

MUTANT

CHRONICLES

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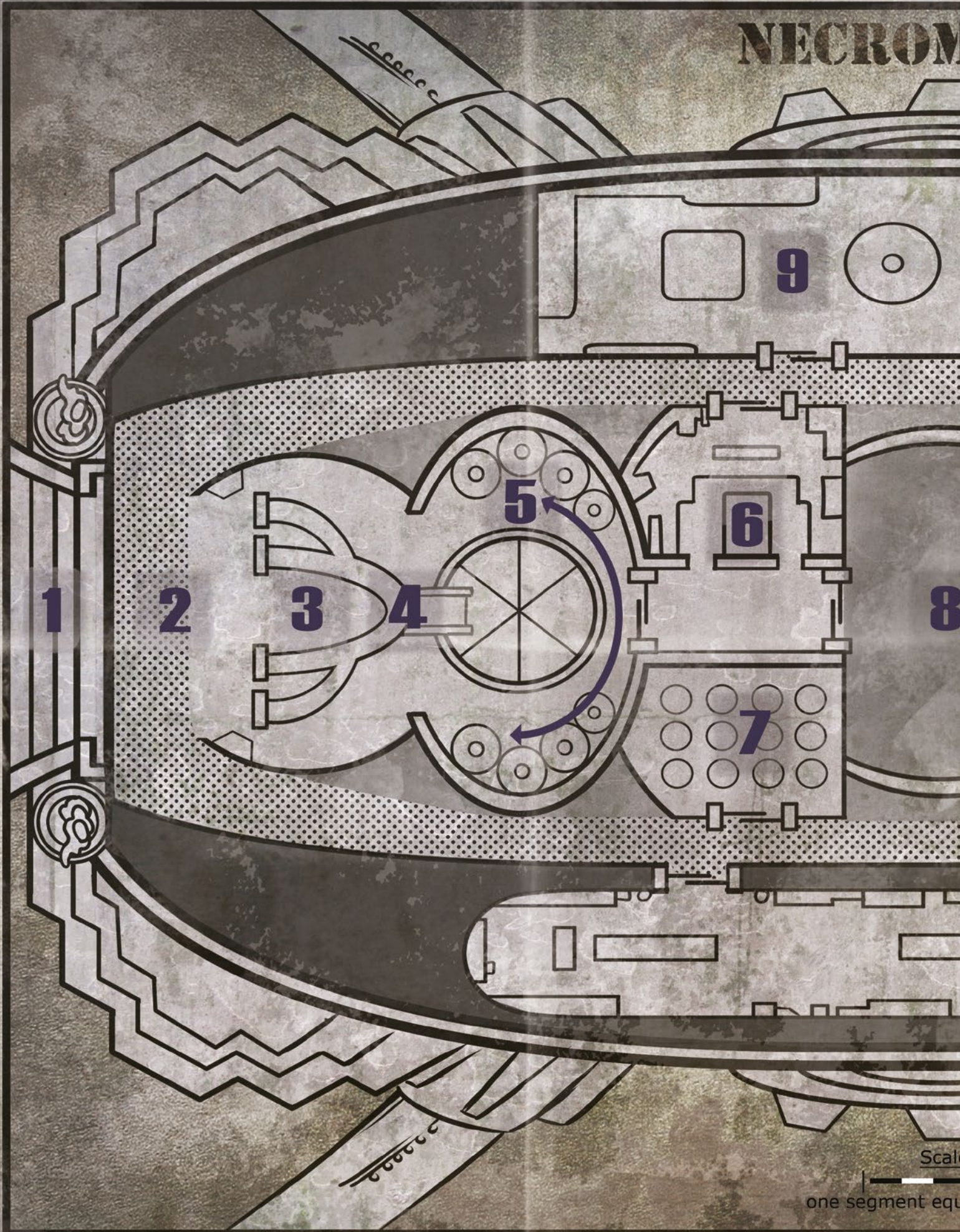


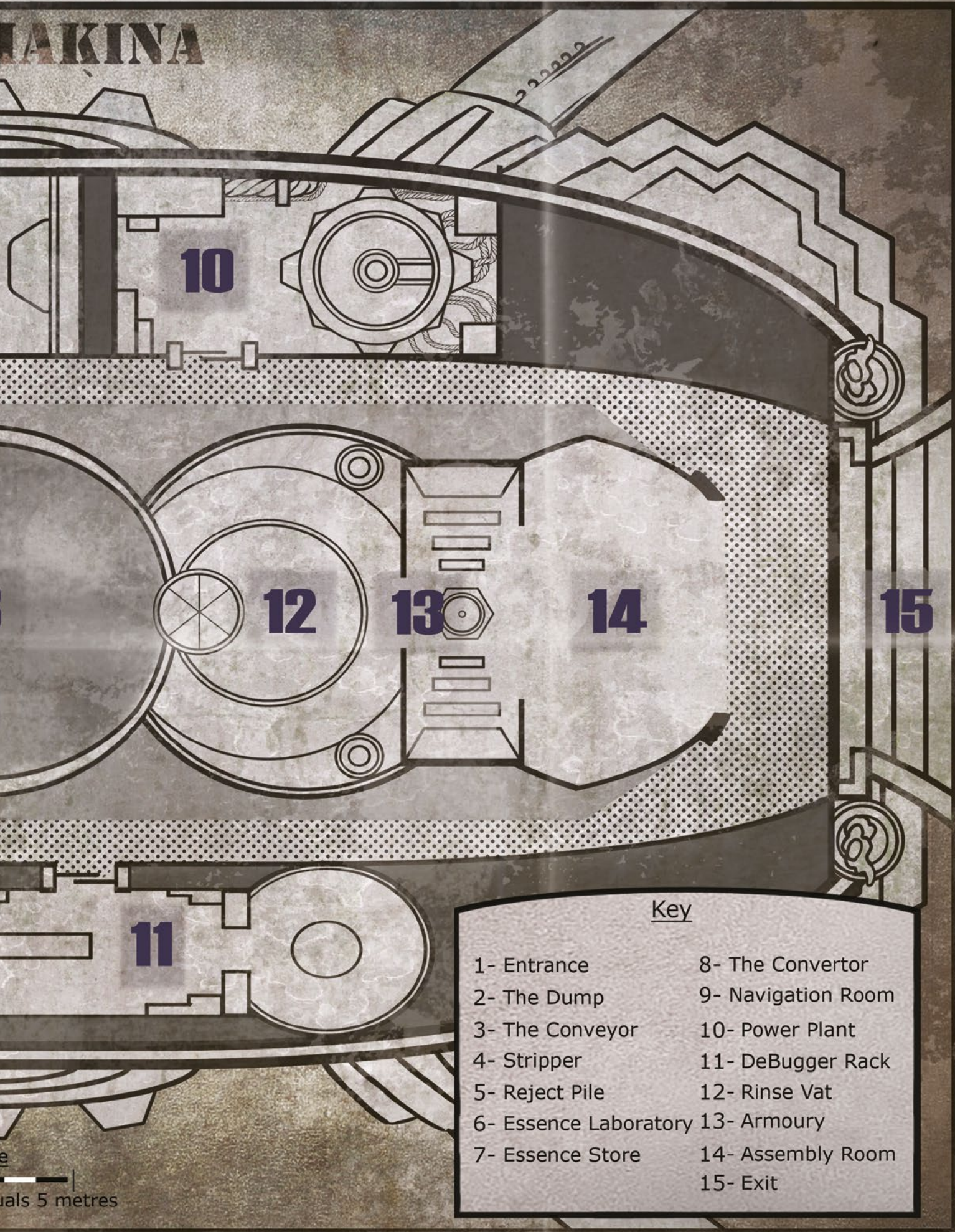
MODIPHIUS™
ENTERTAINMENT

3RD EDITION
DARK LEGION
CAMPAIGN BOOK

FFFG™

NECROM





Key

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1- Entrance | 8- The Convertor |
| 2- The Dump | 9- Navigation Room |
| 3- The Conveyor | 10- Power Plant |
| 4- Stripper | 11- DeBugger Rack |
| 5- Reject Pile | 12- Rinse Vat |
| 6- Essence Laboratory | 13- Armoury |
| 7- Essence Store | 14- Assembly Room |
| | 15- Exit |



2D20 LEAD GAME DESIGN
JAY LITTLE

ADDITIONAL DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT BY
NATHAN DOWDELL, CHRIS BIRCH, MICHAEL E. CROSS, BENN BEATON, JOHN DUNN, MARC LANGWORTHY

WRITTEN BY
DAVE ALLEN, NATHAN DOWDELL, MARC LANGWORTHY, CLIVE OLDFIELD

EDITED BY
BRIAN CASEY

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY
MATTHEW COMBEN

LAYOUT BY
THOMAS SHOOK

COVER ARTWORK BY
MICHAEL BERUBE, TOMA FEIZO GAS

ARTWORK BY
RED SCAR PUBLISHING, TOMA FEIZO GAS, MICHAEL BERUBE, AUDREY HOTTE

CARTOGRAPHY BY
MATHIEU ST-AMOUR

MUTANT CHRONICLES 3RD
EDITION & UPDATED FACTIONS
LOGOS BY
ALEX BUND

PRODUCED BY
CHRIS BIRCH, MISCHA THOMAS

PROOFREADING BY
NATHAN DOWDELL, BENN BEATON,
T.R. KNIGHT AND OUR BACKERS!

ART DIRECTED BY
TOMA FEIZO GAS, MISCHA THOMAS

COMMUNITY MANAGERS
ZARINA KADYLBK, JOHN DODD

Published by: Modiphius Entertainment Ltd. 35 Turneville Road, London, W14 9PS. info@modiphius.com

Find out more about Mutant Chronicles at www.mutantchroniclesrpg.com,
www.facebook.com/mutantchroniclesrpg and www.modiphius.com

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MODIPHIUS™
ENTERTAINMENT

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INTRODUCTION



The Guardian Statues of the Necromakina may surprise the Investigators when they come to life.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins with the Investigators in peril as the result of previous mishaps. We strongly recommend you begin this adventure as a sequel to the earlier Dark Symmetry Campaign, however if you don't possess this book then alternative ideas for getting newly created or established parties involved in the adventure are outlined later.

However they came to arrive on Nero, the Investigators find themselves at the mercy of a band of Imperial heretics, who have come to the planet in order to sacrifice captives to Ilian and begin the process of reclaiming parts from shattered Necromakina all around the solar system. They plan to reassemble one of these great corpse factories. If they should succeed, the machine will greatly aid the war effort for the Dark Legion.

Thanks to the aid of another captive, an unorthodox Brotherhood Mystic known as Sister Eve, the Investigators are able to confront these corrupt Conquistadors. Sister Eve discerns an untapped potential in the Investigators, but she also diagnoses them as suffering from the effects of burgeoning corruption.

Fortunately, there is a way to make the most of their untapped talents, diminish the degree of corruption, and frustrate the Dark Legion war effort all at once. The Investigators discover that if they break into the inner workings of old Necromakina they may find reservoirs of essence left over from another war, one that took place eons ago between the minions of the Dark Soul and an alien species known only as the Ancients. This essence, distilled by the workings of the Necromakina from the bodies of captured Ancients, is being used by the Dark Legion to create new weapons of war,

malign creatures whose corruption is invisible to the Arts of the Brotherhood. However, the Investigators learn that they could use it themselves, to counter the corruption they have suffered during their captivity, and to awaken latent powers within themselves.

The first of these derelict Necromakina is in the process of being explored. It rests on the surface of Nero, not far from the Investigator's starting position. A technical crew of Void Cultists have broken into the mechanism and are taking an inventory of parts in good working order, as well as broken parts to be replaced. They are also using its Navigation Room to locate other Necromakina around the Solar System. By spying on the cultists, the Investigators may be able to learn more about the history of the Necromakina and the Dark Legion, gain some insight into the threat posed by a working Necromakina, and find out more about the opportunities that might arise from looting the Necromakina themselves.

There are three other Necromakina that the Investigators are able to locate in the Solar System (a further machine can be found on Mars, though this is not immediately apparent). The Necromakina are in the following locations (in order of nearest to furthest from the Investigators at the time of the game): in the Asteroid Belt not far from the Imperial colony of Diemansland, under the surface of a Venusian ocean, and on the surface of Mercury.

From Nero the Investigators travel to Diemansland, a major Imperial holding within the asteroid belt. The Investigators will find that the forces of humanity are being mobilised against a newly resurgent Dark Legion (and they may realise that their own actions have had a part to play in this).

From Diemansland the Investigators must travel to High Hythe, a settlement on an asteroid close by. The settlers there have been assaulted by the Dark Legion and left in such a vulnerable and maddened state that the Investigators will have to act quickly in order to ensure that they don't wreck the terraforming machines that make their home habitable.

On the asteroid the Necromakina has been well preserved. It lies empty, but many parts are still in good working order, including the gigantic statue-guardians that overlook the entrance to the machine. If they haven't prepared for such a foe, the Investigators may have a hard fight on their hands.

The investigation then moves on to Venus, where a Necromakina lies underneath the ocean waves not far from the submarine estates of Polaria. This machine is guarded by squadrons of Undead Legionnaires, and the Investigators will have to recruit help from military forces in Polaria to complete their mission.

From Venus, the Investigators will travel to Mercury to find the wreckage of the Necromakina there. The party will have to navigate

both the Mishima corporate structure, as well as a subterranean cavern filled with vampiric monsters, to reach their goal. During this mission they realise another Necromakina has been located upon the surface of Mars.

The final Necromakina is close to the frontlines of the war between the forces of humanity and the Dark Legion. In discovering its location, the Investigators also tip off the Dark Soul to its existence, and so must race against the clock to ensure that they reach it before their enemies.

ANCIENT SECRETS

Whilst the scions of the Dark Legion provide the Investigators with their most obvious challenge, they also discover that agents of the Brotherhood oppose their efforts.

During this campaign, the Investigators become increasingly aware of certain long-forgotten truths regarding the nature of the Dark Soul and the pre-human history of the solar system. In order to manage the delivery of this information, and in order to distinguish the true information from the various rumours and misinformation the Investigators will also inevitably uncover, the following is a synopsis intended for the GM's eyes only.

The ultimate driving force behind the depredations of the Dark Legion is an entity known as the Dark Soul. As far as the teeming multitudes of humanity are concerned the Dark Legion's purpose seems to be simple, it wishes to wipe them out. The truth is more complex. The Dark Soul is entertained and nourished by the suffering of mortals. Death, destruction and torture are all a part of its plan, but the extinction of humanity? It would regard that as boring. The reality is that were it to throw the full force of its armies into the fray the Dark Soul could overcome humanity with ease, instead it prefers to toy with its victims in a drawn-out and sadistic manner. In fact, even though the Dark Soul's forces were temporarily defeated by the humans in the Dark Legion First War this was merely a thrill for it, a self-imposed challenge to make the second war even more exciting.

In ages past, another species provided the Dark Soul with sport. These days scant knowledge of them remains. Archaeologists and conspiracy theorists alike share speculations about the growing body of evidence pointing to an ancient civilisation that predated any known human culture, though the only people cleared to possess such knowledge (meagre as it is) exist within the higher echelons of human corporations and the Brotherhood. Amongst those that know about it, this civilisation is referred to simply as "The Ancients" and a body of wild speculative rumour is all that now remains of their existence and culture. The main ruins on Mars are little more than enigmatic structures in the rock, and they are guarded and covered. They lie within a deep crevasse that is not visible from the air or ground level.

Those who do know something of the Ancients tend to agree on a few core beliefs:

The Ancients looked vaguely humanoid in shape, but had two pairs of arms. They were older than humanity and outstripped humans in terms of both physical and psychic potential, as well as technological advancement. Like humanity, they became prey for the Dark Soul, but with the help of their technology and their willingness to make supreme sacrifices they were able to fight it to a standstill and trap it beneath the site that would one day become known as the human city of Jerusalem. The Ancients possessed massive reserves of psychic energy which they tapped, and they sacrificed themselves in droves to create the seals.

One interpretation of these understandings is a potential beacon of hope for humanity, becoming a precedent for rendering the Dark Soul helpless and harmless exists. On the other hand, another interpretation is that in order to starve the Dark Soul of nourishment the ancients had to endure gruelling austerities, tough mental disciplines, and suicidal degrees of self-sacrifice. Many of the experts agree that the privations the Ancients endured led to their near extinction, and may be beyond what can be expected of mere human beings.

The Brotherhood was founded by the unwitting descendants of attempts by Ancient geneticists to hybridise with humanity. Such people made for exceptional humans, but were nevertheless pale shadows of their Ancient forebears. These individuals (many of whom still exist) do not understand the full extent of their relationship, but they hazard a guess that the mystic Arts have a link back to the practices of the Ancients. Such people speculate that the Ancients have some connection to the Martian ruins, but most of their knowledge is based on fragments of handed-down lore and educated guesses.

The Brotherhood's attitude to the discovery of finds relating to the Ancients is complicated. The predominant philosophy is that humanity is too soft and self-interested to make the sort of sacrifices the Ancients used to weaken the Dark Soul, and so a more militaristic opposition to the Dark Legion is preferred. Over time this eschewal of the more pessimistic side of the Ancients' accomplishments has hardened into religious dogma, and the Inquisitors of the Brotherhood are known to treat those who delve too deeply into the mysteries of the Ancients as harshly as they do Dark Legion Heretics.

So, on one level, the Brotherhood suspects that it carries on a legacy of Ancient beliefs and disciplines, but, on another level, it fears exposure to the philosophies of the Ancients. The Brotherhood believes (with some justification) that despair and chaos would spread through the human civilisations were the extent of Ancient self-sacrifice made public knowledge.

During this part of the campaign, the Investigators will discover that their previous adventures have left them suffering from a nascent corruption. In order to retain their humanity, they will have to exploit Dark Legion technology and employ the weapons of the Ancients. In doing so they will have to navigate the warzones of the solar system, escape the depredations of the Dark Legion, and evade the persecution of zealous Brotherhood Inquisitors.

In recent times, the Brotherhood have been confronted by mutants who apparently exhibit the heritage of the Ancients. This has caused some consternation within the Brotherhood. Most of them continue to regard mutation as a sure sign of heresy, but others are increasingly questioning the dogma regarding mutation.

Sister Eve, who the Investigators will encounter in the early stages of the following adventure, is a Brotherhood Mystic who holds these unconventional opinions. She is familiar with the controversies regarding Ancient knowledge and, once they have earned her trust, she is happy to share her thoughts on the matter with the Investigators.

THE NECROMAKINA

The Necromakina form a core plot element throughout the Dark Legion Campaign. Whilst each Necromakina is identical in form, construction, and purpose, the several derelict machines that the Investigators must visit are in various states of disrepair. The specification and layout of a fully operational corpse factory are presented here for the GM's reference, whilst any specific differences between the wrecks that must be investigated are detailed within the relevant chapter.

Necromakina are giant machines dedicated to turning the Dark Soul's enemies into its own undying servants. It appears as an imposing gothic structure on the battlefield, a twisted perversion of nature and reality that exemplifies everything a cathedral to the Dark Soul should be. It will strike terror into the heart of those who fight for humanity, as they realise their erstwhile brothers in arms might rise up and fight against them in corrupted form. Servants of the Dark Soul scour the battlefield for the corpses of their enemies, and drag them into the Necromakina where the unfathomable process—part physical, part psychological, part metaphysical—is able to turn even the most dedicated ally of humanity into hopelessly corrupted Undead Legionnaires.

As if impaled upon a huge spike jutting from the ground, the Necromakina looms over its surroundings. Measuring around @@ metres by @@ and about @@ metres high, it seems to be made of an unknown dark, glassy, stone that has been sculpted into an ornate panoply of twisted images. It is shrouded in myriad depictions of destruction and depravity, while spikes and cruel barbs jut from the sheer sides.

The eerie dark stone is almost unbreakable. The GM should be reluctant to declare it so, because the players may well take this as a challenge, but almost anything the Investigators try should not be able to damage the structure in any way; short of massive ordnance or other hugely destructive force. The stone is also extremely smooth and very little will adhere to it. This might cause the Investigators problems with usually mundane actions like getting a grip on slanting surfaces, finding holds for ropes, or spiking portals, etc.

The interior of the Necromakina is constructed in a similar way to the exterior. Almost everything seems to be made out of the same dark, impenetrable, marble-like stone. The sculptures and other features seem to have grown out of the very structure, so perfectly are they formed. This could easily cause a feeling of unease among the Investigators. Although their appearance is terrible and repulsive they still possess an alluring quality and strange beauty.

Entering the Necromakina is like being swallowed by the maw of some fantastic beast. On one level it appears like a conventional factory, a production line of various machines receiving its raw materials in one end, and supplying its finished product at the other. But, on another level, it more closely resembles the internal organs of a horrific creature, the various stations supplied by vein-like pipes and adorned with bulbous and sinuous structures.

As the Investigators delve deeper into the belly of the beast they will be able to climb over it and under it and inspect the various elements that sit within the dark shell. Or, the more circumspect can simply pass through the machine by way of the two open walkways that skirt the sides of the atrium and provide access to the rooms that line the outer shell.

The Investigators should find the interior of the Necromakina darker than they might expect. Light sources do not seem as powerful as they should be, and do not illuminate as far as they would be expected to. Shadows cast in this light seem to flicker and move in unexpected ways, which all contribute to the feelings of unease. Any light source brought into the Necromakina's interior will have its maximum range reduced by one, to a minimum of reach, and no light source will illuminate further than Medium range. Entering the corpse factory and experiencing these symptoms entitles the GM to spend two Dark Symmetry points on inflicting one Dread upon the entire group.

Most of the Necromakina the Investigators will encounter during this adventure will be lifeless and without power. Should they manage to power one up, or find a working one, then the structure will present an altogether different ambience. A working Necromakina becomes lighter; lit from the stone-like substance itself. The black surface turns a mid-grey and seems to be faintly illuminated from within with subtle colours. The effect is not necessarily clean or pleasant but it would be a clue that the machine is now working. Once it is

working, instruments and movable parts become highlighted with a faint orange glow.

Underpowered and damaged Necromakina can be reflected by adjusting the statistics of the systems described below. A fully functioning Necromakina will have the stats described, while damaged systems can be given reduced ones.

A dormant Necromakina can be activated by inserting a key into the slot in the navigation room. These keys might still be able to activate some isolated systems (like navigation) even in a dead or heavily damaged machine.

DARK ICHOR AND HUMAN FACTOR

The predominant function of a Necromakina is the injecting of Dark Ichor into the bodies of its victims. All other functions are subservient to this one, and Undead Legionnaires cannot be created without this part of the process.

This is a double-edged sword, because the introduction of Dark Ichor is also combined with the extraction of its opposite: Human Factor. Both these substances can be very powerful if used correctly.

Using the Dark Ichor on human victims together with the expertise and subtlety of the semi-sentient Necromakina will result in the creation of an Undead Legionnaire. The Necromakina is capable of doing this automatically, but this system can also be overridden telepathically to create special Legionnaires with enhanced abilities. Conversely, if the Necromakina is overridden and dominated then its machinery may be used to inject someone with Human Factor.

DARK ICHOR EFFECTS

There are complications however, as simply injecting Dark Ichor into a human victim willy-nilly will have appalling results, but will not lead to the creation of an Undead Legionnaire. The malignant intelligence of the Necromakina works to simultaneously extract Human Factor and channel the effect of the Dark Ichor. Without this process the Dark Ichor will operate to a chaotic pattern as it seeks to reconstitute the recipients flesh and soul whilst battling with the accursed Human Factor. Dark Ichor can be considered a poison that has the following qualities:

continued on the next page...

◀ **VECTOR:** Injection

◀ **VIRULENCE:** 4

◀ **INCUBATION PERIOD:** One minute

◀ **INTERVAL:** Days, Chronic (3)

The recipient is granted an initial Resistance test as normal, with the GM rolling three **↑** if this test is failed; characters who pass the initial Resistance test have successfully rejected the Dark Ichor—on this occasion at least. Each **↑** rolled inflicts a Tainted Mental Wound, although Corruption Soak is applied as normal. If at least one **↑** is rolled, regardless of soak, the GM should roll 1d6 and consult the following table:

The character suffers from Stage One Degeneration if all three dice result in **↑**, which has the following effect (see Dark Ichor Effects Table):

They no longer appear human, and cannot pass for one. The character's eyes turn a sickly yellow, hair begins to fall out, and their gums recede, making their now blackened teeth appear longer. The character's skin turns flaky and grey, suffering from patched necrosis, and showing off pulsating veins on top of dried muscle fibres. They are an embodiment of death and corruption.

Subsequent recursions from Dark Ichor will not result in further Manifestations, but may result in further Degeneration. At Stage Two Degeneration the character becomes truly monstrous and unrecognisable, whilst Stage Three completes their devolution into a Kadaver or Karnophage; at which point it is time to create a new character. The only known antidote for Dark Ichor is a Necromakina administered infusion of Human Factor.

DARK ICHOR EFFECTS TABLE

ID6 MANIFESTATION

1	Reflexive Firing: Hand-eye coordination and reflexes have been rewired and made even more effective when wielding firearms. When using a firearm, the character may take the Exploit Weakness action as a Restricted Action by paying a Dark Symmetry point. Stigmata: Their eyes become bloodshot and constantly dart around, searching for a target. At times, they can look at widely different directions.
2	Creeping Chill: The air around the character becomes preternaturally cold and daggers of frost creep along nearby surfaces. The character may spend one or more Dark Symmetry points to intensify this chill to harm enemies within Close range. All these targets must attempt Resistance tests, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent. Failure means they suffer 1+↑4 damage with the Dreadful and Stun qualities. This damage ignores armour and cover, but not Soak provided by supernatural powers. Stigmata: Their hair pales to a frosty white colour, whilst their skin turns arctic blue and cold to the touch. All colour drains from their irises.
3	Self-Repair: A system of Self-Repair glands develop that lie dormant until times of activity, when they become fuelled by adrenaline and lactic acid. During an action scene or any other period of strenuous physical activity, the character regains one wound at the start of every turn, starting with the most severe (Critical first, then Serious Wounds, then Light Wounds, to the location with the fewest wounds remaining). However, repairing the most severe injuries puts strain upon the Self-Repair system, so they suffer one Dread for each Critical wound regained in this way. Stigmata: The areas that have been healed with the Self-Repair system will be horribly malformed. The flesh is atrociously scarred and disfigured. Though this will not affect movement in any way, multiple repairs will leave them crooked and covered by keloid tissue.
4	Dark Awareness: The character gains the Sense Weaves of Power Dark Gift (page 161 of the <i>Mutant Chronicles</i> rulebook) Stigmata: The character's eyes become cold black pits that absorb light.
5	Bio-Woven Skin: Layers of a thin, but highly reactive membrane develop on the character's skin. This makes them capable of withstanding damage that would cripple or kill a lesser man. They gain three points of Armour Soak to a single location. Should this effect be gained multiple times it will cover an additional location, or it increases the protection of an already-covered location by one. Stigmata: The growth is revoltingly apparent. The armoured location becomes ridged and darkened. It is cold to the touch and resembles battered leather.
6	Neurological Augmentation: The character's brain expands at an exponential rate, unlocking latent neurological potential and significantly enhancing their thought processes. Increase their Intelligence attribute by one, to a maximum of sixteen. This change is permanent—the changes can never be undone. Stigmata: The Dark Ichor creates new tissue in order to increase brain capacity. As a result, their forehead swells and becomes covered with fat, throbbing veins in order to accommodate the expanded organ.

HUMAN FACTOR EFFECTS

A distillation of Human Factor is a liquid fusion of the psychic and physical purity contained within the core of all humanity. Use of a Necromakina to infuse the correct measure of Human Factor will enhance a subject beyond super-human levels, which is exactly the opportunity the Investigators will be provided with at the culmination of this campaign; you will find the results of this process on page 176. Merely injecting Human Factor into a human will have positive results, but will not create the sort of super-human that could be achieved with the use of the Necromakina. In this instance, Human Factor will act as both a strong painkiller and a stim (*Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 253), including the Resistance test to avoid addiction—it will

DARK ICHOR BENEFITS TABLE

IDG MANIFESTATION

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Indomitable Crusader: The recipient gains a cathartic insight into the makings of the universe, including the abominable intrusions of the Dark Soul and its minions; they are not part of this universe, yet the character most definitely is. This cosmic epiphany allows them to exploit the fundamental weakness inherent in any minion of the Dark Symmetry. Any successful ranged or melee attack against a devotee of the Dark Symmetry will generate one additional point of Momentum. This point must be spent on the Bonus Damage, Called Shot, Devastating Blow, Knockout, or Re-roll Damage Combat Momentum options and cannot be 'banked'. |
| 2 | Reinforced Soul: The recipient's core and soul—the very elements that make them 'human' — are strengthened and reinforced by the Human Factor. Increase the character's Corruption Soak by two. |
| 3 | Preternatural Senses: The recipient gains an intuitive perception of everyone and everything around them, and will often know something is about to happen shortly before it does. The character gains a bonus d20 on all Observation tests and does not need to spend a Dark Symmetry point for their first Response Action of any turn. Any additional Response Actions (from talents or abilities) carry their standard cost. |
| 4 | Body Cleansing: The recipient gains an enhanced understanding of their body's biological functions. The character may attempt a Willpower test in place of a Resistance test whenever affected by a poison or disease. Further, he gains one bonus Momentum on tests to resist the effects of poisons and diseases for each rank of Willpower Focus he possesses. |
| 5 | Soul Purge: The corrupting influence of the Dark Symmetry is seared from the recipient's soul by the cleansing power of the Human Factor. The character may immediately roll four ⚡, removing one Tainted Mental Wound for each ⚡ symbol rolled. Treat the d6 result as a 2 if the character is free of Tainted Wounds prior to the roll to remove them. |
| 6 | Psychic Strengthening: The recipient's latent psychic abilities are focussed and strengthened. The difficulty of any power used against the character is increased by one, or they gain an additional d20 to resist the effects of such. In addition, they gain one soak to all locations against any resultant damage. |

take a strong will to resist craving more of the potent sensation of well-being induced by Human Factor. The recipient will also gain a single additional benefit from the Dark Ichor Benefits table:

The potent reactions stimulated by Human Factor will remain in effect for eight hours; although a character may not benefit from another dose until a total of twenty-four hours have passed due to system saturation. 'Coming down' from a Human Factor high does not carry the consequences associated with a stimulant, and thus does not require an immediate deep sleep.

It is worth noting that Human Factor can be equally as devastating to a creature of the Dark Legion as Dark Ichor can be to a human. Servants of the Dark Symmetry injected with Human Factor are subjected to a poison that has the following qualities:

- **VECTOR:** Injection
- **VIRULENCE:** 4
- **INCUBATION PERIOD:** Instant
- **INTERVAL:** Minutes, Chronic (3)

Failing the initial Resistance test will inflict 1+⚡4 wounds with the Knockdown quality. The recipient will also gain the Burning (3) and Perplexed status effects, although the Burning condition is reflective of the internal damage being inflicted as the victim internally combusts.

A Necromakina infused dose of Human Factor has the same effect as the Distortion spell to a creature of the Dark Legion (*Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 174), in addition to the above effects.

A live Necromakina is patrolled by spider-like robots called DeBuggers. These are about a metre across. They are used primarily for maintenance, repair, and to generally keep the machine's systems functioning. However, they do have an offensive capability, and will attempt to deal with any non-Dark Soul creatures wandering around inside the machine. Even a dormant Necromakina can contain DeBuggers with enough vestigial power to attack and fight intruders.

DEBUGGERS

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	6	13 (+2)	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	4	4	4

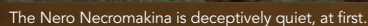
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	-	-	2	2	1	1	-	-	2	2

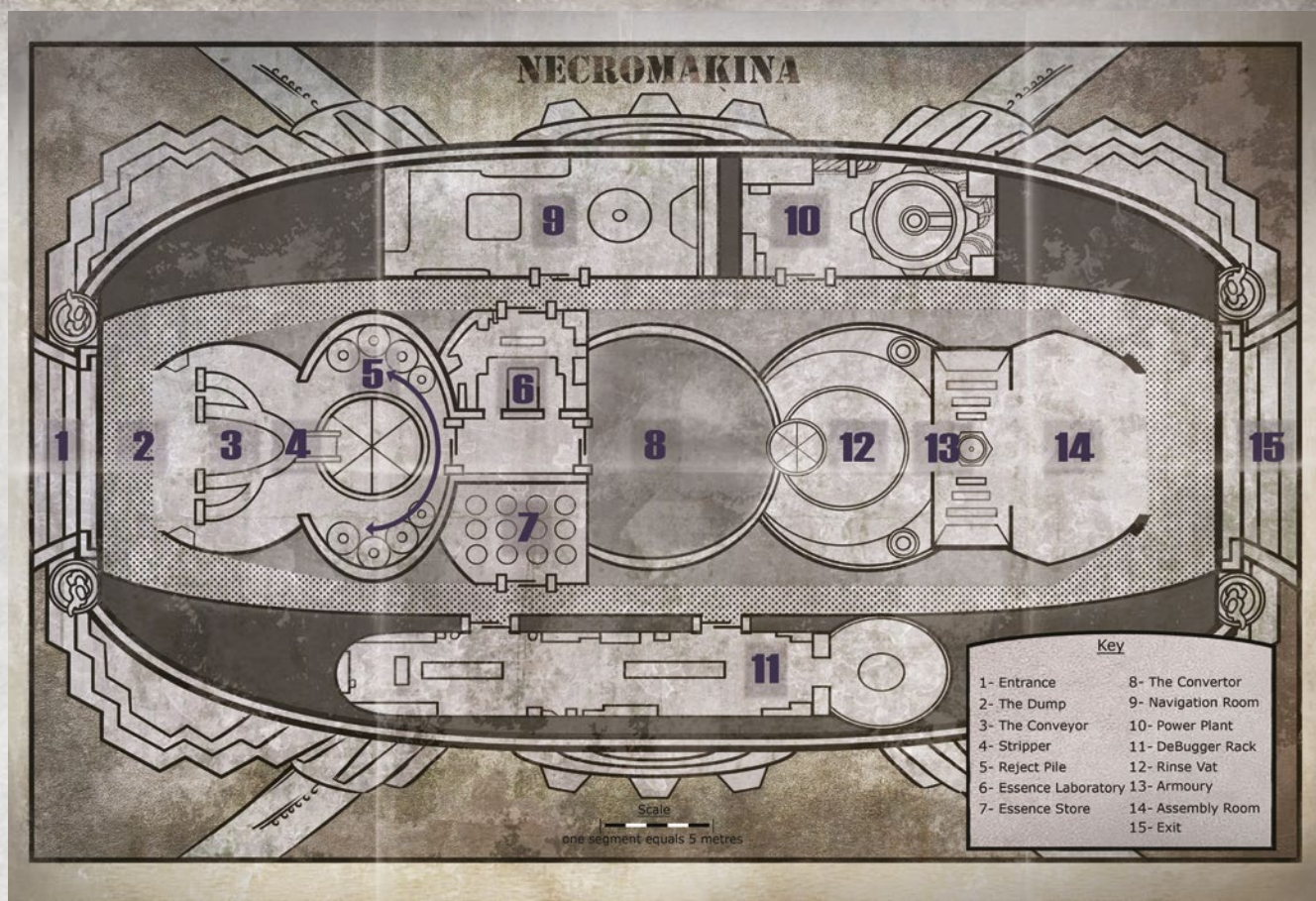
SOAK: Necrobionic Exoskeleton: (All 2)

🗡️ **Scything Limbs (melee):** 1+🔪5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Duelling, Gruesome, Vile

- **Grasping**
- **Night Vision**
- **Slave to Symmetry (1)**
- **Supernatural Agility (2)**
- **Unliving**
- **Brittle Velocity:** DeBuggers are abnormally agile, but extremely fragile. All attacks against a Debugger gain the Vicious (1) quality, in addition to any effects the attack normally possesses. If the attack is already Vicious this quality improves by one.

- **Pincushion:** The DeDebugger spears its victim multiple times with a violent flurry of serrated talons. When making a Close Combat attack the DeDebugger may spend two Dark Symmetry points to make a second attack against the same target.
- **Scuttle:** By spending two Dark Symmetry points as a Free Action, a DeDebugger can reach any location within Long range that they could have reached by normal means (running, climbing, jumping, etc).





I. ENTRANCE

The way to the factory is up a steep ramp and the entrance is flanked by two huge, five-metre-tall statues. These Guardians seem to be modelled on Nepharites of Ilian. If anyone not corrupted by the Dark Soul and not accompanied by Dark Legionnaires attempts to enter the Necromakina the Guardians will animate and attack immediately. Like many of the Necromakina's defences, even though the machine itself is not powered up, the Guardians are able to animate and function under their own steam.

If all members of the party attempting to gain entry to a Necromakina have been corrupted by the Dark Soul then the GM can rule that they will not draw the Guardians' attention. This might be a small consolation for the corruption, but, on the other hand, the GM could rule that some minor corruption is negligible in regard to waking the Guardians.



GUARDIANS ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
16 (+2)	14 (+2)	9	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
11	5	8	4

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE									
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	2	2	2	1	-	2	1	-	-

WOUNDS: 12

SOAK: Stone Vestments: (All 5)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Black Bardiche (melee):** 3+^T8, 2H, Dreadful, Knockdown, Stun, Unforgiving 2
- ◆ **Burning Gaze (ranged):** Range C, 1+^T6, Armour Piercing 1, Incendiary 2, Vile

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Dark Presence**
- ◀ **Fear (2)**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Inured to Pain**
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Slave to Symmetry (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Physique (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Strength (2)**
- ◀ **Unliving**
- ◀ **Stone Simulacrum:** A Guardian is a Dark Symmetry fuelled, semi-sentient automaton created from reconstituted flesh and necrotic granite for a sole purpose: to defend a Necromakina from the untainted. They cannot suffer Mental Wounds and are considered to be unintelligent for the purpose of any effect that requires this (such as some of the powers of the Art). In addition, a Guardian will always seek to remain within Close Range of its parent Necromakina.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Lambast with Flame:** At a cost of two Dark Symmetry points, the Guardian may use its Burning Gaze on any target that it is currently Grasping. The Guardian itself is immune to Burning Gaze.
- ◀ **Symmetric Sorcery:** A Guardian has access to the Dark Ward, Sense Weaves of Power, and Symmetry Burst Dark Gifts. The Guardian will use Sense Weaves of Power to decide who may enter the Necromakina.

2. THE DUMP

Close to the entrance, this chamber is intended to collect the bodies due for conversion, whether living or dead. The bodies are simply thrown into a pile in the middle of the area, and the machine itself loads the bodies onto conveyors.

The middle of the room is a shallow, saucer-like pit. Around the walls and dropping from the ceiling are a number of robotic arms. These arms are extremely sophisticated and mobile, twisting and turning like snakes, and able to extend to almost any part of the room. There are twelve arms in total but any number might not be functioning properly, especially in an unpowered Necromakina. Even in an unpowered one, however, the arms might have enough power and life left in them to attack intruders for a while. The GM may wish the power to fade eventually, after testing the Investigators in combat.

Any investigator defeated by the arms will be placed on a conveyor. If this is powered, it will carry any occupants towards the stripper.

DeBuggers will also patrol here, helping to keep the arms and thoroughfares clear of obstructions and fetching and carrying bodies. Any human matter unsuitable for conversion is carried to the reject

pile. Weapons, armour, and equipment brought in with the victims' bodies is also collected up and transported, by the DeBuggers, to the armoury to be used by the newly created Legionnaires.

The domed ceiling above the dump is decorated with the same sorts of carvings and reliefs that adorn the outer walls of the Necromakina. Looking down from the centre of the dome is an oddly beneficent looking figure with multiple limbs. It looks on impassively as the mechanical arms of the dump viciously sort through its potential converts to the Dark Soul.

RESOLVING ARMS

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
14 (+2)	8	8	3
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	2	4	-

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Mechanical Appendage: (All 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Rending Claw (melee):** 1+7, 1H, Reach, Unforgiving 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Braindead**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Supernatural Strength (2)**
- ◀ **Unliving**

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Flailing Limbs:** Resolving Arms may spend one Dark Symmetry point to add the Knockdown quality to their attacks.

3. THE CONVEYORS

The conveyors lead to the stripper. If the system is powered up the conveyors will be moving towards it. They might also move under residual power for a while, if the GM wishes. The conveyor belt itself is made from a flexible, rubbery like substance. It is studded with all sorts of straps, spikes, and hooks which can be used to make any of the victims more secure, especially the live ones. If a living body is attached to the conveyor a **Daunting D3 Athletics** test is required in order for him to free himself. Each such attempt, whether successful



Undead Legionnaires are created as part of an assembly line by Necromakina, whether the victim is alive or not.

INTRODUCTION

or not, will inflict 1+**T**2 damage with the Dreadful, Gruesome and Spread (1) qualities; the Necromakina does not like to let a potential convert walk free once its hooks have tasted flesh.

Four conveyors leave the Dump, and make their way towards the stripper, converging as they go. The conveyor ends suddenly, dumping the bodies into a round hole. The hole is protected by six sliding 'teeth' which form a hexagonal maw-like trap door that qualifies as Hard Cover. It is impossible to say what apparatus lies beneath the maw and what foul processes are inflicted upon those who are dumped here.

4. STRIPPER

This area should be virtually impossible for the Investigators to inspect, but, for the record, the DeBuggers clamber across the victims and work rapidly to surgically strip them of all their clothes and possessions, paring the poor creature to a bare ingredient from which an Undead Legionnaire can be created. The DeBuggers will also select replacement body parts for any victims that could be saved by being made whole, or eject those bodies and parts that are beyond repair from the conveyor.

5. REJECT PILE

The Necromakina makes use of all the body parts and equipment it can. Even seemingly useless, mangled limbs and organs can be stitched together and assembled into grotesque Legionnaires. Those pieces that are beyond saving are brought to the reject pile by DeBuggers, or simply dispatched through trapdoors in the conveyors.

The paraphernalia of the reject pile is a convoluted system of bubbling pools, receptacles, and pressure tanks in which the reject tissue is, ground, boiled, and liquefied into foul soups. These are then refined and drained into a network of pipes. Some of these bi-products are used to enhance the healing fluids in the rinse. Some are pumped into Legionnaires' bodies for their nutritional properties. Some are recycled into their fundamental elements and used to power the Necromakina itself. The most vital of these substances find their way into the Essence Store.

6. ESSENCE LABORATORY

The Essence laboratory sits aside the conveyor that links the stripper with the converter. From here, through a dim window barely distinguishable from the black glass-like stone of the rest of the structure, the bare bodies of the Necromakina's victims can be seen as they are conveyed towards the converter. When the Necromakina is powered the window is illuminated and gives a good view. In particular, it shows the bare bodies as they are injected with dozens of needles. The injection process is automatic, but this station seems to be here to accommodate manual override for exceptional tasks.

The needles are at the ends of prehensile glass-like rods, which snake around searching for the parts of the body that they are required to inject. Most of the needles inject, although some of them are there to withdraw fluids from the victim.

When the Machine is dormant the window is dim and only gives a vague view of the inside of part of the converter. The ceiling of the room is lined with many glass pipes which emerge from the opposite side of the room and plainly feed the injection system within the converter.

When the machine is active the needles can be controlled manually by creatures of the Dark Soul; a feat which is possibly beyond the abilities of any human observers. If the Investigators are in a working Necromakina and have been severely corrupted by the Dark Soul then they will instinctively understand the mechanisms at their disposal and how to control them.

They will also understand the functions of the needles and the exchange of Dark Ichor and Human Factor that must occur if a conversion is to be made. A **Daunting D3 Mechanics** test is sufficient to work out that manual override of this control room will enable the process to be reversed.

Indeed, if a corrupted human is put into the converter, then on a **Daunting D3 Medicine** test, it will be possible to withdraw the required bodily fluids and replace them with the Human Factor stored in the Essence Store. A failure, however, at such a delicate task is almost certain to result in death, or perhaps the victim turning into an irredeemable servant of the Dark Soul; the poor unfortunate will be subjected to a dose of Dark Ichor, the effects of which are described on page 9.

It is possible to control this process psychically from the laboratory, but this is a difficult task. In order to use the controls of the laboratory efficiently, the user must give up his mind to the Necromakina, establishing a minor psychic link with the controls. This will require a Challenging D2 Mysticism or Daunting D3 Willpower test that causes a **D2 Challenging mental assault** and inflicts one Dread. Once linked, the operator is able to override any of the systems of the Necromakina.

7. ESSENCE STORE

Opposite the essence laboratory is the essence store. This place has a dozen upright cylinders along its centre, each with a number of glass-like pipes leading to it. The pipes interact with each other and with other cylinders like an insane chemistry set, and eventually find their way into the Essence Laboratory.

When the Necromakina is active, strangely-coloured Dark Ichor can be seen pulsing along the pipes. This is the key ingredient in

converting beings into Legionnaires. Most of the ichors contain the essence of the Dark Soul. These are all dark colours and suspiciously gloopy. However, some of the ichor can be seen to be pale and suspiciously light. This is the essence of humanity or, in a few rare cases, the mysterious Ancients themselves.

The cylinders are difficult to break: it requires some sort of tool, or force, or a Daunting D3 Athletics test. This is also likely to get messy. Once they are broken the various fluids can be accessed, but to be transported effectively, some sort of receptacle is required. The transport tubes are much easier to break, but this will give access to much less fluid.



Human Factor extraction removes the victim's humanity in every sense.

This 'Human Factor' is an incredibly powerful substance and may be able to help the Investigators. It will be especially useful to them if they have suffered some sort of corruption by the Dark Soul; see page 11.

8. THE CONVERTER

Once a victim is injected with the vital fluids necessary to create an Undead Legionnaire, the creature must be built up again into a viable physical specimen. There is no way to inspect the process but that is what goes on within the converter. Going inside the converter when the machine is powered up would mean certain death and likely conversion to a Legionnaire.

This device is able to create new Undead Legionnaires from whole bodies, but it is equally able to knit together various body parts and organs to make monstrous amalgamations from the partial remains of several bodies.

9. NAVIGATION ROOM

The seamless black stone of this chamber is etched with intricate diagrams and charts. At the centre of the room is a raised dais etched with strange symbols. A **Challenging D2 Education** test will determine that these charts describe the planets and other bodies of the solar system.

In an active navigation room, there would be a spectacular three dimensional holographic display of the solar system rotating around the dais. From this display it would be a further **Average D1 Space** test to locate all the known Necromakina of the solar system.

The navigation room can be activated by means of ancient keys. These seem to be nothing more than plain silver rods, about fifty centimetres long and five wide. There is a receptacle for one of these keys in the dais. If one is placed in the slot the navigation room will power up on emergency power (even if the Necromakina is completely

dead) and the navigational information can be accessed. This is the means by which the Investigators will be able to learn of the existence and locations of other Necromakina throughout the solar system.

10. POWER PLANT

This room is the power plant of the entire machine. Given the nature of Dark Soul technology, it should not be easy to pinpoint the exact functions of the various elements, though it might be apparent to someone making a **Challenging D2 Science** test that it is indeed the power generator.

When the Necromakina is dormant the large chamber will be dark and dead, and the chunky machinery will give little clue to their function. When the machine is active a yellow glow will pervade the room and it will be alive with a loud humming.

11. DEBUGGER RACK

This round chamber is the focus of DeBugger activity, and also the location of its hive mind. A conspicuous sphere in the centre of the room is the controlling intelligence for these robots and if it is destroyed then the DeBuggers will cease to function.

Around the side of the chambers are the DeBugger racks where the creatures plug in to recharge and get repaired if required. There are about twenty of the DeBuggers, and at any time about half will be recharging.

12. RINSE

The converter seems to simply dump out its finished Legionnaires into this pool. The exit from the converter is several metres above the water level and guarded by a hexagonal maw similar to the one at the entrance to the stripper.

The pool is two metres deep and if functioning will be filled with a strange pink liquid. If it has been dormant for thousands of years the liquid will have mostly evaporated and the pool will be lined with a layer of thick pink gunk.

This wash is actually the final part of the conversion process. For reasons it is unlikely the Investigators will need to grasp, the Legionnaires need to go through this chemical process. They are dropped, lifeless, into the pool, but after a few moments emerge from the liquid vigorously alive.

This liquid has remarkable healing properties when used on damaged Legionnaires, stemming blood loss and knitting together flesh almost immediately. Investigators may decide that it might be similarly useful to them. The recipient must specify a target

location and roll 3[↑], then remove that many wounds from the location. Critical and Serious Wounds must be removed before any light wounds from the target location are recovered. There is also a chance, however, that the user will become tainted; the Investigator will subject himself to a D1 mental assault and suffer one point of Dread from applying the liquid, whilst the GM may roll 3[↑] as a corruption roll against them (*Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 151). The GM may spend up to two Dark Symmetry points to add a commensurate number of [↑] to the roll.

13. ARMOURY

This is the area that newly created Legionnaires are able to grab the weapons and equipment appropriate to their designated function. It is merely a long room filled with racks of weapons, ammunition and other equipment.

Above the racks, incorporated into the ceiling, is the oily machine that manufactures and repairs the weaponry. Often it creates its own weapons from scratch, but if the DeBuggers supply it with bits of equipment and weapons stripped from their victims, this machine will attempt to repair them or make new equipment from the bits and pieces, sometimes with weird and wonderful results.

14. ASSEMBLY

This area is used for the created Undead Legionnaires to assemble and prepare should they need to leave the Necromakina *en masse*.

15. EXIT

Two more Guardians lurk here, disguised as parts of an intricate fresco that decorates the exterior of the Necromakina. They are here to stop infiltrators entering the Necromakina but will be able to detect and attack those seeking to leave, also. A long ramp leads downwards from here, splaying out as it reaches the ground so that the Undead Legionnaires can deploy in all directions.





Her Serenity's Grace arrives on Nero.

GETTING STARTED

Whilst we recommend you run this adventure as a continuation of the **Dark Symmetry** Campaign, it may be that some GMs simply aren't able to. Because of the long gap in time between the two parts of this adventure it should not be too difficult to come up with an alternate reason why a new or established party could become embroiled in the events of the adventure. An example of how a GM might do this is provided later.

However, any party undertaking this adventure will need to meet the following criteria in order to do so:

- 1) The characters should have had a bit of experience, enough to have a reasonable chance of weathering the challenges to be set in this adventure. About ten session's worth of play should be sufficient, but a freshly created party would need to be fleshed out with a little more backstory as to how they came to work together, and what experiences they underwent that have seen them become more formidable than a standard new party.
- 2) They will need access to weapons and equipment to make sure that the initial opposition they will meet does not present them with too great a challenge. Some money and equipment is available to those who salvage it in the early part of the adventure, but the GM should think about adding items to such hauls if the Investigators need them.

WOUNDS

Having fought their way through hordes of Dark Legion forces in order to reach this point the Investigators may be heavily wounded, and in no fit state to tackle a band of Imperial heretics. Fortunately for them, the accelerated passing of time has also led to the healing of many of the wounds they received in the earlier battle.

All Light, Serious, and Critical Wounds have been healed fully.

Critical injuries have also healed, though the Investigators obviously haven't been able to get medical attention during their period in stasis. However, the environment they have been trapped within has been biologically sterile yet infused with vital (if not exactly wholesome) energies.

It is left up to the GM how exactly to deal with such injuries. A rough suggestion is that any flesh wounds heal fully, though leave ugly scars which may even resemble stigmata, whilst more serious injuries are also healed, but may leave some small, but appropriate, disability (for example, a slight limp in place of a broken leg, or an abscess in need of future treatment in case of a stomach wound).

INTRODUCTION

A GAP OF 1,200 YEARS

It is not immediately obvious to the Investigators that a period of over a millennia has passed whilst they were trapped in stasis, though hopefully clues such as the gathering dust, disappearing bones, and flickering of the sun will provide them with some notion that time has passed at an accelerated rate.

The culture shock faced by anyone re-entering human society after such a gap should be considerable. No one that the Investigators knew from their previous lives and adventures is still alive, and subsequent events have wrought major changes to how life is lived in the Solar System.

In certain regards these changes are less dramatic than might otherwise have been expected. Technology, for example, has advanced very little in the interim period and many devices in common use will be familiar to the Investigators. This is down to edicts issued by the Brotherhood in 91YC to the effect that anyone found working with high technology be deemed a heretic, resulting in a distinct chilling effect on innovation. The main technological advances in the interim period have been as the result of engineers discovering low tech equivalents of high technology in order to find loopholes to the ban.

So in many cases the GM should make the Investigators aware that the equipment and artefacts they find on their enemies or within the shuttle are odd in appearance, even if the items are otherwise familiar to them. Such items may well have become heavier and bulkier, as metals have replaced plastics in their construction and intricate gearing has been used instead of electrical circuitry.

As the Investigators explore the Solar System they will discover that they are in the year 1291YC. Some major changes to consider include:

- ◆ The rise of the Cybertronic Corporation, which didn't exist when the Investigators went through their previous adventures.
- ◆ Increased bitterness and paranoia between the corporations as the result of various wars with one another.
- ◆ Renewed activity from the forces of the Dark Legion, and a ramping up of the military response to this threat.
- ◆ Brotherhood influence more widespread and influential.

3) Chasing rumours about possible cures for corruption form a big part of the adventure. The adventurers should be suffering from a moderate degree of corruption. Not enough corruption to lead to immediate obvious manifestations, but enough to be a worry and make them wary of accruing any more.

4) Working to foil the plans of the Dark Legion is a powerful motivator to undertake the adventure as written. Characters with a strong motive to confront and destroy the scions of darkness will find much to occupy them, but those without such motives may feel no particular desire to undertake a series of increasingly dangerous quests. If the group is a highly unconventional one, such as a band of heretics, the GM may need to consider altering sections of the adventure to make them more suitable for such a party.

FOLLOWING ON FROM THE DARK SYMMETRY CAMPAIGN

The Investigators should be left dealing with the effects of a cliff-hanger ending if you have played the **Dark Symmetry** Campaign through to its conclusion. Having travelled to Nero through the gate at the centre of a shattered Citadel they killed an alien creature, a trans-dimensional monster that controlled access to the real universe for the benefit of Dark Legion forces on Nero.

However, unbeknownst to the Investigators, the Dark Soul conserved its energies by placing everything on Nero, including their party, into a time lock whilst it worked out a way to re-establish effective connections with the material universe. The Investigators have therefore been trapped in stasis for nearly twelve hundred years whilst life in the Solar System has gone on without them. Thanks to their (albeit unwitting) sacrifice, the seething multitudes of humanity have been spared from the worst of the depredations of the Dark Legion during this period.

But now the Dark Soul makes it move. It influences the actions of some bungling Heretics of Ilia, who are set to free the Investigators from their stasis and unleash the full fury of the Dark Soul and its minions upon the solar system once more.

Whilst the Investigators have not been physically harmed during the thousand years they have been kept in stasis they have been gradually corrupted by their exposure on Nero. They will have to cope not only with a changed solar system in which they are effectively strangers and myths, but also their own corruption.

The Dark Soul is immortal and timeless, yet clearly not omnipotent; though it exists outside of time, it is still bound in varying degrees by the rules of the fourth dimension. The raw power of Corruption has inexorably seeped into the stasis field that has gripped the Citadel for so long. With mind and body frozen, the Investigators have been unable to resist the creeping tendrils of dark influence that have wormed their way into their souls. The GM should make

a Corruption roll for each player character, with the number of  rolled being equivalent to half their MST, rounding fractions down—powerful minds draw the Dark Symmetry's influence like a moth to a flame. Each Dark Symmetry Icon rolled represents a Tainted Mental Wound that ignores Corruption Soak and inflicts a point of Dread. The GM may then spend Dark Symmetry points to further increase the number of Tainted Mental Wounds received. This is on a one-for-one basis, though the total amount of Tainted Metal Wounds inflicted may not exceed the MST calculation above, regardless of source. It is an optional choice, but the GM may wish to have any taint manifest in visible ways, such as odd swirling patterns that vaguely resemble burrowing worms, or in the form of the strange arcane markings that often adorn those who have devoted their very existence to the Dark Soul.

Read the following to the players if the Investigators are following on from the previous adventure:

Cracks appear in the walls of the chamber and the whole room begins slowly to list to one side.

You feel very odd indeed, and then something even stranger occurs. Lights flicker and pulse and you feel a strong and sudden stab of vertigo, as if you are spinning and toppling even though your feet remain fixed to the solid ground.

And then, all of a sudden, the odd sensations and sights cease. You are still in the chamber where you slew the monstrous creature, but there isn't the merest trace of its remains. All the wounds that you bore from the fierce fighting you undertook to reach this place have long since scabbed over and turned to old pale scar tissue. A thick layer of stale grey dust coats everything, including your bodies and equipment.

An entrance to the chamber has been opened from the outside, though you neither heard nor saw what might have caused the breach. The wan rays of a far distant sun filter in and a small group of human figures can be seen silhouetted against the pale light. Each one wears clothing in odd styles and colours, though the insignia they bear are reminiscent of those worn by Imperial explorers.

"Erm ... I'm sorry." The leader of the group states his apology in an uncertain tone. "We, uh, we weren't expecting to find anyone here." His team begins to fan out around you, hugging the side of the chamber walls.

The Investigators will have to defeat the Void Cultists before they can progress any further. See **The Void Cultists** on page 26.

INTRODUCING NEW INVESTIGATORS OR USING A FRESH PARTY

If the players are part of a freshly created party the GM will have to consider how it is that they come to be on Nero at the time of the reawakening of the Dark Soul, and how it is that they came to be corrupted.

It is suggested that a new party arrive at Nero as the prisoners of the Void Cultists; soulless Heretics mired deep in the worship of IlIan. Such prisoners are intended to become a human sacrifice, part of the unmentionable rituals the cultists plan to hold in order to mark the return of the Dark Soul and its Apostles to the Solar System. In preparation for such a sacrifice, the Investigators will have been daubed with mystical symbols and foul-smelling unguents thought pleasing to the servants of Darkness. During their long interstellar journey to Nero they have been forced to partake in unholy rites and prayer sessions, and they have been cruelly tormented whenever they have refused to participate. This ill-treatment has left them corrupted to an equivalent degree to that which the Investigators trapped in stasis on Nero would have been (see above for how to assign corruption to the Investigators).

Note that if new characters are required for the party to make up for dead Investigators or to facilitate new players then this method might also be a good way to introduce them.

If the Investigators are a new party who are being brought to Nero by the Void Cultists then read the following:

For the past few weeks your only home has been a small and filthy cell decorated with profane symbols and devices designed to ensnare you and mortify your flesh.

None of you are quite sure how you got here. In hushed and fearful voices, you have shared your stories, but the only thing the tales have in common is that during your last night of freedom you each took something to drink. In each case the beverage must have contained a powerful soporific. When you awoke you were here, chained to the wall, your head pounding with a worse hangover than you would have previously thought possible.

In the weeks since your capture you have come to know true horror. Your jailers, citizens of Imperial to judge by their garb, have subjected you to all manner of abuses, both physical and psychological. The torture and privation took their toll, but worst of all were the odd rituals they performed around and upon you. At first you thought it nothing more than silly occultist nonsense, an almost welcome break to the searing pain to which they'd subject you at other times. But day by day you began to feel a growing sense of presence, an evil and polluting force leeching into you, staining you both in body and in soul.

Your captors told you nothing about where you were, but in your private discussions you have come to the decision that you are probably on board a space going vessel. This would explain the bouts of weightlessness, as well as the spare rations of bland reconstituted food you have had to eat.

Suddenly you can feel the weight of the flesh upon your bones again, and then a great shuddering crunch. The ship must have made planetfall. You hear scuffling noises and muffled voices from outside. Clearly your captors are busy.

For a while there is silence and then the room to your cell is opened. Two of your captors enter. They are dressed in tough explorer's clothes decorated with occult symbols, crazed lettering that hurts the eye and confuses the mind to so much as look at. They goad you with zappers, forcing you to stand up and march out. You stumble through the ship, arms held before you in heavy manacles, blinking into the pale light of an alien world. The air is cold, and the sun is a faint and distant light.

A large and sheer-sided mountain dominates the landscape, and your captors seem intent on forcing you towards a shattered hole at its base.

Then there is a strange sensation. Your captors reel, pressing their hands to their heads as if in pain. At the same time, you feel the manacles around your wrists loosen, as if invisible fingers have unlatched them. They fall to the ground.

"Sweet Ilian!" Says one of your captors between gasps for air. "What's happening? What have you done to us?"

What has happened is that Sister Eve (see **The Brotherhood Mystic** on page 28) has used the Impel spell (**Mutant Chronicles** rulebook page 174) to free the Investigators, rapidly followed by the Singularity spell to contain the cultists, as outlined below.

The first thing the Investigators should do is disable the two cultists who are transporting them and search them for useful weapons and equipment. In this they are fortunate, because their two guards happen to be well equipped. They are also effectively disabled due to Sister Eve's use of the Art.

VOID CULTIST ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	8	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	2	2	1	1	2	-	1	-	2	1

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: HFMP5-93 Tortoise Armour, Gas Mask: (Head 3, Arms 2, Torso 3, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Piranha Handgun(ranged):** Close, 1+T3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
 - ◆ **M606 LMG (ranged):** Medium, 1+T6, Automatic, 2H, Spread 1
 - ◆ **EHV Stun Baton (melee):** 1+T3, 1H, Dreadful, Stun
 - ◆ **Combat Knife (melee):** 1+T3, Armour Piercing 1
- Or
- ◆ **AR3000 (ranged):** Medium, 1+T5, Burst, 2H, Unbalanced
 - ◆ **GL3000 Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Medium, 2+T4, Munition, 2H, Blast (Close)

Or

- ◆ **M50 (ranged):** Close, 1+T5, Burst, 2H
- ◆ **M509 Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Medium, 2+T4, Munition, 2H, Blast (Close)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Symmetry Bank (special):** Void Cultists have opened themselves to the void and have become conduits to the Dark Symmetry as a result. Each Cultist has Personal Dark Symmetry 1, but this point may be transferred to any servant of Ilian within Close range as a Restricted Action. A Nephrite of Ilian may siphon a Dark Symmetry point from any Cultist within Close range as a Restricted Action, without waiting for the transfer to be initiated by a Cultist.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Dark Gifts:** As devotees of Ilian these heretics have been blessed with the following Dark Gifts: Corrupt Device, Dark Curse, and Symmetry Burst.
- ◆ **Disciples of the Void:** These Cultists are on the first steps to becoming one with the void. The Cultist may pay one Dark Symmetry point to gain the Inured to Cold and Inured to Vacuum Special Abilities until the end of the current scene.

The statistics provided above represent a standard Void Cultist. Unless otherwise stated, each cultist is equipped with one reload for any gun, and a standard complement of six anti-personnel grenades for any grenade launcher.

For this scene, the Cultists should be reduced to two wounds each, and can be considered to have been affected by a successful casting of the Singularity spell (**Mutant Chronicles** rulebook page 163). The

Cultists have been knocked prone from the spell, and have also gained the Staggered condition for two rounds due to the latent Ancient powers that are beginning to manifest within Sister Eve; they should be easy meat for the Investigators.

One of the Cultists carries an M606 light machine-gun, and the other is armed with an AR3000.

This fight should not prove a difficult challenge for the Investigators. They will need to prevail victoriously in order to equip themselves with some much needed weapons and armour. If the party numbers less than four or if they are otherwise weakened the GM should consider making things easier for them. Some ideas include:

- ◆ Having one of the cultists succumb completely to Sister Eve's psychic assault.
- ◆ The cultists exploring the hollow mountain may have left a crate of equipment within easy reach, intending to come

back for it when they have finished their initial scout of the ground ahead. Such a crate may contain weapons, armour, and ammunition.

The Investigators will have to defeat the other Void Cultists before they can progress any further. See **The Void Cultists** on page 26.

USING AN ESTABLISHED PARTY

If the GM wishes to play through this adventure with an established party who have had previous adventures then he will have to arrange for them to meet an appropriate circumstance from which to embark on this section of the campaign.

The easiest way to do this would be to have them abducted by the Void Cultists and transported to Nero in the manner described above. However, if that sort of fate wouldn't suit your particular group then other ways to get them involved include:



Sister Eve's Singularity Spell means the Void Cultists are about to have a really bad day.

1. The main impetus for undertaking this adventure is to use essences stored within the Necromakina to assuage the effects of corruption. Any party of Investigators who are suffering the effects of corruption could feasibly wish to learn about and visit such machines. They may also be hired by a patron who has learned about the essences and wishes to acquire some for purposes of their own.
2. Whilst exploring the Necromakina, the Investigators will learn about some of the secret history of the ancients, and even find some of their forgotten artefacts. There are plenty of interested parties throughout the universe who might sponsor an expedition to find such knowledge or artefacts. In particular opposing factions in the Brotherhood seek to either expose or suppress the facts regarding the existence of the ancients, and one or other such faction could act as patrons for Investigators undertaking such a quest—perhaps the Order of Caretakers seek to gain answers to questions that the Inquisitors believe best left unanswered.
3. The Necromakina present a significant threat in that they can be used by Dark Legion forces to create the Undead Legionnaires to swell the rank and file of their armies. As such, locating them could help the war effort for either side. Investigators with military connections could be sent to search for and destroy the devices, whilst Investigators with heretical tendencies may be inspired to locate them in order to curry favour with the Dark Soul and its apostles.

Some rework to the scenario, particularly to the early encounters, would be necessary if the GM wanted to use such backgrounds as a starting point. However, it may be helpful to consider that a number of different interested parties could feasibly wish to arrange for a shuttle to Nero (such as Brotherhood agents or heretics of some kind). Because of this fact getting Investigators on board as commissioned assistants, agent provocateurs, or prisoners could make for a suitable and satisfying preliminary scenario.



PART ONE—ESCAPE FROM NERO

However it is that they found themselves there, the Investigators are initially trapped on the planet of Nero. Before they can escape they will need to accomplish the following:

1. Defeat the Void Cultists at the Hollow Mountain.
2. Meet and confer with Sister Eve, a Brotherhood Mystic with unconventional opinions who has some insight into the possible uses the Dark Legion will put the Necromakina to, and how Ancient essence stored within the machines might help the Investigators rid themselves of corruption and unlock hidden abilities.
3. Explore the Necromakina, defeating a second group of Void Cultists and creatures of the Darkness.
4. Use the Necromakina to ameliorate corruption and locate other Necromakina around the Solar System.
5. Use the cultist's shuttle, *Her Serenity's Grace*, to continue to the next part of the adventure.

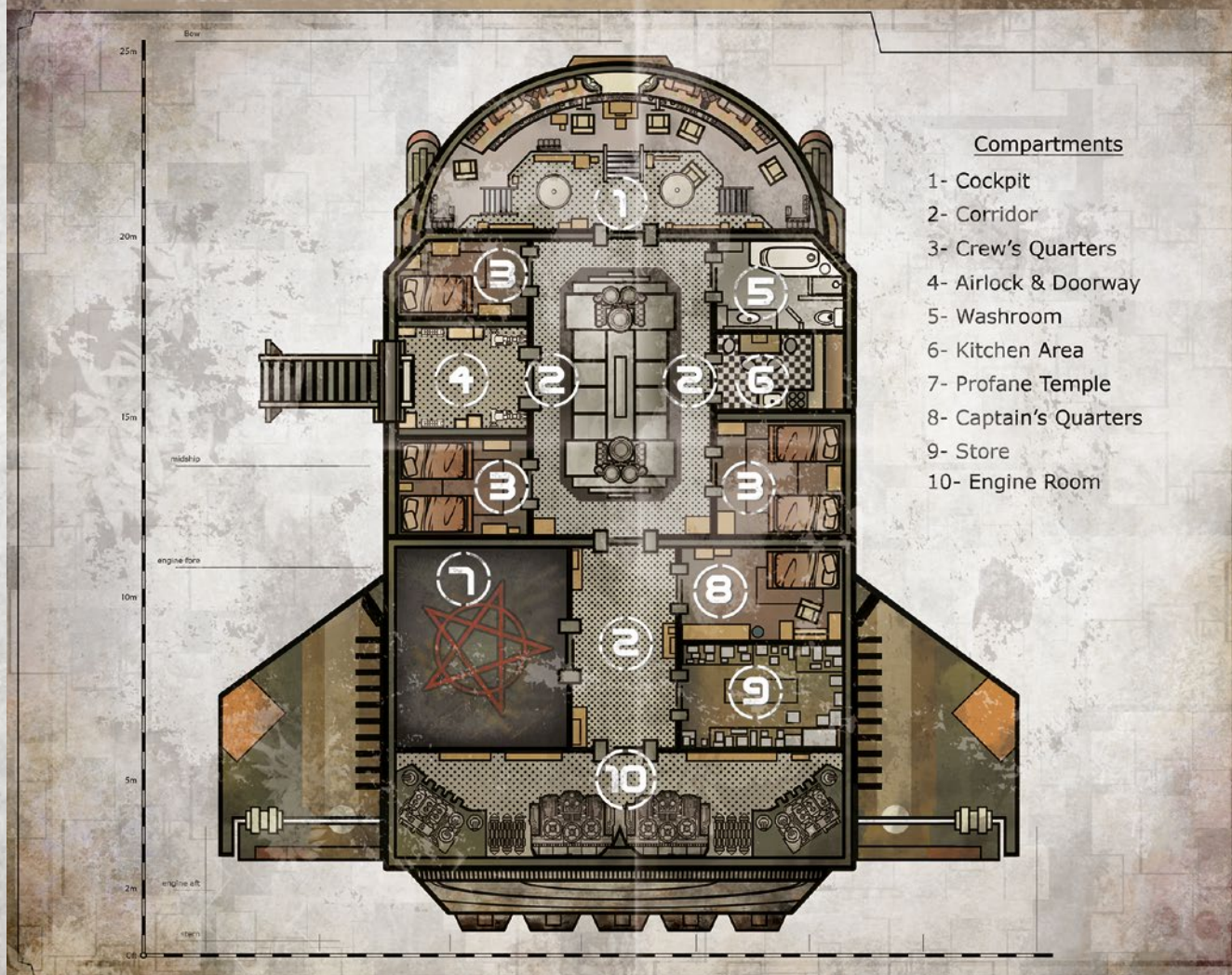
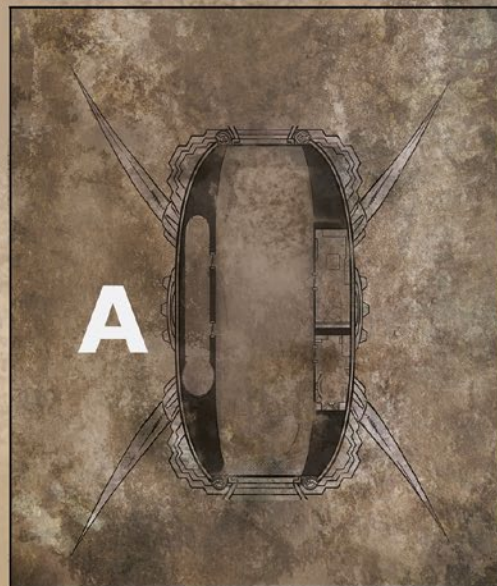
Failure to accomplish these tasks will mean that the Investigators miss vital clues needed to complete this adventure, so the GM should ensure that each of them is completed, and that their implications are acknowledged by the players, before allowing the Investigators to continue to the next challenge.

A couple of points to consider at this juncture:

- ◆ Whilst the Investigators can access the shuttle freely it requires a set of keys to operate. These are in the possession of the captain of *Her Serenity's Grace*, and he is exploring the Necromakina.
- ◆ Sister Eve can move objects with her mind using the *Impel* spell (*Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 163). She will use this power to attract the attention of the Investigators, and even hinder or assail them if they continue to ignore her.

THE LANDING SITE

Nero is a strange and complex environment, and if the GM wishes to allow the Investigators to explore the larger world he should refer to the Dark Soul guidebook. If the GM does not wish to allow the Investigators to explore the wider planet he could cite increased seismic activity and volcanic upheavals as preventing them from getting any further than their immediate surroundings. As the Dark Soul re-establishes contacts with the material universe Nero will become increasingly unstable and inimical to human comfort.



There is another reason that the Investigators should consider leaving Nero as soon as possible. The Dark Legion are gathering their strength and preparing to wage full scale war once again. Soon the surface of Nero will be swarming with all manner of creatures loyal to Ilian, paving the way for a full scale reassertion of Dark Legion power throughout the solar system.

The map below shows the area of Nero that is of concern to the early section of this adventure. The Void Cultists have landed a small shuttle craft near to a hollow mountain in one of the rock strewn and blasted landscapes on the surface of the planet.

1. **THE NERO NECROMAKINA.** This is a deserted shell of an ancient machine that was never fully furnished to begin with. The Void Cultists are currently exploring the structure in the hope of using it to locate other Necromakina around the solar system. The entrance is to the west, and the exit ramp empties to the east.
2. **HOLLOW MOUNTAIN AND ENTRANCE TO THE STASIS CHAMBER.** Thanks to the previous actions of the Investigators the Dark Soul has been separated from the material universe. The Void Cultists are breaking into the stasis chamber through the hollow mountain in the hope of freeing the Dark Soul once again.
3. **HER SERENITY'S GRACE-IMPERIAL SHUTTLE CRAFT.** The cultists have arrived on this vehicle and plan to use it to return to their base in the asteroid belt once they have finished their business on Nero.

VOID CULTISTS

Whatever the reasons behind the involvement of the Investigators in this adventure the first foes they will have to contend with are a group of renegade Imperial Conquistadors. These pirates have become corrupted and have taken up the worship of Ilian. Inspired by seductive dream messages they received from their mistress they have decided to set in motion the events that will lead to a new war between the forces of humanity and the Dark Legion.

The cultists are split into two groups. The first, consisting of the more adventurous and martially inclined cultists has set off into the interior of Nero through a hole they have bored through the side of the hollow mountain, there they will (not entirely wittingly) break the stasis fields that have separated the Dark Soul from the material universe for over a millennium (this is the same stasis field that was formed as a result of the actions of the Investigators if they played through the *Dark Symmetry Campaign*).

The second group include a number of cultists more versed in the lore of Dark Technology and the occult history of the Dark Legion's depredations. This group have travelled across the surface of Nero in order to take an inventory of a derelict Necromakina that can be found there.

DEALING WITH THE FIRST GROUP

Finding the first group of cultists will not be difficult for the Investigators. They have entered the Hollow Mountain and have either disturbed the stasis field that held the Investigators (if they were part of a party that played through the previous adventure) or are within a short distance of the Investigators when they were mysteriously freed from their bonds (if they are part of a new party who have been brought to Nero on the shuttle).

- ◆ **FIVE VOID CULTISTS:** see page 22 for the profiles. All five cultists are armed with M50 Assault Rifles/M509 Grenade Launcher.



THE SHUTTLE- "HER SERENITY'S GRACE"

The layout of *Her Serenity's Grace* is shown on the map above. This shuttle will be used by the Investigators to escape from Ilian and move around the solar system, at least during the early parts of the adventure, so it is important that the GM familiarise himself with its layout and quirks.

Her Serenity's Grace is one of the small shuttle craft Imperial explorers and adventurers tend to use in order to navigate the chaotic areas of space in which they construct their far-flung settlements and bases. It is a compact and manoeuvrable vessel, though it carries no offensive weaponry (the cultists had thought it all the better to avoid contact with the authorities by falling afoul of any regulations involved in bolting weaponry to their spacecraft).

Whilst many citizens of Imperial show an undue degree of abject devotion to their social superiors the name *Her Serenity's Grace* would strike all but the most patriotic as cloying. It is adopted as something of an ironic statement by the cultists. "Her Serenity", to their minds, does not refer to the Imperial Highness, but rather to the Dark Apostle Ilian to whom they are devoted. By adopting this nickname, they reckon themselves safe to praise Ilian, even in public, whilst adopting the pose of loyal (to the point of over-enthusiasm) Imperial subjects. The cultists are even in the habit of referring to Ilian as "Her Serenity" even when they are in private and there is no need to adopt the pretence.

EXPLORING THE SHUTTLE

Once the Investigators have dealt with the first group of cultists they should wish to explore the shuttle. This will give them the chance to find more useful equipment, meet with Sister Eve, and work out that they will need a key to operate the ignition of the shuttle.

1. COCKPIT

The large cockpit area of the shuttle contains seats and equipment for a pilot, co-pilot, communications officer, and three cabin crew. Large windows provide a panoramic view to the front of the shuttle, and computer readouts of all the vital systems on board the ship can be accessed here

There are no items of loose equipment in the cockpit, though there are six large and comfortable chairs and two round tables in the room. The pilot and co-pilot's chairs are to the front of the room, next to the main control panel. A cursory search of the controls reveals that the ship's engines will only operate if a key is inserted into the controls near the pilot's chair. The system is too complex to quickly and effectively hotwire (though if the keys are missed later on the GM can rule that an Investigator can attempt a **Daunting D3 Mechanics** test to work around a suitably dramatic fix time).

2. CORRIDOR

This large corridor is mostly occupied with raised machinery involved in the ship's drive, waste treatment, and water recycling. Banks of computer processing units and readouts monitoring fuel consumption, engine efficiency, water quality and quantity, recycling of air, and other functions.

3. CREW QUARTERS

These three rooms contain sleeping space for four cultists each. Beyond the bunks, and a chest of Spartan personal effects and spare clothes, they contain nothing of value

At the GMs discretion cheap and commonly available items can be found in some of these rooms (any items from the equipment table on page 266 of the **Mutant Chronicles** rulebook with a cost of 2 or less).

4. AIRLOCK AND DOORWAY

In order to enter or leave the shuttle a person must pass through this area. A ramp descends from the exterior doorway. As a safety measure the interior doorway, leading into room 3, can only be opened when the exterior door is closed; the GM is encouraged to increase the tension here by spending a Dark Symmetry point to cause the doors to malfunction and close, potentially trapping the Investigators (overriding the door mechanisms is a **Daunting D3 Mechanics** test that takes one minute to achieve).

Some large wooden crates have been left here. They contain exploration gear for the cultists to make use of if they run into

problems whilst scouting around the landing site and Necromakina. The gear includes 3 lengths of 120 feet of nylon rope, 2 gas masks, a Geiger counter, a field surgery kit, 3 pairs of tactical radios, 3 gas lanterns, 3 climbing equipment kits, and a chemical detection kit.

5. WASHROOM

Contains a sink, bath, shower, and WC. A small closet full of toiletries can be found over the sink. The GM may spend a Dark Symmetry point to include the addition of 'Your Soul Is Mine' being daubed in blood across the washroom mirror while the Investigators watch. Their reflections also slowly disappear, only to be replaced by the infinite cosmos and the approaching figure of a cold, alien beauty dressed in heretical robes (**Dire D2 Mysticism** test to recognise as Ilian). The scene lasts only moments, but any witness to this will be subjected to a D1 mental assault, with a failed test also inflicting one Dread.

6. KITCHEN AREA

There is a small oven with four hobs and a grill here, as well as a sink and cupboards full of dried and canned foods. There are 30 energy bars and canned drinks in the kitchen, as well as 10 MRES cans.

7. PROFANE TEMPLE

This area has been specially prepared so that rites to Ilian and the Dark Soul can be performed properly within. A number of prisoners were being held in the area, intended as sacrifices to Ilian. The Investigators might begin their adventure here if they didn't take part in the previous part of the campaign.

If the Investigators are all part of a party who played through the previous adventure then this area will be occupied by the bodies of prisoners who were sacrificed in a ritual designed to please Ilian shortly before the adventure began, prompting a D1 mental assault from the sight. If this is the case then Sister Eve may also be found here, although she is barely alive; bound hand and foot, blood froths from her mouth and she gasps for breath due to the pain of a ruptured abdomen. Currently on her first Critical Wound, the Investigators will need to work quickly to save her by succeeding at a **Daunting D3 Medicine** test. Sister Eve's Ancient Infused Metabolism will add one success to this test as her system works to repair itself, though this may prompt further questions from her saviours. She will gladly pass these off as Art infused powers until she has assessed the character's intent.

8. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The captain of *Her Serenity's Grace* sleeps here. The room is a little more spacious and better appointed than normal crew quarters, though there are few personal effects or items of value to be found here. A large notebook and a pen lie next to the bed. It is mostly blank, but the first few pages have notes written in a puzzling cipher, as described on page 32 The notes are comments the captain has wished to record following interrogations of Sister Eve.

9. STORE

This room is used to store tools and equipment required to keep the shuttle in good working order, as well as dried and canned food with which to replenish the kitchen should stocks run low.

There are boxes containing 500 MRES cans, 2000 energy bars and 2000 canned drinks in here. There is also a toolkit, a gun kit, a first aid kit, 5 grappling hooks, a pair of binoculars, a data scope, 3 scanners, 5 tents, 12 1 litre canteens, 4 gas lanterns, 2 coils of 120 feet of nylon rope, 12 mess kits, 3 gas masks, 2 inflatable rafts, and 2 wet suits to be found in the store room. If the Investigators are part of a party who were brought to Nero by the cultists then a space will have been cleared in the storeroom for a small mattress, on which can be found the bound form of Sister Eve.

10. ENGINE ROOM

The workings of the shuttle's engines can be accessed from here.

THE BROTHERHOOD MYSTIC

Sister Eve is held on board *Her Serenity's Grace*. She can either be in room 7 (if the Investigators were not held there themselves) or room 9 (if they were).

Sister Eve is 51 years old. She has a slight frame and wears her grey hair close cropped (though it has grown shaggy during her captivity). She has well-worn but attractive facial features. She is dressed in a dirty grey tracksuit and her hands and feet are bound with iron manacles that have been welded shut. A leather gag was placed over her mouth but she has worked it free and now it is slung around her neck. She does display some signs of ill-health; her body shows signs of numerous bruises and lesions, she has become emaciated during her journey, and her skin has a translucent, bluish tinge to it.

She is very weak, suffering from the rigours of her confinement and the abuses of her captors. In fact, she has an undiagnosed rupture within her abdomen, which is causing some internal bleeding and infection. Her condition is steadily worsening and unless she gets effective medical treatment over the next 24 hours she slips into unconscious. If left untreated for a further 24 hours she dies. She puts a brave face on her condition, but within a few hours it becomes clear that she is ailing.

Sister Eve is an important source of information at this point in the adventure, and without her help the Investigators will not know how to proceed. As such it is important she get to deliver the following information one way or another.

Hopefully, sensible Investigators will regard Sister Eve as a potential ally and therefore make the most of her skills and knowledge.

However, it is possible that more suspicious sorts refuse to trust her and may even regard her as an enemy in disguise.

The information is presented in the form of questions that proactive Investigators might ask Sister Eve once they have freed her. If they don't seem interested in asking her about her situation she will begin to insist that they listen to her as she has important information about the threats and opportunities posed by the discovery of the Necromakina.

If the Investigators stubbornly refuse to discuss matters with Sister Eve, or even if they go so far as to neutralise her as a potential threat, the information could still be acquired as a result of translating the code in the notebook that can be found in the captain's quarters.

The GM should also keep in mind that Sister Eve is very knowledgeable about the Dark Legion and the Brotherhood, and would be willing to educate the Investigators on such matters if they are curious.

Who are you?

My name is Sister Eve.

I am a member of the Brotherhood and a Keeper of the Art.

Who are the people who brought us here/the people in the hollow mountain?

They are the misguided servants of an Apostle of Darkness. I believe us to be on the periphery of her domain and I fear to utter her name where she may hear.

Why have they come here?

To cut a long story short, all signs indicate that we are entering into a period of renewed hostilities between the armies of humanity and the forces of the Dark Legion. Heretic cults such as these are scouting the old territories, preparing to herald the arrival of major powers to the conflict. We are on the brink of war such as we have not seen in over a thousand years.

My understanding is that they are particularly interested in recovering ancient machines known as Necromakina, have you heard of such things?

No, what are Necromakina?

The Necromakina are great engines that the Dark Legion use to replenish their armies. They remove the spiritual essence of humanity from the bodies of the deceased and replace them with Dark Ichors. Through this process they create undying soldiers for the Dark Legion on an industrial scale.



Sister Eve is far more powerful than she may appear.

INTRODUCTION

Why did they bring us here/bring you here?

It is customary for such groups to perform ritual sacrifices to the Dark Apostles in order to better win their attention and patronage. My guess is that they would have spilled your blood by way of welcoming the return of their mistress to the material universe.

For myself, I am of interest to them for other reasons; though this may come as something of a surprise to you, I assure you I am not simply some fabulist. By all means disagree with me, but please listen to what I have to say to you before you do so.

I am not an orthodox follower of the doctrines set down by the Brotherhood. It is my belief that long before the wars between the Dark Legion and humanity there was another conflict, eons earlier. It raged between the Dark Soul and another race that inhabited the Earth: We refer to them simply as the Ancients.

The Necromakina were also employed in conflicts with these Ancients. Certain like-minded individuals in my order (myself among them) have surmised that there may be remnants of their existence to be found within the machines. A certain line of interpretation of pertinent evidence points to this.

I have been deemed a dabbler in the occult by many of my former comrades for my researches in this regard, but I have earned myself a reputation as an expert on theories regarding the use of the Necromakina, and in the Ancients' civilisation.

I am increasingly convinced of my propositions, but my researches made me some enemies within my own order. I was left in a vulnerable situation; warned to flee from the Brotherhood lest more conservative elements deemed me a threat. I had travelled to the asteroid belt, following a rumour that one of the machines could be found there. I thought if my theories turned out to have a basis in reality I could be redeemed, you see? I was chasing down some leads on Diemansland when I was apprehended, sedated, and brought here.

What Leads?

There were certain stories regarding a structure that had been spotted on an asteroid near Diemansland, a place known as High Hythe, that corresponded to descriptions of Necromakina.

Have they hurt you?

They tortured me, but I know how to resist pain. I didn't give them anything they didn't already know.

But you're a Master of the Art! Couldn't you have freed yourself and stopped the cultists with spells?

Perhaps. Seeing how I don't know how to fly a spacecraft it didn't seem wise to make any rash moves until we'd landed.

SISTER EVE, KEEPER OF THE ART ☹

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	10	8	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	12	15	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	4	4	—	—	3	3	1	1	2	2

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 3
- ▶ Torso 7
- ◀ Arms 4
- ▶ Legs 5
- ◀ Serious Wounds 6
- ▶ Critical Wounds 3
- ◀ Mental Wounds 15

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **None:** Sister Eve does not employ a standard physical weapon, though she is not above utilising whatever is to hand. She much prefers to punish enemies with her Art-borne powers.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Mastery of the Arts:** Sister Eve is an experienced and competent user of the Art. She has Mysticism Expertise 3 and Mysticism Focus 3, and knows the spells Barrier, Blessing, Contempt, Gaze, Impel, Levitate, Singularity, Strike, and Succour. Additionally, whenever she successfully casts an Aspect of Kinetics spell she gains two additional Momentum, which may only be used to increase the range of the spell.
- ◀ **Influence of the Ancients:** Close association with anything even vaguely related to the Ancients has begun to trigger a metaphysical transformation in Sister Eve. Sister Eve is always considered to be equipped with a Power Controller (**Mutant Chronicles** rulebook page 157). In addition, she may expend one Momentum point from a successful casting to add the Stun quality to any resultant damage from that spell.
- ◀ **Ancient Infused Metabolism:** Advanced psychic potential has also provided some mastery over her physical functions; Sister Eve may use Recover as a Free Action. In addition, she can manipulate her own body functions to add one Momentum point to any Treatment or Medicine test made to heal her.

- ◆ **Dying on the Inside:** Sister Eve is critically wounded and bleeding out internally. She has suffered her full complement of Light Wounds to the torso, followed by the loss of all of her Serious Wounds. She has two Critical Wounds remaining, which bleed out over twenty-four hours. A Daunting D3 Medicine test will allow her to recover one Critical Wound and stabilise her condition, preventing further internal bleeding.

SISTER EVE AND THE CORRUPTION OF THE INVESTIGATORS

Sister Eve is also able to tell that the Investigators are suffering from the effects of corruption. How she delivers this news to them will depend on how suspicious they seem regarding her presence on the shuttle. If they are open and friendly to her she will reveal this information straight away, but if not she will wait until they seem more receptive. If things go really badly she might save such a warning for her very last words.

Assuming things are going well between Sister Eve and the Investigators she will say:

"I regret to have to tell you this, but you should be aware that you positively drip with the corrupting influence of the Darkness. To the senses of a Mystic such as myself the strength of the sensation is as pressing as if you were drenched in a heady perfume or constantly emitting a high pitched whine. You will not long prevail in this paranoid solar system if you carry such a clear stain of Darkness, for sooner or later you will cross the path of those who deem you unsalvageable heretics. I know, for I used to be such an unyielding and dogmatic opponent of all to do with the Darkness myself. You may well be entirely innocent of any worship or fealty to Darkness, and entirely undeserving of such besmirchment of your souls. I'm afraid the only widely known way to rid yourself of such a mark is to beseech powerful exorcists within the Brotherhood. I'd advise against that, for as I say, these are paranoid times."

"However, my studies into the Necromakina may well provide an alternative answer. It is my belief that the machines operate, in part, by removing certain essences that are in themselves characteristic of a healthy human soul, and then replacing them with corrupting ichor. If I am right about such a procedure, and the evidence would suggest I am, then the process could be reversed. I urge you to accompany me to the Necromakina so that we can confirm this for ourselves. We could be of great assistance to each other in this way, if you follow my lead for now."

THE CAPTAIN'S NOTEBOOK

The notebook in the Captain's quarters is written in a rough cipher involving a fairly simple code of substituting letters, numbers and symbols. Any Investigator could crack the code by passing a **Challenging D2 Linguistics** test, or an Investigator could use a computer to crack the code by passing a Challenging D2 Science test. Momentum Points may be spent here to decipher some of the gruesome intent of the Necromakina, which will allow the reactionary expenditure of a Dark Symmetry point by the GM to invoke a **D1 mental assault** at the realisation of the corpse factory's nefarious purpose.

See Captain's Notebook Handout for translation.

If asked about the notes Sister Eve says:

"I can only speculate about a lot of this. Captive is a reference to me, I'm sure, though I have no idea what Pup is. I find it hard to believe the devices could process corpses at such a rate, though it fits with certain rumours. That vital essences are extracted correlates to my own understanding, though I'm not sure what 'creatures of Darkness invisible to light' are. I presume they might refer to servants of darkness that display no stigmata. The Necromakina are said to be guarded by sentinels, and they do discriminate between friend and foe. Navigation area? It's a possibility. I have informed you about the Ancients and the Brotherhood's disagreements regarding their existence. I have no idea what a black stone patriarch is. He claims there are five of the devices? That's a shockingly large number, in all my researches I only came to hear rumours of two, of which one was somewhere in the asteroid belt and the other here on Nero."

For the benefit of the GM, "Pup" is the cultist's name for the Child of Ilian they have summoned to assist them.

TRAVELLING TO THE NECROMAKINA

The Nero Necromakina is situated close to the hollow mountain, about 700 meters to the north of the landing site. The Investigators will have no particular trouble locating it as its dark and baroque silhouette dominates the landscape.

Approaching the Necromakina is made a somewhat arduous process due to the piles of boulder and rubble that litter the planet's surface, but the Investigators do not find the terrain anything other than a nuisance.

The cultists and other inhabitants of the Necromakina are not expecting to be attacked, but neither are they entirely inattentive

INTRODUCTION

War effort benefits from NKMK but capacity estimates vary wildly. Captive no help. According to Pup >100,000 recruits a day at optimal capacity?

Nero NKMK is most secure, but incomplete. Spare parts could be salvaged from other locations.

Theory as to vital 'essence' stripped from bodies as part of NKMK process. Essence supposed as counter to influence of the Darkness? Correlates with notions of creatures of darkness invisible to light. Liability - essence administered could reverse process.

No solid knowledge of NKMK outlay, but many descriptions have things in common. Beyond processing workings, are stores? Could conceivably contain 'essence'?

At gate and exit there are guardians. Stone sentinels of astonishing power. They should allow entrance to the faithful.

Are different NKMK in contact with one another?
Navigation area? Locating beacon?

Captive knows rumours regarding ancient civ?
Claims scant knowledge but does not deny their war with the Darkness.

Is 'ancient essence' possible? Implications? Brotherhood divided on matter!?

The black stone patriarch is an image of Darkness too pure for mortal man to look upon.

Built on Nero? Five rumoured but only one located (AB).

of the world outside. If the Investigators approach without taking care to conceal themselves, they are spotted. The cultists are not welcoming of strangers (let alone escaped prisoners) so if the Investigators are seen they have a harder time on their hands when they enter the Necromakina. Alert cultists rally together, corral active debuggers into helping them, take cover in an appropriate location (the Dump would be a good place, as the cultists could benefit from the assistance of the Necromakina's robotic arms), and ready their weapons.

If the Investigators take efforts to conceal their approach they only alert the cultists within if they fail a **Challenging D2 Stealth** test.

Clever Investigators may decide to use the clothing and equipment of cultists they have already slain to effect a disguise. They could make particular use of armour and gas masks to conceal their heads and faces. This will work well, as the cultists within the Necromakina are expecting to be joined by their comrades at some point.

If the Investigators choose such a tactic the cultists within the Necromakina are wholly fooled by the disguise. Cultists who encounter the Investigators in such disguises may even enter into conversation with them provided that the Investigators pass a **Challenging D2 Persuade** test. Cultists only move to attack disguised Investigators if they are fired upon or if the Investigators give the game away through some obvious blunder.



THE NERO NECROMAKINA

The engineers of the Dark Legion never finished work on this particular Necromakina, and it has stood on the surface of Nero for the past millennia awaiting their return. Whilst a lot of the internal systems are in full working order the exterior of the machine shows clear signs of incomplete construction. Large panels on the outside of the Necromakina are undressed, plain stone, free of the baroque decorations and semi-organic spikes and blades that protrude from finished Necromakina.

Read the following to the Investigators as they approach the Necromakina:

Before you, rising from the rocky plains of the alien world, is a huge and imposing structure, over 200 metres in height. It is built from glossy black stone, like volcanic obsidian, and is covered in thorny protrusions and spikes. Great galleries can be seen on the side of the structure. There are many panels containing statues and grotesque figurines, or odd windows filled with a riot of coloured glass designs. However, many of these panels are simply blank, great sheets of obsidian with no decoration whatsoever.

A high arched stone bridge curves into the structure, ending at a wide open doorway. To either side of this entrance are two large podiums, though whatever was intended to stand there seems to be missing.

If Sister Eve is accompanying the Investigators she will comment on this:

"Well, we've some luck at least. The Dark Legion usually decorates the entrance to these machines with a pair of gigantic statues, called The Guardians. They are war machines, for want of a better term, and attack anyone they deem a threat to the integrity or operation of the Necromakina. The bodies of such guardians consist of hard stone, animated through the malignant will of the Dark Soul. Without serious weaponry you wouldn't stand much of a chance against them, though there might be ways to sneak past. Tell anyone who ever plans to enter one of these machines to equip themselves with the sort of weaponry they'd employ to bust a Bauhaus-brand tank. Anyway, by Durand's grace they haven't been fitted here."

The Nero Necromakina is intended as a challenge for the Investigators, but not a deadly one. Due to its incomplete state some of the more dangerous features of a working Necromakina are missing or disabled. As well as providing the information necessary to find other Necromakina around the system, exploring the device will give the Investigators some of the experience they require in

order to become better able to exploit the other Necromakina they will find during this adventure.

However, because this Necromakina is yet to be used, it contains little of the essences that the Investigators could use to rid themselves of corruption or awaken latent ancient powers within themselves.

The cultists within the Necromakina are using its navigation room to locate the other Necromakina in the solar system. Their plan is to strip the various devices for spare parts in order to create a fully working machine that can be employed as part of the Dark Legion's war effort.

When describing the interior of the Necromakina to the Investigators refer to the default Necromakina description (see page 8). Any changes unique to this particular device are listed below.

Comments in italics are made by Sister Eve if she is still with the Investigators.

1. ENTRANCE

The guardian statues have not been added to the front of the Necromakina, so the Investigators may enter the device without any confrontation.

Sister Eve:

"Through here is the area in which the Dark Legion's corpse finders would deposit the bodies in preparation for processing. The process itself is fully automated, and we ought to be wary as the machine may possess working manipulators and conveyor belts."

2. DUMP

Aside from a few test subjects that were fed into the machine long ago this particular Necromakina has never been used. So there are no bodies or artefacts to be found in the Dump. A full complement of twelve Resolving Arms (see page 14) dangle from the ceiling. They have fallen into disrepair however, and only three of them react to the Investigators.

The mechanical arms will not attack anyone that possesses four or more Tainted Mental Wounds. If the arms do attack the Investigators the cultists within the Necromakina are alerted to their presence, and realise that they are probably hostile.

There is a Debugger in here, though it has ceased to function. It is curled up like a gigantic dead spider in the far left corner.

Sister Eve:

"These robots are sometimes employed in Dark Legion devices such as the Necromakina to ensure their working order. They can be dangerous if they recognise you as hostile intruders, though this one seems to have broken down long ago."

3. CONVEYERS

The conveyors are not functional.

Sister Eve:

"Perhaps the Dark Legion never brought this particular device to full working order, or it has fallen into disrepair in the millennia since their first defeat. Either way, we are fortunate."

4. STRIPPER

The stripper is not functional.

REJECT PILE (5): There is a single DeBugger (see page 12) in here, which attacks the Investigators if it identifies them as non-Dark Soul creatures. Other than the DeBugger this area is completely empty.

Sister Eve:

"I ... haven't the faintest notion of what this room is for."

6. ESSENCE LABORATORY

The laboratory is fully equipped, though none of the needles are articulating or filled with any sort of fluid.

There are a pair of cultists working in here. One of them is making a note of the different equipment and the other is jotting this list down on a pad of paper, noting which parts of the Necromakina are in good working order, and which parts need replaced or refitted.

Confrontation between the cultists and the Investigators almost certainly occurs at this point. The cultists have the same profiles as those encountered in the hollow mountain (see page 22).

Sister Eve:

"I would guess that this is where the fine workings of the process take place. Whether these needles withdraw or inject fluids I can't be sure. I was under the impression that the machines worked entirely automatically, though there does seem to be a station for an operator here."

7. ESSENCE STORE

The essence store is fully kitted out with containers.

Sister Eve:

"If theories regarding a human essence are to be believed, then when it comes to a Necromakina that has seen use this area would be the most likely place to look for them. I can't be sure this particular machine has seen much use, everything looks too clean."

Many years ago a few test subjects were fed through the machine's operation. If the Investigators search through the containers, they may be able to find some Human Factor (see page 9). Whether they do, or how much, will depend on the makeup of the party. If there are a number of corrupted Investigators, then enough essence can be found to allow a single Investigator a single chance to relieve themselves of corruption. If there is only one corrupted individual within the party, then unfortunately no essence is to be found here.

8. THE CONVERTER

The converter is idle.

Sister Eve:

"I wouldn't go in there if I were you. I think that's probably just a piece of machinery required as part of the process. It'd tear you apart if the device was operational."

9. NAVIGATION ROOM

The navigation room is operational. There are three cultists in here, one of whom is the captain of *Her Serenity's Grace*. There is also a Child of Ilian with them, who they have named "Pup".

As the Investigators approach the room they can hear voices coming from within. If they pause to listen read the following.

You can hear at least three different voices from within the room. Two are deep and muffled, as if the speakers are talking through respirators. The last voice is strange, shrill and piping like the voice of a petulant child. The deeper voices seem to be querying the shrill voice.

"I am trying!" It says, in a tone of petulant complaint. "This isn't fair! You go and get a computer that hasn't worked for a thousand million years to home in on Necromakina without problems and see how you like it! Look! The closest device can be clearly seen there within the belt. I did that! Me! Those

further away—too faint a signal to be properly homed in on, isn't it? It is possible that they are underwater, or confined to the dark side of the planet. So actually I've done really well, really. Haven't I?"

Read the following description to the Investigators as they enter the room.

Within this room there are four more cultists, dressed in ragtag Imperial uniforms and armour. They are hunched around a monitor screen on which can be seen a spinning diagram of the solar system, with planets and major asteroids marked out in yellow, and major navigational gates shown in blue. There are also some red areas flashing up on the display.

To the side of the cultists can be seen a strange figure, less than a metre in height. It has greyish and translucent skin through which a number of pulsating purple organs can be discerned. Four semi-organic tubes run from different sections of the creature's skull and connect to its spine. It fiddles with the control panel to the side of the monitor screen and as it does so a different part of the solar system shifts into focus.

Pup has been specially summoned to help the cultists access the Navigation Room in order to triangulate the locations of other Necromakina around the solar system. Pup also brought a gift for Reynold in the form of a Sinarack Assault Rifle; a reward for his untiring efforts to resurrect the Necromakina. It will cower and beg for its life if outgunned, but in truth it is a malicious creature with a hunger for violence. Pup is willing to fight against overwhelming odds, but it hopes that by acting like a lost and frightened child it may trick the Investigators into lowering their guard and offering it the opportunity to spill some human blood.

REYNOLD 'REY' MALCOLM, CAPTAIN OF HER SERENITY'S GRACE ☆

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	9	9	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE					
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	1	2	2

SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	2	2	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Protective jumpsuit with Heretical Overcoat: (Arms 1, Torso 2, Legs 1).

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Sinarack (ranged):** Close, 1+↑6, Burst, Unbalanced, Corrupting 3, Dreadful
- ◀ **EHV Stun Baton (melee):** 1+↑3, 1H, Dreadful, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Inured to Cold**
- ◀ **Personal Dark Symmetry (2)**
- ◀ **Unmatched Negotiator:** A hard edge, years of smuggling, and recent loss of humanity to the void provides a real edge to Reynold during negotiations. When making a Persuade test, he may re-roll any d20 that did not generate a success on the initial roll.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Serenity's Favour:** Reynold's devotion to his Apostle and her works has curried favour from the Mistress herself. He has access to the following Dark Gifts: Corrupt Device, Dark Curse, Obfuscation, and Sense Weaves of Power.
- ◀ **At One with the Void:** Reynold has spent many long, dark hours staring meditatively into the void in a vain attempt to unravel its mysteries. He has become Inured to Cold because of this, and may spend a Dark Symmetry point to become Inured to Vacuum until the end of the current scene. In addition, his understanding of the cosmos and his ship's place in it allows him to siphon Dark Symmetry points from his own crew as though he were a Nephrite of Ilia (see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 289).

Note that the Captain carries the ignition key for the shuttle's controls on a chain around his neck.

- ◀ **THREE VOID CULTISTS:** see page 22 for the profiles. All five cultists are armed with M50 Assault Rifles/M509 Grenade Launchers.
- ◀ **CHILD OF ILIAN:** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 292.

The Navigation mechanism displays a diagram of the solar system upon which three areas are marked with a flashing red glow. The size and sharpness of this area correlates to the degree of accuracy the machine is able to home in on another Necromakina.

- ◀ A sharp pinpoint is placed on the asteroid belt, it can be zoomed in upon to great detail, and shows that a Necromakina has been located on a small asteroid not far from Diemansland. The coordinates can be taken down to compare to a more human-friendly system (such as the navigation computer in *Her Serenity's Grace*) later.

- ◀ A blurred area covering a swathe of Venus.

- ◀ A vague red glow can be seen covering the whole of Mercury.

Sister Eve:

"That a Necromakina rests on an asteroid a short journey from Diemansland is no surprise to me. The place is home to a new settlement called High Hythe. I was on my way to confirm such rumours myself when I was waylaid by the cultists. Nero is... maybe too distant from the core of the Solar System for this navigation unit to clearly locate the remaining machines. However, if the corresponding area of the Necromakina near High Hythe is operational they could be located from there."

10. POWER PLANT

The power plant is dormant. A DeBugger is in here running checks on some of the machinery. It attacks the Investigators if it identifies them as non-Dark Soul creatures.

Sister Eve:

"This looks like the engine room to me."

11. DEBUGGER RACK

There are docks for twenty DeBuggers in here, fifteen of which are occupied.

Over time many of the DeBuggers have become worn out and non-functional. However, five of the machines are still operational and will be activated according to a schedule. The longer the Investigators spend examining the room the more likely it is that one of the machines will activate, and then attack them if it recognises them as non-Dark Soul creatures.

The GM should roll a single ⬆ for every minute the Investigators tarry here, with a DeBugger becoming active if a ⬆ symbol is rolled.

Sister Eve:

"Twenty spaces, and we have encountered a dead one and a living one so far. So there could be two more to deal with before we are through."

12. RINSE

The Rinse is empty. The pink liquid in the pool has congealed into the thick goo.

Sister Eve:

"I have no idea what purpose this area might serve."



13. ARMOURY

Racks for weapons have been placed here, though they are empty.

Sister Eve:

"This place should be a weapons store. The newly created Legionnaires would be equipped with arms and armour from here."

14. ASSEMBLY

There is nothing here.

Sister Eve:

"I don't know if this area serves any particular purpose."

15. EXIT

There is no decorative fresco here. The Guardian statues are missing.

Sister Eve:

"This is our way out. I had feared that a pair of sentinels may have been placed here, such as those said to guard the entrance, but they seem to be absent."

LEAVING NERO

Once the Investigators have finished exploring the Necromakina there is no particular reason that they should wish to explore Nero. However, in order to best continue the adventure, it is best if the Investigators get on board *Her Serenity's Grace* and travel to the asteroid belt.

The navigation systems on board *Her Serenity's Grace* will be able to use the coordinates supplied by the Navigation Room in the Nero Necromakina to identify the site of the Necromakina in the asteroid belt. It is on a small asteroid called High Hythe. This asteroid is relatively close to Diemansland, though there is no safe route to it. Instead it is suggested that anyone wishing to go to High Hythe travel first to Diemansland and then hire an experienced pilot to take them to High Hythe.

Likewise, the swathe of Venus covered by the red blotch can be narrowed down to an area including the Graveton Archipelago and much of the Rings of Winter. However, the navigation systems are no help in triangulating the position of the Necromakina on Mercury and Mars.

Her Serenity's Grace is in good working order and carries enough fuel to make a trip all the way to the inner solar system.

INTRIGUE IN THE ASTEROID BELT

OVERVIEW

In this section the Investigators leave Nero and travel to Imperial territories in the asteroid belt, in particular the resort asteroid of Diemansland and High Hythe, a small, recently colonised asteroid nearby.

A splinter group of Brotherhood radicals begin to monitor the actions of the Investigators at this point. The Unstinting Order of the Blood are dedicated to suppressing all knowledge of the Ancients, and have been trying to track down Sister Eve in order to neutralise her. If the Investigators are with Sister Eve this will lead to a confrontation with members of the Order, but even if they aren't the Order will monitor them and take steps to ensure that they don't spread any secrets.

The Investigators will also find it difficult to travel between Diemansland and High Hythe, as the intervening area of space is dotted with asteroids and only experienced pilots can safely navigate the journey. As many of Diemansland's pilots have joined the war effort choices here are limited.

High Hythe has itself come under attack from the forces of the Dark Legion, and an assault from the forces of Muawijhe has caused the inhabitants of the settlement to descend into lurid madness. These lunatic settlers present an immediate danger to both themselves and the Investigators.

Finally, the next Necromakina to be explored is in a rather more advanced state of readiness than the one the Investigators saw on Nero. An ancient treasure is to be found within and use of the Navigation Room will help locate Necromakina in other parts of the Solar System.



There's no time to sightsee on the way to Diemansland.

JOURNEY TO DIEMANSLAND

Taking the shuttle from Nero to the asteroid belt is a simple business provided someone in the party can pilot the vessel. Navigational gates exist between Nero and Jupiter, and then Jupiter to Victoria. From Victoria a simple space journey to Diemansland is possible.

If none of the Investigators have any skill in piloting a space craft then a possible way around this is for the GM to rule that an additional person, also intended to form part of the sacrifice to Ilian, has managed to hide from the Cultists aboard the shuttle. The Mishiman Tam-Zee has some skill in piloting spacecraft and is able to work the controls, although the beatings he received during the transit to Nero will make him reckless in his pursuit of freedom once sat at the controls.

SACRIFICIAL LAMB TAM-ZEE ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	6	8	7
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	6	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	-	-	2	2	1	1	1	-	2	1

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◀ **Slicer (melee):** 1+13, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Fly Any Old Crate:** Tam-Zee is an experienced pilot who has flown a variety of spacecraft across many different space lanes during his life as a smuggler. He may reduce the difficulty of all Space tests that relate to piloting a spacecraft by one, and he may re-roll any dice that do not generate a success, though the new result must be accepted.
- ◀ **Reckless Pursuit of Freedom:** Tam-Zee is seriously shaken from his most recent misadventure and the beatings he has received; he is suffering from three points of Dread and two Tainted Mental Wounds. He would like to put as much distance between the Dark Legion and himself as possible, and at any cost. He will attempt to set course for Mars on arrival at Victoria, and will hope to coincide this with the Investigators being at rest. A Daunting D3 Space test is required to manage this (the

reduction for Fly Any Old Crate has already been accounted for). The Investigators may pick up on subtle clues to Tam-Zee's plan with a Daunting D3 Observation test—perhaps he leaves navigational charts open in his haste, or constantly mutters to himself. He is fiercely resolute in pursuit of his goal; all Persuade or Command tests made to convince him to take a different course increase their difficulty by two.

The Investigators could conceivably go wherever they like from this point, and they may wish to stop on their way to Diemansland to get medical attention, extra supplies or equipment. There is no pressing schedule that they have to keep to, so the GM should take such detours in his stride and allow the Investigators to make whatever preparations they require (indeed, some sort of heavy weaponry or demolition equipment will be required by the Investigators if they wish to destroy any of the guardian statues they are likely to encounter whilst exploring the remaining Necromakina).

One thing that will become clear to the Investigators as they journey from Nero to the Asteroid Belt is that there is a lot of activity going on throughout the Solar System. Any radio signals that they pick up will tell of news of massive mobilisation of military assets in a renewed struggle against a resurgent Dark Legion. Any space port the Investigators visit is pushed to capacity in order to service military spacecraft, and warships may well hail the Investigators as they make their way to the interior of the system.

The upshot of all this chaos is that the Investigators find it impossible to get any military or police force to take their own quest to uncover and disable the Necromakina seriously. The Dark Legion are very much a clear and present danger in the system at this time, and paying heed to strange and unsavoury types with stories about factories that create zombie legionnaires are likely to be ignored as the wildest of goose chases.

THE UNSTINTING ORDER OF THE BLOOD

While they are within the asteroid belt the Investigators come into contact with a strange group of Brotherhood agents who may go on to prove to be a dangerous thorn in their side.

The Unstinting Order of the Blood are a group of Brotherhood radicals who have some insight into the nature of the Ancients, and are keen to suppress knowledge of their existence. Given that the Investigators are likely to uncover secrets regarding the Ancients in their quest to free themselves from corrupting influence, the Unstinting Order of the Blood are sure to come to regard them as foes to be vanquished.

Unfortunately for the Investigators these Brotherhood fanatics were on the trail of the Void Cultists, and whilst they are familiar enough

DARK LEGION PART 02

A QUICK GUIDE TO DIEMANSLAND

Diemansland is one of the larger and more stable asteroids in the asteroid belt, with a pleasant climate warmed as a result of its unobstructed view of the sun.

During the early days of its colonisation Diemansland was used partly as a mining base and a penal colony. Over time the asteroid's reputation as a beauty spot saw its function as a prison planet diminish. Whilst crime and vice remained important aspects of Diemansland culture, the power brokers on the asteroid, as well as throughout wider Imperial society, realised that more could be done for the world through promotion of its tourism industry than could be acquired through mining and crime.

These days the asteroid runs as a full time holiday resort catering to the many tourists who go there to enjoy sunning themselves on hotel verandas and gambling in the asteroid's many renowned casinos. An air of criminal glamour remains part of Diemansland

culture. Old Diemanslander criminal dynasties might still boast of their pasts as pirates and gangsters, but for the most part they are content to fleece visitors by running gambling joints and supplying expensive luxury services.

Some unrest threatens the stability of the region. A group called the Diemansland Liberation Army (DLA) demands self-rule for the asteroid, and sometimes even goes so far as to organise terroristic attacks on some of the major casinos and hotels there. For the most part they are careful not to inflict too much damage, however, as they would not want to so outrage patrons of the asteroid that they would lose custom should they eventually achieve their goals.

To outsiders Diemansland is an opulent and beautiful holiday resort with a patina of criminal glamour to give the whole thing a bit of an edge. Full time residents may realise this edginess runs deep, and has to be held in constant check lest it jeopardise the hard work of casino owners and hoteliers.

with their quarry to know that the Investigators are not necessarily heretics in the thrall of the Dark Soul, they are keeping an eye out for the return of *Her Serenity's Grace*, and will be very interested to find out more about whoever is on board.

Given the Investigators' corrupted state, and their quest to uncover essence of the Ancients in order to ameliorate their condition, it won't be long before they give the Unstinting Order of the Blood enough justification to interfere.

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE ORDER?

The Order is drawn mainly from those amongst the Brotherhood's ranks who also have ties to the noble families of Bauhaus. As such, each member tends to possess a toxic combination of snobbery and religious fanaticism.

The name of the Order reflects the obsessions of its founders. The "Blood" refers to the notion of human purity, uncorrupted by either the mark of heresy or the design of the Ancients, and "Unstinting" is a clue as to the zeal with which the Order carries out its vigilant search and destroy missions in order to maintain such purity.

HOW DO THE MEMBERS OF THE ORDER LEARN ABOUT THE INVESTIGATORS?

The Order were initially on the trail of Sister Eve, having decided some time ago that her open and progressive attitude to examination of evidence regarding the existence of the Ancients

represents a serious threat. Members of the Order are behind Sister Eve's alienation from the Brotherhood, and now that she is vulnerable they seek to kill her.

Only, the Void Cultists got to her first.

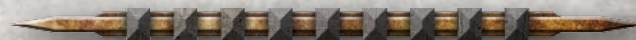
The Order do not know where the cultists went, but they do know they departed on a ship called *Her Serenity's Grace* and they are waiting for any news of its reappearance.

WHAT ARE THEIR INITIAL CONCERNS?

The Order's reaction to the Investigators will depend on whether or not Sister Eve is still with them when they reach the asteroid belt.

If she is, then members of the Order decide to neutralise her as quickly as possible. They will not be so interested in killing the Investigators, as they have yet to work out what sort of role the Investigators play in proceedings, but they are certainly willing to hurt any Investigators who get in their way.

If she is not, the Order will keep the Investigators under surveillance, but do not make any immediate moves to harm or impede them. As it becomes clearer that the Investigators are in the process of uncovering secrets regarding the Ancients, the Order become increasingly motivated to confront them.



INTRIGUE IN THE ASTEROID BELT

MEMBERS OF THE ORDER

There are members of the Unstinting Order of the Blood in many locations around the Solar System, though the centre of their organisation is on Venus. Of particular interest to the GM at this point are three members of the Order on Diemansland who are keeping a vigilant eye out for the return of *Her Serenity's Grace* and Sister Eve.

GEORGIA HURTZEL – INQUISITOR

Georgia is a statuesque woman, 5' 11" in height. She is fifty-seven. She has short white hair and a large aquiline nose. She is never seen without the battle dress of an Inquisitor.

Georgia's motivations are complex, and whilst she isn't likely to reveal them to the Investigators they are listed in brief here for the GMs consideration.

- ◀ Georgia follows the core philosophy of those members of the Brotherhood who deem the truths about the Ancients to be too pessimistic for widespread human consumption. She wishes to have them suppressed until some kind of credible optimistic spin can be put onto them.
- ◀ She does not hold humanity to be superior to the Ancients (as Luke does) but would be happy to play up to that prejudice for popular effect. So whilst she will portray these attitudes, she isn't so naïve as to actually hold them.
- ◀ Georgia is also deeply envious of those who have made major discoveries regarding the Ancients, though she represses this envy. Truth be told she would rather like to be the one to uncover their many secrets, and then reveal them to her Brotherhood comrades and receive all the honours due to a pioneering explorer.
- ◀ These beliefs have combined into a manic ambition. Georgia seeks to suppress any who currently hunt for knowledge regarding the Ancients. She then plans to use the discoveries of those she has neutralised to create her own optimistic interpretation of the Ancients' existence for which she can then claim credit.

Georgia has not included Petra and Luke in her plans. She realises Luke is too dogmatically opposed to revealing knowledge of the Ancients and that Petra is too easy going unless clearly directed.

Her own motives help explain why she doesn't move against the Investigators in a more direct fashion. She would rather let them make some discoveries before making any overt moves of her own.

GEORGIA HURTZEL, INQUISITOR ☠

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	11	8	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	12	13	13

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT	FORTITUDE	MOVEMENT	SENSES	SOCIAL	TECHNICAL
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	2	2	2	3	2

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 4
- ◀ Arms 5
- ◀ Serious 7
- ◀ Mental Wounds 13
- ◀ Torso 8
- ◀ Legs 6
- ◀ Critical 4

SOAK: Inquisitorial Battledress: (Head 4, Arms 3, Torso 4, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **P60 Punisher (ranged):** Close, 1+**T**6, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown
- ◀ **Punisher Short Sword (melee):** 1+**T**5, 1H, Parry 1, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Dabbler in the Arts:** Although trained in the Aspect of Mentalism and an experienced Inquisitor, Georgia has concentrated most of her developmental training in the physical and political arenas of the Brotherhood. She has Mysticism Expertise 3 and Mysticism Focus 2, and is able to employ the spells Blessing, Contempt, Succour, Inner Gaze, Paragon, and Regeneration.
- ◀ **Puppet Mastery:** Georgia is a skilled manipulator who makes every effort to pull the strings of others for her own ends. She gains a bonus d20 on any Persuade or Command test made when convincing someone to complete a task for her and may re-roll any d20 that results in a failure, though she must accept the new result.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Suppress and Appropriate:** Georgia has woven an intricate web of influence amongst her peers and is able to call on many a favour. At any time, if the Investigators attempt to pass on information regarding the Ancients to anyone in authority (be they Brotherhood or corporate official) the GM should rule whether Georgia could reasonably have influence with that person or their superiors. The Investigators must make a Challenging D2 Education test in the event that she conceivably could. The GM may then spend Dark Symmetry points equivalent to the number of successes generated by the characters to oppose the roll with Georgia's Puppet Mastery ability. If Georgia is successful, the information fails to reach its recipient and instead ends up on her desk.

PETRA WEISS – MYSTIC

Petra is a young and athletic woman with close cropped dark hair. She is a talented mystic with a particularly strong grasp of telepathic arts. The members of the order rely on her to glean a little about the knowledge and intention of the Investigators before deciding what to do about them.

Petra is not so zealously attached to the ideals of the Order as Georgia and Luke, but whilst they are alive she will be too invested and intimidated to consider betraying it.

PETRA WEISS, MYSTIC ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	8	10	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	11	14	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE									
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	3	3	2	–	2	2	1	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Armoured Robes, Combat Helmet: (Head 2, Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+T5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ▶ **Punisher Short Sword (melee):** 1+T5, 1H, Parry 1, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Telepathic Agility:** Petra is a skilled practitioner of the Art of Manipulation. She has Mysticism Expertise 4 and Mysticism Focus 3, knows the spells Blessing, Contempt, Succour, Missive, Discern Truth, Hypnosis, Communion, and Suggestion spells, and may also roll an additional d20 when casting any Aspect of Manipulation spell that generates a success. Petra is also extremely adroit at stealthily massaging information from a subject's mind, as described in 'The Orders First Moves' scenario on page 43.
- ▶ **Distraught Thoughts:** As a strong telepath Petra is easily able to read the thoughts of those closest to her, although sometimes she is driven to distraction by doing so. Sorting through the myriad number of unspoken voices in her head requires such a focussed effort from Petra that she is unable to take Response Actions.

LUKE BANBURY – REVISOR

Luke is a man of thirty with a pale and wan complexion. He is blonde haired, but balding and is a little fat. He is a Revisor, an undercover Inquisitor who fulfils the role of private Investigator for the Brotherhood. As a Revisor, Luke dresses down, typically aping the styles of whatever society or culture he is working within.

Luke's hatred of the Ancients stems from his deeply ingrained human supremacism. He simply finds it too fundamental an attack on his identity to face up to the fact that there might be something comparable or superior to the human species. His bigotry runs the other way too, and he tends to look down on his fellow humans who are in some way weak, impotent, or failing to fulfil their potential.

LUKE BANBURY, REVISOR ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	10	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	11	12	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE									
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	3	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	2

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Suit: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+T5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ▶ **Slicer (melee):** 1+T5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Student of the Mind:** As a Revisor, Luke has also received some training in the Art of Manipulation. He has Mysticism Expertise 2 and Mysticism Focus 2, and knows the spells Blessing, Contempt, Succour, and Missive.
- ▶ **Particular Set of Skills:** Luke has enjoyed a relatively long career within the Cell of Intelligence when compared to the average life span of a Revisor. He is a master of close combat techniques despite his bulk, and is well trained in espionage skills. He may roll an additional d20 on any Close Combat, Observation, Persuade or Stealth roll that generates at least one success. In addition, Luke may re-roll up to two damage dice following a successful attack, but must accept the new result.
- ▶ **Condescending Bigot:** Luke has no patience or understanding for those he believes to be weak or underachieving, and it

INTRIGUE IN THE ASTEROID BELT

shows. The Repercussion of any Persuade or Command test should be increased by two if Luke is required to interact with anyone that fits his bigoted criteria.



A HOBSON'S CHOICE REGARDING PILOTS

When the Investigators arrive on Diemansland they may well want to proceed to High Hythe as soon as possible; their quest is to uncover the secrets of Necromakina after all. There are, however, two problems that must be overcome before they can continue.

The area of space between Diemansland and High Hythe is not extensive, but it is dotted with a high density of asteroids and can only be navigated by an experienced pilot. In addition, many of the best pilots on Diemansland have joined the war effort, so only a few rather unsuitable personalities are available for the Investigators to commission.

In the end it won't matter who the Investigators decide to hire in order to take them to High Hythe, though in the course of their search for a suitable pilot the Unstinting Order of the Blood will have plenty of opportunity to assail them.

THE DIEMANSLAND TO HIGH HYTHE ROUTE

The minute the Investigators ask anyone about getting from Diemansland to High Hythe they are met with an attitude of exasperation and disbelief. Typical responses are along the lines of:

"That particular route must be one of the most ill-fated in the system. It's been the ruin of some of the best pilots Imperial ever produced. The asteroid field thereabouts is unstable and treacherous, you see."

"The wreckage of a hundred ships are the consequence of that field, and their hulks only add to the hazards that lie in wait for the inexperienced pilot. You want to avoid that route at all costs."

"I couldn't possibly grant anyone without a thorough knowledge of navigating the asteroid belt the authority to travel that route. It would be just irresponsible of me to do so."

In short, the Investigators will not find anyone willing to grant them the necessary clearance or information to make their own way to High Hythe. If they ask anyone with authority if there are any regular flights to the asteroid, it will result in an answer such as:

"There is a regular shuttle that comes to Diemansland once every earth-standard week, to pick up supplies. It's only just left I'm afraid. If you're willing to wait a week you could hitch a lift I suppose, if they're willing to take passengers."

The reputation of the people living on High Hythe is not good amongst Diemanslanders. They are regarded as rather suspicious and reckless people, eking out a lonely existence on a small and barren asteroid.

"I can't understand the attraction these pioneering terraformers have for such places. You can't get fresh meat or veg, or a decent cup of tea there or anything. It'll be years before life there is halfway bearable. Who'd want to live on such a place in the interim? Mad men and sociopaths, I'd wager."

If the Investigators ask about the availability of pilots, they will only hear more bad news.

"I'm afraid that most of the capable ship's pilots and captains have all been commissioned to help with the war effort. There's only two people left on Diemansland who know that route well, and they'll want good danger money to fly it in these circumstances. There's Captain Shandy who lives at the Drake Hotel, and young Robin Pitt, who you can find at 233c Busby Row."

LOCATING THE CAPTAINS

Both Captain Shandy and Robin Pitt are equally (un)suitable pilots, and the interviews that the Investigators have with them are mainly intended for comic effect. In fact, both men will be able to pilot a ship safely to High Hythe and back, so finding and hiring one of the men is a rather straightforward process that involves no risk to the Investigators.

However, hopefully the fact that both men seem luridly incompetent will give the Investigators much to think about, and travelling between their abodes will provide the opportunity for the Unstinting Order of the Blood to pry into the motives and activities of the Investigators.

The map shows the area within which both of the prospective pilots live.

1. The Drake Hotel.
2. An open garden area including an arboretum and a large duck pond.
3. The Golden Chance Casino.
4. A tenement block within which is 233c Busby Row.
5. The northern end of a large golf course.

Given the fact that neither pilot is likely to make a good first impression on the Investigators they may end up walking back and forth between the hotel and Busby Row before hiring one of the men to take them to High Hythe. This provides the Unstinting Order of the Blood plenty of time to make their first move.

THE ORDER'S FIRST MOVES

The members of the Unstinting Order of the Blood become aware of, and interested in, the Investigators as soon as they enter the area of space around the Imperial holdings on the asteroid belt. They have been listening on air traffic control broadcasts for any mention of a shuttle with the specifications of *Her Serenity's Grace* (so even if the Investigators take pains to change the name unfortunately the Order will still respond to the reappearance of the shuttle).

Luke takes up a position at the Diemansland space port shortly before the Investigators arrive and shadows them as they make initial enquiries. The GM should roll a Stealth test for Luke, which may then be opposed by actively vigilant Investigators, with each point of Momentum generated by Luke being used to increase the difficulty of the opposed roll by one. A Repercussion here may be used to foment paranoia with the Investigators—a sensation of being watched, or impression that they are being scrutinised by security—whilst a Critical Failure means that Luke has exposed himself to them in some way. Once he realises they are trying to hire a suitable pilot he will plan to intercept them. The Order's agents will not attack the Investigators immediately. Instead Petra will look to use her mystic arts to try to probe the Investigators and work out what they are doing. She will position herself within the garden area in front of the Drake Hotel in order to get a good view of the Investigators as they make their way to see one or the other of the prospective pilots. She attempts to blend in with the crowd, which will again require a Stealth test as above if the Investigators are being actively vigilant. Petra will be without her Mystic's robe and power controller as she is attempting to be incognito, so the range for her spells should be adjusted accordingly.

The Communion spell enables the caster to telepathically connect with a target and receive a yes/no answer to any particular question, though this will almost always involve the target's awareness. Petra, however, is an extremely adept telepath and will attempt to remain undetected, though to do so she must focus all of her attention on a single target. She must succeed at a **D1 Mysticism** test (with an increased Repercussion range of 19 due to lack of a power controller) to reach out to her intended target and begin questioning their thoughts. The target is allowed to resist the intrusion with a **Challenging D2 Willpower** test as usual, although Petra's skill is such that the target will have no indication that their thoughts are being rifled through should they fail this test. Petra will use additional Momentum to increase the difficulty of the target's Willpower test as described under the Communion spell, thereby increasing her chance of remaining undiscovered. In addition, Petra may also spend any Momentum generated from casting the spell to increase the difficulty of any Insight test made to discover her presence and whereabouts.

Particularly suspicious or paranoid Investigators who declare they are keeping an eye out for anything strange may spot Petra scrutinising the party with an intense expression by passing a Challenging D2 Insight test. The same is true for any who succeed on their Willpower test to resist her intrusion as they will be aware that their own mind has been brushed by another.

The questions Petra will ask of the Investigators are:

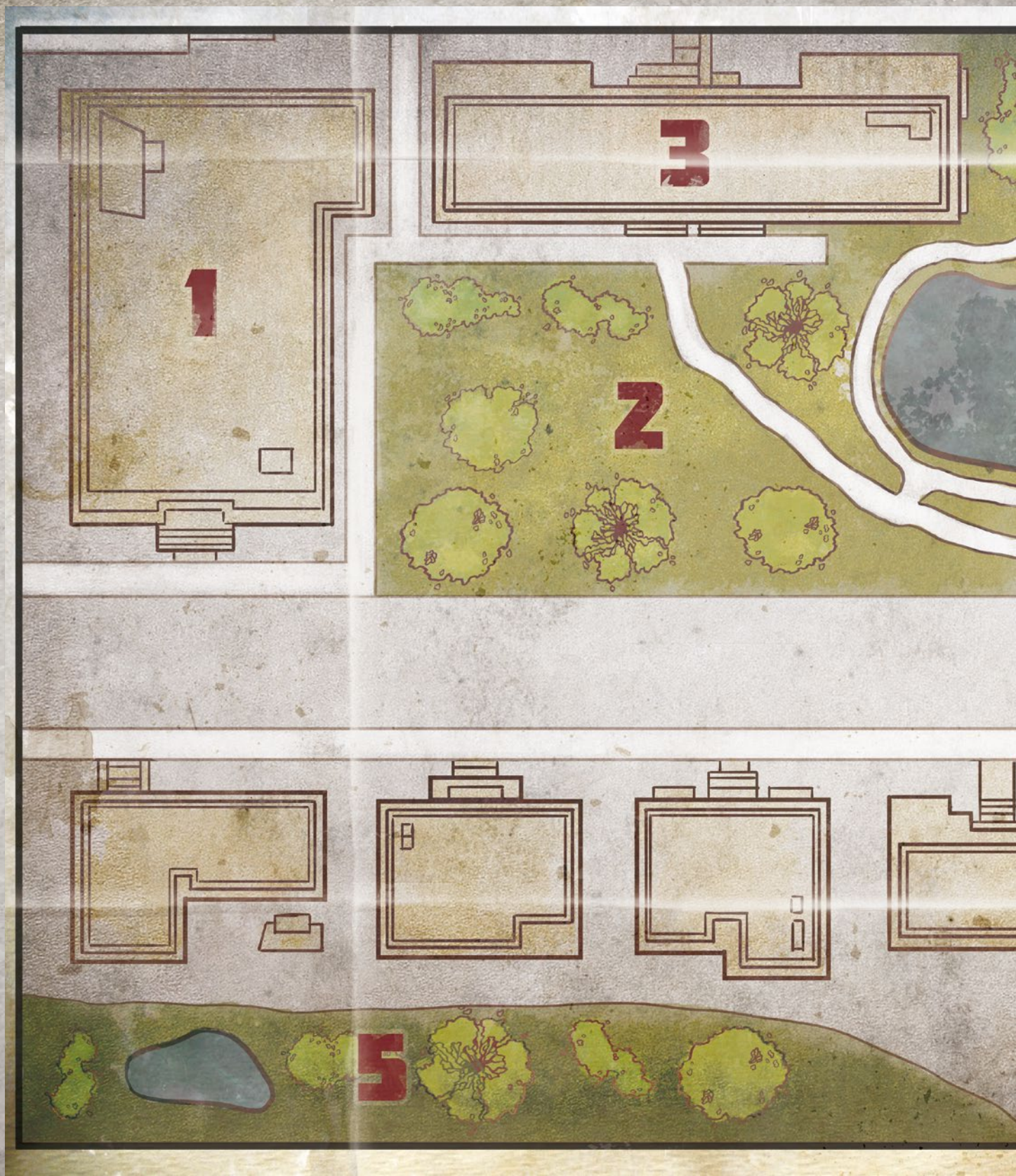
- ◆ Do you know Sister Eve?
- ◆ Do you know of the Ancients?
- ◆ Are you seeking out knowledge regarding the Ancients?
- ◆ Are you a heretic?

The answer to the first of these questions is likely to be "yes" in the case of the Investigators, whilst the last may vary or be uncertain depending on the character in question.

Petra is free to ask any number of questions, although the target is allowed a new Willpower test to resist each one she asks. Any Momentum that she has spent will apply for the duration of each casting of Communion. Once Petra receives a reply of "yes" to any of these questions from any of the Investigators it will justify continued scrutiny of the party in the eyes of the Order.

Assuming Petra gets a couple of answers from a couple of Investigators she will leave them alone and report back to Georgia. Luke, in the meantime, will keep an eye on where the Investigators go.

There is no way a person can tell if a Mystic is communicating with them via telepathy in this way.



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If the Investigators make moves to apprehend Petra, Luke blocks their path, claiming that he is lost and asking directions to the best sun gazing resorts on Diemansland. He denies all knowledge of Petra, and is a fairly convincing actor. During his efforts to distract the Investigators, Petra slips away.

IF SISTER EVE IS WITH THE INVESTIGATORS

The members of the Order behave in a rather different fashion if the Investigators managed to save Sister Eve's life and bring her to Diemansland with them. They will do their best to kill Sister Eve and are not shy about harming the Investigators if they get in the way.

Petra and Georgia do not play a part in this process. They sit back and let Luke arrange an ambush. Luke will hire a group of six lowlifes and arm them with handguns. Hired guns are easy enough to commission on Diemansland as, despite the asteroid's reputation as a beauty spot and holiday resort, it has a dark past as a prison colony, and a certain respect for the criminal life persists amongst the populace here.

Again, the garden area is a good place from which to launch an attack.

The aim of the ambush is simply and clearly to kill Sister Eve. The Investigators themselves will not be targeted in the initial round of fire, and will only become targets if they make any threatening moves against the hired guns.

Luke does not join in the ambush, but watches from a nearby vantage point; an upstairs window of the Golden Chance Casino gives a good view of the battlefield. If any of the Investigators say they are looking out for anyone who might be watching proceedings, they could catch a glimpse of him if they pass **Dire D4 Observation** test. Whether or not the ambush fails to kill Sister Eve he makes a prompt report to Georgia.

HIRED GUN

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	8	7	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	6	7	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	1	1	–	1	1	–	–	–	–

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: Drab Combat Fatigues: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Combat Knife (melee):** 1+4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1 plus one of the following ranged weapons, dependent upon the scenario
- ◀ **M13 Bolter (ranged):** Close, 1+5, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters
- ◀ **.45AP Ronin (ranged):** Close, 1+4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
- ◀ **No 4 Windrider (ranged):** Close, 1+4, Burst, Unbalanced

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Down on their Luck:** These guns-for-hire and lowlifes are in desperate straits; they increase the Repercussion for all tests by one.
- ◀ **Only One Loyalty:** A Hired Gun's only loyalty is to money; they have no other commitment to each other or their employer. Any Hired Gun reduced to two or fewer Wounds will attempt to disengage and flee, as will any remaining Hired Gun if they are reduced to two or fewer in number.

If the Investigators manage to capture one of the hired guns, they do not know much of import. All they can say about their commission is that they were approached by a man of Luke's description. They don't know his name or what organisation he worked for. They can reveal that he was highly devout, following a number of rituals and uttering oaths associated with the traditions of the Brotherhood. They say that they were well paid and directed solely to kill Sister Eve.

GEORGIA'S PART

Whilst Georgia leaves the working of the operations to her subordinates she does keep a close eye on proceedings to ensure her team do not want for support if things go badly. She positions herself amongst a throng of tourists who wander about on the south side of the road, just to the north of the golf course. If the

Investigators look set to accost either Petra or Luke, then Georgia will lean on her connections and use her invested authority as an Inquisitor to incite the crowd. A successful D2 Command test by Georgia will incite the crowd enough to follow her orders and engage the suspected heretics. The angry civilian mob will create difficult terrain by moving to block and harass the Investigators, though the difficulty of resultant **Athletics tests** will increase in severity each round as the crowd press in. Unless the Investigators are quick to react, this should all serve to contain them for the few minutes it will take nearby *Gendarme* patrols arrive. The whole debacle should allow Luke and Petra the opportunity to escape while Georgia makes her own way from the scene via the golf course.

The GM should ensure that whilst the Investigators have a chance to see Luke, Petra, or Georgia that these three characters do not come to serious blows with the party. The three agents should survive this section of the adventure, although they may have prematurely tipped their hand.

INTERVIEWING CAPTAIN SHANDY

Captain Shandy is fifty-two, though he looks ten years older. He is tall and lean, with a hungry expression. His skin is pock-marked and deeply lined. He dresses in a once-fine Imperial army uniform, though the fabric has worn away around the elbows and the brocade and piping is in tatters. The Captain is an old and worn out ship's pilot who has had a few too many near misses in his career. Exposure to Dark Legion entities and mishaps involving space travel have left him deeply traumatised, and he complicates his own condition by self-medicating with alcohol.

The Drake Hotel is a run-down dive on the edge of one of Diemansland's less salubrious resort districts. A flop house where the penniless, washed-up, and drug addicted rub shoulders.

The Captain's room is small and dusty, and it reeks of old tobacco and alcohol.

The Captain is desperate for work, and willing to take the Investigators to High Hythe. However, he should give them a bad impression as he constantly and vividly relives accidents and dramatic moments from his past as he does any dealing with them. He constantly interrupts his own flow by shouting and screaming about the many near misses he has had, cringing and flinging his arms in front of him to protect himself from some imagined blow as he does so. For example, if they ask him to remark upon his experience with the route he will say:

"High Hythe! Of course I know the way there. JUST TAKE YOUR RIGHT OF WAY FOR ALL THAT'S HOLY!! Sorry ... I mean yes. I was one of the first pilots to work out a safe route along that journey. LOOK OUT LOOK OUT I'M RIGHT HERE!! I beg your pardon... yes, I was one of those who first mapped

DARK LEGION PART 02

that route, before there were even colonists there. I know it as well as the back of my hand."

And if the Investigators ask about payment he says:

"Well, it's been a while since I've had a decent commission and I could use the work. I'll do it for MY GOODNESS, MY GOODNESS THE LIGHTS!!... Sorry, I'll do it for two hundred and fifty crowns and a good written reference, how's that?"

Two hundred and fifty is his best price, and he won't be bargained down further; allow the Investigators to make a **Daunting D3 Persuade** test, though a successful test will have the reverse effect as Captain Shandy extols the dangers of journeying to High Hythe and asks to increase his original price. If the Investigators do hire Captain Shandy he will prove an able and reliable pilot, though his sporadic panicked outbursts will continue.

INTERVIEWING ROBIN PITT

Robin is twenty-four years old. He is stout around the belly and wears a week's growth of beard. He has a small green Mohican. He fancies himself something of a rebellious spirit and has an abrasive and arrogant manner. In fact, Robin has gotten rather too involved with the Diemansland Liberation Army, and his cocksure attitude is a cover for his increasing nervousness at being thought a member of a terrorist gang.

Robin is quietly trying to extricate himself from the movement though the brigadiers of the DLA are not willing to let their young recruits slip the net. Whilst the Investigators are talking to Robin he will receive a call from one of his superiors, the content of which may give the Investigators reason to suspect their prospective pilot of being involved in something illegal.

If they ask Robin what he knows of the route to High Hythe read the following to the Investigators:

"Of course!" Robin says. He leans back in his chair and lifts his hands to rest behind his head. "Every pilot worth half a crown in these parts knows that route. Course, most of them is away with the army." Suddenly he sits bolt upright. "You people aren't with the army are you?"

He waits for the Investigators to respond before continuing.

"Well... never mind. Yeah I know the way to High Hythe. No problems."

At this point Robin's Telephone begins to ring. He sighs and rolls his eyes. "Oh! Never a minute's peace!" He says. "Sorry, I'll have to take this."

He lifts the receiver and immediately you notice a distinct change in his demeanour. He seems to shrink and hunch up, all the cocksure arrogance draining from him. "Hi. Yeah ... yeah OK Jamie, I know." You can barely make out a tinny voice on the other end of the line. Whilst you can't quite make out the words the tone is definitely one of angry demand.

"I can't do that right now, er, mate," says Robin. "I've a job on see? Need to take some folks to High Hythe." There is more angry buzzing from the other end of the line. "Look, I'll come and see you as soon as I get back, OK?"

Robin carefully replaces the receiver. He then stiffens his back once more turns to you with a nonchalant grin. "So, where were we?"

Robin will offer to take the party to High Hythe for five hundred crowns, though he can be bargained down to two hundred and fifty if the Investigators haggle; a successful **Challenging D2 Persuade** test will lower his price by fifty crowns, and each point of Momentum spent can reduce this by another fifty crowns until his limit is reached. If the Investigators do hire Robin he will prove an able and reliable pilot, though he will continue to treat them with a surly attitude of contempt.

If the GM wishes he could develop this plot wrinkle into something a little more dramatic. For example, the DLA could decide that Robin's connection to the Investigators risks compromising their operation and they could attack the Investigators and Robin on their return. If this option is explored the attackers could use a similar profile and equipment to the Hired Lowlifes above (see page 46). Robin would use a similar profile, too.

Another possible complication could arise from Robin not wanting to return to Diemansland. He may decide to hijack *Her Serenity's Grace* once the Investigators are finished on High Hythe—using similar rules to Tam-Zee (see page 38) — and take it to a spaceport somewhere else in the galaxy. This could even be a convenient way of getting the Investigators to the place the GM wishes them to go.

WHAT IS THE ORDER'S NEXT MOVE?

Having either killed Sister Eve or confirmed that the Investigators know something about the Ancients and the Necromakina the members of the Unstinting Order of the Blood will move from Diemansland to Venus. The chapterhouse of the Order is on Venus and their activities there are covered on page 61 of **Part Three—A Submarine Threat**.

INTRIGUE IN THE ASTEROID BELT

DIEMANSLAND TO HIGH HYTHE

Provided the Investigators have commissioned one of the pilots mentioned above they will not have any major difficulties getting to High Hythe. Any Investigators keeping an eye out of the ship windows will soon see that the route is indeed a highly treacherous one, littered with small asteroids with erratic flight paths and the wrecks of a number of satellites and spacecraft.

THE MAD MEN OF HIGH HYTHE

In this part of the adventure the Investigators arrive at the tiny Imperial settlement of High Hythe, the nearest human port to the Necromakina. On arrival they find that the entire population are suffering from a vivid bout of madness. The Investigators may well want to make sure that the people of the settlement do not come to harm, but may find that the longer they remain in the settlement the more they begin to feel the effects of contagious madness themselves.

The cause of the spreading madness lies in the fact that a week or so before the arrival of the Investigators the settlement was attacked by a force of Screaming Legionnaires spearheaded by a small group of Howling Legionnaires. One of these creatures was isolated and trapped in a crevasse near the settlement. Whilst it can't do any physical harm from its location it can still issue forth a maddening noise, which is amplified by the unusual acoustics of the splits in the rock that hold it prisoner.

Getting to the Howling Legionnaire and preventing it from causing further madness would be a straightforward enough task, save for the fact that a few of the townsfolk, now rendered utterly insane, have decided to end their troubles by disabling the terraforming engines close to the settlement.

If the Investigators rush to deal with the Howling Legionnaire they will inevitably suffer from the effects of environmental catastrophe as more damage is inflicted to the terraforming engines. On the other hand, if they move quickly to prevent the townsfolk from damaging the engines they will be much more likely to suffer from the maddening effect of the Howling Legionnaire's screams.

THE SETTLEMENT OF HIGH HYTHE

High Hythe is a small Imperial outpost. Before the recent attack it was inhabited by little more than 300 settlers, most of whom were there to ensure that the terraforming engines placed near the settlement were kept in good working order. The settlement consists of small residential buildings to house the settlers, a couple of convenience stores, a small spaceport with room on the landing strip for around 6 interstellar craft, and the Happy Starfarer, a public house.

To the south east of the settlement are two large structures. These are atmospheric, electromagnetic and gravitational force generators and their smooth operation is required in order to give the asteroid Earth-like conditions within which humans can live in comfort. Terraforming such a small asteroid is particularly difficult, and even when the machines are working at full capacity the air is somewhat



The Dark Legion has already made its presence felt at High Hythe.

thin and the gravitational pull somewhat lighter than people used to living on Venus or Mars might be comfortable with.

To the north east of the settlement is a deep ravine. There are cracks and fissures all over the asteroid that appeared when the terraforming engines were first fired up. The ravine is one of these (as is another nearby crevasse within which can be found the Asteroid Belt Necromakina).

1. Space port runway and parking area. The runway is short but well lit and signposted. Two vehicles are parked at the Space port. One is a small corrupted military vessel. The other is a large shuttle used by the settlers to ferry cargo to High Hythe. Both vessels are damaged beyond repair.
2. Space port control tower.
3. High Hythe Hardware Store.
4. The Grocery Stop.
5. The Happy Spacefarer. Bar and inn.
6. Buildings containing terraforming engines.
7. The ravine.

The area around the settlement is mostly barren. Piles of loose rock surround much of the settlement. Some plants are beginning to grow in the grey gravel that is closest the asteroid has to soil, however the only vegetation hardy enough to survive here is tough, withered and inedible.

ATTACK OF THE SCREAMING LEGIONNAIRES

Two days before the arrival of the Investigators at High Hythe the settlement was attacked by a Dark Legion force including a number of creatures typical of the followers of Muawijhe, including Mind Renders and Screaming Legionnaires. These Dark Legion forces were drawn to the asteroid, following visions inspired by the baleful energies of the abandoned Necromakina. Landing at the space port near High Hythe they initially overran the settlements defenders, but a more determined counter-attack was organised before the Dark Legion forces could leave the area surrounding the settlement.

The settlers of High Hythe were bloodied, many of them had lost their lives in the opening moves of the battle, but they were victorious. All the Dark legion forces had been hunted down and destroyed.

Aside from one.

A single Howling Legionnaire had been blasted from its feet by a grenade during the initial exchanges of the battle, and tumbled down into the depths of the nearby ravine. Wedged between jagged rocks, the torn and crippled abomination was at least safe from the eyes and guns of the defenders of High Hythe. The wounded Legionnaire eventually managed to drag itself further into the tight network of caverns that run in and out of the ravine, where it set about calling its keening song of madness and despair.

The surviving residents of the town, already psychically weakened by the earlier conflict, succumbed to the contagious madness associated with Muawijhe and his servants. Some of them turned on one another, others had disappeared into the trackless wastes around the settlement, or even flung themselves down the ravine in suicidal anguish.

A handful of settlers remain in High Hythe. Some of them hide in their residences or deaden their anguish with alcoholic drinks looted from the Happy Spacefarer.

A group of six settlers share a delusion that the keening noise which so torments them emanates not from the ravine, but from the engines that labour to provide the asteroid with its atmosphere and gravity (to be fair to them, these machines are irritatingly noisy). They have gathered outside one of the structures housing the engines and are planning to break in and destroy the engine. Should they succeed, the asteroid's atmosphere will be stripped off in an instant and all unprotected life on the asteroid will be destroyed.

ARRIVING AT THE SPACEPORT

The Investigators may begin to suspect things are awry before they arrive at the asteroid. Any attempts to communicate with the control tower at the space port are met with static and silence. No one is manning the control tower and the Investigators communications will simply not be answered.

Once the Investigators reach a position from which they can survey the space port, the fact that the situation in High Hythe is one of dire circumstance becomes clearer. Read the following to the players:

As the landing strip comes into view you can see that it is a scene of devastation. Bodies litter the runways and a pillar of thick black smoke gouts out of the shattered windows of the control tower. Of the two shuttles parked at the port one is clearly corrupted by Dark Technology, its form rendered warped, asymmetrical and corroded by baleful energies.

All in all, there are thirty six bodies on and around the runway. Twenty-nine of these are the bodies of Imperial settlers, space port staff and members of the hastily mustered militia who first opposed the Dark Legion forces. They carry little in the way of equipment,

HIGH HYTHE SETTLEMENT





Key

- 1- Space port runway & parking
- 2- Space port control tower
- 3- High Hythe Hardware Store
- 4- The Grocery Stop
- 5- The Happy Spacefarer (Bar & Inn)
- 6- Terraforming Engines
- 7- The Ravine

though commonly available melee weapons and light firearms can be found amongst the bodies at the GMs discretion. Amongst the human bodies are other, stranger, corpses.

The bodies of Screaming Legionnaires, of which there are six, are twisted in both body and mind. Read the following to any Investigators who examine these corpses:

Their faces are split almost in half by manic, overstretched grins and gurns, eyes rimmed red with madness and insomnia. They don't wear uniforms as such, but their clothing is made from scavenged offcuts and patchwork scraps looted from a dozen battlefields. Macabre trophies and icons of madness adorn the bodies in place of military honours and regalia, and each one bears some sort of small musical instrument.

The entire gruesome scene will invoke a D1 Mental Assault that will also inflict one point of Dread to those who fail their Willpower test.

Armed with an assortment of melee weapons and light firearms, many of the legionnaires also bear some kind of musical instrument, whether a rattle, small drum, whistle, or other kind of cheap and commonly available noisemaker.

The final body is a stranger sight still. It looks like a charred corpse, skin and fat all burned away, skeleton covered by crisp ropes of blackened muscle. It has five bladelike claws in place of its fingers. The eyes are hollow and there is no discernible mouth. This is the body of a Mind Render, one of the shock troops of Muawijhe.

No one living is to be seen on the runway. The control tower is also deserted, though a number of low technology air traffic control machines are set around the main control room. No one is there to operate them. A fire has been set in the middle of the main control room, and it slowly spreads to consume the entire building.

LEAVING THE SPACE PORT

Once the Investigators have finished examining the area around the space port and enter the main settlement area read the following to the players:

High Hythe is a small settlement of hastily erected prefab dwellings, spare and mean in appearance. It looks as if all the residences have been flown over from some factory site and dumped in their present positions with little thought for planning or aesthetics. Plots of grass and geraniums border the dwellings, and white picket fences and hedges of sickly evergreen separate one property from the other. The place would have a dejected and forlorn look even were it not for the bodies of townsfolk and Legionnaires that litter the streets.

There is one building in the town that differs dramatically from those that surround it, a large three story structure built in the style of an ancient earth dwelling, with white plaster walls criss-crossed with black timber beams. A sign hanging from the eaves depicts a painting of a person in a space suit hefting a large glass filled to the brim with foaming beer. The words "The Happy Spacefarer" are inscribed beneath the picture. To the southeast of the settlement two large conical structures stand many stories higher than any of the buildings in High Hythe. A low and constant thrumming of energy emanates from the structures.

After this description is given, two things immediately become apparent.

MADDENING CRIES

First, the Investigators hear a strange keening cry rise up from the other side of town. This is the maddening wail produced by the Howling Legionnaire in the ravine. Normally such wailing noises only affect those within close range of the Howling Legionnaire but the acoustics in the ravine amplify certain aspects of the effect whilst deadening others.

The result is that whenever the Howling Legionnaire cries out, everyone in the town area (the territory illustrated in the map) must pass a **Challenging D2 Willpower** test or suffer a mental assault.

This ability costs the Howling Legionnaire two Dark Symmetry points to use, so the GM should be attentive to how often it does so; saving its use of Distilled Nightmare for moments of dramatic effect is recommended.

DAMAGING THE TERRAFORMING ENGINES

A few seconds after the cry another noise starts up, a manic clatter and clanging emanating from the southeast. This is the sound raised by a group of five surviving townsfolk as they try to break into the structures that house the terraforming engines.

Once they batter the doors down, they proceed to destroy all the machinery inside. This will render the asteroid increasingly inhospitable for any sort of life. If the Investigators fail to stop the townsfolk damaging the machines, they could find themselves drifting off into space or becoming starved of oxygen.

The table (on the following page) describes the effects of the damage the townsfolk do to the terraforming engines (the turn number refers to the number of turns that pass after the Investigators leave the area of the space port):

Given the fatal consequences of failing to stop the maddened townsfolk from completing the destruction of the terraforming engines the GM should do all he can to encourage the Investigators

to prioritise dealing with this problem. Of course, this will give the Howling Legionnaire more time to generate Dark Symmetry points with which to unleash more maddening howls.

EXPLORING HIGH HYTHE

There are two stores in the main street running through the settlement. They differ from the residential buildings in that they have large front windows in which they display their wares, and large billboards on which are written utilitarian descriptions, "High Hythe Hardware Store" on one, and "The Grocery Stop" on the other.

The hardware store contains commonly available equipment, medical supplies, hard-wearing work clothes, melee weapons, light firearms, and ammunition for light firearms. Much of the stock has been damaged or looted, but if the Investigators wish to search for

items that have an availability rating of two or less they can make a Daunting D3 Observation test for every turn spent searching; each failure indicates that the item being searched for is either unavailable or beyond repair. The till is broken and empty.

The grocery has also been ransacked, though fruit, confectionary, canned drinks, and frozen meat and vegetables can still be found with no need to spend much time or effort looking for them. The till contains 25 Crowns in loose change.



TERRAFORMING ENGINE DAMAGE

TURN	DAMAGE	EFFECT
5	The group of mad townfolk break down the door to the first structure.	A klaxon sounds as the townfolk batter the door down. The loud wailing alarm can be heard for a mile around the settlement.
7	They smash apart a machine governing the artificial density of the asteroid.	For a moment all the Investigators (as well as anyone else on the planet) suffer from a sickening lurch of weightlessness. Then compensatory systems elsewhere on the planet kick in and normal gravity is restored.
8	They disable the klaxon.	The alarm stops sounding.
10	They smash apart a machine controlling the spin of the asteroid.	The asteroid begins to slow and its orbit becomes erratic. Compasses no longer point north. The sun no longer seems to travel from east to west.
12	They destroy a machine controlling greenhouse gases.	No immediate or short-term effect.
13	They leave the first structure.	No effect.
18	They break into the second structure.	A second klaxon sounds with the same effect as the first.
20	They put out windows and smash display screens.	Sounds of breaking glass can be heard. Another surge of weightlessness occurs and when gravity is restored a moment later it is noticeably weaker than before.
24	They smash apart a second machine governing the artificial density of the asteroid.	From now on all actions involving fine motor control and precise dexterity are one degree harder than they would normally be. This includes melee or ranged combat actions. Conversely, actions involving running, jumping, climbing or hefting heavy loads are one degree easier than they would normally be.
27	They disable the second klaxon.	The alarm stops sounding.
30	They destroy a machine generating an electromagnetic field for the asteroid.	The asteroid's atmosphere is blasted off by solar radiation. The temperature plummets two hundred degrees downward. Life on the asteroid becomes impossible without the sort of protective gear required to survive in space.

INTRIGUE IN THE ASTEROID BELT

THE HAPPY SPACEFARER

The Happy Spacefarer has also been looted, and the bar is strewn with discarded bottles, shattered glass, and pools of beer. However, some of the maddened townsfolk have turned to drink in order to deaden the effects of the disturbing visions and thoughts conjured up by the cries of the Howling Legionnaire, and they have prevented too much damage being done to the bar by their fellow High Hythians.

There are four of them currently in the bar, slumped over the tables in an intoxicated stupor. They will ignore anyone entering the bar unless further damage is done. If the Investigators look around or even help themselves to drink, the drunken townsfolk do not even go so far as to acknowledge them.

If the drunkards are spoken to they do not have much to say. Initial queries are met with replies such as "Look pal, I'm trying to get some shut-eye here", "Help yourself if you fancy a pint", or "Whatever mate, just keep the bloody noise down will you?" If the Investigators pursue certain lines of inquiry with one of the more lucid drunkards, they may find some pertinent information.

What's that howling noise? What's that banging noise?

"Search me mate, but it's driving me nuts."

What happened here?

"Couple of days ago we were attacked by some freaky things. Gave them a bloody nose though didn't we? Imperial fighters are best in the system. Gave them some of the old spirited defence didn't we mate?"

What's up with Jack?

"He was hurt in the fight and he seems to have lost his marbles. We've confined him to his room for his own good."

Are you the sole survivors?

"Pretty much, though there was another group about, they said they were going to do something about the noise. Wish they'd bloody well get a move on in that regard."

What are those large structures to the south east?

"Terraforming machinery. If that lot conks out we'd all float off into space."

Behind the bar are a number of large bottles of spirit, two taps producing slightly different flavours of watery lager, packets of salty snacks, and glasses of various sizes.

The till contains 45 credits, but whilst the townsfolk are happy for the Investigators to help themselves to drinks they will object to any further acts of theft, saying "Hoi! How's Jack supposed to keep this place open if you lot nick his takings? I mean, have a drink if you like but stop taking the mick!" If the Investigators don't heed this advice the townsfolk will fight them.

The staircase to the upper stories of the inn have been barricaded with tables and stools. If the barricade is disturbed the townsfolk will object, saying "Leave those alone! Jack's ill upstairs and doesn't want to be disturbed!" Again, the townsfolk fight the Investigators if they don't obey.

INEBRIATED HUMAN SETTLER ☼

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	7	7	6
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	6	6	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT	FORTITUDE	MOVEMENT	SENSES	SOCIAL	TECHNICAL
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	-	1	-

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◆ **Improvised Bar Weapon (melee):** 1+**↑**3, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Drowning out the Madness:** The settlers increase the Repercussion of all tests by three due to their advanced state of inebriation. The combination of alcohol and insanity has inflicted the Dazed status effect upon these inebriates.
- ◆ **Grab the Nearest Thing:** The settlers will grab anything to hand, be it bar stool or tankard, to attack troublemakers. These improvised weapons will break in their hand if any **↑** are rolled for damage.

If the Investigators persist in fighting off the townsfolk and dismantling the barricade they will find that one of the rooms on the first story has been locked and also barricaded by a quantity of furniture piled up outside it. No one inside responds to any knocks or calls.

Jack, the landlord, was transformed into a Mind Render during the attack. He will attack anyone entering his room.



You don't have to be mad to work at High Hythe... but you'll get that way.

INTRIGUE IN THE ASTEROID BELT

◀ **MIND RENDER (ELITE):** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 331.

A safe inside Jack's room contains 1,254 Crowns. There are another 30 rooms in the Happy Spacefarer and each one can contain common items, weapons and small quantities of cash at the GMs discretion.

BREAKING AND ENTERING

There are 40 separate residential properties in High Hythe. Each is a small prefabricated house constructed from aluminium beams and cheap wooden panelling. Mercenary Investigators may like to look in the houses for loot, though the settlers don't possess much beyond basic equipment required for frontier survival. At the GMs discretion, common items and small change can be found by searching each house.

A number of the houses are occupied by maddened townsfolk. Each time the Investigators break into a house the GM should secretly roll three **↑**, with every **↑** rolled resulting in a person inside the house who is willing to repel any intruders, with lethal force if need be.

MADDENED SETTLER **⊗**

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	7	7	6
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	6	6	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◀ **Clubbing fists (melee):** 1+**↑**2, 1H

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◀ **Reckless:** The maddened settlers increase the Repercussion of all tests by one.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

◀ **Slavering Rage:** The enraged settlers barely register pain or injury as they rush madly to attack. The GM may spend Dark Symmetry points to provide each settler with a Soak rating in all locations. Each Dark Symmetry point spent provides a settler

with one point of Soak, to a maximum spend of two points per settler.

◀ **Fire Frenzy:** Life on the frontier is particularly tough and dangerous, to the point that even the townsfolk often carry a sidearm. The GM may spend a Dark Symmetry point to equip one person per house with an M13 Bolter (ranged): Close, 1+**↑**4, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing (1), Close Quarters.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Whilst exploring the pub or looting residences could be profitable, the GM should keep in mind that the more time the Investigators spend there the more likely the mad townsfolk are to disable the terraforming machines. The GM should keep the Investigators aware of things like smashing sounds and lurching moments of weightlessness in order to alert them to the danger. If they remain obtuse about the threat to their lives the GM could underline the peril by having a more lucid member of the townsfolk appear and indulge in a panicked rant about how a mob is trying to break the terraforming engines. "We need to stop them before it's too late or they'll kill us all!"

This section is intended to provide the Investigators with a tense race against time rather than kill them off or render them irrevocably mad, so if they are finding it too challenging then orchestrating some sort of miraculous last minute redemption would be preferable to their untimely demise. Even Howling Legionnaires have to rest sometime, and a mob of concerned not-so-mad townsfolk could conceivably organise in order to save themselves if the Investigators fail to do so.

DEALING WITH THE MAD MEN

When the Investigators make it to the terraforming engines the mob of mad townsfolk will not be persuaded to stop wrecking the machinery. If the Investigators attempt to reason with the mob, they may buy some time as the mob are willing to explain that the machines need to be dismantled because the awful noise they produce is driving people crazy. In fact, the machines do produce a deep and uneven thrumming noise that was a source of irritation to the townsfolk long before the arrival of the Howling Legionnaire, so this excuse isn't entirely without merit.

The townsfolk are not to be dissuaded though, and will bore of trying to explain themselves after a couple of turns. Unless they possess some way of sedating the townsfolk, or otherwise treating their madness, the Investigators have to fight them in order to subdue them.

There are six townsfolk in the mob. They are all armed with melee weapons and two of them carry M13 Bolters—refer to the stats for the Maddened Settler above, but ignore the Fire Frenzy Dark Symmetry option.

DARK LEGION PART 02

THE HOWLING LEGIONNAIRE

The Howling Legionnaire is trapped at the bottom of the ravine to the north east of town. In order to reach the creature, the Investigators will have to find some way down into the crevasse. They can either descend without risk by clambering carefully down the edge of the ravine, though this takes six turns. They could go faster by sliding down in a controlled fashion, but they would need to pass a Challenging D2 Acrobatics test in order to avoid falling and suffering 1+4 damage with the Armour Piercing 1 and Bleeding 1 qualities. A successful test will halve the time required to descend, and each point of Momentum spent may be used to reduce this by a further round, to a minimum of one.

◆ **CRIPPLED HOWLING LEGIONNAIRE:** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 332.

The Legionnaire has been damaged by a grenade blast and resultant fall; it currently has four wounds remaining and has lost the use of its legs. The Legionnaire must drag itself along, which requires a Standard Action to move as though having used a Movement Restricted Action, or a Restricted Action to Adjust Stance (normally a Free Action).

The GM should note that once the Investigators are within close range of the Howling Legionnaire it may use all of its abilities as normal.



THE ASTEROID BELT NECROMAKINA

The Necromakina on the High Hythe asteroid is some distance east of the settlement. Millennia ago it stood proud on the surface of the asteroid, but in the years since it was last operational it was covered by sand and dust. When the terraformers arrived on the asteroid the seismic upheavals caused by their machinery opened up a number of rents in the earth, and the Necromakina has slid down into one of them. The Investigators will not find it too hard to get down to the Necromakina, though they can certainly make life easier for themselves and save a lot of time if they have climbing equipment with them.

The Necromakina is very like a default Necromakina, but with some changes as listed in the room descriptions below. Read the following to the Investigators when they first reach the edge of the ravine.

The Necromakina sits at the bottom of a large rent in the earth. It is the same size and shape as the device you explored on Nero, though it has a much more baroque appearance. The sides and ceiling of the Necromakina have been covered in dressed stone, home to many sculptures and grotesques. Eerie lights glow through the stained glass windows and distant churning noises can be heard.

1. ENTRANCE

One of the Guardian statues (see page 13) has been smashed as a result of the machine falling into the fissure. The other is still active and will attack the Investigators unless it recognises them as creatures of Darkness.

2. DUMP

Seven of the Resolving Arms (see page 14) are functional and there is also a Debugger (see page 12) in this area.

3. CONVEYERS

The conveyors are functional.

4. STRIPPER

The stripper is functional.

5. REJECT PILE

There is a patina of filth all over this area, black and organic. A few scraps of petrified bone can be found. They are humanoid, though they are also a little large for bones from a typical human skeleton.

If the Investigators realise that the purpose of the Debuggers is to keep the Necromakina clean and in good working order it may

confuse them as to why no DeBuggers have cleaned this room in the many years that the Necromakina has rested in the ravine. This is indeed a puzzle, and if the Investigators look for any marks made by DeBuggers they see that none are made within six feet of the entrance to the Reject Pile.

Amongst the bones, covered in a layer of the organic filth, is a strange metal object. A disc of brass nearly 12 inches across. The disc is hollow in the centre, though the outside is razor sharp.

6. ESSENCE LABORATORY

The essence laboratory is in good working order. There are two DeBuggers in here.

7. ESSENCE STORE

There is a little jar of Ancient Essence here, enough for a single Investigator to make a single use of it.

BRASS CHAKRAM

The Brass Chakram is a weapon that was once used by the Ancients. It is circular in shape and a bright brass colour. The disc is thin and has a razor sharp outer edge, it works as a weapon by being tossed at an enemy like a Frisbee. Within the disc are fine microcircuits of alien design which serve to add to the accuracy and lethality of the weapon when it is thrown at a target. It is particularly deadly to creatures of the Dark Legion.

BRASS CHAKRAM (RANGED)

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
C	2+  4	Muntion	2	1H	5
QUALITIES	Gruesome, Pious 3, Unforgiving 2				

A character may choose to increase the difficulty of their next Ranged Weapons test by one to increase the Brass Chakram's range to Medium, though it may not be increased beyond this. A Brass Chakram will not return after every throw, but must instead be retrieved; it is considered to be within reach of the target once thrown, regardless as to whether it hits or misses.

Creatures of the Dark Legion that attempt to move within Reach of a Brass Chakram must first pass a **Dire D4 Willpower** test. Failure results in a Mental Assault that also inflicts two points of Dread. Further, if the creature takes one or more Mental Wounds as a result then it will also gain the Terrified status effect for the next hour, with the Chakram as the object of its fear.

8. THE CONVERTER

The converter is in working order.

9. NAVIGATION ROOM

The Navigation room is in working order. There is a DeBugger in here. However, it does not provide any new information, the red blotch representing the position of the unexplored Necromakina is still diffuse over Mercury, and spread over a region corresponding to the Graveton Archipelago and the much of the Rings of Winter on Venus.

10. POWER PLANT

The Power Plant is working.

11. DEBUGGER RACK

Five of the DeBuggers have broken down, and do not move from their positions. The remaining fifteen DeBuggers are all operational. Four are patrolling the Necromakina and making repairs, the remaining eleven are recharging in their racks and may attack the Investigators if they remain in the Necromakina for a long time.

12. RINSE

The Rinse is empty. The pink liquid in the pool has congealed into the thick goo.

13. ARMOURY

This area is empty.

14. ASSEMBLY

This area is empty.

15. EXIT

Both of the Guardian Statues are active and will attack the Investigators unless they recognise them as creatures of Darkness.

WHERE NEXT?

The Investigators could conceivably travel to Mercury and begin looking into rumours in order to track down the Necromakina that are there. However, Venus is probably the best choice; not only is there a navigation gate between Victoria and Venus but the area within which the Necromakina can be found is narrowed down to the Graveton Archipelago and much of the Rings of Winter.

A SUBMARINE THREAT

OVERVIEW

In this section, the Investigators arrive on Venus in search of the third Necromakina. Unlike the devices the Investigators have explored up to this point the third Necromakina is fully operational and already producing large numbers of Undead Legionnaires to join the armies of the Dark Legion. Forces loyal to Algoerth are heavily invested in the upkeep of the Necromakina. They guard it closely.

The reason that the previous Necromakina have not been fully effective at triangulating the location of the Venusian device is because it is underwater, resting on an uncharted area of seabed close to the aquatic territories around the city of Polaria.

This location happens to be an auspicious one for the Dark Legion. Ever since it became clear that the corpses of humans could be transformed into Undead Legionnaires the Brotherhood has ordered

that the only acceptable way to dispose of a cadaver is via cremation. Such an act has starved the Dark Legion of the raw materials they need to employ many of their war engines, the Necromakina among them. However, those who have been slain in the skirmishes around Polaria often drift away from the battlefields, sinking to the ocean depths or carried on currents to other parts of the ocean. The nature of the submarine warfare which pervades the area means that it is not convenient for the warring parties to retrieve their dead. Such corpses offer the Dark Legion a ready source of (not so) fresh recruits.

Furthermore, the area provides the followers and servants of Algoerth with an advantageous battlefield. The Ezoghoul's who provide support to his legions are able to breathe underwater, as are the Undead Legionnaires created by the Necromakina, and such creatures can therefore fight unhampered by diving equipment. Many of them have been deployed in the area to assist with defending the device from assault and to scout out more corpses.



Ezoghoul's and Undead Legionnaires have no need to breathe underwater.

Attacks by squadrons of Undead Legionnaires on settlements in and around Polaria have been on the increase in recent weeks, and by studying the pattern of these assaults the Investigators could work out the likely site of the Necromakina.

However, they have more to contend with than just their Dark Legion foes. The Unstinting Order of the Blood, who have their centre of operations on Venus, make further moves against the Investigators whilst they are on the planet.

Given the many enemies that lie ahead of them the situation facing the Investigators might seem hopeless, though more secrets regarding the ancients exist on Venus, and uncovering these greatly assists their struggles. Help can (and should) be sought from authorities in Polaria, though if the Investigators wish to be able to monopolise the benefits of their discoveries then they must be careful regarding which potential allies they choose to inform about its existence.

SUGGESTED ORDER OF EVENTS

The action on Venus is presented in sandbox fashion, there is no single way to work through the events described. Venus is in chaos, as Dark Legion forces wage determined war on the cities and installations of the corporations all over the surface of the planet. The Investigators have to navigate a dangerous warzone and complete their own detective work in order to track down and explore the Necromakina.

It could become easy enough to get side-tracked into endless conflict with Dark Legion forces on one hand, or to simply chase the Necromakina and therefore lose opportunities to engage in intrigues or fully evoke the scale of conflict on the planet on the other.

As such, the GM is advised to keep as close as possible to this default suggestion for a running order of events.

1. **INVESTIGATORS ARRIVE:** At one of the operational spaceports in one of the larger Bauhaus cities. See page 62.
2. **THEFT OF THE CHAKRAM (OPTIONAL EVENT):** If the Investigators have the Brass Chakram at this point Georgia hires some rogues to try and take it from them. This event is split into three parts which can resolve at any time between now and part 10. See page 62.
3. **THE ONLY SOLUTION: REVOLUTION!:** Almost as soon as they have disembarked the Investigators learn how chaotic Venus has become as they are plunged into the midst of a riot instigated by revolutionary blackguards. See page 68.

4. **THE CRIPPLED STALKER:** As the Investigators travel to Polaria they come across a scene of destruction. The only survivor, a damaged Praetorian Stalker, still presents a danger to travellers. See page 67.
5. **LOCATING THE NECROMAKINA:** The Investigators arrive in Polaria. By collecting and contrasting stories of how local forces have been beset by Undead Legionnaires they can work out the likely location of the Necromakina. See page 73.
6. **WHAT IF THE INVESTIGATORS DON'T INVESTIGATE? (OPTIONAL EVENT):** Petra lends the Investigators a helping hand if they need it. See page 78.
7. **INITIAL EXPLORATIONS:** Having some idea of where the Necromakina is the Investigators make an initial foray into the area. They discover that the forces of Dark Legion are too numerous there for them to take on by themselves and so they ought to return to Polaria for help. On their way back to the city they may come across a useful item, the Locus of Maya, which rests on the ocean floor. See page 81.
8. **GETTING HELP IN POLARIA:** Having discovered that the Dark Legion in the area are too strong to face alone, the Investigators must try to win important military connections to their cause. See page 88.
9. **TECHNOLOGY IN REVOLT:** A Cable Marionette manifests whilst the Investigators are moving about the streets of Polaria. See page 73.
10. **A WAR WITHIN THE UNSTINTING ORDER OF THE BLOOD:** Certain members of the Order decide that the Investigators have outlived their usefulness and attack. Other members of the Order work to save them. See page 95.
11. **THE VENUS NECROMAKINA:** With the aid of the Bauhaus military the Investigators destroy the Dark Legion forces around the Necromakina and enter the device. See page 98.
12. **SNIPERS ON THE ROAD:** A small squad of Callistonian Intruders have taken up a position overlooking a lonely stretch of road. Any small groups of travellers, such as the Investigators, are attacked by these hidden foes. See page 68.
13. **THE ORDER CLEANS HOUSE:** Georgia decides that the Investigators have outlived their usefulness and know too much, and she makes moves to destroy them. See page 100.
14. **LEAVING VENUS:** Now that the Investigators know where the Necromakina on Mercury is they no doubt wish to continue their adventures there. See page 103.

Given the sandbox nature of the action on Venus the GM may prefer to mix this order up a bit, or add in optional scenarios of their own design or choosing. But staying within the parameters of the suggested order reduces the need to think on their feet or risk missing important details.

It ought to be underlined that the planet is wracked by war, and any deliberate attempts by the Investigators to go marching off into the wilderness, or launch foolhardy assaults on the Citadels of the Dark Legion, should provide the GM with all the excuses needed to assail them with all manner of fell creatures and tragic consequences.

THE ORDER'S NEXT MOVES

The Unstinting Order of the Blood are still very much interested in the movements and actions of the Investigators. Seeing as Venus is the centre of the Order's operation, their members are much more numerous here than in other parts of the solar system, and the fact that the Investigators have made their way here provokes a crisis within the organisation.

Georgia Hurtzel, with the support of Petra Weiss, argues that the Investigators are little more than useful idiots, and that by leaving them unmolested for the time being the Order can benefit by having the Investigators continue to uncover sites and people of interest. In truth, Georgia has entirely selfish reasons for taking this line of reasoning. She wishes to go on to reap any benefits and kudos she can for her part in uncovering Ancient secrets.

Other elements of the Order are less yielding in their attitude to those who have even the slightest contact with, or knowledge of, the Ancients. In particular, a senior Inquisitor, Pedro Albuquerque, argues that the Investigators should be put to death as a matter of urgency. He has the backing of Luke Banbury and several other junior members of the Order.

For now, the two factions have reached a compromise that slightly favours Georgia's approach. They continue to keep the Investigators under surveillance and plan to make moves against them only if their connection with the Ancients becomes more apparent. In the meantime, Georgia tries to work out a way to earn the trust of the Investigators without alerting Pedro to the fact.



BLEU Officer: "Welcome to Polaria. Please form an orderly queue or I'll smack you one."

A SUBMARINE THREAT

ARRIVING ON VENUS

As the Investigators approach Venus they notice that cordons and warning signals guide them away from many of the spaceports. Flying vehicles are greatly restricted during this time of conflict. The military have requisitioned many of them, and stories of planes and ships being shot down mean that private owners and hire firms are unwilling to lease the use of their vehicles until the circumstances change.

Read the following to the Investigators as they approach Venus.

From a distance Venus seems placid, a jewel of a world wreathed in rolling cloud and dappled with verdant jungle and wide blue oceans. However, as you close, various warning lights flash into life on the dashboard, and a tiny klaxon sounds in the cockpit. Written messages flash up on monitor screens, and icons show up to inform you that various radio signals have been received and require urgent attention.

Such messages are all to the same end. The apparently peaceful world is wracked by war, in the throes of some of the fiercest conflicts ever waged between the forces of the corporations and the armies of the Dark Legion. All traffic that hasn't been ordered here for the purposes of the war effort is requested to turn back for its own safety. All the minor spaceports are closed to incoming traffic, only the landing zones in Volksburg and Heimbürg are still accepting traffic.

Landing zones on the planet are restricted to Volksburg and Heimbürg. This is due to an agreement between the corporations in time of war; only registered private vehicles and military craft may land outside of the largest spaceports. In terms of reaching Polaria, Volksburg is the better choice, as it is situated to the south of the ring of fire (Venus' equatorial zone) whereas Polaria is to the south of the southern ring of strife (the southern temperate zone). Heimbürg is further to the north of the planet, though as the capital of Venus and the Bauhaus corporation there are several reasons to visit there (see the Bauhaus supplement book for more details on these great cities).

Security is very tight, the Investigators are escorted to a space port whether they want to land there or not, and Bauhaus Law Enforcement Units (known more commonly as "The BLEU", Bauhaus' famously brutal policemen) are very strict with them about landing anywhere else. (Should this lead to a confrontation of any kind between BLEU troopers and the Investigators then refer to **The Only Solution: Revolution** on page 68 for some ideas on how this might play out in such a way to allow the Investigators to carry on with the adventure).

Even when the Investigators land at the spaceport they are thoroughly searched and subjected to close scrutiny. They are asked what their dealings on Venus are and where they have come

from, as well as expected either to show identity, or give names and corporations of origin. Such matters are not pursued too diligently provided that reasonably convincing answers are provided, the security services here are stretched too thin to follow up on deceitful answers. Use the Corporate Security profile (*Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 275) for the spaceport security personnel, but replace the Tactical Driving special ability with the following:

JUST A ROUTINE SEARCH: Overworked and understaffed, the security personnel at the Venus spaceports are keen to keep the influx of human traffic moving. The Investigators may add one d20 to any opposed roll, excluding bribery, in which they are attempting to deceive the overworked spaceport security.

The Brass Chakram could become a cause of consternation. If it isn't hidden carefully prior to landing by use of a **Stealth** or Thievery test (opposed by security's Observation), then it is discovered during the routine arrival search and may arouse suspicions. Partly this is down to fear that the Chakram could be an example of Dark Technology (though the clean aesthetics of the weapon speak against this). A bigger problem is that members of Bauhaus believe that any finely crafted object must owe its existence to innovations and workmanship that ought to be found only within the ranks of Bauhaus, and as the Chakram lacks a cogwheel it might be a forgery.

If the Investigators admit that the Chakram is an alien object, or just something they found, then spaceport staff demand to have it quarantined and examined by a member of the Brotherhood. If the Investigators allow this, then they lose the Chakram. It is acquired by the Unstinting Order of the Blood and passed on to Georgia. Providing the Investigators argue for an origin of the Chakram that does not involve aliens or the Dark Legion then it is not confiscated here, though hopefully the bemused reaction the spaceport staff show towards the item helps to inform the Investigators that people within Bauhaus society regard it as an odd and suspicious object.

THEFT OF THE CHAKRAM

If the Investigators still possess the Brass Chakram then it gives Georgia and Pedro one thing to agree upon. Both believe that this item is only safe in the hands of the Unstinting Order of the Blood, and Pedro suggests that it should be Georgia who arranges for the theft of the Chakram.

There are a number of ways that the Investigators could lose the Chakram during this part of the adventure:

- ◆ They could fail to give spaceport inspectors a good reason for possessing such an odd item, in which case it is confiscated.
- ◆ They could get arrested, in which case it goes missing whilst they are being processed.

- ◆ They could be so careless as to use it in front of regular soldiers, in which case it is confiscated from them “for the good of the war effort”, or taken by people who suspect it of being Dark Technology.

In all such cases the confiscation leads to the Chakram coming into the possession of Georgia. However, she does not just wait passively by in the hope that the Investigators lose the Chakram through their own carelessness. Through Luke’s networks three pickpockets have been hired to try and lift the Chakram. These pickpockets are:

Sonia Draey: A winsome young girl with long and unruly blonde hair and a wide eyed expression. She wears a tatty blue summer dress and a straw hat. Her persona is that of an impoverished beggar.

Jude Lascelles: A tall man with red hair and an imperious expression. He dresses well in expensive but old fashioned clothing. His persona is that of a lost tourist.

Vern Jopp: An intense young man with a thin black moustache and shifty eyes. He dresses in working clothes and black armband. His persona is that of a revolutionary agent.

The pickpockets work in pairs. One of them approaches the Investigators whilst adopting the guise of their persona, whilst the other holds back and tries to lift the Chakram whilst the Investigators are distracted.

First Sonia approaches the Investigators and asks in plaintive tones whether or not they have any money or food they could spare. Whilst she begs, Jude tries to spot and take the Chakram (prompting Observation and Thievery tests from Jude).

If this fails, Jude pretends that all he is interested in are some directions. He says he is visiting from Victoria in the asteroid belt, and engages in all manner of banal small talk about the various places in the solar system he has visited and whether or not the Investigators have any opinions about them. If challenged about his apparent interest in the Chakram he claims he was just examining it, because “I’ve been all over the place but never seen something like that before”.

A short while later the pickpockets try again.

This time Vern approaches the Investigators. He whispers to them “Innocuous speaks, but will you listen?” and taps his nose (this is a reference to the event **The Only Solution: Revolution** on page 68, and it may be best if the encounter with the flyer and BLEU troopers has already occurred by this point). He then responds to any queries the Investigators have with vague revolutionary slogans and utopian promises about change and progress.

In the meantime, Sonia tries to locate and steal the Chakram. If caught she bursts into tears and spins some pitiful yarn about being desperately poor, owing money to all sorts of loan sharks and gangsters, and apologises for the attempted theft. She will have adopted a new disguise for this attempt, although the Investigators may recognise Sonia by opposing her Stealth with their Observation. If they are successful she will further embellish her story by stating that she had caught sight of the Chakram during their first meeting and recognised it as a valuable item.

The third attempt can happen at a point later in the adventure, such as when the Investigators reach Polaria. This time Jude approaches the Investigators, looking for directions to a local attraction and, once again, keen to talk all manner of banal stuff about the places he has seen in the solar system.

This time Vern tries to lift the Chakram. If he is caught in the act he makes excuses about “requiring funds for the cause—it’s nothing personal comrades”.

The pickpockets stick to their cover stories under interrogation and even mild torture; they will oppose intimidation tactics as normal but must also make a Willpower test to resist the effects of torture, with the difficulty rating equivalent to the amount of wounds inflicted. If they succumb to severe duress or telepathic arts, they may reveal that they were commissioned to steal the Chakram by a person of Luke Banbury’s description who went by the name of Barney H Allison.

SONIA DRAEY, THE BEGGAR ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	10	9	12
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	8	8	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	–

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Slicer (melee):** 1+↑3, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Deft Fingers:** Sonia is able to masterfully lift valuable items from almost any target she sets her sights upon. She has Thievery Expertise 3 and Thievery Focus 3.



Dracy, Lascelles, and Jopp: Freelance Acquisition Operatives.

- ◆ **Unheeded Observer:** Having climbed out of the gutter herself, Sonia excels at impersonating a beggar. She is able to blend into the street detritus whilst observing everything that is occurring within the local vicinity. Sonia may substitute her Thievery skill for Stealth when disguised as a beggar. Additionally, she may spend one Momentum from an Observation test to add one d20 to any skill test made in her subsequent round.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Spare Any Change Guv'ner:** Sonia's pitiful persona tugs at the heart strings; the GM may spend one Dark Symmetry point to win an opposed Persuade test that has resulted in a tie.

JUDE LASCELLES, THE GENTLEMAN ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	9	9	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	9	8	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	-	-	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Serenity Pistol (ranged):** Close, 1+↑5, Burst, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Bait and Pilfer:** 'Gentleman' Jude is well practiced at drawing his mark into conversation so that he may pilfer their wealth. He has Thievery Expertise 3 and Thievery Focus 2
- ◆ **Distraction Artist:** Jude presents the persona of a socialite and charmer. He will adroitly draw his target into conversation and begin to distract them with trifling details of the local landmarks.

When making a Persuade test, Jude may re-roll any d20 that did not generate a success on the initial roll, although he must accept the new result. In addition, Jude may spend a point of Momentum from a Persuade test to add one to the victim's difficulty to detect any Thievery attempt made against them before Vern's next action.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Such a Fascinating Landmark:** Jude has learned a thing or two about the city during his time here. The GM may spend one Dark Symmetry point to substitute fiction with fact when Jude is attempting to distract a target with Persuade. Being freed from the necessity to fabricate a rhetoric nets Jude a bonus d20 on the Persuade test.

VERN JOPP, THE REVOLUTIONIST ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	10	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	9	8	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE									
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	-	2	2	2	2	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Baton (melee):** 1+↑3, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Change in the Air:** The youngest and most inexperienced of the three, Vern will attempt to draw targets into political discussions whilst darting furtive glances in all directions. When making an Education test to discuss politics, Vern may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success, although he must accept the new result. Further, Vern may roll an additional d20 on any Observation that generates a success.
- ◆ **Weak Link:** Vern is still learning the ropes and is not quite used to taking centre stage, which often shows. Increase his Repercussion by two for all tests if acting as the distraction for the marks.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **The Eyes to the Right:** Vern's shifty, darting eyes can sometimes become intent as he grimly stares at a random object or person, which can be oddly disconcerting. Once per

round, the GM may spend a Dark Symmetry point to invoke an Average D1 Willpower test in a character that is in discussion with Vern. Failure will inflict a temporary point of Dread that is recovered at the end of the scene. The target becomes immune to further uses of this effect, regardless of success or failure on the Willpower test.

THE HUSTLE: Each hustle will involve a distracter and a pickpocket. Sonia, Jude and Vern will use Persuade or Education to engage the characters in the hope of distracting them, which may be opposed by the victim's Insight. If the target wins the opposed test their suspicions have been raised and they are aware they are being lied to or played; each point of Momentum spent may be used to increase the Repercussion of any subsequent Thievery test for the pickpocket by one until the end of the scene. If the distracter wins the opposed roll the target remains ignorant of anything untoward; the distracter may spend Momentum to assist the pickpocket, with each point spent increasing the Repercussion of the target's Observation skill by one until the end of the scene.

Looting a corpse is usually straightforward, but lifting an item from an alert individual is clearly much harder. The pickpocket makes a Thievery test, opposed by the target's Observation as described on page 81 of the *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook. An item can be secured against Thievery attempts, although this is largely dependent upon the size of the item; small items can be easily concealed and secured, whilst larger items may need the additional protection of a secure holder.

Concealing an item requires a **Stealth** or Thievery test, which will add the Hidden 1 quality to it if successful. The difficulty of the test is defined by the size of the item, as described in the table below. The Hidden quality may be increased by one for each Momentum spent, to a maximum of Hidden 3. Attempting to locate a concealed item without the use of a bodily search will also require a Thievery test, as the character becomes reliant upon their trade knowledge whilst also searching for telltale signs. Using Thievery to perform this type of cursory search, however, will increase the difficulty rating of the resultant test by one. Possessing the Spot the Mark talent will negate this increase.

The following table provides brief examples, but also feel free to invent your own descriptions:

Using a bag or holder is certainly a good way to provide additional security against Thievery attempts, although straps may still be cut or bags sliced open etc. Of course, the authorities will certainly require answers should an armoured briefcase be the receptacle of choice.

The pickpockets are professional, and if they do manage to swipe the Chakram then they quickly vanish in to the Venusian criminal underworld. The Investigators are unable to pick up their trail

EXAMPLE ITEM CONCEALMENT METHODS AND BENEFITS

SIZE OF ITEM	PROTECTION METHODS AVAILABLE	MODIFIERS TO THIEVERY
Tiny: Coin or finger ring	Concealed: Either a hidden pocket or multitude of pockets. Secured: Stitched, glued, or taped into clothing. Sealable pockets. Concealed & Secured	Requires an Average D1 Stealth or Thievery test to conceal. In addition, the owner of the item may re-roll a single d20 that did not generate a success during any opposed test made to detect a Thievery attempt, though the new result must be accepted. The owner of the item may add one d20 to a single skill test during their first turn following an unsuccessful Thievery test made against the item. Provides both of the above benefits.
Small: Standard wallet or small cellular phone.	Concealed Secured Concealed & Secured	As above, except a Challenging D2 Stealth or Thievery test is required to conceal the item. As above. As above.
Medium: A5 sized data-pad or slender text book	Concealed Secured Concealed & Secured	As above, except a Daunting D3 Stealth or Thievery test is required to conceal the item. In addition, two Momentum must be spent for each increase in the Hidden quality. As above. As above.
Large: Book of Law or Chakram	Concealed Secured	A large item may not be concealed upon a character's person; a bag or holder must be used instead. As above.

(mostly due to Georgia's meddling via her Suppress and Appropriate special ability) but they might be able to win the Chakram back later on as Georgia confronts them for a final reckoning before they leave Venus.

PLANET AT WAR

Much of the surface of Venus is effectively a warzone at this point. From the myriad citadels that can be found on the planet issue forth snaking columns of Dark Legion forces, most of them loyal to Algeroth, though the other Dark Apostles have their representatives at work on the planet as well.

Settlements and army bases all over the world are either under siege from Dark Legion forces, or marshalling troops in the effort to bring the war to their enemies.

This could make things extremely confusing for the Investigators, after all they are there to track down Dark Legion activity and, given the prolific presence of Dark Legion forces on the planet, the mission to locate the Necromakina might strike them as trying to find a needle in a haystack.

The GM should try to balance things in this regard. Certainly the Investigators could be waylaid by Dark Legion forces as they traverse the wild areas of Venus, or even be caught up in heretic uprisings if they stick to the cities. It would be unrealistic for the Investigators to be able to explore the war ravaged planet without becoming embroiled in some of the violence that grips it.

On the other hand, their mission should not be forgotten. Facing down the scions of the Dark Legion is all well and good, but the Investigators should remember to try to focus their efforts on locating and exploring the Necromakina, and the GM should not over complicate matters by having them engaged in constant running battles with the Dark Legion and notions of wider unrest.

It is therefore suggested that the Investigators come into contact with Dark Legion forces that are not related to the specific plot at least four times during the course of this section of the adventure. Two of these occasions should occur as the Investigators move between cities, and two of them should occur as the Investigators are moving from place to place within a city. If the GM has ideas for other extra encounters, and is confident that the Investigators are able to manage them, then they should feel free to add such episodes in.

WILDERNESS ATTACK ONE – THE CRIPPLED STALKER

This encounter can occur at any point in which the Investigators are journeying through the Venusian wilderness. Two of Algoth's most powerful war units, Praetorian Stalkers, have engaged and destroyed a squad of Venusian Rangers. Whilst they have vanquished their foes, the Rangers put up a spirited fight and now one of the machines is destroyed and the other is crippled and languishing.

A damaged Stalker is still a dangerous proposition. The Investigators could blunder straight into its sights, or they could advance carefully and then simply avoid the beast.

Read the following the players:

"The road to the northern borders of Polaria takes many turns, and snakes through sections of Jungle and wilderness. During one stretch you make your way past rolling fields of wheat and vine. The scars of war are evident wherever you look, fields churned to muddy sludge by the tracks of tanks and armoured cars, or burned to a crisp and then blasted apart by shells. The road leads on, snaking between the trees of a vast and primordial forest. You can see a pall of smoke, rising in a tight column into the windless skies."

Pause here and give the Investigators a chance to react. If they announce that they are stopping to take a quick reconnoitre then they may be able to find out what has occurred without engaging the Stalker.

If any of the Investigators decide to take a look around and go on to pass a **Challenging D2 Observation** test, then read them the following.

"To the side of the road, hidden within the undergrowth, is a makeshift fire point, manned by a corpse. A thick and heavy tree trunk lies on the forest floor. Judging by the trail of blood he left upon the wood, the dead man crawled over the log and took shelter behind it. Weaponry and the bloodstained contents of a first aid kit lie around the man's corpse. The man is dressed in white combat armour. A full face helmet decorated with an embossed skull face lies nearby. This is the standard uniform of the Venusian Rangers, crack soldiers and some of the finest fighting troops in all the armies of Bauhaus. It is apparent to you that his actions during his last few minutes of life were split between covering the bend in the road ahead with his gun, and trying in vain to patch up a deep wound that he took in the stomach."



The road ahead turns a sharp bend to the right. The vanishing point is too close to make out what might be around the corner. If the Investigators announce that they are listening for unusual noises, they hear the chatter of forest creatures and the creaking of trees. However, provided that they pass a **Dire D4 Observation** test, they also hear a noise like the laboured breathing of a large animal.

A titanic Praetorian Stalker is the only survivor of this battle, and the bodies of seven other Venusian Rangers are scattered all around it. Its companion machine, an identical Stalker, has been ruined, and lies to the side of the road, its armoured shell cratered with smoking holes. The remaining Stalker is badly damaged, its left leg is shattered below the knee and it cannot move very fast, but it is still mostly functional, alert, and more than willing to kill the Investigators.

◆ **PRAETORIAN STALKER:** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 307, equipped with a Scythe of Semai).

The sustained and focussed fire that the Stalker has been subjected to has left it with seven wounds and crippled its left leg; it may not sprint at all, and must first pass a **Dire D3 Athletics** test to perform any other kind of movement action. Failing the Athletics test will not only prevent it from moving, but will also inflict one ⬆ of damage that ignores Soak as the Stalker's wounded leg machinery overloads and wracks it with bio-electrical current.

There are three ways that the Investigators could deal with the stalker.

1. **FIGHT:** A straight up fight with the Stalker is possible. Its injury means it cannot move far from the centre of the road or take cover. On the other hand, it remains a tough opponent and does not give up until it is utterly destroyed.
2. **TAKE ANOTHER ROUTE:** If the Investigators back track along the road they may be able to find another route. In this manner they can avoid the Stalker altogether, but they add days to their travel time as a result. However, the downside to this course of action is that the Stalker will eventually use the shattered remains of its companion machine to repair itself. If the Investigators take the same route on their return journey they may meet with a fully operational Stalker if the GM deems it suitable.
3. **SNEAK PAST:** The Investigators could abandon their vehicle and try to sneak past the Stalker by using Stealth to edge through the jungle on either side of the road. The GM should make an opposed Observation test for the Praetorian Stalker. If it is passed the creature senses the Investigators trying to sneak past, and tries as best as it can to fire on them. If it fails, the Investigators make their way past safely. Again, the Stalker could use the remains of its fallen companion to fix itself up if it is left alone to do so.

A SUBMARINE THREAT

WILDERNESS ATTACK TWO – SNIPERS ON THE ROAD

This encounter occurs as the Investigators are travelling from one Venusian location to another. A group of four Callistonian Intruders have made a foxhole for themselves at the side of road that winds its way through a small forested area. These soldiers are operating way ahead of Dark Legion battle lines. Their task is to waylay small parties of travellers, sowing terror and confusion away from the main battle zones.



Even a damaged Praetorian Stalker can give the Investigators a challenge.

To this end they have dug a pair of foxholes, one to either side of the road as it winds through a lightly wooded ravine. The foxholes should be positioned within Close Range of the road, provide Light Cover, and require a **Daunting D3 Observation** test to pick out from the foliage, although the difficulty rating may be increased if the Investigators are travelling at speed, or reduced once the ambush is sprung and it becomes possible to track the incoming fire. The Intruders have also chopped down a tree and laid it across the road to stop traffic. If a vehicle stops at the fallen tree and only contains a small group of travellers the Callistonian Intruders launch an attack, trying to wipe out as many of their foes as possible. If the fight goes against them, the Callistonian Intruders slink off into the woods, regroup, and find another place to set their ambush.

Enterprising or suspicious groups may attempt to traverse the slopes of the ravine in order to bypass the fallen log. It will take three rounds and three successive Dire D4 Pilot tests to do so; failure means that they are unable to gain enough traction to make progress, whilst a Repercussion will involve striking a tree (causing 2+3 Impact Damage) or, at the cost of a Dark Symmetry point, require a second Challenging D2 Pilot test to avoid overturning the vehicle.

◆ **FOUR CALLISTAN INTRUDERS:** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 326).

URBAN UNREST ONE – THE ONLY SOLUTION: REVOLUTION!

The rigid and aristocratic structure of Bauhaus society can breed discontent in its citizenry. In times of war this discontent can spill into unrest, as anarchists and heretic blackguards whip the populace up into angry mobs. This event is split into three quick encounters that happen one shortly after the other.

Lord Innocuous is a charismatic rabble rouser whose declamatory speeches and

situationist stunts have caused many to regard him as a genuine alternative. Bauhaus authorities are eager to arrest Lord Innocuous, but thusfar he has managed to slip the BLEU dragnets and detectives.

The BLEU are becoming desperate and heavy-handed in their search for Innocuous, and resulting brutality and oppression is feeding sympathy for Innocuous' cause.

THE PAMPHLET: The first encounter happens as the Investigators are walking down any street on any Bauhaus settlement. Indeed, having it occur shortly after they have disembarked from their shuttle may be a good idea.

The followers of Lord Innocuous have scattered a number of revolutionary pamphlets about in the area, hoping to spread distrust in the Bauhaus authorities and inspire people to follow their cause. The BLEU, the Bauhaus Police, are cracking down on the pamphlets in a heavy handed manner, which may leave the Investigators confused as to who to sympathise with.

As the Investigators walk along the street a piece of paper tumbles in the wind. It is blown towards them and can be spotted by the first Investigator to pass an **Average D1 Observation** test. If it isn't seen it flaps about and is blown onto an Investigator of the GM's choice.

The pamphlet reads:

URBAN UNREST

A CITIZEN LISTENS!

YOU CAN NO LONGER TRUST
THE SOCIETY WITHIN WHICH
YOU WERE BORN

OR ANY WITHIN WHICH YOU
CHOOSE TO LIVE

YOU CAN NO LONGER TRUST THE
ARISTOCRACY

YOU CAN NO LONGER TRUST THE
BROTHERHOOD

THE ONLY SOLUTION?

REVOLUTION!

EVERYWHERE

LAUD THE LORD

Just as the Investigators are taking the message in a pair of BLEU troopers (one Elite and one Trooper) appear from an alleyway that runs into the street. Immediately spotting the Investigators, the troopers connect them with the pamphlets and instantly adopt a belligerent attitude. They draw their batons and march towards them whilst the one at the front shouts:

"You there! You with the poster! Put your hands up and don't you make a move, you hear me?"

If the Investigators comply they are roughly rounded up, placed in manacles and told to sit at the side of the road whilst the BLEU troopers call in for back up.

Once they have finished giving their location to other members of their team the two officers turn back to the Investigators and ask them a series of questions.

◀▶ **Who are you? Show us your ID.**

◀▶ **Where are you from?**

◀▶ **What did you come to Venus for? What are you doing here?**

◀▶ **What are you doing with the poster?**

◀▶ **Have you any connections to any organisations or Orders on Venus or within wider Bauhaus society?**

◀▶ **Have you any criminal record?**

◀▶ **What do you know about Lord Innocuous?**

Provided that the Investigators give either straight, or reasonably convincing answers to such questions the BLEU Troopers relax and let them out of the manacles. They request that the Investigators remain for as long as it takes for their back up to arrive so that they can authorise their release. If the Investigators do this then they may have the satisfaction of meeting Superintendent Marie Fortrice, a woman in her late 40s with a shocking platinum blonde bob, permanently smoking a cigarillo and wearing mirrored aviator glasses. Despite her tough demeanour she apologises profusely for the heavy-handed manner in which her subordinates handled themselves and promises that she will recommend to her superiors that the troopers concerned take additional training in civilian relations before being allowed on street patrol again.

If the Investigators refuse to allow themselves to be manacled, the two BLEU officers attack them with batons and attempt to subdue them forcefully. Escalating violence almost certainly occurs, unless the Investigators flee the scene. If the BLEU troopers are attacked, it is important that one of them says "Curse all followers of Lord Innocuous!" at some point in the fight.

BLEU TROOPER OR

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	8	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	8	7	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	-	1	1	2	1	1	-	1	1

WOUNDS: 3 (Trooper) or 6 (Elite)

SOAK: Bulletproof Vest: (Torso 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **MP-105 (ranged):** Close, 1+4, Burst, 1H, Ammo (Spread 1), Close Quarters
- ◀ **Tear Gas Canister (ranged):** Close, Munition, 1H, Blast (Close), Special—Tear gas is designed to disable non-lethally. Anyone caught by the blast must succeed at a Challenging D2 Willpower test, with failure inflicting the Blind and Perplexed status effects. Affected targets will lose the Blind condition as soon as the Perplexed condition ends.
- ◀ **Bladed Nightstick—Baton (melee):** 1+4, 1H, Parry 2, Stun
- ◀ **Bladed Nightstick—Blade (melee):** 1+4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Parry 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Speed and Efficiency:** BLEU Troopers are renowned for their swift and effective crime prevention methods. They may re-roll one d20 when making an Acrobatics test, but must accept the new result. In addition, BLEU Troopers reduce the difficulty of all Education, Observation, and Persuade tests made when investigating criminal activity by one, to a minimum difficulty of one.
- ◀ **Rough Justice (Elite only):** The BLEU Trooper gains the Dreadful quality when making an attack with a melee weapon.

MARIE FORTRICE, SUPERINTENDENT OF BLEU

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	8	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	1	-	1	1	3	2	2	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Ballistic Trenchcoat: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **P60 Punisher (ranged):** Close, 1+6, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Smokes and Mirrors:** Marie's sultry voice, tough demeanour, chain smoking, and permanent shades are enough to unsettle the hardest of criminals, whilst also making her hard to read. She may roll an additional d20 on any Command or Persuade test that generates a success. Additionally, Insight or Observation tests made to read Marie increase their difficulty by one.

THE INVITATION: The next encounter occurs a short while later. As the Investigators walk a busy street a young man with revolutionary leanings spots them and attempts to recruit them to the cause. This is Robin Rolf, a thin and intense looking adolescent who wears scruffy denims and a black and red band round his left arm. He walks up one of the Investigators and whispers in their ear.

"Laud the Lord. Innocuous speaks this afternoon on the Hapsdorf Square. Be there to heed him, brothers and sisters!"

He then walks on. If the Investigators apprehend him he says that he knows nothing else, and that if they wish to know more they should simply go to Hapsdorf Square in an hour's time. If forced to reveal what he knows by more determined means (telepathic probing or use of the art) it is revealed that he is a recent but committed convert to the cause, but that he is right about not knowing much else. He attends a weekly meeting in an abandoned building on the outskirts of town, and all that is done there is a deal of talk about how badly Bauhaus society is mismanaged by the nobility. If pressed, Robin fights the Investigators bravely, willing to lay down his life rather than give information or allow himself to be arrested. He is armed with a knife.

ROBIN ROLF

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	9	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	7	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	1	1	1	1

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◆ **Knife (melee):** 1+3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◆ **For the Cause:** Rolf passionately believes that revolution is the answer, which serves to fuel his inner fire. When making a Willpower test, he may re-roll any d20 that did not generate a success, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he may re-roll up to two damage dice when fighting for the cause, but must accept the new results.

THE RALLY AND THE RIOT: This part of the encounter can occur at any time. If the Investigators follow Robin's instructions to attend the rally, it can happen shortly after they reach Hapsdorf Square. If they decide not to go then they could get caught up in similar events at any point in the future when they visit a Bauhaus controlled city. Lord Innocuous could feasibly escape the chaos of the first riot his rhetoric inspires, only to inspire further unrest at a later date, and maybe even in another location.

As the Investigators enter the Square (or any location of the GM's choosing if this event occurs later) read them the following:

The area is filled with a tight press of people, most of whom are dressed in the clothing and insignia of lowly Thralls and lower class workers. Many of them wear black armbands, and where the Bauhaus Cog might usually be seen sewn onto suit pockets or adorning a lapel, it has been removed. The crowd look intense, many participants scowl and grit their teeth, and there is a mood of anticipation. Suddenly there is a loud cheer of approval as several people in masks force their way through the crowd. They carry a number of wooden boxes that they place to one side of the square, forming a small makeshift platform. One of the masked men steps on the platform and raises a loud hailer to his lips.



What started as a rally quickly gets out of hand.

Allow the Investigators to make initial reactions to this scene, including a turn of action if it is required, before continuing:

"Friends!" says the man. "You can no longer trust the society in which you live, or any society in which you choose to place yourself! The corporations are run for profit, not for the people! They might offer us succour from inhuman enemies, but do so by imposing upon us an inhuman system! We must rise up and smash that system!"

There is a cheer but also sounds and signs of a sudden turmoil at the far side of the square. BLEU troopers can be seen, marching towards the square with shields and batons raised. The masked men jump down from the stage and disappear into the seething mob. Some people panic, trying to escape from the crush before the BLEU troopers close in. Others push their way through the crowd to get at the Troopers, clearly up for some belligerence.

Allow the Investigators another chance to react. If they wish to leave the square they find it easy enough to work their way towards an adjacent street. If they wish to confront the BLEU they find it increasingly difficult to make their way through the tightening crush of bodies. The square should be separated into three zones, with the Troopers in zone three. All zones are considered to be difficult terrain, but the difficulty rating of Athletics tests for both the Movement and Sprint actions will increase by one for each zone beyond the first. Additionally, sprinting is not possible within zone three (as the mob is shoulder-to-shoulder). Read the following:

You hear a rousing chant go up from the people around you, simple and to the point. "PIGS! PIGS! PIGS!" A brick is thrown towards the advancing BLEU Troopers, though it ricochets from a raised riot shield. Behind the police lines you can see a blonde woman, surveying the growing chaos with sharp scrutiny. She puffs at a long brown cigarillo.

The Investigators may well recognise Marie if they saw her earlier.

Suddenly there is a surge of movement close to you. The crowd is parting, making way for four of the masked men as they scurry away from the square. You see that one of them has the loud hailer grasped in his fist.

The Investigators are free to leave the square if they wish, there are many adjoining streets and the BLEU are not overly interested in pursuit. Their main aim is to break up the rally and arrest the leaders if they can. Should they wish to the Investigators could join those members of the crowd who oppose the BLEU, though this is a dangerous choice and may well end up with the Investigators arrested or injured.

ENTER AYAME KITA

This encounter may provide the perfect opportunity for Ayame Kita to enter the stage (see page 105 in **Part Four: Mercury**). It is entirely feasible that she will be conducting business for Blue Sky on Venus, or she may have followed them here due to their escapades in the Asteroid Belt or, finally, she could have picked up their strange tale via Tam-Zee. Regardless, the Investigators have piqued her interest and she has been ordered to monitor their movements by her superiors.

Spotting her opportunity, Ayame will portray the innocent bystander perfectly by allowing herself to be jostled in all directions and perhaps even knocked to the floor on occasion. She will be more than willing to accept a few bumps and scrapes in exchange for the opportunity to grab the Investigators attention and gain their confidence. From here she will become the damsel in distress seeking an escort home.

The GM may even wish to foster some romantic involvement between Ayame and an Investigator during their time on Venus. It would provide the perfect cover for her to travel with them when they leave, and will provide a sense of personal loss at her death.

There are profiles for BLEU Troopers are provided on page 70. If the Investigators do oppose them and take down a total of ten troopers, they swing the fight in the revolutionaries favour. If they fail to inflict such damage they will almost certainly be beaten to a pulp, and dragged off to jail.

If the Investigators point out the masked men to the BLEU, the Troopers give chase, and if the Investigators continue to assist the BLEU in apprehending the masked men they earn themselves the gratitude of Marie Fortrice. She could go on to make a useful contact if they need someone to vouch for them in Polaria.

Or the Investigators could accompany the masked men from the square. Making the acquaintance of a radical firebrand like Lord Innocuous has no real bearing on this adventure, though if the Investigators are committed to helping spread revolution through Bauhaus society it could form the basis of future scenarios. In the process of escorting the masked men from the square the Investigators have to fight their way past two BLEU troopers that are blocking their path, with two more troopers arriving on every second round of combat. If the Investigators kill or cripple all of the troopers in their way, they see Innocuous to freedom. The game will be up for them, however, if they are still in combat when round

eleven arrives as the BLEU will have completely sealed any escape route, helicopters are in position to observe the scene, and heavily armed tactical response teams storm the area.

If things go badly for the Investigators, they are taken to jail and treated to a sample of police brutality in the process. Attempts to make contact with Marie Fortrice are rebuffed. However, the next day they are mysteriously freed and shown to the door by a clearly irate member of the BLEU. He turns them out on to the street saying "you may have some rich friends, but if I ever get the chance to play a part in your arrest again you won't live to see the inside of a cell".

Any attempts to uncover the reason for their release get the Investigators nowhere. Their benefactor is Georgia, and she is careful to make sure that any paper trail that might lead the Investigators from the BLEU station to her has been thoroughly destroyed (again employing her Suppress and Appropriate special ability).

Any equipment that the Investigators possessed is left on the pavement outside the BLEU station in a large crate. If they possessed the Brass Chakram before entering the station it is now in Georgia's possession.

URBAN UNREST TWO—TECHNOLOGY IN REVOLT

As the Dark Legion encroach on the settlements and people of Venus their Dark Technology manifests in dangerous ways around the planet. In this encounter, a seemingly innocent pile of junk transforms into a dangerous creature that the Investigators must destroy in order to prevent it from rampaging through a crowd of civilians. This encounter could happen as the Investigators are about to leave the city in which they landed their shuttle, but it may be best employed as a distraction from their efforts to recruit help in Polaria.

Read the following to the players:

There is a commotion on the street. Making its way through the thoroughfare is a large vehicle, belching steam and smoke from upright exhaust stacks. It is something like a cross between a tractor and a flatbed truck, a powerful engine hauling a teetering pile of junk and metal. A sign on the side of the vehicle reads "GORST AND SONS—DEEP SEA SCRAP AND SALVAGE".

Suddenly there is a massive noise, screeching metal and popping rivets. A large humanoid figure rears out of the scrap. It is shaped like a powerful man, tall and lean, but it seems to be constructed from parts of junk, wire and discarded technology. It shrieks and roars, flexing its metal limbs, before stepping down from the truck and into the street.

There is panic, people scream and run, calling for the BLEU. The scrap creature's head moves from side to side, casting around with an air of malice and anger.

◀ **CABLE MARIONETTE(ELITE):** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 295.

If the Investigators do not attack the creature it begins to run riot through the streets of the city. The BLEU eventually take it down, but not before it has slain and injured a number of citizens.

If the Investigators do destroy the creature before it does any harm to bystanders, they are congratulated. This increases their standing with the BLEU, which may make life easier for them if they are trying to gather support for their mission.



LOCATING THE NECROMAKINA

Once the Investigators have landed on Venus they have to go about finding the Necromakina. This may not be easy, as all they know about the machine is that it is somewhere in the vicinity of Polaria and the Graveton Archipelago.

The map below indicates the area covered by the red glowing light that has been displayed by the Navigation Rooms of previous Necromakinas.

To the top of the area can be seen a number of islands that make up the southernmost tip of the Graveton Archipelago, as well as the more southerly of the aquatic domes of Polaria, a Bauhaus city that is largely underwater. These domes stretch some distance to the north of the area shown by the map, as does the archipelago. The maps only show the most southerly quarter of both the archipelago and the city.

Towards the bottom of the map can be seen the northern shoreline of the southern Ring of Winter. A gulag operated by Bauhaus' Ministry of Fear can be seen to the south east of the area covered by the map.

If the Investigators show an interest in getting to know the layout of the area, a copy or sketch of this map should be made available to them (see page 74-75).

The Necromakina is deep beneath the ocean, so no one on Venus knows about it aside from the Dark Legions forces that make use of it. This particular machine is particularly beloved of Algeroth. It is regarded by the Dark Apostle as the most representative of his vision for the great devices, and is somewhat different in layout and character to those already explored by the Investigators. It is heavily guarded.

A SUBMARINE THREAT

MAPPING ATTACKS

The war between the Dark Legion and the forces of the corporations is raging all across Venus, and at first the Investigators might be overwhelmed by the sheer number and variety of the forces that assail the various settlements and people of Venus.

However, they can begin to narrow their search down by concentrating on the two factors that ought to be obvious to them.

1. The Necromakina is somewhere within the area of the map.
2. Necromakina produce Undead Legionnaires, so attacks involving such creatures may well help pinpoint the Necromakina.

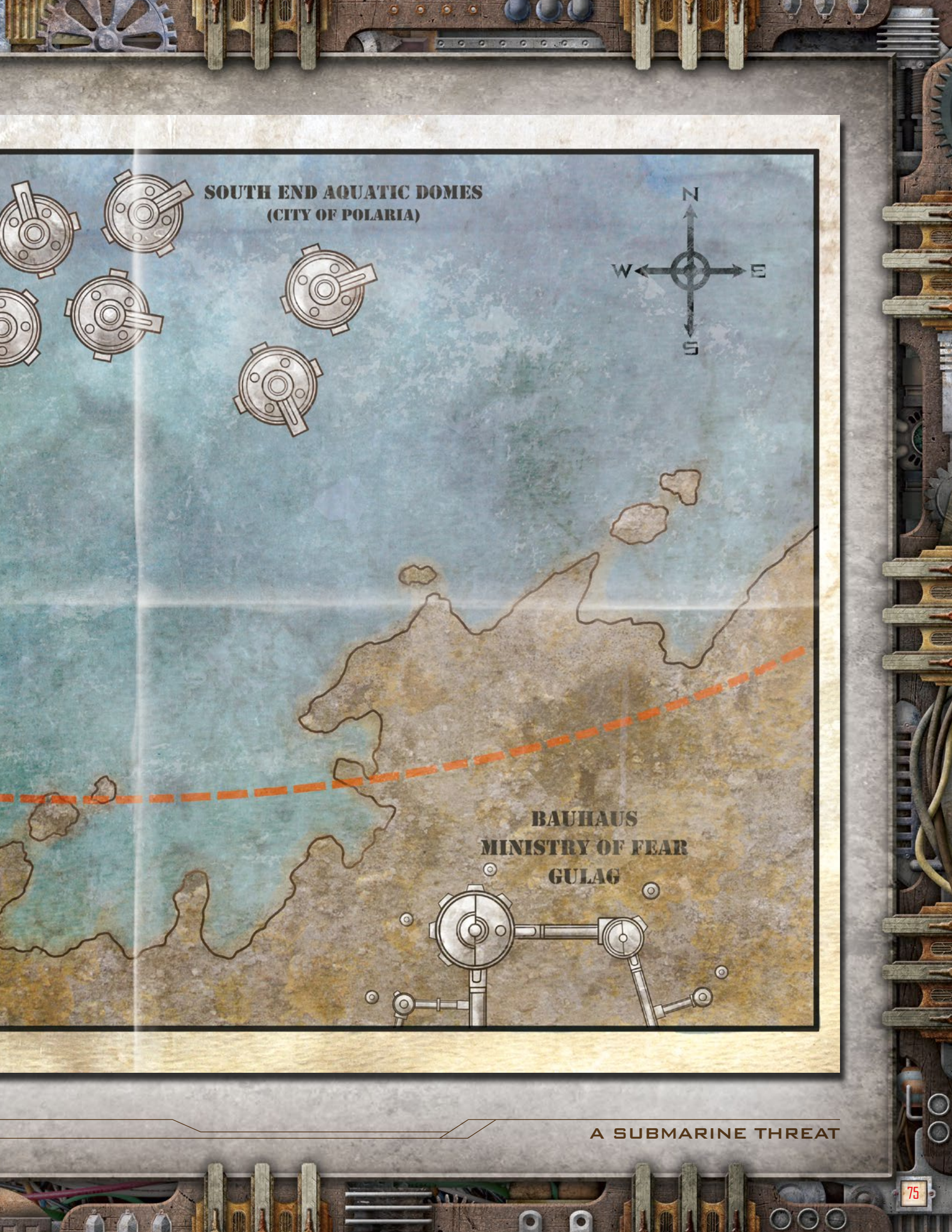
The best way for the Investigators to work out where the Necromakina might be is to attend to the media. TV news reports and radio stories about attacks in the vicinity of Polaria have a number of things in common, in particular the appearance of Undead Legionnaires, often with Ezoghoul at their head, appearing as if out of the sea.

There have been ten incidents in recent weeks that have involved such attacks, and the position of such incidents, as well as the location of the Necromakina (a red X), are shown on the map (see pages 82-83)

How the Investigators go about learning about these incidents could vary, the list below are just examples, and in each case the story has been reported in multiple media. As such, a thorough search of radio broadcasts, television news, or print media turns up reports of the following incidents.

For example, the testament as to what occurred during Incident ten is presented here as being provided by a man in a bar. Obviously, if the Investigators do not trawl bars looking for people to tell them stories about what has happened, they don't get the information as it is presented. However, if they spend all their time reviewing old

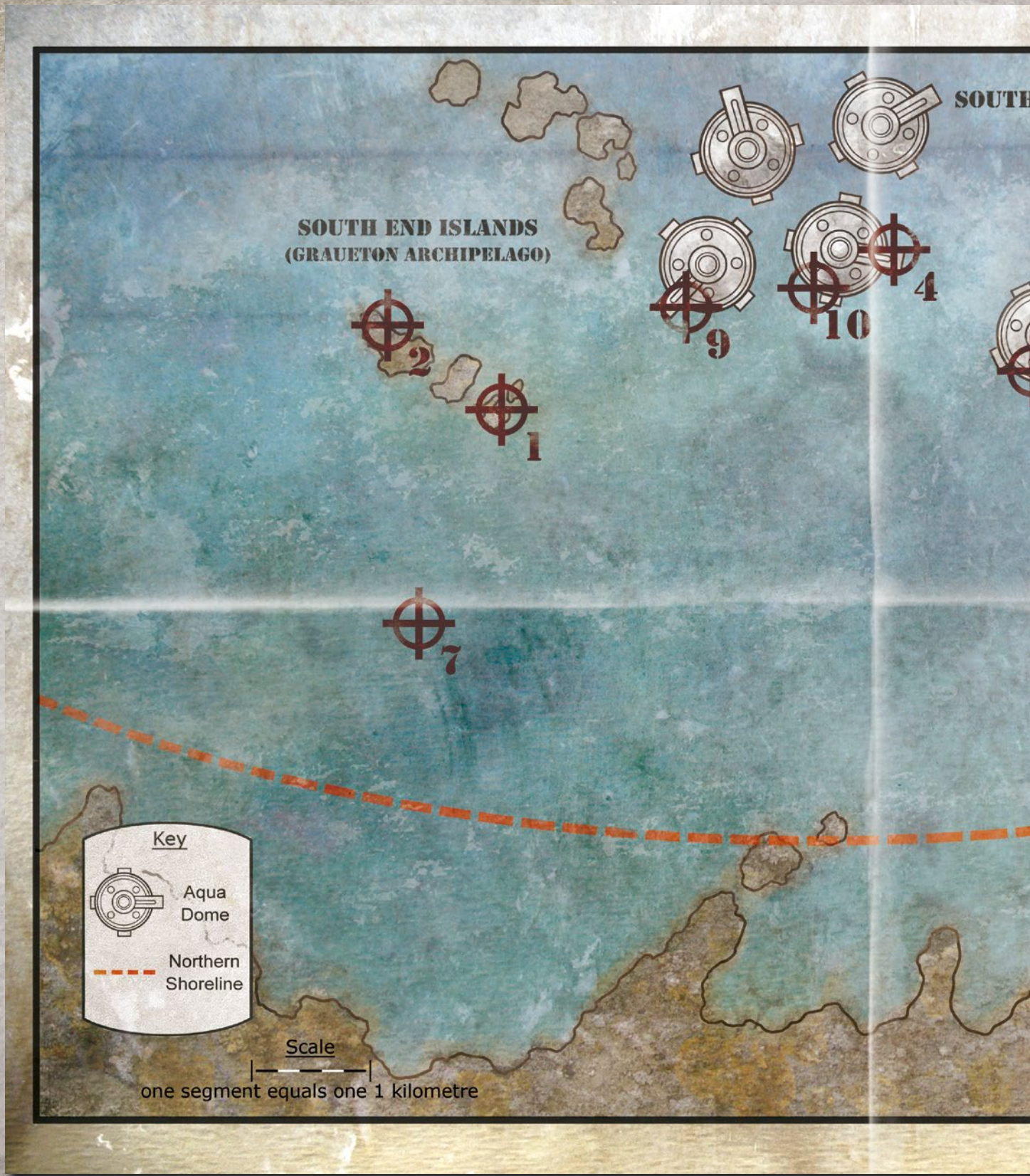




**SOUTH END AQUATIC DOMES
(CITY OF POLARIA)**



**BAUHAUS
MINISTRY OF FEAR
GULAG**



END AQUATIC DOMES (CITY OF POLARIA)



news reports then information equivalent to that provided by the man in the bar could be found coming from another source. The GM therefore must think about presenting the information in different ways if the Investigators only pursue a limited range of options in regard to gathering information.

It would be best for the Investigators to use a variety of methods, as some useful contacts can be gathered from each method, but they could potentially find out about all ten incidents if they just used any one method of gathering intelligence.

These incidents have occurred within the last four months. Putting exact dates to them therefore depends on when it is the Investigators arrived on Venus. The chronological order is roughly as follows:

- ◆ **INCIDENT ONE:** Four months ago. A ship's captain spies some odd goings on. Some Undead Legionnaires appear briefly on an island to the south of the Graveton Archipelago before returning beneath the waves.
- ◆ **INCIDENT TWO:** Two months ago. A group of Venusian Rangers on manoeuvres camp out for the night on a beach on one of the islands of the Graveton Archipelago. They are slaughtered by a squadron of Undead Legionnaires that appears from the sea.
- ◆ **INCIDENT THREE:** Six weeks ago. A work party from the Modfrith Gulag in the Southern Ring of Winter are attacked by Undead Legionnaires.
- ◆ **INCIDENT FOUR:** Five weeks ago. "The First Wave". The first assault on Polaria.
- ◆ **INCIDENT FIVE:** One month ago. Footprints leading to and from the ocean are found on the northern shores of the southern Ring of Winter.
- ◆ **INCIDENT SIX:** Two weeks ago. "The Second Wave". Polaria's Ostendome is

A SUBMARINE THREAT

WHAT IF THE INVESTIGATORS DON'T INVESTIGATE?

If the Investigators remain obtuse about looking into attacks by Undead Legionnaires within the area outlined in the map then a member of the Unstinting Order of the Blood could come to their aid. Petra is highly telepathic and still works for Georgia, who now has a vested interest in seeing the Investigators uncover more about the Necromakina.

So if the Investigators really do become stuck, the GM could rule that whilst in crowded places certain members of the party hear an inner voice asking them leading questions, such as:

- ◆ Could stories of dead men walking lead you to the device?
- ◆ Why bother looking further afield than the territory you already know to be fruitful?
- ◆ Could the locations of different appearances by Undead Legionnaires be used to work out the position of the Necromakina?

In this way Petra could alert the Investigators to the fact that they are pursuing red herrings if and when they do so. On the other hand, Venus is a lively battleground and there is plenty of intrigue and conflict occurring between various houses, corporations and nobles on the planet, as well as the war with the dark legion. If the GM prefers to have the Investigators become distracted by such matters, there is no need to employ Petra in this manner.

Any Investigator who questions the attributes of the voice in their heads should take a **Challenging D2 Observation** test. Those who pass get the impression that the voice is feminine and somewhat humble. If Investigators respond to the psychic intrusion by looking for the possible source they might spot Petra regarding them from a distant vantage point if they go on to pass a **Dire D4 Insight** test (she will have established the Communion from Long Range through the use of Momentum whilst casting the spell). Petra realises the moment she is spotted and flees the scene.

Obviously it would be better to let the Investigators reach their own conclusions rather than point out the best course of action in this heavy handed manner, but Petra could be used as a tool in this way if the investigation flounders.

attacked by the Undead Legionnaires, though they are driven away with minimal Bauhaus casualties.

- ◆ **INCIDENT SEVEN:** Two weeks ago. "The Ship Sinking". A warship from Battlefleet Wolf anchored to the south of the Graveton Archipelago is completely overrun by forces unknown.
- ◆ **INCIDENT EIGHT:** One week ago. A Dark Legion army was attacked in this area of the southern Ring of Winter. It received reinforcements from the ocean.
- ◆ **INCIDENT NINE:** One week ago. "The Third Wave". Polaria's Durand's Mission Dome is attacked by Undead Legionnaires.
- ◆ **INCIDENT TEN:** Incident Four. "The Fourth Wave". The most recent and most damaging of the attacks on Polaria.

Attacks on Polaria itself (Incidents Four, Six, Nine and Ten) are matters of hot gossip throughout the city, and the Investigators can hear people discussing them in bars, shops and on the streets. They may even be asked their own opinions about such attacks if they talk to residents of Polaria, even if they choose to bring up completely unrelated subjects or innocuous small talk.

REPORT: INCIDENT ONE

Captain Herman Drey. A ship's captain from Battlefleet Wolf, interviewed for some glossy lifestyle magazine, asked what was the most disturbing thing he ever saw in the line of duty.

"Funny you should ask, because it wasn't actually one of the conflicts. It was just something... spooky. I mean, I've seen battalions of scuba men slaughter one another with diving knives and harpoons. You'd think that'd be it right? But there was this one time our vessel was returning from patrol, we rounded the southernmost island of the archipelago, and I saw it. A group of men, walking stiffly and determinedly, right into the ocean. They weren't wearing diving gear or anything, just walking into the ocean and down under the waves. I was so shocked I didn't even call for a telescope. Just stood there like an idiot, watching these distant figures march under the waves."

REPORT: INCIDENT TWO

Wilhem Blichter. A soldier from the Venusian Rangers interviewed on a patriotic radio station about his last mission:

"We were on a patrol, taking a small hovercraft 'round the more southerly islands of the Graveton Archipelago, on a look out for Dark Legion forces. We had heard they were mobilising in the area, but we never came across any. Each night we

made camp at the top of the beach. We bunked down and set a watch, keeping an eye out for any movement inland. But the danger didn't come from inland. They were amongst us in the early hours of the morning, a column of dead men, rotting yet marching and fighting, bearing rifles and a flamethrower. There was this horrific creature at their head, like a great skinless centaur that could run, swim and fly with equal ease. Our squad was shattered. We had to fall back. They pulled us down with knives and machetes, or shot us with rifle fire or burned us alive. How I managed to escape I couldn't rightly say. Instincts took over. I think I'm the only one to have survived that night."

REPORT: INCIDENT THREE

A news report on a BHM (Bayer-Hrothgar Media) TV station.

"The brave men of the Order of Fear have proved their worth on the field of battle once again. The men of the Modfrith Gulag, situated to the south of the strife-torn Graveton Archipelago, lead harsh lives, guarding those malcontents whose crimes have so injured our society. The Order of Fear tends to the wellbeing and punishment of these criminals, but recently they were called to go beyond even this diligent degree of duty and service. Members of the Order were leading a work party of prisoners to a mining installation ten miles to the west of the gulag when they were set upon by forces of the Dark Legion. Reports suggest they were a large force of reanimated corpses joined by six limbed monstrosities bearing heavy armaments. The men of the Order of Fear were able to fight a heroic rear-guard action against these beasts, beating an organised retreat back to the safety of the gulag and inflicting heavy casualties on the foe as they did so. Many prisoners lost their lives during the confrontation. They had, of course, forfeited their lives the minute they violated our laws and traditions."

REPORT: INCIDENT FOUR

"Smokin'" Vern Zzap. Columnist for the Volksburg Herald's weekend colour supplement.

"Can it be? Our enemies assail us from land and air but now from the sea as well? And I don't just mean that they use boats! Oh no, I mean that they can walk on the sea bed. I suppose we should have known, for a dead man does not need to breathe the air, so why not employ them as aquatic troops? Far be it from me to place myself in the shoes of the infernal commanders of our hated foe—but it's what I'd do if I could make soldiers of corpses! So now that's what they've done. We need every able bodied Polairian to report to the Army Reserve Ministry right away. They're going to

know how best to tackle this grave opposition to our society. Every able bodied man and woman needs to be ready to fight. Be blessed. I only wish I was young again so that I could stand there alongside you all on the frontline against this benighted foe."

Note that Incident Four (somewhat punningly known as "The First Wave" by the people of Polaria) is the first of the four attacks that have been launched against the city. As such it is the most widely publicised and talked about of the attacks on Polaria, save for the most recent and damaging "Fourth Wave" (Incident Ten).

REPORT: INCIDENT FIVE

Arnst Mael. A spokesman for the Ministry of Fear speaking on a news report on a BHM (Bayer-Hrothgar Media) TV station.

"Since the attack on the work party from Modfrith Gulag a few weeks ago, we have been patrolling the surrounding area to make sure that no further Dark Legion forces surprise us. While we have not come across any forces as such, something odd is definitely afoot in the area. We have found a number of footsteps all across the shores of Hound's Point, an area south of the Ostendome. They are the same size and shape as human footprints, but seem to come straight out of the ocean, traverse a stretch of shore about four miles long, and then disappear back into the sea."

REPORT: INCIDENT SIX

"Hausfrau"—a mid-day panel show on a BHM (Bayer-Hrothgar Media) TV station.

Gertie Bayer (a middle aged lady with noble pretensions and fine grey hair worn in a bun):

"Well we've been hearing a lot about another Dark Legion attack on one of Bauhaus cities. This time in Polaria."

Heidi Zvan (an overweight and red-faced woman with shoulder length blonde hair):

"This comes nearly a month after the last attack, isn't that right Sophie?"

Sophie Knakk (a young and intense woman with short brown hair):

"Yes, though this time we were better prepared. Polarian soldiers were reinforced by a squadron of the Etoiles Mortant who had been despatched to the submarine cities. In earlier attacks the Legionnaires had made it to the borders of Polaria,

though they had not been able to inflict any damage aside from the destruction of some outlying buildings. This time they were repulsed before they even got to the city outskirts."

Heidi:

"The Etoilles, they were your old unit weren't they?"

Sophie:

"That's right Heidi. In fact, my old commander, Jules Hartwig, is leading the defence of Polaria. Other factors could have played their part. Apparently the forces attacked The Ostendome, somewhat to the east of their previous assault, and their column was identified earlier, leading to greater readiness on behalf of the defenders."

Gertie:

"And according to the stories these soldiers are the reanimated corpses of people who once lived in Polaria?"

Sophie:

"This is one of the principle horrors of the Dark Legion, that they utilise the bodies of their fallen foes against them. Remember viewers, if you see a corpse, burn it."

Gertie:

"The Brotherhood be praised."

(They move on to discussing a newly opened restaurant in Volksburg).

REPORT: INCIDENT SEVEN

"The Ship Sinking" is another widely reported event. It is something of a misnomer, as Battleship *Karlstein's Thunder*, the ship in question, was not actually sunk.

The *Heimsburg Gazette* ran the following story about the incident on its military obituaries page.

"Today we mark the probable passing of the brave crew of the Battleship *Karlstein's Thunder*. Operating out of Polaria's Wolf Island moorings, the battleship was found early yesterday morning by an aerial reconnaissance team. She was adrift in the seas between the Graveton Archipelago and the northern shore of the southern Ring of Winter. All crew are missing and presumed dead. A squadron of Venusian Rangers was despatched to search the vessel for survivors. They found no one, though several corpses in advanced

stages of decomposition were on board. Their appearance and equipment were consistent with reports of Undead Legionnaires operating in the area. These bodies were burned and the ship was towed back to Wolf Island."

REPORT: INCIDENT EIGHT

Ron Toht. A serious reporter on a BHM (Bayer-Hrothgar Media) TV station.

"Bauhaus forces have led a heroic attack on a Dark Legion incursion in the southern Ring of Winter. The action took place close to the Modfrith Gulag, much beleaguered by Undead legionnaires and other creatures in recent weeks. The Dark Legion had marched in column from one of the infernal citadels that dot the surface of the Rings of Winter. Their forces contained a great many Necromutants and stalkers with heavy weaponry. The Bauhaus forces formed a barricade of armour and men close to the coast and fought the Dark Legion to a standstill. The initial firefight went well for the Homebuilders, and they beat back the monstrosities of the Dark Legion. However, our enemy played an underhanded trick. Their vanguard fell back and the Brave soldiers of Bauhaus surged forward to take advantage. As they did so, a column of Undead Legionnaires and other fell creatures marched from the sea and fell on their flank. Whilst the Bauhaus forces emerged triumphant, casualties were higher than anticipated due to these unexpected reinforcements."

REPORT: INCIDENT NINE

Karen Samsa. A member of a minor noble house allied to the Bernheims, making a speech shortly after the attack.

"For years, the brave people of Polaria have weathered attacks from the misguided and malign. We have had to stave off assaults from Mishima and Imperial as they have unjustly sought to monopolise our resources and terrorise our people. Who knows what they might have achieved were it not for our faith in the word of the Brotherhood and the leadership of our noble officers? Yesterday an army of dead men marched across the sea bed and attempted to break in through the walls of the Durand's Mission Dome. Many of them wore the tattered remains of Imperial uniforms. Can this be a coincidence? Make no mistake friends, the Dark Legion assails us and other corporations fuel their infernal fires!"

Note that many residents of Polaria feel very bitterly towards other corporations in the light of years of skirmishing with them in the seas around Polaria. However, most people are willing to tell the Investigators that dead people bearing the uniforms and insignia of all corporations (including Bauhaus itself) have appeared within the ranks of the Undead Legionnaires.

REPORT: INCIDENT TEN

Gregori Tivelli. An off-duty member of the BLEU propping up the bar in a Polarian Hostelry.

"You weren't here for the most recent raid were you? That was the worst of them so far. The dead from The Ship Sinking had been reanimated and joined in with the forces of the enemy. That was something to see. You're not from round here so maybe you wouldn't understand, but there's not so much space in these bubble cities, so you get to know everyone. Even though Wolf Island's to the north from here these men were people I knew from life. To see them again, bloated corpses reeking of ocean sediment, eyeless sockets a home for crabs.... It was horrible. In earlier attacks on the cities the Legionnaires hadn't brought much in the way of equipment, and so they didn't inflict much damage, but this time they knew what they were about. They'd brought these strange creatures with them, big monsters with big guns. They breached the outer walls and the corpses flooded in with the sea water. They killed many, and dragged the corpses of the dead away beneath the sea."



INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS

This section describes the Investigators first trip to the Necromakina. As it is much more heavily guarded than previous devices the Investigators should find themselves repulsed and forced to return to Polaria for reinforcements. However, they could discover another item of Ancient technology that could be of assistance to their mission.

It may be that the Investigators realise they need assistance prior to making any initial attempts to locate the Necromakina themselves. If so refer to the section **Getting Help in Polaria** on page 88 for more details about the various military outfits that might be willing to assist the Investigators.

If the Investigators attempt to find the Necromakina without assistance, they may be able to locate the machine, but they should meet so much opposition that they are unable to complete the mission without getting help. This may require some balancing from

the GM. If the Investigators are a small or weak outfit, it might be best to tone down their opposition so that they are at least able to get some idea of the location of the Necromakina. On the other hand, if they are a strong group who are able to cut a swath through their enemies, making the environment more dangerous and their enemies more powerful and numerous could have the desired effect.

See **Exploring and Fighting Underwater** on page 86 for some ideas about the considerations that need to be applied for exploring such an environment.

BLACK DART LAUNCHERS

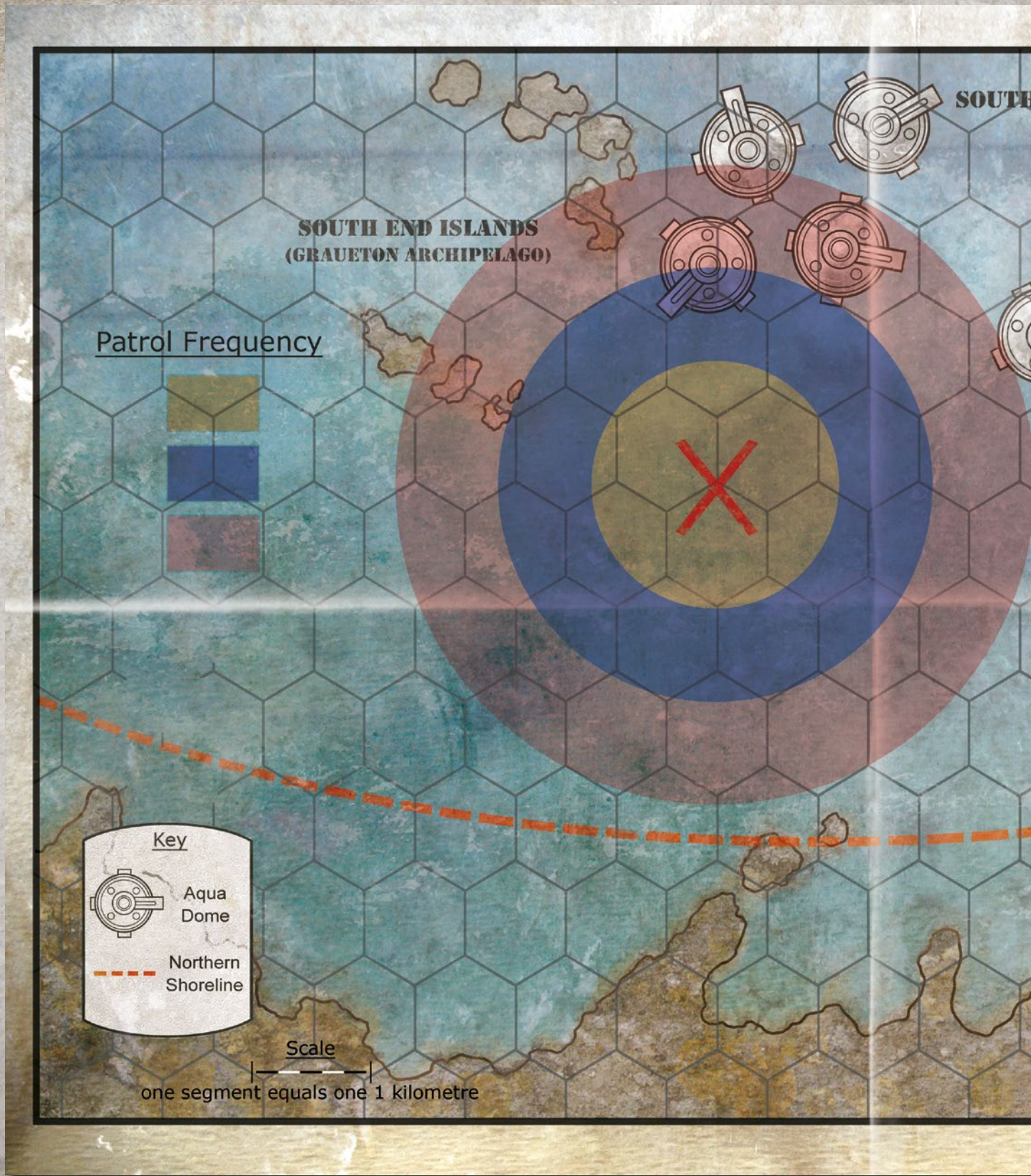
These weapons are the Dark Legion's answer to the SA-30 carried by Bauhaus forces, a weapon that works effectively underwater. The Black Dart Launcher fires tiny harpoons that are coated in a thin film of necromaterial. This corrupting poison deposits itself within the cellular structure of its target if it breaks the skin. The risk of this happening is two in ten, which is higher than that of standard corrupted bullets as the hooks and barbs of the harpoons are more likely to snag and break apart in the flesh. The stamina of the afflicted is the only thing standing in the way of this infectious deposit. If the necro-particles are deposited, they will remain in the body for life, though this might be avoided if the wound is cleaned and cauterised shortly after the wound is received.

The necro-particles invade the victim's cells, altering them using the Dark Symmetry. Ultimately, the infected individual risks becoming loyal to the Dark Legion. Characters that take damage from the Toxic quality of the Black Dart Launcher have been exposed to a dose of Dark Ichor, as described on page 9.

BLACK DART LAUNCHER

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
C	↑3	Muntion	2	1H	0
QUALITIES	Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters, Gruesome, Subaqueous 1, Toxic 2				

SUBAQUEOUS: Weapons that possess the Subaqueous quality are designed to function effectively underwater. Each point of Subaqueous will reduce the penalty applied to Ranged Weapons or Close Combat tests for underwater combat by one, to a minimum of zero. Additionally, each point of Subaqueous will negate one point of Soak provided by the cushioning effects of water, but has no effect on other sources of Soak value (such as armour). See page 86 for the underwater combat rules.



END AQUATIC DOMES (CITY OF POLARIA)



Dark Legion forces are highly active in the area, searching for more corpses and working to defend the Necromakina from discovery and assault. These forces consist of three different types of unit.

PATROLS: These are small units comprised of four Undead Legionnaires. They are sent out to patrol the perimeter of the territory around the Necromakina. They are given simple orders to travel to a particular place and then return to the Necromakina. If they encounter any resistance then three of the Undead Legionnaires (the "fighters") attack whilst the fourth (the "scout") returns to the Necromakina as quickly as possible. These simple orders are carried out in a very literal fashion by the Undead Legionnaires, so setting traps for them or confusing them is easy (for example the fighters always move straight towards the nearest visible enemy, and the scout always take the shortest route back to the Necromakina, even if this means stepping straight onto a mine).

The three fighters are armed with Black Dart Launchers (see **Black Dart Launcher** sidebar) and corroded blades. The scout is armed only with a corroded blade.

If the scout is captured or killed, the Investigators may note that it wears a helmet with a large red symbol on it. This symbol corresponds to the area of the sea floor that the group has been sent to patrol, though the symbols correspond to no human language and it probably takes capturing scouts from different patrols to different areas for the Investigators to work this out.

A war party is despatched to any area from which a scout returns alone within a couple of hours. A war party also searches an area from which no patrol returned within twelve hours.

CORPSE GATHERERS: Corpse gathering units are sent out to locate bodies to take back to the Necromakina. Over the years a number of conflicts between different corporations have taken place around



Corpse Gatherer units of Undead Legionnaires search the deeps for raw materials for the Nekromakina.

DARK LEGION PART 03

Polaria, and the bodies of a huge number of soldiers have drifted to the bottom of the sea and become buried under soft sediment. Corpse gatherers locate these bodies and transport them back to the Necromakina in order to turn them into Undead Legionnaires. They also abduct any living humans they can find for the same purpose.

A typical Corpse Gatherer unit consists of five Undead Legionnaires, an Ezoghoul and a Necromutant wearing corrupted diving gear. The Necromutant and Undead Legionnaires carry Black Dart Launchers and corroded blades. The Ezoghoul is armed with an Ashreketh Howling Blade.

Generally speaking, if the Corpse Gatherers are attacked the Necromutant issues orders to the Undead Legionnaires to attack the Investigators. The Ezoghoul aids this attack whilst the Necromutant heads towards the Necromakina to summon reinforcements.

WAR PARTIES: The war parties are of various sizes, but each is a serious proposition dedicated to defending the Necromakina from attack.

War parties contain ten to twenty Undead Legionnaires, for every five Legionnaires there is a Necromutant and an Ezoghoul.

EXPLORING THE AREA

The Investigators can enter hexagonal areas by either swimming across the sea floor or diving from a ship. The map shows hexagonal areas that take a single Investigator twenty-four hours to properly search. A team of four Investigators could therefore search each hexagon in six hours.

Once a hexagon has been fully searched the Investigators should make a **Challenging D2 Survival** test. If the test is passed they discover a series of footprints on the sea bed, leading to and from the direction of the Necromakina. These are tracks left by patrols of Undead Legionnaires.

At some point during the search (either the third hexagon searched or a hexagon adjacent to the Necromakina, whichever comes first) the Investigators find an area where the footprints on the sea bed seem to go out of their way to avoid crossing a patch of mud. If they investigate further they discover a small silver object resting on the sea bed. This is the Locus of Maya, another Ancient artefact that has been revealed due to the activities of the Dark Legion. Like the Brass Chakram, creatures associated with the Dark Legion seem to give the silver object a wide berth.

◆ Whilst searching a hexagon that contains red shading, the Investigators come across a Patrol every twelve hours. If the Investigators destroy the fighters, let the scout escape, and remain in the hexagon for another two hours, they are attacked

by a small War Party (ten Undead Legionnaires plus support). If the Investigators destroy a patrol and remain in the hexagon for another twelve hours, they are attacked by a small War Party (ten Undead Legionnaires plus support).

◆ Whilst searching a hexagon that contains blue shading, the Investigators come across a Patrol every six hours. If the Investigators destroy a patrol and remain in the hexagon for another six hours, they are attacked by a small War Party (ten Undead Legionnaires plus support). The Investigators also come across a group of Corpse Gatherers for every twelve hours they spend searching hexagons containing blue or yellow shading.

◆ Whilst searching a hexagon that contains yellow shading, the Investigators come across a Patrol every six hours. If the Investigators destroy a patrol and remain in the hexagon for another six hours, they are attacked by a small War Party (ten Undead Legionnaires plus support). The Investigators also come across a group of Corpse Gatherers every twelve hours they spend searching hexagons containing blue or yellow shading.

The Necromakina is located once an Investigator has fully searched any of the three hexagons that are mostly yellow. A large War Party (twenty Undead Legionnaires plus support) patrols around the base of the Necromakina itself.

THE LOCUS OF MAYA

The Locus of Maya looks like a light silver crown or diadem. It is a powerful Ancient artefact that was developed during their most desperate period of conflict with the Dark Legion. Then, as now, the Dark Legion made use of the dead bodies of its fallen foes to replenish its forces, and the Locus was developed as a countermeasure. The bearer of the Locus can issue orders to Undead Legionnaires in much the same way as their commanders can. The Undead Legionnaire follows the orders given to them by the bearer of the Locus until the order is carried out, or until they are given a new order, either by the bearer of the Locus or by one of the commanders of Algeroth's Legions (his Nepharites, Centurions, or Necromutants).

In order to function, the Locus must be placed upon the head of someone who has ingested Ancient Essence (the device is not compatible with standard human psychology and neurology and so only those who have begun to manifest some of the abilities of the Ancients may use it).

Once such an individual is wearing the Locus, they become automatically aware of any Undead Legionnaires within line of sight or 50 meters (whichever distance is greater). In this regard it is as if the wearer is equipped with a scanning device that alerts them to the presence of Undead Legionnaires, even though the effect is entirely in the mind.

Once per turn the wearer can forego any other actions in order to focus on an Undead Legionnaire and give them a new order. In order to do this the wearer must choose a Legionnaire that they are aware of, pass a Daunting D3 Mysticism test, and give the order. Any use of the Locus that requires a Mysticism test may instead be made using Willpower, although the associated difficulty should be increased by one in this case.

The Legionnaire follows the order provided it is relatively straightforward and makes logical sense. Orders to guard doorways from intruders, attack a given enemy, destroy some sort of item or structure, move to a given area, or even leap from a tall cliff are easily followed, but anything requiring any complicated thought or creative skill merely serves to confuse the Legionnaire.

Compound orders, such as “travel to the Ostendome and shoot at any Ezoghouls you come across” are likely to cause confusion. Every time the wearer of the Locus gives such a compound order he should pass an Average D1 Mysticism test. If the test is failed, the Legionnaire simply performs the first part of the order and then mills around in a confused fashion.

Once a Legionnaire is given a task to do, the wearer of the Locus need not continue to pay it any attention. A number of Legionnaires could therefore be given orders by the wearer over the course of a number of turns.

Should another character with the ability to give orders to Undead Legionnaires try to countermand the orders given, the character who gave the original order can choose to either allow the attempt (in which case the Undead Legionnaire acts according to the new order) or try to rebuke it by pitting their Mysticism skill against the Willpower of the character issuing the new order. So, if an Investigator with the Locus of Maya gives an order to an Undead Legionnaire to attack a Necromutant, the next turn the Necromutant could give the Undead Legionnaire an order to attack the Investigator. In this case the Investigator could either ignore the countermand (in which case the Undead Legionnaire would attack the Investigator) or take the **opposed Mental Strength Test** (in which case the Undead Legionnaire would follow the order of whoever won the test).

Creatures of the Dark Legion avoid the Locus for exactly the same reasons they do the Brass Chakram; refer to page 58 for the rules regarding this.



EXPLORING AND FIGHTING UNDERWATER

Fighting underwater presents many challenges, mostly due to the fact that much of the equipment the Investigators are used to will not work underwater, as well as the fact that it is such a different environment.

Movement underwater is considered to be through difficult terrain due to the pressure of the water and the unusual circumstances, with the following additional effects:

- ◆ The difficulty of all Acrobatics, Athletics, Close Combat, and Unarmed Combat tests taken in an underwater environment increase by an additional step (meaning most Acrobatics and Athletics tests begin at Daunting D3). A character's Expertise and Focus in Acrobatics, Athletics, Close Combat, and Unarmed Combat are limited by their Vacuum skill, as per the rules for Vacuum on page 113 of the **Mutant Chronicles** rulebook, regardless of any clothing or equipment they are wearing. The Acrobatics talent Strong Swimmer is clearly of great benefit here.
- ◆ Adjusting Stance becomes a Restricted Action, and the Movement Restricted Action now requires a Standard Action to perform. Sprint is only possible at the GM's discretion, and would generally require some form of propulsion (blasting air from an oxygen tank for instance).
- ◆ Physical attacks are hampered underwater, as is the ability to avoid blows. The difficulty of Close Combat attacks made with a Two-handed or Unwieldy weapon have their difficulty increased by a further step, in addition to that already stated above, whilst the Repercussion range of Unbalanced weapons is increased to a nominal 18-20. The target of a Close Combat or Unarmed Combat attack will gain a Soak of one that stacks with other soak values. Additionally, the Defend Other, Dodge, and Parry Response Actions require the expenditure of two Dark Symmetry points.
- ◆ Whilst most guns simply won't work well underwater, many explosives and grenades can still be useful. However, throwing such things underwater is extremely difficult. All thrown items have their range reduced to Reach. Attempting to throw a weapon further increases the difficulty of the Ranged Weapons test by two steps for each zone beyond Reach, as opposed to the normal one. Additionally, the target gains a Soak value of two against weapons thrown within Close range, and four for Medium. This Soak stacks

with any other Soak value they may possess. Thrown weapons may not be hurled beyond Medium range underwater; the laws of physics make such herculean feats a certain impossibility.

- ◆ Projectile weapons are affected by the cushioning affect of water. Shooting from land or a platform into water will always count as at least one zone of separation, though this may of course possibly be more, regardless of the actual physical distance. Ranged Weapons tests against underwater targets have their difficulty increased by one for Close range, two for Medium range, and four for Long range. Extreme range shots are not possible. Additionally, the target gains a Soak value equivalent to the increase in difficulty for distance (one for Close, two for Medium, four for Long) that stacks with any other Soak value they possess. Increase all range penalties by one if the person firing is also underwater, but not the target's Soak bonus.
- ◆ Visibility on the sea bed is severely hampered. Some form of illumination is required as it is perpetually dark, with most underwater portable torches able to illuminate anything within Close range. Perception is also affected by the murky conditions; increase the difficulty of all Observation tests by one to spot anything within Close range, by two for Medium range, and by four for Long range. These penalties are in addition to those provided on page 128 of the **Mutant Chronicles** rulebook for distance and perception. Spotting anything at Extreme range is virtually impossible.

Note that this penalty also applies to Dark Legion forces underwater, with the exception of Ezoghoul's, who find the submarine environment no less encumbering than the terrestrial.

All underwater explorers need a diving suit (**Mutant Chronicles** rulebook page 254), or armour with suitable environmental specialisations. Diving suits that combine with armour may also be purchased (the armour issued to BLEU Troopers, Order of the Bear, Etoiles Mortant and Bauhaus Reservists from Polaria already includes the equipment needed to turn the armour into an effective diving suit).

Many of the weapons normally employed by these military outfits, as well as much of the Investigators, will not work whilst submerged. Weapons that may be successfully wielded underwater are listed here for clarity:

- ◆ **SURVIVAL KNIVES:** Use the statistics for daggers (**Mutant Chronicles** rulebook page 235), but replace the Hidden (1) quality with Subaqueous (1).

- ◆ All melee weapons from the **Mutant Chronicles** rulebook, excepting those powered by electricity.

- ◆ Anti-personnel, Anti-armour, and Black Grenades.

- ◆ **SA-30 (RANGED):** Close, 1+**T**4, Munition, 1H, Close Quarters, Subaqueous 2, Unforgiving 1

TRANQUILISING DART: SA-30's fire a three pronged dart designed to slice through water and deliver a potent poison. If one or more Dark Symmetry Icons is rolled, the target must attempt a Resistance test at the start of its next turn, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. If this test is failed, the target is rendered unconscious for a number of minutes equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. The character may act normally if this test is passed.

- ◆ **DEMOLITION CHARGE (RANGED):** Reach, 2+**T**6, 1H, Armour Piercing 2, Blast (Close), Knockdown

- ◆ **MAGNETIC EXPLOSIVE:** A Demolition Charge is designed to be attached to a large metal object, such as a tank for example; once attached they require a **Daunting D3 Athletics test** to remove. Momentum may be used to toss the charge into an adjacent zone once detached. On the opposite side to the powerful magnet is an adjustable timer that ranges from three to ten seconds. In this way detonation may be set for the same or following round. Particularly deranged individuals may arm and throw them, though they are heavy and awkward to wield. Using a Demolition Charge as a thrown grenade increases both the difficulty of the Ranged Weapons test and adds one to the Repercussion.

- ◆ **EXPLOSIVE HARPOON (RANGED):** *Capitol* sourcebook, page 67; Medium, 2+**T**, Munition, Aquatic, Blast (Close), Vicious 2

AQUATIC: An Explosive Harpoon suffers no penalties or hindrances for being used underwater.

The perils of fighting underwater provide the GM with lots of opportunities to make use of lucky or unlucky dice rolls. Damage to breathing apparatus or air tanks could result from shots that do no actual damage to the Investigators, and could be used to effectively curtail their explorations if it seems as if they are getting too far too quickly.

GETTING HELP IN POLARIA

Having been routed or repulsed in their own efforts to reach the Necromakina the Investigators should look for help from one of the military or security forces in the area. There are a number of different military outfits in and around Polaria at the time of the adventure, and some of them might be willing to assist the Investigators if they are diplomatic in asking for assistance.

The outfits are the Etoiles Mortant, the Admiralty, the Ministry of Fear, the Reserve Army Ministry, the BLEU, the Brotherhood, House Bernheim's Order of the Bear, and a number of different mercenary outfits.

BLEU Trooper profiles can be found on page 70. Freelance mercenaries and members of the Army Reserves use the Freelancer and Soldier profiles found on pages 275 and 276 of the *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook respectively. BLEU Troopers, freelancers and reservists wear armoured wetsuits whilst underwater that provide the following Soak: Head 1, Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1 and will also be equipped with SA-30's and Survival Knives (see Etoiles Mortant for the profiles for these).

The soldiers of the Etoiles Mortant and members of the Order of the Bear use the following profiles.

ETOILES MORTANT ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	10	9	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	9	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE									
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	–
								2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Interwoven Titanium Scuba Suit: (Head 2, Arms 2, Torso 2, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **SA-30 (ranged):** Close, 1+♣6, Munition, 1H, Close Quarters, Subaqueous 2, Unforgiving 1
- ◆ **Tranquilising Dart:** SA-30's fire a three pronged dart designed to slice through water and deliver a potent poison. If one or more Dark Symmetry Icons is rolled, the target must attempt a Resistance test at the start of its next turn, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. If this test is failed, the target is rendered unconscious for a number of

minutes equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. The character may act normally if this test is passed.

- ◆ **Survival Knife (melee):** 1+♣3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Subaqueous 1
- ◆ **Demolition Charge** (see page 87).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Nemesis of the Legion:** Not only does hatred of the Dark Legion run deep amongst the Etoiles Mortant, but they are also trained to perform reconnaissance, sabotage, and assassination tasks against any number of its foul minions. Etoiles Mortant have Mysticism Focus 1 and Mysticism Expertise 1. Additionally, Etoiles Mortant may reroll up to two ♣ from any damage roll made by a melee or ranged weapon against creatures of the Dark Legion.
- ◆ **Strike Hard, Strike Fast:** The Etoiles Mortant are well versed in the arts of speed and stealth. Whilst wearing only armour that provides a Soak of two or less in any location, or no armour at all, Etoiles Mortant gain an additional d20 to their Stealth pool and may reroll one d20 when making an Acrobatics test, though the new result must be accepted.

ORDER OF THE BEAR ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10 (+1)	10	8	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	9	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE									
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	–
								1	1

WOUNDS: 8

SOAK: Integrated Hussar Mk V: (Head 3, Arms 4, Torso 3, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **SA-30 (ranged):** Close, 1+♣4, Munition, 1H, Close Quarters, Subaqueous 2, Unforgiving 1
- ◆ **Tranquilising Dart:** SA-30's fire a three pronged dart designed to slice through water and deliver a potent poison. If one or more Dark Symmetry Icons is rolled, the target must attempt a Resistance test at the start of its next turn, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. If this test is failed, the target is rendered unconscious for a number of minutes equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. The character may act normally if this test is passed.
- ◆ **Survival Knife (melee):** 1+♣5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Subaqueous 1
- ◆ **Demolition Charge** (see page 87).

DARK LEGION PART 03



The Order of the Bear and Etoiles Mortant can be great help to the Investigators.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Supernatural Strength (1)**
- ◆ **Aspect of the Bear:** Members of the Order of the Bear are all huge men and women capable of extraordinary feats of strength, whilst their enormous physique and training also ensures they wield cumbersome weapons with ease. When using an Unwieldy weapon, the difficulty rating is increased by one step, instead of two, and there is no increase to Repercussion. Additionally, the character gains the weapon quality Knockdown on all melee attacks.

AWKWARD QUESTIONS

The Investigators are lucky in that the authorities in Polaria are getting increasingly desperate for an answer to the waves of Undead Legionnaires that are attacking the city with increasing frequency

and intensity. Such entities would never consider the advice of ragtag adventurers such as the Investigators otherwise. With the circumstances as they are, anyone with news of a production facility pumping out squadrons of undead gains themselves an audience.

However, this does not mean the Investigators are going to be able to simply march in and out of the offices of important institutions with a growing private army at their backs. All of the groups listed want to know a bit about the Investigators, how they came by the knowledge they now wish to share and why they wish to do something as dangerous as assist a military effort to destroy the Dark Legion's submarine forces.

The GM should keep in mind that the purpose of any interview with prospective patrons is positive. These institutions want to learn about the Necromakina, and they want to hire competent scouts to take

A SUBMARINE THREAT

them there. However, resources are stretched and the reputation of such institutions would suffer if they are shown to be incompetent during this time of war, so they regard these issues as serious.

Can we see your identification?

Most of the institutions demand reassurance as to who the Investigators are. If the Investigators are from the distant past, having been trapped in stasis for over a thousand years, this could present a problem in that they simply won't be believed.

Black market identifications can be bought from many criminal elements in Polaria and elsewhere, though the cost is high; increase the cost of all Fake ID's by one, regardless of quality (see **Mutant Chronicles** rulebook page 268).

If a forged identity is purchased it can serve as ID. They are only ever subjected to the most perfunctory of investigations.

A card showing that a character enjoys the membership of an Order also counts as identification. However, members of Bauhaus society take the forging of such memberships very seriously indeed, and any such card is closely scrutinised. If it is perceived to be a fake the negotiations come to a swift and frosty conclusion.

Is there someone we can trust who can vouch for you?

A character reference is sought by most of the people who are asked to consider helping the Investigators. A good possible contender is Marie Fortrice, whose confidence the Investigators might have earned if they were patient with the BLEU troopers earlier. She would be willing to act as a reference as long as the Investigators have not subsequently been in trouble with the BLEU. Other than that, any members of the Brotherhood, or important people within Bauhaus society could conceivably be taken as a reference.

A card showing that a character enjoys the membership of an Order also counts as a character reference. Again, the legitimacy of such cards is carefully checked.

What brought you to Venus?

Any half convincing story suffices here, though safe to say the bald truth might raise a few eyebrows.

What do you want with us?

The spokespersons for such institutions are busy people, and want to cut to the chase quickly.

How did you come to know about this threat and what more do you know of it?

Once introductions are through then the Investigators are pumped for as much information concerning the Necromakina and the forces around it as possible. Strategic planning as well as consideration of the forces used could take place between the Investigators and the captains of the various forces they are seeking assistance from.

Other Considerations

The Etoiles Mortant and Freelancer mercenary captains are not so stringent about such matters. But even they do not simply agree to a commission without knowing a bit about their prospective employers.

In the case of the Etoiles Mortant they merely want to know where the enemy are, what sort of strength they possess, and a bit about how the Investigators came to know about it. However, if the Investigators are cagey about their identities the Etoiles Mortant are even more vigilant about scouting the area and watching the Investigators during the operation. Add one to the difficulty of any rolls the Investigators make when trying to conceal an item or an action from the watchful eyes of any accompanying members of the Etoiles Mortant if this is the case.

Freelancer mercenaries do not much care about the answers to such questions beyond confirming that they aren't going to have their lives thrown away and that they are going to be properly paid. Whilst other institutions are concerned about looking foolish or immoral, such things matter less to mercenaries. In their case the following two questions are more important.

Every time one of these questions is not dealt with satisfactorily, the GM can choose to either have the mercenary captain pull out of the deal, or add 10% to his fee.

You're not just looking to use me and my men as cannon fodder are you?

Mercenary leaders are very concerned that their men will not be placed in a position of undue peril by their employers. Mercenaries, of course, expect to fight, and sometimes even die, in the course of their operations, but they are not willing to fight to the death against unfavourable odds. The captain asks about the strength and disposition of enemy forces in as much detail as the Investigators are able to give, and states upfront that if more enemies are encountered than anticipated he will feel free to pull his men out of the fight with no refund.

Are you able to pay?

Assurance that the Investigators are able to afford the mercenaries is also necessary. Most mercenaries on Venus expect all the money they are owed to be made visible before the operation, for half to be paid in advance, and the remainder stored with a neutral

third party (such as a bank safe deposit) to be paid on completion. Contingencies must be put in place so that the mercenary should be able to get the money even if their employer has died (this may make some Investigators understandably nervous, but it isn't in the interest of professional mercenaries to kill their clients).

THE ETOILES MORTANT

The best bet for the Investigators is to appeal to Etoiles Mortant. If the Investigators researched into previous broadcasts regarding the Undead Legionnaires they may have heard that a squadron of Etoiles are in the city of Polaria under the command of Jules Hartwig (see **Report: Incident Six** on page 79), and that they have been specifically stationed in order to combat the waves of Undead that attack the city from the ocean.

As a matter of fact, Jules is also considering a course of action similar to that of the Investigators, in that he believes that there must be some sort of submarine base from which the Dark Legion are sending out their Undead Legionnaires. He is very happy to hear that the Investigators have intelligence regarding such a base, and, provided that they can offer some reasoning and evidence that their story amounts to more than just a wild goose chase, Jules is willing to devote some support to their cause, a squad of five Etoiles Mortant.

Because each member of the Etoiles is personally devoted to vanquishing the Dark Legion, their commitment to the cause is total. However, there is one negative consequence to having them accompany the Investigators in that they do not hesitate to enter the Necromakina, and, once inside, they explore the machine thoroughly and take anything worth keeping for themselves, including containers of essence. The Etoiles Mortant are much better informed as to the folklore and rumour surrounding the Dark Legion than regular soldiers, and so they may be able to better guess what the Investigators are after in exploring the Necromakina.

THE ADMIRALTY

Nominally based on Space Station Hydra, The Admiralty does have an important office in Polaria. One of the dome cities is set on Wolf Island, to the north of the settlement, and this is the home of Battlefleet Wolf, which patrols and fights on the oceans around the southern Ring of Winter and the southern Ring of Strife.

Captain Herman Drey might be known to the Investigators from various news reports. If they ask after him at the office of Battlefleet Wolf they are shown to a meeting room and he joins them shortly. He is a tall and muscular man, about fifty with close cropped white hair and a grey admiral's uniform.

Captain Drey listens to what the Investigators have to say and then proceeds to ask them all the questions outlined earlier.

He has no submersibles available, as they have all been destroyed during earlier encounters with Imperial pirates. He could offer the Investigators the use of a ship from which to make descents into the ocean. This could be useful for the Investigators as they would not have to swim through red or blue zones to reach the Necromakina if they already have an idea of where it is.

He has no soldiers of his own to despatch with them, but he can recommend other military outfits, such as the Etoiles Mortant or the Reserve Army Ministry, and he can make an introduction to House Bernheim on their behalf.

THE MINISTRY OF FEAR

The Investigators may think to contact Arnst Mael, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Fear. This requires travelling to the northern edge of the southern Ring of Winter and gaining entrance to the staff quarters of the grim gulag that sits there.

Arnst will be willing to meet with the Investigators. He is a stern man with a bald head and a long hooked nose, dressed in a long black leather coat no matter what the weather is. He doesn't offer much in the way of assistance, but asks a lot of questions. He can suggest where the Investigators should go next, and can introduce them to House Bernheim.

THE RESERVE ARMY MINISTRY

Each major Bauhaus city has an office dedicated to the administration and deployment of the army reserves, and Polaria is no exception. The Reserve Army Ministry is actually a fairly good choice for the Investigators, they have a lot of soldiers they could mobilise, won't ask too many awkward questions, and are eager to take on an operation of this sort.

Provided that the Investigators give a good account of themselves and describe the position and make up of forces around the Necromakina, twenty reserve army troopers are made available. These reservists tend to operate in units of five. Each unit acts in pairs, with one unit taking cover as the other advances, then swapping round in order to advance further.

Given that the men and women of the Reserves are not wholly professional soldiers, they could also be browbeaten into following orders given to them by Investigators provided that they do a good job of appearing authoritative and commanding. For example, if a unit of reservists were all set to begin exploring the Necromakina, simple orders like "let us scout this structure before you move in", or "bring any canisters of liquid back to us" might be followed provided that the Investigator giving such an order also passes a Daunting D3 Command test.

THE BLEU

The Bauhaus police forces are run much like a military outfit, even in times of peace. At the present time they are interested in any news that might lead them to end the assaults on Polaria.

If Investigators have the goodwill of Marie Fortrice they are able to use her as a contact here. Also, if they have met Gregori Tivelli and gotten along OK with him, he could also get them started with working alongside the BLEU. If the Investigators haven't cultivated such contacts, they can still get in touch with the BLEU simply by approaching any patrolling officer or any BLEU station house (there is one close to the centre of each dome in Polaria). However, they are subjected to a closely observed interview if they don't have a useful contact.

If the Investigators ran afoul of the BLEU earlier in the adventure, they do not receive a warm welcome. Any attempts to motivate the BLEU to help them fail if they are known to have caused harm to BLEU troopers.

Finally, the Unstinting Order of the Blood have their own contacts within the BLEU, and, if the Investigators do get in touch with the BLEU, an agent loyal to the Order finds his way into any force that accompanies the Investigators on their search for the Necromakina.

Such an agent fights alongside the Investigators and bravely confronts creatures of the Dark Legion. However, they keep a close eye on everything the Investigators do, and they are willing to let the Investigators explore the Necromakina unsupervised. They make efforts to confiscate any essence found in the Necromakina, and will also look to steal artefacts such as the Brass Chakram or the Locus of Maya.

The BLEU can make two units of seven men available to help the Investigators if they are satisfied with the answers the Investigators gave to their questions, or if Marie or Gregori give a good account of their characters.

THE BROTHERHOOD

The Investigators may not wish to contact the Brotherhood in Polaria due to the problems they have had with the Unstinting Order of the Blood. This is understandable and, in fact, agents within the Brotherhood tip off the Order as to the activities of the Investigators.

The advantages of talking to the Brotherhood involve their accessibility and their ability to provide a point of contact for House Bernheim.

In terms of accessibility, there is a small chapel and mission house in each of the domes in Polaria and the Brotherhood staff at such

places are always willing to make time for visitors and provide a sympathetic ear to even the wildest of stories. In terms of ease, the Investigators find it a simple matter to get an audience.

The Brotherhood in Polaria lack any organised armed forces they could despatch to aid the Investigators, though they obviously have good contacts with all the organisations that do. They could, therefore, provide the Investigators with an introduction to any of the other organisations listed, including House Bernheim.

The downside of contacting the Brotherhood is that the Unstinting Order of the Blood come to know about the mission and, through their web of contacts, they manage to place an agent within any military outfit that agrees to accompany the Investigators subsequent to their meeting with the Brotherhood. This works the same way as the agent who would join the group as a result of the Investigators contacting the BLEU, as discussed earlier.

HOUSE BERNHEIM

The most powerful Noble House in Polaria is House Bernheim, one of the four Elector Houses whose heads not only rule a large aristocratic dynasty, but also the corporation of Bauhaus itself.

The family are heavily invested in Polaria, and have a sprawling mansion complex that takes up much of one of the more Northerly Domes.

The Investigators simply will not be able to talk to a member of the House unless they have received some sort of introduction from another source, such as from the Admiralty or the Brotherhood. No amount of wheedling or telling of tall tales make any difference here, the staff of the noble family are very well experienced at putting off interfering peasants.

An introduction could also be procured from Karen Samsa, a minor noble who is on the make on Polaria's political scene. The Investigators may know her from news reports they watched earlier. Karen is unapologetic in playing the populist card, and might be willing to talk to people such as the Investigators if she thinks it might benefit her career. If they convince her that the Undead Legionnaires are coming from the bottom of the ocean she may offer to take the lead on the effort to eradicate the menace, and suggests looking into getting help from House Bernheim.

Even when an introduction to House Bernheim is procured the Investigators do not actually meet anyone from the house itself. Instead they are invited to the Office of the Order of the Bear, the veteran military outfit who act in the interests of the noble family. An officer from the order of the Bear conducts a tough and thorough interview, but provided that he is convinced by the Investigators' story he is willing to make 15 members of the Order



Captain Max Fleisher leads the Kashkreig mercenary company.

of the Bear available to strike out against the Necromakina.

In order to get through such an interview, the Investigators need to provide very convincing answers to the questions listed earlier. Identification, membership cards and references will be stringently checked, and forgeries are likely to be spotted. The reputation of the Order is too important not to take such matters very seriously indeed.

The Order of the Bear are more used to straight up combat than stealth missions, scouting and espionage. As a result of this, members of the Order are more inclined to let the Investigators take the lead when it comes to exploring the Necromakina than members of outfits like the Etoiles Mortant. They only insist on exploring the Necromakina first if the Investigators arouse their suspicions beforehand (either by being dishonest during the interview, or by openly using the Brass Chakram or Locus of Maya).

FREELANCE MERCENARIES

In many ways the best option for the Investigators is to hire freelancers to help them fight their way to the Necromakina. There are four units of Freelancers operating in and around Polaria that have experience fighting underwater. Some of them are even Imperial or Mishiman fighters who were involved in raiding the city for other corporations before the outbreak of war with the Dark Legion.

The main benefit of using Freelancers is that the Investigators can effectively take command of the operation, and can therefore enter the Necromakina unhindered once the creatures in the vicinity have been killed. They can use Ancient technology, and raid the Necromakina for canisters of essence without any awkward questions being asked of them.

The downside is that they have to cough up plenty of money if they want quality help.

A SUBMARINE THREAT

◆ **ROKU RONIN**—Led by captain Hosa Okaidu, an unassuming Mishiman lady of short stature and with long black hair. Six Mishiman adventurers with the same profiles as BLEU Troopers. The basic cost is 30,000 crowns to hire for one day.

◆ **KASHKREIG**—Led by captain Max Fleisher, a large man with a livid duelling scar on his left cheek who wears a polished leather pickelhaube whether or not he's relaxing in a bar or in the midst of combat. Five Bauhaus mercenaries, veterans of many wars with the same profiles as Order of the Bear soldiers. The basic cost is 50,000 crowns to hire for one day. All money must be paid up front in order to hire this unit.

◆ **THE SEA WOLVES**—Led by captain George Mainwaring, a short but heavily built young man with a close cropped beard. He engages in outrageous flirtation with any attractive men or women who seek to employ him. Fifteen Imperial pirates. Ten with the profiles of BLEU Troopers, five with the profiles of Etoiles Mortant soldiers. The basic cost is 70,000 crowns to hire for one day. The Sea Wolves are hated by many people in Polaria for their part in raiding the area around the city prior to the outbreak of war with the Dark Legion. If the Sea Wolves are hired by the Investigators subsequent attempts to enlist Kashkreig, the Army Reserve Ministry, the Admiralty, the Order of the Bear, or the BLEU do not proceed beyond initial introductions unless the Investigators first break their agreement with the Sea Wolves. In such an instance the Sea Wolves are happy to keep any money the Investigators paid in order to enlist them.

◆ **HAIKIDU SHURINI**—This Mishiman mercenary is equipped with a bespoke Battlesuit which he swears has been specially designed for submarine warfare, being water resistant and equipped with weaponry that works as well under the waves as it does on land. Haikidu will charge a non-negotiable two assets per day to hire his services.

HAIKIDU SHURINI ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	7	8	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Amphibious Shoa Ace Powersuit: (Head 5, Arms 5, Torso 5, Legs 4)

◆ **Power Assisted:** The superior physical strength and mobility of the battlesuit's systems provide two additional Momentum on all strength-based tests, and ignores the armour's encumbrance value while it is active. Additionally, the character increases his melee damage bonus by 3↑ while wearing the armour. The difficulty of all Acrobatics and Stealth tests are increased by one due to the bulk of the armour.

◆ **Stable Platform:** Whilst wearing a battlesuit, a character always counts as Braced when using Unwieldy weapons, and may use Two-handed or Unbalanced weapons one-handed without penalty.

ATTACKS:

◆ **Deathshrieker Screechgun (ranged):** Close, ↑6, Munition, Unwieldy, Armour Piercing 3, Stun, Torrent, Vicious 3

◆ **Tranquillising Dart:** SA-30's fire a three pronged dart designed to slice through water and deliver a potent poison. If one or more Dark Symmetry Icons is rolled, the target must attempt a Resistance test at the start of its next turn, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. If this test is failed, the target is rendered unconscious for a number of minutes equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. The character may act normally if this test is passed.

◆ **Katana (melee):** 1+↑8, 1H, Unbalanced, Parry 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◆ **Amphibious Armour Adaptation:** The adjustments made to Haikidu's battlesuit allow him to operate unhindered underwater. It is also equipped with three Oxygen Loads and a torch.

◆ **System Overload:** Haikidu's battlesuit has been rewired to power the necessary functions that allow him to operate unhindered underwater, but is prone to occasional short circuits because of this. Should any of Haikidu's dice result in a Complication whilst he is underwater his suit shorts out and stops working. He requires the Investigators to save him should this occur. If he is saved Haikidu is grateful but mortified, and insists on waiving his fee.

Mercenary captains always have profiles similar to elite Corporate Security (*Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 275), regardless of the profiles of the men and women they command. At the GM's discretion mercenary captains can carry any weaponry and equipment that the GM finds necessary or interesting.

Note that these prices are given if the Investigators convince the mercenaries that the job they are being hired for is straightforward. The more dangerous the mission, the more money the captains ask for (see **Awkward Questions** on page 89).

OTHER PARTIES AND THEIR INTEREST IN THE NECROMAKINA

The various military forces that the Investigators could call upon for support in their efforts to reach the Necromakina do not simply allow them to explore such an odd Dark Legion device without becoming suspicious. This could become a problem for the Investigators as they no doubt want to be able to monopolise any of the contents of the Necromakina for themselves.

Aside from freelance mercenaries, any soldiers who accompany the Investigators have their own commanders and do not take kindly to being ordered around by the Investigators. Essentially they see the Investigators as scouts, or even just eccentric civilians who have come along for the ride, and themselves as the professional outfit in charge of the operation. As a result of this any attempt by the Investigators to suggest things like “just wait outside this device whilst we take a look” raises suspicions.

Use of subterfuge could work. If the Investigators were to slip off and explore the Necromakina whilst the soldiers are engaged in fighting Dark Legion forces then they should be able to enter and explore the device without arousing too much suspicion. However if they have brought members of the Etoiles Mortant or an agent from the Unstinting Order of the Blood along with them then they are followed to the Necromakina and anything they find within (Ancient weaponry or canisters of essence) is confiscated.

If the Investigators are open about the existence of the Necromakina to soldiers from the reserves or BLEU troopers, they might be able to convince them that only they have the requisite authority to deal with such matters if they make an appropriate speech and pass a Daunting D4 Command test. Note that soldiers from the Etoiles or Order of the Bear only scoff at such notions.

A tactic that might work could be to pretend ignorance of the Necromakina, explore it alongside the soldiers and therefore benefit from their help whilst clearing the device, but carefully stashing any discoveries somewhere secret whilst doing so.

A WAR WITHIN THE UNSTINTING ORDER OF THE BLOOD

During the period in which the Investigators try to gather support for an assault on the Necromakina, the Unstinting Order of the Blood make their next move. Luke and Pedro, convinced that the Investigators pose too great a danger in their efforts to uncover secrets about the Ancients, take steps to have them killed. However, they first try to trick the Investigators into revealing what they know.

Georgia, who still thinks of the Investigators as useful idiots set to lead her to more artefacts and knowledge, keeps watch on proceedings, ready to step in at the time most convenient to her.

The encounter begins at some point during the Investigators’ efforts to recruit people to their cause. Luke approaches the Investigators. Read the following to the players after they have left an office or other building in the process of their recruitment drive.

You step out into the Polarian streets. The light here is dim, diffuse and clouded even during the day, the wan rays of the sun force their way through the ocean waters and the reinforced glass dome, and are supplemented with a multitude of blazing electric lights, but even so the gloom is omnipresent.

USING THE CHAKRAM OR THE LOCUS IN PUBLIC

The Brass Chakram and the Locus of Maya are strange alien artefacts the likes of which any soldiers accompanying the Investigators have not seen before. As such, it is best for the Investigators not to make too much open use of them whilst in public, as they certainly arouse undue interest, and even suspicion, if they do so.

If the Investigators do use such an item within sight of any soldiers they have brought with them, the GM should make a **Challenging D2 Insight** test for the nearest soldier (note that this test may be made significantly more difficult than usual due to the underwater environment and any lack of illumination in the area). If the test is passed, the soldiers become alarmed by the use of such odd technology and may well try to confiscate such items or even arrest the Investigators.

If an agent from the Unstinting Order of the Blood is accompanying the Investigators as a result of them tipping off the brotherhood to their mission, they are keeping a close eye out for the use of any odd powers or technology the Investigators might employ. If this is the case, the GM ought to make a separate Average D1 Insight test to see if the agent spots anything. Should the agent pass the test, they try to steal the item from the Investigators at some point during the mission and give it up to Georgia.

Any Freelance mercenaries who the Investigators have employed themselves do not show such interest.

A SUBMARINE THREAT

ORGANISATIONAL SUMMARY

ORGANISATION	PROS	CONS
Etoiles Mortant	Good soldiers willing to help the Investigators with minimal fuss.	They want to explore the Necromakina and may make off with artefacts the Investigators might want themselves.
Admiralty or The Ministry of Fear	Willing to put the Investigators in contact with House Bernheim. Admiralty can provide a boat.	Ask a lot of probing questions. Not a source of direct military assistance.
Reserve Army Ministry	Can make soldiers available.	Ask a lot of probing questions.
BLEU	Can make BLEU troopers available.	Unstinting Order of the Blood learn what Investigators are up to and dispatch agent.
Brotherhood	Willing to put the Investigators in contact with House Bernheim.	Unstinting Order of the Blood learn what Investigators are up to and dispatch agent.
House Bernheim	Could make Order of the Bear troops available.	Require introduction via other party. Ask probing questions.
Freelancers	Available for hire. Do what the Investigators want.	Cost money to hire.

A man is standing on the other side of the road, watching you as you walk. Checking quickly for traffic he jogs across. He is about thirty, with pale skin and thinning blonde hair. Despite his heavy build he moves with the confidence of a strong man.

"Excuse me" his accent is common to Venus. "Word is you could use some help with an operation to stop the dead soldiers. Can I talk to you about this?"

Allow the Investigators time to react. They may have heard that a man of Luke's description hired thugs and pickpockets earlier in the adventure after all. If they don't run away or attack Luke, he continues.

"My name is Jascen Rede. I'm an agent for a man named Pedro who is setting up a new division of Freelance Adventurers in the area. We have heard you could use some help on a military expedition. Given that we are looking to get established, we would be able to assist you with your operation at a bargain price." He gestures to a street up ahead. "Now there's a great little place just up there. Let me get you a drink and we'll talk more about a commission. How about it? I promise you you aren't going to get a better deal in Polaria."

Round the corner Pedro is waiting with a group of thugs (these thugs use the same profile as the ones employed to kill Sister Eve on Diemansland, see page 46). There is one thug for each Investigator, plus Pedro and Luke. If the Investigators agree to go to the "place", the gang attacks them from carefully chosen ambush positions around the corner of the street.

If the Investigators do not go with Luke, or attack him, then the gang runs to give him assistance where he is.

PEDRO ALBERQUERO, INQUISITOR ☹

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
11	10	9	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
11	12	14	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
4	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 4
- ◀ Arms 5
- ◀ Serious 7
- ◀ Mental 14
- ▶ Torso 8
- ▶ Legs 6
- ▶ Critical 4

SOAK: Inquisitorial Battledress: (Head 4, Arms 3, Torso 4, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **P60 Punisher (ranged):** Close, 1+**T**6, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown
- ▶ **Avenger Power Sword (melee):** 1+**T**8, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Duelling, Parry 1, Vicious 2



Order of the Bear troops are larger than life.

A SUBMARINE THREAT

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Geared for War:** Pedro has sought spiritual perfection through physical accomplishment and the Aspect of Kinetics. He has Mysticism Expertise 3 and Mysticism Focus 3, and is able to employ the spells Blessing, Contempt, Succour, Impel, Barrier, Strike, Singularity, and Levitate. Whenever Pedro successfully casts a spell from the Aspect of Kinetics, he gains one additional Momentum which may only be used to increase the damage of the spell. Finally, following the successful casting of a spell from the Aspect of Kinetics, he is able to spend up to three Momentum to gain an equivalent amount of additional Soak that stacks with his armour. This additional Soak lasts until the start of Pedro's next turn.
- ◆ **Honour the Blade:** Pedro believes that a sword fight is the ultimate form of honourable combat, which has resulted in him spending years honing his skills with the blade. He may reroll one d20 when making a Close Combat test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, Pedro need not spend a Dark Symmetry point to perform a Parry Response Action.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Retaliatory Strike:** After successfully executing a Parry Response Action, Pedro may pay one Dark Symmetry point to make a standard melee attack against the foe he parried. Momentum from the Parry action may be carried over to the melee attack.

After a couple of rounds of combat, the Investigators receive help from Georgia and Petra, who have trailed Luke and Pedro and who are watching from a nearby building. Petra does not play a direct role in any confrontation, she stays hidden in the building. However, she tries to use her telepathic Art in any way that she can in order to aid the Investigators or hamper the gang. Georgia takes a more active role, revealing herself at last and using her arts and combat skills to take down Luke and Pedro as quickly as she can.

The combined power of the Investigators and Georgia should be more than enough to see to their opponents. Georgia sees to it that Pedro and Luke are definitely dead.

If the fight refuses to turn in the Investigators' favour, a way to fix things could be to have a BLEU patrol turn up. As Luke and Pedro are in plain clothes, whilst Georgia is dressed in her Inquisitor's garb, they obey her directions to help out of habitual deference to the Brotherhood.

Once the fight is over Georgia turns to the Investigators.

"You have my sincere thanks. This man," she indicates the corpse of the man with the pale skin and blonde hair, "was an agent of heretical powers. His crimes were numerous and unspeakable. I traced him here from (the port the

Investigators landed in) and planned to gather support from my Brotherhood fellows and take him out later tonight. I had not anticipated he would be so bloodthirsty as to attack people in the street." She shakes her head and frowns. "Do you have any notion why he might be interested in you? He may have associates still at large."

Georgia listens to any information the Investigators are willing to part with. She does not subject them to further questioning, but before she leaves she says:

"I am lodging at the Order of Staff and Hand mission house in the Ostendome for the time being. Please, if you have any further ideas about what might have happened here, or if you feel you are in any more trouble because of this man and his cult, come and see me. I will be able to help you."

THE VENUSIAN NECROMAKINA

1. ENTRANCE

Both of the Guardian Statues are fully functional (see page 13).

2. DUMP

This area is somewhat larger and more ornate than those of other Necromakina the Investigators have encountered so far. Read the following to the Investigators as they enter:

You have arrived in what looks like a long hallway. A veritable forest of pillars supports the ceiling and two grand marble staircases rise from the hallway floor and curve up to an aperture leading further into the device. Above the aperture is some kind of large, black sculpture.

All of the arms are functioning. Two DeBuggers are here, cleaning and fussing around the base of the pillars.

3. CONVEYERS

Instead of the conveyers found in other Necromakina this machine features two sets of large marble staircases. Bodies are hauled up by the Resolving Arms (see page 14), rather than conveyed by the machine. Quite why such a practical part of the machinery is missing is not clear, though the aesthetics are grand, if rather grotesque.

4. STRIPPER

The Stripper is functioning. Above the entrance to the stripper is a large, circular, bas-relief sculpture. Read the following to the Investigators:

There is a piece of strange art that has been placed above the entrance to the stripper, a large circular bas-relief sculpture that has been carved out of black stone. The craftsmanship, and quality of the material, is clearly very fine indeed. The work curves round so that its upper edge rests on the ceiling whilst its lower edge sits just above the entrance to the stripper.

It is a depiction of a figure, genderless and ageless. The figure has many arms, and each of its myriad hands gestures with poise and grace. The figure's face, androgynous and beautiful, carries a serene impression with the eyes held shut and a kind and relaxed smile.

As you gaze upon the sculpture you feel a gnawing sense of unease, a growing pressure inside your skull, behind the eyes, like some strong hand has taken you and forced its thumb into the centre of your forehead.

If the Investigators look away from the sculpture at this point, and continue to search the Necromakina, there are no further ill effects. However, if they continue to examine it they must pass a **Challenging D2 Willpower** test for each round they do so, or suffer a mental assault.

If there are any soldiers accompanying the Investigators at this point they instinctively recoil from the sculpture, and avert their eyes from it as they continue into the Necromakina. If asked why they give different reasons, all of which centre round a theme of sensing that the artwork was emanating a kind of maddening and evil vibration.

5. REJECT PILE

A DeBugger is here (see page 12). There are five dead human bodies here, bloated with sea water and rot. They are too badly broken and torn to make into effective Legionnaires.



The Venusian Necromakina.

6. ESSENCE LABORATORY

The Essence Laboratory is in good working order. Three DeBuggers are here.

7. ESSENCE STORE

There are two doses of Human Essence and Two doses of Ancient Essence in here. Two DeBuggers are here.

8. THE CONVERTER

The Converter is in good working order.

9. NAVIGATION ROOM

The Navigation Room is functional. Using the charts and navigation equipment here (as described on page 17) will reveal the whereabouts of the Mercury Necromakina to the Investigators. A DeBugger is here.

10. POWER PLANT

The Power Plant is working.

11. DEBUGGER RACK

All of the Debuggers are functioning, at any one time ten are patrolling the Necromakina, and ten are recharging. A Debugger is in here, cleaning and tuning up those Debuggers who are recharging on the racks. If this alert Debugger is attacked or disturbed, six of the recharging Debuggers activate to assist it.

12. RINSE

The Rinse is in good condition.

13. ARMOURY

There are dozens of corroded blades and Kratach rifles adorning the racks in this room. Five Plaguedealer flamers and three Valcheck Machine Guns are also stored here. Clips and drums of ammunition are also piled up to one side of the room.

14. ASSEMBLY

A squad of ten Undead Legionnaires are waiting in the assembly. They are armed with corroded blades and Kratach Rifles. One of the Legionnaires carries a Plaguedealer Flamer. A Necromutant equipped with a Belzarach rifle and a Grenade of Flies is here to give them commands.

◀ **UNDEAD LEGIONNAIRE:** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 303.

◀ **NECROMUTANT:** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 302.

15. EXIT

Both of the Guardian Statues are fully functional.

AFTER THE RAID

After the Investigators have finished exploring the Necromakina things get much easier for the people in and around Polaria. With no Dark Legion Citadels close by and the Necromakina placed out of commission (either by the expedition led by the Investigators or by military action that takes place in its wake) the waves of Undead Legionnaires attacking the city come to a stop.

Depending on their performance and behaviour during the mission the Investigators may have made themselves some useful contacts, or earned the enmity of powerful foes.

Provided the Investigators cooperated with the armed forces accompanying them in their mission then they earn a significant degree of goodwill from their new military contacts. Such cooperation would involve apparent openness in their dealings with their allies, bravery in the face of enemy activity, good strategic sense, not getting themselves or their allies into unnecessary danger.

If the Investigators are suspected of concealing pertinent details, or of taking unnecessary risks, of lying about the disposition of enemy forces and other such duplicity, then they may earn the enmity of the soldiers who accompanied them.

Causing the death of an ally through direct means (for example if the Investigators were to kill a soldier in order to prevent the confiscation of a jar of essence, or because they thought the soldier was an enemy agent) always causes the organisation from which that soldier joined the party to regard the Investigators with enmity unless such a murder is carefully covered up.

Mediocre or mixed performance from the Investigators results in a cool but civil parting of ways with the pertinent parties once the raid is complete. The Investigators do not go on to receive either help or trouble from such parties in the future.

THE ORDER CLEANS HOUSE

As the Investigators are due to continue on their way to Mercury, Georgia attempts to clean house. She has recruited two more members of the Unstinting Order of the Blood to her cause, Rolf Hurtz and Gertie Heinz.

Rolf is a man of middle height and build. He has a lean, raw boned face, close shaved hair and a large brown moustache that droops down at either side of his thin mouth.

Gertie is a large and muscular woman with a mane of curly red hair. She has ornate symbols associated with the Brotherhood tattooed on each of her shoulders.

ROLF HURTZ, REVISOR ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	11	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2

ORGANISATIONAL REACTIONS

ORGANISATION	PROS	CONS
All organisations	Medical assistance and repair of equipment as needed.	The organisation concerned never knowingly assists the Investigators again.
Etoiles Mortant	None.	When the war with the Dark Legion enters a period of lull a squad of five Etoiles make it their mission to hunt down the Investigators and have their revenge.
Admiralty or The Ministry of Fear	The character gains one additional point of Momentum from a successful Persuade test when dealing with a member of the Admiralty or Ministry of Fear whilst on Venus.	Increase the Repercussion of all Persuade tests by one when dealing with a member of the Admiralty or Ministry of Fear whilst on Venus.
Reserve Army Ministry	None.	None.
BLEU	Investigators will have a friend in the shape of Gregori Tivelli, and if they should run afoul of the BLEU in future he is willing to vouch for them.	Investigators may find themselves harassed and brutalised by the BLEU whenever they visit a Bauhaus city in the future.
Brotherhood	The characters gain the Tithed optional talent (Mutant Chronicles rulebook page 249) whilst on Venus, without the need to pay Assets towards it. Characters who are already members of the Brotherhood add one Momentum to a successful Persuade test when attempting to appropriate an item from their superiors.	The characters are earmarked as rabble rousers that may possibly be tainted by the Second Directorate. They are occasionally watched whilst on Venus, and no member of the Brotherhood will willingly agree to help them beyond providing directions toward the nearest humanitarian shelter; all Persuade tests have their difficulty increased by one step when dealing with the Brotherhood of Venus. This increase is particularly appropriate to any character that is already a member of the Brotherhood, as it will prove more difficult to appropriate items.
House Bernheim	Investigators are presented with business cards expressing the gratitude of House Bernheim. These cards earn the Investigators significant kudos to most people in Bauhaus society; each holder of this card gains one additional Momentum from a successful Persuade test when dealing with members of the Bauhaus nobility. Should the Investigators ever seek to join an Order in Bauhaus these cards help grease the wheels of such a process if they are presented.	When the war with the Dark Legion enters a period of lull a squad of five Etoiles make it their mission to hunt down the Investigators and have their revenge.
Freelancers	None.	Survivors may seek revenge at some point.

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Suit: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

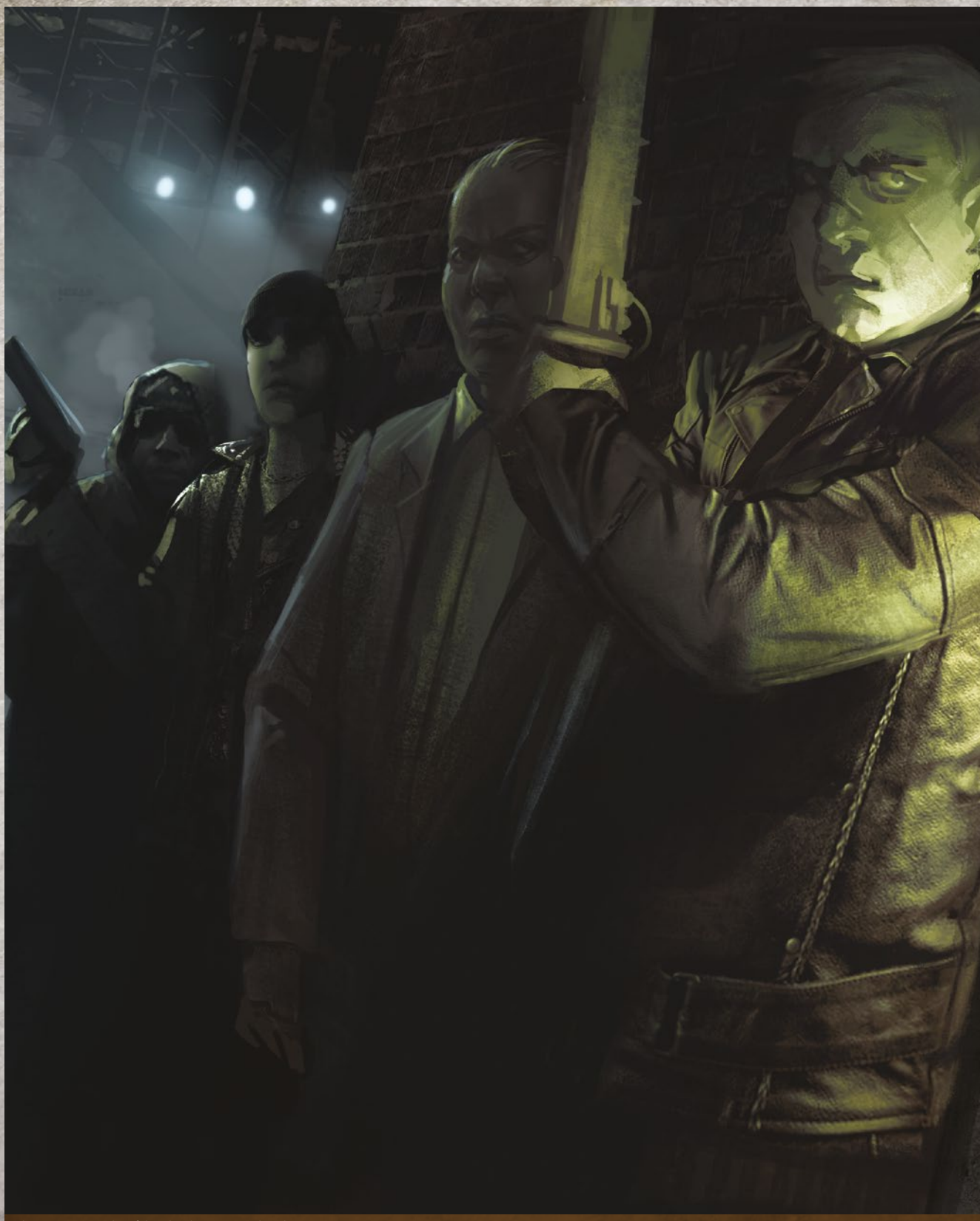
ATTACKS:

- **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+**T**5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- **Fist (melee):** 1+**T**3, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Inner Perfection:** As a Revisor, Rolf has also received some training in the Aspect of Mentalism. He has Mysticism Expertise 2 and Mysticism Focus 2, and knows the spells Blessing, Contempt, Succour, and Inner Gaze.
- **Steel Fists:** Rolf has trained extensively in unarmed combat, and has mastered the steel-hand technique. He may re-roll up to two damage dice when making an unarmed attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, anytime Rolf successfully makes an Unarmed Attack, he gains the Stun weapon quality.

A SUBMARINE THREAT



The Unstinting Order of the Blood prepare to clean house.

DARK LEGION PART 03

- ◆ **Focussed Exclusion:** Rolf has a tendency to pick a target and rain blows upon them until they drop, to the exclusion of all else. He will focus his attacks on a single target until they are unconscious or dead. Add one to the Repercussion for all Observation tests made by Rolf whilst he is in combat.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Hammer Blow:** At the cost of one Dark Symmetry point, Rolf's next Unarmed Combat attack may also inflict the Dazed condition. This ability also requires a Restricted Action to activate. If a target is Staggered by Rolf's attack, they must immediately make a Willpower test with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. If this test is failed, they gain the Dazed condition for the same number of rounds as they are Staggered. If the test is passed they still remain Staggered.

GERTIE HEINZ, REVISOR ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
11	10	10	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	11	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	-	2	1

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Suit: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+T5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◆ **Combat Knife (melee):** 1+T5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Blunt Instrument:** As a Revisor, Gertie has also received some training in the Aspect of Kinetics. She has Mysticism Expertise 2 and Mysticism Focus 2, and knows the spells Blessing, Contempt, Succour, Impel, Barrier, and Strike.
- ◆ **Slice and Dice:** Gertie's favoured combat tactic is to get close and personal with a combat knife. She may re-roll one d20 when making a Close Combat test, but must accept the new result.
- ◆ **Remorseless Justice:** Gertie will never accept surrender from an opponent. Pleading with her or ordering her to stop will fall on deaf ears. Once combat has begun, Persuade or Command tests made against Gertie that involve halting her attacks have their difficulty increased by two steps.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Knife Specialist:** Not only has Gertie spent years honing her knife skills against her peers within the Brotherhood, she has also spent time training with the Etoiles Mortant and other special forces that attend the Cathedrals for training. When attacking with a combat knife, she may spend a Dark Symmetry point to add one d20 to the Close Combat test. Up to two Dark Symmetry points may be spent on each test.

This time Georgia goes all out in attacking the Investigators. She feels they know far too much about her own interests and seeks to have them killed.

However, before they die she would like to know if they have any more information about the Necromakina or the Ancients. To this end she approaches them accompanied by Rolf, Gertie and Petra. Georgia makes the following speech to the Investigators:

"Good day to you all. I have heard some disturbing reports of Dark Legion activity that seem to correlate to your own investigations. Given your assistance in helping me vanquish the heretics in Polaria I am trying to give you the benefit of the doubt in regard to these rumours. Could you please let me know what you were looking for when you discovered the machine under the water?"

Georgia tries to wring all the information that the Investigators know about the Ancients from them. Once they stop providing useful information, or if they refuse to from the outset, she gives a brisk nod before she attacks them, with Rolf and Gertie acting as added muscle. Petra steers clear of any actual fighting, but tries to use her telepathic abilities to help Georgia in any way that she can.

If the fight goes badly for Georgia she tries to cut and run, but if she is killed the Brass Chakram will be found as part of her possessions, along with any other items that were confiscated from the Investigators during their time on Venus.

Any members of the Unstinting Order of the Blood who survive this encounter may try to contact their colleagues in other parts of the Solar System, and so could return to complicate things for the Investigators later in this adventure.

LEAVING VENUS

Once the Investigators have returned to the space port they originally landed in they will find it an easy matter to board their shuttle and continue on to Mercury if they so wish.



A SUBMARINE THREAT

MERCURY

OVERVIEW

This section assumes that the Investigators land on Mercury after travelling from Venus as described in the previous part of this adventure and it assumes they know the precise location of the Mercury Necromakina. It is also assumed that the location of the final Necromakina will be discovered when they explore the Mercury Necromakina, and the Investigators will decide therefore to travel to Mars, next. This precise order is not vital to the adventure, simply the most likely route. If the Investigators do things in a different order it should be trivial to accommodate a revised itinerary. The important thing is that the Investigators travel to all the known Necromakina and then discover the location of the final one.

This part of the adventure deals with staying in the Foreigners' Quarter in Longshore and the Investigators' efforts to get hold of the required travel permissions and documents from a deliberately obstructive Mishima bureaucracy. This is a very mundane obstacle for the Investigators, but it ensures that while they are in Longshore several Mishima factions can attempt to manipulate them.

Then, the Investigators will travel through Mercury towards a surface exit close to the Necromakina. During this journey they should come across a particularly dangerous outlaw gang and find some way to defeat them should they wish to reach the surface.

Once on the surface, they must struggle against the appalling elements to reach the Necromakina and explore it. The climax of this section occurs when the Investigators explore the wrecked and scattered Necromakina in a race against time as Mishima factions vie to double-cross the Investigators and the Dark Legion arrive intending to destroy them.



LONGSHORE FOREIGNERS' QUARTER

ARRIVING ON MERCURY

When they touch down on Mercury, the Investigators will already have the coordinates of the Necromakina. These coordinates are accurate; however, it will not be easy for them to get to the site. They will need to play a careful game among the various interested parties on Mercury, and they will find themselves in the midst of a political struggle within the Suritomo Keiretsu. They are likely to need to align themselves with, or become the pawns of, one of the factions just to get permission to leave Longshore and travel to the Necromakina.

However the Investigators get to Mercury they will land at Longshore. This is vital to the adventure. If they have their own transport and attempt to land near the coordinates they have for the Necromakina (a reasonable course of action) they will not be able to. The Mishima space fleet have every approach vector for Mercury covered, and the Investigators should not be allowed to penetrate these defences. If the Investigators attempt to stray from the designated routes, they will be escorted to Longshore and invited to land there. If they refuse, then they will simply be shot down.

This might seem heavy handed but this part of the adventure is all about the journey through Mercury and interacting with agents of Mishima. This way the adventure becomes more interesting and challenging. It is simple enough to justify in character: As the war across the solar system heats up, Mishima are doing everything they can to keep security across Mercury as tight as possible.

LONGSHORE

Longshore is the only area on Mercury where foreigners are welcomed and the Investigators will be able to stay here as long as they need. However, they will be required to stay within the Foreigners' Quarter. Right from the outset, Suritomo, a major Mishima keiretsu, is aware of their presence and watching them.

One of the themes of this section will be the Investigators' attempts to get together the paperwork needed just to be allowed to enter Mercury beyond the confines of the Foreigners' Quarter in Longshore. They should become exasperated in their attempts, not knowing whether they are being thwarted deliberately, or simply through the tortuous procedures of Mishima bureaucracy.

Even Mishima Investigators will not be allowed to leave the Foreigners' Quarter and those Imperials that might expect to be given access to Fukido will find their way barred by endless formality and red tape. Although this will never be made explicit, it should be clear, soon enough, that the Investigators will not be allowed to go anywhere unless they can make some friends in high places.

SURITOMO

The Suritomo Keiretsu is one of Mishima's largest. It is famous as a great industrial keiretsu well-known for their legions of obedient workers, and massive factory cities producing state of the art power armour and specialised weaponry. But it is larger and has much broader interests than most people realise. It is also significantly invested in space ship manufacture, advanced weapons development, bio tech, and medicines. In addition, it has an intelligence wing which is extremely influential within Mishima.

Soon after arrival on Mercury, the Investigators will find themselves in the midst of a power struggle within the Suritomo. Several of the keiretsu's rival factions have an interest in the activities of the Investigators. They will attempt to spy on them and manipulate them as the adventure develops. They probably do not know precisely what the Investigators are up to, but they realise it is important and they plan to profit from it, and also raise their standing in the keiretsu by doing so.

Add to this the continued pursuit of the Unstinting Order of the Blood (from the previous chapter) and things will get quite political for the Investigators. They will likely seek to find the Necromakina and travel there as soon as possible, getting away from the cloak and dagger stuff. But, this will not be possible and they will need political friends in order to travel safely through Mercury. The Investigators will soon discover that they need to pick a side.

The various factions of Suritomo will all seek to discover the secret of the Investigators mission. It is difficult to say how this will pan out, and depends on the Investigators' actions. This means the GM will have to play thing by ear and juggle these factions in response to the Investigators. But they all essentially want the same thing, and so the broad direction of the adventure should be predictable, even if whichever faction is closest to the Investigators changes.

The events during their time in the Foreigners' Quarter might get a bit complex with several Suritomo factions all watching the Investigators and manipulating them. The Investigators will not really know who is who, and things might look mysterious and dangerous to them. It is up to the GM to make sure they do not become so paranoid at all this activity that they shut themselves in their rooms and refuse to come out.

BLUE SKY

Blue Sky is the dominant force in Suritomo intelligence gathering. It has set itself the task of achieving this status for the whole of Mishima. However, other Suritomo factions are frightened of Blue Sky's potential power and will seek to undermine it, even if that weakens Suritomo itself in the short term.

Blue Sky is aware of the Investigators and has reported what it can understand of their mission to the board of Suritomo. What Blue Sky has managed to learn about the Investigators will depend largely on how they have gone about their mission, especially in Victoria and on Venus. Blue Sky has eyes and ears everywhere it can get them, but it is by no means omniscient.

If the Investigators have bothered to cover their tracks and keep a low profile then they should be rewarded. If they have been loud and blatant then Blue Sky will know a lot more about them. If Blue Sky has managed to glean a lot, the agents it sends to manipulate the Investigators will arrive better prepared and more likely to succeed.

Blue Sky reported to the Suritomo board as soon as the Investigators landed in Longshore. Its agent, Ayame Kita, has noticed them, and is keeping an eye on them. As soon as she arrives in Longshore she will inform Blue Sky regarding whatever she knows, and she will be told to continue her surveillance. If she has not done so already, Kita will be told to attempt to ingratiate herself with one of the Investigators.

Blue Sky has pieced together the Investigators' movements, and has attempted to piece together the nature of their mission. It has come to the conclusion that the Investigators are on the trail of a very powerful ancient weapon. Not only does it think this weapon will be useful in the fight against the Dark Legion, but it believes it will be useful in securing Mishima (and Suritomo) ascendancy among their respective rivals. The plan is to let the Investigators get on with their quest, but to keep an eye on them. It intends to bide its time and to capitalise when the time is right.

Blue Sky itself believes that it should take the lead in this matter (it already has Ayame Kita on the case, after all) but the usual political manoeuvring has meant that several Suritomo companies are making a play for whatever prize they conclude the Investigators must be after. Now that Blue Sky has shared this knowledge with the board, several Suritomo factions see this as an opportunity for themselves and are busy making plans to backstab Blue Sky and take advantage of the Investigators themselves.

Blue Sky is more often used for external intelligence work. It has been thanked for its peerless tenacity in this regard and been told that the matter is now out of its hands. The board of Suritomo has decided that the matter will now be dealt with by Jade temple. This

AYAME KITA

The GM should retrospectively insert Ayame Kita into the Investigators' path at his convenience. There is no reason for the Investigators to know about her or to have noticed her. Therefore, it is easy to suppose that she has been watching them for a while. Whatever method the Investigators used to get to Longshore, she can have acted similarly. If they took public transport, she will arrive on the same vessel. If they have their own ship, she could get hold of another ship and arrived shortly after them.

If possible, the GM should arrange for Kita to ingratiate herself with the Investigators earlier on in this adventure (see page 72 in **Part Three: Venus**). If not, then he should attempt to do so while they are stuck in the Foreigners' Quarter. It is important to the adventure in Longshore that she gets close to the Investigators in order to spur the other factions to get her out of the way.

Simply get her talking to one of the Investigators when he is alone, doing something that interests him, and have her tag along with the Investigators. Kita is talented enough to know whether to just be pleasant and inoffensive, or be a bit pushier, or just to let her natural charms do the talking. She does not need to know the Investigators' inner most secrets, although that will not do any harm. It does not matter whether the Investigators suspect her, or she suspects that they suspect. The important thing is that she is seen with the Investigators a few times, and is recognised by rival agents of rival factions. This will be enough for that faction to decide to bump her off, and lead to the events described later (see **Murder**, page 110).

however has not gone down well at Blue Sky and it has decided to continue to keep an eye on things. It has not informed Ayame Kita of any of this and so she continues with her original mission. Once she turns up dead (or even if she does not), Blue Sky will consider it a matter of honour that it pursues this case as far as it can, even against the wishes, and beyond the knowledge, of the Suritomo board.



Ayame Kita: spy for Blue Sky.

AYAME KITA, BLUE SKY AGENT ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	10	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	11	10	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE					
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	2	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Jacket: (Arms 1, Torso 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **.45 Serenity Pistol (ranged):** Close, 1+↑5, Burst, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Cool and Competent:** Ayame is an excellent agent who always remains calm under pressure. She gains a bonus d20 when attempting to detect, locate, or recognize any person, place, or object that she has ever interacted with, including if they are concealed or disguised. Additionally, she may re-roll 1d20 when making a Willpower test, but must accept the new result.
- ◆ **Disarming Smile:** Ayame is attractive, physically fit, and confident. She has honed her powers of persuasion to a level that would make the geisha of the Overlord's Palace on Luna jealous of her skill. She gains one additional d20 to any Persuade or Command test. Additionally, a successful Persuade test yields one additional point of Momentum.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Provocatively Alluring:** Ayame may spend one Dark Symmetry point to gain two additional d20 on her Persuade test when attempting to seduce someone.

JADE TEMPLE

Jade Temple is a research and design company in the Suritomo keiretsu. It has been particularly successful in a few projects recently, and has seen its respect and influence grow. Now it is attempting to make itself the heart of Suritomo. It hopes that almost nothing can happen in regard to Suritomo production without its design expertise. In this way it hopes to dominate the keiretsu.

From Blue Sky's reports to Suritomo's board, it has gathered that the Investigators are on the trail of some sort of Dark Legion superweapon, perhaps. It believes that the Investigators may already

even hold part of the weapon, or at least some of its fundamental components. It wishes to infiltrate the Investigators in the hope that this will lead it to the complete weapon. And when that happens it plans to swoop in and take it for itself.

Jade Temple has a fierce rivalry with Blue Sky and has used some goodwill behind the scenes to get Blue Sky removed from the situation. It will of course be expecting Blue Sky not to let go so easily, and it will be keen for evidence of Blue Sky's unofficial interference to use against it in the Suritomo boardroom.

The Jade Temple will use every influence it can to keep the Investigators inside the Foreigners' Quarter until it manages to get a Jade Temple agent into the Investigators' party. It plans to use Jiani Sado to infiltrate the group until it is ready to seize the super weapon.

From then on Jade Temple will be happy to let the Investigators acquire the necessary documents to leave the Foreigners' Quarter. It will let them run and see where this leads, always keeping an eye on them if it can, ready to move in once it knows what this weapon is. At that moment, the plan is to seize it with all prejudice. Jade Temple will be happy to keep the Investigators alive for a thorough debriefing, but this is not a priority for the faction.

JIANI SADO'S MOVE

While the Investigators are kicking their heels in Longshore Foreigners' District, inevitably a number of them will be out in a tourist entertainment area at some point. When they are, this encounter has been set up for them. They will hear some plaintive cries coming from a nearby alleyway. Jade Temple has arranged for Jiani Sado to be attacked by a gang of muggers. The muggers are genuinely interested in killing her and making off with her valuables (the muggers' leader is being paid by Jade Temple to arrange this, though he is not at the scene). Jiani Sado could deal with these muggers quite comfortably on her own, but she will allow herself to appear in grave danger in order to entice the Investigators to rescue her.

Once she is rescued, Sado will be eternally grateful to the Investigators. She will explain that she is an executive in Jade Temple in charge of material analysis and procurement. She will offer to help the Investigators with bureaucracy in Longshore if they ever need a favour, which of course they do. She will give them her number. Sado's cover story involves being in charge of the movement of goods and personnel throughout Mercury, so she is in a great (and remarkably convenient) position to be able to help them get around Mercury.

If the Investigators are not suspicious then they will see this as a good opportunity to finally make some progress on Mercury. If they

do contact Jiani Sado, she will be grateful and will do her best to help them. However, she knows how to play the long game and will not throw herself at their feet. She will do just enough for them to keep them interested and, though it will be tempting for her, she will do her best not to rush things. She will try to wind the Investigators in slowly but surely, and only speed up if Jade Temple gets wind that other factions are sniffing around the Investigators.

Once she has arranged the Investigators' travel plans, Sado will offer her services as a guide and/or translator, or she will use what she knows of the Investigators to get in on the group in some other way. Sado will always be on the lookout for one particular Investigator who she can best manipulate and use to champion her. She is bright and calculating, and so is likely to come up with a decent way of inveigling herself into the Investigators' group.

If the worst comes to worst then she might only be able to get hold of special visitors' visas for the Investigators. These documents will require them to be in the company of an official 'trade consul' at all times, while they are on Mercury. And of course, Sado is a registered 'trade consul.' If that is too much for the Investigators' suspension of disbelief, then Jade Temple can arrange for a different trade consul to turn up if the Investigators are looking for one.

JIANI SADO, JADE TEMPLE AGENT ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	8	10	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	10	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	3	3

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Business Suit: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Silken Cord Kunai (melee):** 1+6, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2, Reach

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Disciple of the Blade:** Jinai is a student of the Blademaster school of martial arts (*Mishima* sourcebook page 36). She favours using a pair of kunai that are each attached to two metres of silk cord. When dual-wielding her knives, the Swift Strike Momentum spend requires only one Momentum, instead of two. She inflicts an additional two  of damage when wielding

a Kunai because of the close bond she has forged with her weapon of choice (already included in the weapon profile above).

- ◆ **Follow the Silken Cord:** Jinai may focus her inner ki to make great leaps around the battlefield. This requires a Restricted Action and a D1 Willpower test that has a Repercussion range of 19-20. If she is successful, she may immediately leap to any adjacent zone, including into Reach of an enemy, even where the zone being entered is above or below her starting point. During this jump, Jinai leaps over all difficult and dangerous terrain between those points (obstacles that are enclosing, such as a roof, or airborne, such as toxic gases, cannot be ignored in this way—the GM's discretion applies). When performing this technique, Momentum generated may be used for the following additional effects:
 - ◆ For each Momentum spent, the character adds 1 to the damage of a melee attack before the end of his turn.
 - ◆ For one Momentum, the character's landing creates a shockwave, forcing every enemy within Reach of the character to attempt an Average D1 Athletics test or be knocked prone. For one additional Momentum, this test becomes a Challenging D2 Athletics test.
- ◆ **Patient Analyst:** Jinai uses her near infinite patience to psychoanalyse her targets down to the minutest detail, and then manipulates the bureaucratic system to attain what she needs to get close to them. She may re-roll one d20 when making a Willpower or Education test, but must accept the new result. Further, when interacting with an opponent, she may make an Average D1 Education test as a Restricted Action to find common ground for discussion. Any Momentum generated by the Education test may immediately be added to a Persuade or Command test taken as a Standard Action. Finally, she may substitute an Education test for a Persuade or Command test against any opponent whose motivation she understands.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Motive is Everything:** Jinai will attempt to use subtle conversational techniques to establish their short term goals. Having established common ground with an opponent, she may spend two Dark Symmetry points to gain an understanding of their motivations. Use of this ability consumes an entire scene's worth of social interaction.

FOLLOWING UP THE MUGGERS

The mugging should happen in an alleyway which gives the muggers an opportunity to escape but will also give the Investigators a decent chance to kill or capture them. If one of the muggers is captured and is made to talk, he can reveal that it was all the idea of their leader, 'Tiger', but apparently Tiger did not think it was worth his while being present. Now the mugger comes to think of it, it is a bit odd that they were given such specific instructions to carry out an ostensibly random mugging.



Despite appearances during the mugging, Sado is the most dangerous.

If the Investigators decide to follow this up and they manage to convince a captured mugger to give up the location of the muggers' base, a **Challenging D2 Persuade** test, they can learn that the gang hangs out in an abandoned cellar section beneath a rundown housing block several kilometres away. The place is guarded and there are about twelve gangers present as well as Tiger. They lend their hand to all sorts of criminal activity, usually against the foreigners of longshore and are quite well armed. They will fight to the death protecting their turf.

Only Tiger is likely to surrender, and only he knows that he set the original muggers up. He deliberately sent his most expendable

gang-members plus an experienced gang member he saw as a potential rival, in order to get rid of him. He has done the odd task for a shady member of Jade Temple over the years. He does not know the man's identity, and it is irrelevant, because he cannot be traced and is just another faceless player in Mishima's endless power game. But Tiger does know that the man is from Jade Temple.

◆ **THREE MUGGERS:** use the Hired Gun profile on page 46. These are equipped with Ronin handguns and one Reload.



CRIMSON STAR

Crimson Star is a Human Resources and Headhunting company within Suritomo. It is the brand leader in personnel allocation. This means it prides itself on knowing as much as it can about as many high-ranking Suritomo personnel as possible. Though it presents itself in a business-like manner, as all corporate entities in Mishima do, it is well known that Crimson Star is effectively the Suritomo internal police force.

Like Jade Temple, it is aware of the Investigators' movements through Blue Sky reports, and it is determined to get whatever it can out of the situation, while damaging Blue Sky. It has learned that Ayame Kita is keeping in contact with the Investigators under orders from Blue Sky despite explicit orders from the Suritomo board that she leave. Therefore, it is going to kill her and use this murder as leverage against the Investigators.

THE MURDER

This section will work best if Kita is in regular contact with the Investigators, and preferably a trusted member of their group. If she is not, then it should still work with some modification. It is important that Kita is known to the Investigators, however, and that they will bother to come and see what she wants, if she were to contact them.

Kita has an apartment in the Foreigners' Quarter. It is made to look like she has lived in it for years as part of her cover story. However, it was set up merely hours before her arrival back on Longshore. She will let the Investigators know where it is and be happy to meet them there, so she can report on her progress getting them their travel permissions and various documentation, or to simply entertain one of the Investigators.

Within a couple of days of arriving on Mercury, one or more of the Investigators should arrive at the apartment to find Kita quite dead. She was stabbed several times in her bedroom, and the whole scene is a bloody mess. The Investigators will only have a few moments to take stock before the place is raided by half a dozen Crimson Star officers, ostensibly alerted by a neighbour who heard a funny noise.

THE CRIME SCENE

The chances are the Investigators will be whisked away from the crime scene almost as soon as they get there, only giving them enough time to take in the scene and appreciate its gravity. But if they do get an opportunity to investigate the crime scene they might find some of the following, depending on a **Challenging D2 Observation** test.

The same Crimson Star officers who raided the place and arrested the Investigators arrived at the apartment an hour or so before that. Kita had little choice but to admit them. They brutally stabbed her to

death and then messed the place up a bit making it look as though there had been more of a struggle.

No neighbours heard anything suspicious and no one contacted Crimson Star. One of the neighbours did see the police entering and leaving the apartment during their initial visit, but does not think anything of this. The Investigators would need do some sort of door to door questioning to find this person.

Unseen by the officers, as she was dying, Kita scratched the Mishiman character for 'crimson' into her left palm, with a piece of broken glass. The GM should give any Investigator who had time to quickly examine the body a chance to spot this, although it will require a **Daunting D3 Observation** test.

Once she was dead, the officers simply left the apartment and waited round the back, in their van, for the Investigators to turn up. (The actual murderer went back to the station to clean up.) It should be quite obvious to anyone who thinks about it that the Crimson Star officers got there extremely quickly. They must have been very close to the apartment building and got called to the scene almost as soon as the Investigators arrived.

THE INTERROGATION

The Investigators will be interrogated by Crimson Star special agents Agent Cherry Blossom and Agent Swooping Crane. These two are in charge of Crimson Star's operation against the Investigators and planned the murder partly to get Blue Sky out of the way and partly to get to the Investigators.

The GM should bear in mind that the Investigators have been under sporadic investigation since they arrived in Longshore, especially when interacting with Kita, and so Crimson Star will be aware of them personally, aware of some of their movements, where they are staying, and related intelligence.

Agent Cherry Blossom and Agent Swooping Crane will not want to give away just how much they know about the Investigators, however. They simply wish to give the impression that the Investigators are caught up in a routine murder enquiry, and that the Crimson Star agents are going about their normal business. This is actually true of most of the other Crimson Star officers, of course.

Agent Cherry Blossom and Agent Swooping Crane's interrogation technique is a standard good cop-bad cop routine. But, while Agent Swooping Crane is the large, brooding, menacing looking agent, he plays the good cop, while the petite, and much more fragrant, Agent Cherry Blossom plays the bad cop.

Having questioned the Investigators found in Kita's apartment for some hours, the agents will eventually let everyone go except for



Suritomo internal politics sees Kita dead.

the one they consider the easiest to corrupt. That person they will lock in a cell and begin to get to work on him, psychologically. It does not really matter what arguments or reasoning the Investigators use, Crimson Star know that they did not commit the crime, it is simply looking for any angles with which to manipulate the weakest suspect.

For this reason, their actions and the question the Crimson Star officers ask might seem a bit odd and the evidence against them unsubstantiated. This could give the Investigators a clue to what is actually going on, but, on the other hand, the Investigators could simply put that down to the odd way Mishima officials often seem to do most things.

THE TURNING

After stewing in a cell for a while the Investigator will be dragged before Agent Cherry Blossom and Agent Swooping Crane and told that his trial has recently finished and that he has been sentenced to death. A full confession will commute that death sentence to one of community service. If the Investigator refuses to confess, he will be thrown in jail for a few more hours. He will then be dragged before the officers and asked to confess again.

This can go on for a while, but there is no reason for the GM not to kill the Investigator if he refuses to confess, and it should be made clear to that player that the character will actually be executed. Once this is clear the character will probably opt to confess. Or, if the GM wishes, he can make the Investigator undergo a series of resistance tests with failure representing his decision to confess. Of course, if the character wishes to be (literally) a martyr to the truth then the GM should allow this.

Once the Investigator confesses, then the Crimson Star officers will feign keen interest in the details of the crime. The Investigator will be made to go through exactly what happened and how he killed Kita in gruesome detail. If he is unconvincing or



Agent Cherry Blossom and Agent Swooping Crane: Bad Cop, Good Cop.

unsure, or just wrong with the facts, the officers will go over it again and again until he gets it right. They will lead him with their questioning towards details that the Investigator is unsure of. Effectively, they will painstakingly coach him with a detailed and plausible scenario for the crime.

Once Agent Cherry Blossom and Agent Swooping Crane are satisfied that all aspects of the murder have been covered, they will outline his community service. The Investigator will be committed to the service of Mishima, Suritomo, and Crimson Star for the rest of his life. He must swear to serve those entities in perpetuity, to the best of his ability, on pain of death.

He will be given a 'security tag', a black metallic band that he must wear around his neck. If for any reason he disobeys his orders the tag can be activated and it will immediately explode, inevitably killing the wearer. Agent Cherry Blossom and Agent Swooping Crane will tell him that the tag works anywhere, but in truth it only works on Mercury. He will be told to contact Crimson Star every day, or whenever possible, and to report anything that might be of interest.

The Investigator will be given a communicator for this purpose. He will be told the security tag can sense when something important is being held back, so he should include all instances of illegal activities. This is not true. He will be told that the tag can be traced anywhere and so he will not be able to hide from them. This is true to an extent, but once he leaves Mercury, the Investigator would be 'off the radar.'

The Investigator will also be told not to attempt to remove the security tag as this will cause an immediate explosion. This might be true. Any attempt to remove the band requires a **Dire D4 Mechanics** test. It is commonly perceived by Mishimans, however, that this task is indeed impossible.

Some players might object to such an annoying and invasive punishment for a crime they did not commit, but although it looks like an impossible situation, there are a number of ways around it. Just the simple removal of the tag is not impossible. Lying through one's teeth to Crimson Star is also an option. This system works among Mishimans reinforced with the myth that the security tag is fool proof and that it really can sense lies. The myth serves Crimson Star well, but an outsider (especially an Investigator) might not be so convinced as to its veracity.

While it might seem like a massive disadvantage to be beholden to one of the Mishiman factions throughout this part of the adventure, resourceful Investigators should be able to turn the situation to their advantage by neutralising the security tag or judicious selection of what they relay back to Crimson Star and how they relay it. The GM should give a fair chance to any good ideas the Investigators have for neutralising the tag or using it to turn the tables.

SPECIAL AGENT CHERRY BLOSSOM, CRIMSON STAR OFFICER ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	7	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	9	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	-	2	-	2	2	2	2	2	1

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Suit: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Hana-Bi 30 (ranged):** Close, 1+↑4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
 - ◀ **Stunner (ranged):** Close, ↑4, Munition, 1H, Nonlethal, Stun
- The Hana-Bi 30 is a combination pistol/underbarrel stunner described on page 91 of the *Mishima* sourcebook.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Aloof and Inscrutable:** Cherry Blossom is difficult to read and her intentions are often obscure. Persuade or Command tests made against her have their difficulty increased by one step.
- ◀ **Bad Cop Persona:** Cold and brutal in demeanour, Cherry Blossom plays the Bad Cop part to a tee. She may re-roll any dice that do not generate a success when making a Persuade test to interrogate an opponent, but must accept the new results.

SPECIAL AGENT SWOOPING CRANE, CRIMSON STAR OFFICER ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	7	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	8	9	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Suit: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Hana-Bi 30 (ranged):** Close, 1+↑4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
 - ◀ **Stunner (ranged):** Close, ↑4, Munition, 1H, Nonlethal, Stun
- The Hana-Bi 30 is a combination pistol/underbarrel stunner described on page 91 of the *Mishima* sourcebook.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Consummate Agent:** Swooping Crane is a career officer who is willing to carry out any number of morally questionable activities whilst hiding behind his badge. When investigating or committing a crime, he reduces the difficulty rating for all Education, Observation, and Persuade tests by one, to a minimum of one.

MERCURY

- ◆ **Good Cop Persona:** Swooping Crane and Cherry Blossom play their parts perfectly, with Crane being the balm to Cherry's outbursts. He reduces the difficulty of Persuade tests by one when addressing a victim of Cherry's Bad Cop Persona ability (regardless of whether she was successful). This ability may only be used within two rounds of Cherry's most recent use of Bad Cop Persona, otherwise Crane must wait for her next such interrogation attempt.

BLACK ROSE SOCIETY

The Black Rose Society is the Imperial secret police of Mishima. It is highly feared and has its tentacles reaching all across Mishima society and beyond. The fear the organisation engenders is probably even out of proportion to its actual power, but its actual power is certainly great.

Through its informants within Suritomo, the Black Rose has an inkling that something important is happening, and that this is strongly connected to the Investigators. However, unless the Investigators have been careless with their information, it does not know what this actually is yet. It is aware of all the efforts the various Suritomo factions are making in regard to the Investigators, and is now determined to find out for itself.

The Black Rose will not blunder its way in. It will observe carefully from a distance and once it believes the time is right, it might put an agent in the Investigators' path. Or if it deems it necessary, it could simply order the execution of all the Investigators and everyone connected with this business, for that is how it sometimes operates. Black Rose, as an organisation, fears the unknown and not knowing, more than anything else.

As this matter has come to the Black Rose's attention, it will be very difficult for any of the other factions to get the Investigators beyond the Foreigners' Quarter against the Black Rose's wishes. Black Rose are likely to be able to block any such attempt. However, it is used to playing the waiting game, and because it wishes to discover more about what is going on, it is likely to give the Investigators and the rival factions as much rope as they require. The other factions are unaware that the Black Rose is interested and unless the Black Rose acts impetuously, they are unlikely to find out.

RYO MAE

The head of Black Rose's operation against the Investigators is Ryo Mae. He is a very competent and business-like operator, but more adept at bureaucracy than action in the field. He genuinely serves Mishima with all his ability. Just as he sees himself as a single disposable unit in the greater collective, so he sees all the agents under his command as similarly disposable. He would not tell his agents to do anything he would not do, in the service of Black Rose, but that is no consolation to them because he is prepared to do virtually anything.

Ryo Mae sees himself playing some sort of long, strategic game. He sees everyone as pieces on the board, to be manipulated and moved around. Because of this, he is endlessly patient and more concerned with getting the right move than in human empathy or mercy.

Ryo Mae makes one concession to the human activity of his great game; he must see his opponents up close and look them in the face, sooner rather than later. For Ryo Mae this is a matter of honour. So, during the adventure, Ryo Mae will need to act to make sure he meets each of the Investigators personally, greets them, introduces himself and has a few words with them. Preferably these words will be ambiguously portentous, so they can be given meaning retrospectively, but they will not give him away at the time. This might sound useless and needlessly dangerous, but this is one of the little quirks Ryo Mae has, and he must act on it.

RYO MAE, SENIOR BLACK ROSE AGENT ☹

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	11	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	12	11	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

WOUNDS:

- ◆ Head 3
- ◆ Arms 4
- ◆ Serious 6
- ◆ Mental Wounds: 11
- ◆ Torso 8
- ◆ Legs 6
- ◆ Critical 4

SOAK: Armoured Wafaku or Ballistic Nylon Business Suit: (Both provide Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Unarmed Strike:** 1+3, 1H

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Master of the Esoteric:** Ryo is a student of the Grey Mystics school of martial arts (*Mishima* sourcebook page 38). He leaves the use of ranged weapons to his subordinates, one or two of whom are never too far from his side. When making an Unarmed Combat attack, he may re-roll up to four damage dice, but must accept the new results. Additionally, he can attempt to parry using Unarmed Combat, even though he does not have close combat weapons to hand, and may also substitute Unarmed Combat for Acrobatics when taking a Dodge Response Action. Finally, Ryo need not spend Dark Symmetry points for Dodge

or Parry Response Actions. He inflicts an additional two  of damage when wielding a Kunai because of the close bond he has forged with his weapon of choice (already included in the weapon profile above).

- ◆ **Master of the Game:** Ryo's mastery of martial arts, alongside an instinctual understanding of how everyone fits into his area of responsibility, has focussed his perceptions to a near mystical level. He may use a Free Action to prompt an Average D1 Willpower test. If successful, he becomes perfectly aware of everyone and everything within Close range. This includes creatures (even if they are hidden or invisible) as well as any use of supernatural powers, and even extends through walls and other obstacles. Ryo must concentrate to maintain this effect once activated (see Spell Duration, page 170 of the *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook). When performing this technique, Momentum generated may be used for the following effects:
 - ◆ For one Momentum, the character's awareness covers everything and everyone within Medium range.
 - ◆ For three Momentum, the character's awareness instead covers everything and everyone within Long range.
 - ◆ For each Momentum spent, the character gains one bonus Momentum on all Observation and Insight tests made to discern the nature of creatures, objects, and supernatural phenomena within the area of his awareness.
- ◆ **Pawn Placement is Everything:** Ryo is an extremely effective coordinator. He is adept at placing the best people in their most suitable role, and then exacting more from them once they are there. He has Command Expertise 3 and Command Focus 3, and may immediately roll one additional d20 on any Command or Education test that generates at least one success. Additionally, he may substitute his Command skill for Observation or Insight tests when interacting with people.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **An Agent for Every Occasion:** Ryo will never leave home without an agent or two close at hand, though they will not always be obvious. Any time he is the target of an attack and has an agent within three metres, he may spend one Dark Symmetry to have a Black Rose agent immediately succeed at a Defend Other Response Action and become the new target of the attack. At the cost of two Dark Symmetry points, this ability may be used in a public place (such as a bar or street for example) whilst Ryo is apparently alone; that faceless member of the crowd or drunk propping up the bar is revealed to be an undercover agent.

MEETING RYO MAE

The GM should try to ham up the meetings with Ryo Mae and use him to add some tension or a bit of mystery to this section. It will be difficult to GM, because if Ryo Mae simply remains inconspicuous (which would be sensible for him) then there is not much need to even convey his presence. Even a short, seemingly meaningless,

exchange will be difficult to justify describing without bringing undue attention to the encounter.

The GM could try using him as some sort of wise presence who turns up at unexpected times and imparts the odd word of wisdom to an Investigator. This will make him more enigmatic. And also make the Investigators value his words.

If the Investigators are confused by some of the events happening in the Foreigners' Quarter, and they should be, then Ryo Mae can give them information that can help them make sense of events. He will be careful about what he says, but the information will be helpful. Of course he will resist efforts to interrogate him, or to give more information than he is prepared to give.

This is a subtle way of undermining the rival factions, while getting to manipulate the Investigators. And this will hopefully stand Ryo Mae and the Black Rose society in good stead at the denouement of this chapter. Ryo Mae is planning for the Investigators to trust him enough that, when he turns up later on the surface of Mercury, they will turn over what they have found to him, or at least give the Black Rose a good chance to steal it all.

Generally, Ryo Mae will choose a busy, public place to make an appearance. He will simply appear close to an Investigator without them noticing how he even got there. Perhaps he might be sitting next to them in a bar (when they sit down second), or he will be driving the cab an Investigator waves down, or they might ask a random person in the street for directions only to have it turn out to be Ryo they have asked. Keep it enigmatic.

The GM might need to be careful that Ryo Mae's enigmatic significance does not provoke the Investigators to try to capture him, or use violence against him. If they do, this can be prevented as the man will be accompanied by a number of Black Rose agents watching his back.

THE BROTHERHOOD

The Investigators relationship with the Brotherhood will depend on how they interacted during previous parts of this adventure. The GM should keep the Unstinting Order of the Blood as a recurring nemesis throughout the campaign. However things ended in the previous section, the Order should be able to contact its cell in the Foreigners' Quarter and inform it of the Investigators' arrival.

Preferably, any enemies the Investigators have already made from the Unstinting Order of the Blood should arrive in the Foreigners' Quarter and take over the running of their operation there. Simply insert the characters from a previous section into this event. If this is not possible, then the organisation described below is quite capable of continuing the Order's pursuit of the Investigators, perhaps creating a new, long-running nemesis.

The Unstinting Order of the Blood runs a shrine and lodging house just off the more fashionable area of the Foreigners' Quarter. It is plainly not for locals and caters to order members passing through Longshore for one reason or another. Those staying for a while can rent one of the rooms (bare, perfunctory cells). Important members of the order can stay for free. The shrine is not really public, and is not the place you can stumble upon by accident, nor is it well-known. But those with a good knowledge of the Foreigners' Quarter, and order members, of course, will know about it.

The Shrine is run by Moro Ato, a simple, devoted soul. But Ato is merely a front, and his naiveté and simple-mindedness lends the place a deceptive innocence and a Mishiman presence. Above the shrine, in private apartments, lives Lyle Taylor. Taylor is a respected and up-and-coming member of the order. He is in the Foreigners' Quarter to assist any members coming through and to increase the organisation's influence there. He is essentially the order's eyes and ears in the quarter.



Lyle Taylor is likely to prove a constant annoyance to the Investigators.

LYLE TAYLOR

Lyle Taylor is a dedicated and even fanatical member of the Unstinting Order of the Blood. He is so single-minded that he managed to upset a few of the order's senior members, so they sent him to Longshore as a punishment. Instead of feeling contrite, he sees his posting here as simply an opportunity to prove himself.

So secure in the righteousness of his actions is he that he lives secure in the knowledge that a god-given opportunity to rise in the order is bound to come his way. No doubt, he will interpret the Investigators' presence as this opportunity. This will make him doubly fanatical in his pursuit of them.

Essentially, anything the Investigators do or say will just be further proof that they are enemies of the Brotherhood, and Taylor will make it his life's mission to deal with them. The GM should play Taylor as an annoyance they will never get rid of, someone to follow them through their entire mission on Mercury, never letting up and never giving in, even if they never truly feel threatened by him. To this end, Taylor may miraculously escape with his life any number of times so he can continue his relentless pursuit of the Investigators.

If the Investigators are spotted in the Foreigners' Quarter then Taylor will attempt to take them out as soon as he can. He will hire local gangsters he has dealt with before. These are smugglers, but they are not above doing the odd killing. See the Brotherhood Attack encounter below.

If this fails, Taylor will go back to the smugglers with more money to get more help. Once the Investigators leave the Foreigners' Quarter, he will get himself smuggled into Mercury. He cannot otherwise gain access into the interior at such short notice as he is on a number of keiretsu's undesirable persons lists.

Once in Mercury, Taylor will hire whatever mercenaries he can get hold of at short notice and attempt to follow the

Investigators. It is not important how he manages this; he has Brotherhood contacts all over the place that he can use. He will follow the Investigators; sometimes a day or two behind them, sometimes hot on their heels, at the convenience of the GM. The idea is to make the man a dogged and annoying presence throughout their journey through Mercury. His 'Only A Flesh Wound' special ability should provide the opportunity for this to happen, but can also provide some comic relief as the scars of his obsession begin to add up and take their toll; perhaps he bears a slight limp from his first brush with death, then arrives sporting an arm sling from his second, and so on.

The GM should plan to have Taylor turn up at opportune moments ready to fight the Investigators. If Taylor and his band can be used to give the impression that the Investigators are being pursued throughout this part of the adventure, then so much the better. Even if they enter into a pitched battle and fight to the death, Taylor should escape, recruit a new band, and continue his obsessive pursuit. Of course, the GM should feel free to use any fanatical order member from previous parts of the adventure in Taylor's place; if any are still alive that is.

LYLE TAYLOR, REVISOR ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	9	12	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Suit: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+^T5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◆ **Slicer (melee):** 1+^T5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Mentalist:** Lyle has undertaken extensive training in the Art of Mentalism. He has Mysticism Expertise 3 and Mysticism Focus 2, and knows the spells Blessing, Contempt, Succour, Inner Gaze, Paragon, and Regeneration. Additionally, he may channel the powers of the light to speed his own recovery, which allows him to use the Mysticism skill in place of Treatment when attempting to recover his own wounds. He does not suffer any penalties for treating himself or for lacking the necessary tools when doing so.
- ◆ **Stubborn Fanatic:** Lyle's stubborn fanaticism has upset many of

his peers and plagued his career. Nevertheless, it does provide him a focused edge when pursuing his goals. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Willpower test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, unless they come from his direct superior, Persuade or Command tests made to alter Lyle's perceptions or course of action have their difficulty increased by two steps.

- ◆ **Obsessionist:** Lyle's obsessions dominate his life, sometimes to the exclusion of all else. He increases his Repercussion by one for *all* tests when not performing a task directly related to his most recent obsession (currently the Investigator's demise).
- ◆ **Only a Flesh Wound:** Not only does Lyle put his self-restorative art-borne powers to good use, he also seems to have an uncanny knack for surviving the deadliest of encounters with merely a scratch. Barring dismemberment of his body or a death that offers no opportunity for recovery, such as an acid bath, any blow that would slay him instead renders him unconscious. The GM should describe the death blow in suitably dramatic detail, but somehow, in some way, Lyle's stubborn will and metabolic control allow him to cling to a spark of life and restore himself in time for the next encounter. Lyle's luck will catch up with him in the Necromakina navigation chamber at the conclusion to Part Four, at which point this ability may no longer be used.

ENCOUNTERS

The above plot strands are intended to run together, intermingling, during the Investigators stay in the Foreigners' Quarter. The GM should use the Investigators' forced downtime and their largely mundane activities to place the various encounters. Their precise order, and whether some of them are even used, will depend on the Investigators' reactions to the encounters.

The idea is that while they are waiting for their papers the Investigators should feel that they are in the middle of a complex plot with lots going on in the background that they do not entirely understand. If the Investigators destroy some of the plot threads by ignoring them, or using blatant force, that is all to the good. There are easily enough strands to suffer the Investigators breaking some, and probably too many to have them all run smoothly.

In addition, here are a number of encounters that can be played during this phase which are not necessarily directly related to the plots described above, but will help to round out the Investigators' wait and make sure that not everything that happens to them is significant to the overall plot.

ISN'T THAT THE GUY...?

The Investigators will be going about their business when suddenly one of them will meet the gaze of someone across the other side of the road, or the other side of a store, or the other side of somewhere. Their eyes will meet and a look of recognition will pass across the

fellow's features. Then he will immediately flee. It will require a Challenging D2 Observation test for the Investigator to recall exactly where he saw the face before.

It is up to the GM who this might be. If he needs someone from the Brotherhood to recognise the Investigators, and thus help set up the ambush described below, this can be that individual. If he needs it to be a member of Crimson Star staking the Investigators out, then it can be him. Or it can simply never need to be rationalised. Enough people are trying to keep an eye on the Investigators at this stage that the fellow can go unrecognised. This all contributes to the creeping paranoia that the Investigators should be feeling in the Foreigners' Quarter. The same Investigator can even spot the same man watching him in a different location, later on.

BROTHERHOOD ATTACK

Lyle Taylor has hired a gang of Mishiman smugglers to do the Investigators in. He will accompany them because he wants to be there at the death. The smugglers are nowhere near as competent as the Investigators. They will ambush them at a time of great advantage, because they will need all the advantage they can get.

Taylor will flee once he can tell things are hopeless. However, it is important that the Investigators get a good look at him, because the GM will not be able to use Taylor as a recurring villain if they do not recognise him. If one of the smugglers is captured, a successful **Challenging D2 Persuade** test will see him revealing everything he knows about the man who hired them which is 'Religious, Capitolian, Nutter, Taylor.' From there they might be able to trace things back to Taylor's shrine. If they raid his shrine, Taylor can make another unlikely escape, and then plan his revenge.

◀ **FIVE SMUGGLERS:** use the Hired Gun profile on page 46. These are equipped with Windrider SMG's and one Reload.

POLICE CHECK

The Investigators will be stopped in the street (or a similar public location) by a patrol of Crimson Star enforcement officers. This may appear connected with any interaction the Investigators may have had with Agent Cherry Blossom and Agent Swooping Crane described above, but it is actually purely coincidental and routine.

The Crimson Star officers will be inscrutable and thorough. They will methodically check the identities and business of all the Investigators; questioning them professionally and succinctly while giving no indication of the reasons for this stop, other than to insist it is purely routine.

This encounter might serve to make the Investigators even more suspicious of Mishiman hospitality in general and Crimson Star in particular, but it is genuinely routine.

REI SATO

Sato is an attractive, young student who can befriend any of the Investigators in whatever way is convenient to the game. She is studying history and languages so might come in handy for the expedition. She is interested in outdoor pursuits, mountaineering, survival courses, and endurance sports. She is very patient with bureaucracy. She likes martial arts. And, she is very, very attractive.

The point about Sato is that she will be useful to the Investigators and a chance meeting and befriending her might seem too good to be true. But actually, she has no hidden agenda in regard to the Investigators. She can turn out to be remarkably useful in many situations, with hidden talents and surprising skills that happen to match the situation. She is not a member of any of the factions attempting to manipulate the Investigators, although they might not actually believe that.

REI SATO, ATTRACTIVE STUDENT ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	7	8	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	9	7	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	2	1	1	1

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◀ **Glamorous Acrylics (melee):** 1+↑2, 1H, Dreadful

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◀ **Mishima Is My Fraternity:** Although her status as a student precludes Rei from directly providing resources for the characters, she may often know someone who knows someone that may be able to help. Whenever the characters are in need of a particular item or resource, she may make a Daunting D3 Lifestyle or Thievery test to put them in touch with the right people to appropriate it. Of course, this could lead to some rather interesting roleplaying opportunities.

◀ **Glamorous Beauty:** Rei is disturbingly attractive, to the point of distraction. Unless they succeed at a Challenging D2 Willpower test, opponents of the Investigators increase the Repercussion by one during all social scenes in which Rei is present.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Surprisingly Well Hidden Talents:** Rei is a bit of a jack-of-all-trades, master of none. She can turn her hand to anything and generally succeed (so long as she does not chip a nail in the process). Before any test is made, the GM may allow the players to spend one Dark Symmetry point. If they do so, Rei may re-roll one d20 on any test that she takes, although the new result must be accepted, and may immediately roll an additional d20 on any test that generates a success.

MAD MIKE

If the Investigators are planning ahead then they should be looking around stores for expedition equipment and survival gear. If they do, they might bump into Mad Mike. Mad Mike (real name Michi Matsuda—but no one uses this) is an old prospector who has worked on countless surface explorations.

Surface exploration goes on reasonably regularly. It usually ends in failure, but the riches to be gained if an expedition does happen across a rich seam of minerals just lying on the surface means that people keep trying.

Mike has blown all his cash on expeditions, and now hires himself out to prospectors as an expert (on failure) and a guide. There is very little that Mike does not know about surface travel and, if the Investigators decide to hire him, his help should come in very handy.

Mad Mike earns his name, not because of his wild staring eyes and the fact that he has spent almost as much time on the surface of Mercury as within it, but because he is obsessed with finding Shangri La. This is supposed to be a mythical city on the surface of Mercury that contains personal enlightenment as well as untold riches; no one else has ever heard of it, but Mad Mike is obsessed by it. Any job he gets is an opportunity to explore more of the surface, and to get some money which will help finance his own expeditions to Shangri-La.



Rei Sato.

'MAD MIKE' MICHI, GRIZZLED EXPLORER ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	7	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	3	3	2	2	2	-	1	-	1	1

WOUNDS: 4

SOAK: Makeshift Surface Suit: (Head 2, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **50/50 Airbrush (ranged):** Close, 1+↑6, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Knockdown, Spread 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Grizzled Explorer:** Michi has pretty much seen and done it all so far as surface exploration goes. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Survival test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, Michi generates two Momentum for every success above the difficulty rating, as opposed to one. Finally, when exploring the surface of Venus, he may make an Average D1 Survival test. If successful, he may avoid dangerous encounters. Each point of Momentum spent will protect one of his allies from the same risk.
- ◀ **Second Skin:** Michi is as comfortable in his Surface Suit as he is in his own skin. He may immediately roll an additional d20 on any Vacuum test that generates a success. Additionally, he may substitute Vacuum for Resistance when dealing with the consequences of malnutrition, dehydration, or sleeplessness. Finally, he may ignore any penalties associated with wearing a Surface Suit, including the reduction in MED quality when wearing a makeshift suit.
- ◀ **In Search of Shangri-La:** Michi has experienced dehydration, malnutrition, and sleep deprivation, in different combinations, one too many times. Slightly unbalanced because of this, he is willing to take risks with the safety of his employers and himself to find his fabled city. He will take long, circuitous routes that prolong the groups' time on the surface, and therefore offer him more opportunity to search for imagined clues. Double the travel time for any expedition that Michi leads onto the surface. Astute Investigators may pick up on subtle clues to Michi's irrational delaying tactic by taking an opposed Survival test against him. If successful, they then have the opportunity to make a Command or Persuade test to bring him back in line. If this second test is successful, remove a day from the adjusted

required travel time. Michi will be back to his old tricks on the following day however, which could prompt another opposed Survival test. The GM may wish to allow the expenditure of Momentum on the Command or Persuade test, with each point spent thus removing an additional day from the adjusted required travel time, as Michi stays focussed for that much longer.

SURVEILLANCE MALFUNCTION

While the Investigators are hanging out in the Foreigners' Quarter, they could be preparing for their journey, or simply relaxing, they will get a sudden insight into some of what is going on behind the scenes. One of the Investigators will be talking on a phone, or using some other piece of electrical equipment, listening to music, or what have you.

Suddenly, this equipment will crackle and produce feedback briefly, and then the Investigator will be able to hear a description of what he is doing narrated by some Mishiman agent (he is actually working for Black Rose). The voice will say something like, *'he is just lying there, listening to the radio. Now he has suddenly got up and is fiddling with the radio. No, I don't know why. He's looking a bit confused, though.'* Then the feedback will return briefly, and the equipment will begin to work normally again.

This is just a freak malfunction of some piece of surveillance equipment that Black Rose is using, and it will not happen again. Meanwhile, the Investigator will no doubt get the distinct impression he is being watched.

HERETIC ATTACK

A band of foreigner heretics, using the Foreigners' Quarter as a recruiting base, attack the Investigators. This group is led by Raven, a strange, gothic-inspired woman, into the esoteric and dream interpretation. She leads a band of thugs all willing to obey her every whim.

Raven has been getting increasingly vivid dreams about the Investigators, and she has interpreted them to mean she must destroy them. She has even been sent signs indicating where the Investigators will be, one dark night, suitable for an ambush.

Raven's gang will ambush the Investigators at the convenience of the GM. This should be in a location highly advantageous to them, as, after all, they are getting top information from unknowable sources.

Raven will ostentatiously lead the attack, feeling that her victory is inevitable, and that her dark masters make her invulnerable. She will probably get a rude awakening, but then, the Dark Soul moves in mysterious ways. While the heretics should give the Investigators a run for their money, they should not really be powerful enough



Raven and her thugs have been looking for the Investigators.

to seriously threaten them. They are simply there to increase the suspicion of the Investigators, to keep them on their toes, and remind them, amid all this Mishima in-fighting, who the real enemy is.

There is no real rhyme or reason for the attack, as far as the Investigators are concerned. They may consider it just a coincidence and that they were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Or they may wonder why they get attacked for seemingly no reason by a band of heretics. This may lead to them becoming increasingly concerned about the broad array of enemies they seem to have picked up.

RAVEN, MISTRESS OF PORTENTS ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	10	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Interwoven Gothic Dress: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1).

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Shrieketh (ranged):** Close, 1+⚡6, Burst, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Mind Bender

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Personal Dark Symmetry (3)**
- ◆ **Dreams and Portents:** Raven has received increasingly vivid dreams that relate to the Investigators, which has allowed her to plan an ambush. Not only that, she will often be able to predict their actions before they even take them. She may interrupt any player character's turn without the need to spend Dark Symmetry points.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Fuelled by Visions:** Raven has devoted her life to interpreting the twisted visions that are often sent to her by the Demon of Screaming Insanity. Muawijhe has granted her access to the following Dark Gifts: Dark Curse, Obfuscation, Sense Weaves of Power, Waking Nightmare, and Veil of Enemies.



BEGUILED THUGS ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	7	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	9	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	1	1	1	2	-	1	-	1	-

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: Hooded Robes: (Head 1, Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **CAR-24 (ranged):** Close, 1+⚡5, Burst, 2H
- ◆ **GL-240 Grenade Launcher:** Medium, Munition, Blast (Close)
- ◆ **Cudgel (melee):** 1+[DS3], 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Frenzied Assault:** Raven has whipped her thugs into a frenzy of hatred against the Investigators. They may immediately roll an additional d20 on any ranged Weapons test that generates a success

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Fanatically Loyal:** These thugs are more than willing to lay down their lives for their mistress. They may take the Defend Other Response Action without the need to spend a dark Symmetry point, though only in reaction to Raven being declared the target of an attack.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Much of the politicking discussed above is happening without the Investigators' knowledge. It is possible they could do this whole section of the adventure and be unaware of much of what is happening behind the scenes. But it is important to have the Mishima rivalry explained, and so those adversaries the Investigators do come into contact with will have a decent rationalisation for their actions. It might seem to the Investigators that stuff is happening behind the scenes and they are powerless to stop it, because that is largely true, but Investigators generally have a knack at arriving at the truth, and so the GM should be prepared to give up snippets of the situation whenever the Investigators have earned it.

Hopefully they will come into contact with enough agents, and see enough of the plot that they will begin to appreciate some of what is going on and be aware enough to be guarded against

it. Even so, even the most naïve and trusting Investigators could get through this part of the investigation simply by being naïve and trusting. Though this will not stand them in good stead at the end of this chapter when they are likely to be double crossed a number of times.

Once one of the Mishima agents is firmly in place in the Investigators' group and hopefully trusted by them, that faction will be able to get hold of travel documents and other papers that will allow the Investigators out of the Foreigners Quarter. Black Rose will be aware of these efforts, and they will allow the Investigators to get hold of these papers, playing the relevant Suritomo faction as much as the Investigators. They will then proceed to watch things from a distance. They have the resources and inclination to be aware of the Investigators location almost wherever they go, and will have a good idea of what they are up to, unless they take great pains to hide their activities.

Any faction that loses out will not give up and they will continue to monitor things. They will attempt to get their own agents involved when the opportunity presents itself, or simply pile in with a show of force during the end game.

It is entirely likely that the Investigators will leave the Foreigners Quarter with Jiani Sado as an ally and one of their number seemingly beholden to Crimson Star. Black Rose will be monitoring them from a distance, and Blue Sky, will be seething at their loss of face and determined to make amends. Meanwhile, the Brotherhood is likely to be hot on the Investigators' trail, too.

There are a number of other ways things can turn out at this stage, but this will be the assumption going forward. It should be trivial for the GM to play any slight variations by ear.

RESEARCH

One advantage of being in Longshore, apart from the foreigner-oriented entertainment and hospitality, is the navigation facilities at the spaceport. Although a lot of the more sensitive information about the surface of Mercury is restricted, the Investigators will be able to find plenty of maps of the underground and surface of the planet. They will be able to chart the best route to their coordinates, and will be able to see the lay of the land around those coordinates.

On a **Challenging D2 Education** test they will also be able to find some blurry images of the surface of Mercury taken during a survey some years ago. The pictures do not reveal what the Investigators may have been hoping for: an intact Necromakina sitting in the middle of the desert. Instead, they show a crater with various bits of wreckage strewn all around. They may also be able to make out a few larger pieces of wreckage that might, if you squint, resemble bits of a Necromakina.

It is hard to know what else the Investigators might want to research, although being stuck in the Foreigners' Quarter for a long time, could leave academic Investigators with little to do except bury themselves in books and records. Essentially, the longer they spend researching things, the more general information the GM can impart for free later, as the adventure progresses. It can be assumed that a researcher could pick up all sorts of diverse snippets of useful information during this time.

One thing to get across to the Investigators who bother to research should be the terrible conditions on the surface of Mercury and the sort of things they must go through to survive there. It will be very difficult for them if they find themselves on the surface, unprepared. So they can be rewarded for doing the groundwork at this early stage, by being given hints and tips about what sort of things they will need to purchase to help with the desert crossing, especially adequate water supplies and surface suits.

A cursory look at the relative positions of the Necromakina site and Longshore will show that the easiest way to get there would be to take a rocket train to Moniko and then travel through the underground system to Duoki. As Duoki is the closest underground site to the Necromakina that has access to the surface, it should be apparent to the Investigators that they will need to go there. Researching Duoki will reveal that it is simply an old iron mine that was closed down about ten years ago.

It is worth saying that the various factions of the keiretsu do not allow detailed information about themselves to become public knowledge. Public records for the keiretsu structures exist, but these comprise bland corporate guff, which give no real insight into their actual activities.

Any research dedicated to finding the correct bureaucratic ways to get themselves out of the Foreigners' Quarter can be rewarded only with the confirmation that, indeed, some powerful element must be going out of its way to keep the Investigators in.

If the Investigators attempt to research more detailed information on the Ancients here, they will have their work cut out. This sort of knowledge is reliant on specialised study. Beyond the sort of common knowledge and idle speculation that is easier to obtain, the best the Investigators will be able to hope for is a vague confirmation that they might be on the right track.

PURCHASING EQUIPMENT

The prices of most goods in the Longshore Foreigners' Quarter are likely to be lot higher than the Investigators might expect. The closed-off nature of the quarter contributes to this, and also the attitude of locals, which is essentially: make the rich foreigners pay through the nose for everything. If the Investigators wait,

LONGSHORE GEAR AND SURFACE SUITS

Increase the base cost of any item purchased within the Longshore Foreigner's Quarter by 50%, rounding fractions up. Wily Investigators, particularly those attached to the Brotherhood, may try to circumvent this increase and can be made to pay in other ways; perhaps their superiors take twice as long to requisition and deliver the equipment, for instance.

SURFACE SUITS

Anyone going beyond the protective force fields onto the surface of Mercury will require a surface suit. These generally comprise long, flowing, light outer layers with a tight-fitting inner layer. The outer layers are reminiscent of old Earth desert wear and help to keep the wind out and the sun off. The inner layers serve as protection against the heat and vacuum, and include a body-water recycling system and a cooling system.

The suit includes a chemical filter and miniature electrolysis device, or MED, that separates the wearer's sweat into its component parts to drastically increase their oxygen supply. There is also a face mask and armoured plating for sand storms, and an array of visors to protect the eyes in a wide variety of lighting conditions. Most suits provide pouches and pockets for various equipment, built-in communicators, and all-purpose body armour. A Surface Suit can be modified to allow for the inclusion of a wearer's armour, though this comes at an increase in cost and reduction in mobility.

Those Mishimans who have been visiting the surface for some time often use tradition 'home made' versions. These are usually created from a number of off-the-shelf garments and other pieces of equipment like refrigerators and welding masks, cobbled together into a makeshift surface suit. These look unreliable and scruffy, but experienced explorers swear by them.

Locals often decorate their unique surface suits with distinctive, colourful symbols, reminiscent of feudal Japanese heraldry. This, along with facemasks decorated with fierce animal faces, allows for easy identification from a distance in the harsh conditions.

SURFACE SUIT

FACTION	SOAK			
	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Mishima	1	2	2	1
ENCUMBRANCE	RELIABILITY	RESTRICTION		COST
10	2	4		25

and get the opportunity, it will work out about half as expensive to purchase the supplies they need once they get out into Longshore proper.

LEAVING THE FOREIGNERS' QUARTER

At last, the Investigators will believe they have the paperwork and influence together to leave the Foreigners' Quarter. They should report to the border control point and submit their credentials. The border control officials will inspect the papers and go away for a few moments, and then make a couple of phone calls. The Investigators will be left wondering for a while, and then the officials will invite them to wait in a holding cell while more checks are made.

After an hour or so, one of the Investigators will be summoned into an interview room and questioned over his reasons for entering Mercury. The questions will be largely routine and unless he makes a real mess of the interview, the Investigator will have nothing to fear. After the interview, he will be shown back to the holding cell and be required to wait with his colleagues for a few more hours.

If the Investigators are getting antsy and the GM wishes to draw out things further then he can interview some more Investigators if he wishes. The GM should also feel free to interview any allies the Investigators are bringing along with them, just to raise the tension.

But finally, just as the Investigators are beginning to think they might never leave the Foreigners' Quarter, the border guards will politely and sincerely apologise to them for any inconvenience and inform them they are free to enter Mercury.

ROCKET TRAIN TO MONIKO

OVERVIEW

If they have not researched the route, whoever has facilitated the exit from the Foreigners' Quarter and the Investigators' journey towards the Necromakina can suggest that it is a good idea to take the rocket train to Moniko. This will cover the vast majority of the Investigators' journey by distance, and will certainly be the easiest leg. The journey should be comparatively relaxing and incident free. This will be a good time for the Investigators to actually make some easy progress for a change, as the challenges will soon begin again once they disembark at Moniko.

Moniko is the closest rocket train station to the Necromakina. However, the surface location of the Necromakina is not close to any civilised part of Mercury. No one really knows what lies beyond the relatively safe confines of Moniko, but it should be taken for granted that travel beneath the surface of Mercury is going to be easier than traversing across its surface. Anyone with any sense will only attempt the bare minimum of surface travel.

The closest surface gate to the Necromakina coordinates is a location called 'Duoki'. This used to be a thriving mining community, but it has been mined out and closed down, and there is little indication of what its current function might be. Duoki is now the base of a criminal gang calling themselves Blood River. If this does not sound sinister enough, Blood River is actually a front for ancient Dark Soul creatures called Blood Worms.

MONIKO

Moniko is a thriving industrial section at the hub of a network of mining areas. It is run ostensibly by a municipal authority, but is actually operated by a coalition of Suritomo and Mayama industrial interests. The heavy presence of Suritomo here will mean that any resources Blue Sky, Crimson Star, or Jade Temple require will probably be available to them.

The heart of Moniko is a vast, vaulted cavern filled with countless factories. The highest parts of the cavern are filled with an accumulation of smoke and poisonous gasses that have formed a thick smog. This smog used to permeate the whole cavern, but the municipality has now installed a massive 'ceiling fan' which pumps the smog out into Mercury's surface. Wherever one goes in Moniko they cannot help but be aware of the massive fan turning incessantly above their heads, cutting the foul air with a loud mechanical whirr.

PURCHASING EQUIPMENT

If the Investigators did not get all the equipment they need in Longshore, then Moniko will look like their last chance for doing so. While the Foreigners' Quarter had inflated prices, they are nothing compared to Moniko. The municipality runs an exploitative 'company store' policy which keeps prices extremely high, and the workers in debt to their employers.

However, because of this, there is a thriving black market in the town and if the Investigators can find it, they will be able to get goods at much closer to normal prices. This runs the risk that some of the goods will be of low quality, or even useless. In addition, the more unusual pieces of equipment might require a day or two's notice.

If Jiani Sado is with the Investigators at this stage, she will know of the black market (because she was once involved in an operation to imprison many of them) and can suggest the Investigators use it. She might make herself scarce when interacting with it, though, as she will not want to risk being recognised.

It is possible the Investigators will question the black-marketeers about Duoki. If they do so, they will become defensive and suspicious. They will say that Duoki has nothing to do with them and that they are honest dishonest traders, but they will be reluctant to go into any further detail. They will definitely give the Investigators

A standard surface suit is similar in function to Capitol's Survivor suit, but trades some of its body function recycling properties for increased oxygen management and protection from the exceptional temperatures that ravage the surface environment (though the wearer will be well advised to find shelter from the extreme ends of the scale). The difficulty for all Resistance tests associated with temperature extremes is reduced by one, to a minimum of zero. The wearer can be exposed to temperatures between -20° and 45° Celsius indefinitely, whilst severe heat or cold beyond this requires a test every hour, and the extremes require a test every ten minutes in order to avoid penalties. Additionally, it allows the wearer to subsist for five days without food or water without suffering any penalties. Finally, the Surface Suit is equipped with three Oxygen Loads, though these can be likened to replacement filters and chemicals, whilst the MED extends the duration of each load to twelve hours of moderate use. Each bout of strenuous activity that results in a failure on the **Survival** or Vacuum test will deplete two hours from the current Oxygen Load.

Surface Suits that are modified to incorporate armour have their cost increased by five, and also increase the difficulty of any Acrobatics, Athletics, Stealth, Survival, or Vacuum tests made whilst wearing it by one.

Advanced Surface Suits exist that are designed to increase the efficiency of the body waste recycling system; allowing the wearer to subsist for ten days without food or water without suffering any penalties. Additionally, an advanced Surface Suit provides one bonus Momentum on a successful daily Survival test made whilst navigating the surface of Mercury. An advanced Surface Suit has its cost increased by three, in addition to any other cost increase.

A makeshift Surface Suit has its cost decreased by three, whilst also reducing the efficiency of the MED. Oxygen Loads will be depleted after six hours of regular use, whilst each bout of strenuous activity that results in a failed Survival test will deplete three hours from the current load. Additionally, increase the Repercussion of daily Survival tests made whilst navigating the surface of Mercury by one. Much more versatile and adaptable than regular suits, however, a makeshift suit will allow for the incorporation of armour, at no detriment to the user's mobility.



MERCURY

Scale
|-----|
one segment equals 5 Kilometres

DUOKI



MONIKO



NECROMAKINA





AKIRENKO

LONGSHORE

ZATA

MERCURY

the impression that they consider Duoki to be a place of ill repute and bad luck. Although, astute Investigators will get the impression that the black-marketeers are actually frightened of the place.

MONIKO ENCOUNTERS

BLUE SKY SPY

On a **Daunting D3 Observation** test the Investigators will notice that they are being watched (and photographed) as they make their way from the rocket train. The spy is Aito Ueno, a Blue Sky agent who has been sent to check out the Investigators, especially if they have a Jade Temple agent (such as Jiani Sado) with them. Blue Sky is concerned about what has happened to their influence with the Investigators and fear they have been replaced by Jade Temple. They have contacted Aito Ueno, their agent in Moniko, to find out what is happening.

If Aito Ueno is spotted and has noticed the fact, he will attempt to make his getaway. He knows the areas well, of course, and the place is thronged with people. He should have a distinct advantage, as he should blend in with the crowd, while the Investigators are likely to be more conspicuous.

Ueno will attempt to lose himself in the crowd and then make sure he is not being followed before making his way back home and reporting to Blue Sky. If he does get home safely, he will send the photos of the Investigators' group to Blue Sky base in Longshore. It will be a matter of mere minutes before any Jade Temple agents in their party are recognised.

If Aito Ueno is spotted but does not realise this, he will potentially be at the Investigators' mercy if they wish to capture and interrogate him. If he is captured, however, Ueno is such the loyal company man that he will dramatically bite down onto his false-tooth cyanide-capsule suicide pill before he gives up any secrets.

If the Investigators currently have a Blue Sky agent with them, this encounter can be reversed, using Jade Temple as the antagonists attempting to remove the Blue Sky agent.

AITO UNEO, BLUE SKY AGENT ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	8	10	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	10	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Factory Worker Coveralls: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

◆ **Silenced Piranha handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+**↑**5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◆ **The Clear Long Shot:** Aito is as adept with a Piranha as he is with a camera at executing the perfect moment to take a shot. He reduces the penalty for firing at a range other than the weapon's optimal range by one step, to a minimum of zero. Additionally, if he succeeds at a Ranged Weapon attack and spends Momentum to perform a Swift Strike, there is no increase in difficulty rating for the attack taken with Swift Strike. However, this can only be used once per turn.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

◆ **Back of the Hand:** Aito has memorised every rat-run and alleyway of Moniko, and knows all of the best routes to make a quick getaway. As part of a Movement or Sprint Standard Action, he may spend one Dark Symmetry point to put an extra zone of distance between himself and his pursuers (Movement takes him to Long range, Sprint to Extreme).

ASSASSINATION

If Aito Ueno managed to get information about Jiani Sado back to his superiors, Blue Sky will make the decision to terminate her. (Even if he did not, it is plausible that Blue Sky have another agent in town who can do this job.) Blue Sky sees her presence with the Investigators as a direct challenge, and, although it is prepared to let the Investigators continue (a situation it is hoping to exploit later), having Jiani Sado with them gives too much influence to its rivals.

Aito Ueno (or whoever takes his place) will be ordered to assassinate Sado at the first opportunity. Therefore, he will stalk the Investigators however he can, looking for his opportunity. The GM can play this out however he wishes, depending on the actions of the Investigators. It might work to have Ueno confront Sado early on and kill her immediately. Alternatively he could pursue the Investigators through the next part of the adventure just waiting for a decent opportunity. He will decide to make a move before the Investigators reach Duoki however, as there will be too much to potentially go wrong there.

ALLIANCE

Whether Aito Ueno manages to successfully assassinate Sado or not, he will attempt to reason with the Investigators. He might be arguing from a position of relative strength or great weakness depending on how the assassination attempt went, but having been outmanoeuvred by Jade Temple, Ueno feels it is time to put (most of) his cards on the table.

Ueno will tell the Investigators what he knows of them, in order to gain their trust. He will be able to tell them everything Blue Sky has managed to deduce about their mission. He will then tell them that Blue Sky is keen that the mission succeeds, which is true up to a point. He will explain that Sado was working for Jade Temple all along and that Jade Temple simply wished to take advantage of the Investigators' mission, which is also true up to a point.

Ueno will be arguing for his career, and possibly his life, at this stage and so the GM should do his very best to be convincing. If Sado is still alive then Ueno will try to get the Investigators to kill her, or at least send her away. Then he will make the case for the Investigators bringing him along, in her place. He will tell them that they will get Blue Sky's protection while they are on Mercury, and that Blue Sky wishes to join the expedition merely as observers.

Ueno wishes to accompany them to the Necromakina and simply observe. He promises not to interfere, and that with Blue Sky's protection once this is over, the Investigators will be able to get off Mercury without impediment. Of course, a lot of this is actually true, but Ueno knows that he cannot guarantee their safety honestly, and depending on what happens at the Necromakina, Blue Sky might decide simply to wipe the Investigators off the face of the planet.

THE BROTHERHOOD

The Brotherhood should be hot on the heels of the Investigators. Lyle Taylor has hired a new band of mercenaries and has used his Brotherhood contacts to find out where the Investigators are heading (if he cannot find out through other means). It might be possible for Taylor to waylay the Investigators and have a pitched battle in the streets of Moniko, but perhaps the best way to use him will be to pursue the Investigators along the route to Duoki.

The Brotherhood could follow the Investigators along the Duoki road keeping their distance for a while until the Investigators get into an encounter with Blood River minions. They will then use that opportunity to ambush the Investigators.

The continual presence of the Brotherhood pursuing the Investigators throughout this adventure is useful to bring a sense of urgency and importance. The Brotherhood should be used to remind the Investigators that there are many parties very interested in the outcome of their efforts, and also to force them to be quick and decisive when dealing with the Blood River.

Even if this force is soundly defeated, Lyle Taylor will not give up. He will escape and continue to follow the Investigators into Duoki. There, he can even inspire a force of the Blood River gangers to aid him on his personal crusade against the Investigators.

CRIMSON STAR

If one of the Investigators is beholden to Crimson Star, he can encounter a Crimson Star agent in Moniko. The Crimson Star officer will choose a convenient moment to contact the Investigator, away from the rest of the party. He will interrogate him on what he has done since leaving Longshore and what the Investigators' current plans are. And he will then be warned as to his further conduct.

There is little point to this encounter except to keep the screw turned on the unfortunate Investigator.

TRAVELLING ON SURFACE FROM MONIKO

The Investigators might take the decision to travel to the Necromakina across the surface directly from Moniko, rather than brave the unknown tunnels towards Duoki. Although there is no official surface gate here, there is a network of inspection ducts for the extractor fan which the Investigators could use to access the surface. They should probably be warned against this, by anyone in the know, because surface travel over such a distance, especially by the inexperienced, is very likely to end badly.

If the Investigators do attempt the journey then it might be fun to have them wandering around in circles, battered by the elements, running out of supplies and returning to Moniko with their tails between their legs. Or, even if this strategy turns out to be successful, it will be a good chance to really bring home how difficult surface travel is. The Investigators will have avoided many of the perils of this section, but they will also miss the opportunity of benefiting from some of the encounters, and they will certainly arrive at the Necromakina site in a very fatigued state, and probably a lot later than they would have managed, had they used the Duoki route.

DUOKI ROAD

If the Investigators have not fully planned their route already, it should be a simple enough task to find the way to Duoki. Moniko cavern has several dozen exits, leading to mining areas and other secondary complexes. Most of these are still extremely busy. The Duoki route is one of the few that is almost devoid of traffic, having only impoverished-looking workers making their way into and out of it on foot.

The first mile or two of tunnel leading to Duoki is easy enough going and is known as Duoki Road although, supposedly, it does not lead there anymore. Duoki Road is maintained and the tunnel is lined with rough, makeshift dwellings built onto and into the tunnel walls.

This is a slum area where some of Moniko's poorer migrant and most menial workforces have managed to find shelter.

The dwellings rapidly become more ramshackle and desperate the further the Investigators travel down the tunnel, until by the end it looks like the sort of dangerous slum area most outsiders avoid. However, the Investigators are probably big enough and ugly enough that they need not fear the street gang of young thugs who hang out here.

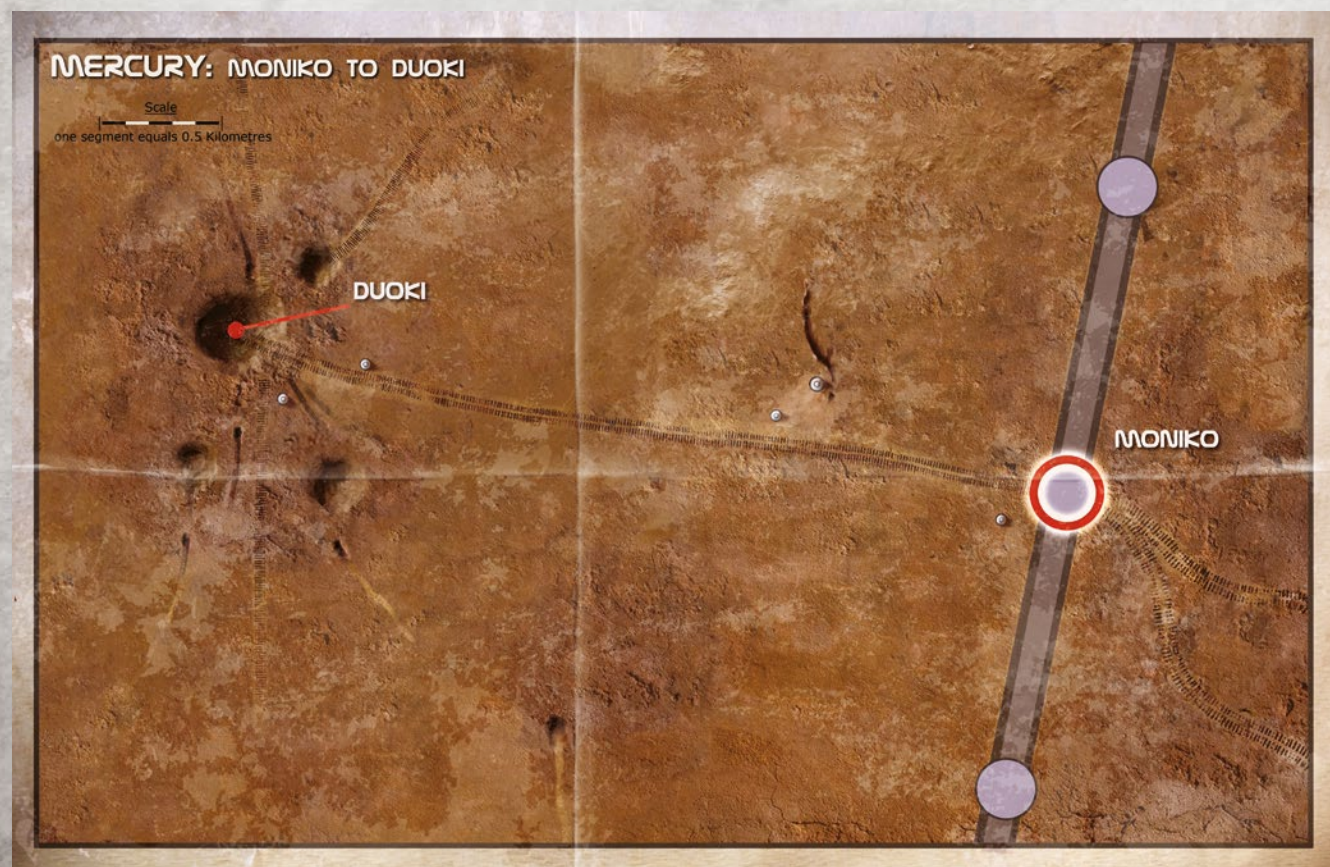
After a couple of miles, the tunnel ends in a mess of rubble and rock; the tunnel has collapsed. It could be that the tunnel collapsed through wear and tear but a **Challenging D2 Observation** test will reveal that it has been deliberately collapsed through a controlled demolition.

It looks as if there is no way to continue the journey. However, a route through the rubble remains and it will take a **Daunting D3 Observation** test to spot this. This route has been created by the Blood River gangsters to give them access to Moniko. They bribe the street gang here to scare off locals, and generally make the place uninviting to anyone who might be tempted to stick their nose in. However, the gangsters are just kids and should not give the Investigators any problems, even if they do retain the pose of a hardened street gang.

If one of the kids in the Duoki Road street gang is leant on with a **Challenging D2 Persuade** test, he will tell the Investigators all about the situation and the existence of the tunnel through the rubble. The Blood River gangsters are smugglers or raiders, or just outlaws. Sometimes they come through the rubble to carry out petty crime in Moniko. Sometimes they use the tunnel to smuggle goods in and out. Blood River throws the gang the odd piece of black market goods to stop locals sniffing around, and to keep the route through the rubble hidden. They will not generally go through themselves because Blood River tell them not to. The Moniko police never bother with it.

A **Daunting D3 Persuade** test will get the street kids to reveal that sometimes they do go through the rubble path when ordered to by Blood River to help transport stuff they have raided. After a few hundred yards the collapsed section ends, and the regular tunnel continues on for about ten more miles. This will be guarded by Blood River. They do not know what is at the end of the tunnel as they have never been that far.

A **Dire D4 Persuade** test will reveal that sometimes Blood River raid Moniko and bring back as many people as they can. The street kids assume that they will be used as cheap labour for whatever Blood River are up to. At the end of the tunnel there is a base that seems to be heavily defended, although they have never gone there.



THE TUNNEL TO DUOKI

The secret way through the rubble of the tunnel collapse goes on for a few hundred yards. In places huge slabs of concrete make the route feel secure, in others scraps of metal and wood shore up the roof that feels like it might cave in at any moment. But it is easy to see that the route is well-used, and therefore should be safe enough, despite the street gang's efforts to hide it.

Once this section is passed, the way opens up again into the wide, high tunnel that clearly used to be a busy thoroughfare, and is now eerily silent. It travels dead straight for as far as any light source can reach. A pair of dead-straight rails run the length of the tunnel. Occasionally the largely featureless route is littered by the odd minor cave-in, abandoned ore-transport, or piece of machinery. Despite the seemingly featureless environment, the floor and walls of the tunnel are punctuated by various access routes, cable channels, and ventilation ducts, that might be used to make any encounters more interesting.

Blood River do almost all their criminal activity in Monoki and therefore need the tunnel, and make sure it is secure and well-patrolled. The Investigators will not be able to make the journey to Duoki without running into at least one of these patrols. The Blood River gangers consider this tunnel their own personal route to Monoki and anyone travelling along it their property.

BLOOD RIVER PATROL

As they make their way through the tunnel, the Investigators are almost bound to meet a Blood River patrol coming the other way. The tunnel is long, straight, and almost featureless, so to make this sort of encounter more interesting, it should probably occur near an abandoned ore hopper or other piece of rusting machinery.

If the Investigators spot the patrol coming then the machinery will be conveniently positioned for them to use to set up an ambush, or for cover. If the patrol spots the PCs coming, then similarly, this can be used to their advantage.

The Blood River gangers should know the tunnel like the back of their hand, and so they might be better at making the environment work for them. For example, they might know of access ducts in the walls or below the surface that they can be used to encircle the Investigators or to surprise them.

Any captured Blood River gangster will be able to give the Investigators a good idea of what awaits them at the end of the tunnel, depending on intimidation or other suitable tests. They can reveal that the settlement has hundreds of gangsters who live in the railway station. They make their living raiding Moniko. Moniko rarely bothers to hit back and can afford to lose the little bit that

Blood River takes. There is a tall tower in Duoki which goes to the cavern roof, and as far as anyone knows, might go all the way to the surface. They are ruled by special samurai whom one crosses at one's own peril.

They will be cagey about these samurai overlords, however, implying that the Investigators might not live to regret messing with them. One bold gangster might warn the Investigators that if they are thinking of going to Duoki they had better think again, because the samurai of the tower are powerful and terrible and the Investigators will have no chance against them. There are rumours that they are not human, but that is just a legend to scare the gangsters into obedience.

BLOOD RIVER OUTLAW

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	7	8	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	6	6	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	1	1	–	1	1	–	–	1	–

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: Scavenged Armour Pieces: (Arms 1, Torso 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **No. 4 Windrider** (ranged): Close, 1+**T**3, Burst, Unbalanced
- ◀ **Slicer (melee)**: 1+**T**5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **An Outlaws Life**: The Blood River gang constantly live life on the edge, which has toughened them physically, but left them somewhat jaded. They may re-roll one d20 when making a Survival test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, they may reduce the difficulty of the required Willpower test by one when exposed to a traumatic event, which may eliminate the need for a test.
- ◀ **Honour the Blood**: Hierarchy is everything to the Blood River gang, as is loyalty to one's own faction. When attempting to extract information from a gang member, increase the difficulty of any Command or Persuade test by one.
- ◀ **Tunnel Rats**: The Blood River gang constantly patrol the tunnel between Moniko and Duoki; they know all of the nooks and crannies. Gang members may roll an additional d20 on their Stealth test when attempting an ambush in the tunnel system between the two habitats.



Duoki Tunnel Rats.

BLOOD RIVER SLAVE GANG

This encounter can be used to foreshadow the situation in Duoki. If the Investigators are making reasonable time in their trek through the tunnel, they might catch up with this Blood River gang. They captured about twenty Moniko workers from the slums shortly before the Investigators arrived on the scene and are now bringing them to Duoki.

Because of the difficulty moving a bunch of prisoners all shackled together through the dark tunnel, progress is very slow. Any reasonable pace the Investigators are making will catch them up with the gang. The tunnels are considered a safe area by Blood River and so they have not bothered with a rear guard. Provided the Investigators are keeping reasonably quiet and taking care, they should spot the slave gang before they themselves are spotted, so they should have time to consider their actions.

If the Investigators get to interact with the prisoners, or perhaps some surviving gangers, they can learn that the slavers struck just before light that morning and dragged everyone they could find

off the streets from a slum area of Monoki. The pale, emaciated prisoners expect that they will be used as slaves, which is nothing to look forward to, but frankly not that much worse than the conditions they have been surviving under in Monoki.

The gangers know, however, that they will not be used as slaves. They will be brought before their samurai in the tower, and who knows what happens to them after that. All they know is that they will never be seen again. Other information about Duoki can be gleaned from ganger survivors as described in the Blood River Patrol encounter above.

PURSUERS

It is likely that at least once faction encountered in the Foreigners' Quarter is hot on the heels of the Investigators at this point. There is something to be said for having them pursued indefinitely, giving the Investigators the odd hint that they are being dogged by persons unknown. On the other hand, the GM may wish to bring things to a head or at least present a more direct indication that there is someone on their tail, with a no holds barred firefight. Blue

Sky, Jade Temple, Crimson Star and the Brotherhood might all have reasons to pursue the Investigators depending on events in the earlier part of this chapter.

It is during this section that the Investigators can be caught up and challenged by this faction. Once the Investigators reach Duoki, they are likely to have better things to do trying to stay alive and getting to the surface than to interact with these factions. Of course, it can always make things more interesting to give the Investigators more than one thing to do at once. In addition, should the Investigators get captured in Duoki, it can be an useful option to have them rescued by one of the above factions. This will also put the Investigators in their debt.

DUOKI

The Duoki mining complex is situated in a huge cavern, partly natural and partly mined. The complex used to feed the industrial facility at Monoki with ore. Huge trains used to take the ore along the laser-straight service tunnel to be smelted there. It was one of the first mines opened in the area, and became one of the first to become mined out and subsequently abandoned. For the last few years it has been inhabited by a crime gang that has some very mysterious leaders.

The cavern wall is studded with countless openings burrowing into the rock in a veritable warren of shafts and interconnected tunnels some of which are very precarious, cave ins are not uncommon. The cavern floor is littered with many mountains of ore and rubble left here when the place was shut down. A network of conveyors links the ore heaps with the central railway terminal.

The terminal stands at the centre of the network of conveyors and rails. The rails are there to manoeuvre the great hoppers that were used to take the ore to Monoki, a dozen or so of which have been left here. The rail terminal is the only large inhabitable building in the complex and that has been taken over by the Blood River gang. Many gangers live in the ore hoppers, while some senior gangers and their leaders, the samurai, inhabit the tower above the terminal.

The tower reaches right into the rock above the complex and on right up to the planet's surface. It was originally used to bring in equipment and manpower when the facility was being constructed, but has been little used since then. The tower is now used as a status symbol for the 'samurai'; the higher up the tower you reside, the higher your standing within the gang.

If the Investigators are going to get to the surface of Mercury then they will need to find a way to deal with the Blood River gang and especially their leaders. And these leaders are not conventional crime lords.

THE GUARD HOPPER

The first hopper the Investigators will come to as they approach Duoki is set aside solely as a guard post. One sub-gang is always on duty here. The sides of the hopper have been cut through to make dozens of small holes, to allow the guards to fire from within while staying under the protection of the thick metal sides of the hopper. There is a small iron shack here, too, which is always manned and which Blood River use as a check point. Anyone travelling this way will need to convince the guards that they have legitimate business in Duoki.

THE ORE HOPPERS

These giant railway hoppers were used to transport the ore from Duoki mine to Monoki. When the mine was closed it was easier to leave the transporters here than to build the infrastructure to transfer them to a different railway.

There are currently a dozen or so hoppers parked around the old railway terminal. These are used as housing for the Blood River gangers. Over the years a rivalry has grown up among the gangers of each hopper and so now each hopper has its own gang associated with it. These sub-gangs function together and carry out their missions together. Each hopper has been decorated with the symbol of a gang and the whole area has become extremely territorial. It is not even permitted for a gangster to visit a rival gang's hopper and so inter-gang business is conducted on neutral ground, usually in the terminal.

The hoppers are roofed with makeshift sheets of metal scavenged from elsewhere and are naturally well armoured. There are usually only two ways in or out, on either end of the wagon, and an emergency exit whereby everything is dumped out the bottom of the hopper, as if delivering its cargo of ore. The odd small window is usually cut out of the side for observation and these can be closed with thick metal shutters.

All sorts of silly rituals and etiquette have grown up between the proud gangers and it is not uncommon for even the smallest slight to result in an execution or a formal duel to the death. Some of the feuds have been going on so long that some gangers will not even speak to the members of other gangs. The samurai in the tower use this to their advantage, using the rivalry to spur each gang on to greater efforts, and also to keep any opposition to their rule divided.

A neutral might sense that the atmosphere around these hoppers and among the gangers is usually very tense, especially when a feud is reaching a peak. If the Investigators get the opportunity and are clever about it, there might be advantages in setting one gang against another.

THE MINES

The mine area is many kilometres of low tunnels that often break out into mined-out, angular caverns of roughly hewn rock. The network seems to go on for ever and nobody knows its full extent.

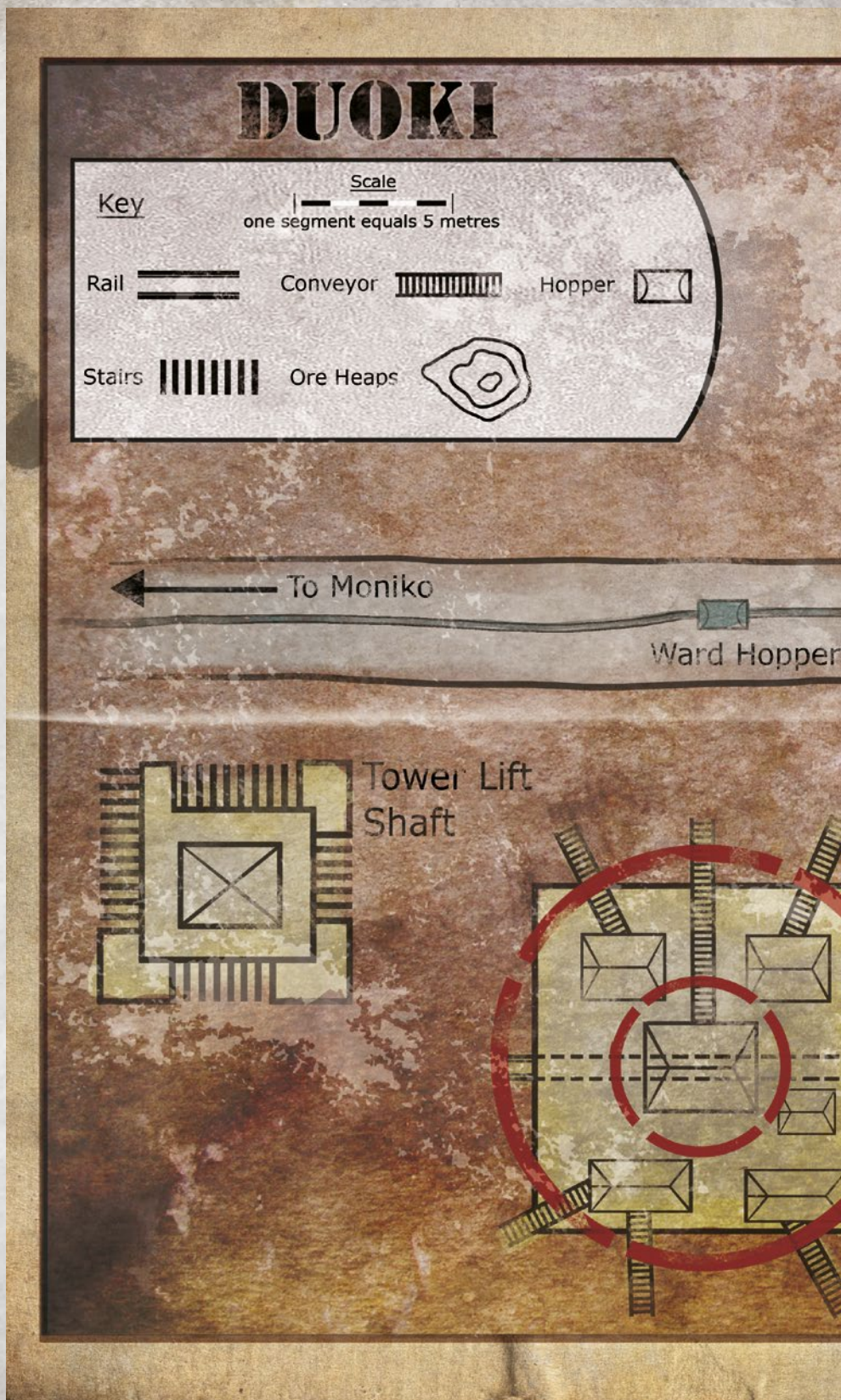
Part of the mine, close to the railway terminal, has been cordoned off with heavy metal sheets. These form pens that are used to hold prisoners until they are required by the samurai. The area is always heavily guarded with each sub-gang taking it in turns to guard the area for a day. The pens can be opened merely by sliding one of the smaller metal sheets across, but this takes a **Challenging D2 Athletics** test or a **Daunting** one if it has to be done silently.

The prisoners are simply livestock. They are there until needed by the 'samurai'. They will then be consumed. The other prisoners who have been kidnapped from Moniko usually meet one of two fates. The older ones become slaves, doing the more menial tasks around the settlement. The younger ones are introduced into the crime gangs and will become gangers, themselves. The middle batch, the ones the 'samurai' consider the tastiest, await their fate in these pens.

THE TERMINAL

The ore terminal lurks in the middle of the great cavern like a huge, rusting spider. It sits astride the railway lines, surrounded by hoppers, and a tangle of conveyors leading from the mines. It is easy enough to reach the heart of the terminal through any of the conveyors, which are too numerous to guard, or up the metal staircases that wind around each of its legs.

The lowest level of the terminal above ground level is the loading bay, essentially a platform above the railway cars used to store and distribute the ore. It is an expanse of functional ironworks divided into hoppers for storing the ore. The roof is crisscrossed with cranes and grabbing arms.





It is used as a sort of meeting and dining hall for the gangers. The samurai conduct a medieval-looking court. Like a medieval court, favours are passed down from on high to the various gang leaders. The feast nights are mad, debauched affairs where the highest ranking gangers are wine and dine, served by slaves and given back some of the spoils of their raids on Moniko.

A favourite game of the gangers is to put a gang member who is to be punished into one of the larger hoppers near the centre of the platform, while wronged parties or high-ranking gangers control hydraulic, articulated arms used to shovel the ore around. The game is to see how long the victim can survive before being crushed to death, torn apart by the metal arms, or ejected through the trap doors.

THE GANGERS

The humans of the Blood River are generally normal folk who have, for whatever reason, forsaken mainstream drudgery in Moniko and become outlaws. They see this lifestyle as preferable to one of poverty and near-slavery serving the Mishima corporations.

It's a lifestyle in which they need to be ruthless to even survive. They obey those higher than themselves in the gang hierarchy, usually without question. And they aspire to rise in the strict hierarchy of the gang.

Blood River is split into many sub-gangs which act together, each relying on their brother gang-member. Between these bands Blood River is riven by countless petty feuds and grievances. A ganger is just as likely to meet his death at the hands of a rival ganger as at the hands of Mishima authority.

There is an element of pride among the gangers that their leadership seems so enigmatic and powerful. They are credited with magic powers from myth and legend. But at the same time there is an unease that something is not quite right. The higher a ganger rises in the hierarchy, the more he will come into contact with the samurai and the more uneasy he might become about their existence.

Even so, the only way to get on in the gang is to have the favour of the samurai and so these gangers will do their best for their overlords. But the gang leaders also live in fear, for the favour of the samurai is fickle and their wrath is swift and deadly.

THE TOWER

The surface access tower is built directly on top of the ore distribution platform. It was originally constructed to allow raw materials to be brought in from the surface of the planet to aid the construction of the ore terminal and the mine works. Then, during the heyday of the plant's production, it was sometimes used to get the most important

personnel into and out of the mine by spaceship. Since the mine was closed, it has been allowed to lapse into the same sort of disrepair that pervades the entire plant.

The tower is little more than a central, square structure containing an elevator surrounded by levels of iron deck-plates resting on a rough ironwork scaffold. It rises about thirty storeys before it disappears into the roof of the cavern.

The decks are linked by a square staircase that surrounds it for its entire elevation. The staircase and deck plates, after the first few storeys, are not even contained within barriers, but left wide open. There is nothing to stop a misplaced footfall resulting in a plunge straight downwards, and certain death. As the elevator no longer works the only way to scale the structure is to walk round and round it using the precarious staircase.

The tower does not even have enough structural integrity to stand on its own; it relies on being secured to the roof of the cavern, to stop it collapsing. Essentially it hangs down from the roof of the cavern, rather than being constructed upwards. As it is ascended, particularly near the central levels, it sways unnervingly under the weight and movement of its users.

The bottom levels of the tower, above the ore distribution depot, are inhabited by the 'samurai'. They seem to occupy the levels depending on a hierarchy that has nothing to do with the samurai personas they adopt, but instead depends on the unfathomable Blood Worm status system. Each samurai occupies its own level, together with a handful of slaves and ganger servants doing their bidding.

As the elevator has not worked for many years, the central shaft is now used by the samurai as their main residences. The areas have been floored, using left-over iron plates and girders from the mines. The lift shaft is actually quite sizeable (having been used to transport large plant equipment to the mine works) at about five meters square. The external decking that surrounds the shaft is about five meters wide, too.

Part of the generator plant is working and outputs enough power to light up whatever is required. The mines are still dark, with only the odd illumination around the prison cells. The ganger area around the hoppers is well lit in places. The tower is strung like a Christmas tree, lit up with numerous small lights for the first few floors. It seems to be aesthetically pleasing to the Blood Worms.

THE SAMURAI

The number of samurai in this part of the adventure is unspecified, but there should be enough to make the Investigators' progress through this section very challenging if they just wish to fight their way through. Negotiating with the samurai should prove to be very

difficult, but it should be manageable up to a point, should the Investigators make an effort at this.

The samurai are actually the Dark Soul entities: Blood Worms. The Blood Worms have lain dormant for countless millennia beneath the surface of Mercury until recently. Shortly before the mine was closed down, these Blood Worms were disturbed by the mining operations and awakened.

The Blood Worms first took over the bodies of a few of the miners and skulked in the deepest recesses of the mine, picking off the odd miner victim. Once they grew stronger, and the mine closed, they were able to thrive, away from the watchful eye of Mishima. The Blood Worms managed to form the outlaw band Blood River which now acts as a front for them.

Ostensibly, Blood River is just another crime gang making whatever money they can while trying to avoid the attention of the corporations. But its real function is to attain human victims to feed the Blood Worms.

Whenever the samurai make an appearance among their gang members they do so behind samurai masks. This does not particularly arouse the suspicion of the gangers but merely adds to their leaders' mystique and authority. The gang members live in fear of their

masked masters and will do whatever they say. The most respected and powerful gangers aspire to the rank of samurai themselves, little knowing that this would actually involve their destruction.

When a ganger is promoted to samurai this usually means that a current samurai body has been worn out. A ganger is brought before the samurai in what he will expect to be a solemn ceremony of honour and dedication. What actually happens is that the ganger is held down before one of the samurai, who lifts his samurai mask to reveal his Blood Worm identity. The Blood Worm then consumes the head of the ganger and takes over his body.

Former colleagues might recognise the body of the erstwhile ganger, with his head supposedly hidden behind his samurai mask. They might notice his change in gait and new, strange behaviour. But they put this down to the magical powers that might get imparted on promotion to samurai, or at least, they try not to think about it too much.

BLOOD WORMS

Mainly take the stats of the human body it takes control of, slightly lower Agility type stats but raise toughness type ones. Mental stats are the worm's itself—high, with Dark Soul powers. Lots of mind control psychic powers (see above).



Blood Worms, in their normal form and on their Blood River hosts.

BLOOD WORMS

Blood Worms are ancient creatures of the Dark Soul. Once, in ancient times, a feared and common enough predator, they were almost wiped out by the Ancients. Now, the only surviving Blood Worms are in hibernation. They are sometimes stumbled across in the darkest places in the far flung corners of the solar system. If awoken, they can be hideous foes, and if allowed to live, they can grow in power and become prodigious servants of the Dark Soul.

Blood Worms appear as short, stubby worms with a huge maw at one end tapering towards its tail. Its skin is an almost black dark-purple with small, rough scales that exude a glistening, clear mucus. They are about 70cm long. Its maw is lined with many rows of dark teeth and is about 25cm wide, but it is able to dislocate its array of jawbones in order to make the mouth many times wider than this.

When feeding on blood, the worm bites into its victim's flesh and latches on in a grip that is virtually impossible to shift while draining its victim's blood in a matter of seconds. When it attempts to take over a victim, it will eat its head, enveloping the entire head in one movement and biting it off.

When hibernating, they virtually turn to stone. They can stay in this state through eternity and, when discovered, will look

like nothing more animate than a fossil. When disturbed by something that might be a food source, the worm can reanimate in a matter of hours.

Blood Worms feed on human blood. Once they latch onto a victim they can suck all its blood in a matter of seconds. The worm is then bloated and will be sluggish for a few minutes. Blood Worms need to feed about once per week.

They lead a tortured existence however, for, while it is fresh blood they crave, it is the tainted blood of their host body that sustains them most. A Blood Worm's saliva and mucus can be used to corrupt a victim's blood, which not only raises them as a Kadaver, but reconstitutes their blood into a potent source of fuel for the Blood Worm.

To take over a human body, a Blood Worm eats its victim's head but does not suck its blood. The worm itself then sits upon its victim's shoulders and burrows its tail into the victim's body. Its mucus and saliva work quickly to alter the victim's blood, which reanimates the corpse. The worm's mucus allows control of the deceased victim's body by providing control of the central nervous system, though only in a passable aping of the victim's movement.

The Blood Worm, when it is in control of a human, appears exactly as it should, a head-sized worm with a massive maw sat on top

BLOOD WORM, WITHOUT HOST BODY ☆

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
13 (+1)	13 (+1)	2	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
2	11	12	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT	FORTITUDE	MOVEMENT	SENSES	SOCIAL	TECHNICAL
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	3	2	2	2

WOUNDS: 10

SOAK: Slimy Scales: (All 3)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Insatiable Maw (melee):** 2+**↑**6, Dreadful, Gruesome, Unforgiving 2, Vile

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Creature of Symmetry:** Blood Worms are powerful minions of the Dark Soul itself, but their access to its power is entirely dependent upon their current satiation. Blood worms that have a personal Dark Symmetry pool of one may use the following Dark Gifts: Black Rot Spew, Dark Curse, Distorted Armour, and Vile Cloud. Blood Worms with two or more Dark Symmetry points also gain access to Dark Strain and Stir the Dark Heart. A Blood Worm that has three personal Dark Symmetry points may additionally employ Veil of Enemies.
- ◆ **Dark Presence**
- ◆ **Dormancy:** Unless it finds a fresh supply of blood, a Blood Worm that has expended all of its Personal Dark Symmetry will enter dormancy at the end of the current scene, becoming inert and semi-fossilised. It gains a Soak of five in all locations, and the Inured to Pain and Unliving special abilities. A Dire D4 Mysticism test is required to recognise it as anything other than a fossilised rock.
- ◆ **Essence Feast:** Blood Worms delve into the essence of the Kadaver hosts they ride to fuel their powers. A fresh host contains four Dark Symmetry points, which may only be used to power the Blood Worm's Dark Gifts and special abilities. Blood

of a headless corpse. As appalling as this sounds, worms are surprisingly good at interacting in human society, provided, of course, they can find a mask or appropriate headgear. If the worm is regularly fed, it is able to keep its victim 'fresh' and serviceable for many months.

The worm is also able to communicate by speech. It can talk in any language its victim knew, although its voice could not possibly pass as the victims. Instead, its voice is so rasping and gravelly it is almost difficult to understand. The worm will retain any armour or weapons the corpse possessed when alive, though it finds it difficult to provide the fine motor control required to aim and shoot ranged weaponry.

The longer a Blood Worms stays active, the more victims it kills, and the longer it stays attached to a victim and controls its body, the more powerful it becomes. The worm will gradually attain Dark Soul powers appropriate to its controlled victim's experience and abilities, and the activities it has been carrying out since it took control.

Conversely, the longer the body is used by the Blood Worm, the more ragged it becomes. The less life-like it appears, the more shambolic its movements, and the less convincingly it is able to pass for human, as the infusion of Dark Symmetry that would usually keep a Kadaver functioning far beyond what would be reasonable for a rotting corpse is instead consumed by the worm.

Worms lose a point of Personal Dark Symmetry for each month they are active, though this may be taken from the host instead.

- ◀ **Fear (2)**
- ◀ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Inured to Cold**
- ◀ **Inured to Heat**
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Personal Dark Symmetry (3)**
- ◀ **Slave to Symmetry (1)**

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Blood Drain:** As a Standard Action, a Blood Worm may attempt to drain the blood of any victim that it has grabbed. The Blood Worm may spend Dark Symmetry points up to a maximum of the victim's current number of Critical Wounds. The victim must immediately make an opposed Resistance test, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent. The victim loses a Critical Wound for each success that the opposed test fails by, or none if they win the opposed test. The Blood Worm gains one point of Personal Dark Symmetry once it has removed

all of a victim's Critical Wounds, but also gains the Dazed and Staggered conditions for a number of rounds equal to the total number of Critical Wounds it has drained.

- ◀ **In Search of a New Host:** Once all of its Personal Dark Symmetry is spent, a Blood Worm may spend Dark Symmetry points from the general pool to delay the onset of Dormancy. Each point spent allows it to remain active for one more scene.
- ◀ **Instinctual Hunger:** Anyone that moves close to a dormant Blood Worm risks disturbing its slumber. A worm under the effects of Dormancy may attempt a Daunting D3 Insight test to detect the presence of any potential host within Reach. The GM may spend Dark Symmetry points to add d20's to the test, to a maximum of two. If successful, a further Dark Symmetry point may be spent to instantly make a melee attack against the target, which will lead to a Blood Drain attempt on its following turn. A Blood Worm may only spend three Dark Symmetry points to attempt to bite a victim before it must slumber for a week.

BLOOD WORM, WITH HOST BODY ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
16 (+1)	16 (+1)	6	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	11	12	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	2	2	-	-	2	1	2	-	-	-

WOUNDS: 8

SOAK: As victim

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **As victim**
- ◀ **Rending Claws (melee):** 2+17, Toxic 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Supernatural Physique (1)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Strength (1)**
- ◀ **Unliving**
- ◀ **Ridden:** The stats provided above are essentially for the physical attributes of the host corpse; the Blood Worm itself retains all of the powers ascribed to it previously, including its own Wound pool and Soak. Attacks to the head affect the Blood Worm, whilst any other region struck affects the host body. A Blood Worm may not use its bite attack while attached to a host, though it may use the Kadaver body to attack. Increase the difficulty by one for all ranged attacks made by the Blood Worm's host body.

DORMANT BLOOD WORMS

The GM might decide it worthwhile to have an encounter with a dormant Blood Worm. This can occur either before or after the Investigators encounter the Blood Worms themselves. If the Investigators end up wandering around the labyrinthine mine workings, they could easily stumble upon a dormant Blood Worm. This will work especially well if one or two Investigators have split off from the rest and find themselves lost in the mines.

If the Investigators search the domiciles of one of the Blood Worms on the tower, that Blood Worm could be keeping a dormant version secret for its own purposes. The dormant Blood Worms could have fallen into the possession of any of the other characters the Investigators are likely to meet during this section. Or the worm might be in the cavern area at the top of the Tower, near to the airlock. If an Investigator gets lost in this section, or goes exploring, he might be unlucky enough to stumble upon a dormant specimen that has never been encountered by mankind before.

The dormant Blood Worms stay curled up in a ball and have a similar dark skin to the active ones, except no mucus is secreted and so the skin looks hard and rock-like. It gives the impression of being a fossil, or simply just a roundish piece of rock. If, however, the Dormant Blood Worm senses life within a few inches of it, for example if being carried or closely inspected, it will suddenly snap to life and attack whatever is nearby. On a successful attack it has managed to grab and ingest the victims head. It cannot afford to expend the energy to make more than two or three unsuccessful attacks before it is required to go dormant again for many days.

TAKING ON THE BLOOD WORMS

Similar to Mishima society and exemplified by the harsh social structures of the Duoki gangers, the Blood Worms are antagonistic towards each other, display a keen rivalry, and will take any opportunity to raise themselves above their rivals in the eyes of the rest of the gang. The Blood Worms must always watch their backs, and their status within the gang is constantly changing. Even an undisputed leader, once it occupies a new human body, will need to prove itself again by clawing its way through the strata of Blood Worm politics, literally rising up the surface access tower as it goes.

The Blood Worms will not pass up an opportunity to gain kudos among their peers and make their rivals lose face. So, the arrival of

the Investigators, if they are given the chance, will be seen as an opportunity and also a potential hazard by any of the Blood Worms they contact.

This could prove to be the Investigators' greatest danger, as a Blood Worm could easily conclude that it will prefer the Investigators dead. Or it could be an advantage, as the Investigators are used as pawns in some sort of game between Blood Worms. They will be kept alive, and the opportunity to escape, or to exploit the intra-gang Blood Worm conflicts will present itself.

The GM should play this rivalry blatantly, in front of the Investigators (Blood Worms are not interested in secrecy in their politics), allowing them an insight into how the Blood Worms get along, and thereby giving them the ideas and potential to benefit from this.

GETTING THROUGH

The Duoki encounter will be difficult for the Investigators if they are reactive and take things at face value. Although Duoki functions like a small town in some ways, it is a regimented and strict headquarters for a deadly crime gang commended by unspeakable bloodsucking monsters. The Investigators will need to approach things carefully.

Although the crime gang is riven with factions and keen rivalry, it is close-knit and heavily dependent on the correct etiquette. This should make it difficult for the Investigators to pull off posing as gangers if they try to infiltrate the area that way.

The Blood Worms are not against negotiation and reason, but things will have to be made worth their while. If the Investigators can be captured, they will have to offer the samurai something quite valuable to negotiate from a position of strength. The samurai need to feel stable and secure in the niche they have created for themselves, and they need a ready supply of fresh humans for food.

There is little, therefore, that the Investigators will be able to offer them that might be tempting. They are certainly uninterested in the Investigators search for the Necromakina, and they will wish to avoid the scrutiny that might come if the Investigators' were to succeed in their mission.

If the Investigators are captured they can be thrown in the prison pens in the mines until they are required as food; this will give them a chance to realise the dangers they face, and once they escape, to come up with a better plan to get through the tower.

Getting up the tower could be difficult also. It is extremely difficult to scale the structure surreptitiously. Because the samurai occupy most of the early levels, and because it is so exposed, it is hard to imagine how the Investigators might climb it without the Blood Worms' permission.

If it should come to a pitched battle, the Blood Worms are powerful psychics and the gangers are competent fighters. They are well-disciplined and know their survival will depend on their conduct in such a fight. They have nowhere attractive to run, and so are likely to fight to the death. All in all, the Duoki situation should give the Investigators a difficult problem to solve.

THE CHASE

However the Investigators manage to get past the Blood Worms and their ganger minions, they will have to climb the surface access tower. This will be an excellent opportunity to get an interesting chase going.

The Investigators will need to climb thirty storeys to get to the roof of the cavern and another five storeys through the rock before they reach the surface of Mercury. Each storey comprises steps that cling to the four sides of the tower. Therefore, they must also make a full lap of the tower for every storey climbed. This will be a strenuous, taxing feat especially if the Investigators do not start out by pacing themselves carefully.

Any pursuit will depend on how and what the Investigators did during this section. If they managed to get in with a faction of the gangers or a particular Blood Worm then it would follow that a rival faction would want to see the Investigators perish. If the Investigators used brute force to get through the gangers, then almost all the gangers can be chasing them.

It is possible that factions encountered during the Investigators' time in the Foreigners' Quarter will still be on their tail. It should be worth hounding the Investigators with one of these if possible. If they are to follow the Investigators up the tower, they would also need to somehow get past the Blood Worms and the gangers. The GM should not worry about the details too much; non-player factions can be quite resourceful off-camera.

If the Investigators adopted a Blue Sky agent as part of their team then it follows that Jade Temple will be on their tail. And likewise, if Jade Temple managed to make a good impression with the Investigators then Blue Sky could be pursuing them. In addition, depending on how they dealt with them earlier, Crimson Star could well be in pursuit.

Finally, the Brotherhood has been on the Investigators' tail for a while now. It is important that they continue this pursuit onto the next part of the adventure. It is not vital that they follow them through this section and up the tower, however. They can turn up on the surface of Mercury, if required. Or, if it suits the adventure better, they can simply get wind of the Investigators' movements during the next part of the adventure (on Mars) and simply take up there, where they left off.

The GM should not worry too much about these factions if their pursuit does not work with the events of this section and how the Investigators dealt with the Blood Worms. They can easily return to play if required once the Investigators get up to the surface. The important thing is to have at least one faction that has a good reason and the means to pursue the Investigators as they climb the tower.

PURSUIT SYSTEM

Each floor counts as a zone in itself. The Investigators must make an **Opposed Athletics test** to stay ahead of their pursuers, and any excess Momentum may be spent to gain an additional floor. Pursuers may make a ranged attack if within Medium range, though this adds one Momentum to the escapee's next Athletics test. Unless they have a talent that allows otherwise, the characters must stop running to shoot (which means they will more than likely be caught). Both parties may run for a number of floors equivalent to the lowest Physique stat amongst their group's members. Once this has been surpassed, they must make an **Average D1 Resistance test**, and if successful may continue running for another three floors beyond this; a new test should be made for every three floors gained beyond the first Resistance test, but both the difficulty of the Resistance test and the group's Dread increase by one each time. Failure of the Resistance test requires that the group stop and catch their breath.

While stopped, group members may make any Free, Restricted, or Standard Action that does not involve movement, and may remove one Dread per round from those they have gained through their ascent. They may continue upwards once three rounds have passed, though they must again make an Average D1 Athletics test after three floors, with an increase in difficulty and Dread as before. If the group takes six rounds of recovery, they may begin their climb again as though they had only just started, with no need to roll a Resistance test until the number of floors climbed again surpasses the lowest Physique amongst their group's members. The GM may spend up to three Dark Symmetry points on each Resistance test for the pursuers, with each point thus spent adding one d20 to the roll.

A Repercussion will result in the floor shifting or railings coming loose. The GM should nominate a player, who must then make an Average D1 Acrobatics test. Failure means that they have fallen from the edge. A Chronicle point may be spent to reduce the fall to 1d6 floors, although this may place them within the clutches of their pursuers!

THE CAVERN ROOF

The tower reaches the roof of the cavern after about thirty storeys. Then five storeys go directly through the rock before the surface of Mercury is reached. Within the rock, the tower is similar to the tower in the cavern, save that it feels much more solid and safe and there is nowhere to fall. The tower is firmly anchored to the cavern roof here.

This may give the Investigators an idea of how to shake their pursuers for good. The Tower is not really a structure built from the ground up, it was actually built from the surface, through this section of rock, and then downwards towards the mining facility. The entire tower is essentially a ladder suspended from the ceiling.

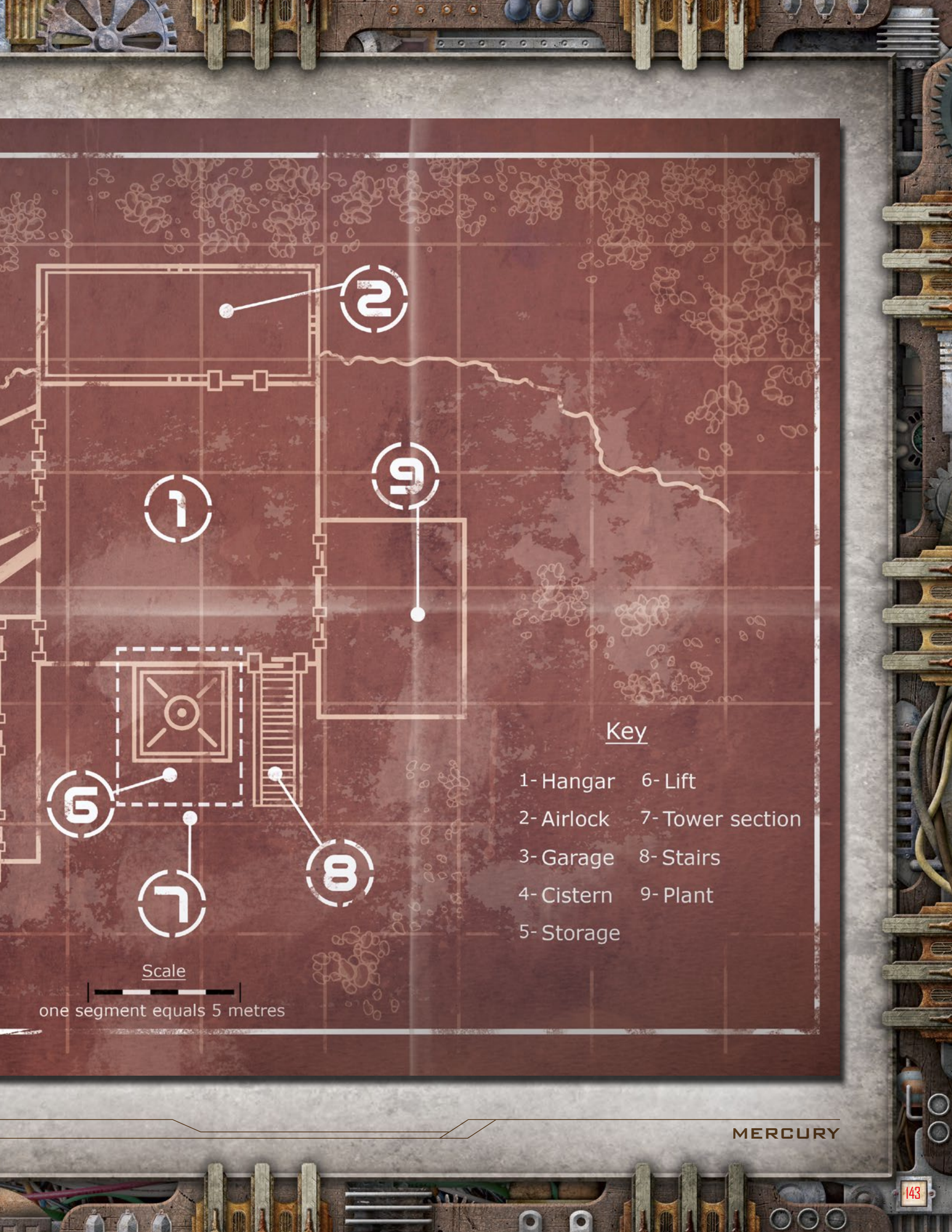
Although this is counter intuitive and not immediately apparent until they reach the ceiling of the cavern, if the Investigators were to somehow destroy a section of the tower below them, they would be safe and the tower would collapse beneath them, and their pursuers would undoubtedly be destroyed.

It is up to the Investigators how they might be able to make the tower collapse. Although the structure is rickety and sways as they ascend it, it was also built effectively for heavy industrial machinery, so the task should not be simple. If the GM is generous enough to have a cache of explosives in the airlock section that follows, then that would certainly do the job.

THE AIRLOCK

Once the ceiling of the cavern is reached, there is just the relatively short climb of five storeys within the rock before the Investigators reach the surface airlock. Although this is the sort of airlock that might be found in any space vehicle or station, Mercury has a (barely) survivable atmosphere. The construction and mining workers needed a system to keep out the worst of the Mercury weather, and an off-the-shelf standard vacuum industrial airlock was simply the easiest and cheapest option.





1

2

9

6

7

8

Key

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| 1- Hangar | 6- Lift |
| 2- Airlock | 7- Tower section |
| 3- Garage | 8- Stairs |
| 4- Cistern | 9- Plant |
| 5- Storage | |

Scale

one segment equals 5 metres

MERCURY

The area adjoining the lock is a large, iron platform half built into the rock and half given a thick, industrial looking, iron roof. It is clear from looking at it that a large section of the roof and one wall is designed to slide away, giving access to the planet's surface. The moveable door section is huge, about thirty metres wide and five meters high, so as to accommodate some of the massive mining and construction equipment that was required below.

The airlock doors are activated by a motorised hydraulic system. The plant for this system is in a room adjoining the hangar. Needless to say, after so long, the plant is not working. It could take a good while to fix it, and it requires a **Dire D4 Mechanics** test. Moving the doors through any other method is going to be extremely difficult as they are iron and huge.

The rest of the equipment in the airlock complex is at the GM's discretion. If the Investigators have not thought to bring surface suits, or have lost theirs, then there can be a supply of them in the storeroom. These are old and have not aged well, but they are better than nothing.

There are the cannibalised shells of two surface vehicles in the garage. These will be useless to the Investigators, unless the GM decides that it is possible that pooling the parts from both vehicles, as well as scavenging other bits and pieces from the plant room, could result in a usable vehicle after a **Dire D4 Mechanics** test and a lot of time.

There should be a supply of poor quality Survival Suits in one of the store rooms. The Investigators would have done well to get hold of some decent suits before they got this far. If they have not, then these, old, rotting, and easily broken suits will be their best bet.

There can be a supply of mining explosives in the storeroom also. This could be useful in destroying the tower or in getting the airlock doors open if the Investigators cannot manage to get the plant functioning. Any improvised use of these explosives requires a Daunting D3 Science test, because they are very old, and liable to either be more volatile than intended, or no longer functional.

If the Investigators are not able to get the power plant working again, and the GM wishes to make things particularly difficult for them, then he may decide that there are no explosives stored in the airlock complex. It would be apparent though, that Blood River must have access to some, after all they have control of the entire mine complex.

The various pieces of equipment and tools around the place will also mean that the Investigators have the opportunity to build any sort of device that they might think of to help them on their journey. There are any number of ways the Investigators can go about trying to open the airlock doors, and the GM should reward their originality and ingenuity.

There are water taps in the hangar, garage and store rooms. This could be vital if the Investigators have not brought enough water with them. They should have worked out that water supplies will be crucial when they attempt to cross Mercury's hot desert surface. The water has been sitting in the cistern for many years and it is rank. It smells of iron and has a distinctive red colour. But if they do not have their own supplies, this will be their best bet. The GM might consider that there is only a small amount of water left in the cistern, and so the Investigators will need to use it sparingly, and restrict its consumption carefully during their journey.

THE MERCURIAL DESERT

The surface of Mercury is an inhospitable, impossibly hot, desert wilderness, at the best of times even in the most temperate areas. As luck would have it, the Necromakina is situated in one of the hottest spots on Mercury, and the Investigators arrive at the height of summer, at the height of the day. It rarely gets hotter than this anywhere on Mercury.

The barren landscape beyond the airlock is a hypnotic expanse of coloured sands and burning heat haze. The sharp sand is whipped up by the cutting wind and thrown around viciously. It gets everywhere, clogs equipment, and can scour flesh to the bone.

Shifting dunes are interspersed with jutting crags and sharp rock formations. The sand storms weather parts of these formations smooth, making them appear glassy, and yet other parts are left sharp and jagged. The expanses of flat sand, interrupted by these spectacular rock formations give the impression of a sea punctuated by islands like teeth.

During a sand storm, the sands are blown in all directions. The landscape is sometimes barely recognisable from what was there only a few hours before. The dunes have shifted, many rock formations are buried, and others exposed. Sometimes tall, awe inspiring edifices now only jut a few metres above the sand, and what was only a low hill yesterday might be an imposing mountain today. The locals know to navigate by only the highest peaks.

Without protection, a human would not be able to stand more than an hour or so in this environment. It is important that the Investigators have some specialised equipment with them to protect against the conditions. The better the quality of this equipment, the better it will be for them.

The standard surface wear is a Surface Suit (on page 124). The Investigators will need these to survive on the surface for any length of time. Storms, however, can rip even the most protective surface suits from a man in minutes. Fortunately, there is usually somewhere sufficiently protective close by to shelter.

Their only other option for the journey would be to use some sort of vehicle that has been specially made or adapted for the conditions. If the Investigators are travelling in a vehicle, then the GM should feel free to test whether the vehicle breaks down or not. The harsh conditions will make this quite likely unless they have a particularly good vehicle. And it would be a shame if the Investigators did not sample the surface conditions of Mercury at least for some part of their journey.

The surface is rocky, jagged, and steep in places, making progress slow and difficult. Sometimes it might be necessary to spend time scouting for a decent route before making any progress at all. Being required to double back is a constant hazard for those who are not sure of their route.

Progress will be slow on the surface. Making twenty kilometres in a single day is very good going, and sometimes storms kick up that require the Investigators to hole up for many hours. At least they

will not have to worry about night closing in, for dusk is not due for another forty or so Earth-days yet. Some days the Investigators might only make four or five kilometres.

Progress is also very draining and the Investigators will find themselves needing to rest more often than they think. Sufficient supplies of water are also of huge importance. Fortunately, the suspected site for the Necromakina is only about fifty kilometres away from Duoki, but this could still take many days to cover.

The players make a minimum of five kilometres of progress each day. The GM should roll **T5** to represent their additional progress, though players may pay Dark Symmetry points to re-roll any dice that are not showing a Dark Symmetry Icon. Each Dark Symmetry Icon represents a potential encounter, plus 3km of progress (unless an encounter description states otherwise). If an encounter is indicated, the GM should roll 1d6 and consult the Road to the Old City encounter table. The players may gain some forewarning of the encounter by

SURFACE SURVIVAL

While travelling on the surface of Mercury, under these particularly harsh conditions, the GM should require each Investigator to make a **Daunting D3 Survival** test at the end of every days travel, which can be impacted by the quality of their Survival suit (see page 124). Damaged equipment will increase the Repercussion of this test by an additional one.

If this test is failed, the level of difference between failure and success should be recorded. These are cumulative, and will affect an Investigator according the following table:

Finding respite from Mercury's surface conditions, such as within a Surface Node or behind an airlock, will provide a wearer with the

opportunity to repair their Surface Suit. Each day spent repairing a suit and cleansing its essential systems in a 'clean' environment requires a Challenging D2 Mechanics test. Success will remove one point of cumulative failure. Each Momentum point generated may be used to remove additional failure points.

If the Investigators are traveling in a vehicle that has been specially adapted to the conditions, they will not need to test. If they have made a vehicle out of the bits and pieces available in the airlock section, they will need to test based on the general quality of their efforts as determined by the GM. If the Investigators made it well, it should be treated as an excellent survival suit for each Investigator. If they made it hastily or haphazardly, it counts as an average suit. If they are using a vehicle and a suit they should test at the level of the best equipment.

FAILURE TABLE

CUMULATIVE FAILURES	EFFECTS
1-3	The Surface Suit's armour and environmental protection are beginning to break down. Reduce the Soak provided by one for all locations.
5-8	The sensitive filters of the EDM, and the body waste recycling functions of the Surface Suit are clogged and overtaxed. Halve both the duration of all remaining Oxygen Loads, and the length of time able to survive without food or water, rounding fractions down.
9+	The atmospheric protection of the suit is beginning to fail. The wearer must succeed at a Challenging D2 Resistance test for each hour of travel to avoid taking T2 damage with the Incendiary 1 and Vile qualities. Seeking a Surface Node is highly recommended.

succeeding at either an **Observation** or **Survival** test, as listed on the encounter table. If successful, the players may then choose to face the encounter, or they may attempt to avoid it by succeeding on either a **Stealth** or **Survival** test, also listed on the encounter table.

SURFACE ENCOUNTERS

Once they get out onto the surface of Mercury, the Investigators still have a way to go to reach the Necromakina. The GM should play this as a detailed journey and as a test of resource management and survival skills. Progress will be slow, but it should not be glossed over. On the surface, even seemingly simple tasks can become difficult and the Investigators' limited resources should bring a need to do things as efficiently as possible. The GM might insist on detailing minor encounters like the crossing of a narrow ravine or scaling a rocky escarpment. This should make the Investigators consider their actions and explain how they have gone about things.

As part of the survival mechanic, the GM has the opportunity to insert encounters to keep the Investigators on their toes. Additionally, there should also be major encounters with some of the rival factions

the Investigators have already met, and the people who have actually managed to make the desert their home. Details of the creatures and factions are presented below.

SAND DRAGONS

Although deadly to human life and scoured by solar winds, the Sand Dragons have adapted to the extremely thin atmosphere of Mercury; an evolutionary step that has allowed these rapacious predators to survive in the rocks and sand just below the surface of Mercury. They hunt the rodent-like creatures that they share that habitat with. They appear a bit like Earth lizards, hence the name the Tengu have given them. But Sand Dragons are adorned with rock-like plates and scales that protect their bodies from the elements. Their red and grey colouring keeps them well camouflaged amid the rocks and sands of the Mercurial desert. They are about the size of a large wolf.

Sand Dragons manage to survive in these harsh conditions by being tenacious hunters. Their lithe bodies can get through the smallest gaps in pursuit of their rodent prey. They can also hunt humans, and are not put off by the size of that quarry. They will seek to surprise

THE ROAD TO THE OLD CITY ENCOUNTER TABLE

106 ENCOUNTER

- 1 Tengu:** Opposed **Observation/Stealth** test to spot. **Dire D3 Stealth** test to avoid. Momentum from a successful **Observation** test may be used to lower the avoidance **Stealth** test, to a minimum difficulty of **Average D1**.
A patrol of six Tengu warriors has decided to make itself known to the Investigators; whether they are benevolent or aggressive is the GM's choice.
- 2 Sand Dragons:** **Daunting D3 Observation** test to spot. **Challenging D2 Stealth** test to avoid. Momentum from a successful **Observation** test may be used to lower the avoidance **Stealth** test to **Average D1**.
A clutch of three Sand Dragons attempt to make a meal of the Investigators.
- 3 Sand Storm:** **Daunting D3 Survival** or **Dire D4 Observation** test to spot the signs. **Daunting D3 Survival** test to find suitable shelter, such as a cave or crevasse. Momentum from a successful **Observation** test may be used to lower the avoidance **Survival** test to **Average D1**. Additionally, two Momentum points may be spent to find a **Surface Node**, as opposed to natural cover. Finally, each **Dark Symmetry** Icon made for the progress roll is instead deducted from the total, to a minimum of 5 km.
- 4 Surface Node:** **Daunting D3 Observation** test to spot. The GM may spend two **Dark Symmetry** points to inhabit the node with any one non-environmental encounter from this list, or three **Dark Symmetry** points to declare that it has ceased functioning (via atmospheric breach or its own EDM ceasing to function for instance). Repairing a non-functioning **Surface Node** requires at least a **Dire D4 Mechanics** test, and possibly new materials.
It is the GM's choice as to whether this has a subterranean connection.
- 5 Suritomo Faction:** Opposed **Observation/Stealth** test to spot. **Challenging D2 Stealth** test to avoid. Momentum from a successful **Observation** test may be used to lower the avoidance **Stealth** test, to a minimum difficulty of **Average D1**.
One of the Suritomo factions has caught up with the Investigators (GM's choice as to size and composition).
- 6 Dark Legion:** Opposed **Observation/Stealth** test to spot. **Challenging D2 Stealth** test to avoid. Momentum from a successful **Observation** test may be used to lower the avoidance **Stealth** test, to a minimum difficulty of **Average D1**.
Despite its dangers, the forces of the Dark Legion often use the surface of Mercury to avoid detection and move troops between nodes. The Investigators have run afoul a small patrol (GM's choice as to size and composition).



Sand Dragons: The ones you don't see are the most dangerous.

and ambush a victim by sneaking up on it from beneath the sand or using its natural camouflage against the rocks. Approaching Sand Dragons within the dunes of Mercury can be detected on a Daunting D3 Observation test as the sand shifts slightly as they move beneath the surface.

If their prey manages to defend itself, they will harass it until they are able to go in for the kill. For larger groups of humans, the Dragon will somehow summon gangs of its fellows and work together in a pack to destroy them all. If successful, they have a complex and unknowable system of group hierarchy that dictates which Dragon gets to strip whatever flesh and organs from their victims.

SAND DRAGON ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10 (+1)	10 (+1)	11	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	3	7	5

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	3	2	2	2	2	1	—	—	—	—

WOUNDS: 8

SOAK: Armoured Scales: (All 3)

ATTACKS:

◆ **Maw and Claw (melee):** 2+↑4, 1H, Gruesome, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Compact Anatomy:** A Sand Dragons is able to squeeze its body into the smallest of openings. It may enter any opening that could accommodate a domestic cat, and does not suffer any penalties to skill tests while so constricted.
- ◆ **Mercurian Desert Camouflage:** Sand Dragons match the environmental colourings perfectly. They may re-roll one d20 on Stealth tests, but must accept the new result. Additionally, they gain one bonus Momentum on any successful Stealth test.
- ◆ **Night Vision**
- ◆ **Sand Stalker:** A Sand Dragon is as comfortable below the sand as it is above it. It may travel beneath the sand using any of the actions available to it above the sand. Additionally, it gains one Soak in all locations when below the sand.
- ◆ **Sense a Disturbance:** Sand Dragons have developed a sensitivity to ground disturbance that allows them to use Observation to locate any creature within Medium range that is in contact with the ground, even whilst below the sand.
- ◆ **Supernatural Physique (1)**
- ◆ **Supernatural Strength (1)**



MERCURY

TENGU

Although the surface of Mercury is one of the most inhospitable places in the solar system, it is inhabited. Many Mishiman simply cannot stand the cramped, soulless, and largely hopeless existence that they must often endure beneath the surface. They find they must get out onto the surface, even though it will mean almost certain death.

A few who make this supposedly suicidal journey, do in fact survive. Through indomitable spirit and extraordinary endurance, and to be fair, the right sort of equipment, they manage to scratch out an existence in the burning deserts.

Stories have spread about these people within Mercury, and they have achieved a mythic status. This myth encourages others to try the same feat; usually ending in their death, of course. The Mishimans call these desert folk Tengu after the mythical goblin-like creatures back on Earth.

The GM may decide that the Investigators should encounter a Tengu tribe. The Tengu are fierce warriors but also impeccable survivors, so they can be used as dangerous adversaries if the Investigators are getting on well or they can be used to help out if the Investigators are struggling.

The nomadic Tengu wear red and grey Surface Suits that look shoddily cobbled together, but are in fact much more effective than any suit available below the surface (they count as advanced Surface Suits). They reinforce their suits with the scales and plates of a Sand Dragon to give some protection in combat, but especially against sand storms (add one Soak to the Torso and Arm locations). They carry whatever weapons and other equipment they can find. They live by scavenging on surface wrecks, roving between caverns and Surface Nodes, and hunting the small rodents that live within the rocks just below the Mercury surface. They have also discovered ways of getting nutrition from any Sand Dragons they manage to kill.

Sometimes, if they are desperate, they will raid the Mishiman settlements far below, but they are reluctant to do so. Tengu society has created its own myths, and the old ways, beneath the surface, under the auspices of the corporations are now taboo. Only the elders of their tribe maintain any sort of society underground, although this is *never* discussed.

How the Investigators are treated by the Tengu will depend largely on their actions. If they appear in need, or as if they have come to the surface to get away from Mishima, much as the Tengu have done, then they are more likely to be received well. If they try to flex their muscles or tout their corporate credentials then they will be seen as dangerous enemies, and the Tengu will not hesitate to destroy them, as a matter of their own survival.

The best way to get on the good side of the Tengu is to offer them food, drink, or genuinely useful equipment. The majority of Mishiman equipment is not designed and built well enough to survive life on the surface for long. Promises of these sorts of gifts will not go down so well; the perception of Mishimans and others who come from the surface among the Tengu, is that they are liars and not to be trusted. The Investigators will be judged more on their deeds than on what they say or promise.



The Tengu are formidable desert fighters.

The Tengu will be reluctant to guide the Investigators to an underground access point, for obvious reasons, but will generally be amenable to guiding them quickly and safely to other surface locations. The Tengu are so experienced at desert travel that there is almost no chance of the Investigators getting lost or being caught in a sand storm while they are with them.

THE TENGU AND THE NECROMAKINA

All the Tengu know the Necromakina site very well. They call it the Old City. They have long told stories about how this was the place where the ancient Tengu lived in peace and prosperity. Although they appreciate that this was long ago, before they even came to Mercury, the Tengu see themselves as the spiritual successors of those who dwelt in the city, and they see it as the site of their salvation.

They have scavenged the area and explored it completely, and so they know more than anyone that the place is dead. They occasionally use it as a shelter if they need to hide from the desert storms, but their reverence for the place and the ancients who dwelt there means they do not visit it lightly.

There is a myth circulating among the Tengu that they will find salvation through the Old City. The story is vague and changes as it passes among the Tengu, but a consistent element is that outsiders will come from beneath the surface (but ultimately come from beyond even there) and lead the Tengu to the promised land. That promised land is reached via the Old City or it is the Old City itself. In some stories there is a ship hidden in the Old City and the outsiders will find it and will know how to fly it. In some stories it is an ancient gateway which will open out onto a promised land.

There are some versions of the story where the outsiders will pose as the deliverers but are in fact evil, and they will need to be prevented from destroying the Old City and even the Tengu themselves. Needless to say, whatever situation the Investigators find themselves in among the Tengu, there will be an old story that describes it in some way or other convenient to the GM.

If the Investigators play the Tengu along in regard to these salvation myths, they will need to deliver at the end, or the Tengu will feel betrayed. If, for example, the Investigators visit the Old City and then attempt to leave by spaceship, the Tengu will wonder why they are not expected to board the spaceship for the promised land.

SAI

If the Investigators need an individual Tengu to interact with, the GM can use Sai. Sai is the leader of her small band of Tengu. She rose to this position on merit, having an instinct for scavenging and hunting, but she also possesses a natural and easy charm.

Sai was brought up on the surface, her parents having left Mishima before she was born. She knows no other way of life and has no experience below the surface, save for one raid she went on when she was younger. This ended badly and several of her colleagues were killed.

She therefore associates life below ground with violence and sadness, and believes every Tengu myth about the terrible conditions and awful society that dwells there. There is a good deal of truth to these myths, of course.

If Sai is invested in the Investigators' efforts to get away from Mishima, she is likely to be helpful, provided her gang gets something out of the deal. If she sees the Investigators as representatives of Mishima (or corporate life) then she is likely to be hostile.

Sai believes devoutly in the stories about the Necromakina site, and will be particularly interested in supporting the Investigators on such a mission, if they promise to share with her whatever is to be found there. Sai is petite and wiry. She can barely be seen under the many-layered surface suit she almost never takes off. But even so, her eyes are plainly bright and fierce.

SAI, TENGU LEADER ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	9	9	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	8	9	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	—

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Sand Dragon Surface Suit: (Head, 2, Arms 3, Torso 3, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **No.15 Archer (ranged):** Long, 2+T5, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Unforgiving 2
- ◆ **Combat Knife (melee):** 1+T3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Dragon Stalker:** An expert hunter and fierce warrior, Sai is well respected by her peers. She reduces the difficulty of tests made to track an opponent by one. Additionally, she may re-roll one d20 when making a Command test against a member of the Tengu, but must accept the new result.

- ◀ **Surface Walker:** Born and raised on the surface of Mercury, Sai has intimate knowledge of its dangers, but only a tainted and rudimentary view of life below-ground. She may re-roll one d20 on Survival tests, and generates one additional Momentum on a successful test. Additionally, she may make a Challenging D2 Survival test once each week. Each point of Momentum earned provides a resource that can be traded for one asset. Finally, her pride, and prejudice against 'tunnel scuttlers' will add one to the Repercussion of all her social tests when dealing with non-Tengu.
- ◀ **Tengu Wisdom:** Refer to the Tengu profile.

TENGU ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	9	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	8	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	-	2	-	2	2	2	2	1	1

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Tengu Surface Suit: (Head 2, Arms 1, Torso 2, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **M50 Assault Rifle (ranged):** Close, 1+**T**6, Burst, 2H
- ◀ **Combat Knife (melee):** 1+**T**3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Storm Warnings:** The Tengu have a profound knowledge of surface survival, and can easily read the danger signs. They need never test to discern their location or direction of travel whilst on the surface of Mercury. Additionally, they reduce the difficulty of any test made to perceive the surface environmental dangers of Mercury, such as rockfalls or sandstorms, by one.
- ◀ **Tengu Wisdom:** Tengu are capable of feats of endurance that would amaze their forebears. They may reduce both the difficulty of their daily Survival test and any resultant Resistance test from suit failure by one. Additionally, each point of Momentum earned on a daily Survival test may be spent to reduce the difficulty of an ally's daily test by one, to a minimum of Challenging D2.



SAND STORMS

Sand storms whip across the surface of Mercury fairly often, emerging unpredictably and with little warning. They can rip the surface suit and the living flesh off of anyone who gets caught in one in a matter of minutes. The only recourse to anyone caught in such a storm is to find shelter immediately. Fortunately, the surface of Mercury is craggy and pock marked offering many opportunities to find at least partial shelter.

The worst place to face an oncoming storm is in the middle of an expansive dune. This will not allow enough time to reach the sheltering rocks that bound the dune. For this reason, the Tengu usually travel along the edges of dunes, close to the handy rock formation, and cross them at their narrowest points.

The Tengu also keep in mind a comprehensive network of reliable caves, Surface Nodes, and rock formations which means that they are never more than half an hour away from exemplary shelter. Some of these shelters are also stocked with small supplies of food, water, and replacement MED filters (which are used to replenish Oxygen Loads). Coupled with their knack for predicting when a storm will brew, this generally keeps them safe.

Every minute someone is exposed to the full force of a sand storm they should take **T**4 damage with the Dreadful, Knockdown, and Vicious 2 qualities. Rock formations provide Light Cover, whilst a canyon will provide Heavy Cover. Surface Nodes and caves provide complete protection from a sand storm.

SURFACE NODES

The early settlers of the Mishima corporation attempted to lay claim to the entirety of the planet during the first years of its arrival on Mercury, but soon abandoned the deadly surface to the blistering heat and murderous cold. They did, however, leave small safe houses dotted across the surface; somewhere for the foolhardy or brave to gain a respite and cleanse their EDM filters.

Surface Nodes are essentially small, self-contained atmospheric hubs that are capable of sustaining human life. They are dormant when uninhabited, only whirring into life once the air-lock has been sealed behind the entrants. Unsurprisingly, not all nodes connect to access tunnels, as the distances involved in creating such a tunnel made this unfeasible. Because of this, most nodes are visited irregularly at best, and some have succumbed to a distinct lack of maintenance. The Tengu maintain and repair those that they can, but lack the necessary resources to replace the components of the large EDM's at the nodes.

The Tengu have connected some Surface Nodes to underground caverns by transplanting EDM's from other sites; these they defend

fiercely. It is also rumoured that the Tengu have created their own cavernous settlement for their elders to carry out mystical rituals, but this has never been corroborated.

SURITOMO FACTIONS

There could be a number of Suritomo factions keeping an eye on the Investigators. The list of factions out to get them could vary considerably depending on how they dealt with them in the Foreigners' Quarter. If he feels things might get too crowded in the desert, then the GM can have some of these factions drop out of the pursuit. He should keep things busy, but not too crowded.

As they close in on the Necromakina, these factions might feel it is time to move in. So this encounter could occur as the Investigators are crossing the desert, still some way from the Necromakina site, or at any time the Investigators are at the site, exploring the pieces of the Necromakina.

If the Investigators have generally thwarted a faction, it might feel it is not in control and will send its force in sooner rather than later. If a faction feels they know what is going on and are confident in their intelligence, especially if they have an agent accompanying the Investigators, then it will be inclined to leave its arrival as late as possible, allowing the Investigators to do as much of its mission for it as they can.

If two rival factions are ready to fight over the Investigators, then the GM should consider landing both the factions at the same time towards the end of the adventure. One of the factions will come in knowing they have infiltrated the Investigators, the other, with no other intelligence to go on, will be simply reacting to this move. Then the GM can run a battle between the two factions with the Investigators forced to choose sides.

The Mishima faction that feels it has the most to lose by allowing the Investigators' mission to go unchallenged will, of course, attempt to stop them. This could be Blue Sky, Jade Temple, or Crimson Star depending on how they have interacted with the Investigators previously, and which of their agents have infiltrated the Investigators' party.

They use a retrofitted *Kōchū*-class transport boat to drop the faction troops at a convenient point. The ship and the troops will be displaying the insignia of their faction. There is no attempt at subterfuge at this time. The faction sees this as the end game, and the moment they will learn the secret of the Necromakina. They wish to do it proudly, in the name of their faction.

They will make a show of strength intending that the Investigators submit and reveal everything they know. If the Investigators have

met one of the faction's agents earlier, he or she should be present to lead any negotiations and also to make things personal. The faction will not necessarily wish to resort to violence, but they will consider that they only need to take one of the Investigators alive in order to fulfil their mission.

If the GM is feeling generous, he can use the arrival of the faction troops as a chance for the Investigators to resupply. If the Investigators have struggled crossing the desert, have damaged surface suits, and are down to their last few drops of water, this could be a welcome encounter. If they survive a firefight with the troops, they could get the opportunity to loot any enemy corpses for the supplies they desperately need.

In addition, a good firefight with Mishima corporates will be an excellent opportunity to prove to the Tengu that the Investigators are on their side.

FACTION TROOPS ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	8	9	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	7	7	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Advanced Armoured Surface Suit: (Head 3, Arms 3, Torso 3, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Hana-Bi 50 Response Rifle (ranged):** Medium, 1+↑5, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Unforgiving 2
 - ◀ **Combat Knife (melee):** 1+↑3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1
- The Hana-Bi 50 is described in the *Mishima* sourcebook.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Kill Shot:** Faction troops are extensively trained in ranged combat. They may re-roll up to two damage dice following a successful Ranged Weapons test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Surface Vet:** These Faction Troops have been selected for having some experience of the surface conditions. They may add one Momentum to any Survival test made in relation to enduring the surface conditions of Mercury.

RETROFITTED KŌCHŪ-CLASS TRANSPORT BOAT

RESTRICTION: 3 **COST:** 32
MAINTENANCE: 3 **RELIABILITY:** 3

QUALITIES	Light Craft, Rugged		
INTERPLANETARY RANGE	6 hours	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	2
CREW	1 commander 1 engineer	PASSENGERS	12
DAMAGE	SOAK 1	DAMAGE	1
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+↑2	FUEL LOAD	1
ARMAMENTS	• Demonstorm Chain Cannon (Close, 1+↑3, Automatic, Close Quarters, Spread 1)		
NOTES	None		

THE NECROMAKINA SITE

The Necromakina itself was very heavily damaged when the Dark Soul was defeated by the Ancients. It has been smashed into many pieces and spread across a wide area. Whatever force managed to achieve this must have been awe inspiring. Bits of wreckage are spread out over an area about 5km long. This is the area known to the Tengu as the Old City.

It is difficult to know where all the various pieces might be except by exploring the area up close and this will take some time. Perhaps if the Investigators had excellent optical equipment it might be worth their while scaling one of the overlooking mountains and trying to identify the various pieces from observation, though many of the pieces are small and with so much weathering and the frequent sand storms they will be difficult to spot.

The pieces are located in a valley between two ranges of tall mountains. At one end of the site is a long, jagged impact crater. This would seem to be the key to the fate of the Necromakina. It seems that either some massive weapon impacted here which managed to shatter the Necromakina, or, perhaps the Necromakina itself landed there and was unable to stand the impact forces. The pieces of the Necromakina are either within the crater or scattered over an area within a narrow arc of the impact.

Remember that any sand storms will completely change the look of the site within a few hours. Some parts of the site that are covered up and inaccessible could suddenly become uncovered, and vice versa.

The entire site is littered with fragments and shards of the Necromakina. These many, and essentially uninteresting, fragments are not detailed here. Only the largest pieces, which will undoubtedly draw the Investigators' eye, are described. Players should be familiar by now with the look and layout of a Necromakina and so they should be able to identify the relevant larger fragments from how they look. Generally, if the players do not recognise how the various pieces correspond to an intact Necromakina from how they are described, a **Challenging D2 Observation** test should do the job.

Exploring the site close up will require a **Challenging D2 Observation** test to recognise one of the shards and its place and function in the Necromakina. This will only be true, of course, if the Investigators have already explored that element of an intact machine.

The GM should feel free to have a colony of Sand Dragons occupying a section of the Old City, too.

1. THE CRATER

From the south end, the bed of the crater descends gradually towards the north. It is hard to even make out where it begins, but soon it is already deep and it is difficult to see beyond its sides. As the crater gets deeper, the floor and sides take on a glassy sheen as if the very rock was melted from the force of the impact. At the deepest part of the crater it is scattered with the odd piece of rock-like material that anyone who has seen a Necromakina might well recognise as a part of that machine. However, these shards are so small (up to a couple of meters across) and indistinctive that it is impossible to tell what part of the machine they could have come from.

2. ENTRANCE RAMP

Jutting out of the sand is the smooth, subtly curved, and quite distinctive entrance ramp. However, it is lying at a sever angle so that the ramp barely ascends at all. This is a rather large shard and is about 40 metres long. At the top of the ramp are the remains of the entrance to the Necromakina.

As part of the entrance, a heavily damaged Guardian still exists. If the Investigators get close to it, it will animate as if it were trying to still guard the way into the Necromakina. The GM can reduce its stats to reflect the heavy damage it has suffered, if he wishes.

3. FLANK SCULPTURES

Here a huge chunk of the right flank of the Necromakina has landed and is sticking out of the sand at a rakish angle. The chaotic images that line the sides of the machine, depending on the level of the shifting sands, is conveniently close to the surface affording anyone who wants to inspect them, a great view of the sculptures.

The black stone figures seem to depict an unholy alliance of all sorts of twisted and deformed creatures. They are quite clearly minions of the Dark Soul. They seem to be lined up in a military rank and file, facing the same way and wielding an assortment of weapons. Then there is a short gap revealing a battle-scarred landscape. After that a mass of human-like figures are depicted. They are plainly in terror and fleeing from the Dark Legion. The sculptures are amazingly well-preserved considering their age, and especially the massive force that must have been required to shatter the Necromakina.

4. THE DUMP

Part of this bowl-shaped chamber can be seen jutting out of the sand, though it is mostly submerged. In the sides of the bowl some of the pieces of the robotic arms are still intact. Some of these arms are still holding onto skeletal limbs, and sometimes whole skeletons. No doubt these were about to become victims of the Necromakina when the machine was destroyed.

The skeletons are humanoid but plainly bigger than a conventional human. They seem to belong to beings that were at least 220 cms tall, and conventionally proportioned. On a **Challenging D2 Observation** test, an Investigator might notice that a particular intact skeleton actually shows that these 'humanoids' while looking very similar to tall humans, actually have four arms. The bones have been scoured spotlessly white by the desert storms.

On a **Challenging D2 Observation** test an Investigator might notice a bright metal object almost submerged by the sand. This device has withstood the test of time and appears almost brand new. It is a tiger claw glove. This is an artefact of the Ancients and is made and functions in a similar style to the other artefacts of the Ancients described earlier in this adventure. Curiously, this artefact has not been salvaged by the Tengu, though what this alludes to remains to be seen.

5. THE STRIPPER

This stripper is, remarkably, entirely intact. It is, free of the rest of the machine, a spherical object with various unknowable and broken projections sticking from it. If the Investigators manage to get it open, though this will not be easy, they will find a nightmarish chamber full of robotic arms, prehensile tentacles and razor sharp blades. The whole place stinks of rotting carcasses and ancient death. Going any distance inside requires an Investigator to pass a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** test or take DS[2] damage with the Armour Piercing 1, Gruesome, and Vicious 1 qualities from the many bladed instruments within. There is nothing much to find in there except the remains of several dead, tall, four-armed, humanoids who must have been in the process of being stripped when the machine was destroyed.

TIGER CLAW GLOVE

This tiger claw glove is essentially a metal gauntlet (for the right hand) which is studded with spikes. The metal glove itself is made of a fine but dense mail which offers a surprising amount of flexibility as well as excellent protection.

The first thing a user will notice about the glove is that it offers a particularly secure and strong grip. The spikes on the knuckles and metacarpal section can create a nasty wound when used to punch. There is also a spike at the underside of the wrist, which can be used to damage but also as a sort of quillion. The user may make a Pin attack with the glove.

Once the user of the glove is attuned to it, however, its most lethal weaponry can be deployed. At a thought, as if from nowhere, four long, curved blades will project from the around the fingers of the glove, like tiger's claws. These blades can be used for slashing or thrusting. They can also be retracted by a thought. The user may make a Rake attack with the glove.

An additional way to use the glove is as a missile weapon. If the user is in tune with it, it can be thrown as if it were missile weapon. If it hits, the glove will securely grip the target until it is ordered to release. The user may make a Pounce attack with the glove.

It requires a **Daunting D3 Mysticism** or **Dire D4 Insight** test to begin to get attuned to the glove. After a successful use, only **Average D1 Mysticism** or **Challenging D2 Insight** tests are required to extend or retract the claws, or to use it as a missile weapon.

TIGER CLAW GLOVE:

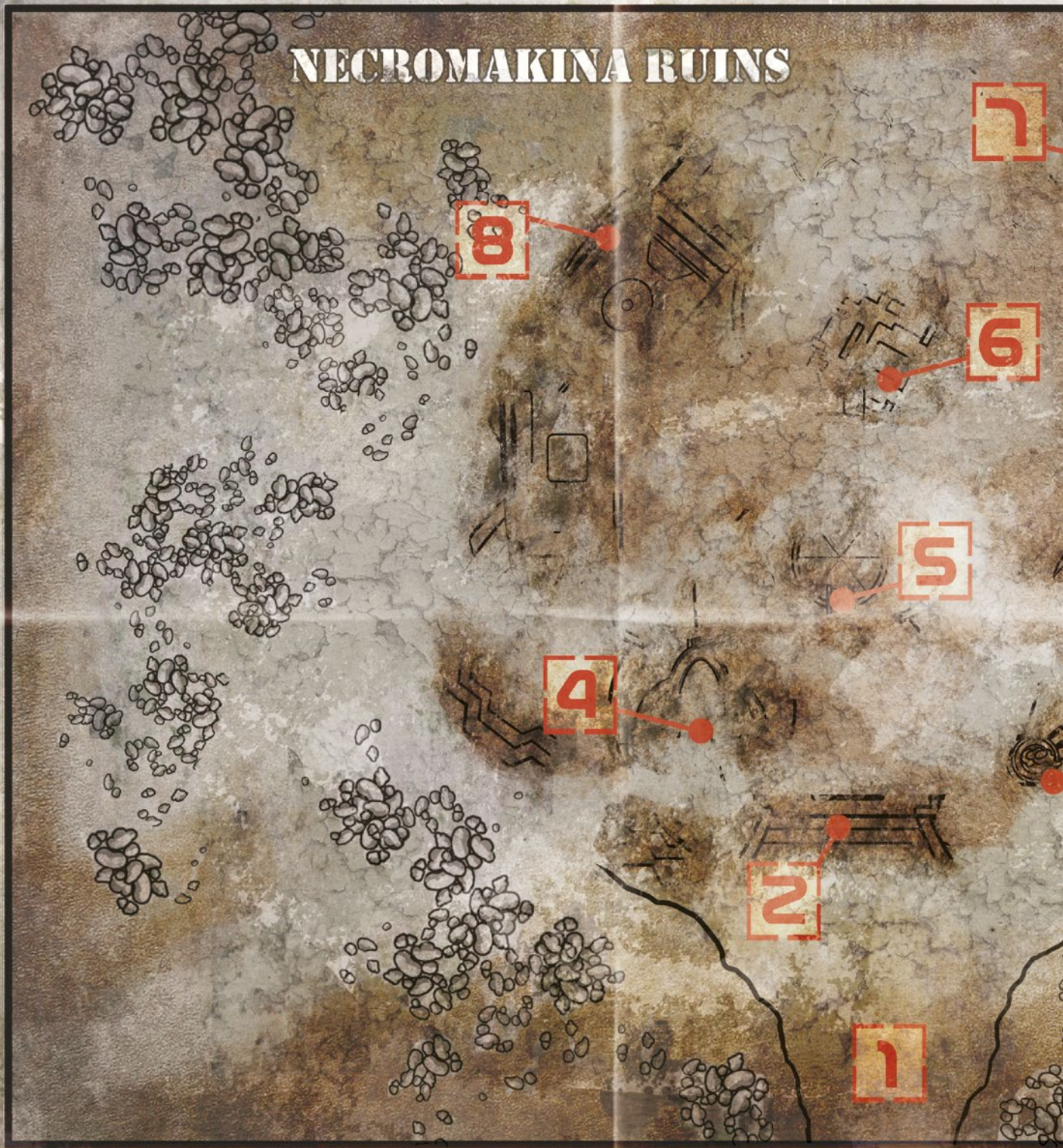
◀ **Pin (melee):** 2+T3, 1H, Parry 1, Vicious 1

◀ **Rake (melee):** 2+T5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Duelling, Gruesome, Parry 2, Vicious 1

◀ **Pounce (ranged):** Close, 2+T3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters, Gruesome 1, Vicious 1

The user gains the Supernatural Strength 1 and Grasping special abilities whilst wielding the glove. The Tiger Claw's Pin attack may be used to attack an opponent that has been grabbed by the user. When used as a ranged attack with the claws extended, the Tiger Claw can grab and pin its opponent as though it had been wielded in melee.

NECROMAKINA RUINS





6. ESSENCE STORE

Though most of the essence store is entirely lost to the desert a portion of it can still be made out. Part of the ceiling survives, now upside down, and several of the essence cylinders can still be seen. The various ichors that they contained are long gone, save for some dirty, and useless, stains.

7. DEBUGGER RACK

The DeBugger area from the Necromakina has remained largely intact. The door to the room is wedged closed with other random debris. It requires a **Daunting D3 Athletics** test to get it open, or a more innovative solution than brute force.

Unfortunately for the Investigators should they manage to get it open, many of the DeBuggers are in working order and they retain power. The confused robots will attack anyone who enters their chamber and pursue them across the desert if required. There should be enough surviving DeBuggers to give the Investigators a decent scrap.

8. NAVIGATION ROOM

Parts of this room have only barely survived the catastrophe, and only a few fragments of the walls survive. However the control dais is intact and that is what the Investigators will require. If a Navigation Key is inserted into the slot in the dais, then the 3D navigational display will power up. This might be a bit difficult to read in broad daylight, as the display relies on the dim lighting inside the Necromakina to be clear.

If the Investigators can make things out, they will see that the display is largely similar to any of the others they have seen. Except, this Necromakina, unlike the others, is programmed with the location of the Mars Necromakina. Anyone making a **Challenging D2 Education** test will be able to notice this difference and work out the exact coordinates of the Mars Necromakina.

This should be all they require to give the Investigators a very good reason to head to Mars as soon as possible.

The Dark Legion is also looking for this information, and so if the Investigators leave the Navigation Room intact, this will put them at a disadvantage later on.



The Necromakina Navigation room has seen better days, but works.

RESOLUTION

The most important piece of information the Investigators can get from this part of the campaign is the location of the Mars Necromakina from the navigation room. They are being pursued by a number of factions who also want this information if for no other

reason than this is what the Investigators are after and therefore they know it must be important. Because some of these factions are ready to swoop in and take what they can get once the Investigators have done the hard work, this should lead to a chaotic denouement.

As the Investigators power up the navigation system, all the factions still standing should arrive on the scene. This is easy enough to rationalise. Any spaceship located observers who only have a vague idea of what is going on will be able to sense the navigation systems powering up and deduce that the Investigators have found what they are after. Those with agents accompanying the Investigators will know they have reached their goal, and will be able to signal their back-up forces. Those factions watching other factions will see them act and wish to counteract whatever they are up to.

BLUE SKY

If Blue Sky has managed to keep an agent with the Investigators then it will bide its time and, ideally, only interfere when they have completed their mission. If other factions move in, Blue Sky will be forced to defend its position.

Otherwise, if it has lost its contact and influence with the Investigators, it should be ready to move in as soon as they get close to the completing their mission. Then it will attempt to capture the Investigators and force them to complete their mission at gunpoint.

JADE TEMPLE

Jade Temple, as rivals of Blue Sky, will behave in a similar way to that described above. It will be especially keen to pull off a victory as it has put a lot of work into shadowing and influencing the Investigators and feels it will lose too much face if it is not seen to come away with the right result. Therefore, it is likely to be the most belligerent and desperate if things do not go its way.

DARK LEGION PART 04

CRIMSON SUN

If Crimson Sun managed to recruit an Investigator, Agent Cherry Blossom and Agent Swooping Crane will turn up at this point with a Crimson Sun special weapons and tactics squad. This might be to get the information and congratulate their agent on a job well done. Or it might be to rebuke the treacherous agent and to arrest or destroy the Investigators.

If faced with other factions, Crimson Sun will attempt to invoke their position as upholders of law and order. But even they will realise that they have no real jurisdiction in the middle of the desert. That will not stop them from claiming it, however.

BLACK ROSE

Ryo Mae will turn up with a company of Black Rose agents in a retrofitted Kōchū-class transport boat. He will try to time this so that he will be perceived by the Investigators as their rescuer. Once the Investigators have got what they came for and Black Rose has helped them out, Ryo Mae will offer to transport them back to Longshore.

This will of course be a trap. Once on board, the Investigators will be taken prisoner, and whatever they have gained will be taken off them. It is likely that the most important thing they have is information (the Mars coordinates). In which case, Ryo Mae will consider carefully what he will do with this. It could be that he simply sends the Investigators off to Mars to save humanity, with the understanding that Black Rose will benefit from what can be achieved on Mars. If so, he will place a Black Rose agent with the Investigators.

THE TENGU

The Tengu have many stories surrounding the Necromakina site, 'the Old City', and believe they are destined to reside there, or use it as a route to salvation. Depending on the activities of the Investigators, the Tengu might well believe that they have been 'chosen' to bring about this salvation. If the Investigators do what they came to do and then try to leave, the Tengu might take this badly, especially if the Investigators have been playing up their chosen status as a means of manipulating the Tengu.

THE BROTHERHOOD

Whichever members of the Brotherhood have been dogging the Investigators throughout this section will turn up at a suitably dramatic moment to make their presence known. If the Brotherhood has managed to follow the Investigators all the way along their journey through Mercury they will have also found a way past the samurai and through the desert and will turn up worse for wear.

If they have been monitoring things from a distance, they can turn up in a spaceship or other craft to lend their authority to the proceedings. The other factions will respect their moral authority, but will be reluctant to accept any judgement that penalises them.

DARK LEGION

And then, of course, the Dark Legion turns up. The GM should keep the pressure on the Investigators and also remind them that the Dark Legion still has a stake in thwarting them. The Dark Legion force that now suddenly lands in the Old City can be composed of whichever troops the GM wishes. But it should be strong enough to be a challenge for not just the Investigators, but for all the factions currently in dispute there.

The idea is that the Dark Legion are such a threat that all the Mercurial factions must come together in order to defend against them. The factions should be in such a state of shock and disorganisation at the sudden arrival of the Dark Legion, that the Investigators should be required to get them to work together effectively.

This should be a spectacular and climactic battle to this chapter and it should be dependent as much on the organisation and persuasive abilities of the Investigators as their fire power. The other factions should not be conspicuously effective unless the Investigators go out of their way to lead them. If the Investigators do not adopt this role and do it effectively then they should be very hard pressed indeed.

In addition, as soon as the Mercury forces begin to get the better of the Dark Legion and it looks as if the danger is passing, they will begin to scheme once more and try to take advantage of the situation. One faction might even use the confusion and distractions of the battle to attempt to capture the Investigators.

The GM may also decide that one of the factions, seeing the honourable behaviour of the Investigators and realising how vital they have been to the Mercury cause here, decide to do the decent thing and act honourably and selflessly in turn, aiding the Investigators without requiring leverage or payment in kind.

AFTERMATH

Once the Dark Legion is dealt with, the factions can go back to their in-fighting. The Investigators should know at this stage precisely where they need to go on Mars, but how to get there will be less clear. It is likely they will need to side with one faction in order to get a lift out of the desert to Longshore, and from there, to arrange transport to Mars.

Just because the factions have banded together to fight off the Dark Legion, does not mean they will stay allied. Relationships should break down quite rapidly and any gratitude the Investigators are owed might be short-lived.

It is impossible to cover the variety of deals that could be struck, here. But the GM should bear in mind that any alliances struck here, should continue on through the next chapter, or at least until the Investigators can get rid of their new allies.

MARS

OVERVIEW

This section covers the climax to the adventure. Hopefully it will be a rip-roaring denouement where the Investigators' struggle against the Dark Legion in their race to find the Necromakina. Once they have found it, they will need to be clever. Several options will be open to them. They can simply destroy the machine to stop the Dark Soul from ever making use of it. This will be victory enough.

Investigators can go above and beyond this, though. The processes that work within the Necromakina to turn humans into Dark Legionnaires can be reversed. The Investigators can therefore use it to repair the damage and corruption done to their own bodies, and even recreate themselves as enhanced humans, a sort of super-being similar in nature to the mysterious Ancients who were able to defeat the Dark Soul. And they, in turn, will become a very real threat to the Dark Soul.

WAR

The events triggered by the Investigators at the beginning of this adventure, and the end of the Dark Symmetry campaign, have provoked the forces of the Dark Legion into a solar system wide offence against humanity. As the campaign has gone on, the Dark Legion's forces have mounted and the war has raged ever more fiercely. The Investigators, distracted by their own quest, may not have noticed quite how desperate things have become, but now, landing on Mars, things should be clear.

The whole of Mars is on a war footing and martial law has been declared. This should effect the movement and freedom of the Investigators. They should not find it easy to get hold of military hardware or to travel across battle lines. Everything is a bit more expensive. Many things are restricted, and bribing one's way through this is riskier and more expensive than usual. Guards and law enforcement are more likely to shoot on sight and people are generally more suspicious and less trusting.

If the Investigators find themselves near the front line, the Dark Legion could attack at any moment. People will live in genuine fear, and the GM should consider getting the Investigators involved in Dark Legion raids to remind them just how close to the front line they are.

PLAN B

It should be left to the Investigators and the GM to sift through the mess at the end of the previous chapter and work out how they will get to Mars. This chapter will simply assume they manage it. Any deals done in the previous chapter might still apply to this chapter, but the Investigators are bound to realise that it will be much easier to avoid the attention of Mercury-based factions once they get to Mars.

The Investigators are likely to have a choice of where they land on Mars. San Dorado is a long way across the planet surface from the Necromakina coordinates, but it would be the safest place to land, and then they could sort out further transport arrangements.

REVENANT

The revenant is the most common of the Dark Legion aircraft. They are built using the burnt out and shattered fuselage of any medium-sized fighter aircraft. They are burned until soot-black in giant symmetric furnaces, repaired with necrotechnology, and tossed back out in the fray. Among human forces, they are known as corpse flyers. This is due to the fact that they are riddled with old bullet holes, and that their wings are so torn and bent that they should not be able to fly. They are, however, agile and deadly dogfighters.

QUALITIES	Agile, Aircraft, Enclosed			
CRUISING SPEED	750 mph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	2	
CREW	1 commander	CARRYING CAPACITY	0	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	5	6	4	3
MOTIVE SYSTEM	4	5	3	2
WEAPON	3	4	2	1
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+  5			
ARMAMENTS	• Quad Nazgaroths: Range L, 2+6, Automatic, Ammo (Armour Piercing 3), Spread 3. • Weapon Pylons: Stats as weapon.			
NOTES	Twelve Reloads for Nazgaroths. Two Reloads for Weapon Pylons. Deathhowl Engines: The Revenant has the Fear (1) special ability.			



If the Investigators attempt to fly straight to the Necromakina and land there, they should be prevented. A war is raging across the surface of Mars and even spreading into the Great Rust Desert. Martian (and even Dark Legion) forces will not tolerate spaceship movements at this stage that they do not fully endorse and control. Therefore, the Investigators will soon get intercepted by powerful Martian forces and diverted to the nearest major settlement, where they can be vetted.

If the Investigators do try to travel straight to the Great Dust Desert, they can be attacked by Dark Legion Revenant Necroflyers. Then a patrol of Capitol AHZ-15 Raptors can become involved. Whether the Investigators manage to fight off the Dark Legion ships on their own, or require the aid of Capitol, they will be obliged to land where they are told.

CUSTOMS

Once they land, the Investigators will be vetted to determine whether they are heretics or enemies of humanity. If they pass these procedures, they are likely to be left in the city without any transport. Whatever major settlement they do end up landing in, the GM should play the events of Cult Status below as soon as possible. This should help make up the Investigators' minds about their next course of action.

If the GM wishes to make more trouble for the Investigators, or they are corrupted to a state that they are not able to pass such scrutiny, they will need to be arrested and interrogated. The Investigators will be kept in single cells and isolated from their colleagues. They will be questioned unenthusiastically by middle ranking members of the Brotherhood over several sessions.

AHZ-15 RAPTOR

RESTRICTION: 5

COST: 39

MAINTENANCE: 4

RELIABILITY: 3

Identified by the high-pitched shrieking of its engines, this fast assault fighter bristles with machine guns and autocannons. In the course of even the briefest military engagement, it can rake a battlefield over a dozen times with pinpoint precision. It has even been known to take out enemy forces that are in hand-to-hand combat with Capitolian soldiers without any friendly fire damage.

QUALITIES	Agile, Aircraft, Enclosed			
CRUISING SPEED	940 mph	COMBAT MANEUVRABILITY	3	
CREW	1 commander	CARRYING CAPACITY	0	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	5	6	4	3
MOTIVE SYSTEM	3	5	3	1
WEAPON	2	3	2	1
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+↑5			
ARMAMENTS	- Twin M90 Autocannon: Long, 2+↑7, Automatic, Armour Piercing 1, Spread 2. - Quad M606 Machine Guns: Medium, 1+↑6, Automatic, Spread 3.			
NOTES	Six Reloads for Autocannons. Twelve Reloads for Machine Guns.			



Revenant "Corpse Flyer" aircraft begin their strafing run.

If the Investigators keep quiet or are not particularly interesting, after a few days the Unstinting Order of the Blood will learn of their detention and arrange to take the Investigators into its custody. If the Investigators are impressive and interesting, and not too self-incriminating, when they are questioned then they can get handed up to Brother Gideon for him to deal with. This will give them a chance to convince someone of their righteousness and the importance of releasing them.

BROTHER GIDEON

Brother Gideon is a tall, thin, almost skeletal figure with dark eyes, shrouded in his Brotherhood robes. His mordant humour and cynical attitude hide a keen intellect and a desire to do the right thing. He is a semi-retired and well respected Ambassador within the Order of Diplomats; an organisation that forms an integral part of the Fourth Directorate. Should the Investigators come to his attention, he will view them with an open mind. Their story is therefore likely to interest him, and if he feels he can trust them, he will do what he can to help. This will mean little more than getting the Investigators released, as he does not have much more power than that.

Should the Unstinting Order of the Blood arrive while he is still considering the Investigators fate, he will hand them over. Gideon will not trust the order, but he will have little choice in the matter. However, he might keep an eye on things for a while, suspicious of exactly what the Unstinting Order of the Blood is up to and why the Investigators are so important to them.

BROTHER GIDEON, AMBASSADOR ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	8	9	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	12	12	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	2	1	1	-	3	2	2	2	3	2

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◆ **Scrawny Fist (melee):** 1+↑2, 1H

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◆ **Perceive the Truth:** Brother Gideon is a very astute individual who is usually able to discern truth from fable. He may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation or Insight test, but must

accept the new result. Additionally, immediately prior to any opposed test to spot a lie, he may make a Challenging D2 Observation test to detect subtle clues in body language. Every point of Momentum earned on this Observation test provides an additional d20 to the opposed test made to detect the deceit.

◆ **Scholar and Gentleman:** Brother Gideon is well respected amongst his peers for his keen intellect and gentlemanly nature. He may immediately roll an additional d20 on any Education or Lifestyle test that generates at least one success.

THE UNSTINTING ORDER OF THE BLOOD

Once the Unstinting Order of the Blood hears that the Investigators are in custody it will rush to get to them, sending local agents first of all, and pull all the strings it can to get them handed over. It will take over a small, out of the way, church complex on the edge of town to use as a base, and convert it into the Investigators' prison.

The Investigators will be locked up for a few days with little interaction save being given a minimal amount of food and water. Once senior members of the order arrive then they will be interrogated thoroughly. The GM should bring in whichever members of the order have interacted with the Investigators in previous sections of this campaign to add continuity and a sense of nemesis.

The order's makeshift base should be strong enough so that they can reasonably hold the Investigators in prison for an extended period and their manpower should also seem sufficient for keeping them controlled. The GM will need to play this section by ear, but clearly the order will be looking to add the final bits of information to what they have already gleaned and the Investigators will be looking for opportunities to escape. The longer the Investigators can withhold their more vital pieces of information, the longer they will be left alive.

If the order manages to get all the information and artefacts they require, they will head out into the Great Rust Desert in search of the promised land. Its senior members will leave instructions that the Investigators should be executed in their absence. This execution, when only a skeleton staff will remain at the church, will give the Investigators an opportunity to escape. And if, for example, the order has taken the Investigators' Necromakina key to the Necromakina coordinates, they will know exactly where to find them.

If they do not manage to escape and things look hopeless, it can be arranged that a member of the Cult of the White Knights (see below) who is also a member of the Unstinting Order of the Blood or has infiltrated it, recognises the Investigators. The cult will then attack the church in an attempt to rescue the Investigators, giving the Investigators a good reason to trust them.



CULT STATUS

This section is a bit of an interlude, separate from the main thrust of the campaign and dependant on events of the Dark Symmetry campaign. Investigator groups with no members surviving from that adventure will probably not be able to play this as written. Although, Investigators who have included the relevant details of the Dark Symmetry campaign in their back story, as part of preparation for this campaign, will have no problems.

The details of the Investigators' arrival on Mars and the places they might go there are up in the air at this stage. The GM should play things by ear and use the **Capitol** sourcebook and **Part Four** of the **Dark Symmetry Campaign** as references. He should attempt to insert this sub-plot as soon as he can, once the Investigators have arrived on Mars.

THE CULT OF THE WHITE KNIGHTS

The Cult of the White Knights grew up on Mars in the aftermath of the events of the Dark Symmetry campaign, especially events from The Deputy show. The Investigators left such a mark during this campaign, that their sacrifice to save humanity spawned its own cult. Now the Investigators are like gods to the cultists. Obviously only those who took part in that stage of the campaign are recognised by the cult as the true saviours of humanity, but any other Investigators in the party can bathe in their reflected glory, and go along for the ride as disciples.

The GM should make an effort to use events from that part of the Dark Symmetry campaign to make his cult feel real. He should use any spectacular or particularly brave moments as cult tenets and dogmas. And if possible, he should use quotes from that campaign, which the Investigators made, and turn them into sacred texts. If the Investigators have a catchphrase, then the cult also has that catchphrase. Essentially it is up to the GM to fill in these details as it is impossible to know here exactly how events of the Dark Symmetry panned out. The GM should change the name of the cult to one inspired by events from that part of the campaign, also. For example, he can use their team name from The Deputy.

The cult should also be strangely fixated on a number of events that took place during the Investigators' previous time on Mars, taken entirely out of context. For example, if one of the Investigators fell in the tank of gunky green water during the Observation Test section of the Deputy, all members of the Cult of the White Knights make sure to bathe in similar greenish water once a week. They will also expect the Investigators to perform a similar rite. Or, for example, if the Investigators got hold of umbrellas during the Bank Raid Test, the members of the cult will all carry similar umbrellas.

The cult has a number of beliefs about the Investigators including that they are not truly dead (as everyone else had assumed) and that

they will one day return to Mars to save humanity. Of course, their appearance on Mars is confirmation to the cult that everything they believe about the White Knights must be true.

FLY IN THE OINTMENT

Over the past seven hundred years or so the cult has grown slowly. It is still not a major force, and would not want to be, and the few members meet and exchange ideas in secret. On the surface it is more akin to a historical interest club, and appears entirely harmless.

However, over the years the cult has been infiltrated and twisted by the Dark Soul. The inner circle of the cult is now made up of fanatical followers of the Investigators. And they all believe, without any doubt, that upon the second coming of the Investigators the key to humanities survival is that they be sacrificed to God.

IT'S YOU!

Very soon after they arrive on Mars the Investigators will be confronted by a typical local, in a public place. She is Martha Savage. Martha is a member of the Cult of the White Knights and has been going about her daily business. She will suddenly come across the Investigators. She will go as white as a sheet, as if she has seen a ghost.

The Investigators should notice this. They will probably wonder why someone is reacting so strangely to them. Martha will garble something about 'the second coming', 'it's finally happened', and she has 'been chosen to witness it.'

Once she manages to compose herself a bit, she will try to talk to the Investigators. She will not be very eloquent, but she will beg them to come with her to meet her 'brother' (or sister). If the Investigators do agree to go with her, she can take them to one of the inner circle members. If they do not, then she will tell the inner circle about this and one of them can approach the Investigators later. The Investigators are likely to be in a hurry during this part of the adventure, so the inner circle should not waste any time.

Martha Savage is not really that important. She just brings the Investigators to the attention of the rest of the cult. The inner circle of cultists will soon take over and control access to the Investigators however they can and begin to manipulate the Investigators into a position where they can be sacrificed.

THE INNER CIRCLE

The members of the inner circle are all hopelessly convinced that the Investigators need to be killed. The GM can use whichever members are most suitable to get close to the Investigators, or make up his own.



Hero worship can get an Investigator killed.

Four prominent members of the inner circle are described below, but there should be a number equal to the number of Investigators who reached the citadel at the end of the Dark Symmetry campaign. The inner circle has all assigned themselves cult names that correspond to each of those Investigators. While on cult business and in the presence of the Investigators, they will always refer to each other using the Brother or Sister title and their cult names. Needless to say, this should soon become confusing and farcical.

CLARENCE WESLEY

Clarence Wesley is a wealthy entrepreneur and well known among the business communities of Mars. He has his finger in many pies and is able to get hold of most equipment and resources at short notice. He bankrolls the cult and will be able to see to it that the cult gets whatever it requires when the Investigators turn up.

Wesley is important as he is extremely rich and is able to fund the cult but, more importantly, plausibly back any promises made to the Investigators. The Investigators are likely to want to be taken to the Necromakina site as soon as possible, and so Wesley can arrange for this to happen, or at least look like it is going to happen.

CLARENCE WESLEY ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
7		8		9		8	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
8		9		8		10	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	3	2	2	2

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Rudimentary Martial Arts (melee):** 1+ $\uparrow$ 2, 1H
- ◆ **Cultist Knife (melee):** 1+ $\uparrow$ 3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Devoted Socialite:** Clarence is wealthy, well respected, and affable, despite his professional exterior. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Lifestyle or Persuade test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, any time he is in need of assistance from specified individuals, he may reduce the difficulty to find a contact that may help his cause by two steps. This may eliminate the need for a roll.
- ◆ **Wealthy Entrepreneur:** Clarence is an extremely wealthy individual who is able to call in many favours to account for the cost of anything he is unable to personally provide. His Earnings rating should be set by the GM as required by the scene, so long as he finds a contact that may help his cause. Additionally, he has an Influence rating of four.

JUSTINE STAFF

Staff is a very personable and attractive front-woman for the cult. She has a charming, easy manner and takes everything in her stride. She is a PR consultant, so this is to be expected.

She is always immaculately groomed and gives an air of professionalism and slick presentation to everything she does. For this reason she might be the most likely member of the cult to liaise with the Investigators. Justine has a number of contacts in important positions across Mars and is able to call in big favours at short notice if required.

JUSTINE STAFF ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	8	7	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	10	8	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	2	3	2	1

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Cultist Knife (melee):** 1+T3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Disarming Charm:** Justine is a very competent and charming character. She may re-roll one d20 on any Persuade test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, the GM may roll an additional d20 on any Lifestyle or Persuade test that generates at least one success.

- ◆ **Professional Connections:** Justine has an extensive network of contacts that reach almost to the top. She may make a Daunting D3 Lifestyle test to ask for a specific favour. A success means that her contact responds with an appropriate amount of resources, as determined by the GM to be necessary for the scene.

BROTHER HADRIAN

Brother Hadrian used to be a senior figure in the Brotherhood. As he turned towards the Cult of the White Knights he dropped from the Brotherhood's view for fear he might be discovered as a heretic. He has set himself up as the theological authority in the cult and will be the one called on to perform the rites during the sacrifice.

Brother Hadrian might also be useful to allay any fears the Investigators have as to the legitimacy of the cult. He will be able to pose, quite credibly, as a current member of the Brotherhood and a figure to be trusted.

BROTHER HADRIAN ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	11	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	-	1	1	1	-	2	2	1	1	3	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Cultist Knife (melee):** 1+T3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Inside Knowledge:** Brother Hadrian has an inside knowledge of the inner workings of the Brotherhood. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Persuade test whilst discussing any matter relating to the Brotherhood, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he gains an additional d20 when lying about his knowledge of the inner working of the Brotherhood.
- ◆ **Scholastic Theologist:** Brother Hadrian is a consummate scholar who has spent his years in study of many old religions. He may re-roll one d20 on Education tests. Additionally, he may reduce the difficulty by one for any test that deals with knowledge of events within the past twenty years, which may eliminate the need for a test.

ANNIE SPANGLER

Annie Spangler is the brawn of the cult. She is ex-Airborne Rangers and clearly a formidable combatant. She wears makeshift combat gear that is still recognisably based on that of the Rangers. She is curt and gruff, typical of the no-nonsense ex-military.

Spangler might be an enforcer, but it is unlikely she will be able to deal with all the Investigators in a fight. However, her presence should lead credence to the notion that the cult is prepared to back the Investigators' mission with a combat group. If the cult need to buy time, she can explain to the Investigators exactly why the cult's military wing is taking time to get organised.

ANNIE SPANGLER, ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	9	8	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	8	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	2	-	2	1	1	1	1	-	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Combat Fatigues: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **S&W.45 Revolver** (ranged): Close, 1+T4, Unbalanced
- ◆ **Cultist Knife (melee):** 1+T5, 1H, Semi-Automatic, Close Quarters, Knockdown

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Airborne and Bred:** A veteran of the Capitolian airborne special forces, Annie is able to re-roll one d20 on any Close Combat or Ranged Weapons test. Additionally, on each such test, she may re-roll up to two damage dice, but must accept the new result. Finally, Annie may add two d20 to any Persuade made to convince someone of her airborne expertise.
- ◆ **Hardened and Numbed:** A veteran of many campaigns, Annie sometimes finds it difficult to relate to non-military personnel. She will reduce the difficulty of any mental assault by one, which may eliminate the need for a test. Further, her gruff nature and intolerance of 'civvies' will add one to the Repercussion range of any Persuade test that she makes.

THE LURE

The Investigators will probably want to get on with the business of finding the Necromakina so they will need to be convinced that the cult can help them with this. The most likely way that this can be done will be to offer the Investigators military help and transport. The GM should play it by ear but he should be able to offer them whatever they require. Even if he cannot ultimately deliver, the inner circle has the personnel to make any promises appear more than plausible.

The most important thing is to gain the Investigators' trust enough that they will be happy to accept help from the cult. The cult should come across as simply mistaken, or perhaps buffoonish and ridiculous, but they should appear innocent and helpful. After all, the Investigators do not need to butt-in to the cults adulation and worship; they just need a lift.

The GM should get the Investigators to fly out to Clarence Wesley's ranch on the edge of The Great Rust Desert. This makes an excellent and reasonable launch point for the mission into the desert. They will be told that they just need to wait for a few hours or so for everything they require to come together.

The GM should do what he can to buy time. If the Investigators do not require anything at all, apart from a lift, they can be assured that their transport only needs to be fitted with special air intake rust filters, and this will be done in a couple of hours. If they want the backing of a tactical platoon and some heavy tanks, then obviously that might take several days to arrange.

DOUBLE-U-KAY RANCH

Perched on a jagged escarpment overlooking plains on the edge of the Great Rust Desert, the Double-U Kay Ranch makes an odd sight. The buildings functional to the running of the ranch are mostly out of sight among the rocks, but the main building and dwelling area sits proudly upon a jagged peak like an iconic Transylvanian castle. In fact, the ranch has been deliberately built to look like the most gothic, bleak, and inhospitable fortress from the land of horror and fairy tales possible. This can easily be explained away as merely the whim of an eccentric millionaire with gallows humour, but the place should still send a chill down any Investigator's spine.

If they have time, the Investigators can be assigned foreboding, medieval-looking rooms with desert views, or they can be shown to the great hall where they can wait for their expedition to be ready. If the Investigators are enjoying their R&R, this will give the cult more time to plan their doom, and no one will be hurrying them.

This may be a clue to the Investigators that the cult does not have their welfare entirely at heart, and they will make no effort to encourage the Investigators or act to support their mission.



Double-U Kay Ranch; built in the Gothic tradition.

They will only do (or pretend to do) the bare minimum of what is requested of them. The cult knows the correct way to save humanity (and that is by sacrificing the Investigators). They do not require the Investigators' input on the subject.

THE RITUAL

Having brought the Investigators, hopefully unsuspectingly, to the ranch, the first part of the cult's plan has succeeded. But now must come the difficult bit. The Investigators need to be sacrificed, while fully conscious at the climax of an incantation dedicated to the Dark Soul.

The cult will obviously want to avoid a firefight, or any sort of struggle. They will consider drugging the Investigators' food, but if this succeeds, the Investigators will have to be given a reasonable chance of resisting such drugs to avoid an abrupt end to the campaign.

The GM might want to try using the farcical nature of the cult to his advantage. He could merely have the cult ask the Investigators to take part in their 'magic' ritual. Hopefully the Investigators will find everything so ridiculous at this point that they will accept this as a harmless gesture in return for the help they have received.

The ritual will involve one member of the cult for each of the Investigators. If they time things right, each cultist can attempt

to stab each Investigator at the same moment, taking them all by surprise.

The ritual involves little more than a reading from Brother Hadrian's book. It starts off as a pretty puerile description of why the Investigators are so brilliant, but about halfway through the odd guttural alien word is inserted into the text, until about three-quarters of the way through, the entire ritual is being conducted in a secret language of the Dark Soul. At the climax of the ritual, the Investigators should have their throats cut.

THE BOOK OF THE WHITE KNIGHTS

Brother Hadrian conducts the ritual reading from this leather-bound tome. It was written several hundred years ago when the cult began to be tainted by the Dark Soul. It is hand-written, in a number of different hands, over the course of up to one hundred years, giving the impression of a gradually building body of knowledge.

It is easy to see, reading through, how the book started as the innocent and whimsical writing of over-keen fans, but soon took a turn for the sinister. Soon, it descends into barely comprehensible ramblings, before being overtaken by an alien alphabet. The Ritual that Brother Hadrian reads is near the end of the book in a mixture of Human and Alien languages. Were the Brotherhood to find the book, they would undoubtedly describe it as heretical.

AFTERMATH

Provided the Investigators survive the hospitality of the Cult of the White Knights, they will be on course to continue their journey to the final Necromakina. The W-K Ranch is on the edge of the Great Rust Desert and it has a number of land and air vehicles that the Investigators can take their pick from.

Once the more belligerent inner circle members have been dealt with, any outer circle cultists still around are likely to still support the Investigators and do what they ask. The staff of the ranch is more neutral, but there is little they can do against the Investigators. Obviously, if it is clear that the Investigators have just killed their employers, they will want to do something, even if it is just to flee.

THE GREAT RUST DESERT

The Great Rust Desert of the equatorial zone of Mars was never properly terraformed, and, in fact, has begun to expand. There are fears that eventually the desert will engulf the entirety of the Martian surface, once more.

Currently, it is a wild and inhospitable place punctuated only by the odd oasis. The sands of the desert include relatively abundant deposits of valuable minerals and metals. And so, nomadic traders and prospectors inhabit the area, moving from oasis to oasis in their search for mineral deposits.

But the most efficient way of extracting the minerals is by use of the giant Sandcrawler machines which move across and beneath the desert surface, sucking in sand as it goes and extracting whatever it can. Sandcrawlers have been known to pass right through parties of nomads, sucking them into their filtration systems and mashing them to a pulp, before extracting any valuable minerals from the corpse.



MARS: THE GREAT RUST DESERT

Scale

one segment equals 2.5 Kilometres

W-K RANCH

THE RAILROAD

MARS

There is little sustenance to be found in the desert, even by those expert at surviving there, so the Investigators will need to take with them whatever supplies they will require. Though, if the Investigators have survived a trek across the deserts of Mercury, the Great Rust Desert will seem like child's play to them.

THE SANDCRAWLER

The Investigators should have this encounter on their journey as they get close to the Necromakina site. A force of Dark Legionnaires has ambushed a Sandcrawler. They have damaged it with heavy weapons and then engaged the crew. The Investigators can watch the slaughter from a distance, safely, or they can engage the Dark Legion and hope to save some of the crew.

The enemy force should not be too strong for the Investigators, but it should demonstrate that the main force of the Dark Legion could be nearby and also, stopping their quest to interfere here could lose them valuable time. If the Investigators do save one of the crew, it will be David Poul, the most senior member of the crew to survive. Although he is having a rough time of it, if treated well, he should be able to help them out later on.

The point of this encounter is that the Investigators learn about Sandcrawlers and that there is one nearby, because getting hold of one is likely to offer them their best chance of reaching the Necromakina. Although the Sandcrawler has been damaged by enemy fire, it still functions well enough to use as transport. However, there should seem little point in taking it to the Necromakina site at this stage, unless the Investigators are desperate for transport, as Sandcrawlers are slow and unwieldy.

This particular Sandcrawler happens to be on its final mission before being scrapped. It is getting old and systems are continually failing. The GM should feel free to inflict minor systems failures on the crawler throughout the rest of the adventure, especially at the most inopportune moments.

DAVID POUL

Poul has been crewing Sandcrawlers in the Great Rust Desert for many years and has reached the rank of Overseer. However, he is losing his nerve. The cramped, hot conditions are getting to him and he is starting to suffer from Claustrophobia. This ambush by the Dark Legion is the final straw and now Poul is decidedly unhinged.

He does, however, know almost everything there is to know about Sandcrawlers and will be invaluable help if the Investigators try to use the Sandcrawler to get to the Necromakina. They will need to treat him carefully, though, as he is reluctant to go back in the Sandcrawler, and especially reluctant to burrow far beneath the sand in it.

DAVID POUL, SANDCRAWLER PILOT ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	9	7	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	8	6	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT	FORTITUDE	MOVEMENT	SENSES	SOCIAL	TECHNICAL
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	2	1	1	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **M13 Bolter (ranged):** Close, 1+DS[5], Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters
- ◆ **Heavy Wrench (melee):** 1+T3, 1H, Knockdown

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Disciple of the Sand:** David Poul has spent the majority of his life either on the sand or below it. He may re-roll one d20 for any Pilot or Survival test made within the Great Rust Desert, though he must accept the new result. Additionally, any Pilot tests made whilst operating a Sandcrawler are reduced by one, whilst damage to a Sandcrawler driven by him modifies the difficulty of Pilot tests by one step less than normal. Finally, he may reduce the difficulty of Mechanics tests made to repair a Sandcrawler by one, which may eliminate the need for a test by reducing it the difficulty to zero.
- ◆ **Fear of Tight Spaces:** David Poul has developed an irrational phobia for sand and enclosed space. He will become aggressive to attempts to coerce him into a Sandcrawler, though he may be convinced to do so with a Daunting D3 Persuade test. Increase the Repercussion for all tests by one for David whilst he is within any confined space (such as the interior of a Sandcrawler), or by two when operating underneath the sand.

DARK LEGION SCOUTS

The GM may wish to engage the Investigators as they approach the Necromakina site. This should remind them that they have reached the frontline in the war that is currently raging across the planet and that the level of danger has suddenly increased.

Whether the Investigators have decided to fly towards the Necromakina site or go by surface travel, they can be spotted by a squadron of Dark Legion scout Revenants (see page 158). The scouts can circle the Investigators and then strafe them with heavy

SANDCRAWLERS

The sands of the Great Rust Desert are rich in traces of valuable ores. As the name might suggest, iron is the most common, but almost all valuable metals are present in some quantity. These traces come generally only as tiny grains, smaller than the grains of sand themselves. So, Sandcrawlers roam the desert sifting through the sands and extracting the metals.

They do this by sucking in masses of sand as they make their way and diverting them through a system of filters and centrifuges. The crawlers usually travel near the surface but are capable of burrowing deeply through the desert sands for a short time in search of the richest deposits. They have a sophisticated array of sensors aboard allowing them to sniff out the richest deposits nearby.

A crawler might spend many months or even a year out in the desert, not returning to the smelters of Valley Forge until its ore hoppers are full. They usually have a crew of about ten, who must share the hot and cramped conditions for the duration of a mission.



Poul's Sandcrawler comes under attack.

QUALITIES	Enclosed, Ponderous, Rugged, Tracked			
CRUISING SPEED	5 mph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	0	
CREW	1 commander 1 pilot 6 engineers (Crew 3)	CARRYING CAPACITY	10,000 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	6	12	8	4
MOTIVE SYSTEM	5	8	6	4
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+↑4			
ARMAMENTS	None			
NOTES	Burrowing Vehicle: A Sandcrawler moves slowly above the ground or extremely slowly below it. It may take normal movement actions whilst above the sand. The pilot may attempt a Challenging D2 Pilot test every round for three rounds to burrow beneath the desert sand. Once below the sand it may not make normal move actions, as movement is now measured in minutes and hours; the only action a Sandcrawler may now make is to emerge from beneath the ground, entering a single ground-level zone from below. All creatures in that zone must attempt an Average D1 Acrobatics or Athletics test to avoid the emerging Sandcrawler; those who fail immediately suffer its Impact Damage as they're clipped by its tracks or caught in a shower of sand and rock. It may take no other action on the round of its emergence, but may move freely during following rounds. Oxygenated Interior: When burrowing, the Sandcrawler becomes atmospherically sealed and draws upon its twelve Oxygen Loads to provide air. Each hour spent above ground will allow the Sandcrawler to replenish one depleted Oxygen Load. Waste Filtration/Recycler: A Sandcrawler is designed to support extended periods of activity within the desert. It does so through the use of atmospheric moisture condensers and body waste recycling technology. The crew may subsist for ten days without food or water without suffering any penalties.			

weapons a few times before flying off. Or, if he wishes to present more of a challenge, the Dark Legion will have time to land and unload a platoon of Undead Legionnaires who can engage the Investigators on the surface, while the scout ships support them from the air.

THE NECROMAKINA SITE

If the Investigators have the coordinates of the Necromakina and have reliable instruments for locating those coordinates, they will arrive at the Necromakina site confident in the knowledge that they are exactly where they are supposed to be.

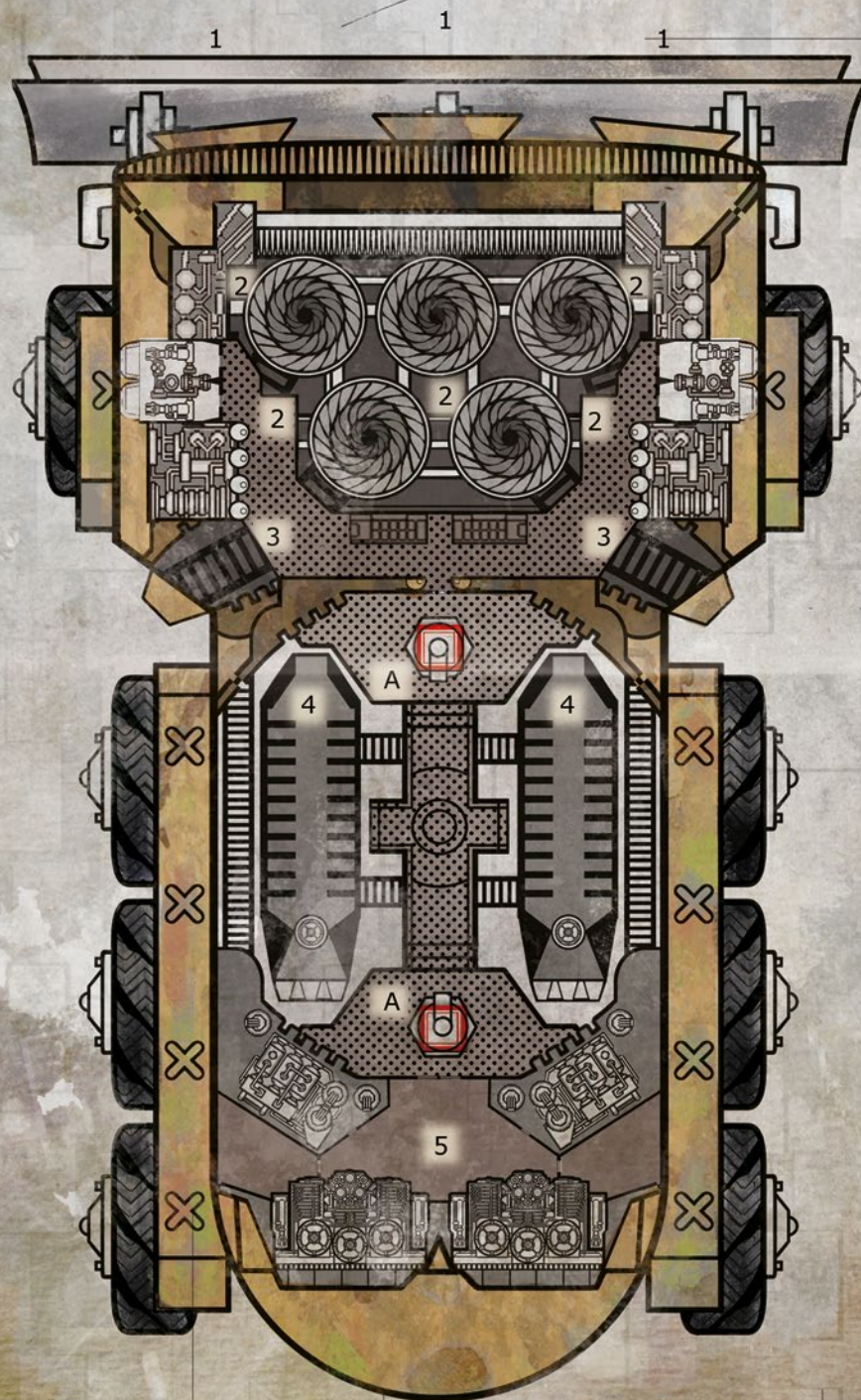
Unfortunately, they will find themselves in the middle of the desert with sand stretching away from them for as far as they can see in every direction. Double checking the coordinates and their instruments will only confirm that they are supposedly in the right place. In fact, the Necromakina has been buried under hundreds of metres of Great Rust Desert sand for thousands of years.

The Investigators will need to work this fact out if the adventure is to continue. How they do that could vary. They might simply have faith in their location and make the leap of faith that the Necromakina must therefore be beneath them. They may have brought navigation equipment and sensors with them (or on their transport). If so, they

LOWER DECK

Compartments

- 1- Shovel Intake
- 2- Centrifuge Extractors
- 3- Out Flow
- 4- Power Plant
- 5- Engine Room
- A- Elevator 



front

midsection

wheels

exhaust

back

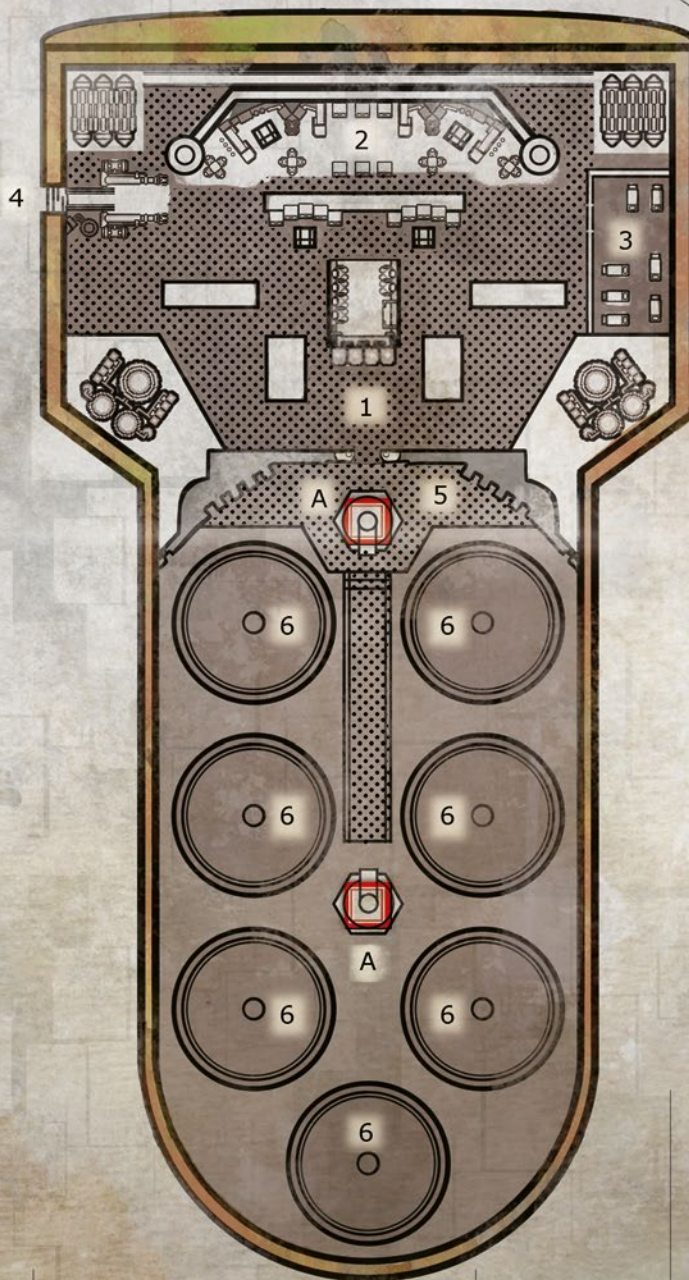
UPPER DECK

SANDCRAWLER

Compartments

- 1- Bridge
- 2- Navigation Board
- 3- Quarters
- 4- Exit
- 5- Storage Section
- 6- Mineral Container

A- Forward Elevator



may be able to jury rig some sort of sub-sand sensor on a **Daunting D3 Mechanics** test. Or they may wish to return to the Sandcrawler they should have already encountered, and get hold of its excellent sub-sand detection equipment.

Once it is established that they are indeed in the right place, the obvious next step will be to fetch the Sandcrawler. It is clearly the best (and perhaps only) piece of equipment for miles that will be able to reach a subterranean Necromakina.

As they do leave this site, however, the Investigators should get a glimpse of encroaching Dark Legion forces. It should help make clear to them that they will need to rush before the Dark Legion reach the area, and that they are in a race against time, in the middle of a warzone.

When the Investigators reach the Sandcrawler, it should be almost in the workable state they left it, however some desert nomads will be in the process of stripping it of useful gear, and they will need to be dealt with. If the GM is feeling generous, then David Poul can have survived the ambush and be hiding, badly injured, in some part of the Sandcrawler, ready for the Investigators to find. He will be able to help them repair and control the machine. There is every possibility that the Investigators may be able to convince the Nomads to assist in crewing the Sandcrawler, though it will involve a heavy cost and will ultimately require a **Daunting D3 Persuade** test; assuming that they haven't leapt into a straight up firefight, of course.

It might take a series of Challenging D2 tests in both Pilot and Survival to get the Sandcrawler to the Necromakina site, on the surface. To detect the exact position of the Necromakina, submerge the Sandcrawler, and navigate it down to the Necromakina successfully, will require **Daunting D3 Pilot** tests. If David Poul is with the Investigators then the tests will be one difficulty lower, generally.

NOMADS ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	8	7	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	8	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	–	2	–	2	2	1	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Nomad Desert Robes: (All 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **M50 Assault Rifle (ranged):** Close, 1+↑5, Burst, 2H
- ◆ **Combat Knife (melee):** 1+↑4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Desert Rat:** The nomads have a profound knowledge of desert survival. They need never test to discern their location or direction of travel whilst travelling the Great Rust Desert. Additionally, they may re-roll one d20 on any Survival test related to the desert and its conditions.
- ◆ **Scavenge to Survive:** Experts in scavenging parts, Nomads may make an Average D1 Mechanics test to repair a device temporarily when necessary components are unavailable. On success, it will function normally for one hour. Each point of Momentum earned on the test can be spent to add an additional hour of function.

THE DARK LEGION ARRIVE

As the Investigators are re-approaching the Necromakina site in the Sandcrawler they will be spotted and strafed by another Dark Legion scout party of Revenant Necroflyers. The Investigators should be able to avoid further damage to the crawler by simply submerging it. The sand crawler already has a hole in it from when it was attacked previously, but this can be mitigated by sealing off some of the bulkhead doors and isolating the damaged section.

Whether they do or not, after the first attack run, the scouts will lay off. They will climb and circle the Sandcrawlers location, ominously, until they need to head home for refuelling. The Scouts have been ordered to lay off, in order that the Investigators can be monitored while a Dark Legion force dedicated to retrieving the Necromakina can be dispatched to the area. The circling scouts should be a clear portent for the Investigators and they should realise that they really are now in a race against time.

GOOD TIMING

Since the Investigators discovered the location of the final Necromakina when they were on Mercury, the Dark Legion have been keeping a special eye on them. If the Investigators managed to destroy all trace of the Mercury Navigation Room, the Dark Legion have been biding their time, waiting to see where the Investigators have been heading.

When the scouts spotted the Investigators initially, in the Great Dust Desert, it narrowed it down for the Dark Legion, and the second sighting means they are finally able to pin point the location of the Necromakina. The Dark Legion, through their vague abilities, also know that the Necromakina is submerged, and so they have been able to prepare for this.

If the Investigators did not destroy the Navigation Room on Mercury then the Dark Legion were probably able to discover the location of

DARK LEGION PART 05

the final Necromakina on their own. They have been rushing to get to the site, as well. Why they have not arrived before now is anyone's guess. Perhaps they believe the Investigators are carrying something essential needed to access the site.

In any case, the Dark Legion and the Investigators should turn up about the same time. If the Investigators destroyed the Navigation Room, then they can be rewarded with a head start. If they did not, then the timing should put them at a disadvantage.

Ideal timing will involve the Dark Legion getting to the Necromakina site just as the Investigators are preparing to submerge their Sandcrawler. Then, as the Sand crawler burrows through the sand while trying to locate the Necromakina, one of the Dark Scorpions will find the crawler and rip a piece of it open, so that the Scorpion's crew are able to get inside the Crawler.

As the Investigators reach the Necromakina, the crews of the other three (or more if the GM needs them) Dark Scorpions can also reach the Necromakina over the course of the encounter, forcing the Investigators to defend themselves as they try to work out how best to deal with the Necromakina.

THE LEGION OF THE NECROMAKINA

The Dark Legion put this force together specifically to retrieve the final Necromakina. It can be dropped by a single Deathworm that will exit the desert close to the Necromakina and comprises four Dark Scorpions with two platoons of ten Undead Legionnaires each. The force will be led by a Nephrite of Ilian with a bodyguard of four Templars. It will also include four Eternal Zealots, brought along to lead the Undead Legionnaires. Finally, countless Children of Ilian will scamper around the place, fixing systems and keeping the Scorpions running, ready to begin work on the Necromakina.

The force has been specially prepared in order to win and retrieve the Necromakina and get it working again. They will stop at nothing to fulfil their mission, and as far as they're concerned, the Investigators will be the first humans fed into the machine and transformed into the first batch of Legionnaires.

- ◆ **VOIDARKA (NEPHARITE OF ILIAN):** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 289.
- ◆ **FOUR TEMPLARS (SEE MUTANT CHRONICLES RULEBOOK PAGE 292)**
- ◆ **FOUR ETERNAL ZEALOTS (ELITE):** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 293.
- ◆ **TWENTY UNDEAD LEGIONNAIRES:** see *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook page 303.

DEATHWORM

These huge drilling machines slowly burrow through the earth, towing long rows of carriages carrying troops. When they reach their destination, they violently break through the ground with a great rumble, knocking down nearby troops. Deathworms can only be tracked by seismic sensors. It is lucky for humanity that they are quite slow. The most usual way to deal with them is to track their progression and place explosive charges where they are to emerge. This is a method that has served Capitol well on Mars.

QUALITIES	Enclosed, Tracked			
CRUISING SPEED	1 mph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	special	
CREW	1 commander (Nephrite)	CARRYING CAPACITY	1,000 passengers, 25,000 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	15	50	30	20
MOTIVE SYSTEM	12	35	20	15
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+ ⚡6			
ARMAMENTS	None			
NOTES	Churned Earth: The zone around a Deathworm is churned up earth and shattered rock. Entering, leaving, or moving through the zone requires a Daunting D3 Acrobatics or Athletics test. Troops disembarking from the Deathworm are exempt from this, as they have been trained (or enchanted) to emerge from the vehicle swiftly and efficiently in spite of the terrain. Dark Legion Onslaught: There are huge numbers of Dark Legion troops transported in a Deathworm. Consequently, when spending Dark Symmetry points for reinforcements in a scene including a Deathworm, roll ⚡ for each Dark Symmetry point spent. For each Dark Symmetry Icon rolled, one Dark Symmetry point is returned to the pool. Tunnelling Vehicle: A Deathworm moves extremely slowly across, either across the ground or below it. It may not take normal movement actions. The only movement action a Deathworm can make is to emerge from beneath the ground, entering a single ground-level zone from below. All creatures in that zone must attempt an Average D1 Acrobatics or Athletics test to avoid the emerging Deathworm; those who fail immediately suffer the Deathworm's Impact Damage as they are clipped by the drill or caught in a shower of rock and dirt. Once it has emerged, it cannot move further during that scene, and it remains in the scene only to disgorge troops.			

SUBMERGING

Even knowing the exact coordinates of the location of the Necromakina will not make it easy to find. Buried under two hundred metres of sand, it still requires precise manipulation of the Sandcrawler. The Sandcrawler is fitted with many sensors in order for it to be able to find the richest deposits of minerals. It is a Challenging D2 Science test to recalibrate these in order to be able to detect the Necromakina. The Necromakina does not register as metal or mineral on the Sandcrawler's detectors, and so it will effectively be conspicuous by the absence of these indicators.

Even with the machine located it requires some precise driving to position the Sandcrawler. The only ways into the Necromakina are through the front and the rear. The Sandcrawler has a number of access hatches all across its body for maintenance and inspection work, but the entries to the Necromakina are flooded with sand and so the best way to access it is to drive the Sandcrawler straight to its entrances and use the sand scoops to displace as much of the sand as possible.

This is a very strange and unusual environment. The sand is everywhere and packed together extremely densely at this depth, and the pressures are great. The Investigators experience all

DARK SCORPIONS

A Dark Scorpion is a Dark Legion machine designed for desert use. It can just as easily walk along the sandy surface as burrow below it and move through the sand. It has been created specially to reach the Necromakina and retrieve it.

The Dark Scorpion has eight legs to propel it, as well as two exceptionally strong pincers at its front, for manipulation and also wrecking. A pincer can tear through inches of sheet steel if it manages to get a decent purchase. The tail of the Scorpion comprises an array of tools and machinery which can be used for cutting, welding, and towing.

A Scorpion is smaller than a Sandcrawler, but more powerful. It holds a crew of four, with cargo space that could hold up to twenty additional legionnaires. Two Dark Scorpions working together will be able to drag the Necromakina to the surface, though that may take some time. Of course all four of them will make much shorter work of this.

QUALITIES	Agile, Enclosed, Rugged, Walker			
CRUISING SPEED	20 mph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	1	
CREW	1 commander 1 pilot 2 engineers	CARRYING CAPACITY	650 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	6	10	6	4
MOTIVE SYSTEM	5	7	5	3
WEAPON	4	7	4	3
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+ $\uparrow$ 5			
ARMAMENTS	- Crushing Pincer (melee): 2+$\uparrow$5, Knockback, Vicious 2 - Black Fire Cutting Torch (ranged): Close, 2+$\uparrow$4, Munition, Incendiary 3, Torrent, Vile			

NOTES

Oxygenated Interior: When burrowing, the Dark Scorpion becomes atmospherically sealed and draws upon its four Oxygen Loads to provide air. Each hour spent aboveground will allow the Dark Scorpion to replenish one depleted Oxygen Load.

Relentless Grip: A Dark Scorpion will squeeze relentlessly once it has a creature within its grip and may use the Grasping special ability.

Sand Sifter: A Dark Scorpion scuttles freely above the ground or swims slowly below it. It may take normal movement actions whilst above the sand. The pilot may attempt a Challenging D2 Pilot test every round for two rounds to burrow beneath the desert sand. Once below the sand it may not make normal move actions, as movement is now measured in minutes and hours; the only action a Dark Scorpion may now make is to emerge from beneath the ground, entering a single ground-level zone from below. All creatures in that zone must attempt an Average D1 Acrobatics or Athletics test to avoid the emerging Dark Scorpion; those who fail immediately suffer its Impact Damage as they're clipped by a Pincer or caught in a shower of sand and rock. It may take no other action on the round of its emergence, but may move freely during following rounds.

Rudimentary 'Life' Support: Tekrons designed the Dark Scorpion with a rudimentary system of life support that can be as harrowing as it is sustaining. Through a system that utilises both Bio and Necrotechnology, the crew may subsist for five days without food or water without suffering any penalties. A Daunting D3 mental assault and a point of Dread are suffered for every day spent in a Dark Scorpion by a creature that is not of the Dark Legion.



the difficulties of functioning in an airless environment as well as tremendous difficulty moving through the packed sand.

The Investigators might consider towing the Necromakina to the surface. This might take a long time, and will be very difficult for a single Sandcrawler to achieve. In addition, it will be playing into the Dark Legion's hands; this will be doing the Dark Soul's work for it.

The Necromakina itself is not filled with sand and once inside the entrance the Investigators will be able to move around normally. However, the air here is ancient and stale and it will last only a short time. The Sandcrawlers are able to function for a matter of hours under the surface and have their own oxygenating system. It would not be too difficult to rig up some pipes to use the Sandcrawler's airflow inside the Necromakina following a **Challenging D2 Mechanics** test.

If the Investigators decide they want to attempt to complete their mission on the air that is inside the Necromakina when they find it, the GM can come up with a sharp time limit (possibly only an hour or so) after which they will begin to run out of oxygen.

It should be a decent challenge to the Investigators to have one of the Dark Scorpions come across them in the sand before they reach

the Necromakina. The scorpion could rip another hole in the side of the Sandcrawler and board it.

If the Investigators take a long time getting to the Necromakina then a Dark Scorpion could have already got there, and, when the Investigators arrive, they will have prepared a decent defence. While the Investigators are exploring the Necromakina, the other scorpions can arrive and board it. This should help hurry them along.

THE NECROMAKINA

This Necromakina is similar to the others that the Investigators have encountered during the campaign. It is littered with the usual detritus of a once-functioning Necromakina and smells of stale air and long-dead corpses. Like the others it is dormant and could be dead. However, if a key is inserted into the slot in the Navigation Room, all the systems will power up and the Investigators will have a fully working Necromakina on their hands.

This will be necessary if the Investigators are to eventually destroy the Necromakina and also if they are to save themselves from corruption. But they should also be aware that this is exactly what the Dark Soul requires of them, too.



The Dark Legion plans to use the Dark Scorpions to drag the Necromakina to the surface.



Salvation: regaining humanity by Human Factor.

THE HUMAN FACTOR

In a way entirely consistent with the strange science of the Dark Soul that appears impenetrable and almost magical to a human, this liquid is a kind of 'Human Factor'. It is the essence of what makes a human human, and could be said to contain all that is good and pure about humanity.

Actually, the liquid was extracted from the Ancients who battled against the Dark Legion. But what made the Ancients pure is also, to a degree, what makes humans pure. So although this is 'Ancients Factor' we will call it Human Factor.

A single human (or Ancient) body will produce only a tiny amount of Human Factor. What is stored in the Essence store must have been harvested from thousands, and even tens of thousands of victims. And if it is to cure corruption in a corrupted human, then the dose must be the equivalent of thousands of victims.

The results of self-administered Human Factor are explained on page 11. If Human Factor is injected into a person by the Necromakina it will have extraordinarily benevolent effects. The patient will be rid of all the corruption it has ever suffered, as well as being cured of all diseases and ailments. He will be immune from most effects of the Dark Soul and heavily protected against even the most powerful corrupting forces.

Anyone being treated with the Human Factor by a Necromakina will gain all of the following permanent benefits:

SANCTIFICATION:

- ◆ Increase *all* Attributes by one.

- ◆ Increase Corruption Soak by two. Additionally, all Tainted Mental Wounds are removed, as are any effects from Corruption or Degeneration; the Human Factor works to not only remove, but also reverse, taint.
- ◆ Any disease or poison affecting the target is cleansed and removed, as are any of its effects.
- ◆ Immediately gain the skills Willpower and Mysticism, both to an Expertise and Focus of one. A character already in possession of either of these skills may instead increase the Expertise and Focus of the skill by one, to a maximum rank of three or five, dependent upon whether the skill in question is a Signature Skill or not. Further, Mysticism is now a Signature Skill for the character, which is in addition to the three they already possess.

Two further supplementary benefits may be chosen from the following list by each target as the psychic and physical purity contained within the infusion unlocks some of the potent powers wielded by the Ancients. Each option may only be chosen once:

- ◆ **AWAKENING:** The recipient gains access to a single Aspect of the Art. Once chosen, this choice cannot be changed. Additionally, they immediately gain one free talent, which must be used to purchase the Minoris talent of the chosen Aspect. Those already in possession of an Aspect, including characters usually limited to a single Aspect, such as an Inquisitor or Revisor, may either gain a second Aspect and bonus talent as above, or gain a bonus talent from within an Aspect for which they are already trained (subject to prerequisites as normal). Additionally, those already trained in the Art prior to choosing this option no longer suffer from increased Repercussion whilst casting spells, and therefore no longer require a power controller (though they may still wish to wear one to avoid awkward questions). Anyone not trained in the Art prior to choosing this option is still subject to the Repercussion increase from a spell's difficulty.
- ◆ **BASTION OF PURITY:** The infusion awakens the purity of spirit that enabled the Ancients to resist the Dark Soul for so long. The difficulty of any power used against the recipient is increased by two, or they gain two additional d20's to resist the effects of such. Additionally, they gain two soak to all locations against any resultant damage.
- ◆ **FURY OF THE ANCIENTS:** The infusion awakens the restrained fury that the Ancients held for creatures of the

Dark Symmetry. All forms of attack, including spells and powers, gain the Pious 2 ability. Additionally, following a successful attack, each extra success generates two points of Momentum instead of one when made against a creature of the Dark Legion.

- ◆ **HEIGHTENED EMPIRICAL SENSES:** The recipient becomes hypersensitive to her surroundings. She no longer increases the difficulty of her tests because of darkness or other visual impairments such as fog or smoke (although any range penalties still have an affect). Additionally, the character's senses will not be fooled by deception or concealment: invisible and hidden people will appear in plain sight, disguises will not fool her, and supernatural powers used to deceive will be obvious to her. Even hidden objects and secret doors are as clear as day, and normally-invisible uses of supernatural powers are apparent.
- ◆ **PROLIFERATION:** The recipient heightens a prime attribute to superhuman levels. She gains the ability Supernatural (2) in any one Attribute. This two-point increase is additional to that provided by Sanctification, above.
- ◆ **PURIFICATION:** The recipient's physique is not only purified, but also bolstered against some of the worst predations of the Dark Legion. He gains the Inured to Disease and Inured to Poison abilities, is immune to the Toxic quality and cannot suffer Vile wounds (treat each Dark Symmetry Icon rolled against the character by a Vile weapon as one point of damage instead).
- ◆ **TRANSCENDENCE:** The character has gained an innate understanding of their body's functions and has transcended the pain barrier. The recipient gains the Inured to Pain special ability. Additionally, he may use Recover as a Free Action and Shake It Off as a Restricted Action. Finally, he may manipulate his own body systems to add one Momentum point to any Treatment or **Medicine test** made to heal him.
- ◆ **UNNATURAL CELERITY:** The recipient becomes possessed of heightened speed and reactions. Restricted Actions may be performed as Free Actions by the character. Additionally, once each round, the character may pay one Dark Symmetry point to perform an extra Standard Action. Finally, he need not pay a Dark Symmetry point for the first Response Action taken during a round, though additional Response Actions (from talents, spells, or abilities) still require Dark Symmetry point expenditure.

POWERED UP

Once the Necromakina is powered up, it will be fully functioning. It will be ready, and hungry, to receive dead and dying humans and turn them into Dark Legionnaires. It will also be able to turn dead and dying Legionnaires into re-born servants of the Dark Soul.

When the power is turned on the whole Necromakina will emit a low, throbbing noise. This noise comes from the very walls of the structure. It might give the Investigators the odd impression that they are standing within the guts of a living thing.

Instead of the bleak, preternatural darkness of a dormant Necromakina, the insides of the machine will glow with a dull, dim light. The dark stone will turn a mid-grey, illuminated from within, and walls, floors, furniture, and ceilings will be illuminated equally. The hues of the grey lighting will shift over time, swirling with subtle changes in colour, through the entire spectrum, but still difficult to discern. Instrumentation and controls will be highlighted in a bright, orange light, which responds to the touch.

As soon as the Necromakina is powered up, the machine's DeBuggers will begin to swarm all over the vessel. They should recognise the Investigators as alien intruders and seek to neutralise them as quickly as possible. Once they have done so, they will drag the bodies towards the dump where they can begin their conversion process.

THE ENTRANCE

As with all Necromakina, two five-metre-tall stone Guardians stand guard at the two entrances. These are inundated with sand but they will be able to move through the sand, almost as swiftly as they can through the air, as they animate to protect the Necromakina from interlopers. Of course, if the Investigators are heavily corrupted by the Dark Symmetry by this stage of the campaign, then the Guardians might not be able to sense them as enemies.

THE DUMP

The jagged pincers and cutters surrounding the dump will be lifeless when the Necromakina is found, but if the machine is powered up, they will come to life. The arms will grab and snap at anything that comes close, as if yearning to fulfil its deadly function. And they will make short work of any dumped bodies.

THE NAVIGATION ROOM

As usual, the Navigation Room contains the receptacle for the key that can power up the machine. If the Necromakina is activated, this room will light up with the spectacular holographic display of the solar system. It should be clear from this display (if it is accurate) that the Investigators have accounted for all the Necromakina that exist.

THE ESSENCE LABORATORY AND ESSENCE STORE

The laboratory and store are both intact and in good working order. When powered, the chamber beyond the observation window is well-lit. It is easy to see the array of manipulators and paraphernalia that are involved in extracting and injecting the victim as it passes through this section. This process is done automatically by the Necromakina, but it can be overridden manually from the laboratory; a process that is fully explained on page 16.

This could be the key to any corrupted Investigators' salvation, if they realise it. It requires a **Daunting D3 Mechanics** test to work out the functionality of these rooms. This generally involves manipulating strange ichor and fluids and injecting them or extracting them from the body beyond the observation window.

It will require a **Challenging D2 Medicine** test, but it is possible to work out from the array of equipment and the network of tubes that run between the laboratory and the Essence Store that all the strange liquids are there to be injected into a victim's body, except one. One of the liquids in the store (and really this one is conspicuous by being white and almost glowing as opposed to other sickly-looking, dull substances) has been extracted from the victims.

It should be left to the Investigators to decide that injecting themselves with this substance is likely to cure them of any corruption they have.

SALVATION

If an Investigator allows himself to be caught by the Necromakina and fed into its awful machinery, and then injected with the Human Factor, he will be dumped into the rinse process at the rear of the Necromakina cured of all corruption. That is the theory at least.

The operator in the Essence Laboratory will need to make a **Challenging D2 Medicine** test in order to override the systems and natural instinct of the Necromakina to stop the Investigator being turned into a Dark Legionnaire.

This should be a difficult thing for an Investigator to do—allowing himself to be eaten by the foul machine and trusting his colleague enough that no harm will come to him—but the reward will be great.

DESTROYING THE NECROMAKINA

It is possible, and indeed likely, that the Investigators will wish to destroy the Necromakina. The easiest way to do this will be to use the Necromakina's own power against it. The power plant will need to be rigged in such a way that the power builds up and is released in a massive explosion.



The Necromanika's power plant explodes spectacularly!

This is a complex procedure involving alien technology. It will require the Investigators working together and making several tests, some of which the Investigators may have already effectively passed during previous parts of the adventure. A **Daunting D3 Science** test is required to get a feel and understanding of the general principles utilised by the power plant, which will allow the Investigators the opportunity to come up with a plan that sets up some sort of feedback loop to detonate the Necromakina like a massive bomb. A **Daunting D3 Mechanics** test is required in order to build in the appropriate failure over several hours, although Momentum may be spent to reduce this time to a minimum of one hour.

Alternatively, much of this insight and the ability to change the physical layout of the power systems in this way can also be achieved by linking psychically with the Necromakina as described in the Essence Laboratory section above.

The GM should use extra successes from these rolls to allow the Investigators leeway and say-so on how long it will take for the power

plant to blow. It is likely that the Investigators will want enough time to do whatever else they have to do on board the Necromakina and to retreat to a safe distance. But, in order to prevent the Dark Legion from undoing their sabotage, they will want the machine to blow as soon as possible after that.

AFTERMATH

The Investigators will need to cure themselves of corruption or destroy the Necromakina to consider their adventure a success, but really they should need to do both and the next campaign, **Dark Eden**, assumes that they have managed both.

If they fail to destroy the Necromakina, the Dark legion will take possession of it and drag it up to the surface. They will then transport all the dead and dying they can find from across the battlefields of Mars and use the machine to convert them to Undead Legionnaires. This advantage in manpower is likely to make all the difference in the battle for Mars.

If the Investigators know this will happen, then perhaps they will tell the authorities and convince them how vital this information is. If so, then a significant Martian army will converge on the Great Rust Desert, too. The battle will rage for possession of the Necromakina, but unless the Investigators come up with some sort of spectacular action, the advantage the Necromakina gives will sway the battle in the Dark Legion's favour. In fact, summoning the Martian army to the Necromakina will be playing exactly into the Dark Soul's hands, as it will effectively bring a ready supply of bodies with it.

CORRUPT INVESTIGATORS

If the Investigators do not manage to heal their corruption then sooner or later things will come back to haunt them. Perhaps the climax of this campaign is a good opportunity to resolve these threads. Perhaps it is time to show the Investigators that they have been unwitting pawns of the Dark Soul all along.

The events at the end of the Dark Symmetry campaign led directly to this new wave of attacks by the Dark Legion. And it also led to this denouement in the Great Dust Desert. Perhaps it was written in the unfathomable alphabet of the Dark Soul that this was always meant to be. Perhaps the Investigators have been foretold as the bringers of salvation, not to humanity, but to the Dark Soul.

Perhaps only the Investigators were able to locate the final Necromakina. And this Necromakina is the key to building a Dark Legion of sufficient strength to capture Mars, and thereafter the entire solar system. Perhaps the Investigators led the Dark Legion to the Necromakina on purpose, subconsciously perhaps, but nevertheless as servants of the Dark Soul.

Perhaps it was all inadvertent, and the Investigators are just its unwitting servants. Perhaps their corruption is testament to their ultimate servitude. Either way, the Investigators might need to be confronted with their utter failure and the knowledge that they have been helping the Dark Soul all along.

SUPER INVESTIGATORS

If the Investigators have managed to inject themselves with Human Factor then they do not merely cure their corruption, but they will gain a number of powers that will be extremely useful in combatting the Dark Legion in the future. This will be useful going into the third book of this campaign, *Dark Eden*, but can also be demonstrated now.

The GM can run an encounter where another Dark Legion force, similar to the Legion of the Necromakina, turn up in order to win the Necromakina. If the Investigators have set the Necromakina on its way to self-destruction, this will be a race against time for the Dark Legion to attempt to stop this process.

They should be given a decent chance to do so, unless the Investigators intervene and delay them. Essentially they will need to find a balance between defending the Necromakina and getting far enough away from it, at the right moment, to be clear of the massive blast when it does destruct.

The Investigators should probably now realise the scope of their new powers and see themselves as key players in the war against the Dark Soul. They should see their rejuvenation as not just a personal success, but as a hope for all mankind. And they should be chomping at the bit to go on the offensive and attempt to defeat their relentless foe once and for all.



ASSETS AND EARNINGS

ASSETS AND EARNINGS THROUGH THE AGES

Assets and Earnings are the abstract resources that players use to provide both purchasing power and an income within the **Mutant Chronicles** setting. Twelve hundred years of absenteeism from living quarters and credit accounts will clearly take their toll on anything that the characters possess prior to their enforced stasis, particularly with the advent of the Dark Symmetry's rise and the subsequent First Dark Legion War; if the characters begin this campaign as a continuation of the Dark Symmetry Campaign, it can be safely assumed that they possess nothing in the way of either Assets or Earnings (particularly vindictive GM's may state this is the case even if the characters are already established within the current time frame, as their captors could have also seized any capitol).

Regardless of how they end up on Nero, or the particular manner in which their Assets and Earnings disappear, it would be a great shame for the campaign to stall at any point due to the Investigator's lack of funds, particularly as this could easily spoil events for the players; they now find themselves penniless and destitute having almost paid the ultimate sacrifice whilst simultaneously stymying the Dark Legion's ability to reinforce itself during the First Dark Legion War, with no means available to reclaim any of their former wealth. This sidebar aims to provide some options and advice that will allow you to introduce opportunities for the Investigators to climb their way back up the ladder of fortune.

Right from the outset there is plenty of opportunity throughout the campaign for the characters to garner loot; from the store on-board *Her Serenity's Grace*, to the Double U-Kay Ranch on Mars, they can easily lay their hands on materials and equipment, which will consequently allow GM's to plan openings in which the Investigators can pawn these goods. Perhaps an unscrupulous customs official in Victoria or Diemansland is willing to shift some items for them—for a small percentage of course—or maybe the characters overhear

the conversation of a mercenary unit that needs to garner extra supplies at short notice in order to complete preparations for their next mission. However you manage to do so, allowing the players an opportunity to convert booty into assets, particularly if they have to overcome a small challenge to do so, can be rewarding for them in itself.

Another method for the characters to earn Assets, though perhaps less rewarding in a narrative sense, is to simply offer them as a reward for their actions. The surviving citizens of High Hythe in Part 2 could feasibly provide some items of monetary value as a payment to their saviours, the nobility of House Bernheim could make a political show of showering the Heroes of Polaria in gifts at the end of Part 3, or perhaps one of the Mercurial factions during Part 4 tables a large number of Assets as a bribe in the hopes of swaying the Investigators sympathies. Again, there are plenty of opportunities to seed rewards throughout the campaign.

A similar approach could be taken in reference to living accommodation and Earnings. As the fame (or infamy) and reputation of the characters builds they will more than likely draw the attention of corporate agents beyond those presented within this campaign. It would certainly not be too incredulous for one faction or another to offer to bankroll the Investigator's efforts by providing a regular income. Corporate representatives could also wine and dine the characters in an effort to garner their loyalty, and even offer to provide living quarters at the megacorporation's expense. It is recommended that Earnings and accommodation become a factor during the latter events of the campaign, so that the characters are provided with the experience of having to literally barter their way across the solar system during the opening events, though this is of course down to the style of campaign that you wish to play; if you wish to jump straight to the action then it may be just as reasonable to increase the character's Earnings rating as the campaign unfolds and assume that it is due to their prudence as their journey progresses.



PREGENS

VENTS SEASONED INVESTIGATOR

Mikhail "Vents" de Vent is a Luna-born Bauhauser who had spent time serving with the BLEU's before transferring to Luna P.D. Originally classed as the rookie by the rest of his peers, he has certainly earned his stripes throughout the events of the Dark Symmetry's rise. His friendship with Ryder has grown into mutual respect, whilst his ability to read and manipulate people has seen him grow into the role of the 'bad cop' during interrogations. Still enthusiastic and diligent at heart, his principles have been weathered somewhat by his recent experiences.

TRAITS: Bauhaus, Working Middle, Luna City, Technical "On The Job" Training, Police (Beat Cop) ×3

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	7	8

SKILLS:

- ◀ **Athletics** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Close Combat** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Education** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Lifestyle** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Mechanics*** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◀ **Observation*** Expertise 3, Focus 3
- ◀ **Persuade*** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◀ **Pilot** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Ranged Weapons** Expertise 3, Focus 1
- ◀ **Thievery** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Treatment** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Willpower** Expertise 2

DAMAGE BONUSES: Ranged (+1)

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 3
- ◀ Arms 4
- ◀ Serious 6
- ◀ Mental 8
- ◀ Torso 7
- ◀ Legs 5
- ◀ Critical 3

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Fatigues, Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pads: (Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Baton (melee):** 1+3, 1H, Stun
- ◀ **MP-105GW (ranged):** Range Close, 1+4, Burst, Unbalanced, Ammo (Spread 1)
- ◀ **GW 1055 Grenade Launcher:** Range Medium, Munition, As Grenade

TALENTS

- ◀ **Citizen/Subject of Bauhaus**
- ◀ **Natural Engineer:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Mechanics test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Snap Diagnosis:** Reduce the difficulty of any Mechanics test by one, which may eliminate the need for a test. When an Exploit Weakness action is taken against a device, Snap Diagnosis grants the Armour Piercing 2 quality to his subsequent attack.
- ◀ **Charismatic:** The character's Influence bonus is increased by 1
- ◀ **Naturally Charming 1:** A successful Persuade test yields one additional point of Momentum.
- ◀ **Strong-Armed Tactics 1:** He gains one additional d20 to any Persuade or Command test when attempting to intimidate an opponent.
- ◀ **Sharp Senses:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Toss the Room:** The character can identify all the important clues in an area quickly, requiring a D1 test to search within Reach, or a D2 test to search within Close range.

EQUIPMENT (INFLUENCE +1)

Basic urban survival kit, basic repair kit, mini-torch, MP-105GW(+2 Reloads), laser sight, two GW-1055 anti-personnel Reloads, leather jacket, baton, handcuffs, Medkit.

VANCE RYDER

GRIZZLED DETECTIVE

Ryder is tough. That's the first thing that most people say about Vance Ryder. Having turned veteran detective after dropping out of military boot camp, his gut instincts, determination, and resilience have kept him in action for longer than most. He often refers to an "old war wound" that plays up when danger is close—an injury picked up during his youth when a training exercise took the lives of six of his fellow draftees and provided him with the dog tags that he still wears to this day. Mentoring Vents has tempered his gruff exterior somewhat, though the corruption of the Dark Symmetry has made him wary of most people's intentions..

TRAITS: Capitol, Working Lower, Luna City, Teenage Draft, Police (Beat Cop), Luna PD Detective

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	8	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	10	6

SKILLS:

- ◀ **Athletics** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Close Combat** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Education*** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◀ **Observation*** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◀ **Persuade** Expertise 3, Focus 1
- ◀ **Pilot** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Ranged Weapons*** Expertise 3, Focus 3
- ◀ **Resistance** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Survival** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Thievery** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◀ **Treatment** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Willpower** Expertise 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Melee (+↑2)

WOUNDS:

- ◀ **Head** 3
- ◀ **Arms** 5
- ◀ **Serious** 7
- ◀ **Mental** 10
- ◀ **Torso** 8
- ◀ **Legs** 6
- ◀ **Critical** 4

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Trenchcoat, Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pad: (Torso 1, Left Arm 2, Right Arm 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◀ **Dagger (melee):** 1+↑4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

TALENTS

- ◀ **Citizen/Shareholder of Capitol**
- ◀ **Sniper:** When making an attack with a ranged weapon, re-roll 1 ↑. The new result must be accepted.
- ◀ **Gun in Hand:** As a Response Action, the character may respond to an attack with an attack of his own with any weapon he can wield in one hand. The attack has a base difficulty of Daunting D3, and is resolved before the enemy attack. If this reaction kills or otherwise incapacitates the attacker, then his attack is prevented.
- ◀ **Sharp Senses:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Quick Survey:** The character may spend one Momentum from an Observation test to recognise the reason the test was made. If this occurs immediately prior to combat, the character may add +1d20 to any skill test made during his first turn.
- ◀ **Disciplined Student:** If the character generates at least one success when attempting an Education test, he may immediately roll an additional 1d20 and add the result to the skill test.
- ◀ **Hardy:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Stubborn:** The character may re-roll one d20 on Willpower tests, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Wary:** Any time the character is the target of a Persuade or Command test, Dark Symmetry points paid to add dice provide two dice instead of one.

EQUIPMENT

Several sets of military dog tags, basic well-worn clothing, basic urban survival kit, advanced forensics kit, heavy military shoulder pad, armoured trench coat, radio, Piranha Handgun (+2 reloads), reflex sight, dagger.



TSUYOSHI REFORMED TRIAD

Sato Tsuyoshi is, if the rumours are correct, a very dangerous man. A towering, broad figure, Tsuyoshi has spent his life beneath the heel of men claiming themselves his better. Years spent in the service of monolithic Keiretsu and vainglorious Samurai, have made him bitter, and ill-disposed to those who flaunt their power over others. During the rise of the Symmetry he shook his reputation as a criminal thug and came to be known as a loyal and dependable comrade to his peers. He has also taken time to hone his martial arts in order to complement his already deadly knife skills.

TRAITS: Mishima, Unemployed Underclass, Heritage Foothold, Grew Up On The Streets, Military (Basic), Triad Enforcer

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
12	9	9	7
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	8	5

SKILLS:

- ◀▶ **Acrobatics*** Expertise 3, Focus 2
- ◀▶ **Athletics*** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Close Combat*** Expertise 3, Focus 3
- ◀▶ **Observation** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Persuade** Expertise 2
- ◀▶ **Ranged Weapons** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Resistance** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Stealth** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Survival*** Expertise 3, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Thievery** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Unarmed Combat** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◀▶ **Willpower** Expertise 1, Focus 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Melee (+↑3)

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ Head 4
- ◀▶ Arms 5
- ◀▶ Serious 7
- ◀▶ Mental 8
- ◀▶ Torso 8
- ◀▶ Legs 6
- ◀▶ Critical 4

SOAK: Hardback armour: (Head 2, Arms 1, Torso 2, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Tambu "Airbrush" (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑5, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Knockdown, Spread 1

- ◀▶ **Two Daggers (melee):** 1+↑6, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Darkslayer, Deadly Accuracy, Hidden 1
- ◀▶ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H
- ◀▶ **Brass Knuckles (melee):** 1+↑6, 1H, Vicious 1

TALENTS

- ◀▶ **Citizen/Vassal of Mishima**
- ◀▶ **Hardy:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀▶ **No Mercy:** When making a close combat attack, a character may re-roll up to 3 ↑. The new results must be accepted.
- ◀▶ **Deflection:** The character does not need to pay a Dark Symmetry point in order to take a Parry Response Action.
- ◀▶ **Riposte:** After successfully executing a Parry Response Action, the character may immediately pay a Dark Symmetry point to make a melee attack against the foe he parried.
- ◀▶ **Martial Artist:** When making an unarmed combat attack, the character may re-roll up to 2 ↑, but must accept the new results.
- ◀▶ **Quick Grab:** When spending Momentum to disarm an opponent, the cost is reduced by one point. In addition, the character may spend one additional Momentum to gain hold of the item the target dropped.

EQUIPMENT

Battered hip flask, basic threadbare and dirty clothing, basic Medkit, Tambu "Airbrush" Shotgun, two daggers, brass knuckles.

Tsuyoshi has commissioned some of the finest Mishimen craftsmen available to forge his twin daggers, citing his need to take the fight to the Dark Symmetry in defense of humanity. Both of his daggers have the following additional qualities:

DARKSLAYER: The weapon gains the Pious 2 quality, and the wielder gains an additional point of Corruption Soak while wielding one or more weapons with this property.

DEADLY ACCURACY: When spending Momentum to alter the hit location struck, adjust the location roll by one additional point per Momentum spent. In addition, the weapon gains the Vicious 2 quality.

NIX HIGH-OCTANE SNIPER

Nicholas "Nix" Cullen is a myth, but a convincing one. Whatever the truth of him, he is a deadly shot and quiet as a ghost when he wants to be. He does not have the build or physical stature to be military—he is too slight, too slender—but his skills are clearly Special Forces level. Although he never discusses his past, his cheery demeanour and thrill seeking nature have endeared him to his companions. He has bent his considerable awareness and reflexes to the task of mastering airborne craft and ground-based vehicles, both of which he has aced despite the terminal unreliability of technology during recent events.

TRAITS: Imperial, Working Middle, Heritage Hotspot, Military Academy, Intelligence Operative, Blood Beret

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	7	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	7	10	8

SKILLS:

- ◀ **Acrobatics** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Athletics** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Close Combat** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Education** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Heavy Weapons** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Insight** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Linguistics** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Mechanics** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Observation** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Pilot*** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Ranged Weapons*** Expertise 4, Focus 3
- ◀ **Stealth*** Expertise 3, Focus 1
- ◀ **Thievery** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Willpower** Expertise 1, Focus 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Ranged (+12)

WOUNDS:

- ◀ **Head** 3
- ◀ **Arms** 3
- ◀ **Serious** 5
- ◀ **Mental** 10
- ◀ **Torso** 7
- ◀ **Legs** 5
- ◀ **Critical** 3

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Fatigues, Reinforced leather jacket: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

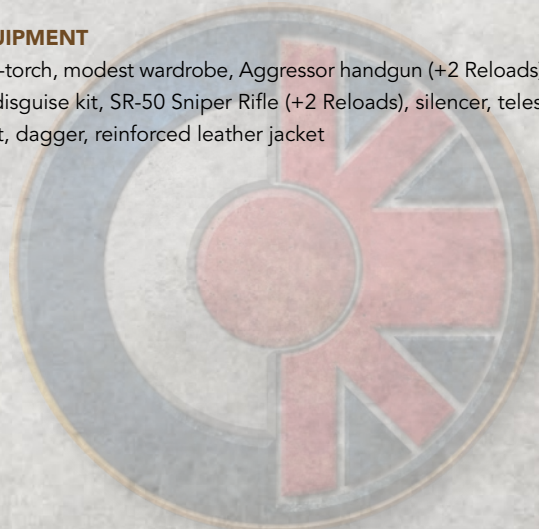
- ◀ **Aggressor Pistol (ranged):** Range Close, 1+16, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters
- ◀ **SR-50 Sniper Rifle (ranged):** Range Long, 2+17, Semi-Automatic, Unwieldy, Unforgiving 3
- ◀ **Dagger (melee):** 1+13, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

TALENTS

- ◀ **Citizen/Kinsman of Imperial**
- ◀ **Sniper:** When making an attack with a ranged weapon, the character may re-roll up to 4 1. The new result must be accepted.
- ◀ **Clear Shot:** The character reduces the penalty for firing at range other than the weapon's optimal range by one, to a minimum of zero.
- ◀ **Precise Targeting:** When spending Momentum for the Called Shot benefit on an attack made with the Ranged Weapons skill, each point of Momentum shifts the hit location roll by up to two points.
- ◀ **Through and Through 2:** When the character spends Momentum on a Secondary Target effect for a Ranged Weapons attack, it only costs one Momentum. Further, the character can select up to two additional targets.
- ◀ **Scout:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making a Stealth test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Sharp Senses:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Ace:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making a Pilot test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Push the Envelope:** When attempting to increase the speed or performance of an airborne vehicle, Dark Symmetry points paid to add dice provide two dice instead of one.
- ◀ **Born to the Wheel:** Decrease the difficulty rating for Pilot tests using ground-based vehicles by one, to a minimum of one.

EQUIPMENT

Mini-torch, modest wardrobe, Aggressor handgun (+2 Reloads), fake ID, disguise kit, SR-50 Sniper Rifle (+2 Reloads), silencer, telescopic sight, dagger, reinforced leather jacket



ARSENI SECURITY EXPERT

Daniela Arseni was an up-and-coming mechanical engineer for a small Bauhauser off-shoot, until the Homebuilders decided to reclaim the little splinter company. Destitution loomed, and crime was the only way out. Tool-making and engineering work for hire brought her into contact with numerous criminals across the city, and a few years in prison only confirmed that there was no way back. In an effort to redeem herself, she has taken to contracting for Luna P.D., her criminal record giving her few alternatives when it comes to honest work.

TRAITS: Microcorp (Bauhaus), Working Middle, Luna City, Technical Pre-Career Training, Technical (Repairman), Criminal (x2)

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	9	9	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	10	7	8

SKILLS:

- ◀▶ **Acrobatics** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Close Combat** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Education** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Lifestyle*** Expertise 2
- ◀▶ **Mechanics*** Expertise 3, Focus 3
- ◀▶ **Observation*** Expertise 3, Focus 2
- ◀▶ **Pilot** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Ranged Weapons** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Space** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Stealth** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Survival** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Thievery** Expertise 3, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Willpower** Expertise 2, Focus 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Ranged (+↑2)

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head** 3
- ◀▶ **Arms** 4
- ◀▶ **Serious** 6
- ◀▶ **Mental** 7
- ◀▶ **Torso** 7
- ◀▶ **Legs** 5
- ◀▶ **Critical** 3

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Fatigues, Medium Military Shoulder Pads:
(Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **CAR-24 Close Assault Rifle (ranged):** Range Close, 1+↑5, Burst, 2H
- ◀▶ **GL-240 Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Range Medium, Munition, As Grenade
- ◀▶ **Pocket Knife (melee):** 1+↑3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

TALENTS

- ◀▶ **Under the Radar**
- ◀▶ **Natural Engineer:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Mechanics test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀▶ **Greasemonkey:** When attempting a repair, each point of Momentum spent to reduce the repair time divides the time taken by four, rather than halving it as normal.
- ◀▶ **Jury Rig:** The character may make an Average D1 Mechanics test to repair a device temporarily when necessary components are unavailable. On success, it will function normally for one hour. Each point of Momentum earned on the test can be spent to add an additional hour of function.
- ◀▶ **Design Savant 1:** Any time the character chooses to design or modify an existing piece of equipment she may reduce the difficulty of the Mechanics test by one. This may eliminate the need for a test.
- ◀▶ **Sharp Senses:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀▶ **Life of Crime:** When the character generates at least one success on a Persuade or Education test to relate to or interact with the criminal element, she may immediately roll one additional d20 and add the result to the skill test.
- ◀▶ **Bypass Security:** Any time the character attempts to pick or overcome a security system—regardless of whether it is mechanical or electronic—she may re-roll up to three d20, though the new results must be accepted.
- ◀▶ **No Mercy:** When making a close combat attack, the character may re-roll 1↑. The new result must be accepted.

EQUIPMENT

Basic urban survival kit, mini-torch, advanced tool kit, CX-Multitool, breaking and entering kit, CAR-24 (+2 Reloads), two GL-240 anti-personnel Reloads, pocket knife (slicer).

'ANGEL' KRAMER

TRIAGE EXTRAORDINAIRE

Angelica 'Angel' Kramer is overqualified. Medical school was better than Kramer's parents could have hoped for her, but the price of it was beyond their ability to sustain. Years of training collapsed from under her as her and her parents' ability to pay for tuition faltered, then failed. So, rather than becoming a doctor, Kramer became a paramedic—she had more medical training than most first responders did, and working 'on the front lines' inspired her more than the few other medical fields still available to her. Joining Luna P.D. as a field medic was a logical extension of that, and she maintains the highest patient survival rate of any medic in the force.

TRAITS: Capitol, Working Lower, Luna City, Post-Graduate Technical/Scientific, Medical (first responder) (x2), Police (Beat Cop)

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	8	7	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	11	10	8

SKILLS:

- ◀ **Athletics** Expertise 3
- ◀ **Education** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Lifestyle** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Mechanics** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Medicine*** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◀ **Observation** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Persuade*** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Pilot** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Psychotherapy** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Ranged Combat** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Resistance** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Science** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Survival** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Treatment*** Expertise 3, Focus 3
- ◀ **Willpower** Expertise 1, Focus 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Ranged (+↑1)

WOUNDS:

- ◀ **Head** 3
- ◀ **Arms** 3
- ◀ **Serious** 5
- ◀ **Mental** 10
- ◀ **Torso** 7
- ◀ **Legs** 5
- ◀ **Critical** 3

SOAK: Ballistic nylon work uniform: (Torso 1, Arms 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **M8 'Slingshot' handgun (ranged):** Range Close, 1+↑3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

TALENTS

- ◀ **Citizen/Shareholder of Capitol**
- ◀ **First Responder:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making a Treatment test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Ration Meds:** When using a dose of Coagulant from a Medkit or Automated, each load adds two Momentum to the Treatment test, instead of the usual one.
- ◀ **Empathic Healer:** When the character passes a Treatment test, each Momentum spent allows the target to recover two Light Wounds to the hit location of the healer's choice.
- ◀ **Flexible Techniques:** The difficulty of any Treatment test is reduced by one step, to a minimum of one.
- ◀ **Physician:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Medicine test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Sharp Senses:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Stubborn:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making a Willpower test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Irrepressible:** When the character takes a Shake it Off action, she may recover two Light or Mental Wounds (or one of each) for each Momentum spent on the Willpower test.

EQUIPMENT

Work goggles with one cracked lens, well-worn clothing, basic urban survival kit, Laboratory (personal), hospital-grade medical kit, Slingshot handgun (with integral silencer and two Reloads), concealed holster.



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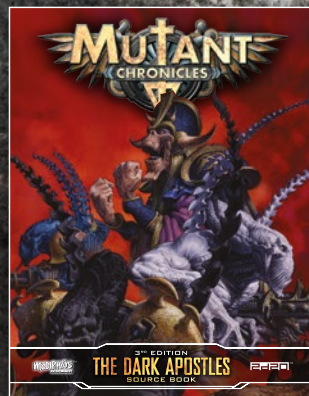
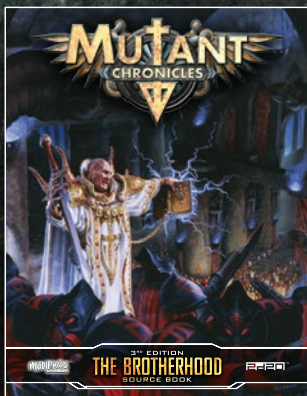
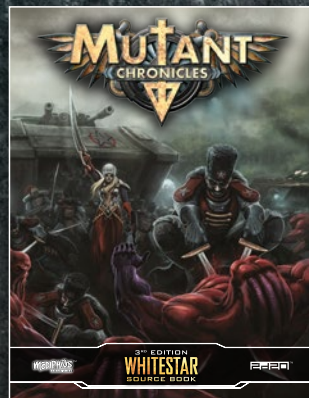
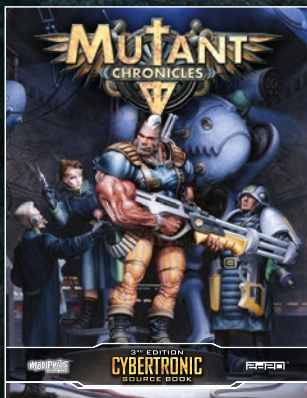
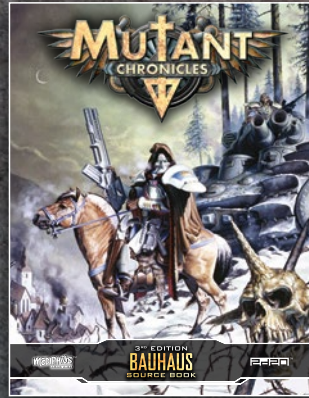
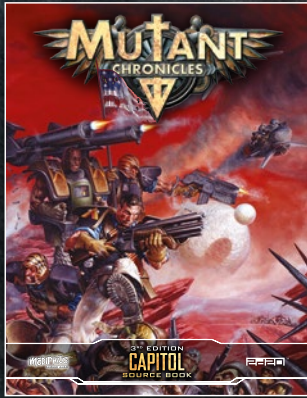
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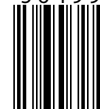
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