

MUTANT

CHRONICLES

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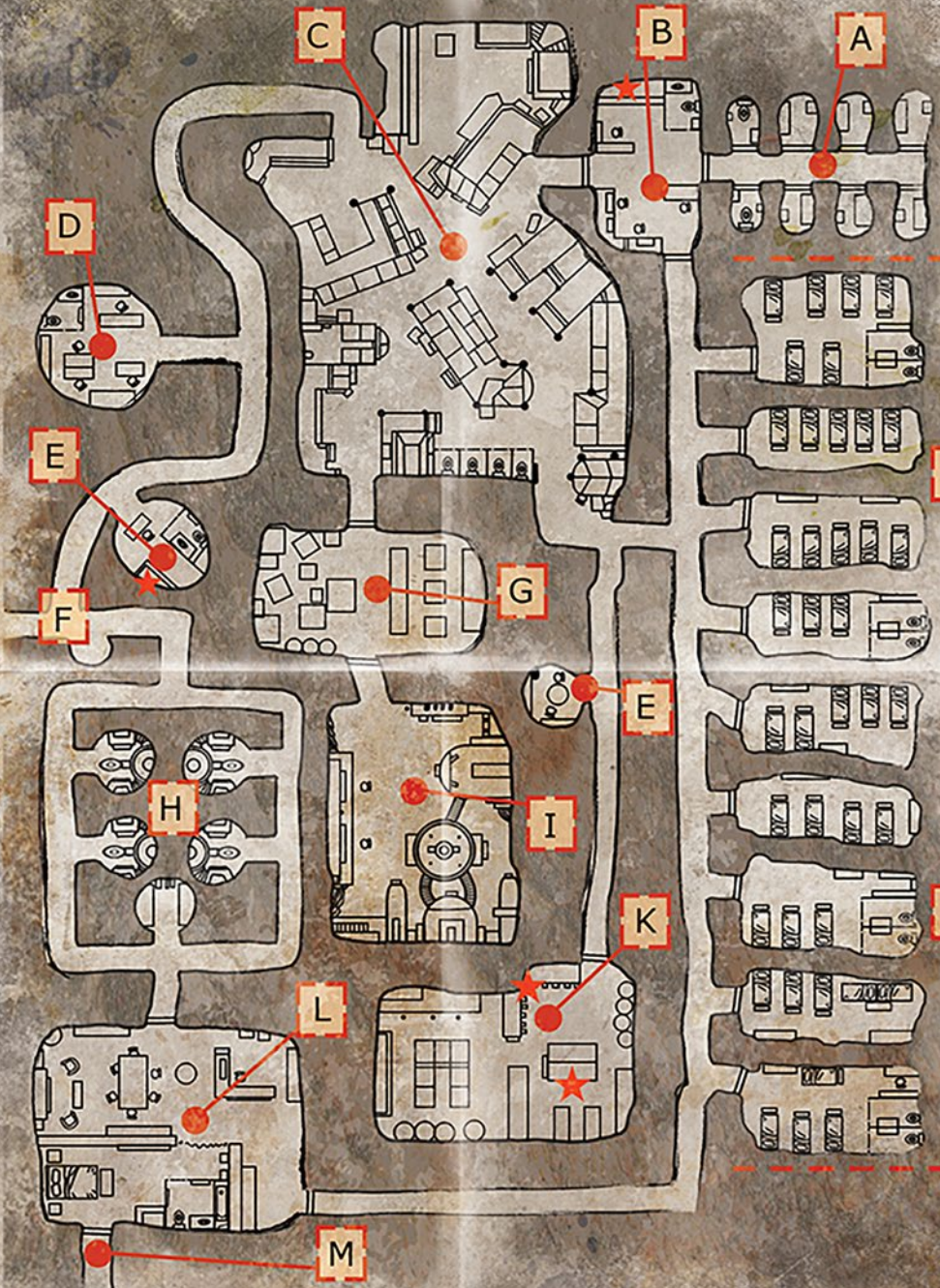


MÖDIPHIUS™
ENTERTAINMENT

3RD EDITION
MUTANT & HERETICS
SOURCE BOOK

FFA™

MUTANT SEWER LAIR



Key

- A- Holding Cells
- B- Security
- C- Bazaar
- D- Administration
- E- Security Alcove
- F- Main Entrance
- G- Storage
- H- Water Reclamation
- I- Power Generators
- J- Living Quarters
- K- Armoury & Reliquary
- L- Leader Sanctuary
- M- Secret Entrance







-  Work Desks
-  Monitoring Stations
-  Toilets
-  Washrooms
-  Beds
-  Weapons Storage


Scale
 |-----|
 one segment equals 2 meters

HERETIC SEWER TEMPLE

Key

- A- Secret Passage
- B- Library
- C- Reliquary
- D- Training Room
- E- Study Area / Offices
- F- Ritual Chambers
- G- Dark Magistrate Sanctum
- H- Guard Room
- I- Mess Hall
- J- Prison Cell
- K- Weapon/Wardrobe Chamber
- L- Recreational Area
- M- Sleeping Hall

-  Work Desks
-  Monitoring Stations
-  Toilets
-  Washrooms
-  Bed
-  Weapons Storage

Scale

 one segment equals 2 meters





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 01

THE TRUE HISTORY.....	6
The Ancients.....	6
The Beginning.....	6
Early Civilisation of The Ancients.....	6
Development of the Culture and the Coming of the Ice.....	7
In Search of The Horizon.....	7
Turning Their Eyes Towards The Stars.....	8
Darkness Came.....	8
The War Begins.....	8
A War of Ages.....	9

CHAPTER 02

THE SEEDS OF REBIRTH.....	12
Birth of The Guardians.....	12
The Genetic Pilgrimage.....	12
The Three Seals.....	12
The Silent Millennia's and the Order of the Watchers.....	14
Darkness Rising.....	15
The Adaptation.....	15
The Exodus.....	18
Dark Eden Emerges.....	18

CHAPTER 03

THE AGE OF MUTATION.....	19
Darkness Emergent.....	19

CHAPTER 04

MUTANTS AMONG US.....	23
Playing Mutants.....	23
Dna Activation & Mutations.....	26

CHAPTER 05

THE LEGACY OF THE ANCIENTS.....	35
The Power of Legacy.....	35
Lesser Psionic Powers.....	36
Major Psionic Powers.....	49

CHAPTER 06

ENHANCED TECHNOLOGY.....	66
The Technology of Two Worlds.....	66
Arms And Armour of the Ancients.....	67
Psionic Endowments.....	71
Psionically Enhanced Spacecraft.....	72

CHAPTER 07

THE DARKNESS WITHIN.....	75
Heretics.....	75
Types of Heretics.....	76
The Humanity of Heretics.....	77
Stories and Missions.....	79
Story Seeds.....	82
Politics & Views.....	83

CHAPTER 08

THE DARKNESS UNCHAINED.....	84
The first voice.....	84
Rituals.....	84
Major rituals.....	92

CHAPTER 09

SEEDS OF DARKNESS.....	93
Relics.....	93

CHAPTER 010

THE VAULT OF INFAMY.....	101
Damned to Infamy.....	101

THE TRUE HISTORY

THE ANCIENTS

The First. The Precursors. The Ancients. Many are the names they have been given throughout the ages. They have been no more than rumours sprinkled throughout the most mystical and primordial of texts. An unseen presence that some have felt but never been able to identify or understand. They are indeed the Ancients and eons ago they waged war against the Dark Soul. For the Dark Soul is an ever present force of vile conflict. The story of how the Ancients halted the Dark Soul is a long and twisted one. But it is important to understand that, for all their powers, technology, and psionic gifts, the Ancients never defeated the Dark Soul, they merely trapped it.



THE BEGINNING

Hundreds of millions of years ago, about the same time that the first simple animals came to form on Earth, the beings which would become the Ancients crawled out of the sea on their home world. Like all natural biological creatures, the Ancients started out simple. A series of cosmic coincidences and planetary conditions made it possible for the smallest of biological elements to appear and evolve. However, as the name suggests, the Ancients evolved into a complex race long before humans did.

It is unknown if it was due to the planetary circumstances on their home world, or something in the first simple creature itself, but in the end the evolution of the Ancients was extraordinarily fast and effective. It only took a few million years from the moment that the first creatures on the Ancient home world crawled out of the sea until their evolution had allowed far more complex creatures to appear.

However, the evolution of these beings followed a different path. The still rather simple reptilian creatures, the early ancestors of the Ancients, began to develop a curiously keen mind. While they still lived out in nature, hunting and scavenging in the way of reptiles, they developed a sort of reasoning. They could understand the cycle of life, the value of cooperation with others of their kind as well as other creatures, and harboured a respect and gratitude for the world around them. As epochs passed they continued to evolve. But as they grew in size and brain power they did so without losing their respect for life and nature. This was a race of beings that had been able to reason in a way surpassing that of the coming Neanderthals on Earth while still crawling on their bellies.

EARLY CIVILISATION OF THE ANCIENTS

As they evolved and began to walk upright something extraordinary happened. As their minds developed along with their bodies they became even more attuned with nature and one another. This was not just an intellectual understanding and appreciation; it was the first signs of their psionic powers. When the Ancients met they could assume each other's point of view through a sort of mental connection. It was not a form of telepathy, it was more akin to an empathic and emotional link. This meant that they automatically adapted to each other's moods and came to a near automatic understanding of one another. As a result, altercations and violence were nearly unheard of. The early tribes that met would more often than not join forces and merge. Through this emphatic link they also

gained a very logical understanding of the world at an early stage. They never developed any type of religion or actual belief system, rather they lived by a sort of spirituality based on their link to each other and the natural world.

Due to their ability to share experiences and information, partly by empathic links, their aptitude to do so, along with their intelligence, increased at an exponential rate. Their physical evolution was rapid as well, perhaps due to the same factors. Even though they were not a violent race, they were hunting animals and forced to fight off primitive and violent primates when left with no other choice. As the Ancients came together, all their collective experience was pooled and led to them becoming instinctively proficient at defending themselves, though they gained no natural aggressiveness or propensity towards violence. As evolution continued, their bodies seemed to evolve as if they had lived through the collective lives of their entire race. And as the epochs passed they grew taller with a lean, muscular body.

THE ANCIENT HOMEWORLD

The Ancients lived on a large planet located within our solar system. The original location of this planet is unknown, but whatever was left of it after the war travelled into the asteroid belt. Shards of the Ancient home world float around to this day within the belt. Within the remnants of this world there lay many secrets yet undiscovered.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CULTURE AND THE COMING OF THE ICE

The Ancients learned to enjoy writing, music, poetry, and art. Even though they developed quite high-cultured activities and interests, they had yet to build actual cities or even any real living quarters. They lived under the open sky or in caves and fields and only constructed the tools they needed to maintain clothing, writing materials, and instruments in the simplest of ways. They saw little need for anything else. The land was generous and the weather warm and mild. The Ancients enjoyed a long lifespan, some living for centuries, but their reproductive rate was slow and their numbers few.

With little warning the weather changed rapidly and an ice age was upon them. They were forced to leave the fields and the open and their previously sheltered caves failed to stave off the encroaching cold. Though they had never engaged in building anything large scale, their collective knowledge made them more than capable.

Their psionic abilities had increased in power during the millennia. With their combined telekinetic powers and knowledge they began to construct intricate buildings by shaping nature rather than imposing upon it. Great cities seemed to grow out of the ground. They built them close to, or on top of, natural heat sources such as geysers. With little effort they managed to funnel the heat into their cities, effectively creating a district heating system. Their intellect and natural ability to understand advanced mechanisms and physics was another by-product of their sharing of experiences on an empathic level. When they paired this with their ability to record all information through writing, their knowledge became a vast library of wisdom. Through this they saved themselves from the ice age.

IN SEARCH OF THE HORIZON

As the cities were built, the Ancients had kindled a passion for engineering and exploration. Though they were widespread, they never travelled the world or crossed an ocean. They never felt the need to do so before, and now the cold outside the cities prevented them from travelling far. But the construction of buildings had given them the inspiration and opportunity to design and develop psionic forges and progress in other areas of discovery and technology. New tools were developed and used, but much of their construction was based upon their growing psionic powers. Using telekinetic powers to construct smaller prototypes while linked emphatically in meditation, they managed to make enormous strides in just years. What would take humans thousands of years to develop, the Ancients managed in a few decades. Their early technology was far more advanced than any wholly human technology would ever be.

The Ancients managed to store pure psionic energy through the manipulation of crystals, whose energy cores would become one of the most vital aspects of their technology and would go on to serve as a source of power for all their vehicles. Harnessed psionic energy is malleable and can be put to a variety of uses. The Ancients discovered that blending this energy with other sources (everything from water to fire) would allow the psionic energy to replenish itself in the core. With the psionic cores at their disposal their civilization rose to new heights.

Their first vehicles were heated amphibious craft. On land they travelled on wheels, by water they used air drawn in and expelled by an ingenious pneumatic system powered by the psionic cores. These sleek and majestic craft could glide fast and silent over most surfaces simply by using and returning the natural resources of the land. With this new technology at their fingertips they began travelling their world, exploring and discovering.



THE TRUE HISTORY

TURNING THEIR EYES TOWARDS THE STARS

After a few decades traversing the surface of their planet, the Ancients managed to map out a significant portion of their world. They discovered that, though quite cold, there were large parts of the world that were not covered by ice and snow. The Ancients also concluded that their home world was a sphere, but what lay beyond the blue sky above they could not guess. In these still early days, the stars, including their own solar body, seemed nothing more than distant balls of fire. They began to wonder; if our world is this large and if we can learn this much from it, what then can we learn from the distant lights?

Where humans would develop spyglasses and telescopes, the Ancients had no need for them while travelling their world. By focusing their psionic abilities through amplifiers in their vehicles and cities, they learned to make use of psychic far sight as an aid to navigation. The Ancients set themselves a new engineering task, one that would create an amplifier powerful enough to see beyond the limits of their own world. The information gleaned gave them insight into the cold vacuum of space, the zero gravity conditions, and the difficulty of surviving travel there. Through this, they understood that they needed to construct formidable craft with advanced life support systems. It did not take long before they made their first forays into space.

For decades they developed even more advanced technology and travelled further. In the end, the Ancients learned to create rifts in space through which they travelled beyond the limits of their local system. It was indeed a golden age.

DARKNESS CAME

During one of their excursions at the outskirts of their home galaxy, the exploration fleet suffered bizarre malfunctions. The fleet lost power and many of the navigators, who were psychically linked to the ships, suffered severe headaches followed by unrelenting but uninterpretable nightmares. As a result, the Ancients' fleet returned home.

They reported what they had experienced and, soon after their arrival, the seers monitoring the long range amplifiers reported that a massive object seemed to appear from nowhere on the edge of their galaxy. One of the seers tried to establish a psychic link with the object itself in an attempt to identify it, but, to the horror of his brethren, he fell to the floor in a fit, screaming and writhing. The only words that passed his lips were "It is coming! It is coming!" He died soon after, apparently as a result of pure fear.

The Ancients, being highly intelligent and intuitive, did not take this lightly. Never before had they had any need for advanced weaponry or defences. This did not mean they did not have the knowledge and resources to create them, though. Now they turned their minds to the manufacture of such devices. It was agreed that something that could affect one of them in this way simply by being viewed was something utterly dangerous, intelligent, and deadly. Whatever it was, this massive object was slowly closing in on their home world.

Soon they began to notice that their empathic link with one another weakening. This made it harder for them to communicate since



Every journey starts with a first step.

they had never been without this connection. It also gave rise to smaller conflicts between them since they no longer had an automatic understanding of each other and could no longer assume each other's point of view. They understood that this corruption was deliberate, a sort of psychic weakening of their defences created by the unknown object.

The Ancients continued to develop weapons systems and heavily armoured spacecraft. They soon noticed that their technology was being corrupted as well, they felt the influence of the darkness in every aspect of their society and technology. While difficult, they managed to keep it at bay thanks to their long experience with psionic control. However, due to the extra precautions and safeguards they had to build into the systems, their preparations were slowed.

The Ancients felt pressed to learn more about the enemy they were about to face, but using any type of psionic vision to examine the object was out of the question. Instead, they sent out a scouting party in their newly created armed fighters. The scouts managed to get a visual of the object and sent the data back to their home world. Moments after, they were attacked and communication was lost. The data they sent back stunned, baffled, and terrified those back home. They had believed that it was some sort of large ship or a cluster of craft, but it was neither. Instead, it was a large, dark planet. One that somehow moved through the cold reaches of space intent on death and destruction. It was the planet that humans would name Nero.

RENEGADE

They were after her and closing in fast. Melissa ran down the back alleys of San Dorado, two of Algeroth's cultists after her. She guessed the word was out and all the cults were gunning for her. She had to get out of town and off Mars. At the moment, though, her focus was on getting away from her pursuers.

A shot rang out as a bullet grazed her left ear. There was no cover down this street. If she kept going she'd be hit. An old, makeshift door lead into a decommissioned building construction site on her right. Left with few options, she ran full speed at it. Melissa crashed through, fell over, and tumbled down a flight of stairs. Sure it hurt, but she was still alive. She got up and ran to the right, through the basement corridor she found herself in. As she ran she heard them come down the stairs behind her.

Dammit. She needed to get into a position where she could get close to them without getting shot. But these were Algeroth heretics, getting close was also quite dangerous. She glanced up and noticed steam pipes in the ceiling. A moments focus and her Visceral Expulsion Pesticum. Her torso split open with a cracking sound in an instant, the ribs tore through her shirt, and what had been her innards came spilling forth as fleshy ambulatory limbs. She used them to snare the pipes and pull herself up.

When her pursuers came around the corner she hung out of sight, waiting for the perfect moment. Just as they passed under her she activated her Flay gift and directed it at one of the men. He stopped and screamed in agony as the skin peeled away from the muscles of his face and arms, exposing red, raw meat underneath. His partner

turned just in time to see Melissa come jump down from the pipes, her viscera appendages whipping around grabbing for him. She managed to snare his gun hand, but not before he got a shot off. Hit in the shoulder, she slammed into him and swung at his face. He parried the blow and flicked out a pair of wicked, gnarled claws. He slashed her in the face, opening thin, blood-filled scratches. She felt the blood fill her mouth. Melissa called upon another Pesticum and her blood turned to acid. She spat a mouthful of the now corrosive blood in his face. Blinded, he let out a howl of pain. She kneeed him in the groin and then impaled him using her sharp, exposed ribs.

She wrestled the gun out of his hand as he went down and turned to the moaning, but still upright, heretic behind her. She emptied half the clip into the exposed muscles of his face and he went down wet. With a servant of Algeroth one could never be too sure. She emptied the rest of the bullets into the man she had impaled to make sure he couldn't regenerate.

Just as the echo of gunshots died out she heard cars pulling up in the alley above. Orders were barked.

"Brothers and sisters, we have a servant of Demnogonis here, a vile heretic. Stop at nothing to find and purge her!"

This just wasn't her day. Now the Brotherhood was also on her tail. Melissa saw a drainage pipe further down the dark corridor and guessed that the sewers was her best bet right now. As she crawled down into the stinking darkness she wondered what the rest of her week would be like. She had only defected from the cult of Demnogonis yesterday.

NERO – SARAKAI

The Ancients named the planet Nero-Sarakai. The word Sarakai is nearly impossible to translate, the closest human equivalent is “Orb of corrupting shadows.” For simplicity, the planet will be referred to as Nero.

THE WAR BEGINS

A war was inevitable. Soon, horrid rifts opened around Nero and on the planet itself and from these rifts beings of unimaginable terror came. Some were large and flew through space, living, thinking, biomechanical ships. Within the retched chambers of these twisted things beings lived. Armies upon armies of unholy life and death given the ability to move and do the bidding of the darkness.

The sheer numbers of the enemy forced the Ancients to plan accordingly. They had to rely on automated weapon systems, but knew that their enemy would be able to corrupt simple AIs. They had to use their psionic energy. They had to shape part of their own minds and replicate the essence, depositing it within thinking matrixes which they could control, but which the darkness could not affect. They also began to strategically construct and hide weapon systems on moons, planetoids, and even in fields of debris. The Ancients had to rely on tactics and preparation if they were to stand a chance.

Soon, a full scale clash erupted with the enemy and many of the Ancients fell. Still they held their ground thanks to their preparations and incorruptible technology. They soon had a name for their enemy: The Dark Soul. As they understood it, it was a force, a power, a sort of everlasting being. This entity had but one goal and that was to torture, annihilate, and consume all sentient life. It was an eternal cyclical process. As soon as a life worth destroying came into existence, the Dark Soul would be instinctively drawn to it. It was a formidable enemy, its motives so utterly bizarre and primal that it was near unfathomable. How does one combat, predict, and slay a capricious force of existence?

THE LOST ONES

Despite being virtually incorruptible, the Dark Apostles did manage to twist some of the Ancients. Unlike the contemptible masses of humanity, the Dark Soul found it impossible to tempt any to heresy, but it did manage to transform some into monstrous servants that are utterly dedicated to its will. Scores of Ancients were captured and subjected to a blasphemous and vile process that involved torture, genetic manipulation, and the rendering of their inner essence. Finally, following decades and numerous deaths, the few they managed to change emerged as Lost Ones.

The characteristic blue skin of the Lost Ones writhes under the dark powers and remnants of their former psionic abilities. Their extra pair of arms have been twisted into sharp bony blades that are not only deadly in combat, but also serve to enhance the terrible powers of Symmetry wielders. Small in number, these immensely powerful beings are most often in direct servitude to a Nepharite. Whether these creatures remember anything of their past is unknown; regardless, they are a testament to the fact that the Dark Soul can corrupt even the most pure and powerful of beings.

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
17 (+4)	14 (+1)	18 (+2)	15 (+1)
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
16 (+1)	19 (+2)	19 (+3)	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 10**
- ◀▶ **Arms 12**
- ◀▶ **Serious 14**
- ◀▶ **Mental 19**
- ◀▶ **Torso 16**
- ◀▶ **Legs 14**
- ◀▶ **Critical 11**

SOAK: Corrupted Flesh: (All 3)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Fists and Claws (melee):** 5+**↑**7, Corrupted 1, Knockdown, Stun, Vicious 1
- ◀▶ **Scything Blades (melee):** 5+**↑**9, Armour Piercing 1, Corrupted 1, Gruesome, Knockdown, Unforgiving 2, Vicious 1, Vile
- ◀▶ **Symmetry Torrent (ranged):** Range C, 2+**↑**6, Munition, 1H, Incendiary 1, Mind Breaker, Torrent

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Ancient Arts:** Lost Ones retain a diluted form of the formidable mental powers possessed by the Ancients. They have Mysticism Expertise 3 and Mysticism Focus 1, and know the following spells: Inner Gaze, Missive, Impel, Barrier.

A WAR OF AGES

The war raged for millennia. Though the Dark Legion had been brought forth from other dimensions—vile demonic and enslaved races—the Dark Soul found it difficult to overcome the Ancients. First, the Dark Symmetry seemed incapable of corrupting the technology of the Ancients. And, even though the symmetry had been able to sever the empathic link the Ancients shared, they were indeed incorruptible. Their minds were steeled and their will remained strong beyond belief. So, as the Dark Soul couldn't rip them apart from within, the Dark Legion assaulted them from without with full force. They wanted the Ancients to suffer for their resistance.

In the end the Dark Legion fell upon the home world of the Ancients. The battle was as terrible as it was spectacular. The sky was blotted out by the sheer numbers of enemy ships. Volleys and barrages of corrupted energy blasts paired with high velocity shards of dark stone made into missiles slammed into the planetary defenses. The Ancients manned their fighters, controlled their psionically linked drones, and went into the fray. The sky lit up as dark blasts were met

by waves of bright, hot plasma. The Ancients fought courageously, but in the end they had to abandon their home world as it fell to the Dark Legion. But the Ancients did not give up. They had set up several secret bases and hidden weapon systems all around the galaxy. With sadness in their hearts, they fled their home world, looking upon it one last time before it was annihilated in a massive explosion.

SIMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

The Ancients travelled far and wide within the Milky Way and established several colonies. During the war, however, the Dark Soul and its Legions hunted the Ancients to these colonies as well. The largest concentration of the Ancients by far occurred within in our solar system, since it was the location of their home world. Which is exactly the reason that the Dark Soul focused its attention there.

- ◄ Dark Presence
- ◄ Dark Symmetry Spend
- ◄ Fast Healing (1)
- ◄ Fear (2)
- ◄ Feed Upon Fear
- ◄ Grasping
- ◄ Inured to Cold
- ◄ Inured to Pain
- ◄ Inured to Poison
- ◄ Inured to Vacuum
- ◄ Monstrous Creature
- ◄ Night Vision
- ◄ Personal Dark Symmetry (5)
- ◄ Reality Rend: The bony scythes that protrude from a Lost One's back can rend reality as easily as they can puncture flesh. As a Restricted Action, the limbs can be used to tear open small, near-instantaneous rents that infuse the immediate area with Dark Symmetry and bolster the powers of those that wield it. When used in this manner, any creature within Close Range of a Lost One—including the Lost One itself—that attempts to use a Dark Gift before the end of the current round may reduce the difficulty of the test by one, to a minimum of zero; a gift considered to be Average D1 for the purposes of using it (i.e. the Willpower test or the number of Dark Symmetry points it costs) will be Challenging D2 for the purposes of its effects. The Lost One may attack with its Scything Blades during the same round in which it makes use of this ability.

- ◄ Slave to Symmetry (2)
- ◄ Supernatural Agility (2)
- ◄ Supernatural Awareness (1)
- ◄ Supernatural Coordination (1)
- ◄ Supernatural Intelligence (2)
- ◄ Supernatural Mental Strength (3)
- ◄ Supernatural Physique (1)
- ◄ Supernatural Strength (4)
- ◄ Symmetry Torrent: The primary ranged attack of Lost Ones, their extra set of hook-like arms release a storm of abyssal fire and void-frost that sears and freezes the target. The attack bypasses all mundane armour, though supernatural enhancements provide normal protection.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◄ **Creature of Symmetry:** As powerful creatures of the Dark Soul, Lost Ones are able to wield a number of Dark Gifts. Lost Ones can employ Corrupt Device, Dark Curse, Sense Weaves of Power, and Symmetry Burst, plus four other Dark Gifts. These additional gifts vary according to the Apostle they serve (see the *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook or *Dark Soul* sourcebook for more Dark Gifts specific to the Apostles).



THE SEEDS OF REBIRTH

BIRTH OF THE GUARDIANS

The Ancients fled across all regions of the galaxy in accordance with their plan. They became harder to find as they withdrew into hiding and desperately sought a means of survival. Soon they turned their eyes towards genetic engineering. As their empathic link had been severed, it became harder to accumulate information and compare experiences. Fusing their superior technology with their vaunted psionic abilities, they sought to create an even more powerful, intelligent, and psionically gifted version of themselves. One that could utilize a sort of genetic memory. One strong enough in psionic ability to readily break through the corruption and make use of the empathic link.

They collected genetic material from their best and brightest as they hid away in secret facilities. To this they added genetic improvements and radical redesigns. It took them decades—while their population was in constant decline—but, in the end, they managed to create the new version of themselves. The new Ancients were even taller, more muscular, and much more psionically gifted. In a way, they became a weapon. This new breed of Ancients was indeed able to partially cut through the corruption and sense the feelings and needs of their brethren. These new beings became known as the Guardians; a new chance and hope of survival.

The Guardians came up with new weapons and tactics, methods by which the entire Ancient race could keep going and survive. In the end though, it mattered little; the Dark Soul and its Legions were by now too strong and numerous. Realising that their end was inevitable, the Ancients began to devise a plan that would involve curtailing the Dark Soul and ensuring that future intelligent life would be provisioned with a chance, so that they might avoid the same fate that had befallen the Ancients.

THE GENETIC PILGRIMAGE

The Ancients had been monitoring a planet in the galaxy, a small blue planet. Life had been evolving on it for millions of years until it had reached the point where the primates had begun to use tools and hunt in packs. This race had the potential to develop into an intelligent species, although they had a level of aggression that had only ever previously been encountered amongst the Dark Legions' forces. For all their intelligence, psionic powers and attunement to the universe, the Ancients had been virtually wiped out as a result of their inability to hate, kill, and dominate. The Guardians put forth the idea to genetically manipulate this simplistic race. Through genetic

intervention with the species, triggers could be set that would become active should certain conditions arise which would provide a way to combat the Dark Soul should it be required in the distant future. And so, the early ancestors of mankind were chosen to carry the Genetic Pilgrimage.

The Guardians travelled to Earth and did their best to remain hidden as they instituted their plan to splice their very own genetic material into the human genome. They buried these genetic building blocks deep and ensured that they would remain latent until required. The necessary changes that would provide the human race with a means of survival were programmed to only begin to surface should certain circumstances arise. The Guardians foresaw that this primitive race would one day reach for the stars, and would most likely be capable of terraforming the worlds they discovered. Through analysis and prediction of biological needs, they calculated the various substances needed to terraform a planet for habitation. Should the human genome come into contact with the biological and chemical substances involved in terraforming, the latent DNA of the Ancients and the Guardians would slowly become activated.

The Ancients knew now that it was too late for them to destroy the Dark Soul, but they could temporarily contain it. Yet in doing so, they knew that mankind, with their will and lust for exploration, would stumble across the Dark Soul again no matter where they managed to lock it away, hence the need for the Genetic Pilgrimage. When mankind inevitably encountered the Dark Soul, the genetic material would by then be awakened, understood, and mastered. Paired with the aggression of mankind, they would be able to best this infernal force once and for all. Once the Genetic Pilgrimage was assured, the Guardians turned their eye to the Dark Soul and its legions. The Guardians knew they could not destroy the Dark Soul but they could lock it away in a powerful prison. If they were willing to pay the price.

THE THREE SEALS

The planet Nero set itself in solar orbit, becoming a more permanent presence in the solar system. After the Dark Soul had established its dominance, the Dark Legion began constructing power bases throughout the system, focusing on Pluto and parts of the asteroid belt. From here they launched search raids, trying to find and eradicate the last of the Ancients.

The Ancients themselves realized that they could do little unless they managed to seal away the Dark Soul itself. Even if they managed to best the Dark Legion, a new legion would show up soon enough as

long as the Dark Soul persisted. Three main vile influences had to be locked away: The Dark Legion, The Dark Symmetry, and the Dark Soul. In the end, they must separate two of the three from known reality. If the Dark Soul and Dark Symmetry could be cast out and locked away, the Dark Legion would be nothing but a headless hydra bound for death. Though the Ancients had felt and seen the influence of the Dark Soul all along, they had never seen the actual being or essence of this entity. And the Dark Symmetry itself seemed to take the shape of five specific aspects of different power and dark influences.

The Ancients managed to devise a way through which they could imprison these vile powers. They focussed on two points in which these powers were at their greatest in both a dimensional and psychic sense, for it was here that their essence was present in such a way that it could be made tangible. They needed to lock them away once trapped, so they set to devising a lock that was far away from their centre of power, in a place in which the Ancients would hold sway and have the greater influence.

By creating several diversions, a small group of Guardians managed to infiltrate the base of operation on Pluto. It was a gigantic underground city of dark cyclopean temples and harrowing edifices. The Guardians cut a bloody swath through the myriads of legions, getting to the very centre. Here they were faced with an incredible and fearsome power. The raw essence of the five Dark Apostles—manifestations of the five aspects of dark power. The strongest, named Ilian, tried to take on a physical shape as the Guardians battled the legions. But before she could materialize on Pluto, the Guardians teleported in the Tablet, the first of the locks they had prepared to be placed where the concentration of dark powers were at their strongest. The Tablet locked the essence of Ilian and her brethren in place, cutting them off from the world and the Dark Soul. Ilian alone was the only Apostle that maintained a strong enough presence to forge a physical form, which she used to flee to her citadel on Nero. Though much weakened, this shadow of her essence remained alive. The Guardians had foreseen this and, unbeknownst to the Dark Soul, had already managed to infiltrate Nero.

When Ilian materialized in the midst of her minions, she was immediately attacked by the Guardians. The other Ancients launched death defying attacks aimed at Nero, which forced the Mistress of the Void to seek shelter within her Citadel. Completely unaware that she was stepping into the jaws of a trap and in a weakened condition due to most of her Symmetry pattern being trapped within the Tablet alongside her brothers, she watched ineffectually as the Ancients invoked their psionic powers through an artefact they had constructed. Manipulating time and space, they forced the living part of Nero and all its vileness into a pocket dimension; one in which time stood frozen. This became known as the Seal of Repulsion. With all the Legions and Dark Apostles trapped, the Dark Soul, for the first time since the beginning of the universe, had to step in.

This multiversal dark power bore down on the Guardians and the Ancients. This too they had anticipated, it was the linchpin of their plan. Whilst securing their genetic legacy, the Guardians had also constructed The Great Seal deep within the ice of the Russian tundra

THE NATURE OF THE SEALS

One could say that The Three Seals are three separate locks on the very same door. When a lock breaks, the door slides open a bit further, whilst the lock that has been broken decides what slips out. The Tablet on Pluto was used to seal away the Dark Symmetry, the five patterns of the Apostles. The Seal of Repulsion was used to seal away the physical manifestation of Ilian and the actual Dark Legion. And finally, the Great Seal on Earth was used to lock away the Dark Soul.

When the Seal of Repulsion on Nero was activated, the entire planet of Nero, including Ilian and her Legions, shifted into a dimension where time stood frozen. The Nero on our end is a dead planet filled with vile dead ruins. It is constantly bombarded by asteroids that seem to impact according to a set pattern. This is a remnant of the Ancient's psionic energy, which draws destruction towards the home world of their ancient enemy. When the Seal of Repulsion was broken, Ilian and the Legions were still experiencing the last infuriating and humiliating moments of their defeat by the Ancients.

However, as the Tablet on Pluto contains the very Dark Symmetry, and as it was released first, Ilian and the Apostles were subsequently armed and provisioned with the specifics of mankind when they entered our world once again. The five Dark Symmetry patterns can best be described as the essence of the Apostles; they are intrinsically linked and intertwined. Once the Dark Symmetry has had contact with something, the physical manifestation of the Apostles will have also have an intrinsic understanding of it should they exist on, or enter, the same dimension, and vice versa.

The Great Seal on Earth locks away the Dark Soul. It hinders it from bolstering the Apostles and their Legions, and keeps it oblivious to our universe.

There are several other containment seals in place around the solar system, although the importance of each is of lesser consequence beside these three; the seal from the **Venusian Apocalypse Campaign**, for instance, was used to lock away an aspect of vile influence that would potentially doom mankind to enslavement in the distant future.

back on Earth. Created as a focal point for the other two locks, the remaining Guardians and Ancients, save for but a few, focused all their energy on the Great Seal. They harnessed their power through this artefact as the Dark Soul coalesced, sealing this mighty entity away in a pocket dimension of its own. Trapped inside, it would be cut off from the universe and unable to bolster its Apostles and Legions to any great degree. In the end, the Dark Apostles, the Dark Symmetry and the Dark Soul itself were locked away and barred from the universe. But the price was great. The Ancients and the Guardians died as they were converted into pure psionic energy used to fuel this great feat. They gave their lives in order to ensure the evolution and continuity of future species. Few survived.

According to plan, a handful of the Guardians remained on Earth and altered their bodies into the likeness of humans. Not being true immortals, but possessing very long life spans, they remained watchful over mankind and the Genetic Pilgrimage. Towards the end of their days, they would procreate and guide their offspring in order to make sure that they would maintain a presence among mankind. The Darkness was not dead, merely trapped, and though unknowing, the whole of mankind had been crafted into a weapon; the only known weapon that could best the Darkness once and for all when it returned.

THE SILENT MILLENNIAS AND THE ORDER OF THE WATCHERS

The Guardians hid among mankind in silence. They lived through the rise and fall of empires, experienced first-hand the devastating war and persecution of religions, and during all these millennia they kept a watchful eye for any manifestation of the Genetic Pilgrimage. Though only a very specific circumstance would trigger it, biology and genetics are capricious at best, so from time to time some humans manifested parts of the Guardian heritage. Some poor souls only became twisted in body, whilst others manifested the ability to heal others, great foresight, or telepathy. There have been many instances of so called psychics throughout history, and all those with genuine ability have borne a small speck of activated Guardian DNA.

Some of these gifted humans were guided surreptitiously and given small scraps of information. Sadly, for humanity, and despite—or because of—the convoluted plans of the Ancients, much that had been learned throughout the ages was either lost or distorted. War and natural disasters claimed the lives of Guardians before their time, or destroyed the archives of knowledge that had been built as repositories to provide future Guardians with all that they would need to know, until eventually word of mouth and written lore became the only means of passing knowledge between the long-lived Guardians.

Being few, the Guardians needed extra eyes and ears to watch for either the signs of the Dark Symmetry or the premature manifestation

of the Genetic Pilgrimage. To this day, and throughout all the ages, the genetic code that had been buried so deeply within human DNA is the greatest secret the Guardians have harboured. For, should the agents of Darkness ever learn that humanity harbours the powers of their ancient enemy, they would stop at nothing to swiftly crush mankind upon their return. It is important to understand that the Dark Soul and the Apostles do not simply annihilate races, they exterminate as deliberately, slowly, and painfully as possible so they may feed upon the energy that the overwhelming pain and death brings. If they were to ever learn that the power of the only enemy ever capable of halting their march is locked away in mankind, they would eradicate humanity and await a safer race to draw nourishment from. To mitigate this, the Guardians formed the Order of the Watchers.

The Order of the Watchers is not a very large or well organized group, but rather a small and disparate, yet far-reaching, group that has been tasked with collecting prophecies across the ages. They are continually aware that a great threat will one day emerge, and that mankind is somehow the key to defeating it. They are also aware that higher beings managed to contain this Darkness many thousands of years ago, and that a few of them still maintain a watchful eye over mankind. Their prophecies relate that one day, mankind will “become”, which will provide humanity with the tools it needs to best the Darkness. Their collective research has brought them the knowledge that the darkest of souls had been locked away within a great sea, but the information has become clouded through the millennia, and the Watchers are unaware of the lock’s location or the exact nature of what it means to “become”. To the Guardians, the Order has proven to be a useful network of passive informants, whilst the information that they have gathered has ultimately proven to be something that only they could ever truly hope to interpret.

HIDDEN STOCKPILES

The solar system is riddled with hidden vaults containing equipment of both Ancient and Guardian design, though most have been forgotten and lost to the ravages of time. These ancient repositories range from small caches that contain psionic firearms and melee weapons, to hidden weapon systems of mass destruction that are capable of destroying small planetoids and moons. There are even some operational spacecraft of Ancient construction that are hidden away. Some of these vaults have been deliberately cloistered, whilst others are spread across the shards that were left behind following the destruction of the Ancients’ home world. These items can only be activated by the Guardians or those humans who have manifested a sufficient amount of Guardian DNA within their genome.

DARKNESS RISING

The Guardians remained ever vigilant over the Great Seal and mankind throughout the millennia. They are responsible for the aggressive nature of humanity, but even the Guardians are genuinely shocked at the level of hostility and cruelty that mankind is capable of, in addition to their lack of a greater sense of self-preservation as a species. At the end of the 21st century, mankind managed to bring their very home world to its knees as a direct result of their greed and wars. This had not been anticipated, and, as the Earth revolted against the abuse it had suffered, massive earthquakes, deadly storms, and titanic tsunamis swept across the planet. The seismic activity struck the Russian tundra deeply, which led to a cataclysmic event: The fracturing of the Great Seal.

Though not destroyed, it allowed a minutia of the Dark Soul's influences to slip out. Sensing the greed, hate and corruptibility of mankind, it stretched forth its vile and corruptive tendrils. The Guardians had hidden their true natures well, so the Dark Soul did not sense its old enemy. Nor did it sense the latent Guardian DNA locked within the genome of mankind.

The Dark Soul's taint slithered free of its confines, much like a blind and amputated limb of the legendary Kraken might slither and creep in search of its prey. It affected the dreams and minds of mankind, fanning the flames of war and deepening their greed. Normal, peaceable, everyday citizens became violent and hateful as a wave of hate and murderous impulse suddenly washed over mankind. No one understood why the violence and destruction escalated to such murderous proportions; no one except the Guardians.

Sensing the fracturing of the Seal, they hastily formulated a plan. They were bereft of their Ancient technology, and too much knowledge had been lost across the millennia, so there was no way to restore the Great Seal and once again fully trap the Dark Soul. They hastily manipulated several nations and immediately set to constructing massive experimental underground facilities in twin hexagonal patterns around and over the Great Seal; mainly under the guise of protective, self-sufficient, underground habitats that would be capable of sustaining life for decades.

Though very efficient, and certainly a viable means of surviving a rapidly deteriorating world, the facilities served another purpose: The Guardians used the opportunity to construct a defence system that would prevent creatures of Darkness from breaching Earth's atmosphere by dimensional means. So long as the defence system functioned, agents of the Dark Soul would be prevented from teleporting directly onto Earth's surface. The Guardians also placed a second ring of six psionically charged crystals around the Seal, which distorted the influence of the Dark Soul and scrambled its position, making it impossible for the entity to communicate its location to the Apostles should they be released.

Unfortunately, charging the crystals also caused the collapse of the focus chamber where the energization ritual was taking place, causing the death of those involved and leaving four relatively untrained and youthful Guardians in control of the destiny of mankind. Worse yet, the knowledge of the exact location of the Great Seal and the majority of the facilities that formed both protective rings died with the Guardians that performed the psionic charging of the shrouding crystals, denying them the ability to monitor the effectiveness of the hastily erected defences until they were once again found. Despite being interrupted for several centuries, the search for this vital information has always been foremost on the agenda for the brothers Durand and the Tsarina.

THE ADAPTATION

When the 22nd century came, it was clear that the Earth was doomed. The corporations mercilessly mined the remaining resources of the planet with the intent of leaving it behind to die while they made a new life on Luna, Mars, Venus, and the other planets in the solar system. Though capable of terraforming new worlds, they were incapable of cleaning up the massive amounts of radiation and pollution now present on Earth. They were guided by greed and wished to find new worlds to strip bare.

The aggressiveness of mankind had been something that the Guardians had engendered and valued, though they had miscalculated its intensity. This, paired with the rupture of the Great Seal, led to mankind undertaking a massive exodus and space colonization program at a much earlier stage than the Guardians had anticipated. In addition to this, the terraforming would trigger the Genetic Pilgrimage too soon, which placed a severe risk of discovery by the Darkness before the power of the Guardians would fully manifest. This, in turn, could lead to the annihilation of mankind, as the Darkness would not risk being locked away once again by the descendants of their ancient enemy.

With all that they had worked for and protected for millennia hanging in the balance, the Guardians took steps to protect both humanity and the great work. The four remaining Guardians set in motion plans that would allow them to follow their charges into space, whilst also ensuring that members of the Order of the Watchers were placed within prominent positions of the colonisation crews. They also needed to maintain the protection of the Great Seal however, so to this end they worked to infiltrate and manipulate the Russian Federation. Construction began on new facilities beneath the frozen tundra, with the intention to extend them as far as the Black Sea and eventually form a second ring of protection to the stabilisers that were set in place to protect the Great Seal.

The Guardians also seeded their influence throughout the Russian Orthodox Church—the precursor to the Zlogorian Orthodox Church—as a means to more easily control the population. This manipulation, alongside the infiltration of the old Romanov monarchy, allowed them to plant the seeds for a future rule.

THE SEEDS OF REBIRTH

FEEDING THE MASSES

Emma Gordon worked as a Brotherhood volunteer for several years, ever since she turned eighteen. She was now twenty-two. She worked on the fringe of the organisation, doing charity work on the streets of Luna. The world could be a dark and cold place, but the Brotherhood provided hope—a beacon of light. Emma raised money to open several shelters and soup kitchens. She saved countless of lives, providing food and shelter for the needy. Whole families on the brink of starvation had been pulled back from the edge.

It was always an uphill battle and it became harder and harder. Folks were not as willing to give as they used to be, and she wasn't able to save as many as before. Just the other month she found Mr Herring dead in the streets. There was no food left in the shelter, nor any room. And that night had been particularly cold. Malnourished and sick, Mr Herring succumbed to the elements. Space was running out. Food was running out. For the first time, Emma felt helpless and despaired. Not even the light and promise of the Cardinal could alleviate her fear and doubts. She even began to feel abandoned and angry. Why didn't the Brotherhood prioritize the needy even more? Of late,



it seemed that the organisation had been far too busy spending time giving speeches and rubbing shoulders with the corporations. And the corporations themselves were rich beyond imagination and yet only held a couple of measly charities each year.

Each Megacorporation had a charity committee and every year these committees sat around and decided where the money should go and with how much they were willing to part. These days they poured money into parks and private schools. The homeless weren't on the agenda right now; it was an election year and every corporation wanted to please their political racing horse. It was all about favours. Emma had had enough, but, when she was on the brink of giving up she met Christy. Christy was a new volunteer, older than Emma. She had such spirit and positive attitude that it rubbed off and it gave a sliver of hope to Emma. Christy also seemed to have some insight into the different committees and organizations, but no direct influence.

Though positive, Christy evidenced great disappointment and anger when it came to the lack of commitment shown in the corporations. She and Emma talked at length about it. During these talks, Emma was filled with the need to do something about it. If only she could talk to a committee member. She was certain she could talk sense into them. Usually she wasn't that brazen, but she felt it was necessary this time. The problem was always that a simple volunteer, like her, could never get an audience with a corporate charity committee member. But as luck would have it, Christy provided Emma with some information. With her connections, Christy managed to get hold of Ronald Hidalgo's schedule. Mr Hidalgo was a charity committee member working for Capitol and Christy had suggested that Emma should confront him privately. Talk to him. Get him to see the necessity of helping the cause. So, with the information Christy gave her, Emma now stood and waited in the darkened parking garage under Mr Hidalgo's apartment building. It was late at night and Mr Hidalgo always worked late on Wednesdays. Christy said that talking to him while he was off work, privately, was the only way to go. Emma felt a bit embarrassed as it was basically a social ambush, but she also knew that Mr Hidalgo would never see her otherwise.

As she stood by the pillar in the empty, quiet garage she saw his shiny, black car drive in. He parked and got out of the vehicle and, as he did so, Emma stepped forward, sporting her nicest smile.

"Excuse me, Mr Hidalgo."

He spun around. He was in his forties and Emma realised

that the money he spent on his suit alone could feed an entire family for weeks. Hidalgo gave her a quick uninterested glance. "Whoever you are, and whatever you want, you'll have to wait and book an appointment. I'm off work." He started to walk away. Emma hurried and got in his way.

"Sir, I'm so sorry. I just want a couple of seconds of your time." His manicure probably cost more than it would have taken to clothe, feed, and shelter several people, people like Mr. Herring who was now dead because of the disinterest of men like Hidalgo.

"My name is Emma Gordon. I work at the Wishing for Hope shelter here in Luna City." She said, still smiling, but becoming increasingly and uncharacteristically angry.

"Listen girl, I don't care who you are. This is my home. How the hell did you find out where I live anyway. Just get out of here and leave me be." He pushed past her, his voice gruff, irritated, and still uninterested. Emma walked after him, keeping even pace.

"Sir, listen. I was just hoping that you could find it in your heart to grant the homeless charity a small donation. We only need a very modest sum in order to stay afloat."

Hidalgo stopped and turned to her, arrogance blatantly displayed on his face.

"I couldn't give a rat's ass about your cause and the homeless. That is so last year. If you're lucky we might swing back to it after the election, but for now, you just have to manage. Now goodnight." Again he turned away and walked off.

Emma watched him for a second or two, stunned. Her eyes fell on his shoes, his golden rings, his two hundred credit haircut. All she could see in her mind's eye was people starving while this bastard spent money that could save human lives on his appearance. Emma had never felt so angry, so outraged. A red hot blaze of hate washed over her and suddenly—suddenly, there was no control. As if in a raging trance she took out the expandable baton she kept in her purse for self-defence. She walked behind him, staring at his back.

"Mr Hidalgo?" She said between clenched teeth.

He spun around, his face red. "Listen you stupid bitch, get the hell out of here or I will have your pretty little ass thrown in jail for harassment." His eyes widened as she swung the

baton. Too late, he realized the danger, saw the hatred etched on her face. The first blow caught him square in the temple. It broke the skin and a fine spurt of blood gushed out as he fell to his knees. Emma, now gripped by an uncontrollable desire to punish him, struck him again and again.

"We want so little!" She howled, the base of the baton hitting him in the jaw. Teeth exploded from his mouth in fragments and clattered across the garage's concrete floor covered in a fine, crimson, high-velocity spatter.

"We want so little!" She repeated over and over again as she continued to smash the steel into his skull.

"We want so little!"

The head was a bloody mess of cracked bone and flesh turned to mush, but at last there was stillness, quiet. What had she done? And why? Her face was wet with blood, but still she wasn't afraid. Or remorseful. Instead, she saw an opportunity.



"No need to cut in line, plenty to go around," Emma said smiling as she served out portions of the rich and fragrant meat stew. Christy, who stood next to her helping serve the food at the shelter, turned to her.

"How did we manage to swing all this? High quality meat like this is expensive."

"Well, people can be much more giving than you might think. They are often even more generous than they themselves think," Emma said.

Christy continued to help serve the stew, fully aware that Mr Hidalgo indeed had contributed. She was pleased. For years she had worked on Emma, trying to find a way to corrupt innocence, to use the need to give to others as a way into the soul. And now she had succeeded. Christy had served her cult well and Semai himself smiled upon her. After years of wearing Emma down, her innocence cracked and served as a portal for corruption, and soon the young girl would be one of them. Even better, when the homeless people that had tasted this meat once again starved in harsh times, they might just fall victim to the Black Hunger. Yes, she had done well and it was time to widen the range of her newfound recruitment and corruption technique.

THE EXODUS

During the early stages of the 23rd century, the corporations handpicked the best and the brightest of mankind. They were the chosen few that would be allowed to escape into the sanctity of space, while the rest would be left on Earth to die. Foreseeing these genocidal events, the Guardians saw to it that the Russian Federation seized control of several useful Bauhaus facilities that were closely positioned to the protective underground facilities they had built. Having become incorporated into an even greater network, the entire unified Russian Federation went underground and locked themselves inside their now massive, city-like Strongholds. Centuries of preparatory work had provided them with the capability to remain locked away for over a century without risking starvation.

Exactly as the Guardians had predicted, those left behind on Earth to die did not want to go out quietly. These desperate humans managed to wrest control over some nuclear weapons and threatened to launch an attack against the greatest colony, Luna, if the corporations did not provide safe passage from the dying planet. The corporations responded by carpet bombing the entirety of Earth's surface. Beyond the structural damage, massive amounts of radiation were unleashed, alongside hideous chemical pollutants from monolithic industrial plants. In addition, a straggling Chinese terraforming ship was hit, with the resultant fallout releasing a massive amount of concentrated terraforming gases into the atmosphere. Almost all life on the surface of Earth as we know it was extinguished, but somehow there were those on the surface who did manage to survive.

All the while, the majority of the population of the former Russian Federation remained safe within their underground facilities.

DARK EDEN EMERGES

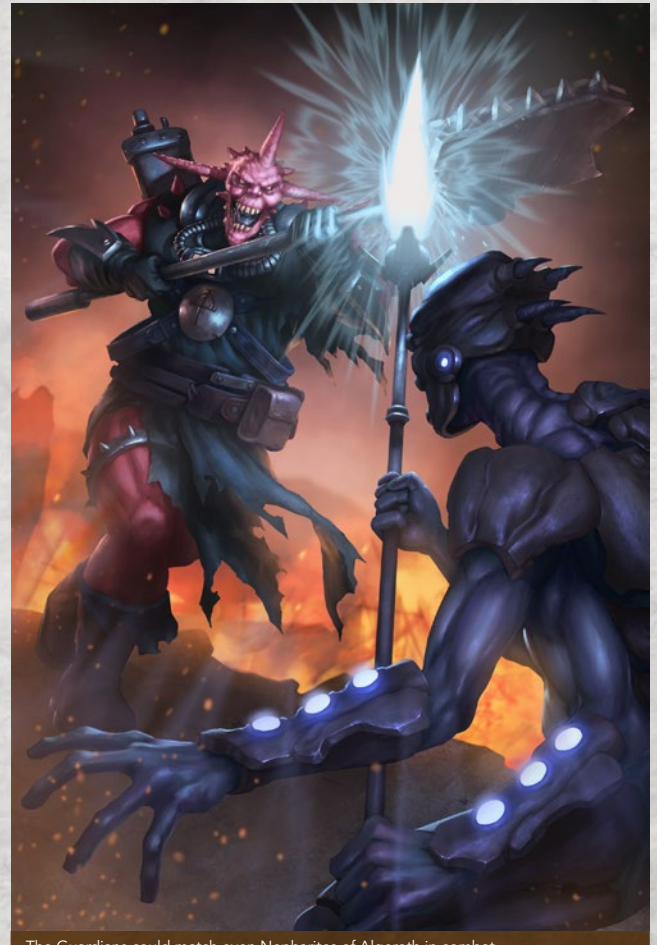
The landscape of Earth was formed into a harsh and hostile land as a result of the carpet bombing and resultant release of radiation, poisons, and terraforming agents. This would be affectionately termed Dark Eden by those who had indulged in the destruction of their former home.

Having been set to trigger and develop slowly when humans were exposed to a terraformed environment, the Genetic Pilgrimage went haywire in the surviving unprotected humans. The huge concentration of terraforming agents released by the destruction of the *Hu Jing*, combined with the massive amounts of radiation and poison now present in the environment, served to trigger and distort the genetic legacy of the Ancients. Humans changed rapidly both physically and mentally as the Guardian DNA hidden away in their genome went into its own mutated overdrive. The surviving flora and fauna were also irrevocably changed as a result of the radiation and bioengineered agents now present in the atmosphere. During

the centuries to come, tribes and civilizations would rise to create a brutal and barbaric world populated by creatures that few would recognize as having once been human.

THE TRUE NATURE OF MUTATION

Human mutation is, in fact, an expression of the Genetic Pilgrimage. The body begins to exhibit physical changes which bring the human closer to the appearance of the Guardians, but they will not only change physically. Mutants will eventually undergo a mental adaptation that grants them access to an assortment of powers that were once possessed by the Ancients and Guardians; those same powers that are now possessed to a lesser degree by members of The Brotherhood, amongst others. This, if anything, is proof that mankind has indeed been engineered into a weapon that can counter the vile Darkness.



The Guardians could match even Nephariotes of Algeroth in combat

CHAPTER 02

THE AGE OF MUTATION

DARKNESS EMERGENT

Despite the monumental efforts and sacrifices that were made by the Guardians in order to prevent the darkness from returning, it was only a matter of time before it was unleashed once more. After the Great Seal on Earth had been fractured, the Dark Soul could reach out and manipulate mankind. It was this subtle manipulation that led to the discovery of the Tablet on Pluto and the corruption of the clan Kingsfield. This, in turn, led to the breaking of the Seal of Repulsion.

With the darkness once again free, the Genetic Pilgrimage was in jeopardy. The mutations began to manifest themselves subtly in some humans. However, it had yet to bestow enough powers to the individual, or affect enough humans, for it to become the great weapon against the darkness as intended. All the Guardians could do at this point was to keep the truth behind human mutation hidden.

HIDDEN BENEFACTORS

The three Durand brothers, Nathaniel, Peter, and Alexander, are not human; they are, in truth, Guardians that have assumed human form. Through replicating human form and function, however, they gave up the ability to assume their natural embodiment, although they are still powerful beyond human capabilities. Two of the brothers have since transcended this restriction: Nathaniel through genetic experimentation, and Alexander via technological breakthroughs. The other notable and powerful Guardian is the Tsarina of White Star, who holds the responsibility for guarding the Great Seal on Earth.

In creating The Brotherhood, they established an organisation that is able to recruit humans who display the ability to unlock their psychic potential. Those with the most aptitude in using the Art have a deeply enhanced brain function capacity, which allows them to access the various psychic abilities that were available to the Ancients, although to a much lesser degree. Mixing this capacity with true Guardian DNA unlocks the true potential of the Art.

A TIMELINE TO MUTATION

1 YC: Following the destruction of the First Seal of Repulsion, the three Durand Brothers secretly travel to Earth and meet with their sister, the Tsarina. They inform her that a war is coming, one in which an inevitable tide of Darkness would wash over humanity. They request that she prepare an armada in secret, one that would be able to aid mankind in the coming war.

14 YC: Peter Durand is immediately struck with dark, maddening visions as the two Dark Apostles, Algoth and Demnogon, step through the rift on Nero. Trying to discern and anticipate the plans of the Darkness, he had been deep within a psionically induced meditation at the moment that the Lord of Destruction and the Befouler once again broached our universe. Co-existing with the energies of the universe as the two Apostles appeared allowed the Dark Symmetry to hook a direct line into his mind and soul. Though it did not corrupt him, it nearly drove him insane. The link was a two-way affair, however, and he was given some insight into their darkest plans and nefarious inner workings. He divined the Citadels to be a key focus; though free, the Apostles were still intrinsically bound to the dimension that housed the Courts of Darkness. All the citadels were interconnected through perverse links, which allowed the Dark Apostles to draw power and communicate more clearly with the Dark Soul whilst within our dimension. The three Guardian brothers began to forge a plan aimed at destroying the link, thereby disabling the Citadels, stripping the Dark Apostles of their power, and once again pushing them back to their dimensional prison. In order to succeed, the Apostle of War, Algoth, had to be distracted or—more preferably—expunged physically. Nathaniel Durand ordained himself to take on the task of fighting Algoth when the time would come.

20 YC: The emergence of Semai and Muawijhe is heralded by the appearance of their ghastly emblems across the surface of the Martian moons, Deimos and Phobos. Both satellites actually contain massive weapon systems designed by the Ancients which are capable of destroying entire citadels with a few strikes of concentrated, psionically focused plasma. Sensing the weapons and emanations of their old enemy, the two Apostles use their dark powers to mark the moons, which distorts their psionic energy and damages their physical systems. The Dark Legions are unable to access the actual weapon systems as they are heavily protected by an automated defence grid, although they establish several small bases with the intention of denying the weapons to anyone else. The Dark Legion is unaware that the Guardians are still among them,

but they recognise that the weapons left behind may pose a threat to them if humans somehow find a way to activate them. Due to the discovery of these weapons, the Dark Legion actively begins looking for weapons left behind by the Ancients elsewhere with the intention of destroying or disabling them.

22 YC: The Guardians assumption of human form engendered a genetic change that made it impossible for them to return to their true physical forms. Appointed to fight Algeroth, Nathaniel undergoes an experimental treatment of gene therapy and psionic infusion that is extremely painful, but ultimately successful. Nathaniel becomes capable of assuming his true physical form at will. If needed, this will be used when fighting Algeroth, as the true form of a Guardian is much more powerful than that of their assumed human forms.

40 YC: After nearly two decades of planning and research, the three Durand brothers discover that a direct gateway to the vile emanations of Nero is located within a Citadel that lies close to San Dorado, Mars. In essence, the chamber of the San Dorado Citadel is found to share the same transdimensional space as the portal chamber on Nero. Strategies are made that entrust an elite force of Doomtroopers, proto-Inquisitors, and others with a suicidal mission to destroy the link at the heart of San Dorado/Nero. This will be their master-stroke, but they concurrently formulate a devious plot to distract Algeroth. They plan to hound him directly whilst also attacking his citadels on Venus, thereby duping him into believing that he is their intended target. So distracted, a lightning strike against his San Dorado Citadel would have a much better chance of succeeding. And so were sown the seeds of the Venusian Crusade. All those involved in the inner circle know that most are unlikely to return. It is a sacrifice they are all willing to make as the entire human race is at stake.

52 YC: The three brothers call upon their sister, the Tsarina, at the outset of the Venusian Crusade. Having spent half a century preparing, she immediately sends her armada to join the crusade. This is how the timely puncturing of the blockade around Earth came to be; it had all been meticulously planned by the Guardians. None argued as the ragtag flotilla bolstered the greatest fleet that had ever been mustered. In keeping with their plan, their main goal is to reach Algeroth and strike him down whilst the other force concentrates on the San Dorado gateway. The three brothers lead the crusade on Venus, which consumes an entire year and countless personnel until this goal is reached.

53 YC: Nathaniel Durand finally corners Algeroth within the depths of Alakhai's citadel on Venus, while his brothers keep the other Legions at bay. Alone and unattended within the Inner Sanctum, Nathaniel and Algeroth battle not only spiritually and psychically, but also continue to cross swords for days, until a near-exhausted Nathaniel is finally left with no choice but to assume his true form.

Muscled and armoured blue skin erupts bloodily from his human shape as his height and girth expand, whilst an extra pair of arms sprout from his torso. The unchaining of his physical potential also unleashes his psionic power, allowing him to subdue the dark powers of the Apostle of War and prevent Algeroth from assuming one of his massive war forms. As Nathaniel battles Algeroth, members of the special team infiltrate the citadel on Mars and access the San Dorado/Nero gateway, although it closes soon after they enter. Several of them perish, their minds and bodies ripped apart by dark forces, as they travel through a vile dimension filled with unimaginable depravity and abhorrence. Those who do make it are hurled out into a gloomy and ominous underground cavern, the walls of which are filled with coiled pulsating biomechanical tubes and glowing blasphemous symbols that illuminate the area with an unholy red light. They courageously press on, unaware that they were now within the living counterpart of Nero within which the Guardians had trapped the Dark Legion so many epochs ago. The invasive and pervading evil that permeates the caverns leads them to the creature that controls the Dark Souls' links to our dimension. Locked in mortal combat, Nathaniel and Algeroth continued to do battle within our universe.

Time flows strangely within the massive caverns, which makes it impossible to know how long it has taken to navigate the hellish network, until they stumble upon the orchestrator of the dimensional portals. Instead of a relic, machine, or gateway, they are met by a huge and bloated creature: The Beast of Vile Hunger. Held in place by massive chains and alien sinews, the enslaved and ensorcelled monster appears to be blind. The creature has been described differently by all who have seen it and lived to tell the tale, but all agree upon specific facts. It is surrounded by a multitude of miniature rifts that appear to be windows into different dimensions and worlds, many of which link to human worlds such as Luna or Mars, whilst others display the totally alien and bizarre. The Beast appears to sniff out corruption and use it to form conduits between the Dark Soul and the Apostles. The team is hesitant for only a moment before unleashing all of the firepower they could muster at the creature. Not only is the creature massive and strong, it is also protected by the Dark Soul. Explosions and gunfire rock the chamber relentlessly as the team make use of every weapon that they possess.

The simultaneous war between Nathaniel and Algeroth shook Alakhai's Citadel to its very foundation as they vented powers that were far beyond human ken, until finally, having both exhausted most of their mystical might, they locked blades. In the momentary silence that followed, Algeroth whispered fatal words to his foe: *"We were here before the beginning of your kind, and we will be here at the end of all that is. Humanity has no hope."*

Nathaniel gained an immediate and intuitive understanding that the Dark Soul had been a part of the universe since the beginning of time, which shook him to his core. Shocked into immobility for a

split second by this utterance, he momentarily dropped his guard, allowing Algoth to plunge his black blade into Nathaniel's body and unleash his last drops of Dark Symmetry into Nathaniel's very core. A triumphant Algoth straddled Nathaniel, ready to strike his head from his body, when the Apostle of War, in the moment that should have been one of his greatest triumphs, roared in pain and vanished without a trace. Though they had been required to inflict an unprecedented amount of punishment, those that had been sent to sever the link had managed to banish the Vile Beast of Hunger. Sending the creature roaring down into the abyss to which it had been tethered once again banished of all the Dark Apostles to the depths of the alternate Nero. With the influence of the Dark Apostles and the Dark Soul now gone, the Nephrites and their legions were severely weakened and left in disarray. Though it would take four decades, mankind was slowly able to defeat the Dark Legion.

Barely alive, and once again clothed in human form, a mortally wounded Nathaniel managed to drag himself free of the Inner Sanctum and out of the Citadel, where he fell into the arm of his two brothers. He ordained Bauhaus Commander Marshall Toth as his successor, before finally whispering "It is done" to his brothers and succumbing to his wounds. Not willing to accept the death of their beloved brother, Peter and Alexander took up Nathaniel's lifeless body, before transporting it with the utmost secrecy to a hidden Mishima biotech facility located deep within the Venusian jungle. Initially intending to use the clandestine technology in tandem with their psionic powers in order to resurrect their brother, they discovered that even this potent combination would not be enough to resurrect Nathaniel due to the amount of Dark Symmetry that had flooded his system.

EARTH 0-53 YC

The Great Seal on Earth, despite the various steps that were taken to secure it, fractured even further not long after the three Durand brothers stepped from the jungle and formed the Brotherhood, with near disastrous consequences. Dark cult sleeper cells hidden within Whitestar sprang into action, unleashing havoc upon several Strongholds and facilities that also triggered devastating seismic activity. Although it was still blind to the location of its prison thanks to the power of the crystals that shrouded the Great Seal, the Heretics had unwittingly allowed their dark master to reach out with renewed vigour and even greater reach. This inadvertent fracturing of the Great Seal created a domino effect that destroyed several more Whitestar bunker cities, killing thousands. Dark cults and creatures were spawned all over Earth following this, with most immediately setting out to attack any Whitestar facility they came across.

The biotech facility, dubbed Mirai, was a long-forgotten laboratory that stood dormant for hundreds of years. Originally established in the 25th Century, Mishima's scientists attempted to facilitate true cloning. Their efforts ended in disaster and effected an uncontrolled release of engineered genetic test subjects into the wilds of Venus, which subsequently caused radical genetic change to the flora and fauna of the planet. Unknown to most, this has spawned many of the bizarre and dangerous environments of Venus and the life harboured within.

94 YC: Saladin discovers the trigger mechanism for the weapons on Deimos and Phobos. Unsure of its nature and intent, he entertains the idea that this could be a way to re-establish the link to the alternate Nero.

100 YC: The Brotherhood defeats Saladin. Due to the fact that his very link to the Dark Soul had been severed when the Beast of Vile Hunger met its end, and having entrusted the security of the moon-weapon trigger mechanism to a select few that are themselves soon overwhelmed, the Dark Legion at large remain unaware of both its location and purpose. Saladin is himself later cloned, but the distorted technology used during this process and the vital missing connection to the Dark Soul ensures that the trigger mechanism remains shrouded in obscurity.

237 YC: Centuries have passed since Nathaniel's death, during which time Peter and Alexander have been experimenting with ways to resurrect their brother. Immortal to all intents and purposes, the two brothers have rotated through the position of Cardinal several times over. They fake their own deaths before re-emerging at an appropriate time with their appearance slightly changed, which ensures that they are always able to hold a position of power within The Brotherhood and allows them to maintain their influence within the organisation. Despite sharing a cohesive vision for The Brotherhood, the two brothers began to disagree on the best method to contend with the Dark Legion following its eventual return, for they both understood that it is only a matter of when, not if.

Peter believes wholeheartedly that cloning their brother Nathaniel and reuniting the trinity provides the best chance at fighting the Dark Legion. Alexander on the other hand no longer believes that Nathaniel's return is possible. He turns his attentions and research towards different fields and seeks to develop technology that is impervious to the Dark Symmetry, which will allow him to take the fight to the Darkness upon its return. The two brothers' ideas are incompatible to such a degree that Alexander decides to leave the facility and strike out on his own in order to pursue his own research. He begins scouring the inner worlds for fragments of pre-Fall technology.

1053 YC: After centuries of searching, Alexander uncovers an Imperial archive of pre-fall technology on the asteroid Cyaneus. He

immediately forms a bond with The Immortal, a highly evolved and still operational cyborg. They begin to work together to recreate the marvels that allow The Immortal to remain free of corruption, allowing Alexander to take the first steps that would usher in a new era of technology. He conducts his work away from the prying eyes of The Brotherhood and hides from his brother, fully aware as he is that his work would be viewed as not only dangerous, but also as a sure path to corruption.

1103 YC: Using the technology at hand, hidden assets, and a vast network of contacts, Alexander is able to not only create a new type of technology in secret, but also to create a new and powerful organisation overnight. Cybertronic is born, with not one person realising that one of the sacred founders of The Brotherhood is at the pinnacle of the organisation.

This very same year, Peter succeeds in cloning his brother Nathaniel, though all of the data indicates that the Guardian genes are stronger than ever in the infant Nathaniel. Whilst conducting his research, Peter discovers that mutation in humans, more specifically infants, is on the rise. It is as if something has triggered and significantly accelerated the mutation rate.

The Brotherhood condemns all those with mutations as Heretics corrupted by the darkness. Humans that manifest physical signs or supernatural powers try to hide their true nature. Some even believe themselves to be corrupted by darkness and hide within Heretic cults, whilst these cults also believe the mutants to be corrupted and readily subsume them.

1105 YC: The Nephrite of Semai, Darsheed the Inveigler, begins to take an interest in the mutated children of Luna. Uncertain as to whether the mutations are a side-effect of the Dark Symmetry, he sends out his minions to kidnap them from their homes and orphanages. In order to facilitate this, Darsheed creates a travelling carnival and circus which provides limitless access to a large number of children. The cultists of the Travelling Carnival of Wonders keep a constant vigil for any children that display mutation. Having spotted a mark, they then rig contests that require clown kits to be sent to the child's home address. The cultists then allow the suspected mutant to win, thereby gaining their address and the opportunity to kidnap them at a later date. Darsheed subjects them all to horrible experiments but is unable to find out why mutation is increasing, although he does manage to swell his own ranks.

1125 YC: The clone of Nathaniel, now in his early twenties, is beginning to exhibit unprecedented potential and a strong desire to fight the Dark Legion.

1151 YC: At this point, the rate of mutations within the human population has become even more common, although it has yet to reach its peak. Peter and Nathaniel approach their sister and

ask her to invest time and resources in working to unlock the mutational mystery.

1300 YC (Second Dark Legion War Era): Through guile and cunning, the snatching of children on Luna by Darsheed has continued unabated for two centuries. Overall, the number of disappearances are like a ripple in the ocean for a city such as Luna, where people—both children and adults—often disappear under strange circumstances. Nathaniel and Peter, through divination and circumspection, come to recognise the pattern. With the Dark Legion once again threatening the fabric of the solar system, the two brothers finally understand that they will need to rely on the mutants in order to once again seal the breach. The Guardian DNA will soon become fully active in some, and they will need these weapons to soundly defeat the Darkness. After all, this was the original purpose of the genetic pilgrimage.

Though they have great influence over The Brotherhood, the two brothers understand that it would be an impossible task to change the perception of mutants overnight. Even were they able to succeed at this, too much attention would fall on the issue, which would in turn alert the Dark Legion of the importance of the children. It would then only be a short leap for Dark Apostles to learn the truth of the matter: that mutants are indeed the invention of an old enemy that once banished them to beyond.

Peter and Nathaniel again reach out to their sister, the Tsarina. They request that she approach The Brotherhood in order to explain that mutants are not Heretics, but are, in fact, a genetic legacy that will provide humanity with the means to defeat the Darkness once and for all. The Tsarina agrees and immediately begins to analogize the genetic evidence that will substantiate this fact. In this way, she hopes to be able to both convince The Brotherhood and also show that mutants carry the same genetic markers as those who are capable of wielding the Arts.

1305 YC: Having finished collating her data, The Tsarina calls for a meeting with some of the most trusted Mystics of The Brotherhood. They meet within one of the Tsarina's hidden bases on Earth, where she reveals the evidence and explains that mutants are both a salvation and a potential threat. She does not reveal the true nature of either herself or her Guardian brothers, but she does still manage to convince the Mystics, which leads to the creation of a small inner circle within The Brotherhood that is charged with silently eradicating the Travelling Carnival of Wonders, in addition to conducting their own clandestine recruitment of mutant children. They stalk the carnival for a year and lure it to Earth before eradicating it, whilst the mutant children that they recruit are taken to the old Mishima biotech facility on Mars. Once there, they receive training from Peter and Nathaniel and their DNA is further altered, which accelerates the rate of mutation. In complete secrecy, the two Durand brothers begin to build their own private army of Guardians.

MUTANTS AMONG US

PLAYING MUTANTS

Being a mutant is not as defining as being a Heretic. In many cases, a mutant is simply a regular person who begins to display bizarre physical mutations and powers. When they do, they are generally scared, believing themselves sick or somehow corrupted by the Dark Symmetry without even knowing it. The era in which the story is set often has bearing on how a mutant character is played. For the most part, this book assumes that most stories are played out in the pre-Second Dark Legion War era. What follows are themes, situations, and circumstances that might be of interest when playing mutant characters.



Mutation remains heresy to the Brotherhood.

THE THREAT OF THE BROTHERHOOD

To mutants, even though they are not, in fact, corrupted, the Brotherhood represents a palpable and potent threat. Physical mutations can give away a mutant, as can manifesting their powers. But, since they are not corrupted, the power of the Arts cannot be used to sense a mutant's true nature. Nor can it be used to track them in the same way as the Inquisition tracks Heretics.

Often, mutants will be faced with the choice of attacking and even killing members of the Brotherhood in self-defence, or being caught, tortured, and killed for no reason other than being different. And it is indeed ironic that the two best hopes of mankind will be pitted against one another in this manner without the influence of the Dark Legion. These types of situations can often pop up in stories where the mutants are trying to survive and hide in a big city.

The Brotherhood does not sense any corruption in mutants, but they do seem to be content that the physical differences and unexplainable powers are a sure sign of true corruption. There

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MUTANTS?

Can those that have been regarded as the protectors of mankind for centuries, those Brothers and Sisters that are capable of wielding the Art, be considered as mutants? Strictly speaking, no, and thankfully so. Unearthing such a fact would likely irrevocably shatter The Brotherhood beyond redemption. Tapping into the Arts is a result of the natural evolution of humanity, one untampered with by the Genetic Pilgrimage; an unlocking of higher brain function and an increased brain capacity that enables the wielders of the Light to utilize the psionic powers that were such an intrinsic part of the Ancients' lives.

Some, such as the Mystics, are able to manifest a much wider and greater range of powers when compared to that of the single Art available to the Inquisitors, for instance. To a Brother though, none of them are capable of the levels of power that could be displayed by even an infant of the Ancients. Those Brothers that begin to manifest or are introduced to Ancient or Guardian DNA are dealt with in **Chapter 5: The Legacy of the Ancients**.

GENETIC PILGRIMAGE, PSYCHIC ABILITY & HUMAN FACTOR

The various sourcebooks and campaigns that encompass the *Mutant Chronicles* universe provide a number of links to the Ancients and their wondrous powers; although intrinsically linked, these different endowments are dynamically dissimilar. The three direct means that draw upon the legacy of the Ancients are discussed throughout this book to a varying degree, but are summarised here for clarity:

PSYCHIC ABILITY: Be it a member of The Brotherhood wielding the Arts, or an adept of the Way focussing their inner Ki, the term psychic ability has been used here to encompass all of these supernatural feats. Accessing and utilising these powers is not a sign of mutation; the human race has always possessed its own inherent potential, independent of any manipulation by the Ancients and Guardians, for brain function and capacity to develop abilities that are capable of manipulating the very matter and fabric of both themselves and the universe. The potential for psychic development is one of the reasons that the Ancients chose to pass their baton to humanity. The fact remains, however, the Ancients and their spawn were capable of psychic feats that are far beyond anything that current wielders of the Arts or proponents of Ki could muster; combining psychic ability with the Genetic Pilgrimage or Human Factor will provide them with the opportunity to develop these abilities to levels that could rival or surpass these genetic manipulators.

GENETIC PILGRIMAGE: Refers to the genetic code that has been hidden and entwined within the DNA of the human race. It has been set to trigger once certain environmental and chemical conditions associated with terraforming, a process that had been readily available to the Ancients, became present amongst the ecosystems of the planets that the human race chose to colonise. The Guardians attempted to predict this event as best they could, yet humanity managed to reach for the stars far before this allotted date. Mutation is the forefront of the Genetic Pilgrimage, although it is occurring at a much slower rate due to the fact that the genetic time stamp that was inserted has not yet been reached. The worst fears that the Ancients had predicted are occurring, as the Dark Symmetry and the Legions have once again been unleashed, yet the best laid plans of their Guardians are yet to reach full fruition; humanity has been gifted a chance to defeat the Darkness, but it may yet be out of their reach.

HUMAN FACTOR: Introduced during the *Dark Legion Campaign*, Human Factor is described as a distillation of the very essence and soul of what makes a person human. It is extracted from a subject's body and soul through the horrific ministrations of the Nekromakina: gigantic corpse-cathedrals that were specifically designed and crafted by the Dark Legion to produce the endless tides of Undead Legionnaires that flesh out their ranks. The Nekromakina hail from the time of the war against the Ancients, so any Human Factor that might be present within the depths of one of these vile factories may actually be the extracted essence of an Ancient or a Guardian. Injecting oneself with Human Factor will hyper-stimulate certain aspects of the Genetic Pilgrimage and may allow the individual to develop any latent psychic potential, or boost any psychic abilities that they already possess. It does not necessarily trigger mutation, but does introduce, unlock, or reinforce certain abilities that were available to the Ancients. Introducing Human Factor to someone that is already displaying the Genetic Pilgrimage could have... interesting results.

will be those brothers whose opinion will be divided as to whether this is the case. Of course, there are the Guardians hiding at the pinnacle of The Brotherhood who are rapidly becoming aware of the value of mutation, in addition to the Order of the Watchers seeded throughout the galaxy. Any one of these agents would be a good way to allow mutant player characters to escape the Brotherhood at times, as they can be helped from inside the very organisation that is seeking to persecute them.

A DOORWAY TO HERESY

Some mutants, for reasons such as believing that they are somehow corrupt—despite knowing themselves not to be evil—or perhaps just looking for a place to hide, can seek out Heretics. They join the cult and hide amongst them, keeping a low profile for the most part and never attempting to rise in the ranks. It can be troublesome when the cult wishes to bestow them with a Dark Gift, as most mutants that join a cult do so only to stay hidden and have nowhere else to go. They are not corrupt, and as such cannot and will not accept Darkness to truly corrupt their soul. This makes it impossible for them to learn any Dark Gifts.

Heretic leaders will find this strange and even suspicious at times. But, if the mutant possesses other powers that are clearly not the Arts and have horrible physical mutations, most Heretics simply believe that the powers are another manifestation of the Dark Symmetry. The physical mutations in this case are viewed as some form of stigmata. Stigmata being the physical signs of dark corruption in Heretics. This can even be used by mutants to infiltrate cults and destroy them from the inside, if so inclined.

MUTANTS & REGULAR FOLKS

Exactly how regular folks react to a mutant varies dramatically as so many factors are involved. It comes down to situation, the experience of the human in question, and

the powers and mutations the mutant has given away. If a mutant suffering from several radical physical mutations is witnessed using the Immolation power to burn an Inquisitor to death in a back alley, most folks would rightfully believe that he was a Heretic or being from the Dark Legion. In reality, perhaps the mutant used to be an accountant a year ago when the mutations began to afflict him. He has been hunted for months by an Inquisitor and was left with the choice of being killed or killing in self-defence. A mutant with no visible physical mutations that heals a child that has been rundown by a car in the middle of the street will most likely be viewed differently. He will probably be believed to be a member of the Brotherhood that is out of uniform and skilled in the healing arts. So it can differ between extremes, but it is always something to take into consideration.

THE CHANGE

Anyone can suddenly manifest mutations and powers. This will be extremely frightening. The individual in question will, in all likelihood, hide this for as long as possible. Few dare go to the doctor or to the Brothers, as something like this might be an indicator of corruption by Dark Symmetry. The risks involved are just too great. Beyond being frightening, the change is often an extremely sad event in cases where the person has a lot of friends and family; if they continue to mutate, they will be unable to hide their inhumanity and be forced to flee. In most cases the reason for fleeing is twofold. First, the mutant is afraid that whatever is happening to him will end up physically or spiritually harming those close to him. The second reason is simply self-preservation. The mutant knows that someone will report him to the Brotherhood and he will be done for shortly thereafter.

MUTANT CITY

It is possible that mutants have come together and formed a secret society of sorts. Such societies and cities would be full of old abandoned tunnels and shafts. Most people won't dare to go down there for fear of running into creatures of the Dark Legion or actual mutants, which most believe to be corrupted as well. But a group of mutants can often clear out any monstrous and unwanted presence since they themselves are quite powerful.

The reason for coming together in a hidden place is usually simple. Most have lost their old lives and homes and now live in fear, persecuted. These sort of places offer actual physical shelter and a network of friends and people who know what the mutant has lived through and suffered. In many cases, mutants are trying to find out just what they are. They are not evil and corrupted, but they are not human. Maybe, just maybe, they stand a better chance of finding out more about their condition if they work together and compare notes.



MUTATION & POPULAR CULTURE

Up until the Second Dark Legion war, mutations were regarded by the Brotherhood as a sign of corruption and all mutants were hunted and treated as Heretics. The three Durand brothers, being guardians themselves and knowing the truth, tried to take steps to prevent the hunt of mutants. However, even though they had great power and governed the Brotherhood, they were never able to put a stop to it. The Brotherhood is a very large organisation and it is impossible for the Durand brothers to micromanage it and control all that goes on. If they had shown open support of creatures that the rest of the organization, all the corporations, and even the Dark Legion themselves regarded as being somehow corrupted by darkness, they would risk revealing the truth. That the very organisation they created is hunting down man's best hope is simply something they hadn't counted on. It was impossible to foresee that the Genetic Pilgrimage would be sped up by the aggressive nature of humanity and mankind's early colonization efforts.

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

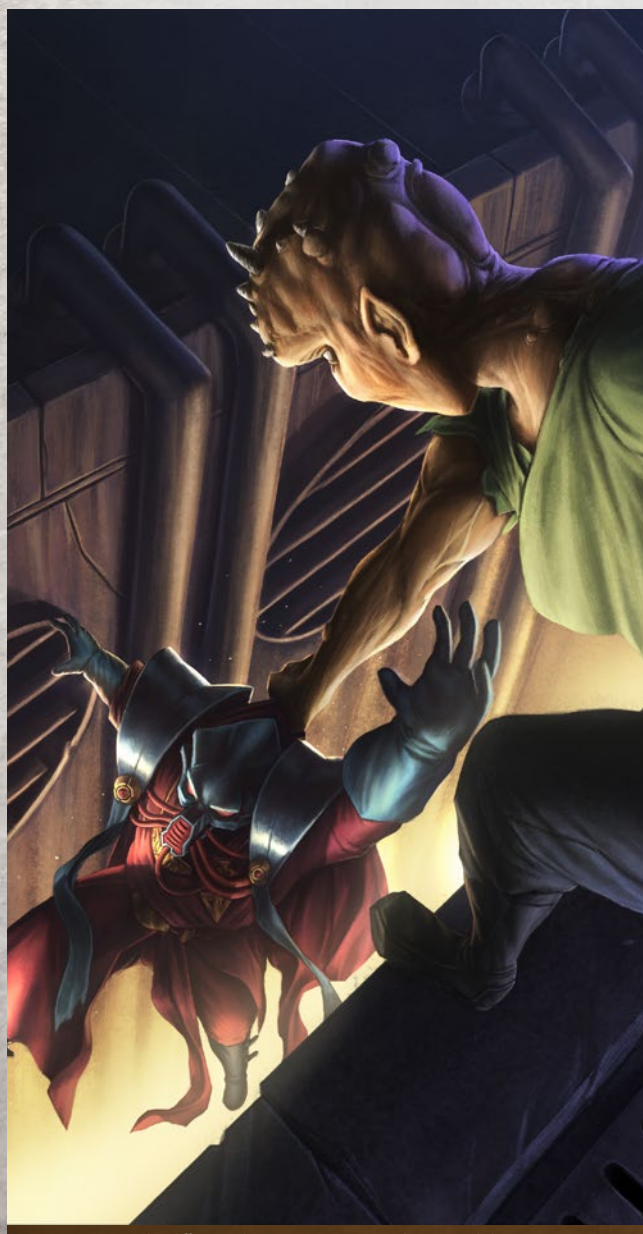
Mutants are an alien biological weapon designed to combat the Dark Legion. This is what they are. But this is not something most mutants are aware of. As time passes, especially if they consort with other mutants, they will learn just how powerful they are. This often leads to the understanding that they, in fact, can go toe to toe with just about anyone. Though mutants are not as susceptible to corruption as humans, it does not mean that all of them are inherently good. A few might turn out quite nasty or evil just as non-mutant humans can. However, the genetic code of the Guardians has left them with a strong biological imperative to fight and destroy the Dark Legion. The greater the percentage of Guardian DNA that becomes activated, the stronger the urge to fight darkness will become. So a mutant that starts out using his powers for his own selfish needs will in the end, as the Guardian DNA becomes more predominant, focus his attention on combating the Dark Legion. In a way, it may seem that mutants lack free will, but in the end, if the Dark Legion wins, they and all other life will be destroyed. Once the threat is gone the mutants can once again focus on living their normal lives.

MUTANT UPRISING

If a group of generally innocent, scared, cornered, and super-charged mutants are pushed too far, it is quite possible that they will push back. This can lead to groups of them feeling that humanity as a whole has turned against them for no reason. This is a classic trope,

MUTANTS AMONG US

but it has become one because it is an interpretation of struggles and oppressions that has been, and still are, affecting mankind. In this scenario—and appropriately themed game—it is all about overcoming differences and characters are likely to play rational mutants and humans that do everything in their power to stop the madness and refocus on the true enemy which is the Dark Legion. This type of story theme can be quite interesting and powerful. The mind-set of us versus them and meticulously contrived dogmas aimed to divide rather than unite is as old as mankind. Struggling against this kind of systematic oppression and attempting to bring piece and unity is indeed a noble struggle. One that can be used to create meaningful and deep game sessions.



Mutation means the difference between Humanity's salvation and damnation.

MIXED CHARACTERS

It is quite possible to play a group consisting of both mutants and regular humans. In the end, mutants are not corrupted and it is all up to the attitude of the other human player characters. If you plan to run such a campaign it shouldn't present a problem. If, for some reason, one of the human characters does have a big problem, the solution is simple: Mutate him. All mutants started out as humans and there is no telling if someone will begin to mutate unexpectedly. This is a theme that is important to understand and use when playing with a mixed group. Every human is possessed of latent Guardian DNA and can therefore begin to mutate at any point. Who knows, this might even be triggered as a result of some accident involving concentrated doses of terraforming agents and chemicals. Though it is a classic trope for mutant characters in many different storylines, it is also an effective one.

THE PHILOSOPHIC & ESOTERIC

What does it mean to be human? Does the mutation change the essence of a person? And what if the characters find out that all humans carry these latent genes? What if all of humanity mutates and is turned into Guardians? Doesn't that mean that the human race will be extinct even if the Dark Legion is eradicated? And let's say that the Dark Legion is defeated and those that are still human try to "cure" themselves of the Genetic Pilgrimage and turn against the mutants? There are many layers and questions to the mutant issue and there are no simple answers. Though the intentions were good, the Guardians never gave humanity a choice and have, in a way, wiped out the human race, genetically speaking. It is tantamount to playing God and is a sort of extreme xeno-eugenics. No matter the circumstances, secretly transforming a race into one's own image for the greater good requires hubris and a belief in one's importance in the galactic scheme of things that borders on the narcissistic. How will humanity as a whole respond to this when they find out? Would they rather have been eradicated than become something other than human? And then again, humanity has never been given a chance to see if they could best the Dark Legion by themselves, since they have always been manipulated on every level by the Guardians. These are all things that need to be considered, as they will surely lead to very interesting themes and in-game discussions.

DNA ACTIVATION & MUTATIONS

The progression of the Guardian DNA within humans varies greatly. Some humans are nearly unaffected while others are profoundly affected. It is true that massive doses of concentrated terraforming agents will speed it up and trigger it, but it also seems that some people's genetic structure accelerates the activation. Overall, the longer mankind lives in terraformed environments the more the activation will progress in humanity.

It is when someone's genetic structure is comprised of approximately twenty percent Guardian DNA that irreversible physical mutation begins to manifest itself. These mutations start out small but will become more and more apparent as the DNA activation progresses. The mutations will work to alter parts of the human body into that of a Guardian; a process that will be more than disturbing to anyone observing this change, as the true appearance of a Guardian is intimidating to say the least.

A mutation must be tested for once a human has reached twenty percent of Guardian DNA activation, which must then be repeated for each ten percent increment beyond this. The player must succeed at a Challenging D2 Resistance test in order for their body to resist the re-coding of their DNA on this occasion. On failure, the player must roll on the Guardian Physical Mutation Table below. The difficulty of the test is increased by one for each ten percent of Guardian DNA that has infused their body beyond the twenty percent tipping point, to a maximum of Epic D5, which is achieved at fifty percent of Guardian DNA; the alteration of human to Guardian DNA has become exponential and difficult to halt beyond this point.

For example: The itinerant Wasteland Walker, Vladimir Oblerast, has recently been exposed to terraforming agents that have pushed his Guardian DNA up to twenty percent. His player must therefore roll a Challenging D2 Resistance test. At a later date, Vladimir's Guardian DNA percentage has now reached thirty percent, so he must again test for mutation, although the difficulty of the test has increased to Daunting D3.

There is little that can stop the Genetic Pilgrimage once it has started however, for even the strongest of character's will be doomed to mutate in some manner; a character will automatically manifest a mutation at twenty-five percent of Guardian DNA progression, with no roll required. Another mutation is then achieved for each ten percent of Guardian DNA beyond this automatic manifestation—thirty-five, forty-five etc—again with no requirement to roll, until a total of eight automatic mutations at ninety-five percent is reached. The GM is free to decide which mutation has manifested at each of these stages by selecting one from the Guardian Physical Mutation Table below (as opposed to the player rolling), but the less conspicuous ones will generally show up first.

As noted in the Manifestation sidebar and the descriptive text of each mutation, they do not simply explode into place, but actually take hours or days to manifest due to the genetic restructuring that takes place. A character that has reached one hundred percent of Guardian DNA can no longer be considered to be human, as they are now, unsurprisingly, fully-fledged Guardians. In addition, a character that is a fully-fledged Guardian gains all of the mutations that are listed below, as their metamorphosis is now complete.

MUTANTS AND CORRUPTION

In general, the more Guardian DNA a mutant has, the less likely it is that he will become spiritually corrupted by the Dark Symmetry. The Ancients, and specifically the Guardians, are extremely resistant to corruption; therefore, as the percentage of Guardian DNA increases within the mutant, so will it become harder for the Dark Symmetry to affect him. Mutants that have achieved a twenty percent alteration of human to Guardian DNA automatically increase their Corruption Soak to 4, which increases to 5 at fifty percent and 6 at one-hundred percent Guardian DNA transmutation.

Corruption could never normally be forced upon a mutant, as their mind and body will continue to work to reject dark biotechnological implants and other endowments until such a point as they willingly choose to learn their first Dark Gift. Physical mutations will remain, but all psionic mutant powers, such as those provided in Chapter 5: The Legacy of the Ancients, will be drained as the character's Guardian DNA becomes tainted. Additionally, this psychic drain makes it impossible for the mutant to activate technology that requires Ancient or Guardian DNA to function. Note that any characters that had been able to access the Arts before losing them to superior mutational powers will not retroactively be able to access the Arts once more. They will remain bereft of all psionic powers and must rely upon their new masters to provide them with Gifts.

MANIFESTATION

The GM should manage when mutations manifest; each mutation has a note on how long it takes for it to fully develop. Note, however, that this describes the length of time it takes to fully take hold of the character. Small manifestations of a mutation can, and often do, appear and disappear during this period. For example, Bizarre Facial Features can flair up, partially reshaping the bones in the face and imposing severe headaches, only to once again become latent. Later, the very same thing can happen on a larger or smaller scale. This can go on for weeks or months. In the end it will progress as stated and become permanent. This is best handled by the GM and the details will vary from situation to situation. It is about displaying the disturbing nature of becoming something different, something other than human.

GAINING AND INCREASING GUARDIAN DNA: When exposed to a concentrated chemical event that could potentially trigger mutation, such as an intense acid storm, the Red Winds of Earth, or exposure to terraforming agents, the player character may spend one Chronicle Point in order to trigger or advance their DNA mutation. If spent to trigger mutation, the Chronicle Point will alter the character's DNA to five percent of a Guardian's. Alternatively, if spent to advance their mutation rate as the result of exposure, and so long as they have a percentage of Guardian DNA that is above zero, the character gains a ten percent increase in overall Guardian DNA. Only one Chronicle Point may be spent in this way during each triggering event.

Characters that begin play with a mutation, due to a Lifepath event for instance, have already reached the point that twenty percent of their DNA has altered to that of a Guardian's.

So long as they have a percentage of Guardian DNA that is above zero, characters may also invest experience points in accelerating their rate of mutation. An initial five percent increase of Guardian DNA may be purchased for 600 XP. For each five percent increased purchased beyond the first, decrease this cost by 50 XP; voluntarily triggering acceleration means that the change occurs more swiftly and readily.

Finally, GMs may also take a hand in accelerating a character's level of mutation. A character is particularly at risk of unwarranted mutational effects when exposed to a triggering event, such as the chemical events mentioned above, when under extreme physical duress, such as suffering from severe physical or mental trauma or receiving treatment for such, or when exposed to a supernatural power that could potentially accelerate mutation, such as certain metabolic powers of the Arts. When a character is exposed to such a potential trigger, the GM may choose to spend between one and five Dark Symmetry points, with the result that the character must attempt a Resistance test with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent. If successful, the character has resisted the unwarranted mutational increase. On failure, the character gains a one percent increase in Guardian DNA for each Dark Symmetry point spent by the GM. Only one such expenditure may be made by the GM per triggering event.

PHYSICAL MUTATIONS

Mutations will be described with Effects and Benefits. Effects will describe the actual process of mutation and what the physical manifestation entails; how hard is it to hide, what does it look like, etc. Some mutations might be beneficial at times and these possible upsides will be described under Benefits. Some have definitive and quantifiable benefits while others might just be beneficial in certain situations. Whenever a physical mutation occurs due to the result of a failed Resistance test by the player due to an increase in Guardian DNA, the player should roll one d20 and consult the following

table. In the case of an automatic mutation due to an increase in Guardian DNA, the GM may choose to select a mutation for the player using the following table, once again noting that the less obvious mutations generally manifest first in these instances.

Most mutations may only be gained once. Where this is not the case, however, it will be noted within the mutation's description.

PHYSICAL MUTATIONS

ROLL GUARDIAN PHYSICAL MUTATION TABLE

1	Bizarre Facial Features
2	Blue Skin
3	Cleft Feet
4	Coarse and Mottled Skin
5	Distended Tongue
6	Eerie Eyes
7	Elongated Appendage
8	Extreme Vascular System
9	Gigant
10	Inverted Legs
11	Jagged Bristles
12	Incisor Maw
13	Misshapen Torso
14	Nictitating Membrane
15	Razor-Sharp Protrusions
16	Sense Exposure
17	Snaked Neck
18	Unearthly Voice
19	Vestigial Arms
20	Wiry Emaciation

BIZARRE FACIAL FEATURES

EFFECTS: The head is somewhat elongated and the skins becomes stretched. The bone structure becomes more pronounced and ridged over the brow. Lips and mouth shrink and are reduced to such a degree that the mouth is nothing more than a thin slit. However, when the character opens his mouth, it distends to normal size in a freakish display of elastic skin. The eye sockets are drawn apart and the eyes become more angular. Beyond a facial mask and hood, or keeping to the darkness while hooded, this mutation is near



Mutants amongst us remain unseen.

impossible to hide. This mutation takes several days to take effect and, as the skull and bone structure is reshaped, the individual will suffer bouts of severe headaches.

BENEFITS: Lack of understanding can often lead to fear and mistrust. When intimidating a human that has no insight into mutations or Heretics, the mutant gains one additional d20 to any Persuade or Command test.

BLUE SKIN

EFFECTS: The mutant's skin turns a dark or pale blue, which varies by degrees. If not fully clothed and masked, this mutation is obvious. This mutation takes only hours to manifest and begins with blue spots appearing on the skin. These will then quickly spread, covering the entire surface of the dermis.

BENEFITS: Though the actual texture of the skin does not appear to change, it does seem to help with insulating the mutant from

extreme cold and heat. They are better equipped to withstand the elements and, to a lesser degree, are able to withstand fire and freezing cold. The mutant reduces the difficulty of all Resistance tests related to exposure to severe heat or cold by two steps, which may eliminate the need for a test. Note that the difficulty of such tests will still increase with prolonged exposure, so that a roll will still eventually be required even though the difficulty might initially be reduced to a level that precludes the need for one. Additionally, the mutant ignores the first point of damage that is inflicted to a hit location from any source of cold or fire damage.

CLEFT FEET

EFFECTS: Feet elongate and toes fuse, before splitting down the middle and forming two, larger, double-jointed toes that are capped by thick blue nails. The heel elongates some as well. Large-sized shoes are still able to be worn, but the mutant has to fold the toes back and will walk awkwardly when wearing them, which prevents them running at full speed. However, walking without shoes

in the open will freely display the mutation. This mutation takes a day or two to manifest and begins with the feet becoming sore, followed shortly by the nails of the toes coming loose and the effects described above taking place.

BENEFITS: The feet become very rough underneath and gain the consistency of concrete, which allows the mutant to walk barefoot even over crushed glass without suffering damage. In contrast, they also gain more stability, which helps when having to perform any kind of balancing act involving their feet; walking on thin ledges and such is much easier. Kicking someone with bare feet provides the mutant's unarmed attack with the Stun weapon quality. Additionally, the character reduces the difficulty of all Acrobatics tests that involve balancing with their feet by one step, which may eliminate the need for a test. Further, any difficulty increase associated with difficult terrain due to underfoot conditions is reduced by one step, to a minimum of zero. Finally, the mutant is unable to take the Sprint Standard Action and loses the benefit that Cleft Feet provides to their Athletics tests whilst wearing shoes.

COARSE AND MOTTLED SKIN

EFFECTS: The texture of your skin turns coarse and mottled. Ridges appear and these are as coarse as bark while the rest of your skin is as leathery and rough as that of an elephant. The ridges do appear in a pattern so there is symmetry to it. But this covers your entire body, including your face and it is an apparent mutation that is very hard to hide.

BENEFITS: The coarse skin provides a slight protection against physical attacks and even helps against bullets and knives. The mutant gains an Armour Soak of 1 to all hit locations. This protection follows the normal limitations for armour and does not stack with others types of armour that may be worn; only the highest Soak value for each hit location is used.

DISTENDED TONGUE

EFFECTS: This mutation causes your tongue to turn blue, become rounded and grow in length to over a foot long, which is a distinct sign of the reptilian heritage of the Ancients and the Guardians. It does not impede your speech and you can choose how long you wish it to extend. If you wish it to remain unnoticed, however, you have to ensure that you do not open your mouth too much when you speak. The mutation takes about two days to take hold. The first signs are blue spots on the tongue. Once completely blue, it rounds off then grows in length.

BENEFITS: The tongue is fully prehensile and contains a comparative amount of strength, which can be quite useful in some situations. For example, it can be used to untie rope, lift smaller objects and so forth whilst their hands are otherwise constrained. Although it cannot be used to wield weapons, the tongue may be used to take other actions that might otherwise be unavailable to the character due to

their circumstances. For instance, it could be used to complete a Draw/Use Item Standard Action, or as part of a skill test that is being attempted in order to untie the ropes that bind them.

EERIE EYES

EFFECTS: The colour of your eyes have shifted and now fills the entire eye. They are either pitch black, ice blue or blood red. You have no discernible whites, irises or pupils. This mutation can be hidden quite well with the use of sunglasses or coloured eye lenses. This mutation only takes a few hours to appear, which induces a slight stinging sensation in the mutant's eyes while it develops.

BENEFITS: You gain a slight improvement to your ability to discern details in low light conditions. This is not night vision, but you are able to be less affected visually when there is little to no light. The mutant reduces by one step any difficulty increase to skill tests due to darkness, to a minimum of zero. The mutant is no more adversely affected by sudden bright lights than a non-mutant would be.

ELONGATED APPENDAGE

EFFECTS: One set of the mutant's appendages elongate and become disproportionately large when compared to an average human. Roll one d20 to determine the appendages that are affected: 1-5 Arms, 6-10, Fingers, 11-15, Legs, 16-20 Toes. This mutation may be gained more than once, although it will affect a different set of appendages each time; re-roll any duplicate results.

ELONGATED ARMS

EFFECTS: The arms grow freakishly long until they eventually hang below their knees. This mutation will not always make people believe that corruption is involved, as it might be construed to be a birth defect, but it will always raise some eyebrows. This mutation takes about a week to develop, during which the mutant will feel as if he has some extreme muscle strains in his arms while they grow.

BENEFITS: The mutant's reach is drastically increased, granting a number of benefits dependant on the situation, such as simply being able to reach a high shelf or ledge. Additionally, the character's melee attacks gain the Reach weapon quality.

ELONGATED FINGERS

EFFECTS: All five digits on both hands grow by approximately fifteen to twenty centimetres and take on an unnaturally spidery appearance due to their weird proportions. Though obvious and capable of turning heads, it will not always make people believe that the mutant is corrupt, as the condition could again be considered to be a birth defect, but odds are that the mutant is better off hiding it. The mutation takes about three days to develop, which inflicts sever bone and muscle pains in the hands during the growth spurt. Near impossible to hide, it might be a good idea to pick up a coat with deep pockets.

BENEFITS: Beyond a slight increase in reach, the mutant is able to encompass larger objects with its hands. He does not lose any strength in his hands and fingers, so if previously able to lift a bowling ball, he will now be able to cup it one palm. This can also come in handy in certain close combat situations. As it is now possible for the mutant to cup an opponent's head and grab hold or wrap his fingers around the entire neck with an ironclad, spidery stranglehold. The long fingers can also aid some with climbing manoeuvres. This mutation grants the Grasping special ability. Additionally, the mutant reduces the difficulty of Athletics tests related to climbing by one step, which may eliminate the need for a test.

ELONGATED LEGS

EFFECTS: The legs become approximately fifty centimetres longer, making them appear disproportionately long and slim. The mutant's entire stature increases as a result. This is another mutation that some might adhere to corruption, whilst others might simply believe it to be a birth defect of sort. A very long coat is a solid investment for someone with this mutation as wearing one will make them look very tall, but more normal in proportion. It takes about a week for this mutation to develop from its onset, throughout which it feels like the muscles in the legs are constantly flooded with lactic acid.

BENEFITS: Beyond an increase in overall height, the longer legs will allow the mutant to run much faster simply by being able to cover more ground. The character is able to take a Sprint action as a Restricted Action, rather than a Standard Action. When combined with Elongated Arms, the two mutations will allow the character to vastly increase their speed by crawling on all fours as fast as most people run and climb. When used in this combination, the mutant may attempt an Average D1 Athletics test. If successful, he may perform the Movement Restricted Action as a Free Action.

ELONGATED TOES

EFFECTS: Not only are the toes elongated by five to seven centimetres, but each toe also gains an extra joint, which looks very bizarre. This mutation can be hidden with the use of socks or shoes, but it will still be obvious that disproportionately long and narrow feet are contained within. It takes four days to develop this mutation and the pain is similar to that of Elongated Fingers. This mutation can be combined with Cleft Feet.

BENEFITS: The toes are prehensile and can be used to grab and use simple objects. With some training, a mutant can learn how to use knives and guns with his toes, despite lacking the equivalent of a thumb. This allows the mutant to develop a unique fighting style that involves grasping opponents with his feet as well as his hands. Climbing also becomes easier. When performing unarmed attacks with the character's feet and spending Momentum on the Disarm Momentum spend, the cost is reduced by one. Additionally, at the GMs discretion and following a period of intense training that culminates in the expenditure of 600 XP, the mutant gains the ability

to operate melee and ranged weapons with his feet as easily as he would his hands, although he is still subject to the normal rules for dual wielding. Finally, the mutant reduces the difficulty of Athletics tests related to climbing by one step, which may eliminate the need for a test. This effect stacks with the reduction for climbing provided by Elongated Fingers, above.

EXTREME VASCULAR SYSTEM

EFFECTS: A web of thick blue pulsating veins covers your skin. They are impossible to hide as they run across your face as well. They look very unnatural and most will believe that you are corrupted. Your blood also turns blue. This mutation only takes a couple of hours to manifest after its inception. The mutant will feel feverish and as if his blood is boiling in his veins during the development of the mutation. The veins are pressed to the surface of the skin violently and it is quite disconcerting to watch.

BENEFITS: The entire cardio-vascular system has been changed to resemble that of a Guardian. The mutant can now receive blood regardless of their blood type, and can provide blood to any human recipient. His blood adapts to all human blood it comes into contact with and amalgamates with any blood that is injected into the mutant's system. Additionally, he gains an enhanced resilience to poisons and pathogens. The mutant reduces the difficulty of Resistance tests taken to avoid the effects of poison or disease by two steps, which may eliminate the need for a test.

GIGANT

EFFECTS: Your entire body grows and your height and weight increase by approximately twenty-five percent. Short characters might not reach extreme proportions, but those of average height and weight will become massive. Those that have never met you before may find there is nothing strange about you, but for anyone who has met you your extreme increase in height and weight is bizarre and very unnatural seeming to say the least. It takes about a week for this mutation to come to completion, throughout which the mutant's entire body aches from a horrible sort of growth pain.

BENEFITS: The mutant will be much harder due to his new size and will be able to sustain more damage. Increase the mutant's Physique attribute by one, to a maximum of sixteen. This effect is permanent—the changes can never be undone—and affects all stats that derive from Physique (such as Wounds).

INCISOR-FILLED MAW

EFFECTS: All of the mutant's teeth are replaced with perfect rows of semi-transparent razor-sharp teeth. Anyone who sees the teeth and is unaware of the mutant's true nature will surely think them corrupted. The mutation only takes a couple of hours to develop once it has begun. The teeth and gums will begin to itch and soon the human teeth will begin to loosen as the new sharp teeth grows out. A mask that covers the mouth, keeping the mouth closed, or

investing in a pair of very good dentures that fit onto the teeth are the best ways of keeping them hidden.

BENEFITS: These teeth make very good close combat weapons. After successfully grappling an opponent, which requires an Unarmed Combat test as a Standard Action and is opposed by the target's Acrobatics, Athletics, or Unarmed Combat, the mutant may subsequently bite his victim for a substantial amount of damage. As hard as tempered steel and razor-sharp, the teeth inflict 1+**T**4 damage with the Armour Piercing 1 and Vicious 1 qualities. They can also be used to eventually chew through wood, rope and even thin chains and thick wires given time. When combined with the Snaked Neck mutation, the mutant does not need to grapple an opponent before biting them.

INVERTED LEGS

EFFECTS: Your legs invert and twist and an extra joint is added. This cannot be attributed to a birth defect and most will believe that you have been corrupted by darkness. Your legs look very unnatural and monstrous. With some strain you can stretch them so that they are straight. This will allow you to imitate an awkward hobbled version of a normal walk. But if someone sees you without pants your mutation will be obvious. When you run, or if you want to walk comfortably, you have to relax the legs and reveal the strange twisted angles. The mutation takes one week to develop and is very painful as joints break and reform and bone twists. During the development the mutant will be limping severely.

BENEFITS: Muscles and ligaments have been made much more efficient, as have the antagonistic muscle movements. This allows the mutant to jump much further and higher than a normal human, in addition to being able to launch devastating kicks. Overall, their legs are very strong and kicking in a regular door provides little challenge. When making an Acrobatics or Athletics test to jump, the mutant reduces the difficulty by one rank, which may eliminate the need for a test. This ability stacks with other sources that also reduce the difficulty of these tests, such as the Strong Legs Acrobatics talents for instance. Additionally, unarmed attacks made with the character's legs gain the Knockdown weapon quality.

JAGGED BRISTLES

EFFECTS: The mutant loses all of the hair on its head, which is eventually replaced with a layer of ten-centimetre long bluish bristles that cover their entire skull. These needle-like protrusions grow down over the back of the neck and follow the spine all the way to the small of their back. The bristles can flatten when the mutant is frightened or agitated, though a conscious effort may be made by the mutant to stiffen them, similar to the spines of a porcupine. Even when folded back, they are obviously inhuman and most will believe them to be a mark of corruption. The bristle mutation takes about twenty-four hours to develop, which develops from a burning, itching sensation that covers the affected area as the bristles grow up through the skin.

BENEFITS: Sharp as needles and diamond hard, these bristles can be used in close combat. Those on the head can be used to jab at or slice into a foe, whilst the bristles on the back can be extended to harm opponents that have pinned or grappled the character. The mutant gains a close combat attack in the form of a head-butt that deals 1+**T**4 damage with the Armour Piercing 1 and Gruesome qualities. Additionally, when pinned or grappled in combat—such as through the use of a creature's Grasping ability—the mutant may pay one Dark Symmetry point to take a Response Action in the form of an attack that deals 1+**T**3 damage with the Armour Piercing 1 and Vicious 1 qualities. This Response Action may be taken in addition to any other Response Actions available to the character, although Response Action taken beyond the first will have its Dark Symmetry point cost increased by one. Alternatively, the mutant may wait until their own turn in order to make this reactive attack as a Restricted Action. Regardless of which type of action is used to employ them, the bristles may only be used once during each round as a form of attack.

LARGE EYES

EFFECTS: The mutant's eyes become disproportionately large and double in size, which causes the pupils and iris' to grow as well. Large and obscure sunglasses can hide this mutation, which otherwise looks very disturbing. Not always a sure sign of corruption, it nevertheless results in a lot of unwanted and negative attention. The mutation takes approximately three days to take hold, during which the mutant will suffer from blurred vision and a severe pain in his eyes.

BENEFITS: The enlargement of the eyes allows the mutant to see further and adds roughly forty-five degrees to his peripheral vision, allowing him to detect if someone is sneaking up on him much sooner than a normal human. Overall, he becomes better at absorbing the details of his surroundings at much longer ranges, a minor benefit of which allows him to read from much further away. The mutant may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success when making an Observation test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, the mutant gains one bonus Momentum when rolling an Observation test to oppose the relevant skill of an enemy that is attempting to sneak up on them.

MISSHAPEN TORSO

EFFECTS: This mutation makes the waist painfully thin, while the ribs become much more pronounced and distended, so that the torso gains an emaciated and skeletal look. This can be hidden with large shirts and jackets, but if exposed to the naked eye or to any great degree, it becomes apparent that something is wrong with the mutant's torso; the bizarre appearance of which will most likely mark them as corrupted by the Dark Symmetry. This mutation takes about a week to manifest, which afflicts the mutant with severe pains all over his torso and causes them to become easily winded.

BENEFITS: The restructuring of the torso is not merely cosmetic. The lungs and other internal organs are re-arranged and become much more efficient, which allows the mutant to hold his breath for longer periods and strengthens his cardiovascular system, both of which ensure that he can run for kilometres on end without becoming exhausted. The mutant reduces the difficulty of any Athletics or Resistance test associated with Fatigue from prolonged running by two steps, which may eliminate the need for a test. Note that the difficulty of such tests will still increase with prolonged efforts, so that a roll will still eventually be required even though the difficulty might initially be reduced to a level that precludes the need for one. Additionally, the difficulty of Resistance tests made to avoid the effects of suffocation are reduced by two steps, which may eliminate the need for a test. Note that the difficulty of such a Resistance test will still increase during each successive round that the character is deprived of oxygen, so that a roll will still eventually be required even though the difficulty might initially be reduced to a level that precludes the need for one.

NICTITATING MEMBRANE

EFFECTS: The eyelids of the mutant atrophy and are replaced by hardened nictitating membranes similar to those of a reptile, causing a milky membrane to flicker over their eyes when they blink. They also gain the ability to roll their eyes into the back of their head in order to avoid bright lights, a reflex that occurs naturally when they sleep. The membranes are a readily apparent and inhuman mutation that cause most who witness it to believe that the mutant has been corrupted by the Darkness, though a pair of sunglasses can hide it quite well. The mutation only takes a couple of hours, during which time the eyelids will itch as they dry out, until eventually crumbling into dust.

BENEFITS: The mutant's eyes are resistant the effects of wind, small debris or substances such as teargas when the membranes are down. They also allow the mutant to see perfectly well when swimming under water, in a similar fashion to a human wearing a pair of swimming goggles. Whenever afflicted by an airborne substance that could inflict the Blind status effect, the mutant may pay one Dark Symmetry point as a Response Action in order to ignore the blinding effects of the attack or affliction. Additionally, the character reduces by one any penalty that is applied to the visual aspect of the Observation skill whilst swimming underwater, to a minimum of zero. This benefit is only effective for Observation tests made within Close Range; any Observation tests that are required at Medium range or beyond suffer their normal penalties.

RAZOR-SHARP PROTRUSIONS

EFFECTS: The bones that protect the mutant's joints at the knuckles, elbows and kneecaps each develop a sharp and jagged protrusion that is a dark blue in colour. These bony projections are much harder than steel and contain an edge that could slice into most materials with ease. To the unenlightened this is a clear sign of corruption

by the Dark Symmetry. The bony extensions take about a day to develop as the area above them burns and itches, until finally the protrusions are released as they slice through the skin. Large thick winter clothes may help to cover the mutation.

BENEFITS: These jagged tips are capable of slicing through tempered steel and can be used as very deadly melee weapons in close combat. They may be used to make a melee attack that inflicts 2+**T**5 damage with the Armour Piercing 2, Gruesome and Vicious 1 qualities.

SENSE EXPOSURE

EFFECTS: The mutant's nose and ears wither and fall off. The ears are replaced by small bumps with holes in them, whilst the nose becomes two slits. This looks very odd but will not necessarily mark them as one of the corrupted, although, as always, it is would be best to hide the mutation; a knit cap and scarf will usually suffice to keep them under wraps. The mutation takes a couple of hours to fully develop, during which time the ears and nose will begin to dry out and shrivel. A burning, itching sensation then ensues that causes the mutant to scratch at the offending organs until nothing remains.

BENEFITS: The ability to hear is unaffected by this change, but the restructuring of the internal functions of the ear change to the point that the mutant becomes very sensitive to vibrations. He will be able to determine the movement of a group of people on the other side of the wall, including how many bodies there are, and will be able to feel the vibrations of an oncoming vehicle long before any human can hear it, which also helps him to deduce its size. The mutant's sense of smell is also vastly improved, allowing him to identify people by scent alone and detect the presence of creature's within thirty to one-hundred and fifty meters due to their odour, dependent upon wind direction of course. The mutant is also able to home in on a single nuance of scent amongst a myriad. The character reduces the difficulty of Observation tests that relate to scent or hearing by two steps, which may eliminate the need for a test. Additionally, the character gains two bonus Momentum on opposed tests made to detect a target that is attempting to remain hidden or move stealthily. Further, so long as less than five minutes has passed since their departure and other strong scents have not overpowered the odour (which may be achieved by the GM through the expenditure of Dark Symmetry points), the mutant may use the scent of an opponent to track them and reduces the difficulty of the Survival test required to achieve this by one step, which may eliminate the need for a test.

SLAKED NECK

EFFECTS: The neck of the mutant lengthens by approximately twenty centimetres, which subsequently causes the veins and sinews to constantly roil beneath its surface. Utterly strange and downright inhuman, there is no doubt that most will peg them as one of the corrupted. The mutant can attempt to hide the abnormality

by ducking their head down and using a scarf, but this is highly uncomfortable and is likely to only suffice for quick and casual encounters. This mutation takes about three days to take hold as the neck simply grows and distends painfully during this period, which causes the veins and sinew to become very pronounced.

BENEFITS: Beyond the extra reach of the neck, the mutant gains the ability to turn his head one hundred and eighty degrees. When combined with the Incisor-filled Maw mutation, the character gains the ability to perform a bite as a close combat attack. The inside of his throat also becomes lined with small gills that allow him to breathe under water when operating in conjunction with the Misshapen Torso mutation, which prevents the mutant from suffering the effects of drowning.

UNEARTHLY VOICE

EFFECTS: The mutant's voice has been given an unnatural quality that consists of a bizarre reverse echo and an underlying watery tremble. All those that hear the mutant speak will immediately realize that there is something inhuman about him. It is impossible to hide this mutation whilst speaking, but whispering will ensure that a more human-like sound is produced, though whispering every word is odd in itself and might arouse suspicion.

BENEFITS: The mutant's voice can be quite frightening to the uninitiated and may be used to forcefully and tactlessly try to convince a human to do their bidding, although the target is likely to comply out of fear rather than anything else. When intimidating a human that has no insight into mutations or Heretics, the mutant gains one additional d20 to any Persuade or Command test. If the mutant possesses both the Bizarre Facial Features and Unearthly Voice mutations, he may additionally re-roll any dice that did not generate a success when attempting to intimidate such a human, but must accept the new results.

VESTIGIAL ARMS

EFFECTS: A pair of short and under-developed arms that are a mottled blue in colour sprout some twenty to thirty centimetres below the mutant's armpits. No more than thirty centimetres long in length themselves, each ends in an elongated hand that contains three short fingers and a thumb. There is little that can be said to assuage the fears of the majority, meaning that most will believe this to be a sign of corruption. Due to their small size, they can quite easily be hidden by wearing a large sweater or jacket, although intimate situations and prolonged physical contact will betray the extra limbs. It takes about one week to sprout these arms once the mutation has begun, which begins with twin itching lumps on the sides of the ribcage that rapidly develops into a pulsating pain as the arms extend outwards.

BENEFITS: The limbs are fully ambulatory and contain roughly a quarter of the strength that the mutant possesses within his

regular arms, which enables him to hold small objects or even aid in activities such as pick-pocketing. With some training, the mutant can even wield knives and small pistols using the additional arms. The handedness of the character will flow over into the vestigial arms once fully developed, which enables him to use both his regular main hand and vestigial main hand at the same time without penalty. Nerve synapses and brain function also alter significantly, which provides the potential to fire two guns or write two letters simultaneously without penalty; alternatively, give him two typewriters and watch him go!

At the GMs discretion and following a period of intense training that culminates in the expenditure of 600 XP, the mutant gains the ability to utilise knife-sized melee weapons and one-handed ranged weapons with his vestigial hands as easily as he would with the hands that he had been born with; the wearer can still only attack with one weapon at a time, but the Swift Strike Momentum spend only costs one Momentum (as normal for Dual Wielding), although the character may use that spend up to three times (for a total of four attacks, one with each weapon). Additionally, the character gains an additional Parry Response Action should the arms be used to wield a melee weapon. Finally, skill tests that involve the use of the vestigial arms, such as a Thievery test made to pick-pocket a target or an Athletics test made to prise open a window, are reduced in difficulty by one step, which may eliminate the need for a test.

WIRY EMACIATION

EFFECTS: The mutant's entire body becomes emaciated and unnaturally sinewy, which leaves them extremely gaunt and thin in appearance. Their weight remains the same despite this though, which results from the fact that the mutant's tissue has simply become more compressed and dense than usual. Except for wearing a full facial mask and clothes that cover their entire body, it is impossible to hide this mutation. It takes about a week for this mutation to fully take hold, during which time the mutant will feel as if he wants to crawl out of his body due to the fact that his skin seems to be pulsating in burning waves throughout the entire process.

BENEFITS: The mutant's metabolism can adapt itself and has become capable of storing fluids and nutrients in a much more efficient manner than the average human. He is able to survive a full month without food and an entire week without water before they have a negative impact, which of course means that it will take him much longer to die from starvation or dehydration. The character with this mutation need not test for dehydration until they have gone seven days without water, and even then need only test once every day subsequent to this. When suffering from lack of food, the mutant need only test for starvation following one month without sufficient sustenance, with subsequent successive tests required once every five days.

THE LEGACY OF THE ANCIENTS

THE POWER OF LEGACY

A human must have achieved a certain percentage of activated Guardian DNA in order to use psionic powers and physical mutations. Most humans possess between one and five percent of activated Guardian DNA. As previously discussed, reaching twenty percent and beyond will induce mutations that push a character towards Guardian status in both appearance and abilities; the more Guardian DNA that has been activated, the more abilities the individual can use. These irreversible physical mutations should not be considered as a drawback, as the individual is actually on the path to becoming a fully-fledged Guardian, but they will undoubtedly be viewed as frightening and repulsive by any human that is unaware of the nature of the physical changes.

In addition to the physiological benefits of increased mutation, however, a higher percentage of Guardian DNA will also allow the mutant to gain access to an incredible set of mental abilities, or Psionic Powers. Although they may sometimes act in combination, mutant powers can be categorised into two separate forms: Psionic Powers and Guardian Physical Mutations. Almost all physical powers consist of the natural abilities of the Guardians, such as armoured skin, the ability to jump extremely high, or even the manifestation of gills that allow breathing underwater. As physical mutations have already been dealt with in **Chapter 4: Mutants Among Us**, this chapter will solely deal with Psionic Powers.

POWER LEVELS

All Psionic Powers have an associated manifestation level, or Psionic Power Level. Mutants can attempt to use any of the levels that accompany the power, but the more Guardian DNA that has been activated within them, the easier it will be for them to activate powers. For example, a mutant with a rather low DNA percentage would find it very hard and possibly costly to activate powers at a higher level. On the other hand, a mutant with a high percentage of Guardian DNA activation would find it inconsequential to activate a power at the lower levels, whilst powers at the higher levels would require more effort, but are less taxing than they would be to mutants with less DNA activation.

Unless stated otherwise, successfully manifesting a Psionic Power requires a Standard Action that normally consists of a Mysticism or Willpower test. Regardless of the skill used, the difficulty step of the test is equal to the chosen Psionic Power Level of the power being attempted; which is to say that trying to activate a power at

MUTATION AND THE ARTS

Humans that have developed more than fifteen percent of activated Guardian DNA are no longer able to learn or utilise the powers of the Art, as these abilities were only available due to the development of psionic potential in a human capacity, and therefore tap into a very human component. The instability that their genetic makeup experiences during their mutational transition will prevent the mutant from being able to access the powers of the Light.

As a less developed form of the psionic abilities that are available to Pure Guardians, those characters in possession of the Art that suddenly gain more than fifteen percent of Guardian DNA activation should be consoled by the fact that they do indeed lose access to their Art-borne abilities, but these are simply replaced by a number of mutant powers, whilst those that were incapable of wielding the Art in the first place will simply begin to progress as mutants none the wiser.

Full access to the Art will be regained once the mutant's DNA has stabilised and is no longer in flux, which is to say at one hundred percent of Guardian DNA; the mutant is no longer a hybrid and is now considered to be a fully developed Guardian with all the powers that this will entail, including the vast psionic potential that had been available to the Ancients and the Guardians. It stands to reason that these entities are able to replicate the powers of the Art, but the psychic abilities available to them are far beyond anything that the most powerful of Mystics could muster. Fully-fledged Guardians that had no prior access to the Art therefore also gain the Mysticism talent should they not possess it, and may now begin to learn any Aspects of the Art of their choosing.

Psionic Power Level 3 would impose a Daunting D3 difficulty to the test. Failing this test will not normally produce any negative effects, although some powers may list any potential consequences. Some powers require Concentration (*Mutant Chronicles* rulebook p. 170) to maintain their effects or see the manifestation through to its conclusion. Where this is the case, the Repercussion range increases for all other activities that the mutant attempts whilst concentrating is equal to the Psionic Power Level being employed for the power.

Mutant power levels vary from just one to up to as many as five. The lower levels will produce impressive results, but the highest level of powers will allow the mutant to perform near godlike feats. Mutants are, after all, rapidly on their way to becoming Guardians, who are themselves a genetically engineered weapon designed to combat and destroy the Darkness.

The chosen Psionic Power Level of a power determines how difficult it is to activate. The level of DNA mutation that has progressed will also affect this difficulty. Humans that possess between fifteen and fifty percent of Guardian DNA make tests to manifest a power at normal difficulty. Those with between fifty-one and ninety-nine percent Guardian DNA reduce the difficulty of Psionic Power tests by one step. Fully-fledged Guardians reduce the difficulty of these tests by two steps. In any of these cases, the difficulty of the test can be reduced to zero, which may ultimately eliminate the need for a test. Characters who have regained their access to the Art by gaining full Guardian status may also apply this reduction to their Art spells.

DNA ACTIVATION & POWERS

Humans that have gained fifteen percent or more of Guardian DNA activation will be able to access mutant powers, which automatically entitles them to three rolls on the Lesser Psionic Powers table. Mutants then receive one additional power for each ten percent increment of Guardian DNA beyond this, plus one additional power at one hundred percent, for a total of twelve powers once maximum DNA activation is reached. The mutant must roll one d20 and consult the Lesser Psionic Power Table each time a power is received, re-rolling results for powers that are already possessed.

Lesser powers are freely accessible to any mutant through the incremental change that can be induced in their DNA, whilst Major powers only become readily available to a mutant once his transition into a full Guardian is complete. Most Major powers also require at least one prerequisite power. The associated Lesser powers must be possessed by the mutant in order for them to be able to purchase the Major power, remembering that Lesser powers can be gained through either DNA incremental progression or else purchased with XP once one hundred percent of Guardian DNA is accomplished. Note, however, that rolling a one or a twenty on the Lesser Psionic Powers Table will provide a mutant with access to a Major power before their DNA has reached one hundred percent activation. In this case, the mutant must roll once again on the Major Psionic Power Table and is able to ignore any prerequisites that are associated with the resultant power.

All of the listed powers on both the Lesser and Major Psionic Powers Tables become available to fully-fledged Guardians, although they must now be purchased through the expenditure of XP. Each Lesser power purchased through XP once one hundred percent of DNA restructuring is complete will cost 600 XP, whilst Greater powers cost 1000 XP each. No Psionic Power may be purchased twice.

LESSER PSIONIC POWERS

LESSER PSIONIC POWERS TABLE

ROLL	LESSER PSIONIC POWER
1	Choose one option: pick any one Lesser power, or roll once on the Major Psionic Powers Table
2	Acceleration
3	Armour Plating
4	Bolster Minds
5	Coax Technology
6	Density
7	Dimensional Teleport
8	Distortion Bolt
9	Guardian Link
10	Immolate
11	Pattern Pulse
12	Psionic Blade
13	Psionic Navigation
14	Psychic Echo
15	Quadralimbs
16	Regeneration
17	Revivify
18	Unseen
19	Void Adaptation
20	Choose one option: pick any one Lesser power, or roll once on the Major Psionic Powers Table

ACCELERATION

TARGET: Self

DURATION: One round

BASE EFFECT: This power allows the mutant to move and act with extreme bursts of speed, allowing him to not only run faster, but also perform actions much more rapidly and even launch multiple attacks in the blink of an eye. At the higher levels of manifestation, he moves so fast that he is nothing but a blur and becomes an extremely hard target as he is literally capable of sidestepping bullets. The effects normally last for one round, but that is usually enough. The Psionic Power Level decides how accelerated the mutant becomes.

The mutant may attempt to manifest this power as a Restricted Action, which must be taken at the start of the character's turn before any other actions are taken. The Psionic Power Level used for the test establishes the effects. The speed enhancing effects of acceleration override, and therefore do not stack with, any other forms of celerity increase, such as the Increased Celerity Mutational Enhancement from the *Whitestar* sourcebook for example

MOMENTUM: Each point of Momentum from the manifestation test to activate the power may be spent to increase the duration of Acceleration by one round.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Further Restricted Actions performed as Free Actions this round. One bonus Response Action this round which can be used at zero cost.

2: As above, plus one Free Action may be performed twice. Both the bonus and standard Response Actions may be taken at zero DSP cost.

3: As above, plus an additional Standard Action may be performed during the character's turn. In addition to the effects listed above for Response Actions, the Dodge, Guard, and Parry Response Actions benefit from one bonus Momentum when taken.

4: As above, plus two separate Free Actions may now be performed twice. The character gains a second free Response Action, which is in addition to the benefits listed above for Response Actions.

5: As Psionic Power Level 4, plus another additional Standard Action may be performed during the character's turn, for a total of three Standard Actions. In addition to the benefits listed above for Response Actions, the Dodge, Guard, and Parry Response Actions benefit from an additional two bonus Momentum when taken, providing three bonus Momentum in total.

ARE MUTANTS OVER-POWERED?

Compared to most other characters, a fully developed mutant is immensely powerful. This is the way it is meant to be however, as mutants that have reached the higher end of their potential are basically Guardians in the flesh. They have been genetically designed to be able to go toe-to-toe with Nepharites and even the Dark Apostles themselves. Mutants are a progressive weapon that have been designed to crush the Darkness once and for all, so it is not strange that they need to possess powers beyond mere humans. Powers that will allow them to not only stem the tides of darkness, but to turn it and destroy it.



Cultists of Algeoth face Guardians for the first – and last – time.

ARMOUR PLATING

TARGET: Self

DURATION: One minute

BASE EFFECT: Stimulating their inherent physical mutation and enhancing it with psionic shielding allows the mutant enhance their natural armour to the point that it is capable of absorbing increasing amounts of physical and supernatural attacks. There are no discernible visual effects other than the mutant's skin taking on a slightly plated pattern. At the higher levels of manifestation, the armour readily competes with heavy combat armours. A Resistance or Willpower test is required to manifest this power, whilst the Psionic Power Level decides how much protection it grants in addition to establishing the difficulty of the test. Psionic Power Level 1 provides one Armour Soak to all locations, with the Soak increasing by one for each increase in the Psionic Power Level. Armour Plating provides full Soak against effects both mundane and supernatural. Weapon qualities such as Armour Piercing have their normal effect against this power.

MOMENTUM: The duration may be increased to two minutes at the cost of one Momentum, five minutes at the cost of two Momentum, or ten minutes at the cost of three Momentum.

BOLSTER MIND

TARGET: Self, plus as below. Additional targets must be within Close range.

DURATION: One hour

BASE EFFECT: This power is used to strengthen the mental fortitude of the mutant and potentially his allies. It aids in resisting fear, madness and mental attacks. The power level decides how many people it can affect beyond the mutant and how long the effects last. To be affected, a target must be within Close range of the mutant and within line of sight. The mutant selects who is bolstered by this power in the case of there being more targets to affect than the power allows.

MOMENTUM: Spending one Momentum will increase the duration to six hours, two Momentum to twelve hours, or three Momentum to twenty-four hours.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Affects the mutant only. Reduce the difficulty of mental assaults by one step, which may eliminate the need for a test. This stacks with any similar reduction, such as that provided by the Courageous talent.

2: Affects the mutant plus two additional targets. In addition to the effects listed above, the recipients cannot be affected by the Rattled status effect throughout the duration of this power.

3: Affects the mutant plus five additional targets. Reduce the difficulty of mental assault by two steps (this replaces the one step reduction at Psionic Power Level 1), which may eliminate the need for a test. In addition to all of the effects listed above, the recipients cannot be affected by the Terrified status effect.

4: Affects the mutant plus twelve additional targets. In addition to all of the effects listed above, recipients gain one Soak against any damage that results from failing a Willpower test against mental assault for the duration of the power. Further, those affected immediately regain two Mental Wounds.

5: Affects the mutant plus all targets within Close range (the mutant may choose who is affected or not). Recipients gain all of the benefits listed above for the duration of the power. Further, reduce the difficulty of mental assaults by three steps (this replaces the similar effect gained at Psionic Level 3), which may eliminate the need for a test. Further, increase the Soak gained at Psionic Power Level 4 to two. Finally, those affected cannot gain madness as the result of suffering five or more Mental Wounds from one triggering event (although they may still gain madness due to having zero mental wounds).

COAX TECHNOLOGY

TARGET: One piece of equipment, touched

DURATION: One minute

BASE EFFECT: By forging a psionic link to an item, the mutant is able to operate the equipment without actually having to manipulate it via the item's regular user interface. The piece of equipment must still be touched in order for this power to work, which will then take effect regardless of any damage to the user interface. The best part of this gift is that the technology gains an increased resistance to corruption while the mutant is using it, which would enable a mutant to use very advanced technology without risking it falling to the Darkness. The Psionic Power Level decides the size and type of technology that can be controlled, which can even be used to bypass security measures in computer systems and allow the mutant to open mechanical or electrical locks by effectively coercing the technology to cooperate.

The mutant must succeed at a Mechanics or Sciences test in order to coerce the item to follow his bidding, using whichever skill is most appropriate. The mutant is able to freely operate unintelligent and mundane items for up to one minute following this power's use. In addition to the above effects, a successful use of Coax Technology against an item will increase its Reliability rating by two for the duration of this power's effects. If this would push the item's Reliability rating beyond four, the item instead becomes immune to corruption for the duration.

MOMENTUM: One Momentum from the test may be spent to increase this duration to two minutes, two Momentum will increase this to five minutes, or three Momentum to ten minutes. In the case of items that contain some form of intelligence, one single command may be given, which the item's AI will continue to follow for one minute until its original programming reasserts itself. Momentum may be spent as above to increase the duration of this command. Alternatively, each point of Momentum spent from the test can be used to introduce an additional command for the item to follow.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Watch, pistol, handheld radio.

2: Home computer, unwieldy or two-handed weapons, television.

3: Car, heavy weapon systems, small aircrafts and advanced computer systems.

4: Large tanks, whole sections of a space carrier, massive weapons systems and highly advanced AI systems.

5: An entire spacecraft or continental defence grid.

DENSITY

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Ten rounds

BASE EFFECT: The density of the mutant's body increases many times over, adding a total of up to two hundred percent to his body weight. In addition, the mutant's skin and musculature become highly reactive to kinetic shock, which causes them to solidify whenever a large area of the body is exposed to such a force. Striking the mutant with small projectiles, such as bullets, or hand-held weaponry remains unaffected by this power; it really only comes into its own when the mutant attempts to juggernaut through a security door or smash through a brick wall, which could easily be accomplished without suffering so much as a bruise or scratch. When smashing down obstacles, the mutant must be able to gain traction and speed in order for this power to work.

Density also protects against high-speed impacts that affect a large area, such as a ton of bricks dropping onto the mutant's head. Falling damage is also severely reduced, whilst the resultant impact from the fall is devastating to any surface that becomes the landing zone. Use the Psionic Power Levels below to determine the exact effects of this power.

MOMENTUM: One Momentum extends the duration to one minute, two Momentum to five minutes, and three Momentum to ten minutes.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success when attempting an Athletics test to break through a door or apply their Strength in a similar manner to other objects, such as a car perhaps, but must accept the new results; note here that the door itself may survive an impact, but the frame or lock may instead give way. Additionally, any such test will net two bonus Momentum if successful. The character must be able to take a Sprint Standard Action as a run-up to the obstacle in order to gain these benefits, the momentum of which prevents retroactive injury being applied to themselves. Further, the character gains one additional Soak against damage from large objects that are thrown or dropped from a height, or from damage suffered as the result of a fall.

2: In addition to the effects listed above, the character's density has increased to the point that he is able to affect stone and metal structures, although this also requires that the mutant gain sufficient traction to benefit from the power. In each round that the mutant uses a Sprint Standard Action, he is able to inflict 2+**↑**3 Impact Damage with the Knockdown and Stun qualities, exactly as though he were an armoured vehicle travelling at speed. The character may use the force of their impact to damage other vehicles, in addition to gaining two Soak against any damage that may be received in return. They may also use the force of their impact to damage Cover, exactly as described on page 134 of the *Mutant Chronicles* rulebook. The character's Soak against large thrown or dropped objects and falling damage increases to three.

3: In addition to all of the above effects, the character's impact damage is increased to 2+**↑**5 and his Soak against resultant damage is increased to four. His Soak against large thrown or dropped objects and falling damage is also increased to four.

4: In addition to the above effects, any zone that the character lands in following a fall from at least two floors is thereafter considered to be difficult terrain. Further, the character need only take the Movement Restricted Action in order to gain all of the benefits described above, instead of the Sprint Standard Action.

5: In addition to the effects described above, the character's impact damage is increased to 3+**↑**6 and his Soak against resultant damage is increased to six. The character no longer takes damage from falling or from large thrown or dropped objects.



DIMENSIONAL TELEPORTATION

TARGET: Self, plus other intelligent creatures as described under Psionic Power Level

DURATION: Instant

BASE EFFECT: Though not nearly as powerful as the Dimensional Rift Major power when it comes to mass and range, the Dimensional Teleportation power is nevertheless extremely useful and much less taxing. Essentially a short distance teleportation power, the mutant can teleport himself and any equipment he is carrying from his current location to another. At higher manifestation levels, he is able to teleport additional people and their gear, so long as he touches them either directly or via a physical link. For example, he would be able to teleport a number of people that were holding hands in a linked chain so long as he was able to make physical contact with at least one of them.

As with the Dimensional Rift Major power, the mutant is unable to teleport people away whilst he remains behind and must travel with those he wishes to transport. There is no requirement for the mutant to have visited a location prior to teleporting there, but he does need some form of coordinates to work with or a very good understanding of the location, which can be provided through an accurate distance and a number visual pointers, such as photographs or video imagery. Locations that are within teleportation distance and familiar to the mutant will incur a deviation error of one metre from the destination, whilst using second-hand knowledge will invite a deviation error of one hundred metres from the destination. Use of the Psionic Navigation power prior to teleporting will provide pinpoint accuracy, as will establishing a link to a known psionic waypoint through the use of the Guardian Link Lesser power. Dimensional Teleportation will never deposit either the mutant or anyone he is teleporting into solid rock, inanimate objects, or an area that would cause immediate harm (such as high in the air, underwater, in a volcano, etc.); if any of these cases would prevent the mutant from teleporting to a location then the attempt at using the power simply fails.

In addition to how many people can be transported, the Psionic Power Level is also used to determine the distance that may be travelled. Dimensional Teleportation is instantaneous in its effect; those affected are enveloped in a bright swirling mist before a bright flash leads to them disappearing then reappearing at their new location within the very same type of swirling mist. A chiming, swishing sound accompanies each manifestation of this power.

Teleporting vast distances without the use of Psionic Navigation or a psionic waypoint is risky however; increase the Repercussion range of the test by an amount equal to the Psionic Power Level being employed for this power if the mutant has not employed the Psionic Navigation power to pinpoint their destination or established a link to a known psionic waypoint through the use of the Guardian Link

power. Possible Repercussions include landing further away from the destination than intended, finding oneself in an uncomfortable situation upon arrival, or experiencing a difficulty during the transition that could extend the length of time required to either disappear or reappear. The higher the level of manifestation employed, the more severe the Repercussion should be. Employing teleportation is also taxing to the mutant concerned; following each use of this power, the mutant must succeed at a Resistance or Willpower test with a difficulty equal to the Psionic Power Level employed or suffer one Fatigue (note that Fatigue may also be increased as the result of a Repercussion).

MOMENTUM: Momentum from the test may be used to teleport one additional person during each use of this power, to a maximum Momentum spend of the current Psionic Power Level being employed.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Self only to a distance of 1 km.

2: Two additional people to a distance of 10 km.

3: Five additional people to a maximum distance of 100 km.

4: Ten additional people to a maximum distance of 500km.

5: Twenty additional people to a point anywhere on the current planet.

DISTORTION BOLT

TARGET: One creature or object within Close range

DURATION: Instant, see below

BASE EFFECT: The mutant is able to fire off a bright blue bolt that will slam into its target and cause searing physical damage. The bolt forms within both hands before being hurled at its victim and resembles a deadly miniature comet once in flight, complete with a bright white ion tail.

Creating a Distortion Bolt at Psionic Power Levels 1 to 3 requires a Restricted Action, whilst creating a bolt at Psionic Power Level 4 or 5 requires a Standard Action. Launching it at a target requires a Ranged Weapons test as a Standard Action. Once formed, the Distortion Bolt can be cupped indefinitely by the mutant until such time as he chooses to hurl it, or it can be dissipated harmlessly at any time as a Free Action.

The bolt will range in size from that of a baseball to a volleyball in circumference dependent upon the power level used, thus making it virtually impossible to hide once formed; due to the light that is shed, which is brighter than a signal flare in intensity at the highest levels of manifestation.

DESTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS AND FIXTURES

Although the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook does provide rules for damaging Cover, little has been written in relation to damaging buildings or fixtures. The following list provides an estimation of standard damage capacities and Soak for such, although GMs should feel free to adjust this as they see fit. Damage that exceeds any Soak that is rolled is applied directly to the building or fixture's Damage Capacity. Additionally, exactly as when destroying cover, ten or more points of damage above the building or fixture's Soak will degrade this value by $\uparrow 1$ against any subsequent damage. Once either the Damage Capacity or Soak value have been reduced to zero, the building or fixture is destroyed.

BUILDING OR FIXTURE	DAMAGE CAPACITY	SOAK
Heavy Wooden door	15	1
Plexi-glass window or reinforced aluminium panel	25	2
Steel door	35	3
Reinforced steel door or concrete pillar	45	4
Wooden hut or small barn	60	4
Shipping container	80	4
Small concrete building or outhouse	100	6
Reinforced concrete bunker	120	8

MOMENTUM: At Psionic Power Levels 1 to 3, two points of Momentum from the test may be used to manifest the bolt as a Free Action, whilst two Momentum at Psionic Power Levels 4 or 5 will reduce the manifestation time from a Standard to a Restricted Action. In either case, any remaining Momentum from the test may be carried over to the Ranged Weapons test.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: The bolt has the following properties: Range C, Munition, $1+\uparrow 4$, Knockdown, Pious 1

2: The bolt gains the Blast (Close) and Incendiary 1 qualities.

3: Increase the bolt's damage to $2+\uparrow 5$. In addition, the bolt gains the Armour Piercing 1 and Vicious 1 qualities.

4: The bolt gains the Torrent, Unforgiving 1, and Spread 1 qualities.

5: Increase the bolt's damage to $3+\uparrow 7$. In addition, the bolt gains the Dreadful and Vile qualities.

GUARDIAN LINK

TARGET: Self, plus other intelligent creatures as described under Psionic Power Level

DURATION: Permanent until dismissed, see below

BASE EFFECT: Despite lacking a visually impressive element, the exceptional benefits that the Guardian Link power can provide in terms of communication are undeniable; several mutants in possession of this power would be able to employ it in concert and establish a communications hub that could feasibly span the entire solar system yet remain completely covert and secure.

A mutant can manifest this power in order to form a psychic bond with a target of their choosing. Once established, the bond allows the mutant to communicate telepathically with the recipient across vast distances. A mutant is able to establish a number of separate links with several different individuals, all of whom are then instinctively able to communicate freely with all of the other people that have been psychically bonded, although the mutant is required to act as a hub in order to facilitate this.

The mutant can establish a psychic link with a number of people equal to twice his Mental Strength. He must be within Close range of the target in order to establish the link, which requires an Average D1 Mysticism or Willpower test should the target be willing. In the case of an unwilling target, this becomes an opposed roll against the target's Mysticism or Willpower, with success for the mutant meaning that the link has been established and failure meaning that the attempt has been resisted; a number of days equal to the intended target's Mental Strength must pass before a new attempt can be made. The target will always know that an intrusive will is seeking to establish contact with his mind. Once established, the link cannot be severed willingly by the target, although the mutant that established it can choose to permanently remove the link at any time (which can be done in order to make way for a link to a new target). Of course, the mutant's death will also end the link permanently. Several mutants with this power may establish links with each other in order to form extensive networks.

The mutant is able to telepathically communicate with every individual with whom he has established a link, although some amount of effort is required by all parties involved. Each person involved in the communication is required to use Concentration in order to both understand and respond to the conversation. The mutant manifesting this power simply places a 'call' to a chosen

individual, which is felt as a slight mental tugging or buzzing by the intended recipient. Concentrating on the call will allow the receiver to then clearly understand what is being communicated. If the mutant loses Concentration, the call will end and must be re-established, whereas the recipient losing Concentration will simply cause the call to return to a background murmur that can be picked up by once again concentrating. The mutant is able to link several recipients together within one call by acting as hub, although he must maintain Concentration throughout and is privy to the entire exchange. Calls can be ignored without ill effect, although the mental tug will certainly become irritating over time.

A linked individual gains the minor ability of being able to psychically contact the mutant to whom they are bonded, although they may only use this ability to a Psionic Power Level of 3, may only use it to contact their linked mutant (although he may then act to establish a connection to another individual), and may not spend Momentum from the test to introduce other recipients.

Communication that does not require a rift is virtually instantaneous, irrespective of distance, whereas introducing a rift as a means of establishing the link will introduce five rounds of delay between sending and receiving at both ends of the communication.

MOMENTUM: Each point of Momentum generated on the test may be used to include one additional recipient in the link. At Psionic Power Level 5, each point of Momentum generated may also be spent to reduce the response delay time by one round.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: 2500 km, one recipient.

2: 5000 km, three recipients.

3: 50,000 km, five recipients.

4: 500,000 km, ten recipients.

5: Anywhere in the solar system via rift portals. Any number of recipients that are connected to the mutant.

IMMOLATE

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Established by Psionic Power Level, below

BASE EFFECT: Immolate is an extreme and aggressive manifestation of Guardian power that allows the mutant to engulf himself in a swirling layer of blue hot flame. Whilst in this state, he becomes immune to fire and scorches anything that he comes into contact with. Higher power level manifestations allow the mutant to extend ribbons of fire up to five meters away in order to attack targets at distance.

The Psionic Power Level determines both how long the power remains in effect and the abilities that are provided. The mutant can always elect to end the effects at any time.

MOMENTUM: Two points of Momentum from the test may be used to reduce the manifestation time to a Restricted Action. Alternatively, each two points of Momentum from the test may be used to purchase one additional round of duration.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Three rounds. The mutant gains the Inured to Heat Special Ability. The flames inflict 1+**↑**4 damage with the Incendiary quality to anyone touching or touched by the mutant. The mutant is considered to be armed whilst alight and his unarmed strikes now inflict 2+**↑**5 damage with the Incendiary quality (which includes the damage listed above).

2: Five rounds. In addition to the effects listed above, damage from the flames gain the Spread 1 quality.

3: Ten rounds. All of the above effects. Additionally, damage from the flames is increased to 1+**↑**6, or 2+**↑**7 for unarmed attacks, and the Incendiary quality to 2.

4: Twenty rounds. In addition to the above effects, the mutant is able to create twin lashes of fire that not only provide him with the Reach quality, but can also be used to attack any target within Close range. Attacking with a lash inflicts damage to the target as though they had been struck by an unarmed attack (i.e. 2+**↑**7 damage with the Incendiary 2 and Spread 1 qualities). So long as the second action is used to make an attack with the other lash, attacking with both lashes allows the Swift Strike Momentum spend to be utilised for one less Momentum.

5: Remainder of the combat scene. All of the above effects. Additionally, damage from the flames is increased to 2+**↑**6, or 3+**↑**7 for melee or lash attacks, and the Incendiary quality to 3. The attacks also gain the Vicious 1 quality.

PATTERN PULSE

TARGET: Determined by Psionic Power Level

DURATION: Instant (pulse) or mutant's Mental Strength in hours (ward)

BASE EFFECT: This extremely potent and useful power allows the mutant to release an expanding ring of psionic energy that causes the air to ripple in a seemingly explosive manner. The disturbance is accompanied by a deep, rumbling base sound that will likely pop the ears of all those who experience it. Smaller objects may be sent flying, whilst anything that the wind could affect will flail and flutter in the wake of the ripple.

The potential physical effects on those who harbour corruption, however, is much more impressive than these relatively minor effects, as it is capable of bowling over or staggering those who have given themselves over to the Darkness while leaving all others unaffected. This allows the power to be employed not only as a minor distraction tactic, but also as a means of instantly identifying Heretics or creatures of Darkness that are hidden amidst larger groups of humans.

A further use of this power lies in the fact that it can be used to ward a specific area against further entry from the agents of Darkness; although not designed to physically harm creatures of Darkness in either form, it will serve to stop them in their tracks.

The Psionic Power Level employed will determine the range of either the pulse or warded area, in addition to establishing how powerful it is; at lower manifestations it will have a shorter range and will knock down the weakest of Heretics, whilst at the higher end it can affect entire city blocks and potentially bowl over Nepharites or other powerful creatures of the Dark Legion.

In addition to the auditory and visual effects described above, a pulse will affect all servants of Darkness within the range indicated by the Psionic Power Level below. In essence, the mutant uses the pulse to generate an opposed test using their Mysticism or Willpower against the creature or Heretic's Willpower. If the mutant succeeds at the opposed test, the pulse inflicts $\uparrow 3$ damage with the Knockdown and Stun qualities. Servants of Darkness that win the roll are unaffected. The GM should roll for Hordes and Squads as a collective body in order to speed up play.

In contrast, a ward prevents access to an area for a creature of Darkness unless it passes a Willpower test with a difficulty equal to the Psionic Power Level employed by the mutant when first establishing the ward. Failing this test means that the creature or Heretic has been prevented from entering the area, whilst passing the test enables the creature to freely enter and exit as they please without inducing any of the subsequent effects described here. The ward is subversive to the point that most creatures of Darkness will not be aware that they are unable to enter the warded area, so those who fail this test potentially will not realise that they are being prevented from entering the area. For example, either a convenient excuse to avoid the area will present itself, or an alternative route will be chosen. An Insight test with a difficulty equal to the Willpower test that is required to enter the area must be passed in order for the creature or Heretic to be able to determine that it is being manipulated away from the area by a supernatural force. In its capacity as a physical barrier, the ward will inflict $\uparrow 3$ damage with the Knockdown and Stun qualities to any servant of Darkness that—having failed its initial Willpower test to enter the warded area—attempts to breach its outer extent, although this damage may be increased at the GMs discretion dependent upon the velocity of the creature when striking the barrier.

Attacks from normal weaponry and untainted supernatural powers may freely penetrate the ward from the outside, though only so long as they do not possess any taint of Symmetry. Ranged attacks or supernatural powers that are empowered by the Dark Symmetry, such as the bullets fired from a Voriche handgun or any Dark Gifts that manifest a physical attack, are subjected to a Cover Soak of X when rolling to determine damage against a target that is within the warded area, where X is equal to the half of the Psionic Power Level used to manifest the ward (rounding fractions up). The Armour Piercing quality provides no benefit against this psionic effect. If a creature of Darkness does somehow breach the ward, its ranged attacks or powers are no longer subject to this effect.

A mutant can maintain a number of warded areas at any one time equal to their Mental Strength divided by two (rounding fractions down), with each new area beyond this limit causing the longest established to collapse first. Brotherhood Art wielders or those who are sensitive to supernatural powers may detect something abnormal concerning the area, although this requires a Dire D4 Mysticism or Epic D5 Insight test. Even then, the area registers as refreshingly free of any taint and induces a feeling that some would even describe as invigorating.

MOMENTUM: When setting a ward, the mutant may spend Momentum from the test in order to increase the difficulty required to enter the warded area at a cost of two Momentum for each increase in difficulty step, to a maximum of Epic D5. Alternatively, each point of Momentum spent from the test nets one additional hour of duration for the ward.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

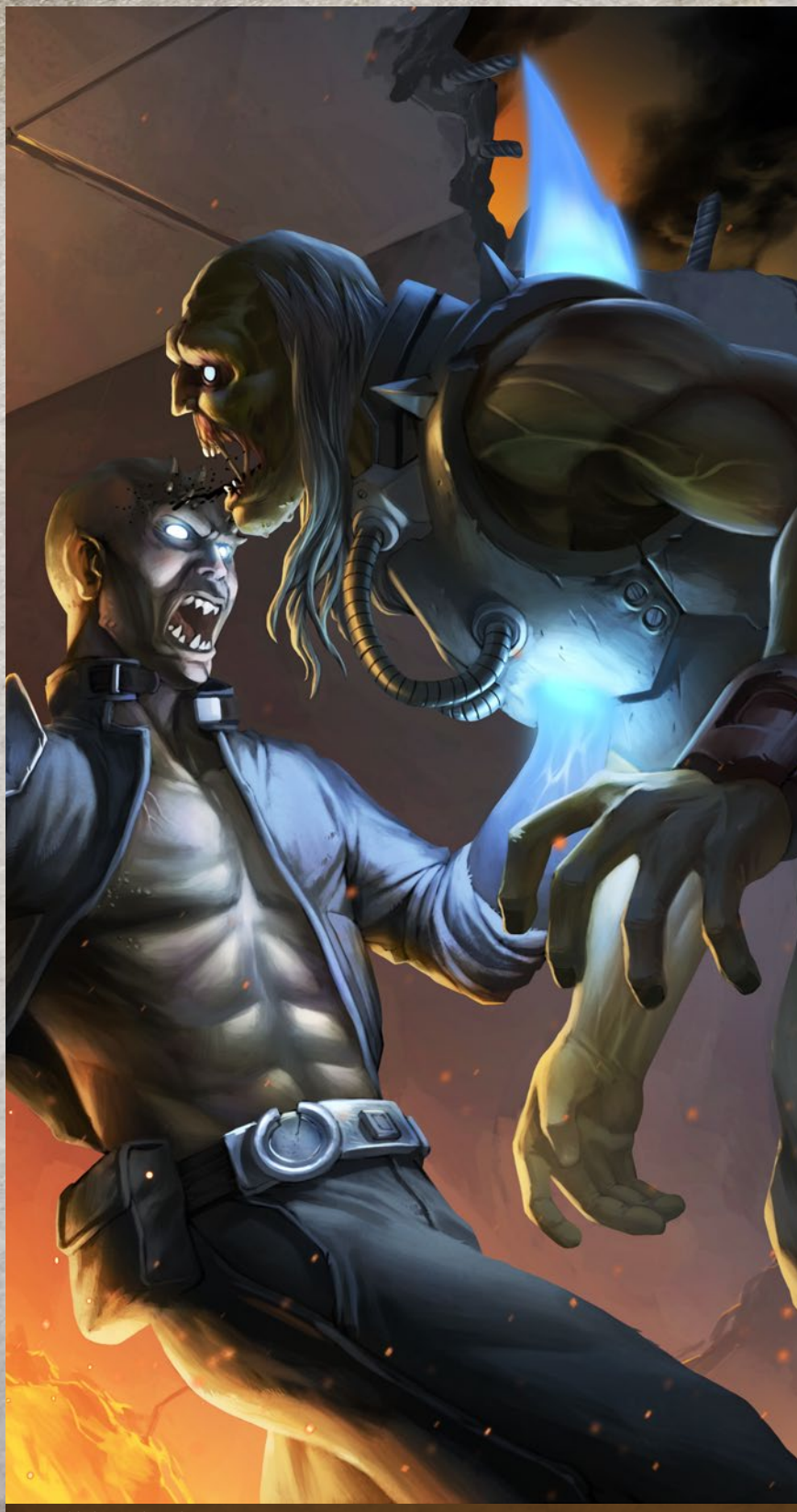
1: Close range. The mutant must choose to either ward an area or release a pulse.

2: As above, plus the damage from the ward or pulse is increased to $1+\uparrow 4$ and now gains the Pious 1 quality, in addition to Knockdown and Stun.

3: The ward or pulse can be extended to cover every zone within Medium range. Alternatively, a dual-pulse may be released that not only affects all servants of Darkness within Close range, but also simultaneously places a ward that prevents access to those on the outside. Creatures or Heretics on the inside of the warded area are free to enter or leave as they choose once the pulse has passed over them, assuming that they are able to do so of course.

4: The ward or pulse can be extended to the first zones that establish Long range (i.e. those that are adjacent to the Medium range zones). Alternatively, a dual-pulse may be released as above with an area of effect that now extends to Medium range.

5: The ward or pulse can cover an entire city block. Alternatively, the dual-pulse now has an area of effect that extends to the very first



Psionic blades cut through corruption.

zones that establish Long range. In addition to gaining the Dreadful quality, the resultant damage from either effect is increased to $2+\uparrow 5$ and the Pious quality to 2.

PSIONIC BLADE

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Permanent until dismissed

BASE EFFECT: The mutant is able to sculpt his psionic energy into a physical form that can be used as a formidable weapon. Taking the shape of a luminescent blade that pulses through various hues of blue, it manifests over the forearm as a bladed gauntlet whose edge extends approximately fifty centimetres beyond the fingertips. The blade is extremely sharp and capable of leaving its mark on most know materials.

The blade can be maintained indefinitely without the need for Concentration and may be dispersed as a Restricted Action whenever the mutant so chooses. The Psionic Power Level affects not only the damage that the blade can inflict, but also the qualities that it can possess. A mutant that has manifested a blade is considered to be armed with a melee weapon for the purposes of combat.

MOMENTUM: Each point of Momentum from the test may be used to generate an additional blade on a separate arm, thereby allowing the mutant to dual-wield the weapons—possibly across all four arms should they possess that many.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: A blade can be manifested that possesses the following qualities: $1+\uparrow 4$, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Pious 1.

2: As above, plus the blade gains the following qualities: Parry 1, Vicious 1.

3: As above, plus increase the blade's damage to $1+\uparrow 5$ and the Armour Piercing quality to 2.

4: As above, plus increase the blade's Parry and Pious qualities to 2. Additionally, the blade gains an electrostatic charge that grants the Stun quality.

5: As above, plus increase the blade's damage to 2+ \uparrow 5 and the Vicious quality to 2. Additionally, the large amount of psionic energy required to manifest the blade also infuses it with the Dreadful quality.

PSIONIC NAVIGATION

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Ten minutes

BASE EFFECT: In addition to ensuring that he never gets lost whilst planet-side, a mutant who is able to manifest this power can employ it to navigate the usually unfathomable depths of dimensional rifts with exact precision. Though apparently mundane in its application, this ability is extremely useful when used in conjunction with the Dimensional Rift Major power, as it can then be used to jump from one side of the solar system to another without error. This power also provides the ability to place psionic waypoints, which are psychic markers that can be placed at a location in order to reduce the difficulty of subsequent attempts made to pinpoint a waypoint's coordinates.

The Psionic Power Levels decide how extensive the navigational information is, which can be as simple as determining a direction of travel with unerring accuracy at the lowest levels, to understanding exactly which quadrants of space and time must be joined by a rift to reach a required destination at the highest level. The validity of the information acquired through the test remains accurate for approximately ten minutes, during which time the data updates itself in the mutant's mind without the need for Concentration. A new manifestation of the power must be attempted once this duration ends in order to once again navigate without error.

Using this power to place a psionic waypoint at a location will reduce the difficulty of subsequent Psionic Navigation tests made by anyone attempting to pinpoint the location by an amount equal to half of the Psionic Power Level used to create the waypoint (rounding fractions down), which may eliminate the need for a test. This reduction in difficulty is in addition to that provided by the amount of Guardian DNA that has been activated within the mutant (see Power Levels on page 35).

MOMENTUM: The duration may be extended through the use of Momentum gained when making the manifestation test: one Momentum will provide information for one hour, two Momentum for six hours, and three Momentum for twelve hours.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Unerring directional sense for the duration of the power. Does not allow placement of a psionic waypoint.

2: Planet side navigation for the duration of the power, which provides specific coordinates to known locations—this includes any that have been visited personally and those locations that have been provided with an in depth description. Alternatively, can be used to place a psionic waypoint that has a duration of one day.

3: Planetary body navigation for the duration. As above, but can also be used to plot travel and coordinates between a planet and any of its attendant moons, which allows for the plotting of flight courses without the aid of technology or star charts. Alternatively, can be used to place a psionic waypoint that has a duration of one week.

4: Interplanetary navigation for the duration. As above, but can also be used to plot travel and coordinates between the mutant's current planet and any adjacent planet within the solar system, which allows for the plotting of flight courses without the aid of technology or star charts. Alternatively, can be used to place a psionic waypoint that has a duration of one month.

5: Rift navigation for the duration. As above, but can be used to plot an accurate rift calculation that will connect two points together within the same solar system. Use of this Psionic Power Level will eliminate the increase in Repercussion range that accompanies a use of the Dimensional Rift Major power without first having employed Psionic Navigation. Alternatively, may place a psionic waypoint that has a duration of one year.

PSYCHIC ECHO

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Concentration, which must be maintained for thirty seconds

BASE EFFECT: Every location possesses a psychic echo, although some have acquired an imprint that is much more established than others due to a number of factors such as legendary status, the acts that have occurred there, or the passion and regard in which they are held. Mutants with this power are able to read these echoes and auras in order to determine events at the location.

Subsequent to the test to manifest this power, the mutant must focus his mind's eye on the target location for at least thirty seconds of uninterrupted Concentration. If the mutant is searching for something specific that has occurred, such as the events surrounding a brutal murder, or the actions of a known individual that has frequented the area, he is able to establish a clear vision of a single scene that is experienced as though he were actually a witness at the time of the occurrence. If merely browsing recent history or acting upon a hunch, the mutant must again maintain Concentration for the required amount of time, but must additionally succeed at an Observation or Insight test with a difficulty equal to the Psionic Power Level in order to make sense of the random scenes of activity that have occurred.

The difficulty of this additional test is not reduced according to the mutant's current Guardian DNA percentage. Succeeding at this test will allow the GM to insert a snippet of information that is relevant to the current story arc. The Psionic Power Level determines how far back in a location's history a mutant may search, although the further back in time a mutant decides to look, the more he must concentrate. Assimilating and sifting through the amounts of raw psionic information that can be received when using this power requires the mutant to make a Willpower test with a difficulty equal to the Psionic Power Level at the conclusion of this test. The mutant suffers no ill effects on success, but suffers one level of Fatigue for each Psionic Power Level employed on failure.

MOMENTUM: Two points of Momentum from the test may be used to witness a second scene as part of the vision, although this must be used to establish some of the facts surrounding events that are prior or subsequent to the current scene that is under review (it may be possible to establish who set up an ambush for instance, or witness any belated events that occurred post-scene).

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

- 1: Up to one month.
- 2: Up to one year. Requires one minute of Concentration.
- 3: Up to one decade. Requires five minutes of Concentration.
- 4: Up to one century. Requires ten minutes of Concentration.
- 5: As far back across the millennia as required. Requires one hour of Concentration.

QUADRALIMBS

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Thirty minutes

BASE EFFECT: Most mutants are able to emulate the Guardians that they are destined to become in both form and function, although often to a lesser degree. Those who can manifest this power are temporarily able to sport two fully grown pairs of arms, both pairs of which darken in colour to match a Guardian's blue skin tone. The extra pair of limbs that sprout are completely ambulatory, possess the full strength of the mutant's regular arms, and are capable of being used to the very same extent as his regular pair. Additionally, the mutant's nerve stems and brain synapses alter and form new pathways when this power is used, which allows him to operate both pairs of hands simultaneously yet completely independently.

If the mutant possesses Vestigial Arms, use of this power completely replaces the benefits gained from that mutation. The mutant's second pair of arms can be used to perform a second Standard Action that

is completely independent of any Standard Action for which the first pair of arms are being used, although the additional Standard Action may only be taken if it involves the use of the second pair of arms; the mutant could use his first pair of arms to assist with a climbing test whilst using his second pair of arms to fire a ranged weapon for instance, although performing two Sprint Standard Actions would not be allowed (as the second action would not involve use of the second pair of arms). Using both pairs of arms together as part of a single action, such as employing both sets to assist with the climbing test mentioned above, will reduce the difficulty of the associated test by two, which may eliminate the need for a test.

Mutants who employ this power gain the Grasping special ability (note: pure Guardians already possess two pairs of fully grown arms and thus already enjoy this ability). Mutants who use this power to enhance their Vestigial Arms mutation not only replace that mutation's abilities (as stated above), but also gain the Supernatural Strength (1) special ability, whilst Guardians who manifest this power are able to further bolster and reinforce their wiry strength, which increases the Supernatural Strength rating to 2. The Psionic Power Level used to manifest the power determines its duration.

MOMENTUM: Each two points of Momentum from the test may be used to purchase one additional hour of duration.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

- 1: Thirty minutes.
- 2: One hour.
- 3: Six hours.
- 4: Twelve hours.
- 5: Twenty-four hours.

REGENERATION

TARGET: Self

DURATION: One hour

BASE EFFECT: Similar to Revivify in its effect, Regeneration's much slower process can take hours to visibly manifest, but the results are astounding. Whereas Revivify can be used to instantly heal Wounds and mental trauma, any resultant physical deformity (such as a lost limb) will remain. Regeneration, however, can be used to reattach severed limbs and repair damaged organs, or even grow new ones should they have been destroyed completely.

As a Restricted Action, the mutant can manifest this power at any time in order to affect himself. Being at rest whilst doing so allows the roll to be made at normal difficulty, but undertaking any form of

activity more strenuous than this will increase the difficulty of the test by one step. In order to stimulate its effects in anyone other than himself, the mutant will need to lay his hands upon that person and maintain Concentration for one entire round before attempting the roll, which is then made at normal difficulty. Once manifested, the benefits of the power require no additional concentration and remain in effect for the duration, even should the recipient fall unconscious.

Any use of Regeneration will immediately halt the effects of any poison or disease that is affecting the character on whom the power is being used. Once all Wounds have been repaired through the use of this power, the affliction will also be removed from the character's system. The Psionic Power Level determines not only the severity of Wounds that can be healed, but also how long is required to repair each type of Wound; it can be used to simply mend Wounds, but its true power lies in its ability re-grow or knit severed limbs.

MOMENTUM: Two points of Momentum from the test may be used in order to extend the duration of the power by one hour, to a maximum of four Momentum and three hours total.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Light Wounds only, healed at a rate of one Light Wound per minute.

2: Serious Wounds. Heals one Serious Wound per ten minutes, then as above. Serious Wounds are always healed before Light Wounds.

3: Critical Wounds. Heals one Critical Wound per hour, then as above. Critical Wounds are always healed before Serious Wounds. Alternatively, this power level may be employed in order to halve the healing rate of Psionic Power Level 1.

4: This power level can be used to re-attach a severed limb or repair a damaged organ, which requires twelve hours of continuous use of this power to complete; any less than this will induce a reduced effectiveness in the limb or organ until the Regeneration process is begun once again and allowed to complete its course. The majority of the limb or organ must be present in order for this to be effective (use GMs discretion). Alternatively, this power level may be employed in order to halve the healing rate of Psionic Power Levels 1 and 2 (Serious Wounds must still be healed before Light Wounds).

5: This power level can be used to grow a new limb or replace a missing organ, which takes an entire day to fully form and begin functioning normally. Alternatively, it may be employed in order to halve the healing rate of Psionic Power Level 3 and below (remembering that Critical Wounds must still be healed before Serious etc).



REVIVIFY

TARGET: Self

DURATION: One creature, touched

BASE EFFECT: With this power a mutant may instantly rid a person of the direct effects of dread and fear. He can also rid a person of his madness. The power level needed depends on how severe the condition is. Long term madness effects and high levels of dread are generally harder to heal. The power can also restore memories lost due to retrograde amnesia due to shock or mental manipulation even if this manipulation stems from the Dark Symmetry.

With this power, the mutant is able to instantly heal physical damage and mental trauma affecting both himself and others. Unlike Regeneration, the power cannot be used to replace missing limbs or organs; the flesh of the affected area will simply knit together, which will repair the surface damage that has been inflicted and effectively cauterise the wound, but does nothing to restore lost mobility or effectiveness.

In addition to its physical healing benefits, Revivify may also be used to refresh and repair traumatised minds, or even alleviate madness at its highest manifestation. Memories lost to retrograde amnesia due to shock or mental manipulation can also be restored, even in cases where they have been torn from the patient by the powers of the Dark Symmetry.

The Psionic Power Level determines exactly which type of Wounds and mental trauma are healed. As normal, Critical Wounds must be healed before Serious, and Serious Wounds before Light. Completely healing all of a patient's Mental Wounds will not translate into healing physical Wounds. Each time this power is manifested, the mutant must make a conscious choice to repair either physical or mental damage.

MOMENTUM: The number of Wounds healed may be increased by one per Momentum spent. If the healing restores all of a single type of Wound (Light, Serious, or Critical), then move on to the next type. Any surplus Wounds healed are lost.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Restore one physical Wound of any type (Light, Serious, or Critical), or one Mental Wound.

2: As above, plus remove one status effect or negative condition caused by injury (excluding permanent effects of serious injury, such as the loss of limbs or organs). As a bonus Momentum option, each point of Momentum from the test may now also be used to remove one additional status effect or negative condition caused by injury (excluding permanent effects of serious injury, such as the loss of limbs or organs).

3: Restore three physical Wounds of any type (Light, Serious, or Critical), or three Mental Wounds.

4: Remove a madness effect or remove a disease or poison currently affecting the target. As a bonus Momentum option, each point of Momentum from the test may now also be used to remove one additional madness, poison, or disease affecting the target.

5: Restore all Light Wounds in a single hit location, or all Serious or Critical Wounds. Alternatively, restore all Mental Wounds.

UNSEEN

TARGET: Self, plus as below

DURATION: Concentration, or mutant's Mental Strength in rounds

BASE EFFECT: At its lowest manifestation, this power allows the mutant to become nigh invisible, whilst more powerful manifestations will allow him the ability to extend this power to hide other creatures and objects; the higher the Psionic Power Level, the better and more flexible the cloak will be. This psionic power manipulates the target's physical properties, such as the bending of light and shielding of heat, in addition to distorting any observer's mental perceptions of the target, the results of which produce a cloak that is able to shield the user from most senses and across most spectrums.

The power remains in effect for so long as the mutant concentrates, or for a number of rounds equal to his Mental Strength once concentration has lapsed. Radar, infrared and most supernatural senses (such as those powered by the Dark Symmetry) can be fooled by this power and are thus subject to its effects.

MOMENTUM: Two points of Momentum from the test may be spent to further increase by one the difficulty of tests that target the character or cloaked vehicle, though this spend may only be employed once.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Self only. The mutant is almost completely hidden when stood still and benefits from three bonus Momentum on opposed tests made to detect his presence via visual means (including the use of electronic devices or supernatural means). Taking a movement Restricted Action will reduce the bonus Momentum to two and a Sprint Standard Action to one. If spotted, increase the subsequent difficulty of tests that target the mutant by one step due to his blurred and indistinct outline. Unless his location is determined (through a successful opposed test), the mutant is always considered to be acting from ambush against foes whilst this power is active.

2: Self plus anyone within Close range that the mutant chooses to affect when the power is activated, all of whom gain the benefits

described above. Alternatively, the mutant can cloak a car-sized vehicle in order to provide it with all of the benefits described above (exactly as though it were the mutant).

3: Self plus anyone within Medium range that the mutant chooses to affect when the power is activated, all of whom gain the benefits described above. If the mutant chooses to only affect himself, he now nets the three bonus Momentum to opposed tests irrespective of his movement speed and the difficulty of tests that target the mutant are increased by two steps. Alternatively, the mutant can cloak a truck-sized vehicle, armoured tank, or jet fighter.

4: Self plus anyone that the mutant chooses within the first zones that establish Long range (i.e. those that are adjacent to the Medium range zones). Alternatively, the mutant can cloak a pleasure yacht sized vessel or escort ship.

5: The mutant can extend the personal use benefits of Psionic Power Level 3 to anyone within Close range. Alternatively, the mutant can cloak a vessel similar in size to a large military spaceship.

VOID ADAPTATION

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Determined by Psionic Power Level, below

BASE EFFECT: This power allows the mutant to adapt to space. He becomes impervious to the cold, most forms of solar radiation, and gains the ability to withstand a certain amount of heat. Essentially, he is insulated against the void as though he were wearing the latest cutting edge spacesuit. It is not known why, but the power only works within the realms of real space or a Symmetry simulated space environment; he would not gain any of the effects from manifesting it within a vacuum chamber for instance, or when attempting to use it to resist the associated radiation that would accompany a nuclear meltdown. When paired with the Hibernation Major power, it becomes possible for the mutant to survive against all odds.

The Psionic Power Level determines the duration of the manifestation. Whilst in effect, this power provides the mutant with the Inured to Cold and Inured to Vacuum special abilities. Additionally, the mutant reduces the difficulty of all Resistance tests related to exposure to severe heat or solar radiation by two steps, which may eliminate the need for a test, and ignores the first two points of damage that are inflicted to a hit location from each source of heat related damage.

MOMENTUM: Two points of Momentum from the test may be used to provide the Inured to Heat special ability, which supersedes the reduction in difficulty applied to heat-related effects. Extended duration may also be purchased at a cost of one Momentum for one additional hour.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Thirty minutes.

2: One hour.

3: Six hours.

4: Twelve hours.

5: Concentration, or twenty-four hours if concentration is lost. A new test for this power at Epic D5 can re-establish Concentration.



Void Adaptation: (final) frontier life.

MAJOR PSIONIC POWERS

MAJOR PSIONIC POWERS TABLE

ROLL	MAJOR PSIONIC POWER
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1	Pick any one Major power
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2	Cleanse Corruption
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3	Cleanse Soul
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4	Dimensional Rift
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5	Disintegrate
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6	Emotional Shift
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7	Energy Storm
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8	Equivalence
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9	Fury of the Ancients
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10	Gravitational Sphere
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11	Hands of Lazarus
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12	Hibernation
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13	Incorporeal
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14	Protective Sphere
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15	Psionic Construction
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16	Psionic Bio-sculpting
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17	Purge Symmetry
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18	Purify Dark Technology
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19	Repel
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20	Telepathy
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CLEANSE CORRUPTION

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Ten minutes

PREREQUISITE POWER: Coax Technology

BASE EFFECT: The Dark Symmetry has a tremendous ability to corrupt. This power can rid a location or item of any and all taint that is currently staining it. Cleanse Corruption will not affect living beings, but will work on any type of thinking machine or piece of technology that has not been crafted using the Dark Symmetry. Each power level decides how large the piece of technology can be. Alternatively, higher power levels may be utilised in order to cleanse several items at once.

THE LEGACY OF THE ANCIENTS

The item or location's corruption level is permanently reduced by one following a successful use of this power. Each two points of Momentum spent from the test may be used to reduce the corruption by one additional level. Use the inverse of the Psionic Power Levels to determine how many smaller items could be affected by a higher manifestation of the power. For instance, using Cleanse Corruption at Psionic Power Level 5 would allow the user of this power to cleanse either one spacecraft, two large tanks, three cars, four home computers, or five pistols. Cleansing an object will always require Concentration, although higher manifestations of this power can reduce the time required for smaller items.

Pitting one's psyche and soul against the Dark Soul is not undertaken lightly however; mutants or Guardians do not benefit from a reduction in the difficulty level of the test due to the potency of their Guardian DNA when using this power. Additionally, the GM may spend two Dark Symmetry points to increase the Repercussion range of the test by one each time this power is attempted, to a maximum spend of six Dark Symmetry points and an increase of three to the Repercussion range. Possible Repercussions include exposing the character to a potential mental assault with a difficulty equal to the power level employed, or employing a Dark Gift against the characters as the Darkness lashes out to defend its sanctity.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Watch, pistol, handheld radio, small closet. Requires one minute of Concentration.

2: Home computer, unwieldy or two-handed weapons, television, small room. Requires two minutes of Concentration.

3: Car, heavy weapon systems, small aircraft, average room. Requires five minutes of Concentration. Alternatively, this level of manifestation may be used to instantaneously cleanse the items listed under Psionic Power Level 1.

4: Large tanks, whole sections of a space carrier, massive weapons systems, a large apartment. At this level the mutant can cleanse Dark Technology, rendering it useless or restore it to its normal equivalent, should there be such a thing. Requires thirty minutes of Concentration.

5: Entire spacecraft (including Black Ships), an entire block (or even a small citadel). Requires one hour of Concentration. Alternatively, anything listed under Psionic Power Level 3 or lower may now be cleansed instantaneously.

CLEANSE SOUL

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Ten minutes

PREREQUISITE POWER: Bolster Minds

BASE EFFECT: Unlike the Exorcise Dark Influence Art power, which draws upon the psyche of the recipient in order to purge taint, the greater effects of this power are instead both draining and time-consuming for the mutant. Given time, however, the mutant can use this power to draw the corruption out of a Heretic, remove access to Dark Gifts, or excise Endowments such as biotechnical or necrobionic Implants. A Heretic must either be compliant or else captured and restrained in order for this power to work. Cleanse Soul will always require Concentration whilst the mutant roots out the taint.

When used to cleanse a non-Heretic of taint, each Psionic Power Level employed will remove two Tainted Mental Wounds but also subsequently cause the mutant to suffer one Fatigue. For instance, a mutant employing this power at Psionic Power Level 3 will remove up to six Tainted Mental Wounds but also suffer three Fatigue. Additional Momentum from the test may be spent to expunge any poison or disease that has been inflicted upon the target as the direct result of a Dark Gift or the abilities possessed by a creature of Darkness, with a difficulty equal to the Virulence of the affliction. Further, one point of Momentum may be spent to prevent the mutant from gaining any Fatigue associated with this use of Cleanse Soul.

When used to cleanse a willing Heretic, the Psionic Power Levels presented below describe the possible effects that may be garnered at each level. These are a guideline only and are entirely at the GMs discretion; for instance, some GMs may rule that certain Dark Inks (see *Dark Soul* sourcebook) are far more powerful than others and will thus require a higher manifestation of this power to cleanse its presence. Each Dark Gift, Implant, power, or connection must be rolled against separately, although a mutant may spend Momentum in order to cleanse additional powers through each use of this gift, which costs an amount of Momentum equal to the equivalent Psionic Power Level that would be required to remove the taint. Note that a Heretic's rank, Transfiguration step, or connection to their Apostle may never be affected through the expenditure of Momentum. Removing access to any single Dark Gift requires that this power be used at a level equivalent to the base difficulty of the Dark Gift that is being excised. Each Psionic Power Level employed will cause the mutant to suffer an amount of Fatigue equal to the power level plus two. Momentum may also be spent on Psionic Power Levels 2 or 3 in order to reduce the time required to cleanse the taint, with each point of Momentum spent allowing the mutant to read from the next line above when calculating this, to a minimum of five minutes at Psionic Power Level 1.



When used to cleanse an unwilling Heretic, each test made to draw out corruption will now become an opposed test against the Heretic's Resistance or Willpower, whichever is higher. The Heretic gains an amount of additional Momentum to this test equal to their Heretic rank (*Mutant Chronicles* rulebook pg. 287) divided by three, rounding fractions to the nearest whole number and is also free to spend Dark Symmetry points in order to gain additional dice for their test.

Much like when attempting to cleanse an item of corruption, mutants or Guardians do not benefit from a reduction in the difficulty level of the test due to the potency of their Guardian DNA when using this power against Heretics. Additionally, also when cleansing a Heretic, the GM may spend two Dark Symmetry points to increase the Repercussion range of the test by one each time this power is attempted, to a maximum spend of six Dark Symmetry points and an increase of three to the Repercussion range. Possible Repercussions include exposing the character to a potential mental assault with a difficulty equal to the power level employed, employing one of the Heretic's Dark Gifts against the characters as the Darkness lashes out to defend its vessel, or heaping additional Fatigue upon the mutant.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Cleanse the Heretic of a Dark Ink or power of a similar level, which also removes any associated Stigmata. Requires five minutes of Concentration.

2: Cleanse the Heretic of a Bioengineered Implant, which will also remove any associated Stigmata. In the case of Implants that have permanently affected a character's attribute, the increase remains effective but is no longer considered to carry any associated taint. Cleansing any Implant. Requires thirty minutes of Concentration.

3: Cleanse the Heretic of a Necrobionic Implant, which will also remove any associated Stigmata. Requires one hour of Concentration. Alternatively, powers listed at Psionic Power Level 1 now require only one minute of Concentration.

4: Reduce the Heretic's effective rank by one level (*Mutant Chronicles* rulebook pg. 287) or remove one step of Transfiguration (*Dark Soul Sourcebook* pg. 140). Requires at least twelve hours of Concentration.

5: Sever the Heretic's connection to his Apostle, and thus the Dark Soul. Note that this does not remove the Heretic's access to his Dark Gifts, powers, or Implants, nor any associated mental or physical trauma, but does prevent the Apostle and Dark Soul from using the Heretic as a conduit to garner information and use him as a puppet. Requires a battle on both a spiritual and metaphysical level that requires an entire day of Concentration. The mutant should be prepared for the eventuality that the Apostle will do anything within its power to prevent this from happening; they do not relinquish their minions easily. Alternatively, this level of manifestation may be used

to cleanse the taint of anything listed from Psionic Level 3 or below in half the stated time (which would now be thirty seconds for Psionic Power Level 1 listings).

DIMENSIONAL RIFT

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Ten minutes

PREREQUISITE POWER: Dimensional Navigation or Dimensional Teleportation

BASE EFFECT: Dimensional Rift is an awesome display of power that allows the mutant to transport himself and others across extreme distances by folding a suitable vehicle through a rift that connects two separate points of the solar system together in both space and time. The mutant can determine the exit location to within one kilometre of the intended destination, although use of the Psionic Navigation power in conjunction with this would provide pinpoint accuracy.


In order for the mutant to transport people, both himself and those he transports should be positioned inside a space worthy craft, as traversing the rift will expose the travellers to the vacuum of space. Wearing a vacuum suit would also suffice, but those accompanying would still need to be inside a craft or other metal lined shell, as the forces would otherwise tear their molecules to pieces; successful jumps even have been made with cargo containers. Note, then, that it is the container that the mutant transports, the other individuals are merely along for the ride. Coincidentally, this means that the mutant is also required to jump himself and cannot simply send others away.

The mutant must concentrate whilst opening and traversing the rift, which usually requires a minute or so to complete. The power is most often used to transport people from one side of a planet to another, although increased power levels provide the capacity to transport people from one planet to another within a relatively short amount of time. Having turned himself into a supercharged rift engine, the mutant can then use the Psionic Power Levels to decide how large a craft he wishes to transport and how far he would like to jump. There is no requirement for the mutant to have visited a location before opening a rift to it, but he does need some form of coordinates to work with or a very good understanding of the location, which can be provided through an accurate distance and a number of visual pointers, such as photographs or video imagery.

At Psionic Power Levels 1 to 3, Momentum from the test may be used to increase the distance travelled; multiply the distance travelled by one plus the amount of Momentum spent, to a maximum of three Momentum and a multiplication factor of four. At Psionic Power Levels 4 and 5, Momentum from the test may be spent to reduce

the amount of travel time required, with each point of Momentum spent from the test reducing travel time by one minute at Psionic Power Level 4 and two minutes at Psionic Power Level 5. Note that Momentum spent at Psionic Power Level 5 cannot be used for a reduction in time if this power level is being used to effectively transport a ship of Psionic Power Level 3 or lower in a shorter time (see associated Psionic Power Levels below), but Momentum from the test may be used to increase the distance travelled in this case by following the guidelines above.

Travelling vast distances without the use of Psionic Navigation is also risky however; increase the Repercussion range of the test by an amount equal to the Psionic Power Level being employed for this power if the mutant has not employed the Psionic Navigation power to pinpoint their destination. Possible Repercussions include landing further away from the destination than intended, finding oneself in an uncomfortable situation upon arrival, or experiencing a difficulty during the transition that could lengthen the time required to complete the jump. The higher the level of manifestation employed, the more severe the Repercussion should be. Employing rift travel is also taxing to the mutant concerned; following each successful use of this power, the mutant suffers a number points of Fatigue equal to the Psionic Power Level employed (note that Fatigue may also be increased as the result of a Repercussion).

Losing control of a rift or experiencing a loss of concentration does not automatically mean the death of those traversing it. Having lost concentration or control, the mutant may attempt a Mysticism or Willpower test in the subsequent round in an attempt to regain control of the tremendous powers that are making this travel possible. The difficulty of the test is equal to one plus the original Psionic Power Level used to employ this power, to a maximum of Epic D5, whilst the Repercussion range of this attempt is also increased by an amount equal to the difficulty of this test. Failing at the test or invoking a Repercussion will mean that the mutant has lost control of the rift, with dire consequences. All of those being transported, including the mutant himself, immediately suffer 3+ damage with the Dreadful, Knockdown, Mind Breaker, Spread 2, Stun, and Vicious 2 qualities that completely ignores armour as the colossal forces of the universe seek to re-exert themselves upon this disturbance to its very fabric. The mutant employing this power also immediately suffers an amount of Fatigue equal to the amount of Dread that has been rolled as part of the damage. Assuming that they survive, the vessel that is being used to transport the rift travellers is then ejected into a place of the GM's choosing.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: A small craft, space fighter, or shipping container. Jumps of approximately 1000 km. Requires thirty seconds of concentration.

2: A personnel carrier or small pleasure cruiser. Jumps of approximately 2500 km. Requires one minute of concentration.

3: A small cargo transport or military escort ship. Jumps of approximately 25000 km. Requires approximately two minutes of Concentration. Alternatively, this power level may be employed to instantaneously accomplish feats listed under Psionic Power Level 1.

4: A Large freighter or military frigates. Short interplanetary hops, such as from a planet to one of its moons for instance. Requires approximately five minutes of Concentration.

5: A massive freighter or military carrier. Interplanetary jumps between planetary bodies within the same solar system. Requires approximately ten minutes of Concentration. Alternatively, this power level may be employed to transport the types of ships listed under Psionic Power Level 3 or below across distances of approximately 25000 km in thirty seconds, or across distances of 1000 km instantaneously.

DISINTEGRATE

TARGET: One creature or item, touched

DURATION: Instant

PREREQUISITE POWERS: Distortion Bolt and Immolate

BASE EFFECT: This extremely destructive and deadly power can be used to utterly annihilate an opponent. It will affect most materials and works as equally well on the flesh of the living as it does on blasphemous undead forms of life, such as the foul minions of the Dark Legion. The material touched and anything in direct contact with it will be affected, so that a mutant grasping a victim's armour will affect the armour, the victim, and anything carried or worn. A bright smouldering light surrounds the hands of the mutant when manifesting this power, which is released in one quick pulse that sinks into the target and begins to burn and melt it from the inside out until nothing but ash or cinders is left.

In addition to determining how much damage is inflicted to a person or creature, the Psionic Power Level will decide not only the type of material that can be affected, but also how much of the subject that can be affected. Each use of this power will always affect an area roughly a metre wide, a metre high, and up to twenty centimetres deep, irrespective of the Psionic Power Level being employed. For example, manifesting at Psionic Power Level 1 will affect an area of wooden material that is one metre by one metre, whereas manifesting at Psionic Power Level 3 will affect an area of steel, concrete or wood that is of the same proportions. Each manifestation of this power should therefore be related to the Destruction of Buildings and Fixtures sidebar, with the Psionic Power Levels below providing guidance as to how this should be applied, although this is at the GMs final discretion. Disintegrating a large area of inanimate material, such as a bunker for instance, will not affect those within it; unless they suddenly find themselves facing a plunge of several floors of course.

When used against a person or creature, manifestation of this power becomes an opposed roll versus the Mysticism or Willpower of the intended target. If the mutant defeats the target, full damage is inflicted as listed below. If the target succeeds in beating the mutant's manifestation test, he is still subjected to 1+**↑**4 damage with the Incendiary 2 quality in the touched location; if this damage is enough to destroy the target, it will combust internally until nothing remains as described above. There is no known form of armour that will provide a Soak against this power, although certain supernatural abilities may reduce the damage at the GMs discretion.

MOMENTUM: Three points of Momentum may be spent in order to set up a psychic resonance within the target that will extend the duration of the power by one round. This causes the target to be subjected to another damage roll on the subsequent round exactly as though another manifestation of this power had been used against it, without the need for a second use of this power. The amount of damage rolled is determined by the original Psionic Power Level used against the target.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Wooden materials. Will completely disintegrate a heavy wooden door (i.e. deal enough damage to its Damage Capacity to destroy it). Inflicts 2+**↑**6 damage with the Incendiary 3 and Dreadful qualities to a person or creature.

2: Concrete or light metals. Will completely disintegrate a reinforced aluminium door (effectively dealing twenty-five points of damage to a structure or fixing's Damage Capacity). Inflicts 2+**↑**7 damage with the Incendiary 3 and Dreadful qualities to a person or creature.

3: Reinforced materials such as steel or concrete. Will completely disintegrate a reinforced steel door or concrete pillar (effectively dealing forty-five points of damage to a structure or fixing's Damage Capacity). Inflicts 3+**↑**7 damage with the Incendiary 4 and Dreadful qualities to a person or creature.

4: Can be adjusted to affect a larger area of wood, concrete, or light metal equivalent in size to a shipping container (effectively dealing eighty points of damage to a structure or fixing's Damage Capacity). Inflicts 3+**↑**8 damage with the Incendiary 4, Dreadful, and Vicious 1 qualities to a person or creature.

5: Can be adjusted to affect a larger area of reinforced concrete or steel equivalent in size to an outhouse or small outbuilding (effectively dealing one hundred points of damage to a structure or fixing's Damage Capacity). Inflicts 3+**↑**8 damage with the Incendiary 4, Dreadful, Vicious 2, and Vile qualities to a person or creature.



EMOTIONAL SHIFT

TARGET: Determined by Psionic Power Level

DURATION: Determined by Psionic Power Level

PREREQUISITE POWER: Guardian Link

BASE EFFECT: With this power, the mutant is able to drastically alter the emotional inclinations of a person. It is only possible to alter any strong emotions that are already harboured by the target, although once determined, these can then be manipulated to opposite extremes if so desired. For example, an individual's strong distaste for a particular corporation could be either fuelled into a burning hatred that will motivate the person to destructive action, or flipped on its head into an instant love and admiration of the corporation's culture. The mutant is unable to affect emotions that are faint or translucent, nor can he shift a strong emotion into a feeling of equilibrium; love can be turned to hate or vice versa, but none of those emotions can be soothed into emotional neutrality. The affected individual will always be able to produce a natural explanation for his sudden shift and will even be able to point to several indicators that have led to the change, no matter how flimsy they might be. Once the effect has run its course the victim will not understand why he acted as he did. The mutant requires line of sight to be able to affect the target.

The Psionic Power Level decides the duration of the power. An opposed test versus the target's Mysticism or Willpower is required in order for the shift in emotions to be successful. Use of this power constitutes an overt intrusion of the victim's mind, which makes it possible for the victim to detect the use of this power should they succeed in resisting it; a Challenging D2 Insight or Mysticism test will alert the target to the fact that a supernatural power has invaded their mind when Psionic Power Levels 1 to 3 are employed, which is reduced to Average D1 for Psionic Power Levels 4 and 5. A victim that has been successfully manipulated will not be aware that their emotions have been tampered with, although the effects may be detected by the supernatural powers of others.

MOMENTUM: At Psionic Power Levels 1 to 3, each point of Momentum generated from the test can be used to add one hour to the duration of the power. At Psionic Power Levels 4 and 5, Momentum can be spent to affect the mind of a nearby, like-minded individual at the cost of two Momentum per additional target. The original and additional targets must share the same emotional viewpoint and must experience the same emotional shift; two loyal bodyguards may both immediately develop a hatred for their beloved employer, for instance.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: One hour.

2: Twelve hours.



Emotional Shift: Fear the mutant. See them and despair.

3: One day.

4: One week.

5: One month.

ENERGY STORM

TARGET: All creatures and vehicles within one zone

DURATION: Five rounds

PREREQUISITE POWER: Pattern Pulse

BASE EFFECT: By drawing upon ambient energies and infusing them with his own psionic potency, the mutant is able to blanket an entire area in a deadly and disruptive energy storm. The violent tempest covers a three dimensional spherical area that is approximately fifteen metres in radius and is not only damaging to biological creatures and materials, but is also extremely disruptive to electronically operated or Symmetry infused equipment.

So long as he has line of sight to the target zone, the mutant can place the storm to affect any zone that is within Medium range of the current zone that he is occupying (he can also choose to affect his current zone). The storm has a duration of five rounds and remains in effect for the duration, although the mutant can end the storm at any time by spending a Restricted Action to disperse the energies. The storm automatically strikes each creature, vehicle, or item of electronic equipment within the zone once during each of the mutant's turns. Creatures, or vehicles that are being driven, may attempt to avoid the strike from the Energy Storm by employing a Dodge Response Action against a difficulty equal to half the Psionic Power Level employed to manifest this power (rounding fractions up). The Psionic Power Level determines both how much damage the storm inflicts and how disruptive its effects are to technology.

MOMENTUM: Momentum from the roll may be spent to increase the duration of the storm by one round for each Momentum

spent. Two points of Momentum can be used to extend the storm to affect an additional zone, which must be adjacent to the target zone. Two points of Momentum from the test can be spent to affect one of the zones that establishes Long range from the mutant's current zone (i.e. those zones adjacent to Medium range).

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Inflicts 1+**↑**4 damage with the EMP, Knockdown, and Pious 1 qualities to all creatures, vehicles, and electronic systems inside of the target zone, including any or all items of equipment that are powered by the Dark Symmetry. Note that the EMP quality means that the damage rolled is an effect against the vehicle or system's circuitry; it does not cause physical damage to the vehicle or system.

2: As above, but increase the damage inflicted to 1+**↑**5 and add the Stun quality to each strike.

3: As above, but increase the damage inflicted to 2+**↑**6 and add the Armour Piercing 1 and Vicious 1 qualities to each strike.

4: As above, but increase the damage to 2+**↑**7 and add the Spread 1 quality to each strike.

5: As above, but increase the damage to 3+**↑**8 and increase each of the Armour Piercing, Pious, and Vicious qualities to 2.

EQUIVALENCE

TARGET: Self

DURATION: One hour

PREREQUISITE POWER: Psychic Echo

BASE EFFECT: Equivalence is a very useful power that grants the mutant the ability to replicate the powers of another creature. This power provides the ability to replicate other mutant powers, the Art or even Dark Gifts. In order to mimic a power, the mutant needs to see the power at work as it happens or must be able to make skin-to-skin contact with someone that is in possession of supernatural powers. A mutant that has observed a power will be able to duplicate that exact power. So long as they have seen the power in action, the mutant may state which power is being copied when making contact with someone. Accidental contact with a target that is in possession of supernatural powers will provide random results as to which power becomes available to the mutant.

The mutant is able to absorb a number of powers equal to one plus the number of mutant powers he possesses (not including those that have been copied). The Psionic Power Level required to replicate the power in question is equal to the base power level—for mutant power—or difficulty level—for Art spells and Dark Gifts—for the supernatural power that is being duplicated. Utilising a power

EMP WEAPONS

Emp weapons were introduced in the *Whitestar Sourcebook*, but the effects are reproduced here for expediency:

EMP: Electromagnetic pulse weapons produce an intense magnetic field purposefully designed to disrupt and damage electronic circuitry. EMP weapons roll damage in the same manner as Corruption by rolling against the target item, vehicle, or spacecraft's Reliability Soak. Portable electronic items or equipment cease to function if the Corruption roll exceeds their Reliability Soak. Exceeding a vehicle or spacecraft's Reliability Soak on the damage roll results in one malfunction for each point of Corruption that surpasses the Reliability Soak. The vehicle or spacecraft will shut down if the Corruption roll is enough to beat the Reliability Soak by twice the amount; seven points of Corruption against Reliability three, for instance. EMP Corruption damage is not a Dark Symmetry effect and can never result in Malignancy.

once it has been copied requires a further Mysticism or Willpower test, with a difficulty again equal to the base difficulty or power level of the power that is being replicated. When successfully copied, all of the additional effects of the power that can be produced via either an increase in difficulty or the expenditure of Momentum also become available to the replicating mutant.

MOMENTUM: One point of Momentum generated from the test can be used to extend the duration to six hours, two Momentum will provide twelve hours, and three Momentum will allow twenty-four hours of use.

FURY OF THE ANCIENTS

TARGET: Self

DURATION: As determined by Psionic Power Level

PREREQUISITE POWER: Immolate and Psychic Echo

BASE EFFECT: A mutant that can manifest this power is able to agitate his inner psionic energy into an exponentially increasing vortex that will also amplify ambient energies into vast torrents of psychic potential. The mutant is then able to harness this raw psionic power and use it to transfigure himself into a being that virtually crackles with both protective and destructive powers. The transfiguration causes his entire body, including any possessions that are carried or worn, to become semi-ethereal, whilst his whole appearance alters until he appears to be a creature that is

made purely of light that crackles and surges with raw energy; he no longer looks human and his facial features, minus the vividly glowing eyes, are completely obscured. Two ribbons of light that burn hotter than any flame can also be unleashed by the mutant in this state, both of which possess a caress that is particularly ravaging to creatures of Darkness.

Whilst transfigured, the mutant gains the Incorporeal X special ability, where X is equal to half of the Psionic Power Level used to manifest this power. He is also able to unleash two ribbons of destructive psionic energy that can be whipped forth to attack any target within Close range. Despite becoming a formidable weapon, the mutant loses the ability to interact with the physical world to any greater degree due to being Incorporeal. He can, however, damage his environment or any creature within Reach with the incandescent energies that swirl around his form, or strike at barriers with the twin lashes that can be unleashed. Any creature that moves to within Reach of the transfigured mutant must succeed at an Acrobatics test with a difficulty equal to the Psionic Power Level used to manifest this power or suffer 1+ \uparrow 6 damage with the Incendiary 2 and Pious 1 qualities. The test to avoid this damage must be repeated for each round that the creature remains within Reach of the mutant; note that this effect cannot be quelled at all by the mutant whilst the power remains active (in order to prevent a friend from being struck by the energy for instance). If the mutant so chooses, physical objects within Reach can also be affected by these energies, which seem all too eager to sear flesh, but must be mentally willed to attack inanimate objects or structures.

Should the mutant choose to attack a creature in Close Combat, his unarmed strikes deal 2+ \uparrow 7 damage with the Incendiary 2, Pious 1, and Spread 1 qualities. Attacking with a lash will inflict 3+ \uparrow 8 damage with the Incendiary 2, Pious 1, Spread 1, and Vicious 1 qualities. So long as the second action is used to make an attack with the other lash, attacking with both lashes allows the Swift Strike Momentum spend to be utilised for once less Momentum.

In addition to defining the duration of this power, the Psionic Power Level will also determine any bonus qualities that attacks will benefit from.

MOMENTUM: Each point of Momentum from the test can be used to purchase one additional round of duration for this power, to a maximum of five Momentum and five rounds of duration.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Three rounds.

2: Five rounds. Increase the Pious quality of attacks to 2.

3: Eight rounds. Attacks with the lash gain the Torrent quality, although its effects are still limited to Close range.

4: Twelve rounds. Increase the Incendiary quality of attacks to 3 and the Spread quality to 2.

5: Fifteen rounds. Unarmed attacks and lash attacks gain the Vile quality.

GRAVITATIONAL SPHERE

TARGET: One creature or object within line of sight

DURATION: Concentration

PREREQUISITE POWER: Density

BASE EFFECT: By psionically altering gravitational properties, the mutant is able to lift living creatures and heavy objects alike through force of will alone. Though it does not provide the power of flight, it can be used to make massive jumps that culminate in a controlled descent when the mutant focusses the power on himself. Any objects that are lifted with this power are under the control of the mutant until he releases them, which is performed as a Free Action, or he loses concentration. This power can also be used to fling objects at great speeds and hurl them at targets with great effect.

Only one target within Medium range and line of sight can be controlled at any one time. The mutant must also maintain line of sight throughout the use of this power. Any object can only be controlled to an extent of Medium range, beyond which point it falls to the ground. Alternatively, it could be forcefully tossed to anywhere within Long range, dealing its Impact Damage to anything struck along its path; creatures may attempt to avoid a hurled object by taking a Dodge Response Action with a difficulty equal to half the Psionic Power Level used to manifest this power (rounding fractions up). The Psionic Power Level determines the size of the object that can be manipulated or the distance that may personally be jumped by the mutant.

MOMENTUM: Each point of Momentum from the test can be spent to provide one additional round of manipulation of the object beyond the mutant releasing Concentration.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Human sized or less. Personal jumps of twenty metres in height and fifty metres in length.

2: A small craft, space fighter, or shipping container. Personal jumps of fifty metres in height and one hundred metres in length.

3: A large armoured vehicle, such as a tank. Personal jumps of one hundred metres in height and two hundred metres in length.

4: A personnel carrier or small pleasure cruiser. Personal jumps of two hundred metres in height and five hundred metres in length.

5: A small cargo transport or military escort ship. Personal jumps of five hundred metres in height and one kilometre in length.

HANDS OF LAZARUS

TARGET: One creature, touched

DURATION: Instant

PREREQUISITE POWER: Bolster Mind and Regeneration or Revivify

BASE EFFECT: In the simplest of terms, the mutant can return the dead to a healthy and vibrant state of life. As powers go, this is one of the most visually awe-inspiring, as it allows the mutant to repair and reinvigorate even the most mutilated of corpses. The Hand of Lazarus is also a cleansing power in that those brought back are returned to full life without any stain of corruption to the body or soul. This power should be used wisely and sparsely, however, as it weakens the mutant severely in both a temporary and permanent sense. This drain upon the mutant is wholly dependent upon the state of the corpse; resurrecting someone that has been killed with a single gunshot to the heart is far easier than returning someone that has had their limbs torn off after also being riddled with a barrage of high calibre bullets.

Soon after a successful manifestation of this power, the corpse will be seen to twitch as a bright light radiates from their wounds. Flesh will be seen to knit together, broken bones will snap straight with a bone-grating crunch before fusing back to their original shape, bullets will be forced out of the body and even missing limbs will regrow. At the culmination of the effect, which requires but moments, the now living subject once again rises at the peak of their health. What is remembered from the other side differs widely; some do not remember dying and the time that they were dead is a black vortex, while others will have experienced their own personal heaven, hell, and everything in between. When returning a Heretic or similarly tainted person from the dead, all forms of Implants will also be seen to flee from the body, like a black, inky sludge that slithers and seeps into the ground.

In addition to describing the types of physical injuries that can be overcome, the Psionic Power Level is also used to determine the maximum length of time that is allowed to have passed in order for this power to be effective. The level of maiming that a corpse has suffered will induce an increase in the Repercussion range of the manifestation test, as described. The mutant must be able to lay their hands upon the body of the fallen before undertaking at least one minute of Concentration, although more severe injuries and timelines may require longer. All poisons and diseases that were affecting the target prior to their death are also removed. The only type of corpse currently known to have been resistant to this power are those of the endless teeming hordes of Undead Legionnaires; it would seem that the process of removing their Human Factor (see

the *Dark Legion Campaign*) removes an important link that would otherwise enable this power to resurrect the poor unfortunate. Aside from the process of becoming an Undead Legionnaire, this power may also not be used to restore a person to life that has succumbed to the natural process of aging.

Much like when attempting to use some of the other Major powers that require pitting oneself against immovable obstacles, mutants or Guardians do not benefit from a reduction in the difficulty level of the test due to the potency of their Guardian DNA when using this power. Additionally, following each successful manifestation of this power, the mutant suffers a number of points of Fatigue equal to the Psionic Power Level employed (note that this Fatigue may also be increased as the result of a Repercussion).

MOMENTUM: At Psionic Power Levels 1 to 3, each point of Momentum generated from the test can be used to increase the length of time that may have passed for the deceased by one hour, to a maximum increase in time of five hours. At Psionic Power Levels 4 and 5, each point of Momentum generated from the test can be used to increase the length of time that may have passed by one day.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: One hour. The body must be whole and complete.

2: Six hours. May be used on a body that has a single limb severed, though it must still be present. Increase the Repercussion range of the test by one if this power is required to reconnect a limb.

3: Twelve hours. May be used on a body that has one or two limbs severed, though they must still be present. Increase the Repercussion range of the test by one for each dismembered limb.

4: Twenty-four hours. Three or four of the body's limbs may be severed, but only one may be missing. Repercussion range of the test by one for each dismembered or missing limb.

5: One week. The body may be completely dismembered with one or two limbs missing. Increase the Repercussion range of the test by one for each dismembered or missing limb.

HIBERNATION

TARGET: One creature, touched

DURATION: Determined by Psionic Power Level

PREREQUISITE POWER: Regeneration and Void Adaptation

BASE EFFECT: Normally only used when the mutant is forced to enter the state as a means of survival or obfuscation, this power is used to place either himself or other willing creatures into a state of hibernation. Once in this state, the creature affected is virtually

impervious to harsh weather conditions, extremes of temperature, and can even survive whilst floating in the airless vacuum of space. The target does not need food or water and emits a low frequency psionic emanation that causes animals to ignore him as a food source or threat (a Daunting D3 Insight or Mysticism test will detect this supernatural emanation). While in this state, however, the creature is completely oblivious to his surroundings and seemingly appears to be deceased, although a Dire D4 Medicine or Treatment test will determine that the body is actually close to a state of suspended animation. Whilst in a state of hibernation, the body will also work to slowly heal all but the most grievous of injuries that are inflicted upon it.

Entering a state of hibernation requires one minute of uninterrupted Concentration. By placing his hand on a willing target, the mutant can also guide others into hibernation, which then provides them with exactly the same benefits as the mutant would enjoy. The mutant always sets the time of his awakening, which he can pinpoint down to the exact second. It is possible to awaken someone from hibernation early, but this requires several days of medical treatment that culminates in a Dire D4 Medicine or Treatment test. If successful, the hibernating character will begin to recover over several more days. Unsuccessful attempts may be retried once a week has passed. Each month of hibernation that has passed will cause the hibernating character to suffer one point of Fatigue, meaning that a hibernating character will likely be sluggish, hungry, and thirsty upon awakening; the longer the character has hibernated, the more time and nourishment will be needed to recuperate. Placing oneself in a position to be provided with sustenance whilst hibernating will prevent the character from suffering Fatigue.

Once successfully hibernating, the character benefits from the Inured to Cold, Inured to Heat, Inured to Pain, and Inured to Vacuum special abilities. Any poison or disease inflicted upon the character will have no effect until the period of hibernation ends, at which point the character must test as normal to determine if they are affected. Whilst hibernating, the character's body and mind will repair themselves at a rate of one physical Wound and one Mental Wound each per day. This form of regeneration will even repair Critical Wounds, although these must be healed before Serious Wounds, and Serious Wounds must be healed before Light as normal. The Psionic Power Level employed determines the maximum length of time that may be spent hibernating, although the mutant chooses when this effect will end within that time period. A state of hibernation cannot be ended early by the hibernating character.

MOMENTUM: At Psionic Power Levels 1 to 3, each point of Momentum generated from the test can be used to increase the length of hibernation by one month, to a maximum increase of four months. At Psionic Power Levels 4, each point of Momentum generated from the test can be used to increase the length of hibernation by one year, to a maximum increase of four years. At

Psionic Power Levels 5, each point of Momentum generated from the test can be used to increase the length of hibernation by one decade, to a maximum increase of four decades.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: One month.

2: Six months.

3: One year.

4: One decade.

5: One century.

INCORPOREAL

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Concentration or as determined by the Psionic Power Level.

PREREQUISITE POWER: Unseen

BASE EFFECT: Use of this power allows the mutant to become insubstantial. He appears semi-translucent once in this state, is unaffected by physical attacks, and is now able to pass through solid barriers. Unless manifesting a supernatural power, such as a Distortion Bolt for instance, the mutant is now himself unable to affect others with physical attacks. When used in conjunction with the Unseen power, the obvious benefits of both can be used to enter secret facilities and other secure areas.

This power is manifested with a duration of Concentration, although once this is relinquished or lost, it will remain in effect for a number of rounds determined by the Psionic Power Level. Alternatively, the mutant can release this power at any time through the use of a Restricted Action. A mutant that manifests this power gains the Incorporeal special ability and can ignore the first X damage inflicted by any hit, where X is equal to the Psionic Power Level that has been employed. At the higher levels of manifestation, there are few physical barriers that can prevent a mutant's passage, meaning that he can even sink through the ground or floor if he so wishes.

MOMENTUM: Each point of Momentum from the test may be spent to purchase an additional round of duration for when the mutant releases Concentration. At Psionic Power Levels 1 to 3, two points of Momentum from the test may be used to increase the damage that is ignored by one, to a maximum of four Momentum and an additional two points of damage. At Psionic Power Levels 4 and 5, Momentum from the test may be used to purchase additional depth of physical barrier that may be travelled through at a cost of one Momentum for each fifty centimetres.

PSIONIC POWER LEVELS

1: Three rounds.

2: Five rounds.

3: Eight rounds.

4: Twelve rounds. Physical barriers that are less than fifty centimetres deep no longer present a problem to the mutant, which enables him to pass between the rooms of most buildings and through the interiors of most vehicles unhindered. The mutant may make a Challenging D2 Mysticism or Willpower test each round in order to pass vertically between the floors of buildings, with the amount of Momentum generated by the test determining how many floors he may ascend/descend within that round.

5: Fifteen rounds. As above, although barriers that are less than one metre in depth no longer present a problem to the mutant. He may ascend or descend between floors at the rate described above. Alternatively, the mutant may completely submerge himself up to one metre below ground if he so wishes.

PROTECTIVE SPHERE

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Concentration, or the mutant's Mental Strength divided by four (rounding fractions down)

PREREQUISITE POWER: Pattern Pulse

BASE EFFECT: The mutant is able to generate a psionically charged sphere that can prevent high velocity physical attacks, such as bullets and explosions, and chemical or mystical attacks, such as fire or supernatural attacks that produce a physical effect, from passing through in either direction, but which does not hinder movements that possess a relatively low kinetic force from penetrating, such as someone walking or running into the screened area for example.

Attacks made by creatures that are inside of the limits of the Protective Sphere can be targeted against other creatures that are inside of the protection without hindrance, although attacks made from inside to out are also subjected to the sphere's effects. As it emanates directly from the mutant, the sphere will move with him. Normally invisible to the naked eye, it ripples and flashes brightly when hit by an attack.

Upon the first round of manifestation, the expansion of the sphere will also provide all of the effects of a Pattern Pulse, exactly as though the mutant had unleashed it for its pulse effects (see the Pattern Pulse Lesser power on page 42). The pulse effect has a Psionic Power Level equivalent to the Psionic Power Level used to manifest the Protective Sphere. Once at full expansion, which

requires the usual Standard Action for manifesting a power, the pulse will establish the sphere at the limits that are determined by its Psionic Power Level.

The sphere provides a Cover Soak whose value and area of effect are determined by the Psionic Power Level employed to manifest the power. By choosing to establish the sphere as though the Psionic Power Level being employed is one lower than that actually used, the mutant is able to increase the Cover Soak of the sphere by one. Employing this effect at Psionic Power Level 1 will effectively reduce the sphere's range to within Reach of the mutant. The sphere can be maintained indefinitely through Concentration, although it will also remain in effect for a number of rounds equal to the mutant's Mental Strength divided by four (rounding fractions down) should Concentration be lost, which could be either voluntarily or otherwise. Alternatively, it can be dismissed at any time through a Restricted Action.

MOMENTUM: Each point of Momentum generated from the test can be used to provide one additional round of duration to this power beyond the mutant losing or forsaking Concentration. Three points of Momentum from the test can be used to reinforce the sphere as a warded area (see the Pattern Pulse Lesser power on page 42). In this case, the sphere will still provide its pulse effects upon the round of manifestation, but will now also provide the ward effects of the Pattern Pulse power once established. Creatures of Darkness trapped within the sphere once it is established may act freely. Using the mutant's movement to force the ward against a creature of Darkness will allow the creature to freely breach the barrier with no ill effects.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Covers the mutant's immediate zone. Provides a Cover Soak of 2.

2: As above, plus one adjacent zone. Provides a Cover Soak of 3.

3: As Psionic Power Level 1, plus two adjacent zones, both of which must be on opposite side of the mutant's zone. Provides a Cover Soak of 4.

4: As Psionic Power Level 1, plus five adjacent zones, the entirety of which must form an unbroken rectangular shape. Provides a Cover Soak of 5.

5: Covers all zones out to and including Medium range, i.e. the mutant's zone plus all adjacent zones. Provides a Cover Soak of 6.

PSIONIC CONSTRUCTION

TARGET: One item within Reach

DURATION: Concentration for a duration stated under Psionic Power Level

PREREQUISITE POWER: Coax Technology

BASE EFFECT: The Ancients and the Guardians possessed the ability to construct everything from complex tools to spacecraft using their powers. Through Psionic Construction, a mutant is able to emulate their feats by building advanced structures and technological components from very simple raw materials. By reconstructing and purifying the materials at hand whilst simultaneously infusing psionic qualities, the mutant is able to actually take partial control of a substance at a molecular level. It becomes possible for him to break apart a metal alloy and divide its composite metals and materials, he would have little problem sculpting a computer into some form of energy weapon, and he would be able to reconstruct a car into a faster and more efficient vehicle that could potentially have the ability to fly. This power is time consuming, however, and often requires hours, days, or weeks to complete the restructuring of an item depending upon the material at hand and the level of complexity involved. A rudimentary understanding of technology and engineering is essential in order to benefit fully from this power.

The mutant must maintain Concentration throughout in order to finish the project, although it may be completed in a number of stages in order to allow for rest breaks, sleep etc. A simple tally of hours, days, or weeks would suffice to track progress. A successful Mechanics or Mysticism test is required at prominent points within the timescale of the project, which could be once each week at Psionic Power Level 3, or once each month at Psionic Power Level 5. It is recommended that only a single test be required at Psionic Power Levels 1 and 2. Each successful test means that progress is registered against the completion time, whilst each failure indicates that no real progress has been made, although the construction may still continue. When in full flow, the mutant's manifestation of this power will cause the parts to actually hover in the air under the suspension of a blue psionic field. The components will then break apart, reshape, and reconnect at his direction. He would not lift an entire vehicle, but would rather seek to dislodge the engine until it hovered above the car, allowing him to then rotate it very slowly whilst reconstructing it. This power can also be used to repair both mundane and psionically enhanced items.

In addition to deciding the complexity of the project that may be undertaken, the Psionic Power Level also determines the raw materials that may be required, although ultimate discretion lies with the GM. The Psionic Power Level also determines the length of time required to construct an object, although this should again be subject to GM discretion using these as guidelines, as small yet complex pieces would clearly require longer than simply modifying a blade, one of which might require the full hour, the other mere minutes.

MOMENTUM: At Psionic Power Levels 1 to 3, each point of Momentum from the test may be spent on reducing the required

construction time by one tenth (rounding fractions down). At Psionic Power Level 4, each point of Momentum spent from the test will instead reduce the construction time by one week, which is increased to two weeks at Psionic Power Level 5. Use of a Psionic Construction Core (see page 71) to reduce the construction time required will also reduce the effect of the Momentum spend to the relevant Psionic Power Level; for instance, reducing a Psionic Power Level 4 item's construction time to that of a Psionic Power Level 3 will also mean that each Momentum spent to further reduce the required time will shave only one tenth of the time off.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

- 1:** Simple, upgrading a pistol or similarly straight-forward weapon, or build such a device using the required parts. Able to turn a sword into a Psionic Edged Sword (see page 70). Requires one hour.
- 2:** Modest, build a simple device by distilling and re-shaping component parts using raw materials, or definitively alter the function of an existing construction. Turning a car into a hovercraft capable of navigating rough terrain. Requires twenty-four hours.
- 3:** Advanced, rebuild a television set or computer into an energy weapon, or provide a car with flight capabilities. Requires four to six weeks.
- 4:** Extremely advanced, create a vehicle from raw materials, reconstitute a tank into a space worthy craft, repurpose a vehicle into a missile or large bore anti-aircraft artillery piece. Requires three months.
- 5:** Extremely advanced and gargantuan, reconstructing a corporation carrier into a psionically enhanced vessel, crafting a Rift Stalker (although blueprints would be required). Requires one year.

PSIONIC BIO-SCULPTING

TARGET: One creature, touched

DURATION: Mutant's Mental Strength divided by two in days (rounding fractions down)

BASE EFFECT: Psionic Bio-Sculpting gifts the mutant with the ability to temporarily inflict drastic changes upon the body of a living organism using an entirely painless psionically imbued surgical procedure. The target's body can be reshaped in order to make him faster, stronger and hardier, any or all of which may be achieved through the re-sculpting of the body or the attachment of technological augmentations. The higher manifestations of this ability could ultimately be used to transform a person into an armed and armoured behemoth of war.

The target must be willing in order to receive the benefits of this procedure; it can never be forced upon an unwilling target. In the case of animals, such as dogs or horses perhaps, the mutant must

have not only gained the creature's trust, but it must also have a friendly disposition towards him in order for this power to be effective. Sculpting the target's body requires thirty minutes of Concentration for each Psionic Power Level involved in the procedure, the process of which also demands the patient remain still throughout. Any alterations made are temporary in nature and only remain for the duration listed above, following which the target's body painlessly returns to normal; any technology fused with the subject will also be harmlessly rejected by the body until it tumbles free.

The Psionic Power Level denotes how much of a change may be affected upon a creature. A successful Mysticism or Medicine test made at the standard difficulty to manifest a power is required to complete the process effectively. Once one successful use of this power has been employed upon a target, no further alterations can be made until the effects have ended.

MOMENTUM: Two points of Momentum from the test may be spent to grant an additional Supernatural (1) rating to a physical attribute, to a maximum of four Momentum and two additional Supernatural (1) ratings increases. No single attribute may possess a Supernatural rating above four. If the mutant has instead chosen to provide natural armour, or the Psionic Power Level is high enough to also include natural armour with its effects, two points of Momentum from the test may also be spent to increase the natural armour Soak in all locations by one.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Grant the target a Supernatural (1) rating to one of its physical attributes, or provide it with a natural armour that grants a Soak of one to all locations.

2: Grant two of the target's physical attributes a Supernatural (1) rating, or one physical attribute a Supernatural (2) rating. Alternatively, provide the target with a natural armour that grants a Soak of two to all locations.

3: Grant all four of the target's physical attributes a Supernatural (1) rating, or two physical attributes a Supernatural (2) rating, or one physical attribute a Supernatural (3) rating and one physical attribute with a Supernatural (1) rating. Alternatively, provide the target with a natural armour that grants a Soak of three to all locations.

4: Grant two of the target's physical attributes a Supernatural (2) rating and the remaining two physical attributes with a Supernatural (1) rating. The target also benefits from a natural armour that grants a Soak of two to all locations and gains the Monstrous Creature special ability. Additionally, man-made armours may now be fused with the target's body in order to increase the amount of Soak at up to four hit locations, which combines the Soak that the armour provides with the natural Soak that this Psionic Power Level provides. Further, a single weapon that is comparative to an assault

rifle in size may now be grafted onto both of the target's arms, which prevents the Disarm Momentum spend being used against the grafted weapons.

5: Grant one of the target's physical attributes a Supernatural (3) rating and the remaining physical attributes a Supernatural (2) rating. The target also benefits from a natural armour that grants a Soak of three to all locations and gains the Monstrous Creature special ability. Additionally, man-made armours may now be fused with the target's body in order to increase the amount of Soak at all hit locations, which combines the Soak that the armour provides with the natural Soak that this Psionic Power Level provides. Further, up to two weapons may now be grafted onto both of the target's arms, one of which can be comparative to an assault rifle in size and one of which can be as large as an assault cannon. In addition to allowing the mutant to perform the Brace action as a Restricted Action with each weapon, as opposed to a Standard Action, grafting the weapons to the target's arms will also prevent the Disarm Momentum spend from being used against them.

PURGE SYMMETRY

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Concentration, or as described under Psionic Power Level

PREREQUISITE POWER: Pattern Pulse

BASE EFFECT: The Guardians taught themselves psionic techniques that could be used to quell the influence of the Dark Symmetry, the benefits of which they ensured would be passed on through the Genetic Pilgrimage. When manifested, this power creates a sphere of psionic energy around the mutant that will cause the servants of the Dark Symmetry and many of their effects to lose much of their potency; Dark Gifts, Symmetry powered technology and creatures of the Dark Legion will have a much harder time functioning within the sphere. Servants of Darkness that stand outside of the sphere and try to direct their powers against targets within will also experience a diminishment of the effects. The sphere is completely invisible, though easily detectable by corrupted beings, as they will feel ill at ease and weakened within it. Conversely, Brotherhood Art wielders or those who are sensitive to supernatural powers may detect something abnormal when within the shield's envelope, although this requires a Challenging D2 Mysticism or Daunting D4 Insight test. Probing the area reveals it to be refreshingly free of taint.

The sphere has a radius that effectively encompasses the zone that the mutant currently occupies. The sphere is also anchored to the mutant and therefore moves when he moves. The Psionic Power Levels decide the effects of the sphere upon corrupted creatures and their powers. The sphere can be dismissed at any time through a Restricted Action.

MOMENTUM: Each point of Momentum generated from the test can be used to provide one additional round of duration to this power beyond the mutant losing or forsaking Concentration. Two points of Momentum from the test can be used to infuse the shield with the pulse effect of Pattern Pulse (see page 42) on the first round that it is manifested.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Unless they succeed at an opposed Willpower test against the mutant's Mysticism or Willpower, each tainted creature within the sphere's envelope must increase the Repercussion range of their skill tests and powers by two. The shield remains in effect for two rounds once Concentration is lost.

2: As above, plus the difficulty of tests to use Dark Gifts or any related skill tests to employ Dark Symmetry infused technology are increased by one when used by a tainted creature that is either within the sphere's limits or directing an attack or effect against a target that is within the sphere. The shield remains in effect for five rounds once Concentration is lost.

3: As above, but the Repercussion range increase is now three and tests to use Dark Gifts or skills used to employ Dark Symmetry infused technology now suffer from a difficulty increase of two. The shield remains in effect for eight rounds once Concentration is lost.

4: As above, plus any power or effect employed by a tainted creature that requires the expenditure of Dark Symmetry points has its cost increased by one. The shield remains in effect for ten rounds once Concentration is lost.

5: As above, but the Repercussion range is now increased to four and tests to use Dark Gifts or skills used to employ Dark Symmetry infused technology now suffer from a difficulty increase of three. Additionally, any power or effect employed by a tainted creature that requires the expenditure of Dark Symmetry points has its cost doubled. The shield remains in effect for fifteen rounds once Concentration is lost.

PURIFY DARK TECHNOLOGY

TARGET: One item, touched

DURATION: Instant

PREREQUISITE POWER: Coax Technology and Pattern Pulse

BASE EFFECT: Using this gift, the mutant is able to not only rid human technology of Corruption, he can also completely purify a piece of technology that has been crafted by the Dark Symmetry of all the malicious, unfettered taint that has been used to empower it. The function of a purified item of dark technology will differ and is ultimately at the GMs discretion; some items will not work at all

as most of their functionality is driven by the Dark Symmetry, whilst others will function with a reduced effectiveness. A purified Kratach, for example, would perhaps function like a similar type of human weapon once purified. Upon manifesting this power, a bright blue light can be seen to stream from the mutant's hands and enter the object. As the purifying light enters the item, dark ribbons of energy can clearly be seen to be leaving the object before dissipating with a low tortured screech.

Handling a piece of technology in order to purify it will not expose the mutant to the risk of Corruption. In addition to providing the length of time required, the Psionic Power Level also determines the size limits of the item that maybe purified, though particularly infused items may require a higher level use of this power, as the more powerful or larger an object is, the more severely infused with Dark Symmetry it tends to be. Concentration must be maintained throughout the purification, or else the entire process must be restarted.

This power cannot be used to affect items of Dark Technology that form part of a living creature, such as an Implant for instance; the Cleanse Soul power would instead be required for this. Using this power on a creature that is almost entirely composed of Dark Technology however, such as a Praetorian Stalker for instance, would effectively destroy it at the power's culmination; although good luck to those mutants who would wish to keep one of something of that power and magnitude immobile for the length of time required to accomplish this!

MOMENTUM: Two points of Momentum from the test may be spent in order to reduce the amount of time required as though employing a Psionic Power Level one step below that which is actually being employed. Spending two Momentum whilst manifesting this power at Psionic Level 4 would reduce the time required to five minutes for instance. This Momentum spend may only be employed once each test. At Psionic Power Levels 1 to 3, two points of Momentum may be spent in order to cleanse one additional similarly sized item as part of the same test, to a maximum of four Momentum and two additional items.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: A pistol, one-handed weapon, or item of similar size. Requires thirty seconds to purify.

2: An assault rifle, unwieldy weapon, or item of similar size. Requires one minute to purify.

3: An assault cannon or rocket launcher, something similar in size to a television. Requires five minutes to purify.

4: A car or similar sized vehicle or item. Requires ten minutes to purify.

5: A tank or similar sized vehicle or item. Requires thirty minutes to purify.

REPEL

TARGET: Self

DURATION: As determined by the Psionic Power Level

PREREQUISITE POWER: Unseen

BASE EFFECT: The mutant can use this power to provide resistance to the effects of any and all mystical powers, regardless of their source. The power is personal to the mutant at lower levels of manifestation, although it is possible to extend the protection afforded to a number of other people at higher levels. Like most of the other psionic powers that provide some sort of barrier, the effects of this power are invisible to the naked eye, although certain powers will highlight the fact that a shield is in place, such as a flame attack that licks the edges of the barrier for instance.

In addition to determining the duration and potential area of effect, the Psionic Power Level also determines how difficult it becomes to direct powers against the mutant; increase the difficulty step of supernatural powers that target anyone protected by this power by an amount equal to the Psionic Power Level employed to manifest this power, to a maximum increase of Epic D5. Any surplus increase in difficulty that would take the required difficulty beyond Epic D5 is instead translated into a number of additional Momentum that must be generated on the caster's test in order for the power to affect the target. Only powers that directly target the mutant—or those within the sphere—are affected by the shield; A Brotherhood caster directing a Strike spell at the mutant would be subjected to the full effects of the barrier for instance, whereas a different caster using the Swiftess spell on themselves within the sphere would not be subject to its effects.

MOMENTUM: Each point of Momentum from the test can be used to purchase one additional round of duration, to a maximum of five Momentum and five rounds of duration.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: The power affects the mutant only. The sphere has a duration of three rounds.

2: The power has an effective range of Reach. This allows the mutant to extend the protection of the power to anyone that he is in direct contact with, although this physical contact must be maintained for the duration of the powers effects. For those that lose contact with the mutant, the power will remain in effect until the start of the mutant's next turn. The sphere has a duration of five rounds.

3: In addition to the mutant, the shield can be extended to encompass up to three other characters that are within Reach of the mutant without the need for physical contact. The sphere has a duration of eight rounds.

4: The shield can be extended to encompass the mutant's current zone and now has a duration of twelve rounds.

5: The shield can be extended to encompass the mutant's current zone plus one adjacent zone and now has a duration of fifteen rounds.

TELEPATHY

TARGET: One intelligent creature, see below

DURATION: See below

PREREQUISITE POWER: Guardian Link

BASE EFFECT: When manifesting this power, the mutant is able to not only communicate with others telepathically, but is also capable of forcing his way into the furthest recesses of the target's mind in order to lay their subconscious bare and scour their darkest secrets. Telepathy is a powerful tool that can be used in a number of ways, the simplest of which would be using the power to whisper directly into a target's mind, whilst the more complex uses can be utilised to scan for specific thoughts and mental patterns amongst a sea of people in order to home in on one particular individual.

Holding a mental conversation with a target allows the character to freely communicate with the mutant by simply thinking the words that they would usually speak. Mental communication of this form cannot usually be prevented unless the target possesses some supernatural means of doing so. Forcefully entering someone mind requires an opposed Mysticism or Willpower test versus the target's Mysticism or Willpower. The Psionic Power Level employed determines exactly how much of the target's mind is laid bare or open to manipulation.

MOMENTUM: At each Psionic Power Level beyond 1, two points of Momentum from the test may be used to extend the range of any of the effects by one increment, to a maximum of Long range. This Momentum spend may only be used once per test.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

1: Communicate with a target within line of sight at any range.

2: Communicate with a target that is outside of line of sight but within Medium range, or forcefully extract information from a target that is within line of sight and Close range. Alternatively, hypnotise a target within Reach, who then becomes docile and blank-faced whilst this Psionic Power level is in effect. Extend the duration of the power to Concentration. Anyone attempting a Persuade test against the target whilst under the effects of this power level will gain two automatic successes. The target cannot be persuaded to do anything that would cause him to come to harm. The target remembers everything that happens whilst under the effects of this power, but will struggle to specifically recall the fact that they

were hypnotised until a number of days equal to the Psionic Power Level used to employ this power level have passed.

3: Communicate with a target that is outside of line of sight but within Long range, or forcefully extract information from a target that is within line of sight and Medium range. Alternatively, the hypnosis effect described above can now be employed by the mutant to implant a new memory or force the target to believe something that is not true. Use of this power level requires line of sight and an opposed test as described above. If the mutant is successful, the target's belief is total, but fragile—as soon as the target encounters something that contradicts this new belief or memory, it is revealed as a lie. Subtle suggestions, or ones that cannot easily be disproven, can last indefinitely, whilst obvious falsehoods may last minutes or less before the truth is revealed.

4: As Psionic Power Level 3, although the hypnosis effect can now be employed against a target that is within line of sight and Medium range. Additionally, the thoughts and memories of the target can be reshaped or altered. Alterations that span a relatively short time span, such as changing a couple of hours' worth of memories, will require a couple of minutes of Concentration, whereas changing significant parts of someone's entire life span can take several hours. Each such alteration of a memory requires an opposed roll as described above. Altering a memory allows him to add or change an important person, object, or location within that memory, alter other significant details such as the time of day or year the event occurred, or add noteworthy details. Erasing a memory completely expunges it from the target's mind, never to be recovered. The effects of this power will fade after a number of weeks equal to the Psionic Power Level used to employ the power. Alternatively, this Psionic Power Level can be used to forcefully extract information from a target that is outside of line of sight but within Close range.

5: As Psionic Power Level 4, although the hypnosis effect can now be employed against a target that is within line of sight and Long range. Additionally, any changes that are enforced are now permanent. Alternatively, this Psionic Power Level can be used to forcefully extract information from a target that is outside of line of sight but within Medium range.

THE HEAVY HEART

Jack formed a jagged, sharp blade from one of his dark tattoos. The security guard had questioned his ID card and was just about to call in and Jack simply didn't have time for this. With a powerful thrust he skewered the guard. The blade cut through the flak jacket like butter, slashed open the abdominal aorta and severed the spine of the man. Jack allowed the body to drop to the floor, holding on to it so it slumped slowly down. He took the keys, opened the door and dragged the body inside. The blood wouldn't show on the dirty night street outside and it would be another fifteen minutes until the now dead guard was supposed to call in. If this had been a normal hospital, Jack could have waltzed right in, but this particular hospital was one funded by the Brotherhood. Though they didn't have Mystics and Inquisitors on site, the front entrance level was crawling with Missionaries. He didn't want to risk it.

He stood in the back emergency stairwell and checked his maintenance uniform. It was free from any blood stains. Jack had worked hard for years in the cult of Semai. He wasn't a typical corrupting power monger like many of his brothers and sisters. He was an assassin on his way to becoming a Reaper. Jack was killing his way to the top on job at a time. And now he had another job. To kill Jessica Nakamura. He only knew her name, floor, the room that she was in and that she had been taken to the hospital three days ago after being injured in a car accident. This was more information than he had received on some of his other jobs. Once, he had a photo, an address to a busy street, and a time. No other instructions than that the guy had to die. Jack had spotted him, bumped into him, and given him a small dose of a nasty poison. Thirty seconds later the mark had been flopping around on the ground convulsing so hard that he spat up blood and parts of his organs. Messy but effective.

Jack kneeled down and opened his little red tool box. In it he had hid the parts for his weapon. He quickly assembled the silenced pistol. Beyond the sparse info concerning the target, he had been instructed not to leave any clear signs of Dark Legion involvement. The wound on the guard could just as well have been made by a punisher sword or any other armour piercing blade and the gun was a stolen Piranha Handgun, a throwaway that he would leave on the scene. Jack hid the gun in his overalls and jogged up the stairs.

He opened the door on the seventh floor and calmly walked down the corridor as if he belonged. He was good at it, his stride and confidence paired with his disguises usually allowed him to go virtually unnoticed. He was impressed that the rent-a-cop he just killed had been so suspicious. Jack continued down the mostly empty corridor. It was the nightshift, and this part of Luna City didn't really put high pressure on the ER. His eyes slid across the room numbers on the doors. Halfway down the corridor he found room 718. He opened the door slowly, slid inside, and closed it behind him.

The light was soft, almost dark in the room. Jack locked the door and took out his gun, secured the silencer, and slowly moved towards the bed. He turned to the target, levelled the gun, and froze. Jessica was no more than ten years old, sleeping peacefully. She had long black hair and finely chiselled features. Jack had killed children before, they had never been his primary target, but they had been killed as collateral damage during two of his missions. He tried not to think about it, it was nothing he liked. He had never asked himself if he would kill a child if ordered to do so. But even if he would, this situation would be different.

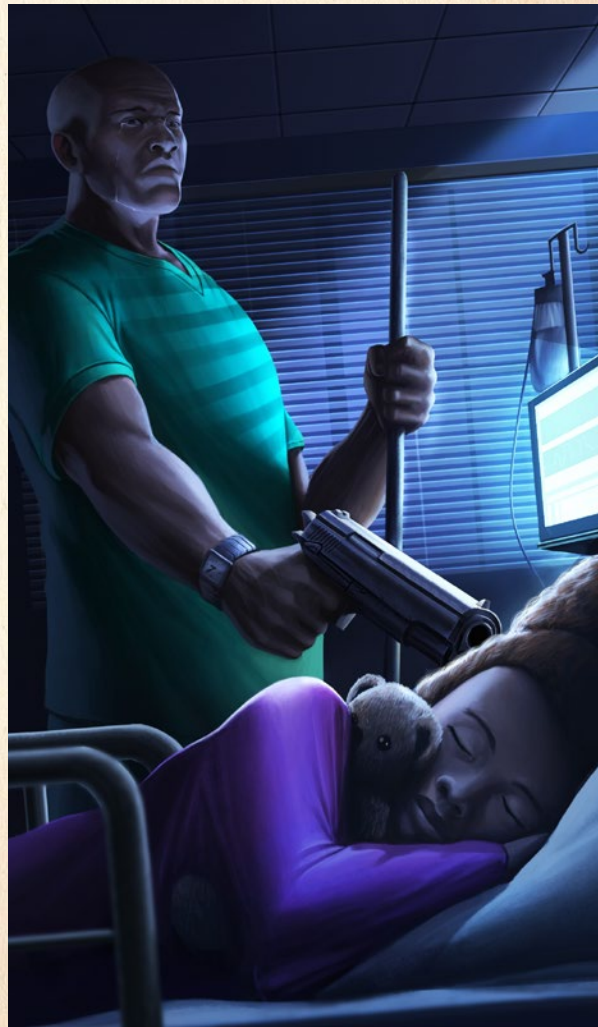
Jack had been a heretic for five years. His old life felt so far away, eons ago. He had changed so much during those few years. He saw horrors and wonders and was bestowed with powers beyond the grasp of humans. He did things that he wasn't proud of, but his faith in his lord Semai had been absolute. Mankind had no choice than to bow under the rule of the Dark Legion and it was to this end that he served. But now he felt his heart sink, his faith in his masters shook in their foundation.

As he stood there, his gun pointed at the sleeping child, he realised who she was. His daughter. He hadn't seen her since he left his old life for the glory of Semai and that had been five years ago. She was older, but it was her. She had his eyes and her mother's chin. Jack's family name was Glendale and his daughter had been Jessica Glendale. His wife must have remarried, changed her last name.

For a couple of seconds Jack was nearly frozen, but soon he noticed himself moving towards her. He still aimed the gun at her but did so more haphazardly. Now he stood but an arm's length from her. She was beautiful. He remembered how happy he had been when she was born, seeing her first steps, hearing her first words. He felt burning tears in his eyes. He had all but forgotten about her, his mind consumed with the wish to serve his dark masters. It had all seemed so clear back then. Now, when his mind played through it all with critical eyes, it all had been a snowball effect of events. He had been a cop who had taken some money on the side in order to feed his family. Through a series of bad choices, he ended up at the mercy of ruthless organised crime and the cult had pulled him out, given him the opportunity to do something that mattered. Why did they want her dead? This was only the second time he had ever asked himself why a mark had been branded for death. The first was the first time he had been asked to assassinate a threat.

He stroked her hair and smiled, but, oddly enough, he still had the gun aimed at his daughter's head. Mankind had to submit

to the darkness, it was the only viable alternative. There was no recourse, no real alternative, yet his tears streamed and he felt his heart torn between what he once was, and what he had become. The dark whispers in his soul mixed with memories of love. He stroked her hair again and cocked the hammer of his gun. He looked out the window at the still winter night. Did mankind have a chance on its own to rid themselves of the darkness, or was it all hopeless? Was joining the Apostles the one and true and right choice? Jack had always thought that his defining moment of loyalty, the ultimate life choice, had been made the day he swore fealty to Semai, but now he wasn't sure. Maybe his defining moment in life had been the birth of his daughter? He stood perfectly still, one gentle loving hand on his daughter's head and the other locked around the grip of his gun. This, he now understood, was his defining moment.



ENHANCED TECHNOLOGY

THE TECHNOLOGY OF TWO WORLDS

Pure Guardian technology is quite different from anything used by mankind, it uses psionic energy to act as a catalyst and transformer for other types of energy. For example, a psionic core in a ship has the capacity to transform electrical energy and combine it with advanced magnetism in order to provide a burning form of propulsion energy. This can then propel a ship through space and, in most cases, keep it airborne within an atmosphere. Their weapons also operate from conventional energy sources combined with psionic energy. Pure Guardian technology, however, is quite rare and will most often only be found in hidden caches that have been collecting dust for millennia. All Guardian technology also comes complete with a genetic safety catch. Only those with a certain amount of Guardian DNA are able to activate them. The percentage needed to activate the weapons varies and often depends upon the comparative power of the weapon. In many cases, the technology is very different in appearance from anything that a human could produce, as psionic construction can utilise all manner of materials such as rocks and crystals, which are then used to create all manner of seamless organic shapes. Human/Guardian hybrid technology, though still rare, is slightly more common. Mutants and Guardians alike can use the power Psionic Construction to create hybrid technology.

USING ANCIENT TECHNOLOGY

The weapons listed below have two special designations: Type and Lock. Type will simply state Guardian or Hybrid. Guardian indicates that it is a rare piece of gear created by the Ancients and the Guardians hundreds of thousands of years ago, whereas Hybrid will indicate that it has been constructed more recently using materials that are available to humanity that have been merged with psionic material. Though it would be plausible to create full Guardian technology using Psionic Construction, it should be considered near impossible as almost all of the knowledge pertaining to their construction has been lost throughout the ages. Also, it should be taken into account that all original Guardian technology from the time before is larger in size; a fully-fledged Guardian is about two and a half metres tall and requires gear that has been designed to fit their size.

Lock is a statement of the percentage of Guardian DNA that must be active within the mutant in order for the weapon or item of equipment to function. None of the following technology can be

used by creatures of the Dark Legion, mutation or no mutation, Lock or no Lock. Heretics are capable of using gear that is not Locked, but only if they do not possess more than three Implants or Enhancements (see the *Dark Soul Sourcebook*), as this pollutes the character's genetic code to the point that it is no longer Guardian-laced or even human.

TECHNOLOGICAL INFLUENCE OF THE GUARDIANS

Throughout history, the Guardians have always watched over mankind. This also extends to the technology that has been developed by humanity; the massive armoured vehicles, the large bore weapons and the many other types of defensive and offensive technology that have been developed and deployed throughout the millennia as a result of this. The Guardians have been preparing mankind for the ultimate war with the Dark Legion. One of the most obvious influences can be witnessed in the forms of the Mishima Demon Hunter and the Brotherhood Judicator armour, which both sport an extra pair of mechanical arms. Not only have these suits been developed to be effective, they have also been given form as a symbol of their influence.

ALIEN ATTRIBUTES

The technologies that the Ancients and Guardians developed in order to turn the tide of the war introduce several new qualities that are prevalent throughout the equipment that follows:

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL

The Psionic Power Level of an item or vehicle represents the level of investment that is required when using the Psionic Construction power to create it (see page 59).

COST

Obtaining any of the items presented within this book should be the focus of a number of adventures for player characters, as they are either extremely powerful and ancient relics, or require the use of powers that are largely still misunderstood and feared. They are also covered by the Brotherhood's Edicts of Thoth and are therefore very much considered to be banned technology.

The sad fact of the matter is, however, that cold hard cash can often obtain the unobtainable. With this in mind, the items presented below have been provided with a cost and Restriction rating. That said, they are extremely difficult to obtain through the use of material wealth, hence their significantly higher associated cost. In addition to their exorbitant cost, any item of Guardian or mutant construction is also considered to be illegal; do not reduce any items Restriction rating due to this however, it is already factored in.

RELIABILITY

Items of Guardian or Ancient manufacture possess a Reliability of G, which indicates a general immunity to corrupting influences, though they may still malfunction due to reasons mundane or relating to the internal psionic construction of the device. Some of these items are even anathema to creatures of Darkness, although this will be noted within their description.

WEAPON QUALITIES

PSIONIC

A ranged weapon with the Psionic quality does not use conventional ammunition, but instead draws upon the inner psychic reserves of the vehicle or wielder. A weapon, or any of the effects generated by its function, are considered to be supernatural in origin. Additionally, weapons that possess this quality do not require Reloads, though weapons that are capable of doing so may still only be used to 'let rip' a certain number of times during each combat scene before over-heating or destabilizing in some way, which then renders them inoperable until a sufficient amount of time has passed.

The character using the weapon must attempt an Average D1 Mysticism or Willpower test following the first instance of 'letting rip' or firing a weapon with the Munition quality during each combat scene, with success allowing him to continue to use the weapon unhindered—although a Repercussion on this test may still mean otherwise. On failure, the weapon overheats or destabilizes in some fashion and may not be used again for the remainder of the current combat scene; the delicate internal psychic balance of the weapon requires an amount of time to re-align and reconstitute itself. The difficulty of the test will increase by one step for each time that the weapon is used to 'let rip' during the current combat scene. Two points of Momentum from each test may be used to reduce the difficulty of the subsequent 'let rip' test by one step, to a minimum of Average D1, although this Momentum spend may only be used once for each successful test; four points of Momentum could not be used to reduce the subsequent test by two steps for instance.

Weapons that have destabilised or overheated remain inoperable for a number of scenes equal to the level of difficulty of the Mysticism or Willpower test that lead to failure, or for twenty-four hours, whichever occurs first. The number of scenes that the weapon

remains unavailable for is inclusive of the current scene, so that failing the test at Average D1 difficulty will only render the weapon inoperable for that scene, failing at Challenging D2 will preclude its use for that scene plus one more, and so on. Mutants, or indeed Guardians, that possess Psionic Construction may attempt to use this power in order to allow the weapon's use ahead of time following overheating or destabilization, with the difficulty of the Psionic Construction test required to achieve this equal to the Psionic Power Level of the weapon. On success, the weapon may be used immediately, whilst on failure, the mutant must wait for one scene to pass before attempting this test again.

ARMS AND ARMOUR OF THE ANCIENTS

GUARDIAN ARMOUR

TYPE: GUARDIAN **LOCK: 70%**
PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 4

Generally, the Ancients had no use for the different kinds of armour that humans utilise; as their society was non-violent, they had no need for light armour such as Kevlar or other composites. Their protectors, the Guardians, were also engineered to possess a natural armour that is tougher than equivalent light armours of human construction. The Guardian therefore utilise only a single type of sleek and hardy full body armour that enhances the physical, psychological, and psionic powers of the wearer. Guardian armour is also fully customizable and will often vary between the wearers, but all are built around a standard core. Usually adapted for four-armed wearers, it is possible to configure the extra pair of arms to be fully robotic. The different size and leg configurations are of no consequence so long as the mutant displays the requisite amount of Guardian DNA as the armour will adapt itself to fit whoever dons it, matching their body and anatomy for a perfect fit. The armour uses an array of sophisticated scanners, robotics, and psionic enhancers that resonate, amplify, and feed back in order to augment the user. The armour becomes an extension of, and is somewhat powered by, the wearer's body, although this drain on bioelectrical energy subsequently induces a voracious appetite in the user.

GUARDIAN ARMOUR

FACTION	SOAK			
	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Guardian	5	5	5	5
ENCUMBRANCE	RELIABILITY	RESTRICTION	COST	
10	G	5	60	

BIOELECTRICAL FEEDBACK AUGMENTATIONS: Guardian armour is constructed with physical and psionic components that draw upon, amplify, and feedback the psychic and bioelectrical reservoirs of the wearer. When worn by someone with sufficient Guardian DNA, the suit provides the wearer with the following

ENHANCED TECHNOLOGY

special abilities: Night Vision, Supernatural Agility 1, Supernatural Awareness 1, Supernatural Mental Strength 2, and Supernatural Strength 2. The materials used to construct the armour also work to reduce the difficulty level required to make use of a mutant power by one, which may eliminate the need for a test.

GUARDIAN COMBAT ENHANCEMENT: Designed to outfit the user with multiple forms of weaponry, the wearer is still limited to only attack with one weapon at a time. If the character uses the Swift Strike Momentum spend, it only costs one Momentum (as normal for Dual Wielding), but the character may use that spend up to three times (for a total of four attacks, one with each weapon).



LESSER GUARDIAN ARMOUR

TYPE: HYBRID

LOCK: 30%

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 3

Basically a less powerful version of Guardian Armour, Lesser Guardian Armour has been built using Psionic Construction and is designed to be worn by mutated humans. Also possessing four arms, the extra pair is instead robotic on this armour as most mutants do not possess permanent extra limbs, although they can be modified with two small plates consisting of an elastic ballistic compound that will allow a mutant to extend their vestigial arms should they possess them. This effectively grants the wearer six arms for a short while; although the arms will be incapable of wielding weapons due to the nature of the plates, they may be used to gain extra purchase or an enhanced grip. Less powerful than its counterpart, Lesser Guardian Armour still provides significant enhancements to the wearer, although this also comes at the cost of a significantly increased appetite.

GUARDIAN ARMOUR

FACTION	SOAK			
	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Mutant	4	4	4	4
ENCUMBRANCE	RELIABILITY	RESTRICTION	COST	
12	4	5	45	

BIOELECTRICAL FEEDBACK AUGMENTATIONS: Similar in construction to Guardian Armour, although less refined, Lesser Guardian Armour provides the wearer with one bonus Momentum on all Agility and Awareness based tests. It also grants the following special abilities whilst worn: Night Vision, Supernatural Mental Strength 1, and Supernatural Strength 1.

GUARDIAN COMBAT ENHANCEMENT: Designed to outfit the user with multiple forms of weaponry, the wearer is still limited to only attack with one weapon at a time. If the character uses the Swift Strike Momentum spend, it only costs one Momentum (as normal for Dual Wielding), but the character may use that spend up to three times (for a total of four attacks, one with each weapon).

PSIONIC PLASMA GAUNTLET

TYPE: GUARDIAN

LOCK: 70%

RESTRICTION: 5

COST: 25

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 3

This gauntlet is fastened at the top of the forearm, which leaves the hand of the arm free of restrictions. The weapon fires a focused blast of blue plasma that contains a strong kinetic force. Capable of toppling large enemies and reaching



temperatures hotter than burning thermite, this is a very powerful weapon that benefits from next to no recoil as the kinetic force of the plasma is discharged a nanosecond or so after the psionic energy has left the weapon. Initially developed as a light sidearm, it packs an enormous punch that is entirely capable of taking down lighter vehicles, such as armoured cars.

PSIONIC PLASMA GAUNTLET

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
M	2+↑4	Semi-Automatic	2	1H	G
QUALITIES	Ammo (Blast [Close], Psionic, Vicious 1), Incendiary 2, Knockdown, Pious 1				

CUTTER

TYPE: HYBRID

RESTRICTION: 5

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 2

It is possible to construct a cutter from scratch, but often some form of laser or high powered blow torch is used as the basis. Most appear to be a large handgun with a wide, flat barrel that releases an arc of superheated gases that are held together by psionic magnetism. When directed at a target, the arc does not slam into them like a bullet would, but instead slices through like a magma-infused razor's edge. The cutter can carve through heavy armour or even take a man's leg clean off, instantly cauterizing the wound as it does so. It can even be used to drill through several enemies, which is often employed to stifle frontal attacks.

LOCK: 20%

COST: 20

CUTTER

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
C	1+↑4	Semi-Automatic	2	Unbalanced	4
QUALITIES	Ammo (Psionic, Torrent), Armour Piercing 1, Dreadful, Pious 1, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1				

CUTTER'S ARC: The cutter's tightly focussed beam cannot affect targets beyond Close range, although 'letting rip' with the weapon provides it with the Ammo (Psionic, Torrent) quality that effectively extends this range to Medium for the attack.

ENERGY ROIL CARBINE

TYPE: GUARDIAN

RESTRICTION: 5

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 3

The Roil Carbine is a large, assault rifle style weapon that is apparently constructed from grey stone fused with metal and glass, the whole of which provides an overall streamlined and ergonomic look. Large and extremely powerful, it is capable of striking down entire squads of enemies. When fired, it releases a wave of kinetic force that looks like a wave of superheated air. There are no projectiles involved, rather the kinetic blast targets soft tissues to deliver a powerful hydrostatic shock. Able to ignore armour and bones, those lucky enough to survive the blast will be left in extreme pain, whilst those not so fortunate will have experienced the liquefaction of their soft tissues and internal organs. The wave can be focussed on one creature or empowered to sweep across a five metre facing.

LOCK: 50%

COST: 25

ENERGY ROIL CARBINE

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
C	2+↑5	Semi-Automatic	2	Unwieldy	G
QUALITIES	Ammo (Blast [Close], Psionic), Dreadful, Knockdown, Pious 1, Spread 1, Vicious 1				

SUPERHEATED HYDROSTATIC DEATH RAY: Unless interrupted by an energy shield, which could be either supernatural or technological in nature, the energy wave is able to pass through walls, hulls, and other physical barriers in its search for soft organic tissue. The blast from an Energy Roil Carbine completely ignores both Armour and Cover Soak; cowering behind cover, however, will negate the Knockdown quality of the energy wave. Thankfully, an Energy Roil Carbine's effective range is limited to Close, as the energy wave rapidly loses effectiveness beyond this.

STASIS GRENADE

TYPE: HYBRID **LOCK: 30%**
RESTRICTION: 5 **COST: 25**
PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 3

Mainly constructed from raw materials such as natural crystals, this device also incorporates a few mechanical and electrical components. The blast of the grenade is not designed to cause considerable direct damage, but instead seeks to envelop those that are caught inside within a temporal stasis field that slows them down to a fraction of their original speed. The slowdown effects everything that is within the field at the instant that the grenade detonates, so that even the bullets fired from an affected gun will be significantly slowed. The detonation field covers a sphere with a radius of roughly five metres. At least fifty percent of a target is required to be within the radius in order for it to be affected. The stasis field will even effect gravity by slowing the fall of targets. The blast makes the air ripple for a split second, whilst the effects lasts for two rounds.

STASIS GRENADE

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
C	↑3	Munition	1	1H	G
QUALITIES	Blast [Close], Dreadful, Knockdown				

TEMPORAL LETHARGY: Anyone caught within the blast radius must succeed at a Challenging D2 Mysticism or Daunting D3 Willpower test to avoid the temporal effects of the grenade. On success, the target is free to act normally. On failure, the target must perform Free and Restricted Actions as a Standard Action during his turn, which effectively limits the character to a single action each round. Actions that themselves were a Standard Action before the stasis effect now require two Dark Symmetry points to use and have their difficulty increased by two steps. Further, Response Actions taken by the character now cost double the amount of Dark Symmetry points and have their difficulty increased by two steps, whilst any Response Actions that would normally be free for the character

now cost two Dark Symmetry points. The temporal effects only cause interference between affected and unaffected individuals. For instance, two characters that have been affected by the Stasis grenade will be able to react to and act against each other normally, as will two unaffected characters that are acting against each other. The temporal effects persist for two rounds.

BLAST HARNESS

TYPE: HYBRID/GUARDIAN **LOCK: 40%**
RESTRICTION: 5 **COST: 20**
PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 2

The blast harness, which is worn as a waist belt, is more self-defence mechanism than a weapon. It generates a wave of kinetic energy that extends approximately five metres in every direction. Those that are struck by the expanding energy risk being stunned and knocked down, which provides the user with a moment of time to escape or adapt to a sudden attack. It does, however, need some time to recharge after it has been used.

BLAST HARNESS

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
C	1+↑3	Munition	1	1H	4
QUALITIES	Blast [Close], Knockdown, Nonlethal, Psionic, Stun				

PSIONIC DRAIN: The structure of this device requires a significant amount of input from the user's internal psychic reservoirs in order to function, which also serves to destabilise the internal structure of the device for a prolonged amount of time once used. This device may only be employed once per combat scene, although a Psionic Construction test against the device's Psionic Power Level may allow more.

PSIONIC EDGED SWORD

TYPE: HYBRID **LOCK: 30%**
RESTRICTION: 5 **COST: 15**
PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 1

A psionic edged sword is created by applying the Psionic Construction power to a human blade that is of the highest quality, such as an authentic Clansman claymore or Mishiman katana. The power fuses the blade with psionic crystals and a small amount of electrical components that make it capable of generating a psionic edge that radiates a fixed blue light. Powered by the bioelectrical energy of the user, the blade becomes extremely sharp and is capable of cutting through just about anything. The very energy signature of the Guardians as a component of the psionic edge makes it detrimental to creatures of Darkness.

PSIONIC EDGED SWORD

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
-	1+↑5	-	3	Unbalanced	4
QUALITIES	Armour Piercing 1, Parry 1, Pious 2				

PSIONIC EDGED GREAT SWORD

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
-	2+ \uparrow 5	-	4	2H	4
QUALITIES	Armour Piercing 1, Parry 2, Pious 3				

PSIONIC ENDOWMENTS

PSIONIC UPGRADE

TYPE: HYBRID

LOCK: 15%

RESTRICTION: 5

COST: 10

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 1

This is not a weapon as such, but rather a means of upgrading human melee or close combat weapons through the use of Psionic Construction. This upgrade imbues the weapon with a small amount of Guardian energy, which makes it more effective against creatures of the Dark Legion and grants the weapon the Pious 1 weapon quality. This quality stacks with any instance of Pious that the weapon may already possess, although it will not stack with itself, e.g. through two uses of Psionic Upgrade on the same weapon. A Psionic Upgrade thereafter imbues the weapon with a Psionic Power Level of 1, although this may be increased if the weapon's construction is further altered beyond this.

PSIONIC CONSTRUCTION CORE

TYPE: HYBRID/GUARDIAN

LOCK: 20%

RESTRICTION: 5

COST: 100

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 5

Most often found hidden away within old Guardian caches, it is entirely possible for them to be constructed using the Psionic Construction power, although the length of the procedure often precludes this. Psionic Construction Cores, which can vary in size from crystalline arrangements that would fill a small apartment to massive structures that would engulf a football pitch, provide an immense boon to further psionic engineering once complete. Once completed or activated, several Guardians or mutants are thereafter able to use the facilities functions as a psionic workshop that is entirely capable of manufacturing large pieces of psionic technology, or smaller pieces on a massive scale.

A Psionic Construction Core is formed from several pillars that are positioned in a circular pattern and are generally constructed out of rare quartz stones—typically Faden or White Phantom—and different types of crystals. The facility amplifies the Psionic Construction power in addition to allowing the users to combine their skills and power. The largest cores are used to build vehicles and massive



A Psionic Construction Core begins to alter and infuse a waiting ship.



A Symmetry Hunter: the Dark Legion spacecraft now have a predator.

weapons, or perform as industrial units capable of creating large amounts of Guardian arms and armour. Construction of a psionic device will still take time, but the facility will enable several users to reduce those times by combining their skills and energies. Those involved, however, must undertake a period of study working with a core, or else have access to the design schematics of the Ancients.

Understanding the operational nature of a Psionic Construction Core without prior training or knowledge requires a Daunting D4 Mysticism or Epic D5 Insight test. Having discerned the nature of the facility, any individual with the Psionic Construction mutant power may then make use of its features by making a Daunting D3 Mysticism or Willpower test, which are thereafter reduced to Average D1 once the facility has been used by the character to create their first piece of psionic technology.

Creating any form of psionic device within the Psionic Construction Core merely requires an Average D1 Mysticism or Willpower test, regardless of the Psionic Power Level of the device, although the need for a test may be negated altogether by bonuses accrued from increased Guardian DNA percentage (see page 36).

Additionally, most facilities allow several operators to collaborate in order to reduce the length of time required to construct a psionic device. Each operator involved in the process must possess the Psionic Construction mutant power. For every two operators involved in the construction of a single psionic item, the timescale required to construct the item is read as though the item were one Psionic Power Level below its actual level, to a minimum of Psionic Power Level 1. The actual Psionic Power Level upon completion of the item is unaffected, only the timescale required to produce it

is reduced. For example, a device with a Psionic Power Level of 4 would normally require three months to construct, but two mutants may work together within the facility in order to construct the device as though it were a Psionic Power Level 3 item, which then only requires four to six weeks. A maximum of six operators may work on a single psionic device at any one time, bearing in mind the minimum construction time reduction limit of Psionic Power Level 1.

The only exception to the above is the construction of Psionic Power Level 5 items, the construction of which would require hundreds of Cores working in concert in order to reduce the amount of time required to craft the device.

PSIONICALLY ENHANCED SPACECRAFT

SYMMETRY HUNTER

TYPE: HYBRID

LOCK: 20%

RESTRICTION: 5

COST: 65

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 3

The Symmetry Hunter is a small, agile, and very versatile fighter. It can be constructed from scratch, but is usually built by combining a small human fighter with all manner of other raw materials and parts. The name comes from the fact that its scanners and targeting system use a psionic resonance vortex which is highly sensitive to the Dark Symmetry. This data then feeds back into the user interface, allowing the pilot to easily target and track enemies that are heavily influenced by the Dark Symmetry. Though this craft makes use of regular human munitions, the weapons become psionically enhanced when loaded onto the fighter. The bullets from the

forward twin autocannons will explode in a small cloud of plasma, which enhances the kinetic force of the projectiles. Additionally, its missiles are equipped with a homing function that works against all vehicles of the Dark Symmetry.

The craft has an ergonomic and streamlined design. The metals often resemble stones and crystals in different sections due to the psionic crafting used to change and mould the materials. It operates just as effectively inside or out of a planet's atmosphere.

QUALITIES	Light Craft, Agile				
INTERPLANETARY RANGE	1 week		COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	2	
CREW	1 commander 1 gunner		PASSENGERS	None	
DAMAGE	LOCATION	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURE DAMAGE
	ENGINE	2	3	3	3
	HULL	3	3	3	4
IMPACT DAMAGE	WEAPON	2	3	3	3
	2+↑3		FUEL LOADS	2	
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twin Psy-Storm Autocannons (Close, Burst, 1+↑4, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters, Pious 1, Vicious 1) • Dark Slayer Missiles (Medium, Munition, 2+↑4, Armour Piercing 1, Incendiary 2, Pious 1, Unforgiving 1) 				
NOTES	Six Reloads for Psy-Storm Autocannons. Four Reloads for Dark Slayer Missiles.				

RIFT STALKER

TYPE: GUARDIAN

LOCK: 80%

RESTRICTION: 5

COST: 100

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL: 5

Yet to be discovered by friend or foe, only a few of these powerful multi-purpose carriers remain in existence in the wake of the Ancients' war against the Darkness. Without exception, each example of this craft is hidden away within secret and forgotten hangar bays within the asteroid belt. Designed by the Ancients and the Guardians to serve as their foremost weaponry amongst the void, they are approximately three hundred and fifty metres in length and bristling with hidden weaponry across their entire lengths; armoured hatches readily open to reveal an unparalleled amount of firepower in the form of plasma missiles, plasma cannons, rail guns and energy emitters.

Each vessel is operated psionically, meaning that this massive ship can be manoeuvred by only one individual if need be, although a total of twenty crewmen are needed to operate the weapon systems, man the engineering bay, and ensure the spacecraft performs to its full capability. The ship is able to maintain the relatively small number of crew due to the fact that each member is able to control hundreds of systems and function through the use of an individual psionic interface. The vessel itself can transport and support one thousand men, whilst its hangar has room for almost two hundred Symmetry Hunters. It has a self-sustaining life support system that not only produces air, but also provides organic nutrients via its



A Rift Stalker launches the opening salvo.

ENHANCED TECHNOLOGY

advanced circulatory system that is itself semi-organic in nature. It can be propelled using just about any energy source available, as the Psionic Core converts the energy into the psychic fuel required to power the ship. It can, in theory, sustain itself and its crew indefinitely.

The massive main frontal armament is capable of destroying large parts of a city with one direct hit, or tearing other battleships apart. This devastating and psionically enhanced plasma cannon does, however, suffer from the fact that the targeting system is particularly complicated to operate. The recharge time for the main armament is also lengthy due to the fact that it is fed directly from the ship's main core. Beyond this, the Rift Stalker has a hull forged from memory metal that is not only capable of self-repair, but is also able to employ an advanced cloaking system and kinetic protection shields.

As the name suggests, the ship is fully capable of opening and travelling through rifts. But one of the most mind boggling aspects is the fact that this large, quiet, and wingless beast of a ship can manoeuvre within an atmosphere using advanced arrays capable of manipulating gravitons. Though comparatively smaller in size, a Rift Stalker could hold its own against, or even destroy, Black Ships and citadels. Just finding even a single specimen would tip the scales of balance in the war against the Dark Legion.

QUALITIES	Agile, Rugged, Ship				
	INTERPLANETARY RANGE		COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		2
CREW	160 days		PASSENGERS		1000
	1 commander (Crew 3) 1 pilot 15 gunners (Crew 1) 3 engineers (Crew 2)				
DAMAGE	LOCATION	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURE DAMAGE
	ENGINE	5	5	5	3
	HULL	6	6	5	4
	WEAPON	5	4	4	3
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+ \uparrow 8		FUEL LOADS		12
	ARMAMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Weapon, crewed by one gunner (Crew 1): • Voidfire Plasma Cannon (Long, Munition, 5+\uparrow8, Armour Piercing 1, Anti-Ship, Pious 2, Psionic, Slow Loading 2, Vicious 2) • Additional armaments, crewed by two gunners (Crew 1): • Hydrostatic Energy Emitter Battery (Close, Burst, 1+\uparrow3, Pious 1, Psionic, Spread 1, Vicious 1) • Plasma Cannon Battery (Close, Automatic, 2+\uparrow4, Armour Piercing 1, Point Defence, Close Quarters, Pious 1, Psionic, Vicious 1) • Psy-Fury Plasma Missiles (Medium, Munition, 2+\uparrow5, Armour Piercing 2, Incendiary 2, Pious 2, Vicious 1) • Psy-Strike Railcannon Battery (Medium, Automatic, 2+\uparrow6, Anti-Ship, Armour Piercing 1, Pious 1, Vicious 2) 				

NOTES

Twelve Reloads for Psy-Fury Plasma Missiles. Twelve Reloads for Psy-Strike Railcannon Battery. Twelve Launch Bays each crewed by one gunner (Crew 1). A Launch Bay contains three squadrons consisting of four Symmetry Hunters each. Only a single squadron may launch or land from a Launch Bay in any one turn.

Advanced Psionic Capabilities: The complex psionic and semi-organic systems of the Rift Stalker enable one crew member to perform the task of many. The gunners in control of the additional armaments may fire up to two weapon systems as part of one Standard Action, though each weapon system may only be used once during a single turn.

Hydrostatic Doom: The hydrostatic energy emitters of a Rift Stalker are designed to cripple the crew of an enemy ship at close quarters without necessarily compromising the integrity of the vessel itself. If an attack with the hydrostatic energy emitters is successful, two Dark Symmetry points can be paid to affect up to ten crew members with damage to a random hit location as though successfully struck by an Energy Roil Carbine. Rather than rolling for each crew member, the GM should use discretion for vessels that have a particularly large crew, although player characters should always be affected separately.

Invisible Stalker: Rift Stalkers are equipped with a cloaking device that can be activated with a Standard Action by any crew member. Once active, tests related to visually or electronically detecting the Rift Stalker are increased by two steps in difficulty, as are Gunnery tests made to attack the vessel.

Psychic Drain: Firing the main armament places a massive drain upon the ship's power systems and prevents the use of the Rift Travel ability. Additionally, during any turn in which the Voidfire Plasma Cannon is used, only one other weapon system may also be fired. Use of the Launch Bays remains unaffected.

Rift Travel: A mutant crew member in possession of the Rift Navigation power is able to make use of the ship's systems in order to create a rift for the purposes of leaping vast interstellar distances in mere moments. Operating the rift drive requires one combat round, whilst navigating into it requires a second. The rift portal then remains open for a third round as the Rift Stalker traverses the space/time hole. This could, theoretically, allow fast pursuers to follow the ship, although becoming trapped within a collapsing rift presents its own problems. So long as the Rift Navigation power has been successfully employed, the rift is able to transport the ship to a place of the navigator's choosing. Safeguards within the ship's systems prevent the opening of random rifts. Activating a rift consumes eight of the ships Fuel Loads, which recharge at the rate of one Fuel Load every two hours. The Interplanetary Range listed above represents the Rift Stalker's ability for interplanetary travel should it lose access to its rift capability.

Self-repairing Hull: Forged from psionically imbued memory metal, a Rift Stalker's hull repairs one point of Surface Damage to each location during each round.

THE DARKNESS WITHIN

HERETICS

What does it mean to be a heretic? What does it do to your humanity, to your very being, to the person you once were? In the world of **Mutant Chronicles**, the word heretic inspires dread, fear, and mistrust in the average man on the streets. Any inquisitor worth his salt will be overcome with the need to hunt them down as soon as they get wind of one. Heretics are, in a sense, considered to be worse than many of the horrors spawned in the foul pits of the citadels since they are humans who, through their own actions, have opened their souls to the foul corruption of darkness. Still, every heretic, no matter how corrupt, foul, and endowed with dark powers, is still a human being. They had a childhood, parents, and might even be parents or grandparents themselves. No heretic is alike; they don't come off the assembly line programmed with a purpose like so many other dark beings. Even if led astray by dark forces, they are, at their core, driven by human desires, wants, and needs. Their ultimate goal might be to become something inhuman, but their motive to become a monstrous thing will still stem from some human emotion and desire.

GOOD INTENTIONS

Many heretics start down the path of darkness and evil with the best of intentions, and many of them do truly loath and hate the Dark Legion when they start out. They believe that they can use the powers of the dark to do good, that they will be able to control it and stay true to themselves. But the dark powers are like a potent drug mixed with otherworldly steroids. It grants unimaginable powers that allow a human to perform far beyond his limits, but the darkness is also addictive and it twists the mind without the person even being aware



Looking for Heresy in all the right places.

of the change. Soon, all the right reasons have resulted in all the wrong decisions and actions. But by then the heretic has often forgotten, or no longer cares, why he started down the path he is on and now serves the Dark Symmetry. Below are some circumstances and reasons why a good man with the best of intentions might turn to darkness. These are just a few examples and the methods used by cults to snare new members are discussed within the *Quid Pro Quo: Methods of Recruitment* sidebar.

FREEDOM FIGHTER

The world is indeed a broken place, and the desire to change it in order to give justice to those who have a radical approach can, at times, be overwhelming. The little man is often crushed under the heels of the Megacorporations. The poor get poorer and starve to death in the shadow of profit; their voices lost to the sound bites of big money. Some people have taken it upon themselves to try to right these wrongs. When there is no political and legal way to do it, they choose to go outside the law. They choose disobedience and rob supply trains, banks, sabotage corporate weapon factories, and perform a hundred other crimes in the name of freedom. However, the odds they are up against are overwhelming and to some of these folks, if desperate enough, the darkness might be a solution. In most cases they are soon approached by recruiters that are quite subtle. They don't brandish the fact that the individual is about to get into bed with the Dark Symmetry, rather, they portion it out bit by bit, presenting the heretic cell as fellow freedom fighters. The one signing up will, in all likelihood, suspect what he is getting himself into. But seeing the possibilities of putting vast resources of power to good use and helping those in need, he usually convinces himself that he is in control and will be able to quit while he is ahead. Sadly, this is seldom the case and soon they become corrupted. Instead of helping those in need, the person is now doing his best to put his boot heel on the throat of humanity itself.

FEARING THE REAPER

This might not be a motivation with a good intention per se, but it is an instinctual one that is neither good nor evil at its core. Many fear their death and pain. Some of those that have been diagnosed with an illness that will kill them within a short space of time, and possibly do so painfully, often become desperate. They would give just about anything to escape this horrible fate. Many also feel that they don't want to abandon those that depend on them. A parent would not want their children to be left all alone. The loving spouse wouldn't want to leave the one they love. Being given a very limited amount of time to live before one has grown old and lived a full life is quite jarring and quite terrifying to most. Being given the chance to be cured, or being given a second chance to be with the ones you love, is a strong incentive. Those in this situation are often willing to go quite far, but they seldom think of the long term consequences. In their desire to live and stay by the side of those they love, they are

drawn into to the darkness as their souls become corrupted. All too often they end up hurting, or even indirectly causing the death of, those closest to them.

A SORROW TOO GREAT TO BEAR

To lose someone you love can be unbearable. Facing the risk of losing a parent, a partner or a child can drive a person into the arms of the Dark Symmetry. If given the chance to rid a loved one of a painful, deadly disease, few people would hesitate even if they suspected that the consequences would be dire. Though a powerful and positive force, love is blind and can be twisted and perverted, used to snare an innocent soul. Few are the mothers and fathers that would hesitate to save their child from a slow and painful death if given the chance. Such is the evil of the Dark Symmetry, even love is made into a tool of corruption.

HUNTING EVIL

The Dark Legion and the Symmetry are indeed powerful. Those who fight it are often overcome with despair as facing an ancient, eternal, and seemingly invincible godlike malevolence takes its toll. At times, those that feel the weight of hopelessness might turn to the old adage "sleeping with the enemy". They hope to gain information or powers that would allow them to combat the darkness. They wish to turn the Dark Gifts and knowledge they gain against other heretics, but more often than not they are misled and corrupted. Before they know it they serve the very forces they wished to combat. The Dark Symmetry has a way of distorting a person's beliefs and motives. In the end, a good man can be led to believe that the Brotherhood is the true enemy, a shackle of oppression around the neck of humanity that has to be removed and utterly crushed.

TYPES OF HERETICS

Beyond the typical loyal heretic there are three other types. These are heretics that have defected or never really joined. Playing these can really mix up the game and give some great variation.

APOSTATES

These are among the most powerful of all heretics, but they are generally those in the most danger. Apostates will, in the end, be hunted, and when they are, they will generally be hunted by other heretics as well as the Brotherhood. It is true that the Brotherhood will hunt renegades as well, but they hunt apostates with inhuman fervour. Apostates are those who are, or have been part of, the Brotherhood. They are able to use the Art and have become heretics capable of using Dark Gifts and Endowments. Heretics use Apostates to their advantage, gaining as much information as possible from the Brotherhood as they can. When an Apostate is discovered, the cult seldom helps them as the Brotherhood will

hunt them like no one else. Often the cult also hunts them with the intent of killing them in order to prevent them from divulging cult secrets if captured. Apostates lead a dangerous life, but the ability to use powers from both sides of the fence allows them to become immensely powerful.

RENEGADES

Renegade is the name given to those heretics that have defected. For one reason or another they have decided that enough is enough and they leave the cult. They will spend the rest of their lives in hiding. They have to avoid the Brotherhood as well as their former associates. There is a rumour that speaks of very powerful Brotherhood exorcisms that can rid a repentant renegade of his corruption, but no one knows for sure. Most renegades simply try to hide and live as normal a life as they can. Others take it upon themselves to fight the cults, doing everything in their power to make up for all the evil deeds they have done in the name of darkness. Only the smartest and most resourceful of renegades manage to stay alive for long.

ROVING HERETICS

Roving Heretics are by far the weakest heretic type in one respect, but the most independent and free. Roving heretics are seldom heretics as such. They are not bound to any Apostle, and some do not even particularly care for or support the Dark Legion. Some have been known to actually combat cults and Dark Legion creatures. Roving heretics can be uncorrupted, but usually have some small measure of corruption. The reason behind their unique status is the fact that they don't use Dark Gifts or possess any Endowments. They use rituals to tap into the Dark Symmetry independent of the actual Apostles. Rituals are time-consuming and require a lot of study but can produce powerful effects. Roving heretics are, in many cases, addicted to the use of rituals, and they might kill heretics in order to gain more insight into the world of dark knowledge. As they have never been part of a cult and don't use powers that are as spectacular as Dark Gifts, they usually stay off the radar. Some work with regular freelance crews, keeping their powers secret. The use of rituals is not as easily detected as the use of Dark Gifts, which makes them capable of staying hidden from the Brotherhood.

THE HUMANITY OF HERETICS

Heretics are human, and often they are more human than darkness until the very end, though many are irrevocably corrupted. In any event, their humanity is important and it will affect them greatly. Below are some examples of how to handle certain situations and themes. The fact that they come from humanity and that it affects them will create an interesting dynamic with several aspects to consider.

BOTH SIDES OF THE COIN: DARK GIFTS AND THE ART

Apostates are immensely powerful individuals that wield powers drawn from the opposing forces of both the Art and the Dark Symmetry. There is a cost to this power though.

Whenever an Apostate generates a Dark Symmetry Icon as the result of any **T** rolled to determine the result of a casting of the Art, they must total the number of Dark Symmetry Icons generated then subtract their Corruption Soak. If the result is one or more, then the patron Apostle's Dark Influence asserts itself (see **Mutant Chronicles** Core Rulebook, p.156), which remains in effect for the remainder of the scene.

Additionally, Apostates gain the Dark Presence ability whenever they make use of the conflicting forces of both the Darkness and the Light within the same scene. This effect will manifest in the Apostate immediately following their first use of a supernatural power that is spiritually opposed to any other supernatural spell, gift, or power that has already been used during the scene, and remains in effect for the remainder of the scene. This represents the fact that something unnameable has occurred. A Daunting D3 Insight test that does not require an action will allow sensitive individuals to perceive that the Apostate is tainted in some way.

Finally, the Apostate will no longer gain any benefit from the Pious quality should they make use of any weapon that possesses it. They have left the Light, and now suffer the same fate as all Heretics.

HERETICS AND THEIR LOVED ONES

It is so easy to simply create a heretic that is pure evil, born bad, and taken by darkness. But this is taking the easy way out and these kinds of heretics are quite unusual. Most heretics, at least in their early years, still have their old friends and family. They love them and want to protect them. Many run into problems when they are first corrupted as their behaviour and values change and it often clashes with their old life. But most heretics level out, adapt, and find a way to pick up large parts of their old life. Early on, this is a good thing for the cult; a cover of normality keeps the fledgling heretic hidden. This gives a lot of role-playing opportunities. Heretics are prone to insanity as the powers they meddle with have a dire effect on their minds and souls. Family and friends can act as a balancing factor, something to keep them sane. But at the same time they are a risk factor. They have to be kept in the dark and if they find out the truth

QUID PRO QUO: METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

Cases where a person seeks out the darkness willingly and without any doubts or qualms are rare. Few people, even counting most depraved serial killers, step into the shadows of pure evil without having a long hard think or strong doubts. This is why the cults have developed several structured methods by which they can approach possible recruits. Most methods prey on people's desperation. Often the cult secretly puts someone in peril and swoops in to "save" them.

CURING THE PLAGUE: By using Dark Gifts, rituals, bio-weapons, or Endowments, cults can cause horrible illnesses, remove them, or heal naturally occurring ones. Sometimes they approach someone that suffers from a terminal illness or someone who has a loved one that does. At other times they cause the illness and then approach the victim, again swooping in as saviours. The victim is, of course, unaware of the fact that the heretic caused the illness to begin with. Sometimes they dangle the cure as a sinister type of carrot, withholding it until the victim has performed a number of services. These services tend to corrupt the victim and when they, or their loved one, are finally healed, they are so deep in that there is no return.

RAISING THE DEAD: The Dark Symmetry is powerful, but it is incapable of actually bringing back a human from the dead as they were. But they can do a very good job of faking it. They are capable of plucking the memories from the dead and implanting them into a Changeling. Through this method they can fool a

victim into believing that their dead loved one has risen. They use this trick in two ways. Either they require dire payments in the form of favours ranging from espionage to murder, or they act more subtly, having the doppelganger slowly influence the victim to do the cult's bidding. Either way, the victim usually ends up corrupted, in the end joining the cult. Sometimes they simply use the victim up, killing him when they have had their way.

EMPOWER THE WEAK: There are many people that wish to do good but are too weak to do anything about it. Their weakness might be a physical one, but it can manifest in many ways. Lack of political clout, supporters, weapons, funding, will, or mental faculties are all things that can get in the way of someone being able to change things. Boosting any of these attributes is an easy thing for a heretic cult. With their Dark Gifts, rituals, resources, and minions it is a small thing.

SKEW RIGHTEOUSNESS: The Dark Symmetry has an enormous power to corrupt and it often twists the thoughts and views of those it affects. The will to do good can easily be turned into evil deeds. Someone that wishes to collect money for a charity can end up stealing money from other charities in order to provide for his own flock all the while lining his own pockets as he suddenly realises that his work is unappreciated. When he is discovered he might be driven to murder as he has to protect his work and, after all, what is one measly life compared to all those he is saving. All the while this is going on he cannot see how corrupt and foul he has become. And at this point he only needs a slight shove in order to turn into a full-fledged heretic.

they risk being the reason for the heretic's downfall. The risk of the family being used as leverage is always present and it is often just a matter of time before the dark true life of the heretic comes crashing through the doors of quiet family life.

The point isn't to explore and play out family life when in the shoes of a heretic, but it should often be present. Heretics are humans after all and they do not come from a vacuum. They started out like anyone else, normal humans. Often they are still torn between what they once were and what they have become. Even if they are capable of true evil, there are pieces of them that are still very human, parts that have doubts.

SHORT TERM MOTIVES

Heretics are, of course, motivated by their loyalty to their dark masters, and most of the time by their own faith in what they are doing. But this is their motivation on a large scale, a general overview. Each heretic

will have their own view of things and only the most ingrained and inhuman of them will be as programmed and soulless as a true creature of darkness. Heretics live to obey those above them and to further the ends and needs of the Dark Symmetry, but there is no such thing as a run of the mill mission. Each mission they are sent out on will be different. Often they will run across situations and people that will remind them of their old life. This can put them at odds with other heretics or their mission as old feelings and motives might get in the way. This doesn't happen all the time, but it is very likely that it will affect them at some point. For example, what if a heretic was charged with killing or framing a detective that is about to expose the cell and it turns out that the detective is a close relative to the heretic, one that they left behind long time ago when they turned to darkness? How will the heretic behave if he still has love in his heart? There are numerous situations that can come along which have the potential to stir things up. These situations will skew, change, and pervert the original motives and loyalties of the heretic. From time to time the game master should throw the players a curve ball that tugs at their character's humanity.

METHODS

How heretics go about their business differs greatly. It all depends on which cult they are from, what endowments and Dark Gifts they have access to, and their personality. All will greatly affect how they go about their business. Often they are under strict orders about how to perform certain missions, but most of the time they are left to use their own judgment. The personality and worldview of the heretic will often decide how he kills, manipulates, or carries out his duties. Those that serve Algeroth are usually very direct and forceful, while the heretics of Semai have an inclination to be much more subtle. Heretics also have a tendency to grow a bit mentally unhinged due to the powers they dabble in and this can quite often affect how they perform a task. A heretic charged with a simple assassination gig might end up staging it like a twisted ritualistic slaying, for no other reason than that their mind is broken. Their behaviour will fluctuate due to their ever changing mental state. Being a heretic will put abnormal mental strain on a human and from time to time this will shine through. Heretics will go through a sort of evolution of the mind, soul, and body as they rise through the ranks. Sometimes for the better, and sometimes for the worse from their point of view.

THE DYING OF THE SOUL

Heretics do start out as humans and even after years of servitude they will still retain pieces of their humanity. But, as time passes, their humanity, their very soul, will wither and become tarnished by the corruption of the Dark Symmetry. This too happens in stages. Their descent into corruption, madness, and dark power is a journey of horror, wonder, and confusion. In the end, their ultimate goal is to shed their humanity in order to become a true creature of darkness, or even try to achieve the status of a dark demigod in the form of a Nepharite. How they view the world will also be affected. A heretic that has shed most of his humanity will relate very differently to other humans as well as to other heretics in their group that have not been able to leave as much of their humanity behind. This can cause some tension among heretics. Those that have left most of their humanity behind might not have a problem with some collateral damage in the form of innocents, while those that have most of their humanity still intact might. There are different levels of evil and corruption even among the worst and this should, in fact, be something that is noticeable.

TRUE REGRETS IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS

Most heretics do have doubts at times. More or less giving up one's soul and humanity to creatures and powers of pure evil is a big step. But some heretics will truly begin to regret what they have become and where they are headed. This is one of the most frightening realisations a heretic can come to. They have nowhere to turn. The cult will in all likelihood kill them for their disloyalty and doubt rather than risk being betrayed. They cannot turn to the Brotherhood as

they would torture them for information before executing them. A heretic that wishes to repent and get out of the cult has a near impossible and deadly road in front of them.

STORIES AND MISSIONS

Creating stories and missions for heretic characters can be quite different, yet quite similar, to creating stories for regular characters. Regular characters, be they criminals, Inquisitors, or reporters, usually try to avoid or root out heretics and do everything in their power to thwart their sinister plans. But when portraying heretics, the players will take on the rolls of the sinister forces. The rules that govern most other characters, even criminal ones, do not apply to heretics. Not only do they live beyond the laws and regulations of civilized society like criminals do, they live beyond the rules of the very soul and reality as we know it. There are a wide range of missions and stories that heretics can get involved in.

CORRUPTION STING: Often, the cults use different tactics to ensnare people in order to do their bidding. Sometimes they just need them to obey for a short time, while at other times they prime them for recruitment. Corruption stings might revolve around something as simple as a form of blackmail. Some types are mundane, using incriminating photos to squeeze what they need from someone to outright threats employing their Dark Gifts. Long term corruption stings can be very elaborate and stretch over weeks, months, or years. In many cases there are dozens of heretics involved, none of them seeing the big picture. One might see it that the mark gets fired, while someone kills the mark's wife some weeks later, all leading up to an impossible situation where the mark will be ready to accept any type of help no matter where it comes from. However, if the player characters are involved, they should be the closers or main handlers of a corruption sting. This will allow them to see the whole picture, plan it, and be part of its execution. These types of operations can be quite fun and intricate but they require that the players plan with foresight as well as think on their toes when the situation changes.

ASSASSINATION: It might sound simple, but many assassinations can be very intricate and require detailed steps. One might think that a cult would use dark powers to kill their enemies, but often this risks drawing the attention of the Brotherhood. So, whenever possible, if the attention of the Brotherhood isn't part of the plan, they use mundane means. It may be desirable that an assassination look like an accident, natural causes, or a murder committed by someone else. Simply put, an assassination can mushroom into a multi-layered plan of conspiracy. These types of missions often boil down to forensic manipulation, frame jobs, and clandestine manipulation with little room for error. In many cases, the person that is to be assassinated is not the actual threat or mark but a mere vector of sorts. Their death can spark a feud or even a war between two rival factions, allowing the cult to kill two birds with one stone.

POLITICAL MANIPULATION: There are many reasons for cults to influence politics. The more power they can wield in the human world through official channels the easier it is for them to hide and conduct their business. But most cults prefer to be the puppeteers, part of a shadow council. Official and public people are often used as pawns to be sacrificed in the course of a larger game. If they are forced to make a powerful political figure fall on his sword, they can simply stage a suicide. For short term political manipulation, they can be more blunt about it, simply employing a Changeling. Setting up a political powerbase that dances to the tune of the cult can be done in many ways, but the best option is to see to it that the main political figure is without a trace of dark mystical influences. Negatively influencing the political competition is one obvious way to go about it, but it is still quite direct. If scandals begin to rain down on the competition too severely, people will begin to wonder. So a subtle approach is a good way to go. Instead of affecting the actual competition, the heretics might do well in steering big time contributors and voters the right way. If the heretics' political platform is to be tough on crime, the heretics might stage a series of crime waves and even have one of the opponents financial contributor's house invaded, steering them towards a candidate that is tough on crime. Manipulating the actual politician is usually done by having people on his support staff such as advisors, campaign managers, and maybe their mistress, if they have one, as an enabler. During all this they have to duck authorities, stay under the Brotherhood's radar, and stay on top of things. Whole campaigns can revolve around manipulating an election.

DARK MATTERS: Sometimes there is no way around drawing the attention of the Brotherhood, and at times it might just be the point. These kind of missions involve powerful rituals, blood sacrifices, and dark mysticism. The use of powerful artefacts and the combination of forces is a common theme. These types of operations are usually conducted as a show of strength, a way to quickly increase dark influence in a smaller area such as a remote colony, or as the final stage of some form of mystical assault. Rituals and dark works have the capacity to influence whole areas and they are a powerful tool. But they often require several ritualists and sacrifices, and have a tendency to draw the attention of the Brotherhood as efficiently as a flame draws the moth. Operations involving powerful rites are often intense as the area is already under dark influences and Brotherhood Inquisitors might be on site, searching for heretics. But they can often be very important as they can turn a demonstration into a riot, a riot into urban warfare, or plant the seed of doubt in everyone living within a ten block area. Heretics in charge of the ritual are in most cases also responsible for the prep work which can go on for weeks or days. The prep work often involves lesser rituals, sabotages, and manipulations that have to be conducted very carefully. Having the Brotherhood on the case early can ruin the whole plan.

INFILTRATION: This is a very wide term and can entail a plethora of operations. It can be part of a shorter mission in the form of a smash and grab or it can be spun into an entire campaign

involving something as dangerous as having heretics infiltrate the Brotherhood. In most cases, heretics have an easier time infiltrating an organisation as they have a wide assortment of Dark Gifts and Endowments at their disposal. Some allow them to manipulate the minds of those around them, change memories, or even take on an entirely different appearance. However, when infiltrating the Brotherhood, these powers and the heretic's affiliation with them can have the opposite effect. Long term infiltration missions can be taxing and difficult as the heretic often has to pass as someone else. Corporations and the Brotherhood often have hidden agents of their own embedded in their lower ranks just to keep an eye on things. These types of stories often turn out claustrophobic with an air of deadly espionage. One thing that should be kept in mind, if a heretic is caught, he most likely has hours or weeks of torture to look forward to followed by his execution.

MAINTAINING COVER: It is a constant part of a heretic's life and one of the most important lifelong missions of a heretic. This can often be made into a central story. Heretics must always keep tabs on the people around them. Their family, co-workers, mailman, landlord, or even the girl that operates the register at their corner store might pose a threat as all are capable of noticing something that might send them running to the Brotherhood. Who knows, their favourite bartender might actually be a Brotherhood informant or spy. The game master as well as the players should always keep in mind exactly how dangerous it is to be a heretic. The player characters should always keep an eye out and should look closer at those around them should these folk begin to act odd or strange. The people the heretic knows, those that are not part of his hidden dark life, should all be expendable. In theory these people are nothing more than a sort of cover that helps the heretic maintain the visage of a normal life. However, heretics are capable of love. It might be hard to spy and lie to those closest to them, though they must do so to stay alive. Focusing a story on a heretic investigating those he loves can be quite interesting and it can lead to some very giving role playing. Heretics are expected to clean up their own messes. What if they find proof that the person they love, like a parent, child, or spouse, has discovered the truth and is about to go running to the Brotherhood? Could they kill this person or manage to corrupt them? Would they even want to corrupt them? If they hesitate, how would their fellow heretics react? And if the cult acts, killing those close to the heretic, how would the heretic react? There are a lot of interesting ways to handle this story theme.

TERRORISM: For many of the more direct and aggressive cells, as well as for the Dark Legion as a whole, the act of terrorism is a vital tool. At times they take credit for the acts of terrorism, while at other times cults frame other factions in order to cause discord and animosity between groups. When they take credit for acts of terror, they do so to establish dominance or to create fear which they, in many cases, use as a tool to communicate the power and omnipotence of the Dark Legion. An act of terror is never subtle

as it would defeat the purpose. When they blame other factions, they usually use hardware connected to the organisation they are framing so forensics will point in the right direction. When they want to show the power of the Dark Legion they often resort to using Dark Gifts, Endowments, or pieces of Dark Technology to create mass destruction and panic as there are few other more effective means of showing the true power of their masters than to use these dark, otherworldly tools. Acts of terror that will have a desired effect and leave a powerful echo of fear require planning. The Brotherhood actively roots out Dark Legion terror threats and has preventive security protocols in place. So heretics that are resolved in their desire to conduct successful acts of terror aimed at prominent targets, especially if they are looking to survive, have to be careful and meticulous in the execution of their plan. The actual bombing, shooting, or symmetry laden attack is the climax, but weeks or months of scouting, planning, and manipulating is what makes it all possible. Stories focusing on acts of terror often have many depths as they employ so many layers and stages, leading up to one climactic event.

EXPLORATION: Throughout the solar system there are many hidden symmetry artefacts, dark temples, and creature infested ships. While most characters would struggle to destroy the artefacts, attack the temples, and do their best to destroy and survive the creature infested ships, heretics can be sent out for entirely different reasons. Heretics are looking to bring back powerful artefacts of profound evil, they seek to fortify the dark temples, and wish to work with the foul creatures. Explorations of this kind are very adventurous. Heretics need to traverse dangerous terrain and, when they find what they seek, they have to unlock the mystery that waits in the shadows. If they have found an ancient artefact, powerful creature in hibernation, or something else they need to bring back to the world of man, they have to plan how they go about it. They can't just gift wrap an ancient creature of destruction, slap a no customs



Should he stay or should he go? A Heretic narrowly escapes – or plots – an ambush.

sticker on it, and hope for the best. Bringing something powerful back is hard and often the group needs to prepare several weeks or months in advance so they have a way to safely get where they are going and return. The Brotherhood, Megacorporations, or the Cartel will be suspicious if a group of people return from dangerous and uncharted reaches of space or an area corrupted by darkness. They will even be suspicious of people wanting to go there. So the actual journey and exploration is but a part of such an endeavour. Even though heretics serve the Apostles they might still be attacked by ancient creatures that have forgotten their allegiance, harmed by powerful artefacts, or have their souls ripped out by the primordial defence system of an old and forgotten citadel.

WAR: Many heretics are ex-military. Some stay in the field but on the side of the Dark Legion. There is a lot of room for civilian heretics in war as well. Heretics, military or not, are seldom sent out as part of the infantry. Heretics are valuable because they can pass for humans and because they can think like humans, since they, in fact, are human. Often they fill out a part of a special team. Some are experts in performing sabotage behind enemy lines, while other groups are sent out in order to secretly imbed in human troops. Creating war campaigns involving heretic characters is quite similar to creating one for non-heretic characters. Though the main difference is the fact that these characters battle humanity and have very different resources at their disposal. A plain human unit will see its internal conflict and drama in the form of folks coming from different corporate backgrounds and upbringing. In a heretic outfit, it often boils down to conflicts arising as a result of serving different Dark Apostles. The heretics work towards the very same goal, but they will favour the methods and short term goals of their own Apostle. Add to this the fact that they are probably going to work with non-human creatures, some vastly superior to humans, and things can get heated and dangerous within a small unit. Often the early stages of a war campaign should focus on the bonding and trust process of the unit if the members haven't met before, and as time goes on they learn to trust each other and work together as a tightly knit team working towards the usurpation and destruction of the human race.

STORY SEEDS

There are many stories one can tell involving heretics. A few suggestions follow. They make use of some of the ideas above, at times combining them. In some aspects some stories can be very similar to those of regular characters while in other instances they can be very different. These story seeds will not necessarily explain why the characters were chosen to perform a certain mission, or how they got involved in certain events. It all depends on the characters the players have created. You should feel free to adapt it accordingly.

DEAD METAL: The Dark Legion has picked up an old degraded signal in the middle of space. The ship ID belongs to an old human

ship the legion used to smuggle rare, powerful weapons, relics, and creatures and it was lost decades ago. The characters are charged with finding the ship, boarding it, and bringing back whatever important material and secrets it might hold. The first problem is the fact that the ship is in a part of space that is restricted and they have to make it past corporate fleets and Brotherhood patrols unnoticed. Then it will take time to find the actual ship. It might be dangerous as the area is a known back lane used by pirates and other scum that might be aggressive. When they finally find the ship and board it, they have to deal with an old but still functional defence system. The crew may still be alive, fuelled and driven insane by the Dark Symmetry in their isolation. These beasts will, in all likelihood, be prone to attack anyone that boards the ship, or maybe they are more interested in hijacking the character's ship in order to get home.

RENEGADE: One of their own has not only strayed, but gone off the path entirely. He has left the cult and is now posing a threat to them. The characters know him and they are given the unthankful task to hunt him down and bring him back dead or alive. The renegade is quite powerful and poses a considerable threat to them, but they know him on a personal level. He is someone they considered, and might still consider to be, a friend. They will be forced into a hunt that will take them through dark alleys, ducking the police and the Brotherhood while hunting one of their own. They will also be forced to face their own codes of ethics, their sense of loyalty, and mixed emotions. What if the man not only claims that he has been framed, but can produce some sort of believable evidence? It is understandable that he is unwilling to come back peacefully before he can prove his innocence. Is he just trying to fool them in order to get away or is he still loyal and has been framed by the real traitor in their midst? Do they dare to take the chance? Another way to go is to reverse it and create a situation where the characters are the ones who have actually been framed and made out as traitors. Now they must prove their innocence and find the guilty party.

CLEANING UP: A heretic was forced to use his power to kill several people. He was cornered and on the verge of discovery. Normally this isn't a problem as such, but this particular heretic is a high ranking politician that is of utter strategic importance to the cult. They need him to conclude one of their long term plans. Now the characters have to go to work. The investigations have just begun and the Brotherhood is called in. The method by which the victims has been dispatched absolutely reeks of the Dark Symmetry. The characters are now in a race against time. They have to get involved in the investigation somehow, either by means of an undercover operation or via pure infiltration. It is their mission to derail the investigation, making it lead in a whole other direction. Evidence needs to disappear and somehow they must throw the Brotherhood off the tracks. Should they commit a similar murder and make sure that the heretic they are to protect has an alibi? Might it be possible to pin it on someone that has become slightly

corrupted and not initiated into a cult yet? Whatever they aim to do, they have to do it fast.

DARK HUNT: A creature is killing wantonly and it seems to be killing quite close to the cult's temple or other important location. This draws a lot of attention to the area, which is quite dangerous to them. The heretics have to talk to the other cults and heretics in order to see if the creature is something they have unleashed with a purpose. This can be a sensitive issue, so they better handle it with some tact. In the end, they will find that no one knows what kind of creature it is and no one within their ranks has unleashed it. Might there be a Roving Heretic behind it? In any event, they have to track it down and kill or capture it before the police and Brotherhood find their temple. It would be in their best interest to find out where the thing came from.

POLITICAL PRESSURE: Some years ago, several cults went together in order to build and establish a massive storage room beneath the streets in the old subway tunnels. The storage place is very special as it is inscribed with protective runes that keep Dark Symmetry from popping up. They have stored a rather large quantity of powerful relics, weapons, and creatures in stasis down there. These are to be used in the future as they are planning an attack, one year in the making. The problem is that some corporate lobbyists and politicians want to build a brand new subway line in order to take the load off the rush hour lines. Whether or not it will happen is going to be decided through an upcoming vote and recent polls indicate that most people want the new line. The route will go straight through the heretic stockpile and the material is impossible to move *en masse*. Doing so would remove them from the protection and send up a virtual flare of Dark Symmetry which would have the Brotherhood rushing to the location. The characters must now find key people in the corporate and political landscape and find ways to manipulate the election so the votes will swing in the other direction. They can't simply kill the lead figures as they will be replaced and the vote will go on. Blackmail, election tampering, and carefully planned set ups seem the only way to go and the clock is ticking.

TREASURE HUNT: It has become known that a very powerful artefact exists. The heretic's superiors have researched ancient texts and made the discovery. The relic is very powerful and can grant a lot of power to the cult, however, the text speaks of it being protected by a lock of sorts. The location of the first key to the lock is divulged by the text and the location of the second key should become apparent as soon as they find the first. But a team of renegade heretics are also after it and they have the location to one of the other keys. It is unclear how many of these keys there are, but only by finding all of them can they discover and gain access to the relic. This hunt takes them all over the solar system. They have to keep up with the renegades, avoid raiders, and duck corporate and Brotherhood patrols. In the end, they must confront the renegades in order to get their hands on all the keys.

POLITICS & VIEWS

Heretics are loyal to their Apostle but whether they care much which Apostle other heretics serve varies from person to person. Heretics are human and they often view their particular cult as superior. Not necessarily because they believe the Apostle is better, but because they take pride in their work, their loyalty, and their organization.

Heretic cults do their best to handle things without the aid of other cults as they want the glory and rewards for completing the task to themselves. Sharing the reward means that it will take heretics longer to rise in the ranks and gain Dark Gifts and Endowments.

The leaders of the cults are very zealous and set the policies when it comes to the cooperation with other cults and heretics. The achievements of the cult members are a reflection of the leader. So if the members manage to serve the Dark Legion well, the leader himself will be rewarded and given prestige. This has led to a sort of competition between cults acting in the same region. Unless the situation requires it for some dire reason, cults do not exchange information or help. When they do, they usually exchange favours. On rare occasions, Dark Gifts and Endowments are exchanged as payment for particularly important and large favours. This is, however, considered a great honour and a sign of trust.

At times, and depending on the situation, isolated teams and partnerships are formed, usually as a way to complete a mission with a common goal. In cases where several cults share a territory, the cult leaders can appoint members, usually of mid to high rank, that are to cooperate and form a sort of taskforce. This is so each cult within the territory has equal insight into what goes on and can share the bounty. When they share a territory this is prudent as a too competitive atmosphere in close proximity might lead to altercations otherwise. Though human, heretics are not normal human beings as such. They are very powerful and often suffer from personality disorders and mental problems, so it is quite important to see to it that the pot doesn't boil over.

Many heretics that know of each other, even those from different cults, sometimes socialize outside of cult activities. It is discouraged as it increases the risk of exposure, but heretics often feel very isolated as they have to hide from everyone around them. To many of them it is important to meet other likeminded individuals in a relaxed environment where they can simply talk, drink and mingle without having to watch how they act or what they say.



THE DARKNESS UNCHAINED

THE FIRST VOICE

The Dark Legion have their own language known as the First Voice. Most creatures built on human genetic material have this language imprinted into their minds at their creation. Heretics have to learn it just like they would any other language. Ilian and Algeroth cults are the most adamant about teaching the language to heretics that have reached rank three or higher.

Spoken, the language has a coarse and hard edged quality relying to greater degree on hard vowels and semivowels, often tying together some words with consonants. Added to this are several guttural grunts and hisses. Many creatures of the Dark Legion that utilise speech do not have lips, the nature of the First Voice makes it possible for them to speak the language clearly. Though ceremonial callings made in rituals are often done in human languages, the actual words of power are forcefully spoken in the First Voice.

The alphabet has a main core that relies on a phonetic system while a syllabary system supports it. The phonetic characters consist of simple glyphs while the syllabary consists of more advanced runic symbols. All the runes and glyphs that can be seen carved into armour, weapons, and vehicles of the Dark Legion have a meaning and are

written in the First Voice. The special property of the language allows the power of the symmetry to be bound to the meanings of the words formed. Those with enough power and knowledge could inscribe a sentence like *The Fiery Death of My Enemies By This Blade* into a sword over and over again and the blade could be imbued with the power to actually cause fire damage to those it strikes.

RITUALS

The Dark Symmetry existed long before man, for eons and eons. Traces of it show up in the early days of human existence in grimoires. In the early days of the awakening of the Dark Symmetry, grimoires were rediscovered and new ones were written. Those with access to them can unleash the corrupting power of the Symmetry. Rituals were much more common when the first dark cults appeared during a time when Dark Gifts and endowments didn't exist. Today they are not as common and the heretics that practice it are most likely the followers of Ilian who appreciate the art of the mysterious. Overall, heretics tend not to practice them or even have knowledge of them.

Many rituals more or less emulate Dark Gifts and Endowments for a limited time and they are often quite time consuming and intricate. One of the most frightening aspect of rituals is the fact

UNRAVELLING THE FIRST VOICE

Just how do ritualists and Roving Heretics learn how to understand or even utter the First Voice? Particularly as it is highly unlikely that they have someone to teach them. This sidebar should help to unravel that mystery for the curious or unwary.

As noted under Ritual Grimoires, studying another ritualist's tome and understanding what is contained within is impossible, as the very powers that fester inside its covers serve to confuse any reader that is not the originating owner of the grimoire. The work must be painstakingly and unerringly transcribed via an ordeal that will require several weeks of uninterrupted study and a Dire D4 Mysticism test to complete. Increase the Repercussion range of the test by three, which stacks with any other increase that the character is suffering from. Failure means that the transcriber is exposed to the corruptive nature of the grimoire's contents; a corruption roll is made against the character using 3♣ as a base

pool. The GM may spend Dark Symmetry points to add dice to the pool on a one-for-one basis, to a maximum of five Dark Symmetry points and five additional dice. Failure also means that the act of deciphering the work must begin anew, which could possibly expose the character to more corruption in a vicious and repetitive circle.

Passing the test means that the transcriber has successfully copied the work, though it must still be decoded. Cracking the encryption requires a Challenging D2 Linguistics test, although the GM may spend one or two Dark Symmetry points to increase the difficulty step by the amount spent. At this point, anyone who already understands the First Voice now has full access to all of the rituals that were copied. Using the tome as a means to unravel the First Voice will require several months of study that culminate in a Dire D3 Linguistics test. Making this test to learn the First Voice will expose the character to the same Repercussion and corruption dangers that were described previously.

that any human, heretic or not, can use them. They do not have to be gifted by the Darkness, they can simply be torn from the raw power of the Symmetry. Those that are uncorrupted and use them, however, will risk becoming corrupted, and the deeper they delve, the greater the risk of corruption. In addition, the use of rituals has an addictive effect on the uncorrupted, which make them want to use the rituals more and more, causing them to delve deeper and deeper into the Darkness. Some ritual users become corrupted beyond redemption, but never join a cult. Rather, they expand their ritual knowledge, serving only themselves and the Darkness in their own way. These unaffiliated ritual practitioners have become known as Roving Heretics.

RITUAL TEMPLE

Ritualists usually maintain secret areas in which they conduct their work. This is referred to as a temple or laboratory. Here they keep their tools, components, and often have a permanent basic evocation circle which they only have to add symbols to from time to time, speeding their use. It is also important to them to keep what they do secret as discovery would send them to one of the Brotherhoods less than compassionate interrogators before their execution. The ritual temple is often warded by both mundane traps as well as those powered by the Dark Symmetry.

RITUAL GRIMOIRE

This is the most valuable possession a ritualist has. In this book he records all his rituals, knowledge, and experiments. He can perform and remember rituals without consulting the book, but not being able to read instructions from it before performing a ritual will increase the difficulty by one step. They usually write everything in both the First Voice and code. Every ritualist's grimoire is unique. It is impossible to read another ritualist's tome and perform the rituals in it, one has to transcribe it in order to decode and firmly grasp it before using it.



A Mistress of Rites invokes a Dark Ritual of Ilian.

CASTING RITUALS

Rituals can be used by anyone, not just Heretics. Each ritual is listed with a difficulty in its description, as well as any specific ritual requirements. Much like Dark Gifts, rituals are cast using a Willpower test, which includes the fact that the roll is effectively an attempt to resist mental trauma. Unlike Dark Gifts however, rituals will expose non-Heretics to mental trauma regardless of success or failure; the powers of Darkness are not to be trifled with by the uninitiated. Succeeding at a ritual will inflict \uparrow X mental damage to all involved, where X is equal to the difficulty of the ritual, plus cause them to suffer an amount of Dread equal to the number of \uparrow rolled. Failing an attempt at a ritual will inflict an amount of \uparrow in mental damage equal to twice the amount that would have been suffered from a successful casting, plus cause them to suffer an amount of Dread equal to the number of \uparrow rolled.

Example: An Investigator that has always been jealous of The Brotherhood and their Art-borne powers has decided to delve into Dark practices in order to gain the information that he needs. Seeking to bypass mechanical and electronic detection, he successfully casts the Arcane Eye ritual, which has a difficulty of one. He suffers \uparrow 1 mental damage and one Dread at its culmination. Had he failed to perform the ritual, he would have instead suffered \uparrow 2 mental damage and two Dread.

The very essence of the Symmetry is as intoxicating as it is powerful, which places the ritualist at serious risk of becoming addicted to its heady influence. A second Willpower test must be attempted should one or more Dark Symmetry Icons be generated when rolling for mental damage, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. Success will mean that the ritualist has resisted the Symmetry's allure, whilst failure will result in their craving for the next attempt at a taste of power. Addicted characters will suffer one Dread for each week that passes during which no attempt has been made to cast a ritual. Symmetry addiction can be treated with a successful use of the Art of Exorcism spell, Exorcise Dark Influence, or similar supernatural effect, although this is something that will obviously carry serious consequences with The Brotherhood.

Rituals are unforgiving to the careless, and Repercussions could range from minor failures (the effect is reversed), to truly lethal or dangerous conditions, such as a ward being damaged or a summoned creature becoming uncontrolled.

RIUAL COMPONENTS: Rituals are somewhat time-consuming and have several components, often bizarre ones. It is unknown why these are needed in order to tap into the powers. Maybe they were put in as a sort of key system in order to assure that those that wished to use the powers were devoted enough, or it might be a human invention that helps the ritualist to focus his mind when shaping and calling upon ambient Symmetry. Ritual circles, also

known as evocation circles, on the ground drawn in chalk, coal, or blood, are the most basic component present in nearly every ritual. The ritualist often stands in the circle in order to focus his powers; at times he needs it to protect himself from the very powers he is summoning. The circles are inscribed with words in the First Voice, speaking the elements of the ritual. Sacrifices, chants, offerings, and tools such as ritual daggers are also quite common. In order to affect individuals, personal objects belonging to the victim, or their blood or hair, or maybe a picture of them, is necessary.

DESCRIPTION: Rituals are described using the following terms:

DIFFICULTY: The basic difficulty

TARGET: What the ritual affects (person, self, area, etc.)

COMPONENTS: Here things such as evocation circles, sacrifices, and other components needed will be described. Unless stated otherwise, when human blood is required it needs to come from someone other than the ritualist.

TIME: How long the ritual takes to perform.

CORRUPTION: This lists the amount of Corruption Damage the ritual causes to all participants. Heretics remain unaffected. The GM should make a corruption roll at the culmination of each ritual, regardless of success or failure, with the number of \uparrow rolled equal to this listed number. The GM may spend a number of Dark Symmetry points in order to add additional \uparrow to the corruption roll, but this expenditure may not exceed ritual's difficulty. Further, each dice that generates a Dark Symmetry Icon allows the GM to immediately roll an additional \uparrow and add the result to the total corruption. Sometimes, opening a door to the Darkness will unleash the floodgates.

EFFECT: Describes what the ritual does and how the ritual is performed. Unless stated otherwise, a ritual cannot be performed multiple times in order to boost the effect. The effect has to wear off before the ritual can be performed again.

ARCANE EYE

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Eye

COMPONENTS: Relatively fresh eye in good shape from a mammal that is roughly the size of a human eye, blood from a mammal.

TIME: 1 hour

CORRUPTION: 2

EFFECT: The ritualist places the eye on an even surface, then inscribes a small invocation circle around it whilst chanting. He weaves a strand of Symmetry, connecting one to the eye and one to his own mind. Thereafter, the eye can be moved and placed at the ritualist's discretion, allowing him to see everything that occurs within line of sight of the eye and hear every sound within thirty meters of it. The sound is picked up as though through a microphone, so whispering can increase the resultant difficulty of Observation tests to overhear the conversation. Focussing on the eye requires a Standard Action to initiate and an act of Concentration to maintain (*Mutant Chronicles* rulebook pg. 170). The eye cannot be detected by any device that is designed to uncover mechanical or electronic surveillance devices, but may be discovered following a successful Daunting D4 Insight or Mysticism test, or by any means that could potentially uncover supernatural powers or effects. The eye remains active for one week and exudes an unnatural and foul aura that is anathema to animals and insects; Animal Handling tests undertaken with trained animals within ten meters of the eye are one step more difficult, whilst untrained animals and insects will completely avoid this sphere of influence (which, in itself, could indicate that something is not quite right). If hidden correctly, it can be used to gain a great deal of information. The ritualist can have a number of Arcane Eyes active equal to his Mental Strength divided by two at any one time. The eye has a range of one hundred kilometres.

BLOOD FOR BLOOD

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Self or other

COMPONENTS: 500 ml human blood that is viable (no more than 3 days old or stored under blood bank conditions) or a smaller live mammal such as a large rat, cat, or small dog which is to be sacrificed.

TIME: 1 hour

CORRUPTION: 2

EFFECT: While sitting or lying down in a trance-like state, the practitioner sacrifices the animal or unstoppers the vial. In either case, he dips his fingers in the blood and begins to trace incantations in the First Voice on his naked skin. If he is performing it on someone else, he simply traces the symbols on their body. This focuses the Dark Symmetry and draws it into the body, where it can be directed to create new tissue and knit together damaged flesh, effectively healing it. Upon successful completion, the caster of the ritual may enable the target to instantly heal 1+ \uparrow 2 Light Wounds to a hit location of the caster's choice, or one Serious Wound. The most severe type of wound must be healed first. Wounds healed in this manner leave behind a dark, puckered, and necrotic scar. A recipient may not benefit from more than one use of this ritual during each 24-hour period.

DON THEIR SKIN

DIFFICULTY: Challenging D2

TARGET: Other or self

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, ritual dagger, four nails or pins, a couple of drops of blood, flakes of skin or strands of hair from the person you wish to imitate, 30 × 30 centimetre human skin that is in good shape. Frozen skin will do.

TIME: 1 hour

CORRUPTION: 3

EFFECT: The ritual is executed in exactly the same manner as Other Skin, but it allows you to perfectly imitate another human being as you use their blood, hair, or skin in the ritual. This is put on the patch of skin used. This ritual will change age, weight, gender, teeth, voice, and everything else down to the fingerprints, allowing the caster to perfectly imitate the person both visually and vocally. This is in effect for twenty-four hours. Mannerisms, accents, and body language are not mimicked, meaning one has to study the person in order to pull off a perfect imitation. But even if someone is acting weird, few people will suspect that they have been copied. Don Their Skin allows the recipient to substitute their Stealth skill for Persuade, Command, or Education tests when impersonating the chosen victim. In addition, if at least one week of study and practice has been undertaken in relation to the mannerisms of the victim by the recipient, the ritual will also provide the Momentum benefits of the Other Skin ritual. It also ends in the same grisly manner as Other Skin, allowing the recipient to peel off the skin and change their body back to its original shape as the Symmetry leaves their flesh.

FLESH OF FIRE

DIFFICULTY: Challenging D2

TARGET: Self or other

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, cup of blood mixed with ashes or dirt.

TIME: 2 hours

CORRUPTION: 2

EFFECT: While in a meditative trancelike state, the ritualist traces symbols of power on the naked flesh of one of his forearms. After the conclusion of the ritual, these symbols are seared into the flesh and create ten runes, written in the First Voice, that resemble bizarre tattoos. With these in place, the ritualist will be able to summon bolts of raw Symmetry, with each bolt so summoned consuming one of the ten tattoos. The bolts can be targetted against anyone

within Close range and inflict 2+**↑**4 damage with the Dreadful and Incendiary 2 qualities. The tattoos will persist for three days or ten uses, whichever occurs first. A Willpower test is required in place of Ranged Weapons when attempting to hit a target with this power.

HARDEN THE WEAVE

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Piece of clothes.

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, a cup of fresh blood from a mammal, the piece of clothing that is going to be imbued.

TIME: 1 hour

CORRUPTION: 1

EFFECT: Using his knowledge to control the Dark Symmetry, the ritualist can temporarily weave it into a piece of clothing. The fabric can be a jacket, a pair of pants, or any other medium sized or smaller garment. The ritualist concentrates and traces several words of power in blood on the fabric. The symbols become invisible at the conclusion of the ritual. The fabric looks and feels as it always did, but it is now capable of withstanding physical attacks. The Symmetry woven into the symbols will flash momentarily when hit with a ranged or melee attack, dampening the impact and trauma. The garment will be able to protect the wearer for twelve hours. Two of these cannot be worn at the same time for greater coverage, as the effects of the Symmetry will cancel each other out. The garment provides Armour Soak 3 to the chosen location. Additionally, reduce the difficulty of Observation tests made to discover the location of the wearer by one during any round in which the garment protects the wearer from harm.

LEGION

DIFFICULTY: Challenging D2

TARGET: Dead body.

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, Summoning circle, a handful of ashes of the dead. A corpse with its head still attached and not too decomposed.

TIME: 3 hours

CORRUPTION: 3

EFFECT: The ritualist places the body in the summoning circle and sprinkles it with the ashes, before moving to stand within the evocation circle. Here he performs a long and focused chant that draws Dark Symmetry down into the corpse. The corpse will undergo a horrific change as the ritual culminates, until it eventually animates; the ritualist has effectively created an Undead Legionnaire (**Mutant**

Chronicles core rulebook pg. 303). The creature has all the same characteristics, but unerringly obeys the ritualist. The creature will exist until it is physically destroyed. A ritualist can have a number of these creatures under his sway at any one time equal to his Mental Strength divided by two.

MALICIOUS HEX

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Individual

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, Blood, hair, or skin from the individual or a clear photo that is no more than one month old and where the face is fully visible. Some paper or fabric. The blood, hair, skin, and photo is burned during the ritual.

TIME: 3 hours.

CORRUPTION: 2

EFFECT: Using paper or fabric, the ritualist cuts a small human shaped form. To this he adds the blood, hair, skin, or photo of the intended victim. The ritualist then chants over a burning brazier whilst holding the effigy. His chants speak of ill will and misfortune. At the end of the ritual he tosses the effigy into the fire. The effects of this ritual are not directly dangerous, but it can cause numerous problems as the Symmetry is woven into a pattern that will surround and harass the victim. It will disrupt his thought patterns and interfere with his performance. The victim will feel tired, sluggish, and forgetful. Not to a degree that he will think that something is genuinely wrong, but rather he feels that he has "one of those days". The victim must succeed at an Average D1 Willpower test in order to avoid gaining the Dazed status effect for 24 hours. The difficulty of the victim's Willpower test may be increased at the time of casting by spending two Momentum to increase the difficulty by one, to a maximum of Daunting D3 and four Momentum.

OTHER SKIN

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Other or self

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, ritual dagger, four nails or pins, a couple of drops of mammal blood, 30 × 30 centimetre human skin that is in good shape. Frozen skin will do.

TIME: 1 hour

CORRUPTION: 1

EFFECT: Sitting in the circle, the ritualist stretches the skin out by nailing it to the floor or a board. He then carves in an invocation with

the dagger which speaks of change. After this he chants and drips the blood over the skin. At the end of the ritual he places the skin over his face. Infused by the Dark Symmetry, the skin envelops the head and the entire body. It will randomly change his appearance. It can change skin colour, complexion, hair and facial features, in addition to providing an untraceable set of fingerprints. His height, weight, eyes, teeth, and voice will remain the same, but age can shift up or down by five to ten years. The recipient of the ritual will generate two bonus Momentum for each extra success on Stealth tests relating to disguise, instead of one. This ritual remains in effect for twenty-four hours. It can also end prematurely if the skin becomes too damaged. When the effect ends, the skin becomes slimy and soft, allowing the ritualist to simply rip each part free. It oozes with a blood coloured sludge as it is torn from the body.

MARK OF CORRUPTION

DIFFICULTY: Challenging D2

TARGET: Other person

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, Blood, hair, or skin from the individual, or a clear photo that is no more than one month old and where the face is fully visible. Some paper or fabric and a burning brazier. The blood, hair, skin, and photo is burned during the ritual.

TIME: 1 hour

CORRUPTION: 1

EFFECT: Using paper or fabric the ritualist cuts a small human-shaped form. To this he adds the blood, hair, skin or photo. The ritualist chants over a burning brazier holding the effigy. He focuses the Dark Symmetry into a mark of corruption, one that will saturate the victim. The ritualist transfers it into the effigy and then burns it, sending the mark of corruption into the victim. The victim himself won't notice a single thing when he is marked. For all intents and purposes he will show as an individual corrupted by the Dark Symmetry, though he is not. This can cause all manner of problems, especially when dealing with the Brotherhood. The mark lasts for twenty-four hours or until someone with the right knowledge removes it.

RUNES OF HARM

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Weapon

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, a cup of blood mixed with ashes or dirt, the weapon to be imbued.

TIME: 2 hours

CORRUPTION: 2

EFFECT: By placing a melee or ranged weapon within the circle, then tracing words of power on it whilst using the mixture, the ritualist is able to infuse it with the raw energy of the Symmetry, which is subsequently released in harmful bursts whenever it is used. The ritual can make even the smallest of weapons very lethal. When an attack hits, a burst of dark flame shoots out from the point of impact, allowing observers an Average D1 Insight or Mysticism test to determine that something unnatural is empowering the weapon. The Weapon gains the Incendiary 1 quality. This quality may be increased by one for every two points of Momentum spent when the ritual is cast. Also at a cost of two Momentum, additional effects may be chosen to supplement this effect as follows: Corrupted 1, Dreadful, or Spread 1. If purchased, the Corrupted and Spread qualities can be increased in a similar manner to the Incendiary quality. The effects of this ritual persist for ten uses of the weapon or five days, whichever occurs first.

SCROLL OF PAIN

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Arc of paper

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, human blood, black feather quill, piece of paper.

TIME: 1 hour

CORRUPTION: 1

EFFECT: The ritualist sits within the circle and chants as he inscribes symbols of pain and fear onto the paper, imbuing it with Dark Symmetry. The symbols are inscribed with blood using the quill. Upon completion, the symbols smoulder and burn into the paper, turning them invisible. This allows one to print or write something else on top of the now hidden symbols. The paper is then folded. The first person that unfolds it and looks at the page will suffer from its effect. When activated, whatever is printed on top of the symbols will burn off and the symbols will become visible with a blood red flash. The victim falls to the ground, screaming as the agony rages through their bodies and appears to suffer a seizure. The scroll inflicts \uparrow 1 damage with the Dreadful, Knockdown, and Stun qualities, plus one additional \uparrow of damage for each Momentum that was spent at the time of casting. A Scroll of Pain retains its power for one week, after which it simply becomes a regular piece of paper. Once it has been activated it is useless.



SENSE CORRUPTION

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Area

COMPONENTS: Crayon, ash or dirt.

TIME: 30 seconds

CORRUPTION: 1

EFFECT: By drawing some quick words concerning revelation and detection in the First Voice on the ground or wall the ritualist can sense if a ritual, Endowment, or Dark Gift has been used within a fifty-meter area within the last twenty-four hours. He can also detect if several powers have been used and which symmetry pattern is the most prevalent. Completing the ritual will allow the caster to subsequently reduce the difficulty of all Insight tests made to detect the use of such powers by one, to a minimum of zero, for the remainder of the scene.

SENSE THE INTRUDER

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Area

COMPONENTS: Writing implement, paint, blood, or anything else that can be used to trace symbols with.

TIME: 5 minutes

CORRUPTION: 1

EFFECT: Chanting whilst tracing a small inconspicuous symbol on the chosen surface allows the ritualist to create a ward. Whenever someone crosses this ward he will sense it, no matter the distance. The ward covers an area that is roughly 25 metres square and will remain active for an hour once it has been triggered, allowing the ritualist to sense if more people pass through. Whilst the ward is still in effect, an Average D1 Insight test can be made to differentiate between individuals and which direction they take when exiting the warded area, which can be increased to Challenging D2 to determine if such individuals are non-human, corrupted, or capable of using mystical powers. The power contained within the ritual will dissipate one hour after being triggered, so the ritual must be performed once again in order for the ward to be re-set. If not activated, the wards are in place indefinitely, or until the ritualist ends it by will. At any one time, the ritualist can have a number of wards activated equal to his Mental Strength divided by two.



TENEBOUS HOWL

DIFFICULTY: Challenging D2

TARGET: Special

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, Summoning Circle, 1 cup of fresh human blood other than the ritualist's, burning brazier.

TIME: 4 hours

CORRUPTION: 3

EFFECT: Using the blood, the ritualist draws a summoning circle. He then sits in his evocation circle and howls in the Dark Voice, into the fire which represents the power of the dimensions. This is quite a rare and dangerous ritual. It shapes the Dark Symmetry into a search pattern through the dimensions, namely Ilian's Wild Realm and the Void. When it finds a Shadow Hound, it snares it and drags it into the summoning circle, where the beast is caught and compelled. The ritualist can ask virtually any favour of the hound which it is capable of performing. In most cases, it is used to hunt down and kill someone. The hound will be available for twelve hours. After the duration the hound will return to its dimension. While it is summoned it is incapable of attacking the ritualist and will do its best to obey its orders, though it will not harm itself. This ritual is not to be taken lightly as it is said that the hound will remember the ritualist and might one day come calling, wanting vengeance for being forced into servitude. This is a rare and powerful ritual.

TRACE THE FLESH

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Person

COMPONENTS: Evocation circle, string tied to a small piece of soft metal, ritual dagger, bowl of water, blood, skin, or hair belonging to the target. The biological matter has to have been obtained freshly no longer than a week ago.

TIME: 1 hour

CORRUPTION: 2

EFFECT: The ritualist carves symbols into the small piece of metal, which locks a small amount of Dark Symmetry into it. He then drops the biological matter taken into the bowl. He then ties the string to the metal and dips it into the bowl, calling upon the symmetry. The water swirls and becomes black and thick as oil. The metal absorbs part of it, using it as a guide to the dark energies. While holding the newly created talisman, the ritualist can make an Average D1 Observation test in order to trace the target to all locations that they have visited during the last three days. The talisman will actually pull

SHADOW HOUND

These shape-changing hounds are extremely versatile. In their natural state, they are hulking, killer beasts, whirlwinds of teeth and claws. However, they are seldom seen in this fearsome state unless they are about to strike, are on guard in a citadel, or are hunting down prey inter-dimensionally, such as when taking part in the Wild Hunt. In their natural form they are gigantic dogs of war. Their mouths are filled with rows of razor sharp teeth, and they have long, wicked claws that can rend metal asunder. They stand 150 centimetres to the withers, and have huge, bulky muscles. Their skin is rock hard and covered by thick black fur, which shimmers with the colour of the void and is marked by the symbol of Ilian. The more symbols a dog possesses, the higher its rank.

When in human worlds, each Shadow Hound can morph into a specific breed of dog. They use this ability to infiltrate human families and areas, and many strays that are picked up are, in fact, Shadow Hounds. In their role as innocent pets they can gather information, track marks, and act as strategically positioned sleeper agents. The breed they can morph into often reflects their standing within the pack. Some of the most ferocious and strong pack leaders might have a morphed form of a Mini Pincher or Chihuahua, while lesser members can morph into larger breeds. This might seem strange, but the smaller the dog breed, the more likely it is that a family will take it home. This means pack leaders are often taken into a home, sometimes one of political standing, while lesser members are more likely to be picked up and used as junkyard dogs, or not picked up at all.

SHADOW HOUND ▲

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
13 (+1)		13		11		13 (+1)	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
6		7		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	1	3	3	2	2	-	-

WOUNDS: 6 (Trooper)

SOAK: Iron-Hard Flesh: (All 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Slavering Jaws (melee):** 2+**↑**5, Gruesome, Vile
- ◀ **Rending Claws (melee):** 2+**↑**5, Armour Piercing 2, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Fear (1)**
- ◀ **Glamour:** Shadow Hounds can switch between their natural form and the form of an ordinary breed of dog. It takes a Free Action to make this change, which does not alter the Shadow Hound's powers in any way, except that it loses the Fear (1) ability while disguised. Shadow Hound Alphas are able to transform into smaller breeds.
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Soul Tracker:** A Shadow Hound can track by sensing the soul of a creature, and is able to follow that soul across dimensions. Once a Shadow Hound has observed a creature, it can forever more attempt a Challenging D2 Observation test in order to determine where that creature is.
- ◀ **Prowl Across Dimensions:** Shadow Hounds can travel freely between Ilian's realms and the material universe, and are able to cross the boundaries of dimensions at will. It takes a Standard Action to cross these boundaries. When a Shadow Hound crosses into a dimension, it may appear anywhere except locations that are warded against Darkness (such as cathedrals).



Shadow Hounds, in their natural form, participate in the Wild Hunt.

in the correct direction and track the locations in chronological order. Repercussions may lead to false guidance or worse; the ritualist must be careful as it will take time to backtrack a person and the tugging of the talisman is likely to draw attention.

WARD THE GRIMOIRE

DIFFICULTY: Average D1

TARGET: Grimoire

COMPONENTS: Grimoire

TIME: 1 hour

CORRUPTION: 1

EFFECT: This ritual has been specifically designed to guard the grimoire of a ritualist. The ritualist simply lays his hands on the book and chants for an hour. After this the ritualist will always sense in what direction his grimoire is within a one hundred kilometre radius. Those who unlawfully touch it will suffer terrible pain and horrible visions. These are near crippling but not harmful and the ritualist will be aware that someone has touched it. This ritual also leaves the grimoire extremely tough and hardy. Nigh indestructible, it is immune to water damage and fire damage, and resistant to most types of physical and mystical attack. The effects are permanent. Characters touching the grimoire without permission must attempt an Average D1 Willpower test, although the difficulty of this Willpower test may be increased at the time of casting by spending two Momentum to increase the difficulty by one, to a maximum of Daunting D3 and four Momentum. Failure causes the victim to suffer a mental assault and gain the Dazed status effect for 1d6 rounds, whilst any Dark Symmetry Icons generated when rolling for Mental Wounds will also inflict the Staggered condition for a number of rounds equal to the number of **T** rolled. Additionally, the grimoire gains the Inured to Heat quality and ignores the first X damage from any source, supernatural or otherwise, where X is equal to one plus the amount of Momentum spent to increase the difficulty of the Willpower test associated with touching the grimoire.



Ward the grimoire takes effect on a Brotherhood investigator.

MAJOR RITUALS

Roving Heretics seldom use these as they tend to work alone and generally don't support the agenda of the Dark Legion as such. When used in a game, these do not have any mechanics and are more a story hook and a concept than anything else. Major rituals are those ancient and extremely powerful ones that often require several participants, very hard to get components, and human sacrifices. In most cases, they can only be performed on rare occasions such as during eclipses or particular dates.

These rituals are very powerful and can be the focus of a story. They are capable of opening portals through which incredibly powerful beings might come, or they might even have the ability to turn the population of an entire block into Undead Legionnaires. In a heretic campaign or story the goal of the heretics is to make the ritual happen in the name of their dark masters. Those that participate rarely have to have any other skill than the rudimentary understanding of the First Voice.

SEEDS OF DARKNESS

RELICS

There is a myriad of relics out there and they come in many shapes and sizes. When most people think about relics of the Dark Legion they envision amulets, weapons, and otherworldly objects marked by the First Voice. However, there are two types of relics: Crafted and Born. Crafted are the ones people most often refer to when the subject of relics comes up. These have been created deliberately and given specific properties. Born relics have been formed out of circumstance and can come in any shape, size, or form. The death of powerful Heretics or other creatures, as well as areas used for ritual and ritualistic killings in the name of the Apostles, are typical things that can give rise to a relic. Corrupted people that, in their most desperate hour and in their death, turn from the Light and accept the darkness into their souls, are also capable of giving rise to a born relic. Overall, relics are quite uncommon, especially in the cities, but they are quite useful.

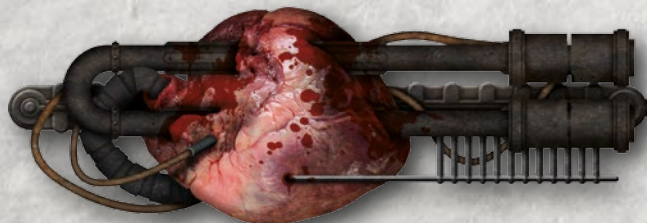
All relics pose a risk to the uncorrupted, whilst Born relics can pose a danger even to Heretics, as the powers they contain consist of Symmetry patterns created out of raw and uncontrolled human emotion. Born relics are most often unique items that will never be recreated due to the fact that special circumstances have created them. The four attributes that describe a relic are listed below:

TYPE: This simply describes if it is a Born or Crafted relic.

BENEFIT: Shows the positive effects and abilities of the relic. These will become available to the user.

DRAWBACK: Some relics have a drawback. This is almost always the case with Born relics. These affect the user detrimentally.

CORRUPTION: Shows the risk of corruption for non-Heretics that use the relic. The number listed is the Corruption Damage that is rolled each time the Relic is used.



HAND OF ARIEL HEINRICH

TYPE: Born

BENEFIT: So long as it is in their possession, the owner of the hand will increase the damage of any bladed melee weapon he wields by $\uparrow 3$, whilst additionally increasing the TN of all such attacks by two.

DRAWBACK: The user suffers from a terrible blood rage. He can become prone to killing enemies that are at his mercy following a fight, or may even feel the overwhelming urge to continue attacking those nearby, even if they are not considered to be enemies. The user must succeed at a Challenging D2 Willpower test in order to resist attacking the nearest individual should all opponents within Reach be considered to be dead or dying. A similar test must be made in order to accept an opponent's surrender.

CORRUPTION: 2

Ariel was a Bauhaus noble with a flair for sword fighting. Her father always wanted a boy but when his wife gave birth to a daughter he was just as happy. However, he didn't see why he couldn't teach his daughter the very same thing that he would teach a son. So fencing became Ariel's passion.

Ariel's noble house had been involved in a vendetta with another house, the Koch. When Ariel was twenty she came home to find her entire family slaughtered and she found an engraved ring that one of the perpetrators had dropped. It bore the mark of the Koch family. Ariel picked up her sabre and went looking for revenge.

Consumed by vengeance she cut a bloody path through the Koch family; killing men, women, and children. Jensen Koch, the head of the family, managed to mortally wound her. As Ariel died she called upon the powers of the Apostles, asking for them to grant her the strength to finish what she had started. She had always believed in the Light, but in her final moments she called upon the Darkness. Still dying and riddled by bullets, Ariel managed to stagger across the room and disembowel Jensen, killing him, before dying just moments after.

It is unknown how the hand was severed and put in circulation, but it is out there somewhere. It is severed at the wrist and all the flesh still remains upon it. The flesh is petrified, with a hard waxy surface.



A Heretic invokes Ariel Heinrich's hand to defeat a Mishiman Samurai in combat.

VEIL OF THE APOSTLES

TYPE: Crafted

BENEFIT: Any attempts at sensing corruption or Dark Symmetry in the wearer are two steps more difficult.

DRAWBACK: None

CORRUPTION: 1

These come in all shapes and sizes, but, in most cases, they come in the form of jewellery. Rings, amulets, and bracelets are the most common. These are quite hard to come by as they are difficult to craft. The relic has several runes carved into it but these are often placed so they cannot be spotted.

THE BLOOD CANVAS

TYPE: Born

BENEFIT: The user can summon forth two Figments, which he can then send after his enemies. They may only be summoned once every five days, and may only be used to carry out the owner's blood-letting. They will fight until they are destroyed, at which point their essence will teleport and return into the Blood Canvas.

DRAWBACK: The user must succeed at a Challenging D2 Willpower test each time the canvas is used in order to avoid a mental assault.

CORRUPTION: 3

This large painting was created by Gabriel Slocomb. Gabriel lived in Luna City and was an artist that tried to support himself by driving a cab. He was also a vile serial killer. He kidnapped his victims and killed them by draining their blood. He used the blood in his paint mixes. He only killed people that were exceptionally beautiful or had some sort of special talent or gift, believing that their qualities would make his art even better. His mission was to capture

the very essence of the Dark Symmetry in a painting. Gabriel created the Blood Canvas, unwittingly weaving his malice and madness into the very painting, mixing it with the Dark Symmetry. In a way, he had performed a ritual, though he didn't know it, by binding two Figments into the painting.

The painting depicts a burning lake of flesh and blood where two twisted figures emerge, screaming in rage and pain. If human blood comes in contact with the canvas, the person that the blood belongs to will see the figures in the painting look at him. He will be informed how he can use the painting through visions and dreams. Each use requires that the person splashes some blood on the canvas, which it will absorb. He then has to place his hand on the canvas and visualise the person or persons he wants to kill. The figures in the painting will then hiss and crawl down into the lake of fire and blood. They will be teleported close to where the target is and do their best to kill him. In most cases they try to do so when the victim is alone. When they succeed, or if they are killed, they will simply vanish and reappear in the painting, crawling up from the lake to take their original poses.

After Gabriel was killed by the police in a shootout, all his things were sold. The painting hangs at the back of an antiquarian book shop in Luna City, collecting dust.

FIGMENT

Figments are small creatures, standing between one to one and a half meters tall. They are fomented from the mind of the crazed by the Distillers. When spewed forth, they are a revolting, quivering puddle of smouldering blackish liquid flesh. Within seconds, they grow to full size.

Figments are predatory, violent creatures, and are created out of pure madness. They act without apparent rhyme or reason, hiding in the shadows and dark alleys, and seemingly attacking victims at random. Some pledge allegiances to mad and enraged street people, acting as their angels of vengeance, and attacking those that their new master deem to have wronged them. As their master is psychotic, this can be just about anyone.

Figments cannot go out on their own until the Distiller that created them allows it. Until they are set free, they serve their creator blindly. Most Distillers keep a couple of Figments close by, often hiding in the ductwork or underground basement sections of their place of work.

Figments have an utterly morbid and unsettling appearance. They take on aspects of the delusions and traumas of the mind they were distilled from, so are often a mesh of human faces and monstrous



Figments are the monsters under the bed.

delusions. Their bodies are twisted and fleshy, and when all aspects come together, they look like large, deformed fetuses. They attack with their needle like claws and teeth, spewing forth random sentence fragments from the memories of the minds they were birthed from.

FIGMENT


ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
9	7	12	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	6	6	5

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	-	-	-	-	-

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◀ **Needle-Like Claws and Fangs (melee):** 1+3, 1H, Dreadful

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Inured to Pain**
- ◀ **Scuttling Climb:** A Figment can climb freely on any surface—sheer walls and ceilings—and contort itself through tight spaces without regard for the normal structure of a human body.
- ◀ **Slave to Symmetry (3)**
- ◀ **Unliving**

LANTERN OF JOHANNES BERG

TYPE: Born/Crafted

BENEFIT: Anyone who holds this in their hands and illuminates a person standing no more than ten meters away is able to reveal corruption. The wielder must pass an Average D1 Insight test whilst concentrating on the effect as though it were a spell (**Mutant**

Chronicles rulebook pg. 170). If successful, those with corruption in their soul (such as Heretics), Dark Legion creatures in human form, or anyone suffering from Tainted Mental Wounds will be revealed as revolting and festering creatures. Their skin sags and rots, eyes become blood red, and dark ichor begins to ooze from the mouth and nose. Only the holder of the lantern will see this, and only in a momentary flash. The more corruption a creature carries, the worse the vision will appear.

DRAWBACK: Unless they succeed at a Willpower test, those who use this will suffer from horrid hallucinations for 1d6+2 hours, or nightmares should they go to sleep. The difficulty of the Willpower test is determined by the severity of the vision of corruption: Average D1 for someone carrying Tainted Mental Wounds, Challenging D2 for Heretics and cultists, Daunting D3 or greater for creatures of Darkness and Nepharites. The visions are not dangerous as such, but they can be very disturbing and interfere with the individual; the GM has the final say on which conditions are imposed, if appropriate. A Repercussion on the Willpower test could even lead to a Mind Render (**Mutant Chronicles** rulebook page 331) becoming torn free of the sleeper's nightmare.

CORRUPTION: 1

Johannes Berg was an Inquisitor given the task of tracking down a Heretic known only as the Marked One. The Marked One was responsible for many atrocities and was extremely elusive. Johannes hunted him all over the solar system for years. On three occasions he managed to confront him, but each time the Marked One nearly killed him. Johannes was a powerful Inquisitor but the Marked One was even more powerful. Johannes was nearly driven mad by the hunt and his inability to bring the Marked One down. So he began to research forbidden lore. He had heard that the Marked One and his creatures hid among the homeless, hiding in plain sight. Using the First Voice and rituals he crafted the lantern. Desperate, he also used rituals to give himself the power to wield dark flames and imbued his sword with the powers of the Apostles. With his new relic he searched for weeks, wading through the filth of the dark alleys. In the end, he found the Marked One. But as he did, he found that he didn't want to kill him. His mind and soul had been corrupted by his grim arts and relics. Johannes became an apostate, serving the Dark Legion. His relics were scattered and destroyed after he died some years later. But the lantern survived. The relic's current whereabouts are unknown.



ROVING HERETIC

Three bodies laid contorted, broken and torn on the cold concrete floor in the old abandoned parking garage. They were illuminated by the bleak beam of the forensic floodlights. Detective Nina Bukowski with the Luna PD knelt down next to one of the bodies. Farley, the lead forensic technician, was kneeling next to her.

"By Durand, what the hell hit him, a truck?" Nina asked, not fully serious.

Farley gave her a lopsided smile as he continued to take the prints of the dead man. "Sure looks like it, but I bet you one hundred Cardinals that these guys died just the same way as the others. They are, in all likelihood, soldiers for some organised crime syndicate, just like the others as well."

Nina sighed as she looked at the three bodies. She was sure that these guys were organised crime. This made it nine. Nine criminals that had been killed during the last two months. All had been brutally beaten to death during some kind of deal and probably ripped off. Some had been armed with pistols or SMGs but had only been able to get a few rounds off, hitting nothing. When Nina walked into the first crime scene she thought that it was simply a deal gone wrong, a fluke that an unarmed group had got the drop on two armed men and been lucky enough not to get shot. But, on the second crime scene about a month later, there had been four downed men, three of them armed. They too had been beaten to death. By then, Nina felt that there was something strange going on. But it wasn't like she could call in the Brotherhood for this kind of thing. Her gut told her that it was something unnatural, but her gut wasn't enough. There were no obvious signs of heretic activity.

She examined the bodies visually. Multiple broken bones, severe compound fractures that had forced bone through flesh. One of the men have had his face more or less obliterated. It was a bloody convex crater of mashed flesh and splintered bone. She leaned in closer. She wasn't sure but it looked like there was an actual fist imprint in there. That would mean that the wound hadn't been created as the result of multiple trauma, but as a result of a single blow, which was humanly impossible.

"Farley, I want a casting of this imprint," she said.

"Huh? You want me to make a casting of what is left of this guy's face? Why?"

"Just humour me, okay?" Nina tossed her head slightly to the side in order to get rid of the dark bangs that hung over her eyes. She lit a cigarette and felt the frustration come over her. She would go through the motions but she didn't feel she could do much here at the moment. She would have to wait for the identification of the dead and the medical reports. But she could imagine that the IDs would only lead them to a crime syndicate with tight-lipped thugs that wouldn't say a peep about what they knew about their now dead colleagues.



The office was quiet but never empty. The North 24th precinct of Luna PD wasn't the safest of areas. Gangland slayings, kidnappings, and ritual murders were all part of it. Nina had been a detective for five years. She paid her dues on the streets as a patrolling officer for seven years before being promoted and she had seen a lot of horrible things. Now she was thirty-three. She made a name for herself as a capable detective with good instincts, not being able to clear what looked like a simple gang shooting or robbery wouldn't look good on her jacket.

Nina lit another smoke while she sat at her desk. She took out the bottle of single malt Victorian Rye she kept in the second drawer. Imperial folks could be a bit stuck up, but their clansmen sure knew their way around the distillery. She fortified her coffee with a few corks and continued with her work.

The bodies had been identified, three local crime syndicate soldiers. For the last couple of hours, she had been reading their files and the files of their associates. Her desk was brimming with file folders, pizza cartons, and mug shots, but she had come up with nothing. It was two o'clock at night and Farley hadn't called. He had promised her a hurry-up with the autopsies and medical examination even though he was busy. Well, if he was dragging his ass, she had to put a fire under it. She picked up the phone and called down to the morgue. No answer. Dammit, she would have to drive down there herself.



It had started to rain. Nina parked the car and walked into the building. The morgue was just a couple of blocks down the street. It was located in the basement of the district's administrative storage building. It was a small, ancient, sandstone structure wedged in between some newer, larger buildings. Nina walked inside and took the stairs down.

She walked down the catacomb-like corridor and passed several autopsy rooms before she came to the one Farley worked in. Nina walked through the door.

"Okay Farley, you better be finished with those stiff. And that cast of his face. Because..." Nina stopped in her tracks. Farley was on the floor. He seemed to be breathing, but unconscious. On one of the slabs, the guy with no face had been laid out and next to the body stood a man. He was tall and wiry and wore a dark suit. He was about her age. He stood awkwardly bent over the body and was cutting into the face with a scalpel. Nina drew her Bolter M13.

"Luna PD, don't move!"

"Detective Nina Bukowski." The man said, not missing a beat or taking his eyes off what he was doing.

Nina was stumped. Who was this guy and how did he know her? She moved closer, gun trained on him.

"Stop whatever sick crap you're doing and let go of the blade. What the hell did you do to Farley?"

"I'm soon done here. And your colleague is fine. He will be up and at it in a while. I just knocked him out," he said and seemed completely unfazed. Nina cocked the gun.

"Drop it or I will shoot you."

Finally, the man looked up. His intensely green eyes reinforced the slight smile he beamed at her.

"You've forced my hand."

Nina was used to reacting to people drawing guns at her, or people coming at her with a knife, but she hesitated when the man hurled a bolt of sickly, blue flame at her from his hand. She didn't even get off a shot. The flame hit her gun hand and the pain was incredible. The gun fell out of her hand. Within a blink of an eye he was upon her. He

grabbed her by the throat with one hand and held the other next to her face. She could feel the heat coming off it and see a faint blue light beneath the skin along with glowing tattooed symbols on his forearm.

"I'm not going to kill you and I am sorry for burning you, but you left me with little choice. We can help each other. We have similar goals at the moment," the man said calmly. Nina wanted to break free but she had never been face to face with a heretic before, and she was sure that he was one. He just shot blue flame at her from his hand and who knew what the hell he would do if she tried to move. Still, she didn't buckle.

"We have nothing in common, heretic," she hissed, angrily.

Her attacker almost looked hurt. "Heretic? No that is not what I am. I don't serve the Apostles or the darkness."

The whole thing felt surreal. What just happened? Farley was out on the floor and the conversation she was having went beyond unreal.

The man continued to speak to her. "Now, I will let you go and I want you to move far over there by the wall, away from your gun. Keep your hands where I can see them. Don't yell, don't try to run, and don't try to come at me. I am soon finished here and then I will be on my way."

With that he let her go and nodded in the direction he wanted her to go. She moved slowly and kept her hands up. When she was backed up against the wall he moved back to the body and continued. She looked at him as he cut off some hair and placed it in a bag. Next he drew some blood which he poured in a bottle. And lastly he dug into the fleshy crater with the scalpel.

"I am in luck today," he said merrily, as he managed to pull out an intact eye from the mess.

Nina felt revulsion. "What the hell are you doing? You're sick!"

"I am simply gathering components. And eyes are very useful for a number of things. I think I can find the people who did this. But I might need your help when I do. Just think about it. I can help you solve this case detective."

"I. Don't. Help. Heretics." As she said it, she could feel herself grow angrier and angrier.



SEEDS OF DARKNESS

"I am not a heretic and I have never been one. It is hard to explain..." He stopped talking, and cocked his head with a blank face, as if he had heard something. He turned to her.

"Time to go, you will be getting some company." He moved toward her and she pressed herself against the wall. He placed a paper card in her hand.

"If you want my help, come to this address. I won't be there, but I will know when you are and I will contact you. I am taking a big risk with you here, but something tells me that you and I can make quite the team. Nice meeting you detective." With that he was out the door. Nancy ran after him, scooping up her gun from the floor as she went and ran out in the corridor with the weapon raised.

"Hey, take it easy!" In front of her stood a frightened janitor and Nancy was pointing his gun directly at him. She pulled her gun down.

"Did you see him? Where did he go?" She said with her heart pounding from the adrenaline.

"It's just me."



The Inquisitor's voice was booming and resonated throughout the room electronically distorted by his helmet.

"Detective Bukowski, tell me again exactly what this heretic was doing with the body."

Nina sat in the police station interrogation room. The Inquisitor stood on the other side of the table. He was massive in his full armor and it was marked with the name Daniel. Nina had always been unnerved by them. She was worried that one single thought of doubt in the light would register and have them come down on her with full force. And now she had landed in the middle of one of their investigations. She cleared her throat.

"He was drawing blood, taking hair and... He removed an eye, sir. Said it could be useful. And he..."

"And he what?" Brother Daniel said impatiently.

"I accused him of being an heretic and he said he wasn't

one. He seemed almost insulted at the notion and was very adamant to point out that he didn't serve the darkness or the Apostles. In fact, he went so far as to tell me that he had never been a heretic, sir." Nina felt her voice tremble slightly. She was nervous. And that damn helmet the Inquisitor wore made it impossible for her to read him.

"So you had a conversation with him?" He said sternly. Nina swallowed hard.

"No sir, not as such. When he spoke I saw it best to answer as he might have killed me if I didn't. But sir, why would he try to convince me that he wasn't a heretic? And why didn't he kill me or Farley?" Nina rubbed her now bandaged hand where the flame had hit her. "He could easily have killed me instead of disarming me. Sir."

Brother Daniel was quiet for a long time and it more than made her nervous, it scared her. Maybe she had said too much, maybe he was contemplating dragging her away to one of their interrogation cells? Finally, he spoke.

"Why these vile corrupted beings do what they do is not always clear. But consider yourself lucky that he didn't kill you. Be sure to go to the cathedral and accept the light into your heart so the closeness to the darkness does not taint and corrupt you. Is there anything else you can tell me? Did he say anything else?"

"No, sir." Nina lied, not knowing why or even how she dared to do so.

"Then I thank you for your cooperation. Be sure to send a copy of your report to our administration as soon as it is finished." Brother Daniel left the room. Nina sat there for a while. In her clenched fist she held the piece of paper the man at the morgue had given her. She had neglected to mention the whole bit about the help he had offered her, and that he had given her a way to contact him. This was dangerous territory, potential deadly and soul-damning territory. But something told her that the man wasn't a heretic. And she wanted to clear these goddamn murders. She looked down at the note. She would give it a few days to make sure that the good brothers hadn't put a tail on her, then she would go to the address. In a way, she realized that it probably was the worst and most dangerous decision she had ever made. But still her gut told her to do it. And she always listened to her gut.

THE VAULT OF INFAMY

DAMNED TO INFAMY

There are many Heretics, but some stick out as they have made their mark or have a particular role to play. The Vault of Infamy will show off some of these individuals with their background, personality and stats. These Heretics have attained some notoriety and rank, and thus should always have an important part to play. Since most are of a high rank and have been Heretics for quite some time, these men and women are often inhuman and callous; most of their humanity has been burned out through years of corruptive influences. Many even come from a background that left them damaged, morally broken, and mentally unstable before being seduced by the Darkness. Most, if not all, carry insidious implants and powers of the Dark Apostles; although comprehensive rules for each listing are provided here, more in-depth descriptions of the range of augmentations available to Heretics can be found within the pages of the *Dark Soul Sourcebook*.

CHARLIE DANVERS

AFFILIATION: Algeroth

BACKGROUND: Charlie grew up in San Dorado, son to a “whore-mongering, degenerate gambler”. His mother died while giving birth to him. When Charlie was five his father sold their house to pay off his bookies. They moved from one dirty motel to another. Young Charlie hated the drunken women companions of his father and spent as much time he could in school or out just wandering the streets. But due to his father’s erratic lifestyle, he stopped going to school at the age of ten. It was just too much of a hassle changing schools several times a year. His father constantly moved them around trying to keep out of reach of various leg-breakers whose bosses he owed money to.

When Charlie was thirteen, his father ran out of luck and was beaten to death in their motel room by two masked collectors after failing to pay one time too many. Charlie saw the whole thing; he was frozen with fear as the men mashed his father to bits with baseball bats. Spattered with blood and in shock, Charlie remained catatonic until the cops came three hours later.

Charlie became a ward of the state and was transferred to the shamefully inferior social services of San Dorado. During his first years he was moved from foster family to foster family. During this time, he was subjected to all manner of vile abuse. At the age of fifteen he took up weightlifting as a way to rid himself of his

frustration and by sixteen had grown quite a lot. When one of his foster parents tried to hit him with a belt for taking a snack before dinner, all his repressed anger spilled over. He beat the man to an inch of his life and then finished the job by snapping his neck. In a near-psychotic rage, no doubt partially fuelled by the steroids he had begun juicing up on, he proceeded to kill everyone in the house with his bare hands. The youngest was only ten and the oldest was his stepmother who was forty-five. All in all, he killed four people that night. Charlie walked away and never looked back.

Due to his violent nature and strength he survived by robbing people, beating them down and stealing what they had. Soon he was noticed by organised crime, and he was hired as an enforcer at the age of nineteen. He was now like the men that killed his father, but the irony escaped him. For years, he was a loyal soldier. He was in and out of jail, but managed to avoid being caught for anything serious and never served more than a few months.

During what should have been a routine collection of money owed by a gambler, he found himself in trouble. After he kicked down the door to the guy’s apartment he was attacked. The guy he was supposed to tune up rushed him—but it was strange. Even though the guy weighed twenty kilos less than Charlie and was out of shape, he somehow got the upper hand. The man picked him up by his collar and threw him clean across the room. As Charlie looked up and saw the dark black flames engulf the now-smiling man’s hands, he realised he was facing a Heretic. He had been helpless before, the day his father died and all those years he suffered abuse. Never again. With a rage exceeding even the one he felt that night in the foster home, he jumped up and rushed the man. Realising that he was a dead man either way, he took his decision. Charlie would rather die fighting than helpless on his knees. With this thought in mind he wrapped his arms around the man as the flames engulfed him and sent himself and his enemy out the fifth storey window.

Charlie awoke several hours later in a dank apartment. He was sore, but patched up and alive. Miraculously he had survived, falling through an awning and landing on the roof of a car. The Heretic hadn’t been so lucky and been impaled on a wrought iron fence. As he sat up, both legs and several ribs broken, he saw a woman sitting in the shadows. Before he managed to ask who she was and how he got to the apartment she spoke to him. *“You are very impressive. It seems that you freed up a position in our ranks all on your own. Do you want the job? Algeroth will grant you powers beyond your wildest dreams.”* Charlie smiled, nodded and laid back down.



Charlie Danvers removes an obstacle.

For nearly ten years Charlie has been one of the most prized enforcers and street soldiers of the cult of Algeroth on Mars. He thoroughly enjoys maiming and killing people and the cult uses him when they need someone brutally killed, have to deal with the criminal world, or in cases where they need to set an example by killing someone with excessive sadism. In many ways, Charlie does what he always does, murder people and apply physical pressure; but these days he has access to Endowments, Dark Gifts, and is backed up by a powerful otherworldly organisation.

DESCRIPTION: Charlie was damaged beyond belief going in. He is driven by little else than his sadism, brutality, and blood thirst. He is loyal to the cult and is quite high-ranking, but he views them more as a criminal organisation he owes his loyalty to. The years have taught him some patience and he is not as quick to take to violence as he once was. This is, however, not due to a lack of desire to do so at every opportunity, rather it is a pragmatic choice. Doing a good job and serving his cult comes first. He is still quick to anger and has a juvenile sense of pride. He does not take insults, challenges to his manhood, or threats very well. At heart he is a violent sadistic psychopath with a measure of self-control and he is unknowingly repeating the cycle of his own life, inflicting his pain on others.

Charlie is big and grotesquely muscled. Before becoming a Heretic, he had a very impressive physique, but due to the manifestation of the Stigmata of his Muscle Augmentation, he is unnaturally bulky. He stands two metres tall and keeps his dirty blonde hair cropped short. His face and knuckles are scarred from the hundreds of altercations he has seen, but new scars are unlikely to form as he recently was given the Regeneration implant.

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
14		12		10		8	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
8		8		8		8	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 5** ▶◀ **Torso 10**
- ◀▶ **Arms 6** ▶◀ **Legs 8**
- ◀▶ **Serious 9** ▶◀ **Critical 6**
- ◀▶ **Mental 8**

SOAK: Heavy civilian shoulder pads and ballistic trench coat
(Head 2, Arms 4, Torso 2, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Brass Knuckles (melee):** 1+**↑**7, 1H, Vicious 1
- ◀▶ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+**↑**3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Bare Knuckle Brawler:** Full of rage and aggression, Charlie will often let his knuckles find a resolution to his emotions. He may re-roll up to four **↑** when making an unarmed attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, the Momentum cost to disarm an opponent is reduced by one, whilst he also gains the ability to spend one Momentum on gaining hold of the very item that his target has dropped. Further, when spending Momentum for the Called Shot benefit on an attack made with the Unarmed Combat skill, each point of Momentum may be spent to shift the hit location roll by up to two points, instead of one. Finally, his Unarmed Combat attacks gain the Knockdown and Stun weapon qualities.
- ◀▶ **Muscular Augmentation:** The sinews and muscles of Danvers' body are enhanced with steel-hard fibres, alchemical steroids, and stranger treatments. This massively increases his physical prowess, allowing him to perform astonishing feats of strength. He increases his Strength attribute by one (already included in his profile). This change is permanent—the changes can never be undone—and it affects all stats that derive from Strength (wounds and melee damage bonus).
- ◀▶ **Personal Dark Symmetry (3)**
- ◀▶ **Regeneration Implant:** A complex system of necrotechnological glands secrete bizarre substances into Charlie's bloodstream, accelerating the body's natural healing processes. He heals at a startling rate, allowing him to recover from all but the most devastating injuries. He gains three bonus Dark Symmetry

points on all Resistance tests for natural healing, and he only requires a minute's rest in order to attempt a Resistance test for natural healing, regardless of the level of injury. This implant has no effect on poisons or diseases.

- ◀▶ **Skeletal Reinforcement:** The structure and composition of the Charlie's bones has been altered, making them far denser and more able to withstand trauma. He increases his Serious Wounds and Critical Wounds by one each (already included in his profile).
- ◀▶ **Subdermal Armour:** Impact and piercing resistant pads of synthetic cartilage are grafted beneath Charlie's skin, improving his resistance to harm. This Implant provides him with one point of Armour Soak to all locations (already included in his profile).

DELICIE HECKART

AFFILIATION: Demnogonis

BACKGROUND: Delcie grew up in Heimbürg, her young years privileged and protected. She was a part of the House Salvatore. At a very young age, before her teens, her father Adam brought her with him to many of the Salvatore laboratories. He was one of the more prominent researchers, working together with his younger brother Carl. Though part of the absolute elite of Bauhaus, House Salvatore has a dark reputation as they are involved in the development of chemical and biological weapons manufacturing and biological experimentation. These experiments are frowned upon by the Brotherhood and closely monitored by the Cartel. Delcie watched and learned when her father brought her to his work. It fascinated her and, when she became old enough, she went to the university to study chemistry and biology. With her razor-sharp intellect she had managed to take her doctorate by the age of twenty-two and joined her father as his right hand in the laboratories.

The years went by as father and daughter worked side by side. They did great work together, and were responsible for great strides in science. Both of them loved the intricacy of the work and the medical applications and wished to use their findings to better the life of mankind. As with many scientific discoveries their inventions could be used for good, but it could also be used for military ends. Delcie and her father worked in a department that wasn't officially part of the military research branch of the Salvatore labs. They were interested in medical research that could save lives.

A small mining colony was attacked by what were believed to be anarchist terrorists. They used a biological weapon which killed all the miners and their families: Men, women, and children, one hundred and fifty-two of them. The weapon had induced a non-communicable acute haemorrhagic fever. When Delcie and her father heard about it they were curious as they had been working on a vaccine for Venusian Jungle Fever (see **Mutant Chronicles** core rulebook page.313) using vectors found in hemorrhagic fever.



Delcie never sleeps. The work is all important.

They had samples from the strain in the bodies sent to them. They were shocked to discover that the strain was an exact match to the one they had engineered in their laboratory to be used to extract the vaccine vector. This meant that someone had stolen a sample from their lab and used it to kill.

Not willing to bring shame over the entire house and have their research shut down, they did their own quiet investigation in hopes of finding the leak and bringing the guilty party to justice. Just a week after they had instigated their investigation the Ministry of Justice came calling, arresting Delcie's father. They found evidence that he was the one who sold the strain to anarchists. He was arrested, tried, and executed for treason. Delcie was distraught as she knew that her father had been set up. Delcie got part of the blame as she had helped her father investigate in secret. She was excluded from the Salvatore family, dishonoured, and stripped of her title and excluded from the house of Salvatore. Her uncle Carl, her father's younger brother, was made chief of the lab and sole heir to the family's riches. At that moment she knew. Carl was the one who sold the strain and when he was on the verge of being discovered he had framed her father. Carl had always been envious of Delcie's father and of Delcie.

Distraught and forced to live in squalor after being dishonoured, she was approached by a man who made her an offer. A life of dignity, a chance to work in a high-end laboratory where she could do good and use her intellect, and the chance of revenge. Unwittingly, Delcie had been recruited by the cult of Demnogonis. She worked in a laboratory just outside Heimburg, a front for the cult. For years she worked there, at the beginning thinking she was doing good. During these years the cult influenced her, used her anger and hatred of her uncle to corrupt her. When her mind had been flooded with hate and she no longer cared about doing good and only about vengeance, they revealed the truth. Delcie gladly joined them.

CHAPTER 10

She is now thirty-three years old and has been a member of the cult for four years. She has risen fast within the cult and works closely with the Biophages. So far, Delcie has not killed her uncle, but she has killed his wife and two children by using a strain of haemorrhagic fever specifically designed to only affect them. Now she is in the process of ruining his laboratory. She wants to take away everything he loves and owns, get him excluded as she was, and then kill him.

DESCRIPTION: Delcie was an altruist but, thanks to what she has experienced and through the corruption she has embraced, she has become somewhat of an intellectually cold machine. Her main emotion is hatred aimed at her uncle, otherwise she is considerably cold, collected, and efficient. She develops all manner of strains and weapons for the cult but she cares little for what her work will lead to. In reality, she doesn't care that much about the march of the Dark Legion. According to her logic, the cult uses her for her skills and she uses them to continue on her path of revenge. She doesn't realise that she is indeed indoctrinated and very loyal. Delcie is not a sadist or unnecessarily cruel when dealing with her enemies or when performing experiments. Though if ordered, she will devise weapons that kill slowly and painfully, and when necessary her test subjects will suffer. When given a choice she kills quick and clean. Though she is sadistic when it comes to her uncle, members of the Salvatore house, and agents of the Ministry of Justice.

Delcie has long black hair which is a stark contrast to her striking blue eyes. She is short, thin, and otherwise rather plain, but her eyes are a feature people will remember. Before her tragedy and corruption, she was quick to smile and laugh, but nowadays she is quite expressionless and speaks with a flat monotonous voice. Only when talking about the House Salvatore, her uncle, or the Ministry of Justice is there a temporary flare of emotion, a razor sharp sliver of hatred. If caught off-guard by the mention of her father, one can see a faint lingering piece of her humanity and the love she once carried in her heart. She wears a locket around her neck and in it she has a picture of her father. This is something she keeps to herself. As she has been stripped of the Salvatore name she simply goes by the last name Heckart which is quite usual. She never talks about her history. Only by digging into her past may one find out who she once was. The house of Salvatore kept everything that happened out of the public eye so, finding information will be difficult.

ATTRIBUTES

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 3**
- ◀▶ **Arms 4**
- ◀▶ **Serious 6**
- ◀▶ **Mental 12**
- ◀▶ **Torso 7**
- ◀▶ **Legs 5**
- ◀▶ **Critical 3**

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Slicer (melee):** 1+**T**3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2, Infection
- ◀▶ **P60 Punisher Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+**T**6, 2H, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown, Infection

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Infection:** Delcie's slicer and bullets are impregnated with vile toxins and deadly bacteria. If one or more Dark Symmetry Icons are generated when rolling for damage, the target has been exposed to Infected Wounds.
- ◀▶ **Mistress of Dark Matter:** Delcie has dedicated her life to hatred and revenge, which manifests through the horrific viruses that she engineers. She may re-roll one d20 when making a Medicine, Sciences, or Treatment test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, she may reduce the difficulty by two when making a Sciences test that relates to biology or bioengineering, which may eliminate the need for a test.
- ◀▶ **Personal Dark Symmetry (4)**
- ◀▶ **Sleepless:** Implants that help regulate Delcie's brain activity have been fused into her medulla oblongata, which emulates the physical and neurological activity that goes on in a sleeping body. She never needs to sleep, and never feels any deleterious effects for going without sleep. She automatically succeeds on all Resistance tests made to avoid the effects of sleep deprivation.
- ◀▶ **Threat Perception:** The animalistic, instinctive part of Delcie's brain has been reinforced with additional synaptic connections, making her highly sensitive to potential threats and extremely aware of her surroundings. Whenever she attempts a Response Action, she does not have to pay the normal Dark Symmetry point cost. If she, for whatever reason, has any additional Response Actions, then only the first is 'free'.

DARK SYMMETRY SPENDS

- ◀▶ **Dark Gifts:** Delcie knows the following Dark Gifts: Control Sickness, Dark Strain, Obfuscation, and See Sickness.
- ◀▶ **Strain Manipulation:** Delcie has an intrinsic understanding of virtually every virus known to the Darkness, which is a considerable amount more than is known to man. When working in a laboratory, she may create any poison or disease of the GM's choice, which requires an amount of time in hours equal to the Virulence of the chosen poison or disease. Creating these strains will cost Dark Symmetry points as normal.

EFREN TIANO

AFFILIATION: Semai

BACKGROUND: For all intents and purposes Efren had a very normal childhood. He grew up in a middle-class home in Luna City. His mother worked as a security guard for a freelance firm and his father owned a small but successful diner, catering to day workers. Both parents worked hard and saved up in order to be able to give Efren a future. Efren had always been good with words and he honed this skill early in life as he joined debate teams in school.

In his early teens he decided that he wanted to become a lawyer so he studied hard. He managed to get very good grades and, due to all the money his parents had saved, he could afford to go to a respectable law school. Efren continued to study hard and managed to become one of the top students. It was here he met James Kresge, a fellow law student, and they became fast friends. Efren was a slightly better student than James, most often finishing number one on tests with James as a close second.

During their fifth year there was a change. James began to surpass Efren, by quite a lot. His grades skyrocketed. As time passed, James also became scouted by prestigious law firms that before had had their eye on Efren. At first Efren didn't mind but soon he became more and more jealous. James began to float away, spending more and more time with his new friends. He even got together with Lena, a girl that Efren had been eyeing for a long time. Efren felt a growing, although uncharacteristic, anger directed at his now former friend. During the last years they parted ways.

Efren was hired as a lawyer by a successful firm, but all through his working life he heard of the exploits of James and every time they went up against each other in court James won. Year after year he was humiliated time and again by James who always seemed to far surpass him. Not only that, James seemed to deliberately try to make him look bad while doing his best in general to make his life miserable. Efren began to take illegal shortcuts, using bribes and witness tampering. It took him almost a year to get ahead but in the end, he managed to manoeuvre himself into a position where he had the upper hand. Efren managed to get back some of the clients James had poached, and then some. Shortly after, James vanished without a trace.

A few months after his climb to the top, Efren was still using all manner of illegal methods to win his cases and he seemed to care less and less about how he was conducting his business. It was at this point a man showed up at his apartment. This well dressed and well-spoken man calmly explained that he and his associates knew exactly what he had been up to and that they possessed evidence of his illicit behaviour—evidence that could land Efren in prison. The man handed him an envelope containing copies of a small fraction of documents, photographs, and statements they possessed which

proved Efren's illegal activities. All they wanted for their silence was for Efren to do them a favour from time to time. Of course, he agreed. Efren was already corrupt as a human and it didn't take long until the recruiter from the cult of Semai brought him into the fold.

Efren had been handpicked by the cult at an early age as they saw his potential. James was, in fact, a Vile Antagonist planted to test, groom, and corrupt him. Efren has just been taken into the cult, and given a great deal of responsibility already. It is unknown who singled him out for grooming or why, but so far he has been able to do a great deal for the cult. Efren has a vast amount of contacts and he is a coordinator of sorts. He uses his influence to further the ends of his own cult and also acts as a liaison when cells from different cults are to cooperate. He has managed to accumulate several Dark Ink tattoos as well as many Dark Gifts. As thanks for his help and meeting members of the other cults, he has been granted a few Dark Gifts from the other Apostles as well. Cultists whisper that Efren has been chosen by powerful creatures and that some great destiny awaits him. After his recruitment he was hired by *Fenwick, Slate & Partners* (see the **Dark Soul Sourcebook**).

DESCRIPTION: Efren is in his mid-thirties. He is tall, lean, and exceptionally well groomed. He has dark, slicked-back hair and all the expensive suits and accessories one would expect of a successful lawyer. Efren is very well spoken, charming, and friendly. But he is a ruthless Heretic who is fiercely loyal to his cult. His recruitment and grooming process was a long one and the corruption had taken hold of him long before he actually joined. He prefers to use subtle tactics, but if backed into a corner he can take care of himself due to his Endowments and Dark Gifts. Though his father died of a heart attack some years ago, he still talks to and visits with his mother quite often. Of course, she knows nothing of his true nature. In his own twisted way, he wants to keep her safe and has begun grooming her to join the cult. The way he sees it, he won't be forced to kill her if she becomes a Heretic. As a normal human she might turn him in if she ever learned the truth, but as a member of the cult she would be safe.

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	9	9	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	8	12	14

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 4**
- ◀▶ **Arms 5**
- ◀▶ **Serious 7**
- ◀▶ **Mental 12**
- ◀▶ **Torso 8**
- ◀▶ **Legs 6**
- ◀▶ **Critical 4**

SOAK: Ballistic nylon clothing: (Head 0, Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Slicer (melee):** 1+**T**3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2
- ▶ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+**T**3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Personal Dark Symmetry (2)**
- ▶ **Silver-Tongued and Soulless:** Although he prefers to use his charm, Efen will plumb any depth in order to win a case, including bribery, bullying, and assassination. He may re-roll one d20 when making an Education, Lifestyle, or Persuade test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, when attempting to fast-talk an opponent, each Dark Symmetry Point spent on the test provides two bonus d20s to the Persuade test, instead of one. Further, he gains two additional d20 to his Command or Persuade test when attempting to intimidate or lie to an opponent. Finally, each successful Persuade test yields two additional Momentum.

DARK SYMMETRY SPENDS

- ▶ **Dark Gifts:** Efen knows the following Dark Gifts: Muddle the Memory, Pluck Mind, and Stir the Dark Heart
- ▶ **Dark Ink:** Efen has a series of small tattoos running down his left torso. These Dark Ink Tattoos (see *Dark Soul Sourcebook* for further details) each cost one Dark Symmetry point and provide the following powers:
- ▶ **Edged Storm:** A high-speed volley of sharp fragments comes hurling out from Efen's palm. They can target any creature or object within a relatively short distance. Though the damage is not stellar, those struck run a large risk of being disoriented by the volley. The kinetic force is quite powerful, and human-sized creatures also risk being knocked down. This is a ranged attack using the Ranged Weapon skill, with the following profile: Range C, 1+**T**3 damage, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Knockdown, Spread 1, Stun. This attack does not use conventional ammunition, instead drawing on Efen's own life-force; each Reload the Heretic wishes to use for the attack causes him to suffer a single wound, ignoring all Soak, to the arm making the attack.
- ▶ **Torrent of Inked Glyphs:** This is an offensive power employed to get out of harm's way. A whirlwind of thick, swirling black fragments form a myriad of minute glyphs. A cloud engulfs Efen, obscuring vision and giving off an unsettling wailing sound. While the power is active Efen can do little else than run, swim, climb, or take any other action that moves him in any direction with some speed. All attacks aimed at him will increase in difficulty by two steps, but he cannot make any Standard Actions other than Pass, Sprint, or Withdraw. This power's effects end the moment the Heretic takes any actions other than the ones listed above, if he stops moving for more than two rounds, or if he chooses to end the effects. Its sole

purpose is to allow Efen to avoid attacks while fleeing a dangerous situation.

- ▶ **Weave of Protection:** The tattoos expand and form a tight black pattern all over the body. This mesh protrudes a couple of millimetres from the skin, and is cool to the touch. As it even covers the face, it makes Efen look unnatural and frightening. It grants protection against physical attacks. This ability may be used as a Restricted Action, and grants him an additional two armour Soak on all locations.

KIMIKO MINATO

AFFILIATION: Ilian

BACKGROUND: Kimiko grew up as a commoner on Longshore. The only life in store for her was one down in the factory units. Her family were poor and had always worked the factory lines. The rest of her family seemed to be content with their lot in life, happy with the life they had since they knew no other. But, since early childhood, Kimiko had always wanted more. She dreamed of a life far from the crowded housing quarters, a life of wealth and privilege.

When she was sixteen, there was a food riot in her block and her parents were killed by overzealous samurai. Kimiko was left without anyone. Mishima is not known for its great social welfare system and she was left to fend for herself even at this young age. She kept her job at the factory line, slaving away for diminutive wages which barely bought her food for the day and a sleeping shelf in the slums. Kimiko kept to herself, working her sixteen hour shifts. The death of her parents had crushed her dreams and hopes for a different future. She became almost as empty as the machines down at the factory, only going through the motions as efficiently as possible.

Just after she had turned eighteen, the factory she worked at was shut down and times were hard. She couldn't get another job and was about to be thrown out on the street when a woman, seemingly upper class, flanked by two bulky men in suits, came up to her. The woman introduced herself as Ayane and said she was out looking for new talent. Ayane was the owner of the Gilded Blossom, a pleasure house, and what she was looking for was new Courtesans. Desperate, Kimiko accepted her offer.

The Gilded Blossom catered to the upper class and many men and women of power frequented the locale in the upscale entertainment quarters of the inner city of Longshore. Though the selling of her body wasn't the future she had had in mind, most of her time was spent as an entertainer. She became schooled in the conversational arts, etiquette, and seduction. Though she was more or less owned by Ayane, she now earned what she used to earn in three months in a week and had full access to the rich, famous, and noble families. Kimiko had never thought of herself as beautiful but it was her exceptional beauty that had drawn Ayane to her.

By the age of twenty-two Kimiko had become one of the top girls both in regards to popularity and responsibility. But her private personality had changed. She had become quite greedy, callous and selfish. In a way she was driven by fear, a fear of losing it all and returning to the squalor. In her mind the only way she could stay safe was to get her hands on as much riches and power as possible. She began using the pillow talk the men and women that hired her mumbled between the sheets. But she was not so rash as to use it for blackmail. She manipulated them, pitting adversaries against each other, making one company leader weak while strengthening another and then reversing it, all the while using the subtle chaos she caused for her own ends. Kimiko bought stocks when they were down and sold when they were up. She had the inside track as she manipulated the very leaders of the industries.

By the time she was twenty-five she had become extremely rich and planned to buy back her contract from Ayane and strike out on her own. But before she could, Ayane came to her with a smile saying that Kimiko was ready. If she wanted she could amass even more power and be granted eternal youth. She only had to do one thing and that was to serve the one true Mistress. Kimiko accepted the offer.

Kimiko has now been a Heretic for five years and she has taken over the Gilded Blossom as Ayane has been taken off-world to serve in one of Ilian's citadels on Venus. Kimiko is a manipulator and information broker, she has dirt and leverage on hundreds of powerful people in Longshore and is a very important, high ranking member of the cult. Due to a special ritual, Kimiko has been granted immortality and will never grow old.

DESCRIPTION: Kimiko's beauty is striking. She is slim but retains her curves. Her obsidian hair is thick and smooth as the finest of silks. Her skin is stark white and her face is perfectly proportioned. Many are those that have drowned in the deep voids that are her eyes.

Kimiko is extremely courteous and accommodating. She cannot stand rudeness and the few times she actually has to make a verbal threat she is very polite about it, speaking in a soft melodious voice. Her polite exterior is treacherous. She is manipulative, cold, and efficient. She feels that she owes Ayane her life for giving her this new life and sees it as her sworn duty to do her and the cult proud. She is loyal to the death and there is nothing she will not do for Ayane and Ilian. Kimiko has seldom been forced to resort to violence personally, but when she does, she uses a master smith katana given to her as a gift from Ayane. And Kimiko knows how to wield it. She has also applied her focus to learn Dark Gifts and has become quite skilful. Kimiko does not view humanity and the Dark Legion from a greater perspective, she is content in her role as an information broker on Longshore and likes her cover as the proprietor of the successful pleasure house.

ATTRIBUTES

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	-	2	1	1	1	5	3	2	1

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 2**
- ◀▶ **Arms 3**
- ◀▶ **Serious 5**
- ◀▶ **Mental 8**
- ◀▶ **Torso 6**
- ◀▶ **Legs 4**
- ◀▶ **Critical 3**

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Katana (melee):** 1+**↑**5, Unbalanced, Parry 1
- ◀▶ **Windrider SMG (ranged):** Range C, 1+**↑**3, Burst, Unbalanced, Unbalanced

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Blade Mistress:** Kimiko has perfected her mastery of the blade. She may re-roll up to three **↑** when making a Close Combat attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, each Dark Symmetry point spent to gain additional dice for a Close Combat test when using a katana will net two bonus d20, instead of one. Finally, each point of Momentum spent on Bonus Damage following a successful Close Combat attack with a katana will add two points of damage, instead of one.
- ◀▶ **Eternal Life:** Kimiko has effectively become immune to the ravages of time. Physically, her metabolism and cellular state are frozen in time, keeping them perfectly in their prime. She is not immune to injury or illness, but does not age in any physical sense, and will never suffer any penalties for aging.
- ◀▶ **Personal Dark Symmetry (3)**
- ◀▶ **Purveyor of the Blossom:** In addition to being flawlessly polite and impeccably dressed, Kimiko is capable of pursuing an unrelenting seduction. She may re-roll one d20 when attempting an Education, Lifestyle, or Persuade test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, she may reduce the difficulty in finding a contact by two steps when seeking assistance from her network. Further, she may attempt an Average D1 Education test as a Restricted when interacting with an opponent, with success allowing her to recognise an element of common ground for discussion; any Momentum from the Education test may be immediately added to a Persuade or Command test that can be taken as a Standard Action. Finally, when attempting a seduction, she gains two

additional d20s to her Persuade test per Dark Symmetry Point spent, instead of one.

DARK SYMMETRY SPENDS

- ◆ **Dark Gifts:** Kimiko can use the following Dark Gifts: Dark Curse, Dimensional Flensing, Obfuscation, and Summon Malignant
- ◆ **Summon Malignant:** Kimiko can summon a Malignant, calling one lurking in the vicinity, or summoning one from one of Ilian's abyssal realms. The Malignant appears within Close range of Kimiko, and may not act during the turn it is summoned. Multiple Malignants may be summoned, increasing the difficulty by one rank for each additional Malignant summoned. The Malignants remain for as long as the Kimiko Concentrates (see **Mutant Chronicles** core rulebook p.170) on this Gift—as soon as she stops concentrating, the Malignants vanish, scuttling into shadows or vanishing in a sulphurous cloud.

CECILIA PEMBRY

AFFILIATION: Muawijhe

BACKGROUND: Cecilia comes from an upper-middle class Imperial military family and grew up on Victoria. When she turned sixteen she joined Paxton military school. After she graduated, she went on and joined the Defence Troopers. Cecilia worked hard and served well. She soon became squad leader due to her exceptional skill, strategic mind, and bravery. She did her family proud as she kept up the tradition.

When she was twenty-two she was recruited by the Blood Berets. It was an honour no-one in her family had enjoyed. She was shipped off to patrol Dark Legion grounds in the Venusian jungle. She saw many battles and stoically faced down the horrors of the Dark Legion. Her squad even survived several meetings with Praetorian Stalkers and they actually managed to kill two.

When she was twenty-seven, after five years of blood, heat, and horror in the jungles, her squad walked into an ambush. A Centurion named Balrethon and his elite team had been given the task of eradicating Cecilia's squad. Her squad, the Dead Twelve, had been extremely successful hunting down and destroying fortifications and elite teams of the Dark Legion in the jungle. They were so good at it that Balrethon's team had been specially trained to deal with them once and for all. Balrethon managed to surround them in a valley and laid down deadly crossfire. The Dead Twelve fought back valiantly and managed to kill all but Balrethon, but every member of the Dead Twelve with the exception of Cecilia paid with their lives. Balrethon and Cecilia were the only survivors. They went at each other ferociously, using close combat weapons. In the end Cecilia managed to get the upper hand and wrestled Balrethon's Skalak, his honour blade, from him and used it to disembowel him. When he was dead she took the dog tags from her fallen comrades and

then she cut off their heads, burying them away from the bodies so that the Dark Legion couldn't reanimate them and turn her valiant brothers and sisters into abominations.

Cecilia was out of radio range and she wandered for days through the jungle. She was badly wounded and feverish. In this state, her judgement was impaired. She carried the Skalak with her. In a way, it allowed her to survive as she ran across several Dark Legion troops that she had to kill, her only weapon was the dark blade. She wandered for days and her fever, in combination with the corruption of the blade, made her see visions. She doesn't remember how, but she managed to get to an Imperial outpost. She awoke in a hospital bed after a two week coma. She had been picked up by a long range trooper patrol. Oddly enough she remembered dreaming while in the coma, diffuse images. Some frightening and some calming. Whispers and dark shapes, visions of her squad as they died and an intangible sense of longing. And in the darkest and most secret part of her soul she realised that she longed for the blade, the Skalak. It was gone when they found her and she had no idea where it was, but she knew that she was lucky. If the blade had been found in her possession there would have been questions.

After a couple of days, she was well enough to be released from the hospital. She didn't feel she had the will to return to active duty. She was given several medals for her extreme bravery, fortitude, and service. She asked to be discharged and she was, with great honours. Cecilia continued to have her dreams, they grew darker and her longing grew stronger.

In civilian life she took up as a security consultant, hired by a large freelance firm called Firewalker Security on Victoria. She mainly worked as a bodyguard. Cecilia was content with her job but she began to feel more and more separate from society as a whole. That longing, not only for the blade, but for something else, a world beyond what could be perceived, persisted and grew. Even though she didn't want to go back into combat, she missed the simplicity of it and the single purpose it gave her. At this point she also began questioning whether or not mankind would stand a chance against the darkness, and whether or not the Dark Legion was natural part of the universal order. She, of course, kept these ideas for herself.

One night, when she came home to her apartment, she found the Skalak. It lay on her table. She didn't even question how it had gotten there, she just stepped up to it and longingly grabbed the handle. As she did, she felt whole and safe. But her head was also bombarded with images, instructions. She followed them. The instructions led her to an old warehouse by the docks. There she was greeted by a nameless man. He said that he could give her a way to feel as safe and whole as she did while she held the blade, and give her an important purpose. Affected by the corruption, Cecilia felt it was the right choice.

The seed of corruption was planted in her the moment she grabbed the blade in the jungle. A Heretic of Muawijhe infiltrated the outpost where she was found and hid the blade. He sensed that the blade had affected her and sent word to the cult on Victoria. It made sense to recruit a capable war hero that had insight into the inner workings of the Imperial war machine. They only had to use minimal effort as she was already on the path to corruption. They simply infused the blade with runes carrying the instructions and left it at her apartment.

Cecilia has now been loyal to the Lord of Visions for three years. She is used to providing security details for important high-ranking Heretics and she herself is on her way up. Cecilia is one of many, quite typical, cases where a soldier has been corrupted by Dark Technology and slowly turned into the very horrors they combat.

DESCRIPTION: Cecilia is of medium height and in her mid-thirties. She is well-muscled and athletic as she works out constantly. She has several scars on her body and some shrapnel scars on the left side of her face. They are not disfiguring but they are numerous and large enough that they stand out. She keeps her red hair in a short but feminine style. She has the posture and demeanour of someone with a military background and steely grey eyes that are forever watchful.

Cecilia is rather quiet and withdrawn. She is very observant and highly intelligent with a brilliant strategic mind. She fell out with her family years ago as she no longer shares their passion for the military life or their loyalty to Imperial. They simply think that she suffered a damaging mental trauma during the ambush which has led her to turn away from them and the corporation. Overall, she has separated from her old life and lives with, and for, the cult. She views the cult as her new military outfit and has managed to channel the lurking madness the followers of Muawijhe often suffer into a precise instrument of insight and clarity. She has been granted some combat Implants from the cult of Algeroth as a reward after she helped one of their cells survive a Brotherhood raid.

ATTRIBUTES

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 4
- ◀ Arms 6
- ◀ Serious 8
- ◀ Mental 12
- ◀ Torso 9
- ◀ Legs 7
- ◀ Critical 5

SOAK: Mk. III Combat Armour: (Head 4, Arms 5, Torso 3, Legs 3)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Skalak (melee):** 4+ \uparrow 5, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Parry 1, Unforgiving 1
- ◀ **Mk. XLIII Plasma Carbine (ranged):** Range M, 1+ \uparrow 6, Burst, 2H, Ammo (Blast (Close), Vicious 1), Unforgiving 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Athletic Brutality:** Cecilia is a living weapon of war. She may re-roll up to two \uparrow when making a Close Combat, Ranged Weapons, or Unarmed Combat test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, she generates two additional successes on any Athletics test that generates at least one success. Further, she does not need to spend a Dark Symmetry point for the first Parry Response Action that she takes in a combat round, and she may attempt to parry using her Unarmed Combat skill even when she is not armed. Finally, she reduces the penalty for firing at a range other than the weapon's optimal range by one, to a minimum of one.
- ◀ **Personal Dark Symmetry (3)**
- ◀ **Securely Insane:** Cecilia has managed to channel the lurking insanity that affects all of Muawijhe's followers into a successful career as a security consultant. She may re-roll one d20 when making an Insight or Observation test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, she may spend one Momentum from an Insight or Observation test to instantly recognise the reason the test was made, which also allows her to add one d20 to any skill test made during the first turn of combat that ensues immediately subsequent to the original test (no Dark Symmetry spend is required). Finally, so long as she succeeds at an Average D1 Observation test as part of a Restricted Action during combat, she may immediately determine the severity of her opponent's worst wound, with each Momentum spent from this test allowing her to know how many Light Wounds remain on the hit location of her choosing.
- ◀ **Self-repair Implant:** This implanted system of Self-Repair glands is active during times of activity, fuelled by adrenaline and lactic acid. During an action scene or any other period of strenuous physical activity, Cecilia 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 she suffers one Dread for each Critical Wound regained in this way.
- ◀ **Structural Awareness Implant:** Invasive neuro-surgery has enhanced the parts of Cecilia's brain that interpret patterns and fine details, allowing her to discern the weak-points of creatures and objects far more quickly and effectively. Combined with the hypno-implantation of an instinctive knowledge of anatomy, material stress tolerances, and structural engineering, she has an exceptional ability to strike at the most vulnerable points. All of her attacks gain the Unforgiving 1 quality, or increase the rating of any Unforgiving quality the attack already possesses, by one.

DARK SYMMETRY SPENDS

◀ **Dark Gifts:** Cecilia knows the following Dark Gifts: Dark Influence (see *Dark Soul Sourcebook*), Symmetry Burst, and Veil of Enemies

GIDEON SKYLER

AFFILIATION: None

BACKGROUND: Coming from an average background and brought up in a middle class neighbourhood in Luna City, no one expected Gideon to amount to much else than a middle income Average Joe. This was the way his life was headed, and it was something he was quite content with. One of the masses with a steady job. There are worse fates in the world. But when Gideon was twenty, he worked as a construction worker specializing in demolition. He went in with a sledgehammer, tore down walls and ripped out copper wires and pipes that the construction company could reuse. On one such job he was alone in an old decrepit basement of a building that was being torn down. As usual, he slammed down the walls and collected the copper. As the wall came down in a small backroom he found a small compartment. It was a small shelf and on it there was a very old book. It was covered with bizarre symbols. As Gideon touched it, an unfathomable pain coursed through his body. At first he was scared and backed away, but he also felt intrigued. Using a piece of wood, not wishing to touch it again, he shoved it down his work bag. He continued working without saying a word.

For weeks he flipped through the book using forceps. It was filled with ominous runes and symbols. Though he couldn't understand a single word, he did understand that it was of the Darkness and some type of instruction manual. He knew that the right thing to do was to turn it in to the Brotherhood, but he was drawn to it and the secrets he knew it held. For months, he went to different libraries and obscure bookstores in order to find research material. He was careful to spread out his purchases and loans so no one could suspect that he was looking for forbidden knowledge.

After almost a year he had collected enough information to understand part of the book, he learned of a language called the First Voice, the language of the Dark Legion. Using this, he was able to decipher some of the information in the book. This led to him being able to perform some of the rituals. He learned of their power and began writing his own grimoire. Gideon quit his job and went into the freelance business as a private detective. He specialized in cases involving folks that had gotten into the trouble which could land them inside one of the Brotherhood's interrogations cells or on the wrong end of an enraged Heretic's Dark Gift. Gideon only helped those that he felt deserved it, those that really wanted to get away from the darkness they had gotten themselves involved with. Though guided by a sense of right and wrong, he was also interested in the rewards the cases sometimes could grant him

which lay beyond cold cash. Relics, new rituals, or the dispatching of less morally upstanding roving Heretics was of great interest to him. Gideon is quite careful. He takes on regular cases as well and usually he finds the clients that need help with dark matters himself. He really can't advertise his speciality as both Heretics and the Brotherhood would come gunning for him.

DESCRIPTION: Gideon is in his late thirties but looks to be in his late twenties, though his eyes seem to belong to a much older man filled with wisdom and restraint. He is tall, with a wiry and lean physique and has black hair and a chiselled, but kind, face. He usually dresses in dark tailor-made suits and he does like the finer things in life. He is a skilled investigator and, paired with his dark powers, there isn't a case he cannot crack. The fees he has collected, paired with objects he has stolen from Heretics, has made him quite a rich man.

Gideon is careful when he uses his powers and so far he is his own self with only a hint of corruption. He does not support the Dark Legion or the Apostles in any way. He simply uses the powers of the rituals and he has no interest in becoming a Heretic. He likes to help people that have become involved with the Darkness but who want out: he sees it as his duty. Given the chance, he will tip off the Brotherhood if he comes across a particularly nasty Heretic or a cult temple. He has one foot in the world of Light and the other in the world of Darkness. It is a dangerous path he is walking and he knows it. Gideon uses mundane weapons and methods for the most part, turning to rituals when it seems to be the best solution. Using mundane methods make it easier for him to stay under the radar.

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	10	8	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	12	12	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	1	1	-	4	2	3	2	2	2

WOUNDS:

- ◀ **Head 3**
- ◀ **Arms 4**
- ◀ **Serious 6**
- ◀ **Mental 12**
- ◀ **Torso 8**
- ◀ **Legs 6**
- ◀ **Critical 4**

SOAK: Ballistic nylon clothing: (Head 0, Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Dagger (melee):** 1+**T**3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1
- ◀ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+**T**3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Fruits of the Forbidden:** Gideon has steeped himself in the lore of his enemies. He has Mysticism Expertise 3 and Mysticism Focus 3 and reduces the difficulty of Mysticism tests made to identify a creature or power of Darkness by one step, which may eliminate the need for a test. Additionally, he may attempt an Average D1 Mysticism test as a Standard Action during any combat that contains at least one Heretic or creature of Darkness, with success providing a free Response Action against a single attack from a Heretic or creature of Darkness; each Momentum spent will provide an additional free Response Action, all of which may be used at any point prior to the end of combat. Finally, by spending an hour meditating and performing a minor ritual, he gains a special Response Action that he may perform to resist a spell or supernatural power that is used on him, so long as he is aware of the attacker, with the test to use the power now becoming an opposed test against Gideon's Mysticism skill. For supernatural powers that do not require a test, Gideon may attempt a Mysticism test to resist the power's effect, instead of any normal test to resist (if any), and gains a bonus d20 on that test. The benefits of this ritual last for 24 hours.
- ◆ **Ritual Caster:** Gideon knows the following Rituals: Harden the Weave, Malicious Hex, Runes of Harm, Scroll of Pain, Sense the Intruder, Trace the Flesh.
- ◆ **Sanctioned Investigator:** Gideon has established a reputation as a competent investigator, despite being a home-brew private eye. He may re-roll one d20 when making an Insight or Observation test, or up to two 📈 when making a Ranged Weapons test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, he may make a quick yet obvious search of an area, with a difficulty determined by the size of the area searched; searching within Reach requires an Average D1 Observation test, while searching within Close range takes a Challenging D2 test instead. If Gideon passes the Observation test, he identifies all of the important clues in the space. Momentum can be spent to reduce the amount of time required, or to obfuscate the fact the area was searched. Searching within Reach takes one minute, while searching within Close range takes ten minutes. Finally, the Secondary Target Momentum spend will only cost Gideon one Momentum, instead of two.
- ◆ **Subject to Corruption:** Gideon is not yet a servant of the Darkness; every time he uses a Ritual, he is subject to the same Corruption test as non-Heretics.

IRINA RUMANDV 🧐

AFFILIATION: Former Algeroth, Renegade.

BACKGROUND: Since childhood Irina has lived close to the Dark Symmetry. Her parents were Heretics serving Algeroth on Victoria. When Irina was five they began her initiation. She was destined to become a Destroyer, the most skilful and deadly warriors among all

of the Heretics. She was trained in urban warfare as well as covert operations and assassinations. When she was fifteen, she was given her first mission. Irina accompanied a small squad that had been charged with destroying a heavily guarded Cybertronic weapons factory. It was a hard mission, but Irina excelled in it. She managed to rack up fifteen confirmed kills and, when their squad leader was shot, she took care of the explosives he had carried and placed and detonated them while wounded under heavy fire. From that day on, she was given even more responsibilities and rose quickly through the ranks.

Irina killed many people during the years and she was even shipped to other planets and warzones to deal with particularly dangerous and important missions. She was one of the cult's favourites and with this great service came Dark Gifts and Endowments. At the age of twenty-five, Irina had managed to become one of the most powerful Heretics within the cult. She had accumulated primarily combat-oriented Endowments and Dark Gifts. And, by this age, most of her body had been replaced by Necrobionics.

During a mission on Luna she was ordered to exterminate thirty people that lived in a condemned building. She never asked why and was never given a reason. She arrived and began her slaughter. After taking ten or so lives, she kicked in a door and there she came across four young children. Irina had killed children before. But this time it was different. She didn't know why but it just was. She began to question all that she had done and been taught. In reality, she had never had a personality of her own. Her parents had programmed her to become a loyal acolyte of Algeroth from birth. Irina dropped her weapons and left, disappearing into the night.

She flew to Mars, hiding out in San Dorado. She was an expert at travelling unnoticed and navigating the urban environment. Irina was confused and didn't know what to do next, everything she was she now hated. She had suddenly woken up and was hit with the full force of regret and remorse. All that she had done weighted on her, grinding her down. She knew one thing and that was that she had to stay away from other Heretics and the Brotherhood. She changed her appearance on a daily basis using the *Malleable Face* Endowment. Killing was what she knew, so she reinvented herself as a freelance assassin, only taking on contracts where the targets were the worst of the worst such as other contract killers and mob bosses.

She managed to go unnoticed for several years. She listened to Heretic chatter and heard the general belief was that she had been killed or scooped up by the Brotherhood. However, during a hit, she ran across a Heretic of Semai, one that could scan her thoughts and he managed to identify her. Irina failed to kill him as she was busy dealing with a mob hit squad at the time. After that, the word was out. All the cults were notified that she was alive. From now on she had to be even more careful. Irina pulled up stakes and went to Longshore. She decided to keep on the move.

CHAPTER 10

Some months later she was cornered by some Heretic assassins in Luna City. She was wounded, but managed to kill them. Using her extensive experience, she tracked down their cell and killed those that remained. Afterwards, she left a message explaining that all bets were off, they had chosen to hunt her and now she would hunt all of them. Irina continued to work as a hit man, now taking on corporate contracts as well, delving into the shadowy world of industrial espionage. She used the money to fund her hunt. She managed to stockpile several caches of weapons in a wide assortment of safe houses across the solar system, as well as a vast network of contacts.

Over the years, Irina has killed thirty Heretics single-handedly and burned one of Algeroth's temples to the ground on Venus. She is by far one of the deadliest Heretics alive and one of the greatest threats to Heretics all over the solar system. She has reached something of a mythic status, Irina is almost like an urban legend even to The Brotherhood. She is driven and will not stop until she is killed. And given that she has Endowments that will allow her to heal and stay young forever, killing her is the only way for anyone to actually stop her.

DESCRIPTION: Few people know her true appearance and age. As she constantly changes her appearance and is immortal, it is of little consequence. Irina is brimming with Implants and Necrobionics. She is more a bio- and necro-bionic machine in body than human. This has left her extremely powerful and, combined with all her Dark Gifts, she is a one-woman army.

Irina is very driven and she mostly keeps to herself. She feels lost as she really has no place that she can call home. She is an outcast among the Heretics and among the human race. All her powers and immortality makes her into the kind of a monster that is far removed from humanity. But she is not evil, and does not kill innocents. She is a woman of few words and her reason for living, the one thing that keeps her at least semi-sane, is her mission: to kill all the Heretics she finds. The only person she has some regular contact with (and trusts) is Gideon Skyler. It is unknown how these two began to work together but Gideon provides Irina with research and ways to track Heretics when she is in Luna City. In return she gives him whatever relics and dark texts she picks up after her killing sprees.

ATTRIBUTES

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
5	2	3	1	3	1	2	-	1	-	1	-

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 3**
- ◀▶ **Arms 8***
- ◀▶ **Serious 6**
- ◀▶ **Mental 10**
- ◀▶ **Torso 8**
- ◀▶ **Legs 9***
- ◀▶ **Critical 4**

SOAK: Ballistic nylon clothing: (Head 0, Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Punisher Short Sword (melee):** 1+**T**6, 1H, Parry 1, Vicious 1
- ◀▶ **PSG-99 Sniper Rifle (ranged):** Range L, 2+**T**7, Burst, 2H, Ammo (Spread 1), Unforgiving 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Assassination Tool:** Irina's formative years were spent training in the arts of insertion and murder. She may re-roll one d20 when making a Stealth or Thievery test, up to three **T** when making a Ranged Weapons test, or up to two **T** when making a Close Combat or Unarmed Combat test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, she reduces the penalty for firing at a range other than the weapon's optimal range by one, to a minimum of one, and benefits from being able to shift the hit location by up to two points when spending Momentum from a ranged attack for a Called Shot, instead of one. Further, when attacking with one-handed melee weapons, each Dark Symmetry point spent for the Close Combat test provides two dice, instead of one; she may not use this ability when fighting unarmed, but instead benefits from her Unarmed Combat attacks gaining the Knockdown and Stun qualities. Finally, she may add two d20 to her Stealth pool when attempting to remain unseen or unnoticed and benefits from being able to replace Stealth with Thievery when attempting to bypass physical security measures.
- ◀▶ **Eternal Life:** Irina has effectively become immune to the ravages of time. Physically, her metabolism and cellular state are frozen in time, keeping them perfectly in their prime. She is not immune to injury or illness, but does not age in any physical sense, and do not suffer any penalties for aging.
- ◀▶ **Know Your Mark:** Irina has studied many different foes, all for the purpose of murder. She has Mysticism Expertise 2 and Mysticism Focus 1 and may re-roll one d20 when making an Education, Insight, Lifestyle or Mysticism test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, she may reduce the difficulty of any Mysticism test made to identify a creature or power of Darkness by two, which may eliminate the need for a test. Further, she may spend one Momentum from an Insight test to instantly recognise the reason that the test was made, which allows her to add one d20 to any skill test made during the first round of any ensuing combat without the need for a Dark Symmetry point. Finally, even though she may not be aware of it, she is entitled to an Average D1 Insight test when in the presence of the supernatural or beings with unusual powers, with success allowing her to recognise this presence; the expenditure of two

Momentum allows her to identify the type of abilities. This test should be made even though the target may not have any abilities active.

- ◆ **Malleable Face:** Irina's skin is fitted with tiny pigment glands, and her face is underlain with a mass of tiny muscles and pseudocartilage that shifts to alter its shape and appearance. She gains one bonus Momentum on Stealth or Persuade tests made to disguise herself as someone else.
- ◆ **Necrobionic Arms and Legs*:** All necrobionic limbs replace the character's normal number of Light Wound boxes on the limb replaced—a normal necrobionic arm has eight Light Wound boxes, while a necrobionic leg has nine Light Wound boxes. In all other ways, the default necrobionic limb functions exactly as the character's original limb did, providing no additional benefits, and replacing the original organic limb's function in all ways. However, wounds suffered to a necrobionic limb do not heal naturally—rather, they must be repaired manually. This takes a Daunting D3 Mechanics test, or a Challenging D2 Science test, and restores one Light Wound box, plus one per Momentum spent.
- ◆ **Necrobionic Restructuring (1):** Irina's entire central nervous system has been rebuilt and augmented with highly efficient vat-grown nerve fibres. Awareness increases by one (already included).
- ◆ **Necrobionic Targeting System:** Irina's eyes have been replaced by necrobionic versions, imbued with an aggressive nature that aids her greatly when using a firearm. This reduces the difficulty of ranged attacks by one step, to a minimum of Average D1. As an Implant, rather than being attached to a weapon, it is exempt from the normal limit of one scope or sight on a weapon.
- ◆ **Personal Dark Symmetry (3)**
- ◆ **Relentless Indoctrination:** Indoctrinated and de-sensitised at an early age, Irina learnt how to control her pain long before her implants were provided. She may re-roll one d20 when making a Willpower test, or any dice that did not generate a success when making a Willpower test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, when someone or something triggers an effect that would require a Resistance test to avoid a status condition, the difficulty of the Resistance test to avoid the negative effects is reduce by one, which may eliminate the need for a test. Further, when taking the Shake It Off action, she may recover two Light or Mental Wounds (or one of each) for each Momentum spent on the Willpower test. Finally, any time she attempts to resist supernatural powers that target her mind, any Dark Symmetry points spent add two dice to the test, instead of one.
- ◆ **Self-repair Implant:** This implanted system of Self-Repair glands is active during times of activity, fuelled by adrenaline and lactic acid. During an action scene or any other period of strenuous physical activity, Irina 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 she suffers one Dread for each Critical Wound regained in this way.

DARK SYMMETRY SPENDS

- ◆ **Dark Gifts:** Irina can use the following Dark Gifts: Obfuscation and Painless.

TWO MEN

"Is he trying to run away? Seriously?" Sam said.

Jack leaned against the hood of the car and smiled. "Yep. Looks that way. Are you going to run after him?"

"Why run when I don't have to?" Sam did a simple gesture towards the man with his lowered hand. The fugitive gave off a frightened yelp and ran smack into a concrete wall at full force. Jack laughed hard, bending over trying to catch his breath as he watched the spectacle. "Oh man, blinding someone while they are running is so freaking funny. It's a classic move. I like your style."

Sam bowed theatrically. "Thank you, kind sir." He turned and walked over to the sprawled man moaning on the ground. Sam stopped and, with his hands in his pockets, he looked down at him. He focused for a second and could feel how his mind invaded that of his victim's. He pushed and pulled mentally in order to shape the memories to his desires. Then it was done. He turned and left the dazed man lying in the filthy back alley.

"Okay, that's all she wrote. Let's move on." Sam got into the passenger seat of the car while Jack got behind the wheel, still snickering, and started it up. They slowly drove out from the alley and onto the street where they joined the sparse night traffic.

"So he won't remember a thing?" Jack asked.

"Oh, he will remember, but he will not remember the details or the date or time."

"That is quite a nifty little Dark Gift. Me, serving Algeroth, I mostly possess gifts and endowments that tear people apart. Not that subtle."

Sam and Jack had been partners for six months. The local Semai and Algeroth cults were located quite close to each other and their leaders had deemed it prudent to put together two pairs consisting of one heretic from each cult to keep an eye on things and look out for common interests and problems. Sam served Semai and Jack served Algeroth.

The man they had left in the alley was a witness in a corruption scandal involving one of the politicians the cults had in their pockets. Now, they could have killed him, but that would have been too obvious and set off too many alarm bells. So Sam had simply messed up his memories, destroying his reliability as a witness. And the drugs they had planted in his apartment earlier would soon be found thanks to an anonymous tip. When all was said and done, the man would be useless in the hearing and their political friend would be free to continue his career without a hitch.

"So, why did you join the cult?"

Sam was surprised by Jack's question. Why someone had joined wasn't something heretics normally talked about unless they knew each other well. Reasons could sometimes be very personal. Sam had joined to get vengeance on the man who had killed his family. Several years ago he had managed to track the man down. Sam had used his powers to drive the man insane, forcing



him to kill all those he loved. The guy was still alive; Sam had spared him and tucked him away in an insane asylum. Once a month he visited him, made him believe that his family was alive by changing memories and then reintroduced him to reality. Sam wouldn't stop until he had crushed the man's soul. But he told Jack nothing of his real reasons for joining. Instead he gave him a jovial brush off.

"You know, the Dark Legion has a great health plan, and the perks are just stellar."

Jack smiled. "Fine, don't tell. I won't pry. Me personally, I got my legs shot off while fighting Bauhaus on Venus back when I was in the Golden Lions. I got a small military pension and a pat on the back. The cult offered to give me my legs back in exchange for my loyalty and some Imperial defence secrets. So I kind of jumped on the band wagon." Jack patted his right leg. "You got to love Necrobionics."

Sam hadn't expected Jack to be so fully honest. Maybe he would tell him the reasons for his joining further down the line. For now, he would keep his private life to himself. They drove for a while, chatting about cult philosophy and approaches. Algeroth's overt tactics versus Semai's subtle approach. They agreed that their partnership gave them a great deal of versatility.

Jack turned in to a back street and parked the car. The night sky opened up and the rain began to fall. They got out and walked back to the boot. Sam flicked open his umbrella. Jack looked sceptically at him while opening the trunk.

"An umbrella? That kind of takes the edge off your coolness."

Sam shrugged. "Hey, this is a five thousand cardinal crown tailor made Longshore suit. I am not about to get it ruined."

Jack began to assemble the two silenced MP-105 GWs they kept in the trunk. "Just saying, you look ridiculous."

"Well, you look wet," Sam said as Jack forked over one of the weapons.

The neighbourhood was a slum. All derelict buildings, hobos, and drug addicts. As they went inside the building Sam left the umbrella by the stairs. They walked with their weapons in their hands. Nobody would get in their way and the residents were not the kind of people that called the cops. They climbed the dark stairs and Sam took out his flashlight. Jack grunted.

"Hey, point that some other way. It messes with my night vision implant."

"Sorry, forgot. So what did these guys do?" Sam put his hand over the light, only letting a small sliver out.

"They're drug dealers, kind of violent. They accidentally stumbled across one of our lower cells. They thought our brothers were rival drug dealers and killed them when they firebombed the place. We're here to set the scoreboard straight and get rid of a problem. Everyone in the room goes down wet."

When they reached the third floor, a couple of kerosene lanterns spread a soft light. Sam turned his flashlight off and they moved quietly along the decrepit corridor. After a couple meters they stopped in front of a door. It was the only intact door in the corridor and had three new locks. They could hear low music and people talking inside. They readied their weapons and positioned themselves on each side of the door. Jack counted down from three on his fingers. He was always the first one in. With his Implants, he was strong enough to kick down just about any door. On three he underlined that fact by kicking the door straight off its hinges.

The apartment was basically one big room cluttered with some old furniture, supply boxes, and a drug lab in the far right corner. There were five men in the room. Jack let loose a hail of automatic fire which sent three of them into a violent and blood spraying spin and dropped them to the ground before they had time to even know what had hit them. Sam aimed more carefully. Two three round bursts. Each burst hit centre mass on each on the drug-addled dealers. The drug-heads folded up and fell like cheap deck chairs. Five dead in less than two seconds.

"Okay, a work well done," Jack said. Just as he did there was a loud bang and he was thrown back by a swarm of buckshot that hit him in the chest. Sam instinctively dove for cover and saw two men come out from behind a stack of boxes, one wielding a shotgun. Sam landed behind an overturned freezer. He quickly stuck his head up so he could get line of sight. He focused for the blink of an eye and dove down again, bullets flying over his head. He could hear one of the men screaming and the other shooter was frantically asking what was wrong. Sam forced his will into the man's mind and overwhelmed him with fear until the shooter's blood vessels burst from the pressure. Then he heard the distinct sound of auto-fire and all went quiet. He looked up and both men were lying in a pile of blood, riddled with bullets.

"You was worried about the rain ruining your suit? Look at this crap! And do you know how much this hurts?" Jack put in a new clip where he stood. His suit and shirt was ripped apart and blood soaked. Sam got up and walked over to his partner. He looked at the wound on his chest. Pellets were being pushed out and the flesh was knitting together all while a thin veil of smoke rose from it, stinking of burnt flesh. In a matter of seconds, he was as good as new. Sam shook his head.

"No matter how many times I see that, it still kind of freaks me out. But it is very cool. And very useful I imagine."

"That it is," Jack said.

"Let's get out of here. I'm starving. We have time for a bite to eat before our next job right? We can stop at the diner."

"Sure, but I need to go home and change. Can't really walk into a restaurant looking like this, now can I?"

Sam smiled. "Ah, but it just so happens that I have an extra suit and shirt in your size in the car. I also have a towel and some water. So get cleaned up and changed and we are off."

"You have a set of clothes for me in the car? What are you, my wife?"

"Hey, two months ago you were set on fire by those amateur civilian heretic hunters. We had to go all the way across town

to your place and pick up a new set of clothes. It takes time and for the life of me I have no idea why you don't keep a set yourself."

"Well, thanks I guess."

After Jack had changed they got into the car and hit the road once again.

"Hey Sam, my kid is going to play little league this Saturday. Afterwards some of us football dads and moms are going to have a barbecue in the park. Some beers and some steaks. You want to come, meet the wife?"

Sam thought about it for a second and realised that Jack never told him that he had a son. So he was a family man. Yes, he would go. It could be nice. Sam had decided that he would tell Jack why he had joined. A father would understand. He turned to his partner.

"Thanks, would love to." He looked out the window. "So what's our next stop after the diner?"

"We need to arrange a mistrial for one of our associates in order to buy him some time. So, we're off to kill a judge."

"Busy night," Sam said.

"The devil finds work for idle hands."



INDEX

- Alkhai** 20
Algeroth 10, 19-21, 79, 84, 101-102, 110, 112-114, 116
Ancient Homeworld 7
Ancients, Corrupted See **Lost Ones, The**
Ancients, The 6-14, 18-20, 23-24, 27, 30, 35, 49, 55, 60, 66-67, 72, 74, 118
Apostates 76-77
Armour 67-68
 Blast Harness 70
 Guardian Armour 67
 Lesser Guardian Armour 68
Beast Of Vile Hunger 20-21
Brotherhood, The 10, 16, 18-19, 21-25, 43, 61, 63-64, 66, 76-77, 79-83, 85, 88, 97, 103, 110-113, 118
Carnival of Wonders 22
Cyaneus 21
Danvers, Charlie 101-103
Dark Gifts and the Art 77
Darsheed the Inveigler 22
Deimos 19, 21
Demnognis 10, 19, 103-104
Destruction of Buildings and Fixtures 41
DNA Activation & Powers 36
Durand Brothers, The 15, 19-22, 25, 97
Durand, Alexander 19, 21-22
Durand, Nathaniel 19-22
Durand, Peter 19, 21-22
Equipment 71-72
 Human Factor 24, 57
 Psionic Construction Core 71
 Psionic Endowments 71-72
 Psionic Upgrade 71
Figment 95-96
Genetic Pilgrimage, The 12, 14-15, 18-19, 23-27, 61
Gilded Blossom, The 107-108
Great Seal 13, 15, 19
Guardians & The Art 35
Guardians, The 12-15, 18-20, 22, 24-27, 30, 35-37, 46, 50-51, 57, 60-61, 66-67, 70-71, 74
Heckart, Delcie 103-105
Heinrich, Ariel 93
Heretic, Renegade 76-77, 83
Heretic, Roving 77, 83-84, 92, 97, 111
Hidden Stockpiles 14
Ilian 13, 84, 88-89, 107-109
Lesser Psionics Powers Table 36
Lock 66
Lost Ones, The 11
Luna 15-18, 20, 22, 64, 94-95, 97-98, 106, 111-113
Major Psionics Power Table 49
Major Rituals 92
Marked One, The 96
Mars 10, 15, 20, 22, 102, 112
Methods of Recruitment 78
Minato, Kimiko 107-109
Muawijhe 19, 109-110
Mutant & Corruption 27
Nature of the Seals 13
Nero 8-9, 12-13, 19-21
Nero-Sarakai 9, See also **Nero**
Order of the Watchers 14-15, 24
Pembry, Cecilia 109-111
Phobos 19, 21
Physical Mutations 28-34
 Bizarre Facial Features 28-29
 Blue Skin 29
 Cleft Feet 29-30
 Coarse and Mottled Skin 30
 Distended Tongue 30
 Eerie Eyes 30
 Elongated Appendage 30-31
 Elongated Arms 30
 Elongated Fingers 30-31
 Elongated Legs 31
 Elongated Toes 31
 Extreme Vascular Systems 31
 Gigant 31
 Incor-filled Maw 31-32
 Inverted Legs 32
 Jagged Bristles 32
 Large Eyes 32
 Misshapen Torso 32-33
 Nictating Membrane 33
 Razor-sharp Protrusions 33
 Sense Exposure 33
 Snaked Neck 33-34
 Unearthly Voice 34
 Vestigial Arms 34
 Wiry Emaciation 34
Pluto 12-13, 19
Power Levels 35
Psionic Powers 36-63
 Acceleration 36-37
 Armour Plating 38
 Bolster Mind 38
 Cleanse Corruption 49-50
 Cleanse Soul 50-51
 Coax Technology 38-39
 Density 39
 Dimensional Rift 51-52
 Dimensional Teleport 40
 Disintegrate 52-53
 Distortion Bolt 40-41
 Emotional Shift 53-54
 Energy Storm 54-55
 Equivalence 55
 Fury of the Ancients 55-56
 Gravitational Sphere 56-57
 Guardian Link 41-42
 Hands of Lazarus 57
 Hibernation 57-58
 Immolate 42
 Incorporeal 58-59
 Pattern Pulse 42-44
 Protective Sphere 58
 Psionic Bio-sculpting 60-61
 Psionic Blade 44
 Psionic Construction 15, 49, 59-60, 66-68, 70-72
 Psionic Navigation 45
 Psychic Echo 45
 Purge Symmetry 61-62
 Purify Dark Technology 62
 Quadralimbs 46
 Regeneration 46-47
 Repel 63
 Revivify 47-48
 Telepathy 63-64
 Unseen 48
 Void Adaptation 48-49
Psionically Enhanced Spacecraft 72-74
Relics 93-96
 Blood Canvas, The 95-96
 Hand of Ariel Heinrich 93
 Lantern of Johannes Berg 96
 Veil of the Apostles 94
Ritual Components 86
Rituals 84-92
 Arcane Eye 88-89
 Blood for Blood 87
 Don Their Skin 87
 Flesh of Fire 91
 Harden the Weave 90
 Legion 88
 Malicious Hex 86-87
 Mark of Corruption 88
 Other Skin 87
 Runes of Harm 91
 Scroll of Pain 86
 Sense Corruption 91-92
 Sense the Intruder 92
 Tenebrous Howl 88
 Trace the Flesh 92
 Ward the Grimoire 91
Rumanov, Irina 102-104
Saladin 21
San Dorado 10, 20, 101, 112
Seal of Repulsion 13, 19
Semai 17, 19, 22, 64-65, 79, 106, 112, 114, 116
Shadow Hound 89
Skyler, Gideon 111-112, 113
Slocomb, Gabriel 94
Spacecraft 72-74
 Rift Stalker 74
 Symmetry Hunter 72-73
Tablet of Pluto 13, 19
Tiano, Efren 106-107
Tsarina, The 15, 19-20, 22
Using Ancient Technology 66
Weapons 67-71
 Cutter 69
 Electromagnetic Pulse Weapons 55
 EMP Weapons See **Electromagnetic Pulse Weapons**
 Energy Roil Carbine 69-70
 Grenade, Stasis 70
 Psionic Edged Sword 70-71
 Psionic Plasma Gauntlet 68-69
 Psionic Weapon Quality 67
Zlogorian Orthodox Church 15

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