is far from that. The Warp ebbs and flows around Tuchulcha and it is often thrust back into reality, a waiting house of horrors for any who dare to land there.

ETERNAL DAMNATION

Every voidfarer in Askellon knows the sorrowful tale of the doomed world of Tuchulcha; the account of House Roth's folly and destruction is a cautionary tale throughout the sector. What most people do not know, however, is that this devastation was caused by one man—a man who now attempts to rule the blackened lands of Tuchulcha in the name of Tzeentch.

Tuchulcha was initially just a frontier staging area for a large-scale exploratory fleet destined for what lay beyond known space, one involving a number of Rogue Trader houses. Erravan Roth, a minor son in the Rogue Trader House of Roth, became obsessed with the expedition. In an effort to secure a greater place for himself in the House and increase his personal glory, Erravan explored all options available, no matter how forbidden. One of these led him to the Changer of Ways. Tzeentch opened many new avenues for the young captain, granting him wondrous insights to the multitude of worlds that lay beyond and the massive riches they held. Roth used his newfound knowledge to manipulate and alter many of the plans for the expedition, all things that would further the will of the Great Architect.

When all the pieces were in place, the Pandaemonium fluctuated, engulfing Tuchulcha and the fleet, and destroying most of the ships. Those that were not destroyed were condemned to a life of eternal battle and suffering on Tuchulcha, all part of Tzeentch's grand plans. Some say that there were warnings, that the Emperor's Tarot revealed that the fleet was doomed to fail, but no one paid any heed to these ramblings.

Since the loss of the expedition, Erravan Roth now serves Tzeentch on the world of Tuchulcha. Now known as the Daemon Prince Erravan the Schemer—his new daemon name, of course, utterly unpronounceable and a carefully hidden secret—it leads the forces of Tzeentch in battle against the legions of Khorne, who also battle for this dark world. Whether the former captain knew before the fleet departed of the imminent doom at Tuchulcha, only the herald and Tzeentch can say.

HOME WORLD: TUCHULCHA

Players can adopt Tuchulcha as their home world when creating a new Acolyte, especially as a replacement character while adventuring in that location. Characters from Tuchulcha follow the Daemon world rules (see page 26), but with the following new Home World Bonus instead of the usual one:

HOME WORLD BONUS

Inured to the Horrors: A character from Tuchulcha begins with 3d5 Corruption points. In addition to the normal uses of Fate points (see page 293 of the **DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook**), once per encounter he may spend a Fate point to count as having the Adamantium Faith talent until the beginning of his next turn.

THE LOST...

The space above Tuchulcha is now filled with the abandoned remnants of the grand fleet. Refuelling depots, orbital shipyards, and other smaller stations float above the world. Some of these hold great riches, bays filled with treasures brought back by the initial explorers who first set off for the unknown lands. Tales of these waiting treasures have been the stuff of legends for centuries, and almost all captains who travel in Askellon know of these lost stations. While few are foolhardy enough to attempt to seek out these items, there are those who would risk anything to gain access.

The largest of the lost islands above Tuchulcha is *Errant Station*. Created as a refuelling and resupply facility, it is now the domain of Nurgle and his minions. Walls, floors, and ceilings—every inch of the station—are now home to pestilence hidden behind a veneer of normalcy, and Nurglings caper across the station looking to bring new blessings in the Plague Father's name. The station holds much of the initial treasure found in the worlds beyond Tuchulcha, a tempting destination for those who value riches over their own sanity. Plaguebearers endlessly count these riches, serving as tallymen and attributing a new plague to each of the riches, ensuring that any items leaving the station continue to spread the glory of Nurgle.

Long before *Errant Station* fell, a treasure was discovered that helped to seal its fate. Today, deep in the heart of the station, an ancient door sits in the centre of a cavernous hall. This artefact was found in early probes of a world deep in the fringes beyond Tuchulcha. It was the last standing remnant of a huge city whose name only dead xenos races would remember, its intricate carvings depicting a garden of beauty and seduction. The explorer who found it, Captain Uless Barr, was so taken with the design that he demanded its excavation and removal from the planet. Barr would spend hours staring at the designs, swearing that the garden called to him, inviting him to enter. No one else ever heard these supposed voices, leading many to believe that Barr was mad. Eventually his obsession with the artefact caused House Roth to remove him from his captaincy. Uless Barr would spend the rest of his days confined to a cell aboard a Hospitaller ship, ranting about the garden and how he had to get to it.

The Tuchulcha Orbital Shipyards are a less massive object, though they occupy a much larger volume of space. Once the shipyards worked around the clock to produce hundreds of ships and repair components for the exploratory fleet. These factories were prized among the Adeptus Mechanicus for their amazing output, and many Tech-Priests clamoured to be a part of their operation. The ships to come off the lines at Tuchulcha were some of the greatest vessels of the Askellon Sector, such as the gigantic cargo haulers *The Eternity of Empire* and *His Indomitable Will*.


When the Pandaemonium swallowed Tuchulcha, the shipyards appeared to be untouched. The countless servitors continued their work hour upon hour at their stations, following their programmed construction plans. Unknown to the mindless servants, they were given new plans by the denizens of the Warp. Now the factories fashion war engines for the infernal armies who wage eternal war on the planet below. Horrible Daemon Engines are created every day, used by Daemon Princes as they fight for the supremacy of their patron god.

...AND THE DAMNED

Not all who were aboard the ships above Tuchulcha were lucky enough to be killed by the Great Storm. Some of the vessels crashed to the planet below, stranding thousands on the surface. These refugees were initially able to use the supplies they recovered from their crashed ships. Many had no idea what had happened, and they expected to be rescued in short order. They were not ready for the skies to open up and the hordes of Daemons to come pouring through, plunging the world into darkness.

For years, the survivors held out against uncountable odds, living a desolate existence as the Daemon armies razed the planet. By the sheer blessing of the Omnissiah, many Tech-Priests were still operational, and became instrumental in keeping one large group protected. Using their arcane knowledge, the adepts were able to repurpose one ship's Gellar Field to protect a camp of many hundreds against the rampaging Daemons. The Tech-Priests knew that power resources were limited, and worked day and night to keep the field maintained. Ecclesiarchy priests worked constantly as well by adding their fervent prayers to the field, knowing that the Emperor's Will was just as powerful in keeping the Daemons at bay.





LIFE ON TUCHULCHA

Despite the Warp-tainted nature of Tuchulcha, somehow humans manage to survive in this place of madness and insanity. Rationally, this should not be possible—but a Daemon world is, by its very nature, a realm of the impossible. Laws of physics are more suggestion and whim there. The initial survivors' auspex readings could detect no breathable atmosphere after the Warp devoured the planet, yet breathe they could. Gravity itself shifts capriciously, especially within the myriad caves that wind through mountain ranges like maggot-trails through fruit. Stablights can illuminate the darkened caverns, but also bring forth screams of pain as the light burns the rock and blood drips from the wounds. A cry for help might go unheard metres away, yet be detected clearly on an orbiting ship. Many of the survivors have not eaten in what seems like decades, yet somehow remain physically alive. What Tuchulcha has done to their psyches and souls, though, is something else entirely.

This makes Tuchulcha an ideal setting for horror-themed adventures, where the Acolytes must pit their will and faith against an entire world seeking to corrupt and drive them mad. It can allow the GM to create utterly bizarre and horrifying settings for Acolytes who find themselves on Tuchulcha, or even in orbit of the Daemon world. It should be a nightmare realm, where they might step across kilometres or even light-years with a single stride and find any terror they can imagine waiting for them, and only their faith in the Emperor can offer any aid.

Eventually, though, the field fell and the daemoniac forces of Tuchulcha overran the camp. Some of the humans escaped the ensuing slaughter, fleeing to the mountains and the cave complexes within, where they hide from the endless wars the Daemons wage across the surface. Some are alive there today, as time flows differently on the Daemon world, even changing in pockets of altered chronologies from cave to cave. The humans who still exist on Tuchulcha hold out against unbelievable odds, always hoping for the day when they can escape the living hell they have been thrust into. Some do manage to leave the planet, disappearing in unexpected Warp-breaches to reappear elsewhere in the sector, or picked up by daring captains searching for the treasures all know are hiding somewhere on the planet.

THE LORDS OF TUCHULCHA

All manner of Daemons call Tuchulcha home, but the forces of Khorne and Tzeentch hold the most sway. The minions of these gods wage constant war, with the forces of Slaanesh and Nurgle drawn into battles as nothing more than pawns of the other two pantheons. The Lord of Battles' hatred of magic and spellcasters brings him into conflict with Tzeentch often, and his forces see those of the Changer of Ways as easy skulls for their master's throne. However, Tzeentch's forces are not as easy to overcome as the Blood God believed.

This back and forth war has waged for centuries, with each god gaining the upper hand for a time before the other then rises to ascendancy. This back and forth chess match forces the Daemon Princes in charge of the legions to come up with new and more elaborate schemes (or more aggressive attacks in the case of Khorne) to overcome each other. This eternal hatred and never-ending war allows the various humans on the world a chance of survival, as the Daemons' attention is focused on their rivals far more than on the human beings still planetside.

THE LEGIONS OF KHORNE

Led by a Daemon Prince known as the Lord of Wrath, the minions of Khorne constantly scour the landscape looking for victims of their blood sport. Packs of Bloodletters prod baying Flesh Hounds forth, seeking out those who would try to escape their fury. Alongside these Daemons are mighty war engines crafted in orbit using twisted technologies, bringing destruction on a massive scale. Everything that fights with the Mark of Khorne is dedicated to the sole purpose of nonstop slaughter and devastation.

The Lord of Wrath was once part of a triumvirate of Daemon Princes of Khorne who sought to rule Tuchulcha. Over the timeless aeons, though, the other members—Vae'ora the Eternal Blade and Skalla the Hideous—were banished by the machinations of their arch-foe, the Changer of Ways Guirros, or left for more bloodworthy battlefields. Only Etrell the Furious remains, commanding innumerable legions with one purpose: to bring skulls to the Throne of Khorne, with the skulls of Tzeentch's servants the most valued.

A master of bloodshed and violence, Etrell is a Daemon Prince of contradictions. Unlike the bellowing Bloodthirsters under his command, this Lord of Battle relies on tactics to reap carnage and crafts elaborate battle plans to achieve the most casualties possible in an engagement. This frequently angers the other Daemons he leads, but Etrell could not be bothered. All that matters is bringing more skulls to Khorne and blood for the Blood God.

THE LORD OF WRATH (MASTER)					75
H ¹⁰ 01-10		26	WS	BS	S ¹¹
AR ¹⁰ 11-20		26	75	50	65
AL ¹⁰ 21-30		26	T ¹⁶	AC	INT
B ¹² 31-70		28	60	35	50
LR ¹⁰ 71-85		26	PER	WP ⁷	FEL
LL ¹⁰ 86-00		26	58	58	57
				IFL	61
HALF 5		FULL 10	CHARGE 15	RUN 30	THREAT 100
HELLFORGED BLADE				CLASS MELEE	
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+10 ^{8+SB} (R)	
PEN 5		CLIP —		Wt 15 KG	AVL UN
SPECIAL: POWER FIELD					

Skills: Athletics (S) +30 (Ag) +20, Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S), Parry (WS) +20

Talents: Ambidextrous, Blade Master, Blind Fighting, Combat Master, Disarm, Killing Strike, Lightning Attack, Warp Sense

Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Berserk Charge (see page 105), Blood for the Blood God (see page 105), Daemonic (5), Fear (4), From Beyond, Size (6), Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength (5), Unnatural Toughness (5), Unnatural Willpower (2)

Gear: Brass Armour

THE HORRORS OF TZEENTCH

Unlike the raving, blood-crazed servants of Khorne, the Daemons of Tzeentch on Tuchulcha are masters of magic and other abilities that they use in their constant struggle for dominion over the planet. The forces gathered in here in incalculable numbers are under the control of one being—the Lord of Change Guirros. Serving at this mighty Daemon's side is Erravan the Schemer, the former member of House Roth responsible for the fall of Tuchulcha. Guirros gives the Daemon Prince a great deal of sway over the forces of Tzeentch on the planet, rewarding the Daemon Prince for bringing about the fall of the world. Erravan sometimes even adopts its earlier human visage to travel within Askellon, there to weave new schemes for his master.


The schemes and plots carried out by the minions of Tzeentch on Tuchulcha are convoluted and beyond the ken of mortal understanding. It may take centuries or longer for a seemingly insignificant stratagem to play out, which in turn is a smaller piece of a larger puzzle. War rages everywhere on the planet, but Tzeentch's generals avoid direct battle where possible, and attempt to manipulate events subtly using sorcery and psychic abilities to great effect. For Tzeentch, however, mere victory on Tuchulcha may be not be the final goal, for there are no ends to the twisting schemes of the God of Change.



THE GREAT BEYOND

Travelling past Tuchulcha lies a region of space unlike any other in the Askellon region. Countless worlds and systems lie in this part of space, all waiting to be explored and plundered. This was the basis of the doomed expedition fleet, and many still hold great interest in these unknown worlds.

Initial scouts sent into this region before the expedition reported worlds unlike any other. One held floating islands of earth suspended upon mighty thermals. Another is covered in vast oceans plied by mighty leviathans with crystal scales worth more than many worlds' tithes. A world of snow-covered lands held palaces of deep blue marble, ancient homes to long-dead aliens. While many dismissed these tales as nothing more than spacefarer fancy, many believe them to be true. It is this desire to explore (and exploit) these worlds that consumes many to this day.



USING THE GREAT BEYOND

The worlds lying in wait past Tuchulcha are an opportunity for Game Masters to let their creative juices flow. The realms blur the line between the Empyrean and the real world, allowing for truly fantastic planets. Lost alien cities, bizarre physics, and more can all be found here. Due to the effects of the Warp, each planet should hold a hidden darkness, a tarnish lurking beneath a gilded surface. Time and space also flow differently here, allowing PCs to encounter characters from Askellon's distant past or even from other sectors. Dangerous wonders can also be found, such as a world of lavish vistas and beautiful waterfalls, where the waters have amazing healing properties but might slowly twist any who use them into bestial amphibians. Entire campaigns could consist of journeys into the worlds beyond Tuchulcha, with the Acolytes returning as dark masters at the helms of mighty fleets, ready to carve out their own empires within Askellon.

INVESTIGATION TEMPLATE: A VOICE FROM THE DARK

Overview: The Acolytes are sent to investigate a signal that could indicate a group of Imperial agents survived a crash upon a Daemon world. A lull in Warp storm activity has allowed for the signal to escape and if the Acolytes act quickly, they can save these individuals. Unknown to the Acolytes, this message is a trap set by a Daemon Herald on the planet looking to bring more powerful servants to him.

In this template, the Acolytes face the horrors of Tuchulcha and the schemes of the Daemons there, but also strong combat encounters with mortal and daemoniac foes as well as areas where PCs with strong piloting skills can save the party. It places them where they must trust their instincts, for reality itself might change unexpectedly at the whim of the Daemons who control the world.

ACT I: THE CALM BEFORE

After a particularly violent time when the Pandaemonium has continually wreaked havoc on transit in many regions, the Great Storm has subsided and Askellon is enjoying a time of relative stability. During this lull, a number of Astropaths in the area report vivid nightmares of humans being hunted relentlessly by unspeakable horrors across a barren wasteland. One of the Astropaths (perhaps someone that the Acolytes have had dealings with before) informs them that the dreams are a message from Tuchulcha, and that important individuals there must be rescued. Alternatively, the Astropath might contact the warband's Inquisitor, or the Inquisitor himself might have also received these messages using his own psychic powers.

As the Acolytes set forth to find out more about this mysterious distress call, they are attacked at the local spaceport by a group of crazed cultists. These newly-revealed Chaos worshippers are intent on stopping the Acolytes from travelling to Tuchulcha, attempting to disable or destroy their ship. This attack is a clever ploy by the Herald, who wishes to convince the Acolytes that their mission is critical and that the forces of Chaos are going to any lengths to stop them.

ACT II: STORM RISING

The Acolytes set off toward Tuchulcha, crossing Askellon to reach the doomed planet along unusually calm and beneficial Warp currents. When they arrive in the area, they find a world trapped out of time. Space stations and other vessels slowly drift in orbit, appearing to be untouched by the years that have passed. A strong beacon of psychic energy can be detected on the planet below, leading the characters toward their quarry.

Setting down on the planet, the Acolytes find a much different picture than they could see from orbit. The world is wracked with storms and violent upheavals. As the Acolytes fly over the surface, scores of Daemons can be seen marching to war. Daemoniac engines unleash blasts against their shuttle, trying to bring it down. The characters must avoid these hazards and make their way to a nearby mountain range where they can set down safely. A group of lesser Daemons converge on the ship as it lands, leading to a battle just to disembark safely.

ACT III: CRASH OF CHAOS

After arriving on the planet, the Acolytes find a ragtag group of survivors who have held out against the Daemons for many years. Their leader is a charismatic psyker named Ballearion, who introduces himself as an Inquisitor of the Ordo Malleus. In reality, this "man" is a carefully disguised Herald of Tzeentch who is attempting to use the Acolytes to further his master's grand plans. He seeks to bring a carefully shielded Warp-infused relic from Tuchulcha's ancient past to other worlds; if the PCs rescue him, the relic grows his power exponentially and gives Tzeentch more control over Askellon.

It is impossible for the Herald to completely conceal his nature entirely, though, and psychically-attuned Acolytes definitely begin to sense that something is awry.

When exposed, the Daemon unveils his true, horrid nature. The other survivors are also revealed as mortals corrupted to the God of Change, all ready to fight for their master. If any combat that follows begins to go poorly for the Herald, it begins a twisted spell that enrages the Pandaemonium, designed to trap the Acolytes on Tuchulcha if completed. Only by quickly defeating their foe and returning to their ship can the Acolytes prevent this horrible fate.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Some of the original Rogue Trader fleet survivors arrive, complicating Ballearion's plans. The Acolytes must differentiate true lost humans that need to be saved from servants of the Daemon Herald.
- While travelling to the planet, the PCs experience a surge of Warp activity where they see the historic fall of Tuchulcha and the part that Erravan Roth played in it. This information can present problems in the future, as the remnants of House Roth have hidden this dark secret for years and do not take kindly when they discover others also know them.
- While on Tuchulcha, the Acolytes find a battered dataslate—a journal of one of the survivors detailing his harrowing life. This device has taken on a great deal of daemoniac energy and the item now contains a malevolent intelligence that is out to corrupt any who attempt to read and learn from it.



THE DAEMONICON

ASKELLIOS

"Do not attempt to understand the things that emerge from that foul realm, my Sisters. It is only necessary that you hate them."

—Canoness Challant, before the Purging of Ferrom

The region of space that encompasses the Askellon Sector has long been tied to the Warp. This is also true of those who live under Askellian stars, a link that the Pandaemonium's unending cry for vengeance rails against with each surge of the Great Storm. Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes have made examining any relation of this nature, especially between the founders of Askellon and the Great Storm, a priority in their work within the sector. Though there are many suspicions, there are also countless layers of secrecy. The many centuries have turned any semblance of fact into mythical lore, and the ongoing efforts of the powerful to ensure their histories remain undisturbed, such that even Inquisitors have found themselves stymied when attempting to forcefully wield their authority. Unravelling any hidden connections has thus become a silent war, fought through deceit and cunning.

Perhaps this connection began even before humanity first encountered Askellian worlds, for the *Lay of Askellios* relates how the original settlers braved many Warp storms and other perils after departing Terra so many millennia ago. Unseen hands seemed to raise up eldritch barricades at every turn along their journey, and many were lost to horrors for which they had no comprehension or defences. Finally, after what seemed like ages of travel, the fleets found a serene area free of storms. It was far from their projected colonisation zone, but after so long in space, its peace projected a sense of welcome that few could refuse. Those who voiced any concerns that there might have been unknown influences guiding their journey were quickly silenced—through violence where necessary.

Over the following millennia, the humans of Askellon discovered that this serenity was not common for their stars. During the many Wars of Purgation against the xenos species who dared exist where Mankind was present, almost every alien civilisation encountered had records of the Warp and the entities that crept from that unholy realm. Tales of terrible gods permeated these tales, often as part of the crumbling ruins of long-extinct races. The rise of the Pandaemonium, later traced back to the union of the original colonists under one rule but seemingly to have existed even before those shrouded days, grew with each generation as well. A number of Askellian sages feared the sector would suffer a fate similar to that of civilisations before them, something else that grows with each generation.

Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus who operate within the sector see these tales as a sign that Chaos has also operated in Askellian space from times immemorial, and had a clawed talon in the destiny in innumerable empires. That even these once-mighty races fell to the Ruinous Powers is yet another sign that the threats from beyond are surely the greatest Mankind faces. Many have been tied to specific Daemon Princes and other entities too dangerous to be named, with visitations throughout the millennia that doomed one race after another. Many of these Warp-tainted ruins have been kept secret—buried or razed to dust—lest others discover the horrid nature of what destroyed these alien dominions. A populace that retains its ignorance of the Enemies Beyond is one that can be saved—while one that knows of these dangers is one already lost.



WARRIORS OF BLOOD: THE PANTHEON OF KHORNE

"Can't you see the signs? The eight failed harvests on Cel! The eight blood moons over Rund? The final Incursion is upon us, and we will all drown in blood as the Pandaemonium laughs at us!"

—Suppressed testimony of the heretic Vida Obradovic

Of all the Dark Gods of Chaos, Khorne stands above the rest as the most directly powerful. His will is indomitable, his rage unending, and his hunger for slaughter unceasing. Khorne desires war and death above all else and grants power to those that kill in his name, taking the skulls of their enemies as his trophies. The Blood God's followers are unsubtle and manic, choosing direct assaults, mass killings, and even genocide as their methods of worship. This extends to Khorne's daemonic legions, as he imbues each of his creations with the essence of his fury and a fraction of his murderous intent.

THE CRIMSON INCURSIONS

Whereas the other three Chaos Gods encroach upon Mankind's domain through corruption, sensation, and trickery, Khorne is more overt. Yet despite his eternal quest for endless war and slaughter, the Askellon Sector remains mostly free of the Blood God's machinations. In fact, Khorne seems to display little more than disdain for the blighted sector, and many Inquisitorial scholars posit that the Pandaemonium itself is what prevents his bloodied legions from falling upon the sector to slaughter at will.

Nevertheless, records kept since the Ordo Malleus' first made inroads into the Askellon Sector note seven distinct events when Khorne's armies burst from the Warp. Dubbed the Crimson IncurSIONs, these events represent the majority of Khorne's impact on Askellon, and only the combined effort of several Ordo Malleus Inquisitors and the intervention of the Grey Knights ensured that the general populations of numerous worlds never found out just how close they came to total annihilation.

Since the seventh Crimson Incursion, a number of conclaves began looking for signs of future attacks and, to their horror, many of them believe the eighth Incursion could encapsulate the entire sector. Numerous theories exist about when this final Incursion might occur, with some saying it is thousands of years in the future, and others saying it is mere decades away. None but the Emperor and the Blood God can possibly know, however.

THE DAEMONS OF KHORNE

More regimented than the forces of the other Gods of Chaos, Khorne's daemonic pantheon is a devoted army with a solid hierarchy of terrible beings, each capable of laying waste to entire cities. Regiments of Bloodletters march behind Juggernaut and Bloodcrusher cavalry, whilst scores of Flesh Hounds run along the flanks, picking off the weak and wounded. Above them soar the mighty Bloodthirsters, easily the most skilled and lethal creatures in existence, who plunge headlong into the enemy ranks in their endless mission to pile more bloodsoaked skulls at the feet of Khorne's brass throne.

NEW KHORNE TRAITS

All Daemons of Khorne in this section gain the following new traits:

BERSERK CHARGE

Daemons of Khorne gain a +10 bonus to their Weapon Skill when making a Charge action.

BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

Daemons of Khorne suffer no penalties from gore and blood (such as when a Critical Effect covers an area in gore and would require an Agility test to avoid falling).

BLOODLETTER

Muscular and possessed of an unmatched rage, Bloodletters make up the bulk of Khorne's forces. Unlike other daemonic rabble, Bloodletters march to war in distinct ranks under banners dripping with gore and loud horns whose piercing cries can chill a man's blood in seconds. They are the Warp's preeminent foot soldiers, and fall upon mortal armies like an unrelenting tide of blood.

Once a Bloodletter enters combat, it transforms into a whirlwind of death, spinning and turning its weapons faster than the eye can follow. Only the best-trained troops could ever hope to match a Bloodletter in close quarters, and the skulls that pile around Khorne's throne are a testament to all who have failed in the attempt.

Each Bloodletter collects skulls for its master through the use of their mighty Hellblades. These terrible swords glow with runes of slaughter and screech like cooling steel when drenched with the blood of the fallen. These blades each harness a small portion of the Blood God's ceaseless rage, and with each life a Bloodletter takes, the blades grow in power.

As with all of Khorne's influence, there are very few instances of Bloodletters appearing upon the worlds of Askellon beyond the seven Crimson IncurSIONs. The Askellian Ordo Malleus notes several cults that have had some success summoning singular or small groups of Bloodletters—always to the detriment of the summoners—but for the most part the people of the sector know nothing of their existence. The only story that persists is the "Red Men of Saint Daphon," apparently a tale of a long-dead preacher who once won a great victory when she called eight red-clad warriors to her side. Some tell the story as if the powerful warriors were members of the Adeptus Astartes, whereas many more believe that Daphon called upon darker powers to ensure her victory. Elements of both the Ordo Malleus and the Adeptus Ministorum have tried to suppress the story, but it persists among many of the Low Worlds, often as a tale to frighten children lest the terrible Red Men reappear again.

BLOODLETTER (ELITE)										22
H ³ 01-10		WS		BS		S ⁷				
AR ³ 11-20		11		50		12		42		
AL ³ 21-30		11		T ⁸		AG		INT		
B ⁶ 31-70		14		42		40		30		
LR ⁴ 71-85		12		PER		WP ⁵		FEL		
LL ⁴ 86-00		12		30		34		14		
				IFL		—				
HALF 5		FULL 10		CHARGE 15		RUN 30		THREAT 19		
HELLBLADE								CLASS MELEE		
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+16 ^{9+SB} (R)						
PEN 10		CLIP —		RLD —		WT 10 KG		AVL UN		
SPECIAL: BALANCED, POWER FIELD										

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int), Intimidate (S) +10, Parry (WS) +20, Survival (Per)

Talents: Battle Rage, Blademaster, Combat Master, Crushing Blow, Devastating Assault, Frenzy, Survival, Swift Attack

Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Berserk Charge, Blood for the Blood God, Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Fear (2), From Beyond, Size (5), Unnatural Strength (3), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability

Gear: Light Brass Armour

Growing Rage: Each time a Daemon of Khorne kills an opponent with its Hellblade, the weapons gains +2 to the damage it inflicts in subsequent rounds. This bonus is cumulative with multiple kills, and lasts until the end of the encounter.

HERALD OF KHORNE

Walking amongst the lesser Bloodletters and directing the will of the Skull Lord, Heralds of Khorne stand as masterful officers and blood-soaked slaughterers in equal measure. Harbingers of ruin, Khorne's Heralds stoke the fires of battle and drive their fellow Bloodletters to greater acts of carnage.

HERALD OF KHORNE (MASTER)										33	
H ³ 01-10		12		WS		BS		S ⁸			
AR ³ 11-20		12		AL ³ 21-30		12		56			
B ⁶ 31-70		15		T ⁹		AC		INT			
LR ⁴ 71-85		13		LL ⁴ 86-00		13		PER		WP ⁵	FEL
						39		34		34	
						IFL		23			
HALF 5		FULL 10		CHARGE 15		RUN 30		THREAT 25			
HELLBLADE								CLASS MELEE			
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+17 ^{9+SB} (R)							
PEN 10		CLIP —		RLD —		WT 10 KG		AVL UN			
SPECIAL: BALANCED, POWER FIELD											

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S) +10, Parry (WS) +20, Survival (Per)

Talents: Battle Rage, Blademaster, Combat Master, Counter Attack, Crushing Blow, Devastating Assault, Frenzy, Swift Attack

Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Berserk Charge, Blood for the Blood God, Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Fear (2), From Beyond, Size (5), Unnatural Strength (3), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability

Gear: Light Brass Armour

Growing Rage: Each time a Daemon of Khorne kills an opponent with its Hellblade, the weapon gains +2 to the damage it inflicts in subsequent rounds. This bonus is cumulative with multiple kills, and lasts until the end of the encounter.

Khorne's Bloodlust: After using the Frenzy talent, the Herald of Khorne can make a Challenging (+0) Command test to have all Bloodletters within 8m become Frenzied (as per the Frenzy talent) as a Free Action.

FLESH HOUND

Unleashed from Khorne's fiery domain to drag the souls of cowards and traitors to the foot of the Blood God's throne, Flesh Hounds stalk their prey across time and space with dogged determination. Ruthless and uncaring, Khorne's hounds never tire and never slow in their pursuit, and most victims descend into madness from the chase long before they are caught.

Flesh Hounds are mountainous beasts of claws, teeth, spikes, and red scaly skin, but it is the gleaming brass Collar of Khorne around each muscled neck that is by far their most defining trait. Acting as a psychic vortex, the collars drain Warp energy to such a degree that the wearers are all but immune to attacks from psykers. The beasts seem to relish this fact, and spend more time terrorising psychic prey than any other, almost as if they feed upon the fear of their victims.

In combat, they are swift creatures capable of covering large stretches of ground very quickly. With butcher's knives for claws and monstrous jaws filled with rows of jagged teeth, Flesh Hounds are threats to even light vehicles, yet still nimble enough to avoid incoming fire and the frantic blows of their terrified quarry.

Despite their best efforts, the Askellian Ordo Malleus have been unable to track any major instances of Flesh Hound attacks or incursions. Generally elusive creatures that stalk their prey for months at a time, evidence of a Flesh Hound's presence is usually only found after their victim's death. The way the Daemons hunt through the Warp makes tracking or predicting their movements next to impossible, and the Inquisitors suspect the involvement of such creatures in many grisly murders, but they lack the proof to say so definitively. More disturbing are the reports from a number of prominent Inquisitors that claim a Xanthite cabal in the sector has actively summoned Flesh Hounds to hunt down their rivals. If true, this would mean these Radicals have moved beyond their attempts to harness the power of the Warp and have turned to outright daemonic heresy.

FLESH HOUND (TROOP)										15
H 4 01-10	12	WS	BS	S 8						
AR 4 11-20	12	49	—	45						
AL 4 21-30	12	T 8	AG	INT						
B 4 31-70	12	40	30	15						
LR 4 71-85	12	PER	WP 5	FEL						
LL 4 86-00	12	60	40	10						
			IFL							
			—							
HALF 8	FULL 16	CHARGE 24	RUN 48	THREAT 18						
TEETH AND CLAWS					CLASS <i>MELEE</i>					
RNG —	RoF —				DMG 1d10+10 ^{2+SB} (R)					
PEN 2	CLIP —	RLD —	WT —	AVL —						
SPECIAL: <i>RAZOR SHARP, TEARING</i>										

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Survival (Per)

Talents: Crushing Blow, Devastating Assault, Double Team, Frenzy, Hard Target

Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Berserk Charge, Bestial, Blood for the Blood God, Deadly Natural Weapons, Daemonic (4), Fear (2), From Beyond, Natural Armour (4), Quadruped, Size (5), Unnatural Senses (30), Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Willpower (1), Warp Instability

Gear: Collar of Khorne (see page 131)

Blood-scent: Once the Blood God puts a Flesh Hound on the trail of a target, that Flesh Hound gains a +30 bonus to Perception-based tests to detect that character, as well as the Unnatural Senses (80) trait.



JUGGERNAUT

Possibly the most ferocious and devastating of all Khorne's creations, Juggernauts are rumbling masses of flesh, bone, and brass that hit with such immense impact that they push battle tanks aside and split fortified positions in two. An amalgamation of daemonic flesh and mechanical devices, Juggernauts are nearly unstoppable in their assault and virtually impervious to the pitiful strikes of anyone foolish enough to stand in their way.

Juggernauts smoke and steam with an unquenchable rage that always drives them to attack whatever comes near them, even other Daemons. Not martially skilful like Bloodletters or nimble like Flesh Hounds, each Juggernaut fights by overwhelming its opponent with its inordinate bulk and crushing charge. Only properly-warded defences or the specially-trained warriors of the Grey Knights can ever hope to stand up to a full stampede from a herd of these daemonic battering rams.

Some Juggernauts enter battle with a Bloodletter upon their back. Referred to as Bloodcrushers, they are the ultimate form of shock cavalry, combining the unrestrained fury of a Juggernaut with the expert martial prowess and weaponry of Khorne's favoured foot soldiers. Sometimes Khorne gifts a Juggernaut to a great Herald or even a mortal champion, granting them the chance at entering the fray before their followers so that they might reap more skulls in the Blood God's name.

Although mass mind scrubbing efforts and even mass executions have stymied the terrible truth of the seven Crimson Incursions, the Askellian Ordo Malleus remains unable to completely block these events from recorded history. One of the more persistent images from these dark events is the memory of massed Bloodcrusher assaults. In fact, some of the most highly valued—and proscribed—artwork in the sector depicts some of these horrific attacks, sometimes in such detail that many claim to hear the screams of the dying amid the thundering hooves of their murderers.

As with the recorded instances of summoned Flesh Hounds, there are very few examples of Askellian cults successfully summoning Juggernauts. In the minds of many Inquisitors this is for the best, as Juggernauts are even more uncontrollable than Bloodletters and would undoubtedly kill thousands in a wild rampage before returning to the Warp.

JUGGERNAUT (ELITE)										20	
AR ⁶ 11-20 16		H ⁶ 01-10 16		AL ⁶ 21-30 16		WS 45		BS —		S ¹⁰ 55	
LR ⁶ 71-85 16		B ⁶ 31-70 16		LL ⁶ 86-00 16		T ¹⁰ 55		AC 22		INT 15	
						PER 18		WP ⁵ 40		FEL 15	
								IFL —			
HALF 6		FULL 12		CHARGE 18		RUN 36		THREAT 20			
HORNS AND HOOVES								CLASS MELEE			
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+10 ^{SB} (I)							
PEN 2		CLIP —		RLD —		WT —		AVL —			
SPECIAL: CONCUSSIVE (2), FELLING (4)											

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20

Talents: Devastating Assault, Frenzy, Hammer Blow, Iron Jaw, Thunder Charge

Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Berserk Charge, Bestial, Blood for the Blood God, Brutal Charge (4), Daemonic (5), Dark-sight, Fear (3), From Beyond, Deadly Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (6), Quadruped, Size (5), Stampede, Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (5), Unnatural Willpower (1), Warp Instability

Bloodcrushers: Bloodletters, Heralds of Khorne, and even some mortals who have gained the Blood God's favour may be granted a Juggernaut to use as a mount. If the rider ever fails the special Wrangling use of the Survival skill test to control its Juggernaut steed, the beast automatically becomes Frenzied per the Frenzy talent (see page 127 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook). During each of its turns, it must perform a Charge action towards the nearest character, friend or foe, until its rider restrains it through a successful Survival test.

BLOODTHIRSTER

The Bloodthirsters that lead Khorne's armies are among the fiercest and most dangerous creatures in existence. Towering and unstoppable, they glide through the air on massive, leathery wings, surrounded by sulphurous smoke and the stench of death. Reality recoils as they stride the battlefield, each step sundering the ground. Filled with an insensate rage, they put their unfettered fury into each of their punishing blows, almost as if every attack carried with it the very wrath of Khorne.

At the head of each Crimson Incursion has stood a titanic gore-soaked Bloodthirster, each one more dangerous than the last. The first two fell easily, torn apart by overwhelming firepower, but the five since then have each taken hundreds or even thousands of lives before their eventual banishment. Many Ordo Malleus Inquisitors operating in the sector fear that when the eighth Crimson Incursion occurs, its commander would be one of Khorne's Exalted Bloodthirsters, a Daemon of such power that the very forces of nature cower in revulsion and terror. Until that fateful day, the Ordo Malleus puts its efforts towards thwarting the larger blood cults foolish enough to think that summoning a Bloodthirster would aid their cause. Much to the Inquisition's relief so far, no attempts have met with success, but the Askellon Sector is massive and the vagaries of the Pandaemonium risk making even the smallest sacrifice a potential entry point for the most violent and murderous Daemon of Chaos.

BLOODTHIRSTER (MASTER)					195
H 10 01-10	28	WS	BS	S 21	
AR 10 11-20	28	99	40	75	
AL 10 21-30	28	T 18	AG	INT	
B 13 31-70	31	65	50	48	
LR 13 71-85	31	PER	WP 10	FEL	
LL 13 86-00	31	60	75	25	
		IFL	71		
HALF 8	FULL 16	CHARGE 24	RUN 48	THREAT 98	
GREAT AXE OF KHORNE					CLASS MELEE
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 3D10+36^{15+SB} (R)			
PEN 12	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 32 KG	AVL UN	
SPECIAL: POWER FIELD, PROVEN (4), UNBALANCED					
AXE OF KHORNE					CLASS MELEE
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 2D10+26^{5+SB} (R)			
PEN 4	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 16 KG	AVL UN	
SPECIAL: FELLING (2), POWER FIELD, RAZOR SHARP, VENGEFUL (8)					
BLOODFLAIL					CLASS MELEE
RNG 8M	RoF —	DMG 1D10+29^{8+SB} (I)			
PEN 4	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 8 KG	AVL UN	
SPECIAL: BLAST (3), CONCUSSIVE (4), FLEXIBLE, INACCURATE					
LASH OF KHORNE					CLASS MELEE
RNG 16M	RoF —	DMG 1D10+25^{4+SB} (R)			
PEN 4	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 8 KG	AVL UN	
SPECIAL: FLEXIBLE, SNARE (3), TEARING					

Skills: Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, The Warp) (Int), Intimidate (S) +20, Parry (WS) +20, Survival (Per)

Talents: Ambidextrous, Combat Master, Crushing Blow, Devastating Assault, Frenzy, Halo of Command, Hammer Blow, Killing Strike, Preternatural Speed, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Swift Attack, Thunder Charge, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee), Whirlwind of Death

Traits: Baneful Presence (30), Berserk Charge, Blood for the Blood God, Brutal Charge (4), Daemonic (6), Dark-sight, Fear (4), Flyer (10), From Beyond, Size (7), The Stuff of Nightmares, Touched by the Fates (4), Unnatural Strength (14), Unnatural Toughness (6), Unnatural Willpower (3), Warp Instability

Gear: Anointed Brass Armour

Weapons for Blood: A Bloodthirster fights with a Great Axe of Khorne wielded in both hands, or uses a single-handed Axe of Khorne with a Bloodflail or Lash of Khorne in the other hand.

Great Axe of Khorne: This Daemon Weapon requires two hands to use. Whenever the wielder kills a living opponent using this weapon (characters with the Daemonic or Machine trait do not count) he regains 1d10 wounds. Finally, if the wielder is killed, the GM rolls 1d10; on an 8+ an unarmed Bloodthirster bursts from the weapon and immediately is Frenzied (per the Frenzy talent on page 127 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook).

Khorne's Prowess: Once per encounter, a Bloodthirster can make a Difficult (-10) Command test to grant the Inescapable Attack talent to all Bloodletters and Heralds of Khorne within 8m until the start of the Greater Daemon's next turn.

INVESTIGATION TEMPLATE: NEW WOUNDS, OLD BLOOD

Overview: The Acolytes investigate disturbing reports concerning a high-ranking commander within Juno's planetary defence army, reports that speak of the Warp's growing influence over both men and machine. The commander has actually caught the attention of a Flesh Hound, which has been drawn to the area by blood rituals from a corrupted band of Enginseers.

This template puts an emphasis on negotiation and interrogation along with close-quarters combat against unexpected foes, as well as the crippling madness brought on by the Emphyrean. It can be introduced by the warband's master as a potential lead to start a new adventure, or during an existing campaign where the Acolytes hear word of secretive blood rituals and human sacrifice.

ACT I: HOUNDED

The head of one of Juno's largest military complexes, Lord General Yasonne Francis Houssemayne Du Boulay, has had a number of worrisome reoccurring dreams of being stalked by an unseen, ravenous beast. A hidden spy of the warband's Inquisitor has learned of these, and reported back to his master. Worried at what they might entail, the Inquisitor has dispatched the Acolytes to determine what is happening and ascertain any potential threats. Arriving at the massive fortress, the Acolytes seek out the Lord General and other high-ranking members of his staff. This can

entail adopting a suitable cover story, or acting in the name of their Inquisitor, but no matter what they attract the attention of the Vigil, Juno's local Enforcers. This can also involve attacks from any desperate petitioners who would kill for the high levels of access the Acolytes are wielding.

The Acolytes' investigations reveal that Lord General Boulay renounced his family's lucrative Warrant of Trade to maintain his position within Juno's proud Grand Army, or the Oldbloods as they are more often called, but found the position unrewarding. Some of his staff believe the dreams are the Emperor punishing Boulay, who has been reluctant to commit to aggressive (but often futile)

battles. Whatever the case, the Acolytes should learn that the dreams started not long after the entire regiment's vehicles began experiencing odd mechanical anomalies, such as weapons twisting to fire on friendly units or roaring uncontrollably across anyone in their path.

ACT II: HUNTED

The Acolytes likely move to investigate the regiment's vehicles, specifically the Adeptus Mechanicus Enginseers who oversee maintenance, repairs, and tech-rituals within the fortress. These Machine Cultists are unusually quick to anger, but at the same time seem pre-occupied with ensuring one group of vehicles does not mingle with any others. Worse, a following of Grand Fusilier Guardsmen being readied for deployment has formed here, unthinkingly compelled to watch over the area and violently expel any unauthorised personnel.

The Acolytes might use stealth and subterfuge to investigate further, but more likely call on violence to get past the armed Guardsmen, who are all eager for battle. If the Acolytes gain access to the vehicles, they come across strange symbols written in dried blood and signs of human sacrifice. Additional investigation with the unit's surgeons reveals that a number of low-ranking soldiers have been turning up dead in the barracks, drained of blood and covered with carvings of disturbing runes. Equipped with the knowledge that something is awry, they can bring their information to Lord General Boulay.

ACT III: HUNTERS

Either due to the time taken to investigate or because the Acolytes drew too much attention to themselves, the conspirators and their Grand Fusilier thralls have moved forward and abducted the Lord General before the Acolytes can arrive. They must now race against time to find Boulay before the blood-soaked ritual begins. The Enginseers serve Khorne unwittingly, though, adding the blood sacrifices to their maintenance rituals based on forbidden tomes and out of frustration for the Lord General's unwillingness to commit their war machines to battle. Despite this, they are fully committed to their goal of wider action for their sacred machines, no matter what other consequences might occur.

At the apex of the ritual, the stalking Flesh Hound emerges from the Warp, eager to devour its prey and anyone else nearby. Should the Acolytes fail, not only will one of Juno's finest commanders be slain (or possessed), but Juno's replacement leaders might launch new crusades across the sector, not caring whom they fight so long as the blood flows for Khorne.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- The Lord General's staff contain several Purple Flower Cultists of Slaanesh who also desire an end to Khorne's influence, and offer their support to the Acolytes. How long such an alliance might last, though, and how it ends, could be an even larger issue for the warband.
- Whilst moving through one of the many motor pools within the complex, the Acolytes are suddenly attacked by 4 servitor drones and 4 combat servitors. All of these bear multiple, horrid mutations they use in their frenzied attacks, and might be tied to the twisted wretches dwelling under the complex.
- The Enginseers are fully aware of their actions, and are working to attract the slaving Daemon so they might infuse their mightiest war machine with the Flesh Hound's bestial nature—thus creating a truly terrifying Daemon Engine.



WEAVERS OF FATE: THE PANTHEON OF TZEENTCH

"Humans think that they are in control of their lives, their destinies. This is a great lie, perpetrated by the Grand Architect as he shapes all that transpires throughout the galaxy."

—Archmeister Aeckelvol of the Church of the Hidden Hand

The Daemons of Tzeentch are perhaps the strangest and most varied of all the Warp's terrible denizens. As Tzeentch is the lord of magic and the shifting change inherent throughout the universe, its Daemons are ephemeral and constantly mutating, their appearance never the same. The Great Architect's servants transmute and twist the very fabric of reality where they appear, as magic and the Warp bleed into the universe with their passing.

SCHEMES ACROSS ASKELLON

Tzeentch is a powerful presence in the Askellon Sector. Its tendrils have seeped into many aspects of life throughout the area, and its minions influence many in positions of authority. There are a number of cults thriving in the sector devoted to Tzeentch, and they are working hard to spread their word to new worlds. Some of these are even led by carefully-concealed Daemons, who delight in taking a personal role in weaving intricate plots and devious concoctions to further their lord's endlessly intertwined designs for Mankind.

NEW TZEENTCH TRAIT

All Daemons of Tzeentch in this section gain the following new trait:

BLESSING OF TZEENTCH

Daemons of Tzeentch are blessed by their patron with unnatural protection. This counts as a force field with a protection rating of 20, and only overloads if either die on the protection roll results in an 8.

The Pandaemonium also holds a special place in Tzeentch's great work, and it uses the storm to great effect in his schemes. Though even the God of Fate cannot fully control or even fathom its nature, Tzeentch and its followers in Askellon have worked to bring about subtle changes in its focus or manoeuvre its path to effect more desirable outcomes. Thus, even the Great Storm can be part of Tzeentch's plans for Askellon, among the many other plots the Fate Weaver and its minions spread across the sector.



THE CHURCH OF THE HIDDEN HAND

A group of individuals founded on the premise of enlightenment, the Church of the Hidden Hand has grown to hold temples on nearly a dozen worlds across the Coreward edges of the Stygies Cluster. The public premise of the church is that the Emperor's Hand touches all things and guides everyone's path each day. This is an elaborate cover for a more insidious plan, however, as the church's true power lies in the guidance of Tzeentch.

The original founders of the church truly believed in the Emperor and His Divinity; over time, though, this was slowly eroded by infiltrators who worshipped Tzeentch and worked their way up through the ranks. Within a century, all of the original leaders of the church were gone, and the Hidden Hand fully embraced their new mission. Recruits to the church are slowly brought in line with their vision and, for many years, most individuals never understand the true purpose of the group, believing that they are simply serving the will of the Emperor.

The hidden goal of the Hidden Hand is to spread deeper understanding of the role the Great Architect plays in the universe. They purport to be a benevolent group, simply trying to bring enlightenment and understanding to the Imperium. They believe the Emperor is not a god and nothing more than a man with great vision—a vision given to him by Tzeentch.

This vision is for Mankind to embrace their growing psychic powers and fully accept the coming evolutionary change, and so the church attempts to unlock its followers' latent psychic powers to their full potential. What they cannot know is that their actions are indeed guided, but as part of a greater plot of a Daemon Prince of Tzeentch. For inscrutable reasons of its own, the creature is raising pockets of powerful psykers across Stygien worlds, and seeks to aim them at the gigantic world of Pellenne. Why it is concerned with events on that world is unknown, though worrisome readings of the Emperor's Tarot there hint at an ancient threat rising from the tunnelled core of the planet, something so powerful that even Daemons tremble.

THE FLAMES OF BARANTHA

Buried deep within the garden world of Barantha is a series of caverns, carefully guarded and kept concealed from any prying eyes for many centuries. These caves are the domain of the Shining Keepers, a sect unknown to the other residents of this pleasant, verdant planet. Within one of the caves is a pool of shimmering waters that burn without heat, never extinguishing and never repeating the same colour in each dancing flame.

The Shining Keepers represent the descendants of those who first discovered the cave system and accidentally learned that immersion in the burning waters granted visions beyond the dull serenity of Barantha. The flames showed the wonders of change, and with each generation the sect grows as more are selected to partake in the revelations. Below the pool, the Flamer of Tzeentch that provides these inspirational fires also feeds slowly on the souls of the humans above, growing in power until it is ready to emerge and bring true change to this ossified world. Each bather is also infused with the Warp, a small seedling of mutation to change the world's inhabitants.

THE VIRRACROMIN

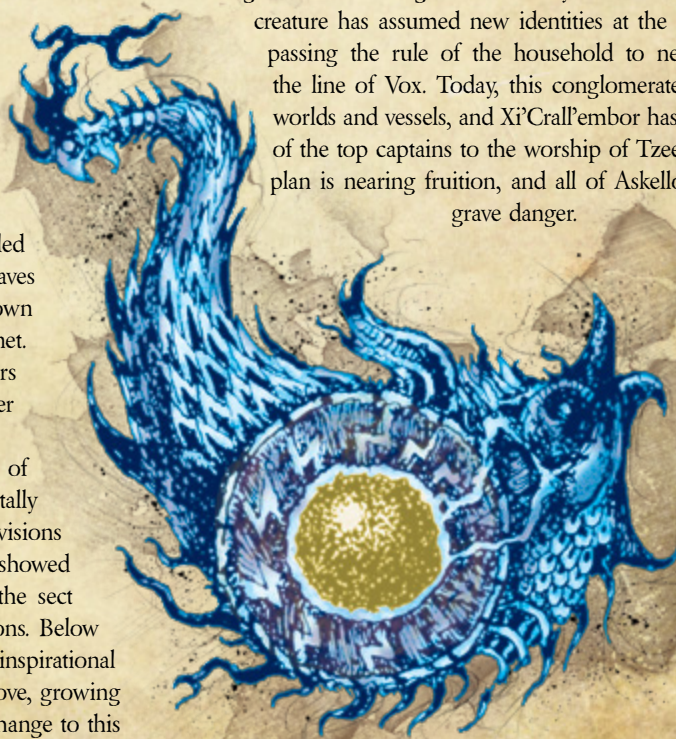
The Virracromin is a massive consortium that conducts trade across the Asphodel Depths, and was founded under the watchful eye of the retired Rogue Trader Rutger Vox. What none realise is that Vox was long dead before his passing, and a Daemon now rules the Virracromin.

Rutger Vox enjoyed his successes greatly and funnelled most of his new fortunes into even larger excursions. When the spirit of adventure took him once more, he led one of these missions to a far-off corner of the sector to explore a forgotten xenos temple. It was there that everything changed for the captain.

In this dark corner of the universe, Vox found a flawless, crystalline egg, nearly a metre tall and shimmering with all colours imaginable. The explorer became instantly fascinated with the beautiful object and would study the swirling patterns that light played out on its surface for hours, enthralled by the many strange shapes he could see them form. In time, he began to forget to eat or drink, his obsessive rapture with the mysterious egg becoming greater with each passing day. Finally, the man that was Rutger Vox dropped in front of his prize, and a new creature stood up and surveyed its surroundings.

On that fateful day, the Lord of Change Xi'Crall'embor broke free from its ancient bonds, escaped the egg where it had remained trapped for tens of millennia, and took possession of the body of Rutger Vox. The Greater Daemon of Tzeentch had closely observed all that transpired around it and understood the part it needed to play. By assuming Vox's identity, the Daemon began to shape the Virracromin to a new mission, one that would please Tzeentch greatly.

In the millennia that have passed, Xi'Crall'embor has steered the Virracromin to new and greater heights, always with the grand designs of the Changer of the Ways in the forefront. The creature has assumed new identities at the proper times, passing the rule of the household to new "heirs" in the line of Vox. Today, this conglomerate spans many worlds and vessels, and Xi'Crall'embor has corrupted all of the top captains to the worship of Tzeentch. A great plan is nearing fruition, and all of Askellon may be in grave danger.





DAEMONS OF TZEENTCH

The daemoniac followers of the God of Change are unendingly mutable in form, and often take on bizarre shapes as their Warp-forms coalesce into physical form upon emerging from the Immaterium. Flames, tentacles, tusks, feathers, and more adorn their multi-hued, twisting bodies, each unique and each designed in some way to serve the plots of their patron god.

HORROR OF TZEENTCH

The writhing, constantly-mutating creatures known as Horrors are the most numerous of all Tzeentch's servants. Fashioned from pure Warpstuff, they spew from the Empyrean to fight on behalf of Tzeentch's Daemon Princes and Lords of Change. Horrors delight in blasting foes with bolts of eldritch power before moving in to tear them apart. Due to their shifting and warping nature, these creatures are notoriously hard to destroy, and some claim that smiting a Horror causes it to split into two, smaller Daemons. Most have never lived long enough to confirm this story, however.

HORROR OF TZEENTCH (ELITE)										20
H ⁴ 01-10		WS		BS		S				
12		25		35		40				
AR ⁴ 11-20		T ⁸		AC		INT				
12		44		55		35				
B ⁴ 31-70		PER		WP ⁶		FEL				
12		40		36		15				
LR ⁴ 71-85		LL ⁴ 86-00				IFL				
12		12				—				
HALF 5		FULL 10		CHARGE 15		RUN 30		THREAT 18		
CLAWS										CLASS MELEE
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+6 ^{2+SB} (R)						
PEN 2		CLIP —		RLD —		WT —		AVL —		
SPECIAL: RAZOR SHARP										

Skills: Athletics (S) +30, Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Psyniscience (Per) +10

Talents: Warp Sense

Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Blessing of Tzeentch, Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), From Beyond, Multiple Arms (1d5), Psyker (PR 4), Two Weapon Wielder (Melee), Unnatural Willpower (3), Warp Instability

Psychic Powers: A Horror can use any 4 powers from the Pyromancy discipline.

Gear: Warpscale armour

Splitting Horrors: Whenever a Horror is slain, it divides into two lesser Horrors. These Daemons share the regular Horror profile, but are Troop level NPCs without armour. Lesser Horrors have 10 wounds, are banished to the Warp when they suffer any Critical damage, and do not have the Splitting Horrors rule.

HERALD OF TZEENTCH

Particularly powerful Horrors are often granted special status among the legions of their god. They achieve the rank of Herald and are elevated in power to lead the lesser minions of Tzeentch. Certain Heralds, like the being known as the Changeling, are dispatched by Tzeentch to carry out special missions that cannot be trusted to any other.

HERALD OF TZEENTCH (MASTER)										29
H ⁴ 01-10		WS		BS		S				
12		37		42		51				
AR ⁴ 11-20		T ⁸		AC		INT				
12		49		58		42				
B ⁴ 31-70		PER		WP ⁸		FEL				
12		44		51		22				
LR ⁴ 71-85		LL ⁴ 86-00				IFL				
12		12				41				
HALF 5		FULL 10		CHARGE 15		RUN 30		THREAT 28		
CLAWS										CLASS MELEE
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+7 ^{2+SB} (R)						
PEN 3		CLIP —		RLD —		WT —		AVL —		
SPECIAL: RAZOR SHARP										

Skills: Athletics (S) +30, Awareness (Per) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +20

Talents: Warp Sense

Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Blessing of Tzeentch, Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), From Beyond, Multiple Arms (1d5), Psyker (PR 5), Two Weapon Wielder (Melee), Unnatural Willpower (3), Warp Instability

Psychic Powers: A Herald can use any 5 powers from the Pyromancy or Divination discipline.

Gear: Warpscale armour

Horrors without End: Once per encounter when a Horror within 9 metres is being split into two, a Herald of Tzeentch can perform a Difficult (-10) Willpower test as a Free Action to allow that Horror to split into 1d5 lesser Horrors instead.



FLAMER OF TZEENTCH

In a pantheon of the bizarre, the Flamers of Tzeentch are perhaps the strangest of them all. Their ever-twisting bodies erupting with eyes, mouths, and tendrils, Flamers leap and bound across the battlefield spewing daemonfire against all who defy Tzeentch's will.

FLAMER OF TZEENTCH (ELITE)					25
AR ² 11-20	H ¹ 01-10	AL ² 21-30	WS	BS	S
			31	45	41
			T ⁸	AG	INT
			46	44	20
			PER	WP ⁶	FEL
			20	40	10
				IFL	
				—	
LR ² 71-85	B ⁴ 31-70	LL ² 86-00			
HALF 4	FULL 8	CHARGE 12	RUN 24	THREAT 22	
WARPFLAME			CLASS BASIC		
RNG 20M	RoF —/6	DMG 1D10+3 (E)			
PEN 4	CLIP —	RLD —	WT —	AVL —	
SPECIAL: FLAME, SPRAY, WARP WEAPON					
FIERY CLAWS			CLASS MELEE		
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1D10+4 ^{SB} (R)			
PEN 1	CLIP —	RLD —	WT —	AVL —	
SPECIAL: FLAME, PROVEN (3)					

The magical assaults that Flamers unleash are unlike anything most foes have encountered. In addition to fire that burns flesh from bones, other Flamers have been known to have more esoteric forms of attack. Forces battling Flamers have encountered flames that freeze, magical energies that transform people into pure crystal, eruptions of burning feathers, and other nightmarish attacks. The one thing that is certain when battling the forces of Tzeentch is that nothing is taken for granted, as no two battles are ever the same.

Skills: Awareness (Per), Psyniscience (Per)

Talents: None

Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Blessing of Tzeentch, Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), From Beyond, Hoverer (4), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability

Gear: Warpscale Armour

Flames from the Warp: Any character who suffers damage from a Warpflame attack from this Daemon must make an Ordinary (+10) Willpower test or gain 1d5 Corruption points.

SCREAMER OF TZEENTCH

Sailing on the aether are the Screamers of Tzeentch, also known as Warp Sharks or Sky Sharks. These hunting beasts seek out souls for food and are voracious killers. When the Warp portals open to disgorge Horrors and Flamers, schools of Screamers also fly forth, their high pitched whistling ringing out across the battlefield in an eerily haunting chorus. These screams have been known to drive men mad, and many who have heard these wails and survived are troubled by nightmares for the rest of their lives.

Screamers resemble multi-coloured manta rays, like aquatic beasts covered with spikes and scales. Magical energies swirl around the creatures and help to propel them through the air.

SCREAMER OF TZEENTCH (TROOP)					15
H ¹ 01-10 7		WS		BS	S
		35		30	48
AR ¹ 11-20 7	AL ¹ 21-30 7		T ⁷	AC	INT
		40		50	16
B ¹ 31-70 7		PER		WP ⁶	FEL
		35		40	10
LR ¹ 71-85 7		LL ¹ 86-00 7		IFL	
				—	
HALF 8		FULL 16		CHARGE 24	RUN 48
THREAT 25		WARP JAWS			
CLASS MELEE					
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+10 ^{6+SB} (R)	
PEN 10		CLIP —		RLD —	
WT —		AVL —			
SPECIAL: RAZOR SHARP, TEARING					

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag), Psyniscience (Per)

Talents: Warp Sense

Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Blessing of Tzeentch, Daemonic (3), Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), Flyer (8), From Beyond, Size (5), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability
Disc Riders: Horrors, Heralds of Tzeentch, and even mortals who have gained the God of Change's favour may be granted a Screamer to use as a mount, which has been twisted into a dislike form. If the rider ever fails the Wrangling special use of the Survival skill test to control his daemonic steed, the beast automatically becomes Frenzied per the Frenzy talent (see page 127 of the DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook). During each of its turns it must perform a Charge action towards the nearest character, friend or foe, until its rider restrains the creature through a successful Survival test.

LORD OF CHANGE

The legions of Tzeentch are commanded by the Lords of Change, the Greater Daemons of the Changer of Ways. These massive creatures resemble humanoid avians, feathered with rainbow hues and incandescent robes. They tower over mortals, although their size can vary (as with all things relating to Tzeentch). Lords of Change can appear frail and emaciated, leaning heavily upon their staves to appear as ancient, wizened creatures that are physically weak. This is just another deception, however, as these monsters possesses lightning fast reflexes, iron skin, and massive strength.

To any who stand before these beings, they appear as omniscient, all-powerful creatures that can shape the future with a wave of their hand. In fact, the Lords of Change love to warp reality, breaking down the barriers of time and space to suit their every whim. Their minds operate on a level unknowable to humans and aliens alike, seeing all dimensions and probabilities in every situation.

While immensely powerful, the Feathered Lords prefer to operate in the shadows instead of through direct confrontation and warfare. This is not due to cowardice, however—it is simply in their nature to let others do their bidding and assume the risk. Scores of lesser Daemons, Chaos Cultists, and even Chaos Space Marines are all available to serve these dark masters.

When mortals view a Lord of Change, their sanity is never the same again. More than any other feature, the eyes of these terrifying creatures have the ability to break one's soul. Behind the eyes of the Daemon lie all the wonders and terrifying knowledge of Tzeentch, and peering into those portals is enough to reduce even the sturdiest and heartiest to a quivering pool of ruin.

LORD OF CHANGE (MASTER)										180
H ⁵ 01-10		16		WS		BS		S ¹²		
AR ⁸ 11-20		19		AL ⁸ 21-30		19		T ¹¹		AG
B ⁸ 31-70		19		PER		WP ¹²		FEL		
LR ⁸ 71-85		19		LL ⁸ 86-00		19		IFL		80
50		60		75		100				
60		75		100						
90		80		57						
HALF 9		FULL 18		CHARGE 27		RUN 54		THREAT 100		
STAFF OF CHANGE										CLASS MELEE
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 2D10+12 ^{SB} (E)						
PEN —		CLIP —		RLD —		WT 9 KG		AVL UN		
SPECIAL: FELLING (4), POWER FIELD, WARP WEAPON										

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (All) +30, Intimidate (S), Parry (WS) +20

Talents: Ambidextrous, Warp Sense

Traits: Baneful Presence (30), Blessing of Tzeentch, Daemonic (5), Dark-sight, Fear (4), Flyer (8), From Beyond, Psyker (PR 10), Size (7), Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength (5), Unnatural Willpower (4)

Psychic Powers: A Lord of Change can use psychic powers from any discipline.

Gear: Exalted Warpscale Armour

Staff of Change: The staff counts as a psi-focus, and any character who suffers damage from it must make a Difficult (-10) Willpower test or gain 1d10 Corruption points.

Flood of Unreality: No mortal being can hope to manipulate the raw stuff of the Warp with the skill of a creature who has bathed in its orphic light for millennia. A Changer of Ways gains an extra Half Action each turn, which it can use in that turn either to maintain its Flying altitude or manifest a psychic power.



INVESTIGATION TEMPLATE: THE SPIRALLING TOWERS

Overview: The Acolytes are tasked with escorting an influential scholar from Juno's ever-shifting circles of power. The dignitary is to visit a feudal world's renowned collection of tall, twisting structures, but soon the Acolytes discover that these Silver Towers are a trap set by Tzeentch to ensnare new souls for the Changer of Ways.

This template combines social interaction with violence and exploration, where the Acolytes must work with a powerful individual steeped in Juno's politics, face deadly aliens and even deadlier Daemons, and make their way through a maze-like, impossible construct that defies logic. It can be used when the Acolytes are travelling back from a previous adventure, or when their Inquisitor stands ready to reward them with an easy assignment—for what could go wrong with escorting a scholar to a routine visitation?

ACT I: PLOTS AND COUNTERS

The renowned sage Lady Pansa Hask of Juno is travelling to the feudal world of Eiron to inspect that world's famous Silver Towers, and the Acolytes have been assigned as her bodyguard. The Acolytes might have undertaken this duty at the orders of their Inquisitor, who harbours suspicions concerning this dignitary or merely wants to garner favour within the courts of Juno. Alternatively, they might take it on when encountering the lord already in transit to Eiron, and are pressed into service when she is accosted (or insert themselves into service themselves, to garner greater Influence).

During a short translation from the Warp to re-enter the final leg of the journey, Dusk Viper Corsairs attack and board their ship. These Eldar pirates attempt to capture the dignitary, and a firefight ensues. The Acolytes repel the small raiding party while their ship fends off the small alien corvette, but the Corsairs fight desperately to reach the scholar. If questioned, a dying Eldar only says that their seers have predicted doom should this person reach Eiron, and that it is better she die here. What the Acolytes cannot know is that there is a predictive duel between Farseer Mandr'thiel of Craftworld Miandrothe and a Changer of Ways concerning times to come. Mandr'thiel has just foreseen a daemonic threat that could arise from Lady Hask's visit, one that might upset her plans in Askellon. The Corsairs were her only hope at preventing this—though the Acolytes might emerge as a new hope.

ACT II: TWISTING TURNS

Upon arrival, the Acolytes and their charge depart for the Silver Towers, which are visible even many kilometres away at the rough landing field. The Towers are a collection of shining protrusions into the sky, near-organic designs that gleam against the rough stonework battlements that surround them. How a lowly world could create such magnificence is unknown, but legends say that long ago its vision came to Eiron's then-Archduke during prayers to the Emperor, driving him to sacrifice the entire planet's workforce for many decades to building them. Thousands now come each day from offworld to marvel at their beauty and walk the interconnected, labyrinthine stairwells that lead to the spires.

There is a large crowd outside the structures, and as the Acolytes arrive a fight erupts between groups all struggling to enter. One is heavily armed with vicious blades and cleavers, and rapidly defeats their opponents before attacking anyone else nearby, even hacking at the Towers' bases as well. The Acolytes are forced to defend themselves against the frenzied mob, and if they examine their corpses, can note the markings of Khorne branded into their flesh. Lady Hask, though, cares little for this and eagerly races into one of the grand staircases, leaping from step to step and dashing off to record the intricate carvings on the walls. After only a few spiralling curves, though, she vanishes into one of the many branching pathways—and the Acolytes see that the carvings have begun to take on the distinctive shapes of Tzeentch symbols, with iridescent feathers strewn in their path.

ACT III: DEAD ENDS

As the Acolytes search for the dignitary, the Towers become a maze of passages that defy their senses. Striding ever upwards does not change their altitude (according to the carved windows, anyway), and linear stairways might somehow return a character back to his origin. Psychic powers and strong wills are needed here, for normal perception is likely to fail them. Worse yet, behind one curve is a waiting Horror, ready to show them the perils of thwarting the God of Fate.

Finally, the Acolytes find the lost Lady in a wide passageway before a large, swirling portal filled with twisting patterns and symbols. The dignitary is intent on solving the puzzles playing out on the portal's surface, and seems oblivious to what is transpiring around her. Something is stirring on the other side and about to emerge, though, forcing the PCs to make a hasty retreat, perhaps having to drag their charge along the way, or face an emerging swarm of Screemers.

They find that all the paths they travelled on have changed, though, and Tzeentch's forces are on their heels the entire time. When they finally exit, they might find many days have passed, or no time at all. Convincing others of the dangers the Towers pose could be problematic, but it is essential to prevent the Fate Weaver from entangling others in its plots here.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Lady Hask shows her true nature when the mob attacks outside the Towers, pulling a serrated knife and ripping apart many herself. By spilling blood here, she and the other Khorne worshippers hope to bring the Blood God's power and topple works of the feathered god—or at least complete a summoning ritual for a Bloodletter.
- The Acolytes discover that Lady Hask is not the first Junoan of power to visit the Towers, and must trace down the others to detect if they had been corrupted or possessed during their time on Eiron.
- The Acolytes arrive too late, reaching Lady Hask just as she solves the portal's mysteries and steps inside, falling into the Warp and a new existence. This newly born Daemon Prince of Tzeentch can serve as a Nemesis (as per the DARK HERESY GAME MASTER'S KIT) for the PCs in future adventures, ready to show the Acolytes what wonders await within the Warp for them as well.

BRINGERS OF DECAY: THE PANTHEON OF NURGLE

"Hurry, my children. We have gifts to share!"

—The Great Unclean One Abscessas,
during the Pustulance of Hive Kallin

The Ruinous Powers each bring madness and destruction to the mortal realm in their own way, yet none delight in their work quite like Nurgle, the Plague Father. For it, destruction is not an end, but merely a new beginning—the start of the next cycle of life. For the Lord of Flies, death and decay lead to rebirth and revitalisation.

Nurgle's foul minions work tirelessly to bring their master's grand plan to fruition. From the most corpulent Great Unclean One, to the tiniest mite of a Nurgling, all do their part. They are the soldiers of his armies, the deliverers of his plagues, and the recorders of his efforts. The cycle is eternal, and the plans to keep it churning ever forward are complex, but Nurgle has faith in his work, and his minions have faith in him.

A DISEASED SECTOR

Askellon has seen the attentions of Nurgle throughout its long history. Hive Desoleum has been victim of the cancerous Callers of Sorrow for untold years. The entire world of Oris Minor in the Rubicon Sub-Sector fell to a horrid swarm of Plague Drones that overwhelmed local defences to attack the single Arbitrator there responsible for banishing a Beast of Nurgle years ago. On the night known as Wailing Eve, many thousands died when a single Great Unclean One stepped onto the farming colony of Hulmerk for reasons still undiscovered. Dawn brought screams from the survivors, who discovered grotesquely rotted corpses laying in permanent repose in beds across the burgeoning settlement. The entire region, along with any left alive, was burnt from orbit under orders from a stern Ordo Malleus Inquisitor, lest the unnatural contagion spread farther.

NEW NURGLE TRAIT

All Daemons of Nurgle in this section gain the following new trait:

NAUSEATING

A character who fails a Fear test against a foe with the Nauseating trait does not roll on Table 8-11: Shock (see page 287 of the DARK HERESY CORE Rulebook). Instead, the character is Stunned for one round per degree of failure, as he doubles over and retches uncontrollably. The character still suffers all other effects of failing a Fear test, such as possibly gaining Insanity points. If the character succeeds on the Fear test, he suffers one level of Fatigue as he contends with the bile rising in his throat.



BEAST OF NURGLE

As Grandfather Nurgle's other children brew their poxes, count each other's boils, and tend to the suffering of festering souls, his Beasts crash about playfully, their massive, tentacled frames leaving trails of slime and upturned soil behind them. Though their reckless bounding creates havoc, none mind it, for the enthusiasm and glee the Beasts display reminds all of Nurgle's Daemons that theirs is a joyful burden.

While many Beasts spend their entire existence playing only in the great Garden, those who enjoy their master's special favour may be allowed to venture in the mortal realm. Here they eagerly crash into new playmates, rotting even the strongest steel in seconds as their poisoned tongues burn flesh. As they latch on to their newfound companions, their tentacles and sheer bulk shatter bones and rip limbs from sockets. Inevitably, their unfortunate victims stop moving. When this happens, the Beasts may whimper or snuff for a moment, but soon spot a bit of motion nearby and shuffle off to greet their new friends. This can result in the befoulment of entire cities, as was seen when a single Beast began the infamous Pustulance of Hive Kallin.

BEAST OF NURGLE (ELITE)					25	
H ¹ 01-10		13		WS	BS	S
AR ² 11-20		14		43	34	52
AL ² 21-30		14		T ¹²	AC	INT
B ⁴ 31-70		16		63	25	16
LR ² 71-85		14		PER	WP ⁵	FEL
LL ² 86-00		14		34	34	16
				IFL		
				—		
HALF 4		FULL 8		CHARGE 12		RUN 24
THREAT 13						
CLAWS				CLASS MELEE		
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+5 ^{SB} (R)		
PEN —		CLIP —		RLD —		WT —
AVL —						
SPECIAL: TOXIC (3)						
TENTACLES				CLASS MELEE		
RNG 3M		RoF —		DMG 1d10+10 ^{5+SB} (I)		
PEN 0		CLIP —		RLD —		WT —
AVL —						
SPECIAL: CORROSIVE, FLEXIBLE, TOXIC (2)						

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per)

Talents: Thunder Charge

Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Crawler, Daemonic (3), Dark-sight, Fear (2), From Beyond, Nauseating, Regeneration (2), Size (6), Spewing Tentacles[†], Sturdy, Toxic (2), Trail of Slime^{††}, Unnatural Toughness (3), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability

[†] **Spewing Tentacles:** As a Full Action, a Beast of Nurgle can unleash one of the following effects from its tentacles:

- **Clouds of Flies:** The Daemon unleashes a mass of flies, which create a cloud centred on its location with the Smoke (3) quality lasting 1d5 rounds.
- **Foul Gases:** Noxious fumes spew forth from the Daemon; each character without the Daemonic or Machine trait who is within 10 metres of the Beast must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1d5 Rounds.

^{††} **Trail of Slime:** Beasts of Nurgle leave a wake of disgusting slime wherever they crawl. Any character who walks through an area so defiled must make a Difficult (-10) Toughness test or suffer 1d10 Impact damage (ignoring armour and Toughness bonus) from the diseases in the rotting path.

PLAGUE DRONE

Not all Beasts overcome their playthings, and are even banished back to Nurgle's Garden where many years might pass as they develop new forms, protected by thousands of bloated flies. They emerge as Rot Flies—their joy gone, replaced by hatred and a need for revenge. Their form also changes: legs are replaced by sharpened limbs, slimy flesh hardens into armoured chitin, and tentacles are replaced with enormous, insectoid wings.

The Pus Lord cannot bear to see such madness take root in one of his children, so he sends elite Plaguebearers known as Plague Drones to care for these Daemons. Riding airborne atop their Rot Fly steeds, Plague Drones eagerly spread disease and decay at the forefront of Nurgle's children. Though few have been sighted in Askellon, or at least few have survived to report such occurrences, Poxifex Spengh of the Callers of Sorrow has performed many ritual supplications to his Grandfather for aid in summoning these foul creatures to his side.

PLAGUE DRONE (ELITE)					20	
H ³ 01-10		16		WS	BS	S ⁶
AR ⁴ 11-20		17		54	22	42
AL ⁴ 21-30		17		T ¹³	AC	INT
B ⁴ 31-70		17		72	40	30
LR ⁴ 71-85		17		PER	WP ⁶	FEL
LL ⁴ 86-00		17		30	49	14
				IFL		
				—		
HALF 6		FULL 12		CHARGE 18		RUN 36
THREAT 18						
PLAGUE SWORD				CLASS MELEE		
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+13 ^{7+SB} (R)		
PEN 0		CLIP —		RLD —		WT 7 Kg
AVL UN						
SPECIAL: TOXIC (2)						

Skills: Athletics (S) +20

Talents: Iron Jaw, True Grit

Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Daemonic (3), Dark-sight, Fear (2), Flyer (6), From Beyond, Nauseating, Size (5), Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (3), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability

Gear: Rot Armour

Drone Gulp: When fighting an opponent of Size (4) or less in melee combat, should the Plague Drone score more degrees of success than the Weapon Skill bonus of its foe, the Daemon immediately swallows the target whole. The target immediately suffers a result of 1d5 on Table 7-16: **Impact Critical Effects – Body** on page 238 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook. Breaking out requires a Hard (-20) Strength test, or some other challenge at the GM's discretion. Failure on a test to escape means the character immediately suffers a result of 1d5 on Table 7-8: **Energy Critical Effects – Body** on page 234 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook.



HERALD OF NURGLE

Mortals who manage to resist Nurgle's Rot for a lengthy time become powerful Plaguebearers, which are known as Heralds of Nurgle. These nightmarish creatures embrace their role and lead their daemonic brethren from the Garden of Nurgle to the mortal realms of man.

HERALD OF NURGLE (MASTER)					33
H ³ 01-10 19		WS	BS	S ⁸	
AR ⁴ 11-20 20	AL ⁴ 21-30 20	55	41	56	
B ⁴ 31-70 20		T ¹⁶	AC	INT	
		69	30	48	
LR ⁴ 71-85 20	LL ⁴ 86-00 20	PER	WP ⁸	FEL	
		50	61	21	
			IFL		45
HALF 4		FULL 8		CHARGE 12	RUN 24
THREAT 31					
VOMIT ATTACK					CLASS PISTOL
RNG 5M	RoF S/-/-	DMG 1d10+2 (E)			
PEN 4	CLIP —	RLD —	WT —	AVL —	
SPECIAL: CORROSIVE, SPRAY, TOXIC (3)					
VIRULENT PLAGUE SWORD					CLASS MELEE
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 1d10+15 ^{7+SB} (R)			
PEN 0	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 7 KG	AVL UN	
SPECIAL: CORROSIVE, TOXIC (2)					

Skills: Athletics (S) +20, Awareness (Per) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Intimidate (S) +20, Logic (Int), Medicae (Int), Parry (WS), Psyniscience (Per) +20, Scrutiny (Per), Survival (Per)

Talents: Iron Jaw, Thunder Charge, True Grit

Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Fear (3), From Beyond, Nauseating, Psyker (PR 4), Regeneration (1), Size (5), Unnatural Strength (3), Unnatural Toughness (6), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability

Psyker: A Herald of Nurgle can use any 4 powers from the Biomancy discipline, plus the power Nurgle's Rot (see page 406 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook).

Gear: Rot armour

Essence of Decay: Mere exposure to a Herald of Nurgle's foul presence can rust and degrade even the strongest materials. While within 20 metres of this Daemon, all equipment, weaponry, and armour functions as though it were of Poor craftsmanship, regardless of its actual craftsmanship, unless it possesses the Sanctified weapon quality. At the GM's discretion, other items may also be immune to this rule.

GREAT UNCLEAN ONE

The Greater Daemons of Nurgle are said to closely represent their patron god: massive, loathsome creatures made of rotting flesh, burrowing maggots, infesting Nurglings, and diseased buboes that invoke retching horror in all that witness their terrifying appearance. Despite their horrific visages, these Daemons are jovial and enthusiastic, just like Grandfather Nurgle himself. They eagerly lead their minions to greet new friends, spreading filth and plagues wherever they go. That few survive such encounters is of little care, for thanks to the blessings of Nurgle's Rot these sluggards soon rise as energetic Plaguebearers to join the Plague Lord's cause. Often, a Great Unclean One takes a particular liking to mortals who catch its pox-ridden eye, and bestows gifts on them through the years. Many in the Askellian Ordo Malleus speculate that this is the hidden source of Poxifex Spengh's power within the Callers of Sorrow in Hive Desoleum.

GREAT UNCLEAN ONE (MASTER)					230
H ⁶ 01-10 28		WS	BS	S ¹⁰	
AR ¹⁰ 11-20 32	AL ¹⁰ 21-30 32	49	42	56	
B ¹² 31-70 34		T ²²	AC	INT	
		98	21	56	
LR ¹⁰ 71-85 32	LL ¹⁰ 86-00 32	PER	WP ¹¹	FEL	
		43	71	47	
			IFL		73
HALF 5		FULL 10		CHARGE 15	RUN 30
THREAT 79					
GREAT PLAGUE SWORD					CLASS MELEE
RNG —	RoF —	DMG 2d10+17 ^{7+SB} (R)			
PEN 6	CLIP —	RLD —	WT 20 KG	AVL UN	
SPECIAL: CORROSIVE, POWER FIELD, TOXIC (4)					

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Command (Fel), Intimidate (S) +20, Parry (WS), Psyniscience (Per) +20, Scrutiny (Per), Survival (Per)

Talents: Nowhere to Hide, Thunder Charge

Traits: Baneful Presence (40), Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Fear (4), From Beyond, Nauseating, Psyker (PR 7), Regeneration (5), Size (7), Stuff of Nightmares, Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (5), Unnatural Toughness (9), Unnatural Willpower (4), Warp Instability

Psyker: A Great Unclean One can use any 4 powers from the Biomancy discipline, plus the power Nurgle's Rot (see page 406 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook).

Gear: Ironrust armour

Nurglings!: A Great Unclean One is always covered with Nurglings, who grow and caper amidst the folds of rotting flesh that cover its body. Once per encounter, as a Full Action a Great Unclean One can release 1d5 Nurglings (see page 416 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook) to further spread the Grandfather's blessings. These lesser Daemons fight together as a group starting in the following round.

Embodiment of Decay: Proximity to a Great Unclean One's unnatural corpulence can rust and degrade even the strongest materials. While within 20 metres of this Greater Daemon, all equipment, weaponry, and armour functions as though it were of Poor craftsmanship, regardless of its actual craftsmanship or even if it has the Sanctified quality.

INVESTIGATION TEMPLATE: THE LINGERING STENCH

Overview: In a remote corner of Askellon, the Acolytes discover that a once-defeated Nurgle cult may have risen again in the area, and that it was more powerful than its remains would have indicated. Its true power descended from a manifested Daemon, which continues to empower its worshippers.

This template can be introduced whenever or wherever the PCs are conducting research, where they can discover information that leads to investigating the cult, its supposed eradication, and possible daemonic influences. The template includes not only investigative efforts but also fierce combat with cultists and the Plague Drone that is leading them into Nurgle's foul embrace.

ACT I: BURIED IN BUREAUCRACY

While conducting research at an Imperial facility, possibly as part of an ongoing investigation or at their Inquisitor's direction, unsettling information comes to the Acolytes' attention concerning a recently-defeated cult of the Plague Lord. Uncovered data indicates the cult should not have been able to sustain itself and its Warp-tainted weapons for as long as it did, and the surrounding area has not recovered from its presence in the expected way. There have even been sporadic attacks against this facility, originating from the supposedly-pacified region. As it is not a vital location, the slow progress of revitalisation and ongoing minor skirmishes has not troubled anyone—until now.

Requests for further records to gain more access meet with misdirection and obfuscation. After several delays, the Acolytes gain limited access. Navigating the information is laborious, and on more than one occasion they are pulled from the search to aid local defences in repelling assaults on the facility. Though minor, these continued assaults are aimed at stymieing any progress in researching the cult or its current activities. The revealed data is still incomplete, but hints at deliberately-buried tales of horrific possessions and other daemonic activities.

ACT II: A TRAIL OF CORRUPTION

Now possessing evidence that the cult was greater than official records indicated, the PCs begin investigation in the field. Further research and questioning of those who purged the cult reveals where it was most concentrated, and the Acolytes make their way to a small settlement in an underhive or beyond the city's borders.

A series of interrogations and minor skirmishes (with enemies wielding powerful, Warp-tainted, and toxic weapons) leads to a tunnel connecting the cult's old headquarters to an underground cave system. It is filled with plant and animal life, all thriving despite showing clear signs of disease and decay. Flies of unnatural shape and size buzz through the dank air in thick clouds. As the Acolytes travel through the tunnel system, they encounter increasingly warped resistance. This could include shambling, infectious humans or even animated corpses (see page 23 of the **DARK HERESY GAME MASTER'S KIT**) and Nurglings eager to greet their new playmates.

ACT III: THE FOUL GARDEN

At the end of the winding caves, the Acolytes discover the final lair, where a fat Plague Drone buzzes contentedly with devoted humans. This Daemon was summoned years ago, and has sustained itself on sacrifices and spreading diseases since then. It is also the source of the tainted weaponry the cult members wield, as well as why the region never recovered after the battles against the cult.

The lair is on the other side of a toxic pool of bubbling pus; at least one Acolyte might need to swim through the foul muck to reach the Daemon and risk almost certain Corruption and mutation. The creature awaits them, planting festering heads and rotting limbs with its foul proboscis to create a pestilent garden which Father Nurgle can use to share his gifts. The Acolytes must fully destroy it and its diseased disciples if this world is to ever fully recover from the attentions of the Lord of Flies.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- The facility scribes working with the Acolytes are part of the cult, and are deliberately keeping details hidden. To prevent the Acolytes from becoming more of a threat, they arrange for them to discover false information that leads the warband into an ambush.
- The Plague Drone has burrowed deeply into realspace, and a Warp rift is about to open. The Acolytes must not only deal with the Drone and its followers, but also ensure the rift is closed before other Daemons escape from the Immaterium.
- Before it is banished, the Plague Drone gifts its toxic plague sword upon one of the Acolytes, for reasons it refuses to explain. The other PCs must now wonder at the true allegiance of their comrade, who could be worried the Daemon saw something within him that he has not detected himself.

MASTERS OF EXCESS: THE PANTHEON OF SLAANESH

"There, the lands of Slaanesh stretched out below it, was a Fortress of whimsies and foibles. It was an unlovely thing, stained by war and victory."

— from *The Liber Malefic*

Slaanesh is the Lord of Pleasure, the Master of Excess in All Things. Of all the Dark Gods, Slaanesh is dedicated to the pursuit of earthly gratification, of forbidden pleasure, dangerous obsession, and the overthrow of decency. Called invariably the Dark Prince and She Who Thirsts, Slaanesh is neither male nor female, but a horrifying representation of hedonistic and perverse pleasure.

Slaanesh was given life by the hubris of the alien Eldar, whose mighty galaxy-spanning empire spiralled into decadence many millennia ago. The Fall of the Eldar was signalled by the birth-scream of Slaanesh, a tsunami of raw emotion heralding the arrival of a new god within the Realm of Chaos. In realspace, this violent birth was accompanied by an implosion of unimaginable power that sucked hundreds of worlds into the Warp, tearing the heart from the Eldar civilisation and killing billions of its subjects at a stroke. Such was the ferocity of this Warp-storm that it tore the veil between realspace and Immaterium forever, creating a vast Warp rift that we call the Eye of Terror.

Rampant and hungry, Slaanesh feasted upon the very souls of the Eldar, almost wiping out the ancient race completely in the days of the new god's birth. Yet in the Warp itself, time is irrelevant. The succession of events from cause and effect is not linear, and no laws govern the Realm of Chaos. As the Dark Prince's rival gods see it, Slaanesh has always existed in the Warp, and yet has never existed at all. Its realm is vast, twisting with endless and labyrinthine passages, and at the heart sits the Palace of Slaanesh, an unnatural and unassailable fortress of pleasure.

ASKELLIAN EXCESSES

The Prince of Excess reigns in a vast and luxuriously appointed palace in the void, where concubines and favoured followers litter the halls, indulging themselves in myriad perverse pleasures. While the other Chaos gods look unfavourably upon trespassers to their realms, Slaanesh actively lures mortal and Daemon alike to its unnatural domain, where they risk becoming ensnared in warped delights for all eternity.

Slaanesh also creates palaces in the more mundane locations within realspace, on locations throughout the galaxy and beyond. Askellon has many such dens of excess, whence the Dark Prince tempts mortals and launches new sensations across the sector.

THE JUNOAN DEPTHS

The Vesuna Regis on Juno is one of the grandest structures in all of Askellon, yet none know all of the innumerable lost chambers and layers of this massive assemblage that exist buried below its surface level. One such location is known simply as the Depths to those nobles and other powers who furtively make their way from the magnificent palaces above to these decadent burrows.

NEW SLAANESH TRAIT

All Daemons of Slaanesh in this section gain the following new trait:

SOPORIFIC MUSK

Daemons of Slaanesh emit hypnotic scents that entrance and captivate their foes. Enemies engaged in melee with one or more Daemons with this trait suffer a -10 penalty to their Dodge and Parry tests.

All those within the perfumed environs wear elaborate masks of wildly exaggerated expressions, the better to hide their well-known visages from fellow rulers and act freely without retribution. Not all who cavort and prance are actually wearing masks, though, for those who oversee the Depths have left humanity behind long ago, if they were ever mortal to begin with.

No sin is too excessive here, and many spend long periods with court medicae to recover after the debauches from a visit—should they recover at all. For those who display impressive zeal in seeking out the most terrible of pleasures and ecstatic of pains, there are carefully hidden alcoves where the true mistresses of excess await in their daemoniac splendour. Here, mortals are tested to beyond their endurances, and those who display sufficient devotion to the Dark Prince are brought into the Realm of Chaos to forever serve their god. Those who do not survive the tests instead become decorations, rendered into pleasing shapes and the subjects of amused chatter for other visitors to the Depths.

THE PASTEL GARDENS OF TSESSELLE

One of the private garden worlds of the fabulously wealthy Rogue Trader Everest Pallon, Thesselle has been kept a quiet secret even amidst the war-torn reaches Spinward of Myros Kappa. Discovered early in M38, Pallon's family kept its location off of Askellian charts and made it a personal fiefdom. Over the generations, the family spent more and more time on it, creating expansive cultivations of flowers and other sweet-smelling flora from across the sector, and transforming a pleasant world into one of entrancing beauty. No expense was spared in the effort, but those who the Pannon Dynasty allowed to visit would themselves fervently proffer their own fortunes for the opportunity to visit again and once more smell the exquisite fragrances.

Especially eager visitors are allowed to take a single planting, though these offer minor shades of the enthralling scents on Thesselle. These only drive their desire to once again sleep amidst the pastel petals and dream of lean figures of disturbing, yet enticing, grace who tend to the flowers each night and impart a fragment of their essence into each of the countless fragrances. Of late, the dynasty has allowed weary Guardsmen fighting in the endless wars in Myros Kappa to recover on Thesselle. Their officers have delighted in the renewed fanaticism the troops display when returning to battle, though they now contend with the numerous unexplained deaths that have occurred far from the front lines.

THE VEILED SWORDMISTRESSES OF HAVARTH

Legends abound within the Cyclopia Sub-Sector of these mysterious beings, said to be unequaled in their mastery of the blade. Most of the tales centre on the hive world of Havarth, though the disturbing legends have spread to Desoleum and even the asteroids of Port Aquila. All speak of lissome figures wielding swords of purest gold, each in layers of violet fabrics and each wearing a diaphanous veil that reveals nothing of their faces, yet seems to allow for normal visibility. Each tale holds that these are the finest practitioners of the blade in the sub-sector, if not Askellon itself.

Swordmistresses appear without warning, seeking out those who fully worship the blade, from lowly underhive gangers who have scored innumerable scalplings with hab-made chainswords to powerful Rogue Traders who have fought man and alien alike with elegant xenos sabres. Some might even be unknown masters of no renown—yet somehow the Swordmistresses know of them, the pursuit of perfection something that they can hear across the stars. Their arrival is the stuff of myths: emerging from out of flowing silverfall curtains, striding boldly into grand hive spire galas, or even appearing on starships whilst deep within the Warp. Then gleaming swords are drawn and the dance begins.

The outcomes of such clashes are often foreordained, for few can stand against their inhuman grace and perfection. That some witnesses claim that swords shifted at times into a long, elegant claws, or that parted robes revealed amethyst flesh, has only added to the legend. Those who fight well, displaying the desire for the ultimate contest and pushing their bodies beyond any previous limits, are granted a glimpse of a raised veil as their hearts are torn open. Of those who fight to superb extremes nothing is said, for they are never seen again—though some say they may later return, often wearing veils themselves and in search of others whose desire for perfection can never be sated.

THE LEGIONS OF EXCESS

By their incantations, conjurations and accursed crafts, the Daemons of Slaanesh seduce, deprave, and corrupt man and beast, bringing them low in the sight of others. The electric colours of their contorted forms offend the eye, just as their impossible lewdness offends the mind. Half-bared torsos and supple limbs of dark pink and soft blue speak of boundless lust, while puckered scars and atrophied flesh boast of sensual pain endured beneath the watchful eye of the Master of Terrible Delights. Revelling in boundless perversity and debasement, twisted in mind and body, the insidious scions of the Lord of Excess take delight in all manner of abominable and unclean deeds, spreading the depravity of the Prince of Chaos to the unwary with crimes that cry out against nature and the true order of the universe.

DAEMONETTE

The most numerous of Slaanesh's daemonic followers, Daemonettes serve the Dark Prince's purposes in myriad ways. They fight battles in its name, conduct its rituals, carry its messages, and seduce its rivals. They are courtiers and courtesans, often found lounging on silken cushions within the Palace of Slaanesh, gossiping endlessly over plans to win their lord's favour. Occasionally, Daemonettes are gifted to Slaanesh's chosen champions as handmaidens, grooming its followers for potential daemonhood, or ensnaring them with empty promises and sinful caresses. Like their patron god, Daemonettes are possessed of a perverse, unnatural beauty that causes equal parts loathing and longing in all who behold them. They are lithe, dexterous killers, gifting their victims with a confection of excruciating caresses and tender killing strokes.

DAEMONETTE (ELITE)										21
H ² 01-10		WS		BS		S				
10		45		23		40				
AR ⁴ 11-20		T ⁸		AC		INT				
12		43		51		42				
AL ⁴ 21-30		PER ⁶		WP ⁷		FEL				
12		42		51		21				
B ⁴ 31-70		IFL								
12										
LR ⁴ 71-85		LL ⁴ 86-00								
12		12								
HALF 5		FULL 10		CHARGE 15		RUN 30		THREAT 17		
PINCER CLAWS								CLASS MELEE		
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+8 ⁴ +SB (R)						
PEN 3		CLIP —		RLD —		WT —		AVL —		
SPECIAL: RAZOR SHARP, TEARING										

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Parry (WS)

Talents: Step Aside, Swift Attack

Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), From Beyond, Soporific Musk, Unnatural Perception (2), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability

Gear: Warpsilk armour

HERALD OF SLAANESH

Slaanesh's most trusted Daemonettes are its handmaidens known as its Herald, who adorn the Dark Prince's throne, caressing its skin and feeding their lord sweetmeats. Upon these favoured few, Slaanesh bestows additional powers, sending them forth occasionally to perform tasks requiring great subtlety. Herald lead the Dark Prince's followers in the ongoing dance, using seductive spells to corrupt their foes. With promises of glory and dark rewards, they twist the aspirations and ambitions of their prey into obsession and madness, luring the victim on the indulgent path to self-destruction and the furtherance of the Dark Prince's desires.

HERALD OF SLAANESH (MASTER)					33
H ² 01-10 11		WS	BS	S	
AR ⁴ 11-20 13	AL ⁴ 21-30 13	51	32	52	
B ⁴ 31-70 13		T ⁹	AC	INT	
LR ⁴ 71-85 13		53	66	51	
LL ⁴ 86-00 13		PER ⁷	WP ⁸	FEL	
		52	61	31	
		IFL		39	
HALF 6		FULL 12		CHARGE 18	RUN 36
PINCER CLAWS		CLASS MELEE		THREAT 30	
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1D10+9 ⁴ +SB (R)	
PEN 3		CLIP —		RLD —	
WT —		AVL —		SPECIAL: HALLUCINOGENIC (2), RAZOR SHARP, TEARING	

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +20, Athletics (S) +30, Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +20
Talents: Assassin Strike, Step Aside, Swift Attack
Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), From Beyond, Psyker (PR 3), Soporific Musk, Unnatural Perception (2), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability
Psychic Powers: A Herald of Slaanesh can use any 3 powers from the Telepathy discipline.

Gear: Warpsilk armour

Overwhelming Allure: For each Daemonette within 6 metres of its target, a Herald of Slaanesh gains a +10 bonus on the Focus Power test to use the Dominate psychic power on that foe.

SEEKER OF SLAANESH

Many Daemonettes sally forth from the Dark Prince's palace on lithe, serpentine Steeds of Slaanesh. These strange, bipedal beasts combine the appearance of horse and flightless bird, albeit with the disturbing, sinuous qualities common to all Slaanesh monstrosities. Over time, such Daemonettes and their Steeds become as one, fused into grotesquely alluring hunters without peer. By assimilating some of their Steed's uncanny abilities, these Seekers—as they become known—use their heightened senses to scout ahead of Slaanesh's legions, and to hunt their chosen prey to the ends of the galaxy.

SEEKER OF SLAANESH (ELITE)					29
H ² 01-10 11		WS	BS	S	
AR ⁴ 11-20 13	AL ⁴ 21-30 13	55	33	45	
B ⁴ 31-70 13		T ⁹	AC	INT	
LR ⁴ 71-85 13		52	61	42	
LL ⁴ 86-00 13		PER ¹⁰	WP ⁷	FEL	
		62	54	31	
		IFL		—	
HALF 9		FULL 27		CHARGE 27	RUN 54
PINCER CLAWS		CLASS MELEE		THREAT 24	
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1D10+8 ⁴ +SB (R)	
PEN 3		CLIP —		RLD —	
WT —		AVL —		SPECIAL: RAZOR SHARP, TEARING	

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20
Talents: Sprint, Step Aside, Swift Attack
Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Daemonic (4), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), From Beyond, Size (5), Soporific Musk, Unnatural Agility (2), Unnatural Perception (4), Unnatural Senses (100), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability
Gear: Warpsilk armour

FIEND OF SLAANESH

Fiends of Slaanesh are creatures of nightmare given form, chimerical blends of scorpion, reptile, and man. Such a collage of disparate forms should by rights repulse any sane mind, but Fiends exude an enticing musk that attracts and then immobilises their prey. The narcotic ecstasy gifted to their prey instils rapturous, euphoric dreams even as the Fiend's mighty claws tenderly snip and tear the foe limb from limb.

Within the Realm of Chaos, Fiends wander Slaanesh's bountiful and magnificent domain. Their keening song echoes through the twisted, fleshy forests and crystalline shores of the Dark Prince's realm, often the last sound to be heard by interlopers who have found themselves lost there. Once lost amidst the languid terrain and enticing scents, they are surely destined to fall victim to the Fiends' lethal caresses for eternity.

FIEND OF SLAANESH (ELITE)					18
H ³ 01-10 10		WS 48		BS —	S 52
AR ³ 11-20 10	AL ³ 21-30 10	T ⁷ 44	AG ⁷ 57	INT 12	
B ³ 31-70 10		PER ⁷ 56	WP ⁴ 33	FEL 06	
LR ³ 71-85 10	LL ³ 86-00 10	IFL —			
HALF 16		FULL 32		CHARGE 48	
RUN 96		THREAT 22			
PINER CLAWS					CLASS MELEE
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+5 ^{SB} (R)	
PEN 3		CLIP —		AVL —	
SPECIAL: RAZOR SHARP					
TAIL STINGER					CLASS MELEE
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+5 ^{SB} (R)	
PEN 1		CLIP —		AVL —	
SPECIAL: TOXIC (4)					
TONGUE LASH					CLASS MELEE
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1d10+5 ^{SB} (I)	
PEN 0		CLIP —		AVL —	
SPECIAL: FLEXIBLE, HALLUCINOGENIC (3), TOXIC (2)					

Skills: Athletics (S),

Awareness(Per), Dodge (Ag) +10

Talents: Hard Target, Swift Attack

Traits: Baneful Presence, Daemonic (3), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (3), From Beyond, Natural Armour (3), Quadruped, Size (5), Soporific Musk, Unnatural Agility (2), Unnatural Perception (2), Unnatural Senses (100), Unnatural Willpower (1), Warp Instability

Disruptive Song: The constant, atonal dirge the Fiend emits causes pain and confusion in anyone fighting it. A character engaged in close combat with this Daemon must pass a Challenging (+0) Willpower test (with a -10 penalty if he is a psyker) every turn or suffer a penalty of -10 to all attacks directed at the Fiend.

KEEPER OF SECRETS

A Keeper of Secrets is a huge and powerful Daemon, perfectly equipped for murder and taking a gloating, sadistic pleasure in carnage, carrying out its master's will in the true spirit of excess. Wreathed in mind-dulling musk and sorcerous glammers, a Keeper of Secrets usually masks its true form behind supernatural allure. It is repellent and sensuous, awe-inspiring and terrifying. Its muscled form is neither masculine nor feminine; its jewels contain the souls of conquered victims; its horned visage is sometimes beautiful, sometimes bovine and terrible; its claws are lacquered with colours from beyond the mortal spectrum. These claws move faster than the eye can comprehend, taking apart the Daemon's foes with grace and precision, each strike calculated to deliver the maximum pain to the victim, and extract the most exquisite screams.

And yet, there is far more to a Keeper of Secrets than physical power. They are the most entrancing of the immortals, and to look upon one is to surrender all self-will. These Greater Daemons can hear every whispered secret, and stare into the hearts of mortals to reveal their innermost desires—thus they do indeed keep the secrets of all sentient beings, secrets that they sometimes trade for boons or services. In this way, Greater Daemons achieve a purpose greater than mere battle prowess—for there is no gift that their master values more than the corruption of a noble warrior.

Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Daemonic (5), Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (4), From Beyond, Multiple Arms (4), Psyker (PR 6), Size (7), Soporific Musk, Stuff of Nightmares, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee), Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (5), Unnatural Willpower (4), Warp Instability

Psychic Powers: A Keeper of Secrets can use any 6 powers from the Telepathy and Biomancy disciplines.

Gear: Refined Warpsilk armour

Aura of Domination: A Keeper of Secrets inflicts an additional -10 penalty to any Willpower tests taken within 12 metres of this Greater Daemon.

KEEPER OF SECRETS (MASTER)					190
H ³ 01-10 19		WS BS S ¹⁰			
AR ⁴ 11-20 20		71	44	65	
AL ⁴ 21-30 20		T ¹⁶	AC	INT	
B ⁴ 31-70 20		66	72	70	
LR ⁴ 71-85 20		PER	WP ¹¹	FEL	
LL ⁴ 86-00 20		63	75	61	
		IFL	66		
HALF 10 FULL 20 CHARGE 30 RUN 60 THREAT 85					
ÆTHERBLADE CLASS MELEE					
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 2D10+18 ^{8+SB} (R)	
PEN 4		CLIP —		WT — AVL —	
SPECIAL: FLEXIBLE, LANCE, POWER FIELD					
PINCER CLAWS CLASS MELEE					
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1D10+14 ^{4+SB} (R)	
PEN 6		CLIP —		WT — AVL —	
SPECIAL: CRIPPLING (6), HALLUCINOGENIC (3), RAZOR SHARP, TEARING					

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int) +30, Parry (Ag) +10, Psyniscience (Per) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +20

Talents: Ambidextrous, Assassin Strike, Combat Master, Killing Strike, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee)

INVESTIGATION TEMPLATE: THE SOUL HARVEST

Overview: The Acolytes are between investigations or are recovering from an especially draining conflict, when a nearby temple draws their attention. Its leader has attracted a large flock of followers, all of whom are strongly devoted to him. The incense censer used in the services, it turns out, is filled with a Warp-tainted substance, and the worshippers have fallen under the sway of the Dark Prince. Though the temple leader is unaware of it, his actions could damn not only this area but worlds beyond, should the daemonic taint spread.

This investigation template includes examination of what could be a delicate area for the Acolytes, especially those with Ecclesiarchal backgrounds, as it concerns religious practices in a local area. The growing evidence of the influence of the Ruinous Powers and the violence surrounding the temple, though, should quickly bring the warband to act against the Daemons seeking to captivate mortal souls.

ACT I: ENTICEMENT

The Acolytes rest at a far-flung location to regroup and recover, perhaps seeking additional spiritual guidance after an investigation's troubling aftermath. Alternatively, they might be assigned directly to investigate an especially devout region, possibly too devout for comfort in the eyes of some Askellian powers. This should be an area with a strong Adeptus Ministorum presence nearby, such as a secluded temple on a frontier world, a crumbling chapel aboard a space station, or the cathedral on a starship. Soon after arrival, the Acolytes hear of an enigmatic preacher, Antoninus Szovnia, who ministers a nearby at a location called the Sanctum of Our Martyred Scribe. The congregation is a superstitious and insular group, loath to discuss anything but their mundane duties and the benevolence of the omniscient Emperor, but freely speak with reverence of Preacher Szovnia.

The Acolytes barely have time to settle before a commotion strikes up nearby: gangs of armed toughs start moving towards the temple, intent on trouble. The Acolytes may choose to involve themselves and break up the mob, or simply watch how things play out. In either case, they notice that the gangers' eyes are dark and haunted, their faces drawn, like stim addicts gone too long without a fix. Soon after the attack, a messenger arrives at the Acolyte's resting place, bearing an invitation from Pastor Szovnia. The messenger says that Szovnia knows the Acolytes' true identities and wishes to help them. He has heard of their heroism and wants to reward them in any way he can. They journey to the Sanctum of Our Martyred Scribe, and seek an audience with this enigmatic spiritual leader.

ACT II: ALLURE

At the Sanctum of Our Martyred Scribe, the Acolytes join a holy service, during which a strange incense is burned in an ancient but elegant ceramic censer. It emits a bitter yet alluring scent, and if asked the pastor relates that this is to represent the harsh yet joyful nature of service to the Emperor. He tells the Acolytes that he creates them himself, following all of the proscribed formulae and precautions handed down from pastor to pastor.

During the prayers, the Acolytes experience strange and disturbing visions, which could be taken as signs (or warnings) from the Emperor. Any psyker in the party is affected particularly strongly, and might even collapse from their intensity. Some in the service become so enthusiastic in their worship that their flailing actions strike others, setting off wild, unthinking conflicts throughout the temple which quickly involve the Acolytes.

Upon examining the incense, the Acolytes discover that there is a mystery ingredient that defies identification. The locals simply nod knowingly and say it has been used for many centuries, and made from a rare plant that grows only within the temple—a sure sign of its divinity. In fact, the incense is a powerful drug, harvested originally from the beguiling Gardens of Slaanesh within the Realm of Chaos. Repeated inhalation takes the user's soul dangerously close to Slaanesh's domain, and thence ultimate damnation. Szovnia believes himself to be chosen by the Emperor, but is in truth an unwitting servant of the Dark Prince. The preacher's flock has succumbed to the Warp-tainted fragrant smoke, and is hopelessly addicted.

ACT III: HARVEST

The Acolytes investigate the source of the incense, discovering that the deep vaults of the sanctum have been surrendered to its production. With even a modicum of it in their system from the service, the vaults look like a vast network of normal chambers, with rows of chambers growing ordinary-appearing plants and tended by temple-serfs. To anyone immune to the effects, however (due to rebreathers or similar equipment), the hideous truth is unveiled. The walls have become fleshy and pliable as the veil between worlds has thinned. The plants themselves are unnatural, with fleshy pods beckoning to any nearby. The plants are harvested tenderly, not by human serfs, but by Daemonettes. The Daemonettes—and their foul crop—must be destroyed, although the fate of the settlement is uncertain even if the Acolytes succeed, for the incense has by now seduced many in this area.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- The incense is highly addictive; as the local populace withdraws, they are sent into a rapturous, bloodthirsty frenzy. This spark incites the local gangs to violence, resulting in widespread rioting. An attack on the local warehouses indicates that huge shipments of the plant have been making their way offworld for some time.
- The actual temple-serfs who aid the pastor could be led by a furtive psyker, who dominates their thoughts and aids the Daemonettes below in the hope that Slaanesh would bless him with dark gifts. These serfs are heavily armed and devoted to their psychic leader, but worse, they have fully infiltrated the settlement, from local Enforcers or armsmen to the street beggars.
- Attempts to petition local officials of the Adeptus Ministorum for information concerning the Sanctum of Our Martyred Scribe or Pastor Szovnia alerts Slaanesh cultists of the situation, and leads to greater forces being brought against the Acolytes.

DAEMON PRINCES

"From the ashes of mortal flesh, a champion's shadow ascends to the gods. A thousand times a thousand lifetimes shall pass in the mortal realm before the shadow returns, but with it comes spite unmatched: mortal's cruelty and immortal's arrogance, mingled in one vessel. Those passed over by the shadow shall come to yearn for simple suffering."

—From the prophecies of Ssayad the Ascended

The Daemon Princes of Chaos are among the most powerful foes a servant of the Imperium can face. They hold power directly granted to them by one of the Chaos Gods, power earned after a lifetime of glorious terror wrought in the name of their patron. This section details how to use a Daemon Prince in DARK HERESY games, including role-playing tips for how a mortal mind is warped by Daemonic ascension, as well as full rules for creating customisable Daemon Prince adversaries.

LIKE NO OTHER FOE

Adding a Daemon Prince to a campaign can make for a memorable series of events, but the presence of such a powerful enemy should be placed into the mix carefully. The manifestation of a Daemon Prince from the Warp is an event that can lay low whole worlds, and its repercussions can shake sectors. The power of a Daemon Prince is evident enough when confronting it, but throwing Acolytes headlong at such a foe is more likely to result in losing Player Characters than a dramatic confrontation. Instead, the GM should provide setup for the arrival of the Daemon Prince, "selling" the threat well before the actual manifestation. The power of a Daemon Prince could grip the mind of its minions and drive them to maddened actions of devotion, and psykers or wyrds might be afflicted with visions of the horror to come. As whatever summoning ritual or unholy alignment of circumstances that can bring forth the Daemon Prince approaches, the touch of the Warp might bleed into reality, creating fearful omens visible to all, from plagues of mutation to temporary inversions of physical law.

Even after the Daemon Prince manifests, the GM should keep the Acolytes at a distance for a time. This is partially to continue establishing the Daemon Prince as a threat, while it gathers armies of cultists or mutants and reduces the defences of the Imperium to twisted rubble, but also to allow the Acolytes a more even confrontation. The omens surrounding the Daemon's manifestation might include clues as to the Daemon's mortal life, which could be used as weapons against the Daemon, or the mounting threat might help the Acolytes mobilise aid against it. The Acolytes might need to journey to the shrine world of the saint who last slew the being to claim her blessed weapon, or they could seek out the long-lost blade that claimed the Daemon Prince's original mortal life in the hopes that it can serve once more.

Furthermore, the threat of a Daemon Prince need not end once the Acolytes have defeated it. Even if they vanquish the Daemon and drive it back to the Warp, they cannot truly slay a creature of the Immaterium. A defeated Daemon Prince might return later to seek vengeance on the Acolytes, providing the ultimate in recurring villains. The GM should not overuse the Daemon Prince itself, in order to avoid diluting the threat it presents, but the servants of such a foe could hound the Acolytes throughout the rest of the campaign at the bidding of their master. When the Daemon Prince itself finally returns, it might have changed during its banishment, gaining new weapons or powers, or it may have become twisted by its master's punishment. Finding a means to permanently bind or banish the Daemon Prince could make for an epic finale to a long-running campaign, and would be a fantastic send-off for veteran characters.



BORN OF A MORTAL SOUL

Alone among the endless daemonic hosts, Daemon Princes come from mortal origins. Their unholy ascension warps their soul, obliterating what little might remain of their moral compass or empathy, and dwelling in the Warp alters their perception of reality, but some traces of their old nature typically remain. The most likely elements of a mortal life to maintain a hold on a Daemon Prince are those of primal emotions—powerful desires, hatreds, and fears that gripped them tightly while they lived. Such fixations often survive the crucible of Ascension, although they might be twisted in the process.

Foes of a Daemon Prince who can learn the secrets of its mortal life stand to gain tremendous advantages against their enemy. For all their cunning and foresight, Daemon Princes are creatures of pride and hate above all else, potentially blinding them to manipulation or deception that plays on their obsessions. If the Acolytes can find something the Daemon Prince once desired, or wield a weapon it once feared, they may be able to force a confrontation on terms of their choosing, luring their foe into a battle that does not favour it, or goading it to strike where it cannot best use its strength. Relics of the Daemon's past life may even hold some direct power over it, if they were of enough significance to its mortal self. Some examples of mortal ties and prior lives that could be used against a Daemon Prince are listed below. They can be used as presented, or be taken as inspiration for customising new ideas.

- As a mortal, the Daemon Prince quested to find a lost artefact of Chaos. If the Acolytes can trick it into believing that the artefact could be found at a strongpoint they have prepared, they can set up an ambush with allied forces backing their attack. Alternately, they might be able to discover that the Daemon Prince's forces are still searching for the artefact, and predict their next targets.
- Weapons that wounded the Daemon Prince as a mortal are better suited to piercing the protections of his new form. A blade or gun that harmed the Daemon long ago can bypass some of the Daemon Prince's protections, such as ignoring the Toughness bonus increase from the Daemonic trait, or potentially even more potent effects. These weapons are often jealously kept if they still exist, either as holy relics or powerful talismans of Chaos, depending on their origin.
- A particularly prideful Daemon Prince has ties to the mortal bloodline that it once called family. Although nothing like true filial affection lasts in the Warp, the Daemon Prince is outraged by attacks on its descendants, or is beguiled by a message delivered by a centuries-distant "cousin." However, the cultists serving the Daemon are sure to keep a close watch on these favoured individuals, and may complicate any attempts to make use of them.
- As a mortal journeys to daemonhood, he might gain rewards from his patron god. As such, GMs should feel free to allow NPCs to possess Daemonic Gifts (see page 130) and Marks of Chaos prior to ascension; later, these might be traits the Daemon Prince is quite proud of and always seeks to use. These "rewards" could also be given to Radical PCs if the GM feels their path has become especially dark and to indicate (to them and perhaps to others) the depths of their fall.

CREATING A DAEMON PRINCE

Despite their diversity of origins, Daemon Princes share some common traits—mainly, monstrous, overwhelming power. To represent both the common strengths and unique traits of these powerful beings, creating an appropriate profile involves several steps. A basic profile for a Daemon Prince is presented below as a starting point. This profile is then modified by the Mark of the Daemon's patron, as well as an Archetype of Power representing the greatest strengths and most frequent tools of the Daemon Prince in question. Finally, each Daemon Prince has Daemonic Gifts granted to it by its master that further enhance its abilities.

DAEMON PRINCE (MASTER)										75	
H 5 01-10		18		WS 60		BS 50		S 11		65	
AR 8 11-20		21		AL 8 21-30		21		T 13		AC	INT
B 10 31-70		23		PER 55		WP 9		FEL 50			
LR 8 71-85		21		LL 8 86-00		21		IFL 65			
HALF 5		FULL 10		CHARGE 15		RUN 30		THREAT 60†			
HURLED WARPFIRE										CLASS THROWN	
RNG 33M ^{3xSB}		RoF S/-/-		DMG 1D10+12 (E)							
PEN 3		CLIP —		RLD —		WT —		AVL —			
SPECIAL: BLAST (3), FLAME											
HELLFORGED BLADE										CLASS MELEE	
RNG —		RoF —		DMG 1D10+19 ^{S+SB} (R)							
PEN 5		CLIP —		RLD —		WT 15 KG		AVL UN			
SPECIAL: POWER FIELD											

† Heightening Threat: Add 5 to this daemonic NPC's Threat for each Daemonic gift after the third.

Skills: Athletics (S) +30, Command (Fel) +20, Parry (WS) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +20

Talents: Combat Master, Lightning Attack, Thunder Charge, True Grit, Warp Sense

Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Daemonic (5), Fear (4), From Beyond, Size (6), Stuff of Nightmares, Touched by the Fates (3), Unnatural Strength (5), Unnatural Toughness (2), Unnatural Willpower (3)

Gear: Daemonic armour, twisted remnants of whatever items the Daemon Prince held dear as a mortal

MARKS OF CHAOS

Each Daemon Prince is elevated by the intervention of the Chaos God that it originally served, as no Daemon Prince is able to rise to such heights without a patron among the Ruinous Powers. This shapes the flesh and essence of the newly ascended Daemon according to the preferences and strengths of its master. The GM should apply the modifications listed below to a Daemon Prince in service to the relevant Chaos God.



KHORNE

Those Daemon Princes elevated by Khorne are warriors beyond compare, but they revel in the immediate butchery of melee combat over more distant death and scorn the coward's path of sorcery above all else. These Daemon Princes gain +15 Weapon Skill, +10 Strength, the Frenzy and Deny the Witch talents, and the Brutal Charge (5) trait. They also gain the new traits Berserk Charge and Blood for the Blood God (see page 105).

In addition, when Daemon Princes of Khorne wield a Hellforged Blade, the weapon gains the Felling (4) and Razor-Sharp qualities, and any Critical damage it causes is increased by +3. However, Daemon Princes of Khorne lose the Hurlled Warpfire attack on the basic Daemon Prince profile.

TZEENTCH

Tzeentchian Daemon Princes are master schemers, possessed of an inhuman brilliance along with a store of knowledge only an immortal could gather. Daemon Princes of Tzeentch gain +15 Intelligence, +10 Perception, +10 Willpower, and all Common Lore, Scholastic Lore, and Forbidden Lore skills at Rank 2 (Trained). They also gain the new trait Blessing of Tzeentch (see page 111).

In addition, Daemon Princes of Tzeentch are powerful sorcerers. These Daemon Princes gain the Psyker trait, a psy rating of 8, and up to ten psychic powers from any discipline. This includes minor psychic powers from page 59 of the DARK HERESY supplement ENEMIES WITHIN.

NURGLE

Father Nurgle's loving touch grants his favoured children unnatural vitality and resistance to damage, but weighs them down with corpulence and rot. His Daemon Princes gain +15 Toughness; +15 Wounds; and the Nauseating trait (see page 117).

In addition, Daemon Princes of Nurgle may either add the Toxic (4) and Corrosive qualities to their attacks with all weapons. Alternatively, these Daemon Princes may instead gain the Psyker trait, a psy rating of 6, up to five psychic powers selected from the Biomancy and Malefic disciplines, and the Nurgle's Rot psychic power described on page 406 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook.

SLAANESH

Daemon Princes of Slaanesh gain a sinuous grace and compelling presence that make them difficult to pin down or oppose. The Daemon Princes serving the Dark Prince gain +20 Agility, +10 Fellowship, and the Unnatural Agility (2) trait, as well gaining the Charm and Deceive Skills at Rank 3 (Experienced). They also gain the new trait Soporific Musk (see page 121).

In addition, Daemon Princes of Slaanesh may gain the Unnatural Weapon Skill (2) Trait and add the Shocking and Flexible qualities to their melee attacks. Alternatively, these Daemon Princes may instead gain the Psyker trait with a psy rating of 6 and up to six psychic powers from the Malefic and Telepathy disciplines.

ARCHETYPES OF POWER

Unlike the hosts of lesser Daemons serving the powers of Chaos, or even the mighty Greater Daemons that eclipse all but the Dark Gods themselves, Daemon Princes were once mortal, and remain shaped by their discarded lives. While a Daemon of Khorne can never be anything that is not of Khorne, mortal minds contain the seeds of Chaos in all its myriad forms. All those who ascend to Daemonhood do so by devoting themselves to one aspect of Chaos in particular, but some sliver of mortal malleability may remain with them, creating a Daemon who operates very differently than his master's other servants.

This unique flexibility is reflected in a Daemon Prince's Archetype of Power. This Archetype is represented through a collection of additional modifiers and benefits, much like a Mark of Chaos. Unlike a Mark of Chaos, Archetypes of Power may belong to a Daemon Prince serving any Chaos God, although each Archetype is typically associated with a particular Mark. It is possible to have a Tzeentchian Warbringer who wages battles at key crossroads of fate to control the territory of the future, or a Vainglorious Daemon Prince of Nurgle who proselytises the creed of decay with a jovial fervour. Each Daemon Prince has a single Archetype of Power, which reflects aspects of its mortal life and the road it walked towards Daemonhood.

NEMESSES IN DARK HERESY

The DARK HERESY GAME MASTER'S KIT introduces the concept of Nemesis—unique and powerful foes who play a recurring role in the Acolytes' missions. Acolytes serving Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus may clash with many different foes who may be worthy of being called Nemesis, but none more so than those who cross the path of a Daemon Prince. These ascended servants of the Ruinous Powers blend the grasping need of a mortal being with the infinite power and malice of the Warp. Those who cross a Daemon Prince become the subjects of a hatred and fury like no other, even as they strike a mighty blow against the most favoured servants of Chaos.

CORRUPTOR

The Archetype of Corruptor is typically associated with Nurgle, but can belong to any Daemon Prince whose path to ascension was marked by efforts to undermine and sabotage his foes rather than simply conquering them. The Corruptor understands the insidious power that comes from allowing its foes to defeat themselves, whether through the spread of plague and rot, through cunning schemes, or through the sowing of terror.

Daemon Princes with the Corruptor Archetype are patient and enduring, gaining +10 Willpower and +10 Wounds. Furthermore, these Daemon Princes can sense and exploit weaknesses of the spirit seeded long ago, gaining a +10 bonus to Opposed tests and attacks against any character with more than 30 Corruption points. This bonus increases to +20 if the character has more than 60 Corruption points.

MASTER OF PROPHECY

A Daemon Prince of Tzeentch is the most common to become a Master of Prophecy, but this Archetype has more to do with the ephemeral intersections of the Warp with so-called reality than it does any mastery of sorcery or the ability to craft complex webs of deceit. A Master of Prophecy is the will of his patron made manifest, bringing the malice of the Warp to bear directly upon the material universe. Any Daemon Prince whose mortal life was spent studying or harnessing the tides of the Warp could be a Master of Prophecy.

Such a malefic creature is adept at twisting the barriers between realspace and the Warp, allowing the Daemon Prince to mould the surrounding world to suit its whims. A Master of Prophecy can mutate another character's use of Fate points by performing an Opposed Difficult (–10) Willpower test against the user. If the Daemon Prince is successful, the Fate point must instead be used in another of the valid uses for Fate points (such as those listed on page 293 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook). If the Daemon Prince also scores a number of degrees of success greater than its opponent's Willpower bonus, the Fate point is simply negated and has no effect.

WARBRINGER

While the Lord of Skulls counts the most Warbringers among his Daemon Princes, the constant war between the powers of Chaos means each of the Dark Gods possesses champions inclined towards battle and conquest. Warbringers can be found among those Daemon Princes who mastered military strategy and personal combat alike in their mortal lives.

Warbringers gain +10 Weapon Skill, +10 Ballistic Skill, and the Crushing Blow and Mighty Shot talents. In addition, it may spend a Full Action to galvanise nearby allies, filling them with fervour and reminding them of the price for failure. Each ally of the Daemon Prince within 100 metres immediately becomes Frenzied (following the rules for the Frenzy talent) as a Free Action.

VAINGLORIOUS

Although the Ruinous Powers are the unquestionable masters of the Daemon Princes they elevate, not all of these ascended champions are equal in their loyalty. Some take their new powers as a sign only that they deserve even more, and they act to further their own agendas. The truly disloyal are typically annihilated, if they are able to ascend at all, but some Daemon Princes are able to advance themselves in this way without angering their master. This is especially common among Daemon Princes of Slaanesh, as their preening and self-aggrandisement only strengthen the position of the Dark Prince.

A Daemon Prince with this Archetype prefers to amass cults of devoted mortal slaves wherever it manifests, whose worship reinforces its power in the material world. It receives +10 Fellowship and +10 Influence. While the Daemon Prince is within 100 metres of any of its servants or allies, it is treated as possessing a force field with a rating equal to its Fellowship characteristic and no Overload rating. However, if the Daemon Prince suffers damage from an attack while benefitting from this effect, its servants lose their certainty in its supremacy, effectively overloading the force field. The Daemon Prince may restore the effect by spending a Full Action and burning 1d10 Influence, but the amount of Influence lost is increased by an additional 1d10 for each time it is forced to do so, as it becomes increasingly difficult to project the illusion of perfection into its servants' minds.

DAEMONIC GIFTS

A Daemon Prince who can manage to maintain the favour of its patron Ruinous Power is granted numerous strange powers, mutations, and artefacts, collectively referred to as Daemonic Gifts. Even an out-of-favour Daemon Prince typically has one or two Daemonic Gifts, and those in the full favour of their masters have three or more. Some Daemonic Gifts are only granted by a specific Chaos God to their chosen servants, while others are found among Daemon Princes serving any of the Dark Gods. There is no upper limit to the number of Daemonic Gifts a Daemon Prince can have, but the GM should keep in mind that excessive power increases the Daemon's threat value (see page 382 of the DARK HERESY Core Rulebook)—and the odds of an abrupt halt to the campaign when the players confront this mighty foe. However, the exact Gifts a Daemon Prince possesses need not remain constant, as its form can be reshaped by the will of its patron—or pruned of power by the patron's displeasure.

AURA OF ACQUIESCENCE (SLAANESH-ONLY)

To disobey a Daemon Prince with this Gift is all but impossible. To attack it is unthinkable. All NPCs who can see or hear a Daemon Prince with this Gift improve their Disposition towards the Daemon by +30. If this increases their Disposition towards the Daemon Prince over 100, they become its devoted slaves and cultists. Otherwise, the GM should role-play the effects of this improved attitude in a manner appropriate to the NPC in question.

Attack tests against the Daemon Prince suffer a penalty equal to half the attacker's Disposition towards the Daemon, after the effects of this Gift. PCs suffer a penalty of -15 to attack tests against the Daemon Prince instead.

BEGUILING MUSK (SLAANESH-ONLY)

Some Slaanesh Daemon Princes wear a literal aroma of power around them, a dark allure cloying the air around them. This sensuous musk clouds the senses and minds of those nearby, leaving them limited capacity to respond to anything else as it drowns out other stimuli in a euphoric haze.

All characters without the Daemonic or Machine traits within 20m of the Daemon must pass a Hard (-20) Willpower test or treat their Agility characteristic as 10 lower for all purposes, including Initiative, movement, and tests based on that characteristic. This effect lingers for 1d10 rounds after they leave the affected area.

BLOATED FRAME (NURGLE-ONLY)

Some Daemon Princes of Nurgle take after their master in appearance, gaining a distended bulk rivalling that of the Great Unclean Ones. This additional weight is ponderous, slowing their movement, but speed is of little concern to Daemon Princes too corpulent for a bolt round to reach anything vital. This Gift increases the value of the recipient's Unnatural Toughness trait by 3, and grants it +25 wounds. However, these Daemon Princes treat their base Agility bonus as 1 lower for the purposes of movement, and cannot take the Run action.

A Daemon Prince cannot possess this Gift if it also possesses Daemonic Wings.

BRASS ARMOUR (KHORNE-ONLY)

While the unnatural flesh of a Daemon Prince is proof against common mortal weapons, the bloodthirsty devotees of the Skull Lord do not challenge common mortals. When battling against a foe worthy of their attentions, Daemon Princes of Khorne wear heavy suits of armour forged in the flames of the Warp.

Brass Armour grants 12 AP to the wearer's body, and 10 AP to all other Hit Locations.

CLOUD OF FLIES (NURGLE-ONLY)

Pestilence travels with the Daemon Princes of Nurgle as a constant companion. For some of these creatures, this is more literal than others, as they are accompanied by a tide of vermin and a cloud of buzzing insects wherever they go. This foul entourage forms a cloud thick enough to conceal even the vast body of a Daemon Prince to a degree.

All attacks against a Daemon Prince with this gift suffer a -10 penalty. Characters in melee with the Daemon Prince without the Daemonic or Machine traits and without environmentally sealed armour suffer a further -10 penalty to all tests, as the insects bite, sting, and burrow into their exposed skin.

COLLAR OF KHORNE (KHORNE-ONLY)

These heavy, brazen collars are inscribed with runes warding against sorcery, forcing anyone being stalked by the wearer to rely upon his prowess at arms instead of cowardly psychic assaults.

The wearer of a Collar of Khorne gains the Deny the Witch talent, and may make any number of Evasion attempts with Willpower to avoid psychic powers per round as Free Actions (it can still only attempt to Evade each power once). The Collar also grants a +20 bonus to all such tests, and prevents attacks against the wearer from benefitting from the Force quality on weapons.

DAEMONIC WINGS

Some Daemon Princes are granted huge wings by their masters—feathered, bat-like, or even seeming impossibilities like sorcerous wings of flame. These allow such Daemons to swiftly soar through the air, and to weave their way between attacks with unlikely grace.

This Gift grants any recipients the Flyer (10) trait, as well as the Dodge skill at Rank 1 (Known).

FAVoured BY THE GODS

To the greatest of Daemon Princes, the Chaos Powers do not simply grant new armaments or forms and then turn away. These most favoured servants find their masters intervene on their behalf in crucial situations, being loath to risk such valuable champions. This intervention can be subtle, as unlikely circumstances conspire towards the Daemon's success, or overt, deflecting the rare attacks capable of delivering true wounds to the favoured Prince.

A Daemon Prince with this Gift increases the value of its Touched by the Fates trait by 2, and is protected from all attacks by a force field with a Protection rating of 35 and an Overload rating of 05.

GMs should count Favoured by the Gods as two Daemonic Gifts when they calculating threat values for this Daemon Prince.

FIRES OF TZEENTCH (TZEENTCH-ONLY)

The gifts of Tzeentch are strange, ranging from incomparable sorcerous knowledge to a mastery of fate's strings imperceptible to mere mortals. In some cases, the gifts are merely impossible, such as bolts of flame that cause reality around them to run like molten wax. Whatever these flames touch is more twisted than burned, if it survives at all.

The Hurlled Warfire attack of a Daemon Prince with this gift gains the Corrosive quality. If the attack deals damage to a character as the result of the Corrosive effect, he must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or gain 1d5 Corruption points.

MASTERY OF SORCERIES (TZEENTCH-ONLY)

By far the most common gift of Tzeentch is a mastery of the psyker's arts. All Daemon Princes serving the Architect of Fate possess an understanding of sorcery that dwarfs that of most rivals, but those who rise in service to Tzeentch consider those secrets but a rudimentary grasp of the basics.

The psy rating of a Daemon Prince with this Gift increases to 10, and it increases its Unnatural Willpower trait by 1. In addition, the Daemon Prince may spend its Reaction to make any Focus Power test made by a visible character into an Opposed test against the Daemon Prince's Willpower. If the Daemon Prince succeeds, it may choose a new target or area of effect for the power within the power's limits, or cause the power to fail entirely.

USING DAEMONIC NPCs

"What is time but a foolish barrier mortals place before themselves as a shield against the unknown? What is flesh but a binding mortals wear to hold back their true essence? I can teach you the true secrets of the Warp, little mortal. The only price is that you allow me to do so..."

—a bound Horror of Tzeentch in service to the Nine-Eyes Cult

Using daemonic adversaries in **DARK HERESY** involves more than desperate battles, protective wards, and scouring away corruption. Including these enemies in the game's narrative should also involve distinct goals and traits that influence their behaviour. Even if the PCs never directly encounter the Daemons outside of combat, a battle can become more meaningful if it has a framing device that sets up the stakes, such as a scheming cult's plot or a grand sacrifice set in motion. For more significant daemonic NPCs, such as the bound Daemonhost a Radical Inquisitor consults for its dark secrets, or the megalomaniacal Daemon Prince set on creating a new Daemon world, adding depth is even more essential.

However, Daemons do not think like mortal beings. Daemonic minds operate to express a singular purpose, and view all things through their frame of reference, whether it is conflict, entropy, vanity, or scheming. As such, roleplaying advice on how to portray various kinds of Daemons also appears below.

DAEMONS OF KHORNE

Khorne does not care whence blood flows, only that it flows. Daemons of the Lord of Skulls work first and foremost by this principle. They view all of reality and the Warp alike as a great conflict, and their goal is escalation, rather than victory.

This focus on violent conflict sometimes makes the Daemons of Khorne seem brutish and stupid. However, the Blood God's servants vary greatly in their intelligence. Daemonic beasts such as Juggernauts take a direct approach to conflict, battering away all obstacles in their path, while rank-and-file Bloodletters draw their terrible Hellblades as their response to most situations. However, the more powerful of Khorne's Daemons, such as the Heralds and Bloodthirsters—and especially some among his Daemon Princes—are quite capable of masterful tactics and even deft subterfuges.

A powerful Daemon of Khorne might allow a handful of enemies to escape a battle in order to draw out new foes, wagering that the loss of a paltry offering of skulls now might lead to a greater harvest in future engagements. The most cunning and arguably the most dangerous Daemons of Khorne are those who are willing to forgo collecting lives directly, but act solely to provoke and perpetuate conflict. These Daemons might foster death cults within the heart of an Imperial hive, planting a seed that could claim millions of lives in the centuries to come, rather than some paltry thousands in an immediate struggle.

This devotion to bloodshed over victory in battle is also why defeating the Daemons of Khorne comes at so high a cost—simply confronting the Daemons in battle strengthens their master. For this reason, Daemons of Khorne do not fear their own destruction, seeking only to accomplish as much as possible before they too become an offering before their master's throne.

DAEMONS OF TZEENTCH

There is very little certainty when dealing with one of the mercurial Daemons of the Lord of Fate. These beings are treachery and scheming made into unreal flesh, and the closest thing there is to a certainty in their behaviour is that anything they do is a front for something else. Daemons of Tzeentch constantly evaluate the past, present, and future for new opportunities for manipulation, and typically are running an additional hidden scheme behind any overt move. Often they may be running several such plans, perhaps even making moves that seem contradictory as they prepare for contingencies within contingencies.

Often, the scheming of a Daemon of Tzeentch is bent towards some specific goal, such as the expansion of the Warp into realspace, or the acquisition of secret lore. However, some of their schemes offer them no discernible benefit, showing no comprehensible motive other than to weave convoluted plots for their own sake. In some cases, this may actually be their goal, as the creation of mysteries and enigmas strengthens their masters. At other times, there may be some true goal hidden amidst the maze of plans, visible only to those with powers of foresight and a twisted mind.

TIME, FATE, AND THE PCs

The defining traits of Tzeentch Daemons are deception, change, and a mastery of fate. Any one of these would be a great challenge for a GM to represent well, and all three combined can seem an insurmountable challenge. After all, how does the GM convincingly portray a creature which changes identities and personalities like clothes, sees the future, or pursues goals that only make sense centuries in hindsight? More importantly, this needs to be done while still giving the players a chance to meaningfully oppose the Daemon and achieve some degree of victory in the campaign. These are serious problems, but they can be addressed with some planning and consideration.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that while Daemons of Tzeentch are masters of time and fate, the players are not. Instead, the GM should focus on the "now" of the campaign. It might be the ultimate goal of a Daemon to engulf the sector in civil war centuries down the line, but that is not something that can be easily represented at the table. Instead, the players should be offered a chance to break the links in the chain of events leading up to the end goal. The GM should avoid trying to make the whole picture visible at once—instead, make the PCs piece it together from the disparate events in which the Daemon gets involved. Showing the Acolytes the full scope of the sort of plans powerful Tzeentch Daemons can develop is likely impossible, but the GM can give the PCs pieces of the puzzle. This allows the campaign to stay focused on the PCs and their actions, while giving the GM freedom to develop events elsewhere however they are needed.

DAEMONS OF NURGLE

The power of Nurgle lies in processes of decay and loss, but it ceases at their conclusions. For as long as mortals struggle against the inevitability of entropy, Nurgle draws strength from their desperation and their doom, but only until it consumes them—the Fly Lord cannot feast on what his victims do not have. Nurgle's Daemons embody this paradox, revelling in rot and foulness but also nurturing their plagues with a grotesque parody of affection. These Daemons are forever jovial and good-humoured, constantly amused by the cruel jest of mortal life. The only thing that spoils the mood of one of Nurgle's Daemons is when their playthings and pets finally die, robbing them of carefully produced entertainment.

The actions of Daemons of Nurgle follow the ebb and flow of Nurgle's power. Where there is health and strength, they seek to spread corruption and putrescence, but where there is squalor and despair, they seek to preserve and expand it. An unchecked Daemon of Nurgle seeks to savour the slow death of worlds, tending them lovingly, and spreading diseases throughout the populace like thoughtful gifts for all they encounter.

The good humour of these Daemons continues even when confronted with a true threat, such as when an Inquisitor steps in to cut out the rot they spread and purge the affliction with holy fire. Advancing forces are frequently greeted as long-lost friends, and as the Daemons strike at them with their slime-coated claws or rusty blades, they might laugh over each blow, or comment on the favour they do to their victim by sharing the gifts of Grandfather Nurgle. For all their cheer, the Daemons are no less deadly to those who oppose them, and they do not hesitate to end a life quickly if it means they can return to spreading their plagues more easily. However, they most often cannot resist toying with opponents. Some Daemons of Nurgle enjoy pretending to spare those who defy them, only to use them as vectors for a new contagion when their victim flees from his tormentor. Such poor souls find their respite only lasts long enough to spread a new plague, before the Daemon returns to recover its wayward "friend."

DAEMONS OF SLAANESH

Unlike the servants of the other Ruinous Powers, the servants of Slaanesh do not act according to goals that extend the power of their patron. Slaanesh's purview is not to plunge the mortal world into wars or plagues or treachery. The Dark Prince holds power over desire, and the allure of his Daemons is such that they advance his cause and incite devotion to the master simply through their presence among mortals. Daemons of Slaanesh act according to their own desires, seeking what might be more accurately described as a set of targets than a series of goals.

It is the essence of a Daemon of Slaanesh to want—this mortal's soul consumed, that mortal's worship turned towards the Daemon, and these shrines desecrated and made into altars to the Prince of Chaos. Once the Daemon acquires what it seeks, it loses interest and begins coveting something else, only acknowledging what it has already claimed when its ownership is threatened. A cult of devoted slaves is worthy only of contempt to a Slaanesh Daemon, who seeks to corrupt those who have not yet fallen to its lure. However, if any of the cultists should flag in their devotion, they soon find the Daemon's disdain does not extend far enough to release them.

Unsurprisingly, Daemons of Slaanesh do not easily suffer opposition. When kept from the object of their fixation, they rapidly turn to whomever dares defy them and form a new obsession. Figures strong-willed enough to resist a Daemon of Slaanesh once are targeted for cruel and elaborate plots of revenge, as the Daemon seeks to destroy anything in the path of its desire. If it should be denied again, the Daemon's attentions are further drawn to its foe, who might become a focus more interesting to the Daemon than the original target. The Daemon may seek to entice its would-be nemesis into service or to destroy him utterly, although the two goals rarely end up appearing dissimilar in success.

BOUND DAEMONS

Although Daemons are driven to act in certain ways according to their nature and the will of their patron power, it is possible for sorcerous rituals to bind them into acting at the behest of a mortal summoner. Some cults serving the Ruinous Powers bind Daemons to gain greater power, while Radicals among the Ordo Malleus sometimes hope to turn the power of Chaos against itself. However, Daemons do not accept the bonds of servitude easily, regardless of the identity of their would-be master. A bound Daemon is even crueller and more vicious than others of its type, and does what it can within the limits of the binding to ensure that its summoner suffers for his temerity.

The exact reaction of a Daemon to binding can vary somewhat, primarily depending on the type of Daemon in question. Daemonic beasts such as Furies or Flesh Hounds are accustomed to servitude, and rarely turn on their masters unless they are denied prey or shown signs of weakness.

Daemons of Khorne constantly test the extent of their binding, pitting themselves against any constraints in a fierce contest. Their masters can appease them somewhat by providing a steady supply of targets for their wrath, but only a truly indiscriminate slaughter can distract the Daemon from its ire.

Binding tests even the good humour of Daemons of Nurgle, but they often seem to endure it more readily than others. In truth, these Daemons are typically playing the long game, waiting for the strength of the bindings to erode and fall apart. Until what they see as their inevitable freedom arrives, they might make light of their situation and serve with seeming cheer, even as they await the collapse of their prison.

Submission to the will of a mortal is nearly intolerable for the egotistical Daemons of Slaanesh. They are less accepting of binding than any, save perhaps Khorne's Daemons, although they are often more capable of putting on a front of acceptance. While bound, a Daemon of Slaanesh invariably seeks to tempt its summoner into releasing any constraints, offering extravagant promises and lies in exchange for its freedom. Anyone weak-willed enough to succumb soon finds themselves exposed to depths of pain that only a master of sensation could even imagine existing.

As in so much else, the reactions of Tzeentch Daemons to binding are varied and often inscrutable. They may invoke their sorcerous powers to undo any restraints on their behaviour, or play along with a failed ritual as if they were bound in order to deceive their summoner with false counsel. They do not like servitude any better than other Daemons do, but they often view it as a circumstance like any other they weave into their plots, and attempt to turn the tables on their master in some cunning ploy.

The binding rituals used by the Ordo Malleus, even among the most Radical of Inquisitors, are typically more restrictive than those used by Chaos cults. Containment of the Daemon's threat is viewed as a first priority, and while the blessed chains and sorcerous wards that hold the Daemons infuriate them above even normal mortal insolence, they are often less able to act on this frustration than a Daemon bound more loosely. Such a Daemon struggles constantly—and usually futilely—at its bonds, feeling a hate for its condition that a mortal could barely comprehend. Such a Daemon may affect servility or submission, but only as a ruse to lower the guard of its master or deceive him in some way.

DAEMONIC NAMES

Daemons may adopt a variety of titles, some of which might resemble names, but the true name of a Daemon is unlike that of a mortal being. A Daemon's true name can be incorporated into rituals of summoning or binding, or be invoked by its servants to call their master's attention to them. Daemonic names are often very nearly unpronounceable by human tongues, but a trained ritualist learns the intricacies of speaking them exactly as they must be spoken for the power to flow through the strange syllables.

Table 3-1: Daemonic Names on page 135 allows the GM to generate names for Daemonic NPCs with d100 rolls. Each roll on the table provides a single name element. Daemons of greater power have longer, more complex names, while lesser Daemons might have as few as three name elements. For example, a minor Bloodletter of Khorne might be called by invoking the name Dredaruz (composed of the Khorne name elements “dre,” “dar,” and “uz”), while a powerful Keeper of Secrets might jealously guard its true name of Malya'aishui'iel (made up of the Slaaneshi name elements “ma,” “lya,” “ais,” “hui,” and “iel”).



Table 3-1: Daemonic Names

1d100 ROLL	KHORNE DAEMONS	TZEENTCH DAEMONS	NURGLE DAEMONS	SLAANESH DAEMONS
01–05	-ar-	-az-	-ble-	-aa-
06–10	-cro-	-aw-	-fle-	-ais-
11–15	-dar-	-cai-	-gla-	-ce-
16–20	-dre-	-eph-	-fle-	-cl-
21–25	-ek-	-hy-	-gil-	-es-
26–30	-gra-	-iz-	-ggo-	-hai-
31–35	-har-	-iq-	-hoph-	-hui-
36–40	-ka-	-je-	-hur-	-ia-
41–45	-kher-	-kko-	-kuk-	-icl-
46–50	-kon-	-ma-	-kuf-	-iss-
51–55	-kul-	-ozz-	-lof-	-ja-
56–60	-mur-	-oq-	-mu-	-la-
61–65	-onn-	-pho-	-nur-	-lei-
66–70	-ohr-	-q-	-off-	-lya-
71–75	-rag-	-qa-	-oi-	-ma-
76–80	-ror-	-qir-	-olg-	-umm-
81–85	-tra-	-tz-	-oo-	-pha-
86–90	-to-	-yz-	-ur-	-sa-
91–95	-vo-	-za-	-ulg-	-sse-
96–00	-uz-	-zz-	-yk-	-vu-

DAEMONIC SACRED NUMBERS

Each of the four Chaos Gods holds a peculiar fixation with a particular number, for reasons that—like all aspects of Chaos—no mortal could begin to fully comprehend. The mortal followers and Daemons of each Chaos god often use such numbers when invoking power from their chosen Ruinous Power.

KHORNE

Sacred Number: 8 (and multiples of 8)

Effect: Characters dedicated to the Blood God who roll an 8 when determining damage inflicted by a hit from a melee weapon may add +1 to the damage result. Characters correctly using the number 8 in any rite, summoning ritual, or other act dedicated to Khorne gain a +20 bonus to all relevant tests.

TZEENTCH

Sacred Number: 9 (and multiples of 9)

Effect: Characters dedicated to the Fate Weaver who perform a Focus Power test where the sum of the two dice used equals 9

can re-roll one of the dice, but must accept the second result. Characters correctly using the number 9 in any rite, summoning ritual, or other act dedicated to Tzeentch gain a +20 bonus to all relevant tests.

NURGLE

Sacred Number: 7 (and multiples of 7)

Effect: Characters dedicated to the Plague Father who roll a 7 to determine damage inflicted by a hit from a weapon or psychic power with the Toxic quality add +1 to the result. Characters correctly using the number 7 in any rite, summoning ritual, or other act dedicated to Nurgle gain a +20 bonus to all relevant tests.

SLAANESH

Sacred Number: 6 (and multiples of 6)

Effect: Characters dedicated to the Dark Prince who roll a 6 as part of an Opposed Willpower test add their Willpower bonus to the result of their opponent's roll (before calculating success or failure). Characters correctly using the number 6 in any rite, summoning ritual, or other act dedicated to Slaanesh gain a +20 bonus to all relevant tests.

THE WARP AND REALSPACE

"I sense them strongly now. They are all around us, watching, listening—whispering. If you knew how little stands between us and the abyss, you would fall to your knees and weep."

—Dralen Tor, Desoleum Visionant

The Warp is anathema to the physical universe. An alternate dimension of raw energy and emotion, the Immaterium always seethes and roils just beyond the veil of reality. Although the Warp is necessary for interstellar communication and travel—and therefore for the Imperium's survival—it is also a constant threat. Those voidships that traverse the Warp and Astropaths who transmit their messages through it expose themselves to the risks of the Immaterium. The risks are manifold, for the Warp is the Realm of Chaos, and it corrupts both physically and spiritually. To glimpse the Warp is to go mad, and to touch it is to invite mutation. A flicker of a ship's Gellar Field or a momentary lapse in a psyker's concentration is all it takes to unleash damnation.

Though the Warp is inimical to realspace, the two can and do overlap. Thankfully, such breaches in the Warp are usually temporary—although mere moments of exposure to the Warp can permanently change the material world, with biological material being the most susceptible. The most infamous permanent Warp intrusion is the Eye of Terror, but others, such as the Maelstrom and the Storm of the Emperor's Wrath, also exist. Such areas of overlap cover vast areas of space, and the planets found within defy description.

Where the Warp bleeds into reality, Chaos holds sway. The very laws of physics are broken, and any strange phenomenon imaginable—and many beyond—is possible. The Warp is utterly corruptive, and creatures exposed to the raw stuff of the Immaterium face instantaneous mutation. Perhaps worst of all, breaches in the Warp allow Daemons into reality, and areas where Warp and realspace overlap sustain Daemons, who usually struggle to remain manifested in reality.

THE THIN VEIL

The barrier between reality and the Warp is not equally strong across the galaxy. In some places, the veil is thin, allowing the influence of the Warp to leech through. Such areas might be permanent or temporary, and could be of nearly any size, the result of random chance or the intentional acts of malefic cults. Some are the result of experiments performed during the Dark Age of Technology, while others are a side effect of psychic activity or a great effusion of emotion or death. In the Askellon Sector, the unpredictable currents of the Pandaemonium batter the shores of reality, weakening the barrier between dimensions.

Various disturbing phenomena can manifest in areas where the veil is thin, for the Warp and its influence are never predictable or consistent. Such places are often considered haunted or ill-omened, for people might hear voices, glimpse movement out of the corners of their eyes, or experience nightmares or even waking

visions. Chronos might run backwards, temperatures plummet or fluctuate, and auspexes and scanners provide inconsistent or contradictory readings. Individuals might feel a sense of wrongness that they cannot describe, or strange and disturbing sensations, from tingling on the skin to the smell of burning flesh. To represent the effects of such disturbing experiences, GMs might impose a penalty to Willpower or other tests, or even call for Fear tests (causing Warp Shock). To randomly generate an effect, use Table 3-2: Warp Phenomena on page 137. Such effects might occur intermittently or constantly in an area of weak veil, or might suddenly occur to indicate a weakening of the barrier. In areas where the veil is particularly strained, multiple effects could occur.

A psyker can judge the relative strength of the veil, confirming whether it is weak, with a Challenging (+0) Psyniscience test.

PSYCHIC POWERS

Where the Warp waxes strong, psykers can more easily access its power to fuel their abilities, yet doing so also risks unleashing unintended effects. To represent this, the GM might grant a bonus of +10 or more to Focus Power tests, depending on how weak the veil is, with a corresponding modifier to Psychic Phenomena rolls. For particularly dangerous areas, the GM might increase the risk of incurring Psychic Phenomena, such as having it occur when either die produces a 9 result, on any result of an odd number, or even occurring automatically on any successful Focus Power test in areas where the barrier is truly weak.

DAEMONS

Daemons find it easier to manifest and sustain their presence in areas where the veil between reality and the Warp is weak. To represent this, Daemons in such a location should receive a bonus of +10 or more to Warp Instability tests. The GM also might grant a bonus to tests made to summon them (see page 59) in an area where the veil is thin. In both cases, the value of the bonus can be increased to represent a stronger Warp presence. For particularly potent wellsprings of Warp energies, Daemons could also gain the Regeneration trait, with a value determined by the GM.

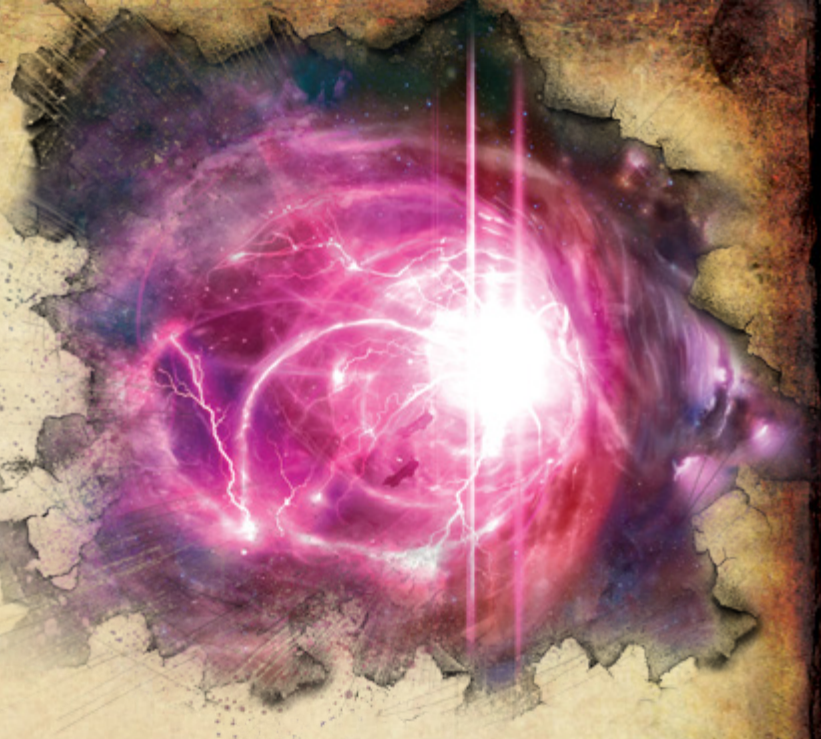


Table 3-2: Warp Phenomena

1d100 ROLL	EFFECT	1d100 ROLL	EFFECT
1-2	Water turns to blood.	51-52	Sparks arc across metal.
3-4	The temperature falls rapidly and thick frost forms on nearby surfaces.	53-54	Characters feel intense pain, as if their flesh is burning or stung by horrid insects.
5-6	Chronos run backward or speed up.	55-56	A strong, cold wind blows.
7-8	Shadows flicker on walls and distort to form the silhouettes of strange figures.	57-58	The taste of bile and blood fills characters' mouths, even if they try to rinse them out.
9-10	Liquids drip upwards, pooling on the ceiling.	59-60	The air is hot, as if standing in front of a furnace.
11-12	Plants wither and die, food and drink spoils.	61-62	Glass cracks or shatters.
13-14	Paint peels as if burnt, metal rusts, and wood rots.	63-64	Flames dance along the walls and engulf people, but do not burn.
15-16	Characters hear their own voices issuing from voxes or micro-heads, saying things they have never said.	65-66	Characters become violently angry or otherwise experience strong and sudden emotions.
17-18	The walls bleed.	67-68	Hideous insects crawl over every surface.
19-20	There is a smell of charred flesh.	69-70	Healed wounds re-open.
21-22	The smell of ozone fills the air.	71-72	Scratch marks appear on flesh.
23-24	Characters taste gritty ashes.	73-74	Discordant wailing is heard.
25-26	The buzzing of flies is audible.	75-76	Faces or hands appear in the walls as if pushing from the other side.
27-28	Characters feel things scuttling across their skin, but see nothing.	77-78	Aquillas and other holy symbols burst into flame or crackle with energy.
29-30	Characters feel nauseous.	79-80	Objects hover in mid-air.
31-32	Light sources flicker or dim, candles snuff out.	81-82	Dataslates and other vid-screens scroll nonsense or threatening messages.
33-34	Sounds echo into barely understood words.	83-84	Characters feel suddenly exhausted or energised.
35-36	Characters hear whispering voices.	85-86	Reflective surfaces or vid-screens show flickering glimpses of daemonic faces.
37-38	Sounds are muffled, as if underwater.	87-88	Electronic devices malfunction.
39-40	Stone or metal slowly melts.	89-90	Characters become paranoid and suspicious of their allies.
41-42	Mirrors and reflective surfaces ripple and distort.	91-92	Spectral figures fill the air.
43-44	Characters' noses begin to bleed.	93-94	Gravity feels weaker or stronger.
45-46	Characters see strange things out of the corners of their eyes.	95-96	Characters perceive a brief but vivid vision of their own death.
47-48	Characters' reflections are disturbingly and frighteningly altered.	97-98	Characters experience memories of events that have yet to occur.
49-50	Characters hear the mocking voices of dead friends and family.	99-100	Characters hear disturbing voices offering riches or power.



WARP BREACHES

A full-blown Warp breach is nothing less than a portal to hell. Exposure to the undiluted energies of the Warp often proves instantly fatal to humans, and even those who survive are likely to lose their sanity or mutate beyond all recognition. In the vicinity of a Warp rift, conditions are like those of an area of weak veil, but magnified a thousand times. The laws of physics break down, and people might experience any number of overlapping effects. In addition to any of the effects on **Table 3–2: Warp Phenomena** (on page 137), the GM should feel free to invent even greater and more horrifying manifestations of the Warp. In the presence of a rift, the ground might sunder, or the sky could darken and whorl with energy. It might rain blood, while translucent daemonic figures might flicker in and out of existence. Even a reality-rip only a few metres across might have effects over an area of kilometres.

A Warp breach might take the form of a fiery rift, a whorl of kaleidoscopic energy, a suppurating wound in reality, or any of a thousand other possibilities. Daemonic forms could be glimpsed within, while probing tentacles extend, translucent liquid fire spills out, or reality cracks and splits like a broken mirror.

Regardless of the form it takes, characters gazing upon a Warp rift must make a Fear test against Fear (2), causing Warp Shock. In addition, characters in the vicinity of a Warp rift gain 1d5 or 1d10 Corruption points, depending on their proximity to the breach and its size and severity. Characters who continue to look into a Warp rift or remain in its presence should gain 1d5 or 1d10 Insanity points as well. Characters coming into direct contact with a Warp rift or the energies it releases suffer 3d10 E damage that ignores armour and Toughness bonus. In addition, they gain 1 Corruption point for each point of damage they suffer.

The above applies to Acolytes and other important characters. Minor NPCs cannot hope to come through exposure to a Warp incursion unscathed. Bystanders might collapse with their minds broken and sanity blasted, die of shock, or succumb to rampant mutation.

Even allies of the PCs or the foes responsible for a Warp breach might be unprepared for the true mind-rending terror of the Warp unleashed. When resolving Fear tests for such NPCs, the GM should make a single roll for each group of similar NPCs, with those who fail removed from the encounter in an appropriate way—raving uncontrollably, fleeing, or even transforming into a horrid Chaos Spawn.

DAEMONIC INCURSIONS

Daemons are walking manifestations of the Warp. Reality bends in their presence, for each is an intrusion of the Warp into realspace. Daemons often occupy areas where the veil is weak or arrive through Warp rifts. Even absent these other conditions, the presence of a Daemon can have similar effects, unnaturally twisting the environment around it or playing havoc with the senses of any mortals unfortunate enough to be nearby.

To better demonstrate the horror and unnaturalness of Daemons, GMs might describe the effects felt by those within range of a Daemon's Baneful Presence trait. To generate a result randomly, use **Table 3–2: Warp Phenomena** on page 137. The following are some suggestions for possible effects based on the nature of a Daemon, and GMs are encouraged to come up with their own unique phenomena.

In the presence of a Daemon of Khorne:

- People become violently angry for no reason.
- People taste blood in their mouths.
- The ground cracks and burns.

In the presence of a Daemon of Tzeentch:

- Colours and forms shift and change, returning to normal once the Daemon passes.
- People experience fleeting visions or speak in languages they do not know.
- Multi-hued feathers are found in odd places.

In the presence of a Daemon of Nurgle:

- Plants and small animals wither and rot.
- Flies and foul stench fill the air.
- People break out in fever or discoloured skin.

In the presence of a Daemon of Slaanesh:

- People feel somehow drawn to the Daemon.
- A sickly sweet scent permeates the region.
- People's senses are heightened.

MALLEUS INVESTIGATIONS

"Daemons are lies given form. To cast out the Daemon, you must only carry the Emperor's Truth, for against it, all lies crumble."

—Inquisitor Brand

Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes face the greatest threat to humanity's existence: Chaos and the Daemons of the Warp. The Dark Gods of Chaos are the Archenemies of Mankind; the Ruinous Powers and their Daemons seek to bring the veil crashing down and undo reality as we know it, plunging the galaxy into the madness of the Warp. Although insidious heretics seek to undermine the Imperium from within and alien abominations attack from without, the Daemons of the Immaterium whisper their lies from beyond the fabric of reality. Yet, when the veil is rent asunder, Daemons invade in a great tide, slaughtering and unleashing cataclysmic destruction. Few warriors can even face such a foe without succumbing to terror and madness, and even mere knowledge of such entities is restricted. Only the Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes possess the knowledge, strength of will, and tools to stand against the Daemon.

DESIGNING MALLEUS ADVENTURES

The Daemons of the Warp take innumerable forms, and so adventures concerning them provide endless potential for variance. The ways of Daemons vary greatly, even amongst the legions of a single Chaos God. Some Daemons rely on trickery and deception to corrupt mortals, while others exist only for blood-soaked battle. Regardless of their methods and nature, all Daemons represent a grave threat to humanity, and wherever a Daemon reaches out from the Warp to exert its unholy influence on the galaxy, the Ordo Malleus must be ready to cast it back into the abyss. Although each adventure is unique, many share certain elements and themes, which GMs can make use of to ensure that an adventure feels suited to the Ordo Malleus, while also ensuring that each investigation is distinctive and memorable.

Just as the ways of Daemons are manifold, so the methods of the Daemonhunter must encompass a wide range of means and tools. Some Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes operate openly. Clad in sanctified armour and wielding devastating pscannons and force hammers, they are mighty crusaders seeking to meet the Daemon head-on in righteous battle. Others operate in the shadows, watching for signs of daemonic influence amongst the populace of the Imperium and eliminating it with unseen assassins. Perhaps the greatest distinction comes between those Inquisitors of a Puritan and Radical approach. While some Inquisitors rely on faith and blessed weaponry to combat the Daemon, others seek to turn Warp-tainted weapons and malefic sorcery against the creatures of the Warp. Some Inquisitors see no contradiction in the use of both methods, wielding a book of Imperial scripture in one hand and a Daemon-bound blade in the other.

BEYOND REALITY

Although Daemons pose an almost inconceivable threat to Mankind, they face certain limitations. Chief amongst these is the difficulty Daemons have manifesting and remaining in the material universe. Without the energy of the Warp to sustain them, Daemons are able to maintain a corporeal form for only so long. Breaching the veil and entering reality in the first place is only possible under certain circumstances. These limitations mean that the bulk of the Ordo Malleus's work consists not of banishing Daemons back to the Warp, but preventing their arrival in the first place. Some Daemons are so apocalyptically powerful that there is no hope of defeating them in battle, and the only way to save a world or system is to ensure the Daemon does not manifest.

For a Daemon to manifest, the barrier between reality and the Warp must be weakened and broken. There are a number of ways this can come about, both due to the actions of mortals and the vagaries of the Warp. Even a sanctioned psyker risks opening a gateway to the Warp with each use of his powers, and for this reason some members of the Ordo Malleus share the same anti-psyker views as the most hard-line Witch Hunters. Malefic cults often seek to summon Daemons, either to enact the cult's aims or as a simple act of devotion to the Dark Gods. The very movements of the Warp, perhaps fed by the emotions of mortals, disturbed by the activities of psykers, or set in motion aeons ago, can in rare cases push against the veil of reality until it tears open. What all these potentialities share is either a Warp rift that allows Daemons to manifest physical forms in reality, or the possession of a mortal host body.

It is not necessary, however, for a Daemon to manifest in reality in order to threaten humanity. Daemons communicate with mortals from the depths of the Warp, and psykers are particularly susceptible to these whispers and visions. Often, such contact is the precursor to the Daemon entering reality, as it establishes a link in order to corrupt and possess a mortal, or instructs the mortal in the ways of its summoning. There are many reasons a mortal might fall to a Daemon's temptation. A lust for power, wealth, adoration, revenge—all of these and more are weaknesses a Daemon might exploit. Even if the interaction does not lead to the Daemon's emergence in the physical universe, a mortal under daemonic influence might undertake all manner of evil deeds. Powerful psykers and influential figures can cause untold damage, igniting wars and leading star systems—even entire sectors—into eternal damnation.

THE SERVANTS OF THE ENEMY

Because of the nature of Daemons, the early stages of Ordo Malleus investigations often deal with mortals in thrall to Daemons. In many cases, a successful mission might mean preventing a cult from summoning a Daemon, or destroying a rogue psyker before he succumbs to possession. In this way, the work of the Ordo Malleus overlaps with that of the Ordo Hereticus. However, while Inquisitors of the Ordo Hereticus focus on the traitors and witches themselves, the servants of the Ordo Malleus concern themselves always with the true threat of the Daemon. Better to prevent that threat from materialising, but if the worst does happen, the warriors of the Ordo Malleus possess the knowledge and tools to fight against the daemonic.

The servants of the Ordo Malleus must often investigate secretive Chaos cults with aspirations to summon Daemons, or even plunge worlds into the Warp. Depending on the nature of the enemy and the preferred methods of a warband, this might entail infiltrating a cult in order to learn the threat it poses and even uncover its dark secrets in order to turn such knowledge against other enemies. Other Inquisitors might conscript local forces in order to flush out the heretics and launch a full-scale assault on their compound.

There are many heretics who unknowingly threaten to bring Daemons into reality. Although a scholar of forbidden lore might not think himself a devotee of Chaos, by opening his mind to the secrets of the Warp, he draws the attentions of its denizens. A noble dilettante who collects Warp-touched artefacts might unwittingly release the power they contain and open a Warp rift. Guardsmen of the Astra Militarum and even Space Marines who enter battle against the force of Chaos, and particularly against incarnate Daemons, risk corruption that might, if unchecked, transform them into the very enemy they battled against.

Because the presence of Daemons is often concealed and the agents of the Ordo Malleus seek to halt Daemonic incursions before they begin, Malleus-themed adventures also bring the PCs into conflict with the other threats to humanity. Although PCs aligned with the Ordo Malleus should primarily encounter Daemons and their mortal servants, GMs can introduce unexpected complications and twists by including other sorts of foes. A noble lord suspected of daemonic possession could turn out to be under alien dominance, or what appears at first to be a Chaos cult may be instead devoted to the protection and advancement of psykers. Although doing so might require adjustment to their methods, dealing with such threats remains the responsibility of the warband, for all threats to humanity fall within an Inquisitor's purview, regardless of his chosen focus.

BATTLE AND BANISHMENT

All too often, Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus or their Acolytes are too late to stop a daemonic summoning, or a Warp rift might open without warning. Sometimes, a warband's first indication that there is a threat comes from the presence of Daemons, whether scheming in the shadows or slaughtering in the habways. When Daemons step foot in the material universe, it is the sacred duty of the Ordo Malleus to banish them back to the Immaterium. Often, once a Daemon is manifest in reality, only inflicting great damage to its corporeal form can disrupt its hold enough to return it to the Warp. For this reason, combat can be a major part of Ordo Malleus adventures.

Daemons are the most dangerous and horrifying foes imaginable, and even for veteran Daemonhunters, each encounter should be a momentous experience. Not only are Daemons powerful adversaries that evince a host of strange Warp-spawned abilities, but their mere presence can taint the soul and shatter the minds of hardened warriors. Because of this, Inquisitors and Acolytes often cannot count on local forces for aid in combat, as few are likely to possess the strength of will necessary to overcome their fear in the face of daemonic foes.

In order to successfully battle Daemons, Acolytes must not only be capable combatants, but strong enough of will to maintain their composure. Heavy weapons and sanctified blades are of no use if the warriors fall apart in the presence of the horrific enemy.



MALLEUS THEMES

Alongside the core themes described on page 374 of the **DARK HERESY** Core Rulebook, certain additional themes and motifs are particularly applicable or unique to Ordo Malleus adventures. GMs can keep these themes in mind when crafting their adventures, making them a focal point of the game as appropriate in order to underscore the nature of the Ordo Malleus and the enemy it faces.

CORRUPTION AND DAMNATION

Of all humanity's enemies, the Daemon poses a unique threat to the soul. From the depths of the Warp, Daemons whisper to the weak-willed, corrupting with promises of power. Psykers' souls are at the greatest risk, for they burn brightly in the Warp, drawing the attentions of Daemons. A psyker who uses his power recklessly or escapes sanctioning is distressingly likely to have his soul consumed by a Daemon. Worse, Daemons can more easily possess psykers, using their connection to the Warp as a bridge to cross into reality. Once manifested in reality, Daemons pose an unfathomable and horrifying threat to all who encounter them. As creatures of pure Chaos, Daemons corrupt the very ground they walk on, and few mortals can witness an incarnate Daemon and come through the experience spiritually unscathed.

It is not merely that the sight of a Daemon shatters the sanity of mortals—it taints the soul as well. Those who encounter a Daemon and somehow survive often lose their faith, for how can the Emperor protect them against such horrors? For some, the effects are slow, as Chaos takes root in their soul, leading them to explore the ways of the Dark Gods. Others forsake the Emperor in the face of a Daemon, while some succumb to immediate mutation, unable to withstand the influence of Chaos.

TERROR AND MADNESS

Daemons are unnaturally horrifying creatures. Their mere presence defies reality, and their nature as beings of Chaos is utterly terrifying. Daemons are horrific to look upon, from the horned and crimson-slicked Bloodletters of Khorne to the indescribably grotesque Plaguebearers of Nurgle. Higher orders of Daemons are even more terrible to gaze upon. However, the terror of Daemons is not merely based on their physical traits and the clear danger they pose, as horrible as these are. Daemons exude an aura of unnaturalness and terror that revolts mortals, far beyond just their twisted shapes and forms—human minds shatter at the mere presence of such creatures, just as reality itself weeps and burns when Daemons emerge from the Warp. Most men are unable to withstand the presence of the daemonic; many lose their sanity when simply confronted with the existence of Daemons.

Mortals experience the unnatural aura of Daemons in myriad ways, some of which are described on page 138. During an adventure dealing with the daemonic, not only must the Acolytes keep their wits about them in the face of terrifying Warp phenomena and the manifest forms of Daemons, but they must contend with the effects on witnesses. Acolytes tracking a Daemon might have difficulty prying useful information from maddened survivors, and might be unable to count on their allies to stand fast during the confrontation with the fiend.

SACRIFICE AND SALVATION

Although all Inquisitors and Acolytes must face great challenges and grave decisions, perhaps none are called on to sacrifice so much as those of the Ordo Malleus. While others face the possibility of death with each new investigation, those who hunt Daemons risk their very souls. It is almost impossible to face the denizens of the Warp without exposing oneself to corruption, and all too often, the greatest opponents of Chaos succumb to it. All who take up the mantle of the Daemonhunter must accept the possibility of sacrificing his own soul in order to safeguard humanity—although some Inquisitors might not make the true danger clear to their Acolytes. Some Inquisitors and Acolytes fully embrace the risk to their souls and take up the tools and weapons of Chaos in order to battle it, considering their souls already forfeit. Others seek to secure their own salvation, remaining pure through their many battles with Chaos.

Perhaps a lesser sacrifice, but still a significant one, to Daemonhunters is to be cut off from their fellow humans. The very nature of the threat they face means there are few if any who can be allowed to know of their work. These Inquisitors and their Acolytes might think themselves divorced from the rest of humanity, and after time can believe themselves above others and thus more ready to adopt more and more hazardous means to achieve their aims. The descent to Radicalism can make them enemies in the eyes of many, and more than one Ordo Malleus Inquisitor has faced perhaps the most powerful of opponents—the Grey Knights. These Space Marines can become deadly nemeses in Ordo Malleus adventures, perhaps even greater than any Daemon.

THE TOOLS OF THE DAEMONHUNTER

The Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes face the greatest foe Mankind has ever known, and so they must make use of every weapon at their disposal to combat it. For some, this even means turning the instruments of Chaos against it, but most Inquisitors view such actions as nothing less than heresy. The following are some of the most important tools in the Daemonhunter's arsenal.

WILL

While armour and force fields can preserve a man's body, only strength of will can safeguard his soul against the threat of the Daemon. Mere exposure to the entities of the Warp can corrupt the unprepared, and so the Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes must gird their souls with adamant resolve. For some, this strength of will stems from faith in the Emperor; for others, from devotion to duty; and for yet others, focussed hatred for the Daemon. Those of Radical leanings trust in their strength of will to protect their souls even as they take up Daemon weapons and foul sorceries in their battle against Chaos. Willpower allows Daemonhunters to overcome the terror that their prey evokes, fighting on where lesser men would collapse in a gibbering heap. Further, resolve protects Inquisitors and their Acolytes from the insidious taint of the Warp; those of sufficient will remain pure where others would succumb to corruption and mutation, and resist the honeyed promises and temptations of Daemons. More than simply a shield, a keen will is as a weapon against the beings of the Warp. When spoken by the resolute of will, prayers of exorcism and hatred can weaken a Daemon's grip in reality.

BLESSED WEAPONRY AND ACCURSED KNOWLEDGE

Mundane weapons are frequently ineffective against Daemons, for their unnatural forms are made of the very energies of the Warp. To battle their daemonic adversaries, Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes often make use of specialised and blessed weaponry, from force weapons, to sanctified blades, to rare and esoteric psybolt shells. Many Daemonhunters have their weapons ritually blessed by preachers of the Ecclesiarchy, or inscribed with devotional script and prayers of warding. Even a simple sword so consecrated can disrupt a Daemon's form and banish it back to the Warp. Purity seals, pentagramatically warded armour, and holy icons can provide protection against the claws and Warp-forged weapons of Daemons. Even the most Puritanical of Daemonhunters must almost inevitably include dangerous and forbidden knowledge in their arsenal, for only by understanding the forms of the Daemon and the manner of its manifestation and summoning can they seek to halt its work.

Some Inquisitors and their servants go further, delving deep into dark lore in order to turn the tools and weapons of Chaos against it. Such Daemonhunters might wield Daemon weapons, go to battle in sorcerously warded armour, and seek to bind the opponent to their will with dark incantations. These are all powerful methods to fight against the Enemy Beyond, but also signs to others of souls in peril, or that might already be lost to the Dark Gods. For Puritanical Inquisitors, detection of actions such as these might lead to requests for the Grey Knights to offer assistance—not against daemonic foes, but against those who would dare use the Warp and its unholy denizens in this way.

ULTIMATE SANCTION

The ultimate threat to humanity calls for any means necessary to halt it. Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus must show no mercy to witnesses and bystanders to daemonic activity. Knowledge of Daemons is harshly suppressed in the Imperium, for were the citizens to know of the existence of Daemons, they would rise up in panic, while some would seek the power Daemons can offer. As for those actually exposed to Daemons, few retain their sanity. For such broken and shattered men, there is little to do but offer them the Emperor's Mercy. Exposure to Daemons and the Warp corrupts, and even should a witness survive with his mind seemingly intact, his soul could be tainted.

For most Inquisitors, the risk is too great to let any but exceptional witnesses live. In the cases of full-scale daemonic incursions, the aftermath might see an Inquisitor calling for the execution of thousands of civilians or more. Individuals deemed too important to execute—Astra Militarum generals, planetary governors, Adeptus Arbites Judges, and Space Marines, for instance—might instead be subject to mind-wiping and thereafter be observed for signs of corruption. It is also possible some individuals might always possess knowledge of the Warp's true nature and what dwells within it; these in particular deserve an even closer watch for spiritual contamination. When an Inquisitor and his Acolytes are unable to contain a daemonic outbreak and seal the Warp rift that unleashed it, though, even greater sanctions might be necessary. If sanctified weapons and rites of banishment are insufficient to quell the incursion, an Inquisitor might be forced to order the death of an entire world—Exterminatus.

MALLEUS CLUES AND LEADS

As described on page 280 of the *DARK HERESY* Core Rulebook, clues and leads are the fundamental components of any investigation. It is only by discovering clues and following the leads they present that Acolytes can advance their investigation to halt the heretics and banish the Daemons threatening the Askellon Sector. Although clues take an almost limitless variety of forms—especially when dealing with the Warp and its denizens—all clues can be assigned one of the basic categories of physical, informational, or correlational, or the special category of unnatural.

Although each investigation yields unique clues, certain elements can be expected when hunting the Daemon. The following section provides further guidance on each of the clue types described in the *DARK HERESY* Core Rulebook and how those clues can be used in Ordo Malleus investigations. In addition, subcategories unique to the Ordo Malleus are introduced for each type of clue. GMs can use these as inspiration when designing their own distinctly Ordo Malleus adventures.

PHYSICAL CLUES

In most investigations, physical clues are amongst the most useful and vital. When dealing with creatures not of the physical world, however, such clues can be difficult to obtain. Physical clues in an Ordo Malleus investigation must be treated with utmost caution, for they likely bear the taint of Chaos and can spread that corruption to others. Daemonhunters must be prepared to follow up on leads that bear little fruit, for oftentimes physical clues that might lead to the daemonic could simply lead to mundane heretics. Not all mutants are in league with Daemons, and the majority of malefic cults do not possess the knowledge or skill to summon Daemons. Yet these are still heretics deserving of death, which the Ordo Malleus can provide.

CORRUPTION MANIFEST

In many cases, the first clues to a daemonic presence are found amongst the mortals who serve them. Chaos cultists and Daemon worshipers often bear physical signs of the corruption in their souls, from ritual scarification and blasphemous electroos to hideous mutations. These heretics always take efforts to conceal their deformities and signs of allegiance, requiring Acolytes to perform careful observation in order to discover them. A warband might rely on stealth to observe suspected heretics unseen, or even attempt to infiltrate their ranks to observe them when their guard is lowered. Alternatively, Acolytes might discover such markers on the bodies of slain opponents. These signs, particularly mutations, could indicate that a Daemon is already present on the physical plane, corrupting its servants through mere exposure to its presence. Physical mutations such as horns, claws, wings and more could point to something even worse—daemonic possession or a Daemonhost. When confronted with such a potent entity, a warband must decide whether to attack immediately or fall back and take additional preparations.

TAINTED ARTEFACTS

Corrupt artefacts are often associated with the worship and summoning of Daemons. Profane idols, eight-pointed stars carved from the bones of mutants, and even daemonic remnants are all prized by daemonologists and Warp-dabblers. Those found in possession of such artefacts are surely heretics, and likely guilty of trafficking with Daemons. Cult witches and magisters might utilise these profane objects in ceremonies to summon or bind Daemons, making their discovery and removal a high priority. Finding such objects could indicate the intent to summon Daemons, but Acolytes must always be wary that the deed is already done and a Daemon now walks the planet. In some cases, the condition of the artefacts may indicate whether they have already been used—a rune-inscribed dagger coated with freshly-dried blood might show that a sacrifice has been made to call forth a Daemon. Such artefacts can be immensely dangerous in themselves, for if authentic, they are certainly saturated with Warp energies, capable of corrupting and twisting those around them. When examining and following leads from such artefacts, Acolytes must be cautious. Once the immediate threat has been dealt with, it might also be necessary to trace the source of such artefacts and uncover the trail of corruption they leave behind.

THE MARK OF THE DAEMON

Although Daemons are creations of the Warp rather than true flesh and blood, and return there when banished, they can nonetheless leave physical traces. This is particularly true of Daemons who entered reality by possessing and twisting the flesh of a mortal. Hideous claw gouges, scorched inhuman footprints, shimmering bile, dead plants and small animals, unnatural rot and decay, and warped metal and stone—all can be signs of the passage of a Daemon. These traces also provide leads to the nature of the creature. A Daemon of Nurgle might leave behind swarms of Warp-spawned insects, while an unnaturally intoxicating musk hints at the passage of a Daemon of Slaanesh. Such clues are not just signs of a daemonic presence; the warband may even use them to physically track a Daemon's movements or narrow down its location.

INFORMATIONAL CLUES

Because physical clues often can be difficult to obtain in the pursuit of Daemons, Acolyte investigators must often make do primarily with informational clues. Reports of strange phenomena, ancient prophecies, and the ravings of madmen all serve as the first sign of an impending daemonic incursion.

It is the duty of those serving within the Ordo Malleus to identify mere falsehoods and simple madness from truth and imminent danger. Informational clues are often fake, or are the result of ignorance and miscomprehension. Inquisitors and Acolytes must learn to tell the difference, for the Ordo Malleus has not the time to waste pursuing smoke and mirrors.

FORBIDDEN LORE

The lore of daemonology is integral to the work of the Ordo Malleus. Although Puritan Inquisitors and Acolytes might find it difficult and disturbing, requiring many hours of prayer and penance afterward, consulting dismal texts is sometimes the only way to uncover the nature of a daemonic foe in order to predict where it strikes next or determine how to defeat it. Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus have spent millennia cataloguing the limitless forms the Daemon takes, and the works of earlier Inquisitors are invaluable. As dangerous as such infernal bestiaries are, they pale in comparison to the works of heretical daemonologists. For some Inquisitors, consulting such profane texts is going too far, but others see it as a necessary step in order to understand and defeat the Archenemies of Mankind.



Just as servants of the Ordo Malleus employ knowledge in the prosecution of their duties, so do their enemies utilise dark lore to unspeakable ends. The discovery of forbidden texts, or even simply the revelation that an individual knows that Daemons exist, are damning clues. Similarly, occult writings amongst an individual's effects or journals sheds light on the plots of heretics and the nature of the Daemons with which they truck.

VISIONS OF DAMNATION

Daemonhunters must often work from the reports of witnesses and survivors—although they are frequently unreliable—especially during the initial stages of an investigation. Reports of strange phenomena could indicate a weakening of the veil between reality and the Warp, and claims that local Enforcers ignore as impossible or insane might, to a warband of the Ordo Malleus, clearly indicate the influence of the Warp. Survivors of daemonic attacks are rare, but are a valuable source of information. However, they are usually so broken in mind that sifting the truth from amongst their maddened ravings is a difficult task. This requires careful judgement, for a warband must be certain they have obtained all of the useful information from witnesses or survivors before delivering the Emperor's Mercy, granted lest corruption consume the unfortunate souls.



CORRELATIONAL CLUES

As with investigations dealing with the other major threats to Mankind, correlational clues in an Ordo Malleus investigation are the result of comparing and contrasting other evidence in order to reach important conclusions. Correlational clues are often those that grant insight into the nature of a daemonic foe or indicate its involvement, and are amongst the most important clues to successfully concluding an investigation.

PATTERNS AND PROPHECIES

The true nature of the Warp is fundamentally incomprehensible to mortals, yet throughout history, occultists, practitioners of the dark arts, and scholars of the Ordo Malleus have sought to understand it and its effects on the physical universe. Often, such understanding comes through connecting ambiguous prophecies and symbolic language. Daemonhunters learned in such matters might detect similarities between the predictions of madmen and the prophecies of both heretics and saints in the clues of an investigation. The increasingly purple colouration of a world's sunsets might bring to mind the prophecy of a particular Daemon Prince's return, as could sky-blue feathers being found in unusual numbers, adding new impetus to the investigation and yielding further clues from the words of the passage. Strange happenings and events might have little meaning individually, but taken together, they could indicate the influence of the Warp.

POSSESSION AND DARK BARGAINS

Daemons often use their Warp-spawned powers to mask their involvement in the affairs of mortals. Hidden in possessed artefacts or clothed in mortal flesh, Daemons do their evil work amongst the worlds of the Imperium while remaining unseen. In such cases, it is only by collecting a variety of clues and piecing together the puzzle that the warband can be sure of the involvement of Daemons. A pattern of strange behaviours, individually unremarkable, might (when taken alongside a series of unusual phenomena) indicate that an individual is possessed. The impressions of a psyker in conjunction with knowledge of a particular Daemon might hint at a dark pact behind a dissolute noble's sudden rise to prominence.

UNNATURAL CLUES

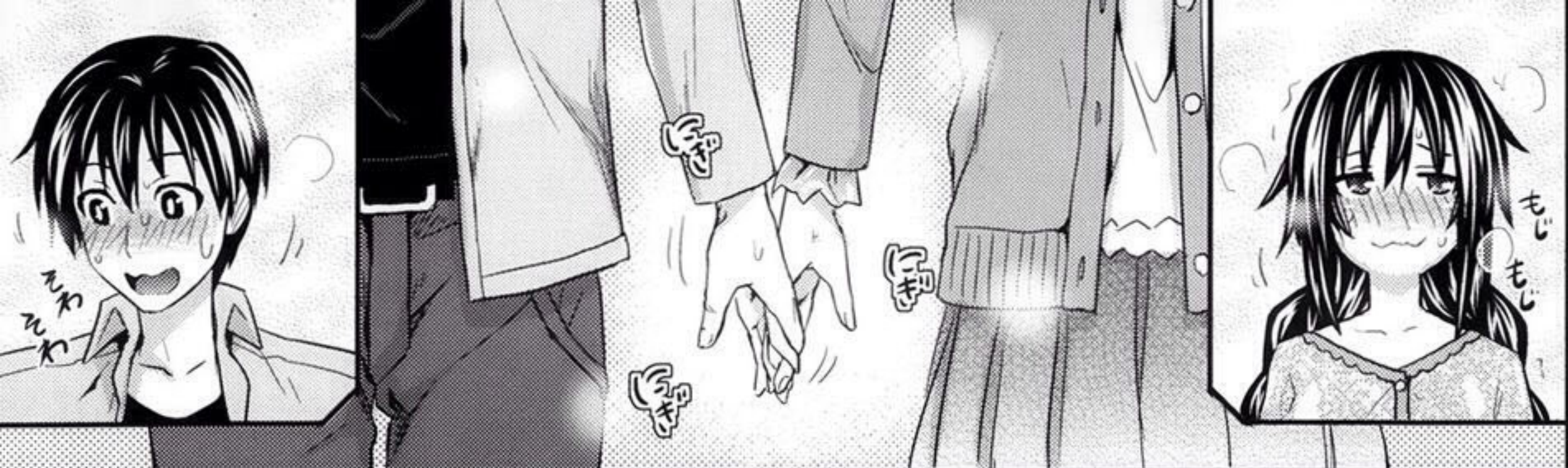
As Daemons are creatures of the Warp, clues dredged from that realm are particularly relevant and common in Ordo Malleus investigations. Sometimes, simply looking beyond the veil of reality provides the necessary information to locate or defeat a Daemon. Dealing with the Warp is never safe, of course—Daemonhunters who turn to the unnatural for guidance must be careful, lest they be led astray by the deceitful influence of Daemons.

THE PSYKER'S SENSE

Although psykers are more susceptible to the lures and predations of Daemons, they are also uniquely suited to hunting and combating the creatures of the Warp. A psyker can sense the movements of the Warp in ways others cannot, identifying where the boundary is weak and vulnerable to intrusion, and even detect the presence of concealed Daemons. The unnatural senses of a psyker can confirm the presence of the daemonic where other clues can only hint at it, or allow a warband to track the invisible spoor left by a passing Warp entity. A psyker can also sense the turbulence in the Warp that precedes a breach and daemonic incursion. These abilities make psykers invaluable when hunting Daemons, yet they must always be watched for signs of corruption, and their allies must be ready to take action to ensure psykers do not succumb to what they hunt.

WHISPERS FROM BEYOND

Sometimes, clues in Ordo Malleus investigations can even come from the foul creatures that dwell in the Warp. Daemons are spiteful beings that ceaselessly struggle with each other, and it is not unknown for one Daemon to sabotage a rival, particularly one in the service of a different Chaos Power. In this way, a Daemon might enter into an investigation unbidden, perhaps manipulating events behind the scenes to guide the warband, or delivering information directly through dreams, visions, and silent whispers. Some Radical Inquisitors summon and bind Daemons for the purpose of interrogation, for the creatures of the Warp know much of what transpires both in the Warp and physical reality. All Daemons are liars, however, and any "help" a Daemon offers might in some way contribute to even greater calamities in the future, or come at a terrible price.





ENEMIES BEYOND™

The most terrible threat facing Mankind is not to mere body or mind. It comes from the foul denizens of the Warp who endlessly hunger for fresh souls. These are the Enemies Beyond: the Daemons of Chaos that the Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus and their Acolytes must strive against lest humanity be devoured forever.

ENEMIES BEYOND provides players and Game Masters with new weapons to combat this threat, with sanctified wargear, daemonic remnants, and new psychic power disciplines, plus Radical options such as entering into Dark Pacts and crafting powerful Daemonhosts to use against their foes!

This supplement for DARK HERESY SECOND EDITION also contains:

- New Acolyte options including Exorcised characters and Astropaths.
- Gazetteers for new worlds from Penal Colonies to Daemon Worlds and the daemonic threats each faces, along with the Pantheons of Chaos.
- New rules for Daemon Princes and rites of possession and exorcism, as well as GM guidance for crafting Ordo Malleus themed adventures.

SMITE THE DAEMON!

The DARK HERESY
SECOND EDITION Core Rulebook
is required to use this supplement.

