

DARK HERESY™

THE GAME MASTER'S KIT



WARHAMMER
40,000
ROLEPLAY

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MEAT



BREAD



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MAGGOTS IN THE MEAT

"In the darkness of the void, a billion hungry xenos silently slip between the stars: gnawing like so many rats at the edges of our great Imperium."

— Hortrian Tybirus, Captain of the *Divine Crusade*, Battlefleet Calixis.

Maggots in the Meat is a scenario that pits the Acolytes against a terrible and insidious alien threat. It is intended for Acolytes in their first or second Rank. However, with a few small adjustments, it can be modified to accommodate groups of any experience.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This adventure takes place entirely on the dark and dismal feudal world known as Acreage. An Imperial backwater, it lies in the sub-sector of Josian Reach, connected only by a few tenuous shipping routes. However, it is firmly under Imperial rule and provides its Imperial tithe in the form of raw materials and manpower. Sending ores to build the Emperor's battleships and men to fill His armies. For most of the citizens of Acreage, the Emperor and the Imperium are merely another set of masters. The inhabitants would seldom think to raise their heads from their daily toil, whether it be in the gruel fields or the sky-mills, to contemplate what lies far beyond the bounds of their world.

The same, however, cannot be said for the dominating classes of nobles (who often claim such titles on little more than strength of arms and poorly-forged documents). They are constantly in conflict, both clandestinely and overtly, to rule the vast toiling masses. Power equals status on Acreage. The amount of land and people a noble commands directly equates to his standing with the High King, and it is the High King who carries the favour of the Imperium, the greatest master of all.

On Acreage, the High King's realm, known as Ascandia, spans the majority of the northern landmass. Stretching for thousands of miles and encompassing hundreds of thousands of people, cultures and scores of lesser princes, kings and queens. It is a land of rugged mountains, dark icy forests and endless lonely plains, broken only by primitive villages and stinking greyish gruel fields or the precarious towering sky-mills.

For the last few years, however, the relative stability of this realm, and in fact most of Acreage, has been rent apart by a bloody civil war. The High King died without naming an heir, leaving his surviving children to bicker and fight amongst themselves for the title (see *The War of the Rhazes*), in which thousands have already perished. This has been a prosperous time for the nobles, as each has taken the advantage of the mayhem of war to expand their domains or settle old scores. It has also drawn more off-world interest to Acreage, in the form of mercenaries and traders, seeking to make a profit through selling skills, training and advanced weapons.

One such noble taking advantage of these off-world visitors is Prince Orcan, lord of the City of Olrakan. Also known as the Floating City, Olrakan, sprawls along a section of the southern coast of Ascandia, where the foetid Chitin Swamps meet the dark waters of the Sea of Sorrows. The city is notable not only for its construction, standing atop countless rotting posts above the stinking waters of the swamp, but also for its proximity to one of Acreage's few spaceports—Emperor's Island, located several miles out to sea.

Prince Orcan has cultivated his position throughout the war by controlling much of the traffic to and from Emperor's Island; brokering deals with other nobles for access to precious off-world cargos and skilled soldiers. Inevitably this monopoly has created a great deal of jealousy amongst his nearest neighbours, and more than once, Olrakan has been besieged by the cannon-barges and musketmen of a rival lord. However, the same off-world weapons and soldiers that have sparked such attacks have also ensured Orcan's victory every time thus far. His rivals, however, have not yet been deterred and continue to try periodically to take the city by force.

While the prince's attentions have been focused on the enemies outside his walls, a far more dangerous group of individuals have infiltrated his domain—the Slaught. Insidious and disturbing aliens, the Slaught are carrion eaters who use their vile cunning to foment war and strife so that they may feed off the resulting carnage. Olrankan's constant state of turmoil has proved the perfect nesting ground and they have secretly set themselves up within the city to feed on its inhabitants. Not content to simply devour the war dead, the Slaught have also been harvesting corpses and spreading terror themselves. Every night they send out their alien pets—xeno predators selected for their aggression and horrific natures—to hunt the locals. These monsters kill indiscriminately and leave only tales of terror in their wake. So far, the prince has been too distracted by his foes outside the city's walls to worry about these wild rumours—after all, amidst the flames of war what is one more horror?

Whilst the prince has not heeded the signs, others have. Word has reached the attentive ears of the Inquisition. Enter the Acolytes.

THE WAR OF THE RHOZES

The civil war on Acreage all started about five years ago and, like so many wars before, it could have easily been avoided. At the time, Gordanus was the High King of Ascandia. In the eyes of the Imperium therefore, he was also the Planetary Governor of Acreage. He had had a long and prosperous reign, under which the soul-crushing toil of his subjects had been perhaps marginally easier—or perhaps marginally harder—soul-crushing toil being much of a muchness to a peasant with a life expectancy of twenty-six. Finally, like all good kings, he died peacefully in his bed, or was possibly foully murdered—the inhabitants of Acreage are not big on autopsies or asking too many questions. This left his twin daughters Rhोजना and Rhozeia in direct succession to the throne. Unfortunately, Gordanus failed to name either one as his successor before his death. So the girls turned to their ultimate lord and master, the Emperor of Mankind, to determine which of them was to take both the throne and title of Planetary Governor and rule over all of Acreage.

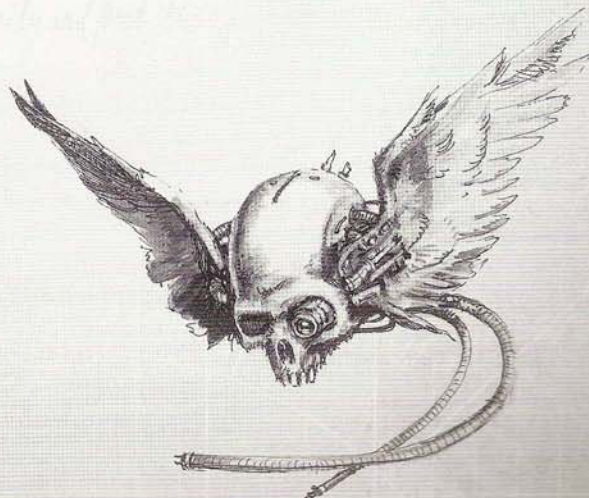
Tragically, an Administratum clerical error omitted the last two letters of the successor's name from the reply, stating only that Rhoze was now officially recognised as the ruler of Acreage. Initially the girls were cordial with each other

and sent a series of requests for clarification. However, these seemed to fall on deaf ears and no further responses were forthcoming. In fact, the Administratum scrivener responsible for the initial mistaken missive was keeping the whole thing quiet, no doubt for fear of getting a stern talking to over the matter.

With silence from the Imperium, it didn't take long for Rhोजना and Rhozeia to resort to violence to ensure that they, and they alone, would become the ruler of Ascandia. In a matter of weeks each had amassed the support of dozens of lesser nobles, each willing to swear to the validity of their chosen queen's claim to the throne and prove it with the blood of their citizens. The resulting conflict has dragged on with neither of the Rhazes gaining much in the way of an advantage, due in equal parts to the primitive nature for their weapons (cannon, sword, and musket for the most part) and the treachery of their nobles (it is not uncommon for a lord's allegiance to change several times a day, often in the midst of a battle).

Ironically, the state of strife on Acreage has actually increased its level of Imperial tithe as both Rhazes frantically try and outdo the other in their service to the Imperium, no doubt hopeful that they will finally receive support to oust the other. This state of affairs has also led directly to the Administratum department responsible for the misunderstanding to own up to their involvement. Claiming it was all part of a carefully devised plan, they have gone so far as to suggest that this kind of tithe boosting technique could be used on other worlds. In any case, as the war poses no threat or disruption to the planet's role within the Imperium, it has for the most part been ignored.

Given all these factors, it seems unlikely that the situation on Acreage will resolve itself anytime soon, and the bloodshed and chaos will continue.



THE ACREAGE BRIEFING

Decide how this briefing is delivered to the Acolytes, perhaps as a coded message or in person by one of the Inquisitor's trusted agents.

"Greetings Acolytes,

You are to travel to the feudal world of Acreage to investigate a series of unnatural attacks on the citizens of the city of Orlankan. The backward locals are full of tales of monsters and daemons, but it is up to you to find the truth of this. Evidence would suggest this is the work of some manner of death cult.

Now make haste to Acreage, your way there has been paved. You will make planetfall at the Imperial outpost known as Emperor's Island, a short distance from the city of Orlankan. From here, tread lightly and make no show of your allegiance as I offer you no support in this task and it is unknown as to the extent of your foes' power.

I await news of your success."

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

And so we come to the Player Character's reason for coming to Acreage. The adventure opens with the Acolytes arriving at the wind- and sea-swept spaceport of Emperor's Island, just off the southern coast of Ascandia. They have been sent by their Inquisitor, tasked with finding out who, or what, is responsible for the attacks in Orlankan. They are armed only with rumours and speculation of death cults and unspeakable monsters.

Their first task is to gather what information they can from the locals on the island and then gain passage to the nearby coastal city. This is easier said than done as Emperor's Island teems with traders and mercenaries, all eager to get to the mainland and make some money from the hapless locals, and getting a place on a boat (or at least a good one) can be tricky. However, after some scamming, lying or applied violence, the Acolytes are no doubt able to take the stomach-churning voyage to the coast.

When they approach the city they discover that it is under siege, something they may or may not have learnt on Emperor's Island. To get in, they need to either run the blockade of cannon-barges or land down the coast and sneak in through the swamps. Both ways have their own set of perils. However, presumably the bold servants of the Inquisition are up to the task and once they set foot in Orlankan they can begin their search for answers in earnest, albeit to the constant thump of cannon fire.

Once in the city, they start their search for answers. They face the stupidity of the locals, tales of horror and woe and even the chance of getting caught up in the fighting for the city. With a bit of legwork and asking the right questions, however, it is not too hard for them to find a few clues about the nature of the attacks and discover the site of a recent attack.

This is a blood-spattered section of the wall where one of the Slaught's pets brought down some local soldiers. Careful examination here might clue the PCs into the fact that they face aliens. Tracks can also lead them back to the lair at the old sky-mill.

Alternatively, while searching the Fabricator's district, they might come across the corpse farmers—a couple of humans that have fallen in with the Slaught. Information here can also lead to the old sky-mill.

The final scene takes place in an old derelict sky-mill filled with rotting, half-consumed corpses. This is where the Slaught have made their nest. The Acolytes must face the vile aliens and their pets and cleanse the city of their filth or become the latest additions to their growing larder.

GETTING STARTED

The first thing you need to do is give the adventure a read-through at least once before running it. You don't need to memorise it, but having a clear idea of how the scenario plays out will make it flow more smoothly. You will also need to generate a few aliens for the Slaught to use as pets using the Alien Generator found in the Appendix.

The adventure starts with the Acolytes having just gathered on Emperor's Island fresh from receiving their mission briefing. As the adventure does not deal with exactly how the characters reached Acreage, it is entirely up to you to decide how they have made their way here. Of course if you just want to dive into the adventure, it is easy to say that the PCs have spent several long weeks in the hold of a freighter or Imperial frigate, hitching a ride from one of the more populous core systems.

You might also choose to have this as the first time that the Acolytes have met each other, each summoned individually to heed their master's bidding from various places around the sector. This can be a fun way of getting the players to introduce themselves in-game as they size each other up. Of course you want them to work together, so don't try this approach if you think it might result in combat!

However you choose to have the player's characters arrive and meet on Acreage, you can start by giving the players the briefing (see The Acreage Briefing sidebar) and then describe their arrival on Emperor's Island.



EMPEROR'S ISLAND

A vast floating spaceport, Emperor's Island is akin to a mighty oil rig or man-made island anchored just beyond sight of the mainland. It acts as a convenient staging point for merchants and mercenaries wishing to do business on Acreage, but also ensures that the Imperium can retain its control over traffic and goods on- and off-world.

Over the centuries the island has grown and expanded with the ebb and flow of commerce to the planet. When the Acolytes arrive, they find themselves stepping off their lander into a monolithic mess of mingled structures and twisted architecture. Upon first arriving you can read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As the lander door opens, you are greeted by the salty smell of the sea, mingled with the scent of rust, oil and human decay. As you look around, you see that you stand atop a vast landing platform that appears to be stabilised against the fickleness of the ocean to remain perfectly level. However, beyond its edges stretches a heaving mass of structures not unlike a vast island of flotsam and jetsam.

There is no real rhyme or reason to the layout of the island, but it does roughly comprise of four distinct areas.

THE LANDING ZONES

This large central area comprises several large heat-blasted landing platforms for orbital craft and dozens of smaller ones for atmospheric vehicles. Each platform is suspended on a bed of constantly revolving stabilisers that counteract the rolling of the island. For those not used to the effect, it can be quite disorientating as the horizon rolls and pitches while their footing remains level. Have the Acolytes make Easy (+30) Agility Tests the first time they experience the sensation. Failure indicates they have embarrassingly fallen over and may only move at half their normal rate until they leave the platforms as they cautiously stagger around.

There is not a great deal to do in the landing zones unless you are either getting onto or off a transport, and the authorities discourage people hanging about. Also, apart from the surly and grubby tech crews that scurry about the place, there is also no one else to talk to. Some Acolytes might have the clever idea that they should try and secure an atmospheric craft to take them to the mainland. However, they are told in no uncertain terms that most of Acreage is a no-fly zone, especially through areas of active conflict. In any case, the only aircraft currently on the island are ancient and inoperative. Of course, if the Acolytes really want to pursue this path, see what kind of cunning plan they can come up with and decide if it has a chance of success. It should not be easy, so their plan will have to be spectacular....

THE BILGES

The Bilges are a random collection of gantries, cabins, corridors and decks that exist in the perpetual shadow of the landing platforms. Every inch of space here is given over either to some kind of personal abode or place of business. It is here that the bulk of the island's several thousand strong population rub shoulders. Finding one's way around can be tricky, as the lighting is certainly sub-par and there is no such thing as street signs. Acolytes trying to find anywhere in particular, or trying to get to another part of the island, must make a successful Challenging Navigation Test. Failure indicates an hour of aimless wandering has passed, after which time they may Test again. A successful Ordinary (+10) Inquiry Test allows the Acolytes to find a guide by the name of Tiplis who can be hired for 2 thrones an hour. As he leads them, Tiplis chatters endlessly about the restorative properties of salt water and how it can be used for everything from cleaning valuable equipment to making babies grow up strong and mutation free (just a few spoonfuls a day!).

Acolytes can find most things for sale in the Bilges' darkened nooks and crannies, as well as outlets for any number of vices. Feel free to make up your own locations and characters if you wish, but here are some of the most notable locations that the PCs might come across.



VETO'S EMPORIUM OF EPHEMERAL DELIGHTS

Probably the largest drinking and gambling den in the Bilges, Veto's is a certified scumhole. Its smoky interior sprawls haphazardly across several linked gantry-ways with dozens of hanging private booths for the more discerning customers. By the harsh red glow of hazard lights, Acolytes can tank themselves up on the local wyrm-brew (made from only finest kelp-serpent secretions, with a decidedly salty aftertaste) only 1 throne a bucket. Harder drugs are also available from a badly-scarred woman by the name of Salacious who is a regular at Veto's. She only deals with those she trusts and a successful Charm or Deceive Skill Test is required to open a dialogue. She sells any drugs listed on pages 148 to 149 of *Dark Heresy* at twice the listed price. Finally there is Veto himself, a withered old man of questionable sanity who sometimes is given over to talking in riddles, but is nevertheless a good source of information. Acolytes who talk to him long enough can learn all the rumours on the Emperor's Island Rumour Mill table.

THE GREASE PITS

With little else to do on the island, many locals and passers-through indulge in either gambling or fighting, or both at once. This is what the Grease Pits are for. A section of deck below one of the main landing platforms has been cleared and walled off. Here combatants can slug each other senseless to the constant whirl of the stabilisers overhead. Fights are always unarmed and usually last until one fighter is unconscious or gives up. Getting into a fight is easy: the fight organiser—a bald sneering fellow by the name of Remarus—happily signs newcomers up for a paltry fee of 10 thrones. A loss nets you nothing (besides the beating you took), while a win doubles your cash. Fighters are welcome to bet on themselves but cannot bet against themselves (any kind of dive-taking normally ends with the fighter getting tossed into the sea). Should Acolytes wish to try their luck, use the stats for a Heavy (without equipment) on page 341 of *Dark Heresy*.

SEA SALVAGE AND STELLA FLOTSAM

Throughout the Bilges, there are dozens of people that make their way selling whatever junk and rubbish they can lay their hands on. Some even have “shops” where they invite customers to come in and peruse their wares. Most of the items on offer are indeed complete rubbish as anyone with eyes is able to ascertain quite quickly. If an Acolyte wants to try and find something in particular, you can use the guidelines presented on pages 125 to 126 of *Dark Heresy* (for the purposes of which Emperor’s Island has a population of 5,000). As a general rule, only items of Average Availability or below are available. Items with the Primitive special quality are one step easier to find.

The Bilges is also the most likely spot for the Acolytes to encounter trouble. At any point while the PCs wander around, you can have them run into some malcontents. When you want this to occur, run the Scum of the Imperium encounter.

THE IMPERIAL PORT AUTHORITY

Located in the centre of the island, the Imperial Port Authority is an enormous tower that reaches up hundreds of metres into the sky. Covered with vox-arrays and vista ports, it is from here that the Imperium keeps a keen eye on Emperor’s Island and all its comings and goings. It is also the most secure place on the whole island, protected at all times by the local Port Wardens (use the Enforcer stats on page 339 of *Dark Heresy*). The Acolytes should have no reason to enter the Port Authority tower, so its role during their stay on the island should be a minimum one. You should, however, remind the PCs of its presence wherever they go, for they can catch glimpses of the building through gaps in the landing platforms or through layers of gantries, and it always seems to be watching them.

THE DOCKS

The docks are located in the underbelly of the island, where the sea crashes and surges against its great supports. Just above the churning ocean, the Acolytes see dozens of boats of all sizes and makes hanging in launch cradles, waiting to be lowered into the churning water.

The docks are a dangerous place, where people pack the swinging gantries awaiting a chance to board a ship and where captains and agents push through the crowds looking for the best fares. If the PCs haven’t had the Scum of the Imperium encounter, perhaps because they didn’t go to the Bilges, you can insert it here if you like. However, the hazardous nature of the swinging gantries means that anyone involved in a combat here must make an Easy (+30) Agility Test each Round or fall down. If you are feeling particularly nasty, you could have anyone that fails by more 3 or more degrees slip over the side and plummet into the sea below. Of course, without some quick thinking, this is likely a death sentence...

Presumably, the Acolytes have come here to get a boat, in which case see *Rough Seas*. If the PCs want to come straight to the docks to get a boat and head off to the mainland, feel free to make them wait, forcing them to explore more of the island while their boat is being prepared. Alternatively, you could make them travel past the Port Authority or through the Bilges and describe some of the sights along the way to get their interest.

EXPLORING THE ISLAND

The Acolytes can spend as much or as little time as they like exploring the island. This can be an ideal chance for them to get to know each other and you shouldn’t feel that you need to hurry them to the docks and get them on their way to the mainland. Players could also use this time to try and purchase extra equipment or indulge in some gambling or carousing. It is also a good chance to try out the characters’ social (and possibly combat) skills. The only set encounter on the island is Scum of the Imperium, but should you want, you can create any number of NPCs for the characters to meet and interact with. These could be hard-bitten mercenaries, greedy merchants or even impoverished bilge workers, all either passing through or trying to eek out a living on this floating eyesore. At the very least, the island is a good source of gossip and rumours, and characters that want to ask around can learn a lot about the world and its locals.

Any Acolyte asking questions about Acreage learns that it is currently in the grips of a civil war without the need to make any Tests (this is, after all, why most people are passing through the island). They can also find out the majority of the common knowledge about



the world, such as the fact that Ascandia is the principle realm. If they ask how to get to the mainland, they are directed to the docks. If a PC wishes to learn about the attacks, he needs to succeed on a Routine (+20) Inquiry Test and then roll on the Emperor's Island Rumour Mill table if he passes.

TABLE 1-1: EMPEROR'S ISLAND RUMOUR MILL

Roll Rumour

- 1-2 "Well you know Prince Orcan, he's the ruler of Olrankan you see, he is under siege by the Baroness Falatrish. She is a bad sort, and I heard the attacks are just her own men sneaking into the city at night, killing folk and taking the bodies to scare the prince into giving up."
- 3-4 "You hear all sorts of crazy stories about swamp monsters and the like but I reckon it is the Horloc. A local swamp god, in case you were wondering. Used to be an ancient tribe hereabouts that worshipped it, and they say it swore one day it would rise again to reclaim its ancestral home."
- 5-6 "Bout a hundred years back, there was a strange cult that used to call Olrankan home. Never got as far as the island but I reckon they had plans. Anyway turned out they were in league with this bunch of seditionists and void worshippers. The Imperium came in and burned 'em all. Don't reckon they got 'em all..."
- 7-8 "I heard that the killings lay at the prince's feet. At night he changes shape and he and his other nobles they go 'round killing and eating the remains, that's why there have never been any bodies found, see?"
- 9-0 "You know there is something in the swamp gas that gets in the blood and changes people. I heard from some folk in the city the reason none of the bodies have been found is they have been getting up after they was dead, and walking off into the swamp."

When the players feel they have done enough here they can travel to the docks and try to secure passage to the mainland.

SCUM OF THE IMPERIUM

Emperor's Island is by no means a safe place. The current situation is one of barely contained violence as gangs of thugs and mercenaries rub shoulders awaiting transport to the mainland. In this atmosphere, fights are common and the Imperial Port Authority has neither the manpower nor the inclination to stop them, so long as they pose no threat to the island itself.

This encounter can be run at anytime during the Acolytes' time on the island, but mostly likely occurs when they are in the Bilges or at the docks. At the start of the encounter, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

As you force your way through the press of bodies you stumble into a group of ragged looking toughs. All at once the crowd seems to part around you, leaving a ring of expectant spectators circling your group and these burly men.

Krass and his Cronies

Krass and his companions have been stuck on the island for a long time. Having wasted most of their thrones upon arrival, and of dubious quality as mercenaries, they have neither been able to buy passage back into orbit or to the mainland. Understandably they are bored and spoiling for a fight. If you want, let the Acolytes try to talk their way out of this one, though they need to pass a Test, using any Interaction skill, by at least two degrees of success to even get Krass talking. Otherwise, the mercs waste little time in throwing the first punch.

ROUGH SEAS

Finding passage to the mainland is easier said than done. Once the Acolytes reach the docks, there are a few ways they can try and get onto a boat.

The Inquisition needs your boat!

If the PCs want to, they can simply requisition a boat in the name of the Inquisition. They need to convince the Port Authority that they are who they say they are (going through a process of code verification at the Port Authority tower), which in turn lets the Slaught know that they are coming. This eventually results in them gaining passage on a sturdy ship, and on their way no further questions asked.

KRASS AND HIS CRONIES

(Krass + 1 Crony per PC)

Krass and his Cronies Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
28	28	35	30	30	30	27	25	30



Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Intimidate (S), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (SP), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP).

Weapons: Knife (3m; 1d5+3 R; Primitive), stub automatic (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 9; Reload Full).

Gear: Threadbare clothing, 2 stub automatic clips, 1d5 thrones.

Tactics

Krass and his buddies do not fight to the death (at least intentionally). If it looks like any of them are about to die, they make a run for it. If Krass runs, they all run. Likewise, they only draw weapons if the Acolytes do so first (or look like they are going to). If things are going badly for the Acolytes or if any firearms, explosives or obvious Psychic Powers are used, or, after about 10 Rounds of combat, a dozen port wardens arrive to break up the fight, arresting anyone who can't get away. Acolytes arrested by the wardens can either pay a fine of 100 thrones (double if they killed anyone) or play the Inquisition card (requiring the verification of codes back at the Port Authority tower) and get away free of charge (though they have tipped their hand to the Slaughter as word gets back from their spies on the island).

So how much then?

The easiest way to get onto a boat is to pay for it. Passage costs 50 thrones per person, though a Barter Test can reduce this as normal. Payment is in advance but, once they have paid, they can board up and be on their way.

Stowing Away

It is also possible to stow away on a ship by sneaking onto one, but this requires successful Concealment, Silent Move and Climb Tests as the Acolytes work their way underneath the gantries and down the chains to the ship cradles. Stowing away at night makes these tests Ordinary (+10).

Developments

If the PCs get violent at any stage, they are unlikely to get passage. At all times, there are at least two dozen port wardens lurking around the docks, and while they are not so bothered about the odd scuffle between passengers, attacks on captains or their crews meet with swift intervention. Likewise, attempts to force entry onto a ship will lead to violence, and possibly arrest or death.

have a good reason to be used to sailing. Failure means that they suffer a level of Fatigue as they are repeatedly sick (either onto the deck or over the side).

If you are feeling particularly malicious, have one of the passengers pressed up against a random Acolyte lose his lunch—all down the unlucky PC. The poor sick passenger tries to apologise through vomit-flecked lips but if a fight does break out use the Scum stats on page 344 of Dark Heresy.

The journey also provides a final chance for the Acolytes to pick up rumours if they have not yet done so. Refer to the Emperor's Island Rumour Mill table.

Finally the Acolytes come into sight of Orlankan and the mainland, currently lit by flashes of cannon fire and partially hidden beneath a pall of smoke.



THE VOYAGE

The journey takes about six hours, and in that time, there is little to do except squat or stand on the crowded decks or in the dingy holds amidst dozens of other people. The seas are far from calm and the ship pitches and rolls alarmingly as it makes its voyage. Have each Acolyte make a Routine (+20) Toughness Test, unless they

OLRANKAN: THE FLOATING CITY

The city of Olrankan is currently besieged by one of Prince Orcan's many rivals, the Baroness Falatrish. This means that the swamps around its walls are filled with enemy encampments and its harbour is choked with cannon-barges. As the Acolyte's vessel approaches the city's harbour, it may look like they are in for some trouble as a number of the besieging ships seem to take an interest in them, ponderously turning in the water to bring them into the firing arc of their guns.

You should draw out this moment for a while and see if the PCs do anything rash. In truth, they are in no danger, as the captains of the cannon-barges are less than fanatical about their duties and have created a detailed toll system, accepting bribes from ships that want to enter and leave the city. Of course, no one on the Acolytes' vessel tells them unless they ask. If they do start shooting or jump over the side and make a swim for the swamp refer to Running the Blockade.

Presumably the Acolytes keep their nerve and glide past the massive enemy ships bristling with cannons, close enough to see the toothless leers of grubby sailors. As they enter Olrankan harbour proper, you can read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Leaving behind the ring of bloated cannon-barges, your vessel makes it way into Olrankan's harbour. The city sprawls out before you, a haphazard collection of dark wooden buildings that sag and lean drunkenly against each other, all held above the putrid waters of the swamp by a forest of tiers and posts. At various places throughout this mass of structures, you can see crooked towers reaching up to the sky, their tops ringed with sails and fans, turning slowly in the wind. At the edge of the buildings, a ruined wall marks the barrier between city and swamp. From the direction of this wall you can see the flash of cannon fire and hear the screams of men carried on the wind.

The vessel unceremoniously wedges its way in between the other boats crowding the docks, banging against the landing platform. Almost immediately, the boat empties as the passengers disappear into the dank streets of the city. The Acolytes can now begin their search for the source of the attacks. Olrankan, like Emperor's Island, is in no way a planned or ordered place. Its streets are little more than plank walkways between stilt-supported structures. However, the city can be divided into a number of parts, each of which the Acolytes may wish to visit.

RUNNING THE BLOCKADE

As an alternative, you might like to make getting into Olrankan a bit harder. Perhaps the ship they are travelling on has not paid the toll, or for some reason they run into some enemy captain who actually understands the meaning of the word siege. In this case there are two likely outcomes. The first is that the PCs need to fight their way in past a number of cannon-barges. No doubt, their advanced weaponry gives them an edge, but their vessel is also sure to be harmed. You can run this encounter fast and loose, with furious exchanges of fire as the ships pass each other, possibly culminating in a boarding action (use the stats for Baroness Falatrish's Musketsmen). The second is for them to convince the captain to skirt the edge of the blockage and drop them off in the swamp where they may then sneak into the city—a better option for less combat ready Acolytes. This is no less hazardous, however, as they need to skulk through the stinking bogs and avoid both enemy patrols and their encampments. Of course, as long as they are clever and quiet they should be fine, probably taking a swim with the leeches under the city to gain entrance. Use the stats for the musketsmen if they run into any enemy troops.

BARONESS FALATRISH'S MUSKETMEN

The musketsmen of the Baroness are typical of the soldiers fighting the War of the Rhozes—poorly trained, ill equipped and distressingly stupid.

Baroness Falatrish's Musketsmen Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	27	31	30	27	25	27	25	30

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Common Lore (Acreage) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (Primitive).

Weapons: Knife (3m; 1d5+3 R; Primitive), musket (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+2 I; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload 5 Full).

Gear: Poor quality uniform, 10 shot and powder.



THE WHARF

This area is not so much a wharf or a dock but rather the seaward edge of the city. It is packed with vessels, many of which are propped up on posts and used as makeshift dwellings. Most of Olrankan's trade also happens here, as vendors hawk their skills or wares to locals or travellers fresh from Emperor's Island. Aside from travellers and off-worlders, PCs get a good look at the unwashed masses of Olrankan, dressed in dark cloaks and coats, loose stained shirts and tight-fitting caps with gauze veils (designed to keep the swamp's biting insects from eyes and ears). They can also check out the local enforcers, known as the Plumes, due to their extravagant plumed hats. The Plumes are very well equipped and wear long flak cloaks and carry very modern

looking rifles (use the Enforcer stats on page 339 of *Dark Heresy*, though change their stub automatics to hunting rifles).

If they like, the PCs can indulge in drinking or gambling here (the local brew is a grey marsh-milk fermented from the entrails of the Furbog, a swamp predator). They can also buy equipment; though the siege means that everything is twice the normal price and Availability is two steps worse. In addition, finding anything that is not Primitive is practically impossible.

Asking about the attacks at the wharfs gains suspicious glares from most of the locals. The Acolytes easily detect the heavy atmosphere of fear hanging over the people here. An Inquiry Test gleams some useful information: it seems that most of the attacks have taken place near the walls and they always happen at night.

TABLE 1-2: BATTLE FOR OLRANKAN

Roll Event

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1-3 | Incoming! A faint whistling noise suddenly grows louder. Randomly pick an Acolyte and have them make an Awareness Test. On a success, he or she is quick enough to leap out of the way as a cannon ball smashes through the walkway where they were standing. If the Acolyte fails he takes 1d10 (1) damage to a random part of his body and is thrown to the ground as the shot grazes him. |
| 4-7 | Infiltrators. The Acolytes turn a corner only to bump into a group of enemy soldier's that have snuck into the city. The soldiers waste no time in attacking. There will be one soldier for each Acolyte present. Use the stats for Baroness Falatrish's Musketmen. |
| 8-10 | Conscripted. The Acolytes have strayed too close to the wall and run into a full-blown battle! Seeing their dress and weapons, a Plume officer rushes over and urges them to aid the city. If they accept, they can take to walls. Use the stats for Musketmen to represent the enemy soldiers. Don't let this fight go on for too long, however, and have the enemy retreat if it is going badly for the Acolytes; after all, this is only meant to be a minor encounter! |

THE HOVELS

This is by far the largest part of the city, comprising of the bulk of its population. It is a depressing place where the Acolytes receive sullen stares from the locals and little else. If you want, this is an ideal place for the PCs to run into trouble. It could either be in the form of some local toughs looking for a fight (though even the inbred inhabitants of Olrankan will think twice about attacking heavily armed Acolytes), some enterprising parents looking for someone of good breeding to marry their "comely" son or daughter, or perhaps if there is a psyker in the group he might get approached by a blind old man pointing and crying "Witch!" attracting the attention of small and unfriendly mob.

Asking about the attacks here, assuming that the PCs can find a talkative local (probably requiring a Charm Test) gains some of the following information. Most of the attacks have been near the walls, they are always at night and none of the bodies are ever found. If the Acolytes spend a bit of time here, they may also hear stories of other bodies going missing, taken from homes or dug up from graves.

THE WALL

The wall refers to any section of the city within a block or two of its edge. Most people have moved out of these areas due to the fighting. There is little for the Acolytes to find here, though they may get to experience the war first hand. If so, have them roll on the Battle for Olrankan table to see what happens. For every hour or two they spend here, roll again. Optionally, you can use this table to generate an encounter anywhere in the city to add some action to the PCs investigation.

Generally, the PCs are kept away from the walls by harried-looking Plumes. If they ask about the attacks, they learn the same information as in the other areas. In addition,

if they can prove to the Plumes that they have some kind of reason to be investigating (or they make a successful Charm, Deceive or Intimidate Test) they are directed to the site of a recent attack, see Blood on the Wall.

BLOOD ON THE WALL

This is a section of wall that looks like it has seen its fair share of battle. At the base of the wall is a large bloodstain that looks only hours old. In the blood, the outline of several bodies and weird prints are visible. Acolytes can make Search Tests to examine the area. Any success reveals that bodies were dragged off after they were killed. In addition, there are spent casings from hunting rifles (like the ones the Plumes use) but only a few, and from their positions it looks like they were from wildfire. The footprints in the blood are not human.

PCs with any kind of Xeno Lore skill can make a test to identify the footprints as definitely those of a xenos.

In addition, anyone passing a Search Test also detects xenos prints leading off into the city. Following the prints takes a good couple of hours and two successful Difficult (-10) Tracking Tests. If they only pass one Test, they lose the trail in the Fabricator's district. Otherwise the tracks lead them to the Old Sky-Mill.

THE HILL

Located in the centre of the city, this area is not really a hill but just a place where the buildings are taller and stand on higher posts. It is also where the prince and anyone who is either important or rich reside. The hill is ringed by its own wooden palisade, mostly for keeping out the riff-raff, but also as an added line of defence against attack. This barrier is guarded at all times by the most well-trained and competent Plumes. Unless they have a very good reason, Acolytes are not allowed inside.

THE FABRICATORS DISTRICT

This area is a vast collection of warehouses and factories, mostly specialising in harvesting the various species of swamp weeds and edible insects, rendering them down into clothing or food products. In fact, it looks little different from the rest of the city, except perhaps the buildings are a bit bigger and a little less ordered (if such a thing is possible). The most distinctive feature of this place is the smell, which makes the rest of the city seem fragrant by comparison. The first time the Acolytes enter this area have them make a Routine (+20) Toughness Test (with bonuses for wearing filter plugs or similar equipment). A PC who fails suffers a -5 penalty on any Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill Test until they leave as they struggle with bouts of nausea.

Asking about the attacks here provides the same information as in the other areas. However, the Acolytes notice that the residents seem more resistant to questioning than those from other areas and constantly mutter about the trials of war and too much work to do. However, if the PCs succeed on an Inquiry or Intimidation Test, or give a local a bribe of 10 thrones, they learn about a couple of people who have been seen coming and going late at night carrying bulky bundles. Their informant even goes so far as to point out their place of business.

THE CORPSE FARMERS

The corpse farmers' warehouse is a pitiful affair squashed between two larger buildings. It hangs dangerously close to the swamp and looks as if it might collapse into the water at any time. Its interior is little more than a single large dank

room filled with stinking wrapped bundles (corpses rolled up in dried swamp weed) with a small raised office at one end.

The corpse farmers, Smeed and Smoot, are two locals who have discovered that there is a living to be had gathering up the dead of city and selling them. The Slaught, with an insatiable appetite for the dead, struck up a kind of deal with Smeed and Smoot after they ran into them dumping bodies near the old mill. In exchange for the bodies, the Slaught leave the corpse farmers any possessions taken from the corpses. This happy partnership has continued for several weeks so far.

Smeed and Smoot are not the bravest of souls, but if they are Surprised they probably fight, at least until wounded or if it is obvious that they are outnumbered.

Development

Assuming that at least one of the corpse farmers is taken alive, the Acolytes can interrogate him and learn about his body-farming business. Neither man can tell the Acolyte's anything beyond that they take bodies to the old sky-mill and then leave them to be collected. When they return, the bodies are gone and clothing, weapons and money are left in their place.

Unknown to Smoot and Smeed, however, the Slaught have been keeping an eye on them and have two of their pets hiding in the warehouse. Initially the aliens do not take part in any fight, watching and waiting to see what will happen. However, if either Smoot or Smeed are captured, the xenos attack, intent on killing everyone. Use the Xenos Generator starting on page 22 to create two xenopredators that you think your PCs could handle.

A search of the warehouse uncovers half a dozen hunting rifles, 30 bullets, two serviceable flak cloaks and a pile of bloodstained clothing and personal items. There are also 137 thrones.

SMEED AND SMOOT

Smeed is a thin wizened old man with a nervous air, almost as if he was guilty of something, while Smoot is slightly fatter but no less suspicious looking.

Smeed and Smoot Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
20	32	22	27	30	44	37	35	47

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel), Carouse (T), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int)

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (SP).

Armour: Flak vest (Body 3).

Weapons: Stub revolver (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 6; Reliable; Reload 2 Full).

Gear: Average clothing, 12 bullets, 200 thrones.

THE OLD SKY-MILL

Eventually, all signs point the Acolytes firmly in the direction of the old Orcan sky-mill. This ancient, imposing structure stands precariously on the northern edge of the city where it catches the foetid wind blowing in from the swamp. If you are feeling generous, or if the PCs are not in great shape after their various run-ins with the locals, you can let them make their way to the mill with little hassle, keeping a low-profile and quickly threading their way across the city through the crowded streets. Alternatively, if you want to string things out a bit, or feel that the Acolytes are just having too easy a time of it, throw in some of the random encounters from the Battle for Olrankan table to slow them down and generally cause them grief.

In either case, the Acolytes eventually arrive at the huge sky-mill. As they take in their surroundings you can read or paraphrase the following to them:

Surrounded by dilapidated and decaying hovels, most of which look abandoned, the mill towers nearly two hundred metres in the air, casting a long shadow across this part of the city. It is an impressive engineering feat for such a backward world, or at least it would be if it didn't look like it was going to fall down at any moment. High above your heads, slowly rotating sails crown the top of the structure, audible even at this distance with their wet creaking.

Looking around for a way in, the PCs spy numerous crumbling holes in the base of the structure, as well as several large doors and windows which were no doubt once used for loading and unloading goods.

As they approach any of the entrances, they smell the unmistakable odour of decaying flesh—decaying flesh in abundance it would seem. If the Slaught know that the Acolytes are coming, they retreat to the sail deck to lay an ambush. Thus, this area contains only bodies. Otherwise, the PCs hear a loud, wet chewing noise, as if meat were being fed into a grinder. This is a single Slaught Infiltrator (see Appendix) that's enjoying its grisly feast. Since it has buried itself in the mound of bodies, it is not immediately visible. The two other Slaught are on the sail desk.

Stepping through an entrance, the Acolytes find a truly grisly sight as their eyes adjust to the gloom. A single room roughly sixty metres in diameter—the base of the sky-mill—is filled knee-deep with rotting bodies, many of which have been dismembered and partially consumed.

Amidst the carnage of slippery and rotting flesh, slimy wooden gears grind and squelch, attached to sails high above. This sight immediately requires Acolytes to make a Fear Test.

As the Acolytes wade into the room, the Slaught, if present, hides until a character draws near, at which point it tears itself free from the bloated remains like a mound of living maggots. This is enough to trigger another Fear Test (–20). The Slaught strikes. If overwhelmed, it retreats up the stairs to the sail deck. It also calls two of its pets to cover its retreat. They arrive 1d5 Rounds after the fight begins. You can use the same xenos you created earlier or generate two new ones as you like.

THE SAIL DECK

A rotten set of stairs climbs up along the inside of the tower wall. This sagging approach leads up to the sail deck at the top of the mill. The climb is alarming as each step sags under the Acolytes' weight and the boards are riddled with holes. Truly, though, the stairs are quite safe—at least as safe as the feudal architecture of Acreage can be.

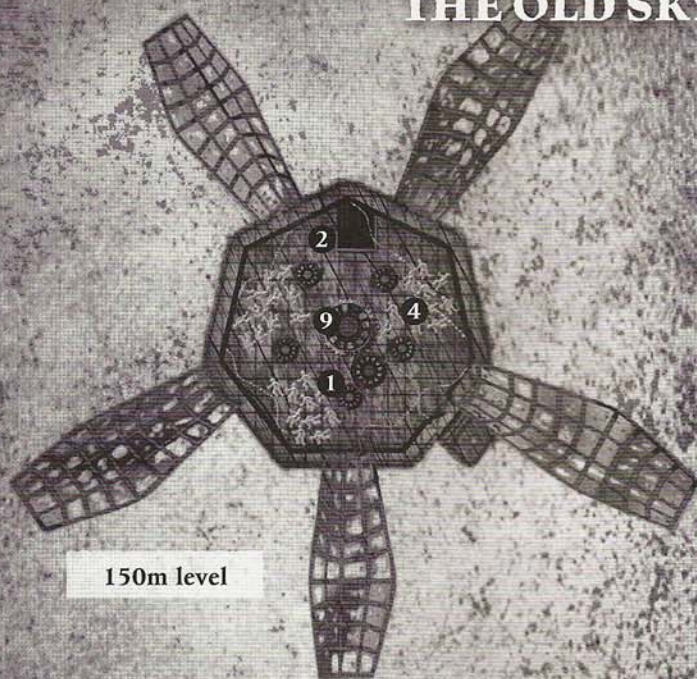
After a bit of testing, the PCs should be able to ascertain this fact. However, this won't stop the stairs from groaning and creaking under their weight. Because the stairs are far from level, characters wishing to charge or run on them must succeed on an Agility Test or fall down (if they fail by 3 or more degrees, you could have them topple back into the heaps of swollen, and green flesh at the bottom. While this is enough to break the fall, the bodies, filled with gas, burst, forcing the character to pass a Toughness Test or take a –10 penalty to all Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests for the rest of this encounter, from the stench.

The stairs ascend almost one-hundred and fifty metres, with a small landing (about two metres square) every thirty metres up. The walls are also lined with hoists and winches, though none look very serviceable or safe. In the centre of the chamber are several huge rotating pillars (the crank shafts attached to the various sails) just out of reach of the stairs. High above in the gloom, the slanted wooden floor of the sail deck can be seen.

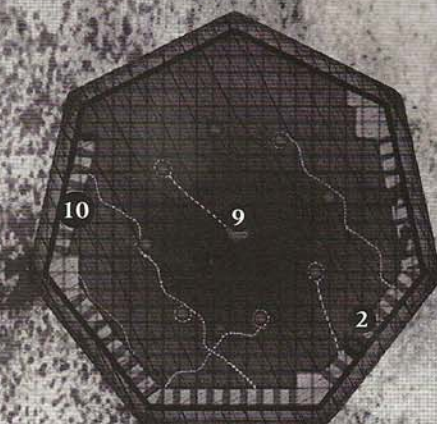
THE WORM TURNS

If the Slaught are ready for the Acolytes, things get really nasty. There are three Slaught Infiltrators currently on the sail deck and at least a dozen of their xenos pets. If aware of the Acolytes, they wait for them to ascend the stairs, watching their progress through knot-holes in

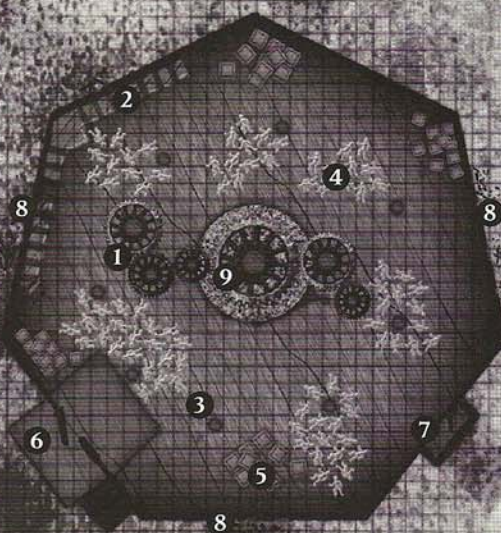
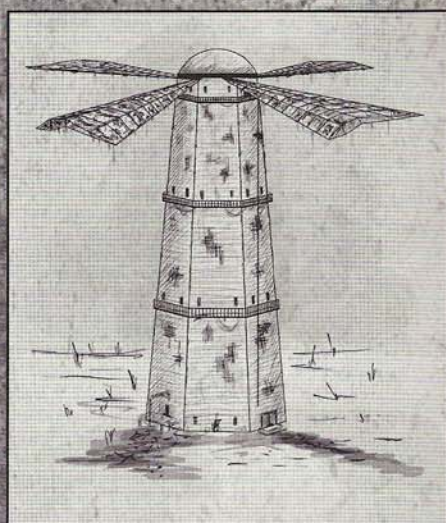
THE OLD SKY-MILL



150m level



100m level



Ground level

the floor, and looking for just the right time to strike. When the Acolytes are approaching the sail deck, having ascended about a hundred metres or so, the Slaught send a few xenos creatures down the stairs to attack, while the Slaught give covering fire from holes in the sail deck floor, about fifty metres above the Acolytes' heads.

Again, you might use aliens you've already created or roll-up a few more. Remember, the point here is not to butcher the PCs, but rather to give them a memorable challenge. Keep this in mind when generating these new aliens.

If the PCs make it to the sail deck, they discover a huge domed room that houses half a dozen

slowly turning shafts and vast cogs connected to broad wind sails attached to the outside of the structure. Small windows also ring the chamber looking out over the city, the sea and the swamp. Like the room below, this chamber is filled with bodies, closely packed and sorted into piles (this is where the Slaught bring their favourite morsels). Acolytes do not need to make a Fear Test upon entering this chamber; it is not so horrifying the second time. The presence of bodies restricts movement and vision in this chamber considerably, so it is difficult for more than two people to attack an opponent at once, and there is always an abundance of cover, even if it is "ripe" cover.

The Old Sky-Mill Key

1. Cogs & winches
2. Stairs
3. Support pillars
4. Corpses
5. Crates
6. Loading stage
7. Front entrance
8. Broken wall sections
9. Main mill pillar
10. Ropes

1 square = 1 metre

If there are any Slaughter alive after a few vicious rounds of fighting, they flee out of one of the room's windows and climb down the side of the sky-mill or lower themselves down with the winch, possibly leading to a dramatic combat on the outside of the building, with Acolytes ducking sails whilst trying to keep their footing. In any case, none of the Slaughter let themselves be taken alive, jumping to their deaths if need be. Once all the Slaughter are all killed, the remaining xenos flee into the city, no doubt to cause more havoc later. The Acolytes can give chase, which may develop as you see fit.

A GOOD OLD MESS

It is quite possible that one or more of the Slaughter or some of their pets may manage to escape the old sky-mill and set off into the city. It is up to you how much trouble this causes but even a couple of stray aliens rampaging through the city could cause unbelievable havoc. Combined with the ongoing siege it may even, in a worst-case scenario, lead to the fall and sacking of the city as the garrison panics. At the very least, the Acolytes might find themselves hunting down several aliens in the sky-mill, even after they have dispatched the Slaughter.

If you want, however, you can wrap-up the adventure here, and handle the hunting down of the rogue aliens as part of the conclusion, whether the PCs have anything to do with it or not.

CONCLUSION

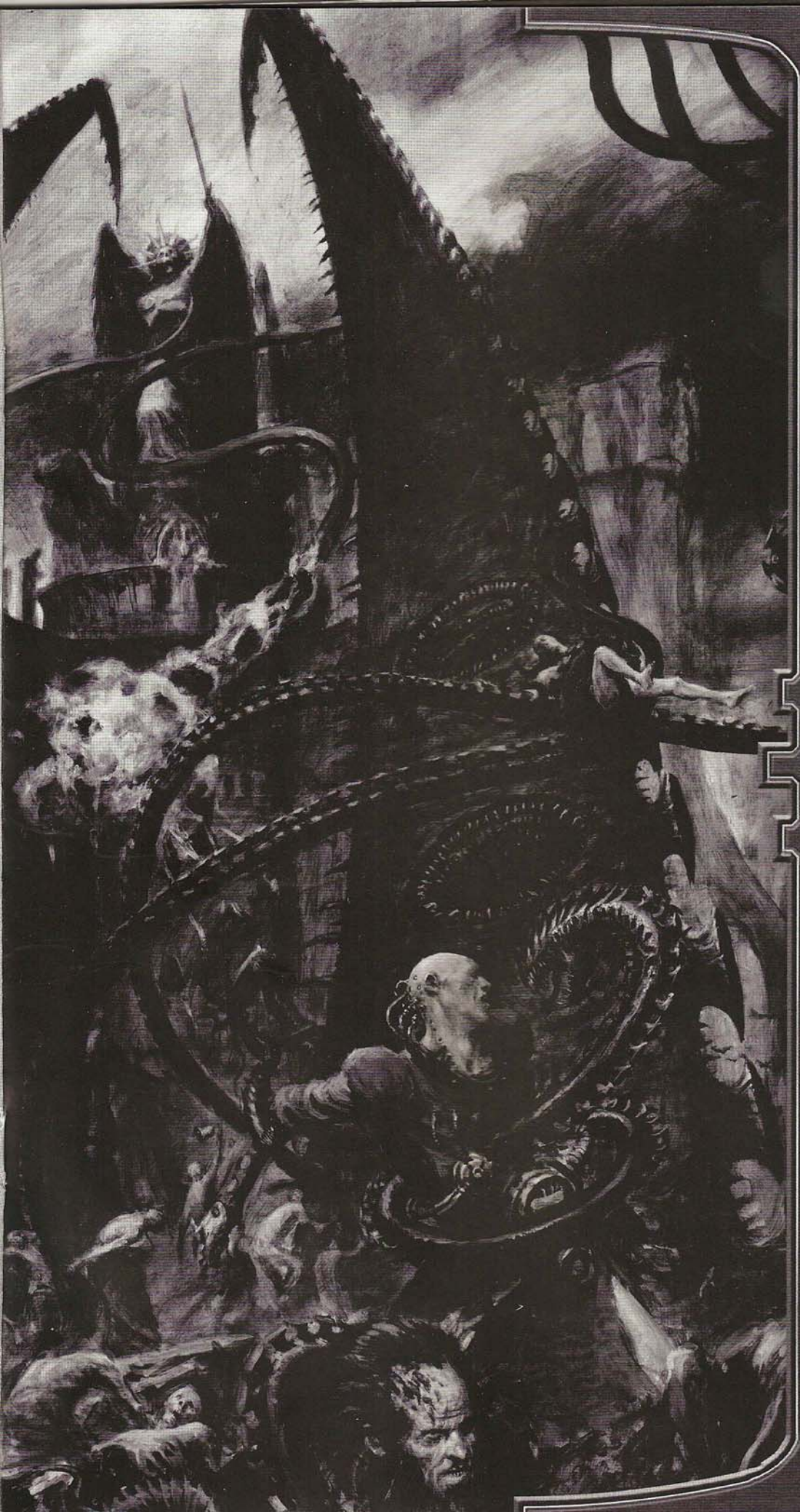
As the dust settles, most of the inhabitants of Olrankan are probably none the wiser. The Slaughter have lost their stake on Acreage and, hopefully, any stray xenos have been taken care of. Once the sky-mill is safe, the Acolytes can have a good search of the sail deck and the bodies. What they find is both informative and alarming.

Firstly, not all the bodies are from Olrankan; some are from much further afield and it looks like the Slaughter have travelled a long way to get here. There is also evidence in the form of maps and warp routes that seem to indicate that Acreage is but a small part of a much larger Slaughter incursion in this part of the Calixis Sector, with dozens of other worlds marked as targets.

When the Acolytes turn this information over to their Inquisitor, they get a pat on the back and a ticket off Acreage for some down time.

This concludes *Maggots in the Meat*. You can use the Slaughter again, or even set a series of adventures around them based on the information that the Acolytes have just acquired. Or perhaps they won't reappear until the PCs have completely forgotten about them....

For their part in the adventure, each Acolyte should receive 200 xp. However, you should feel free to award up to an extra 100 xp for good roleplaying, or particularly heroic or cunning actions by PCs.



APPENDIX

THE
SLAUGHT
•
XENOS
GENERATOR
•
POSIONS
&
TOXINS

APPENDIX

These appendices detail the vile Slaught, as well as, presenting a complete Alien Generator and rules for Poisons and Toxins in your Dark Heresy games.

THE SLAUGHT

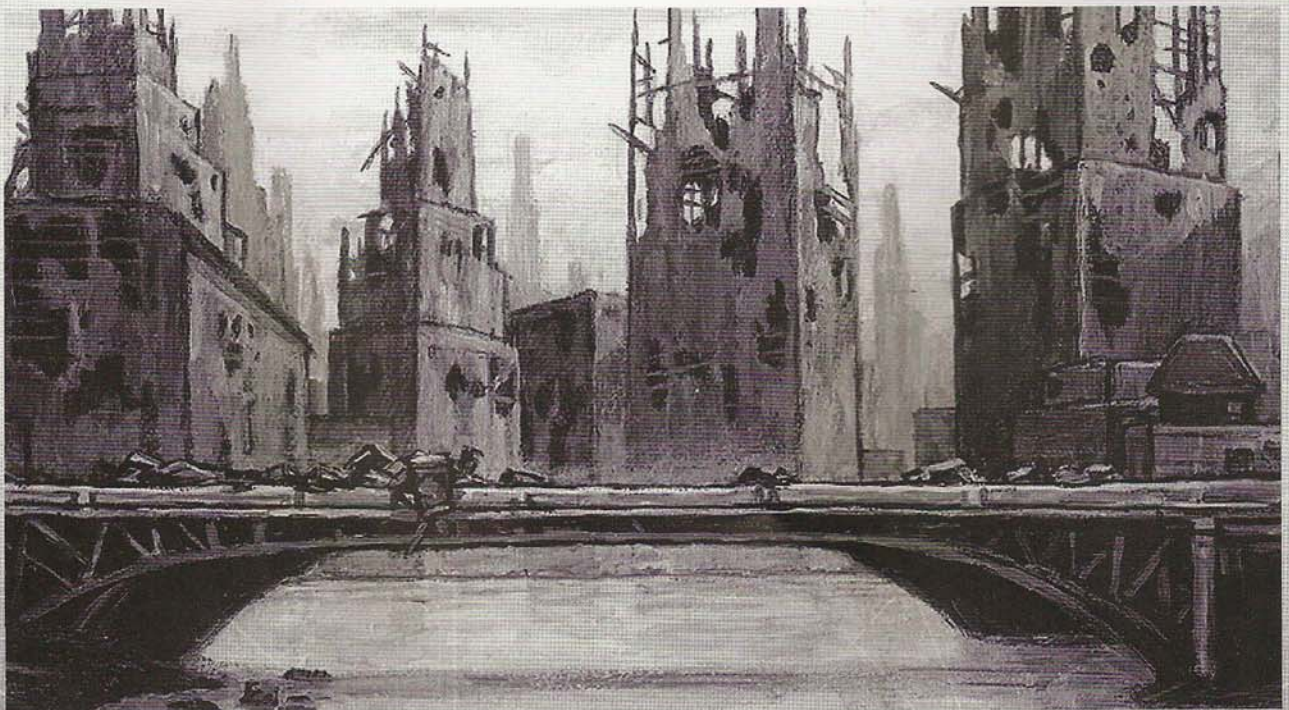
Perhaps one of the vilest xenos races known to exist, the Slaught are terrible and monstrous beings steeped in evil with whom only the most depraved or utterly desperate have dealings. Considered largely mythical by most that have heard of them, they are named in a few scattered tales as the Maggot Men, Dream Eaters or Carrion Masters, but aside from a few wary Rogue Traders and superstitious starfarers, few take the nightmarish legends seriously. The Inquisition, however, knows better. The Ordo Xenos has numerous documented cases of encounters with these mysterious horrors down the millennia, and many atrocities can be laid at their door.

In appearance, the Slaught are truly horrific to look upon. They take the form of quasi-humanoid shapes composed of seemingly hundreds of writhing, half-melded maggot-like worms covered in viscous, necrotic mucus. Capable of stretching and reforming their body-mass at will, they move with an obscene, boneless fluidity and are capable of regenerating injury with starting speed. Their minds, as alien as any encountered by mankind, are coldly savage, psychic voids filled with a monstrous hunger for the dead. The Maggot Men are carrion eaters, and in particular prefer to devour the rotting corpses of formerly intelligent life—by

some unknown and blasphemous skill they are said to be able to consume some residue of the stored memories and even emotional experiences of their victims along with their putrefying flesh, an act of defilement to which they seem to suffer a terrible addiction.

The manifest horrors of this species' bodies and desires are only compounded by an implacable and utterly alien intelligence, and an ability to exploit human corruption and terror to meet their own needs. Mercifully few in number, it seems that they are not given to open warfare and show no interest in acquiring territory. Instead they favour stealth and secrecy to attain their goals, while their seeming physical near-immortality and powerful technology makes them dreadfully powerful opponents when encountered. From the depths of the void their tenebrous ships slip unseen into Imperial space to work their evil, infiltrating isolated outposts and stations to glut their hunger before disappearing, or trading artefacts of their baleful arts to human renegades in exchange for slave stock to fill their grisly larders. Some evidence even exists that they have slowly destabilised several frontier colonies in order to kill and devour, unseen in the shadow of anarchy and civil war.

After almost a century of research that took him from the edge of the Halo Stars to the depths of the pre-Imperial archives on Holy Terra itself, the Slaught Maggot Men were codified and declared Xenos Horrificus Maxima by Lord Inquisitor Quater'maz Knael in M.37. His standing orders were that the Slaught and any that had contact with them were to be exterminated without mercy wherever encountered, with any information pertaining to this xenos race be brutally suppressed. Despite these measures, the last several centuries have suffered a slow but steady increase in contacts with these foul beings across the Calixis Sector, a development causing alarm at the highest levels of the Inquisition.



SLAUGHT INFILTRATOR



Slaught Infiltrator Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	32	48	58	53	50	40	62	21

Movement: 5/10/15/30**Wounds:** 27

Skills: Barter (Fel), Chem-Use (Int), Climb (Ag), Concealment (Ag), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Logic (Int), Intimidation (S+20), Medicae (Int), Security (Ag), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Tech-Use (All) (Int).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Fearless, Leap Up, Rapid Reaction, Exotic Weapon Training.

Traits: Fear Rating 3 (Horrorifying), Unnatural Toughness (x2), Unnatural Intelligence (x2), and Regeneration (recovering 1d5 Wounds).

Elasticity: The Slaught can flatten their bodies down or stretch them out to over three times their normal length, increasing their reach and providing a +20 bonus on Grapple and Climb tests).

Undying: Slaught cannot be Stunned and ignore penalties for being injured—they are only stopped by Critical effects that inflict “killing” results. They are immune to toxins and diseases.

Psychic Null: They cannot be contacted, perceived, influenced or controlled telepathically, and all Psychic Powers and warp abilities targeted directly at them have their Psychic Threshold increased by 10.

Necrotic: At will, Slaught are able to exude a necrotic fluid from their body tissues. This bile is filled with flesh-eating bacteria and molecular acids that liquefy flesh and even burn through metal. As a result their natural close combat attacks inflict damage classed as both Tearing and Toxic. Wounds so inflicted automatically become infected

should the victim survive. Additionally, anyone inflicting Critical Damage on a Slaught in close combat has a 25% chance of being splashed with the creature's necrotic fluids, inflicting 1d10 R Toxic Damage. This splash may be Dodged but not Parried.

Armour: Shroud cloak (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3).

Weapons: Necrotic grasp (1d10+5 R; Tearing, Toxic), ripper ray (Pistol, 20m; S/-/-; 1d10+6 X; AP 4; Shots 15; Reload Full; Reliable).

Gear: The Slaught are masters of a strange and advanced form of pseudo-organic technology, which draws its energy directly from the wielder's life force. They are prone to trade examples of their vile science for slaves (often the ultimate undoing of the buyer), and utilise horrific biological constructs to supplement their numbers if need be. The following are examples of equipment commonly carried by a Slaught Infiltrator.

Shroud Cloak: In order to pass unseen and conceal their horrific nature, these multi-layered robes and mantles absorb light and seem to move and twitch of their own accord. They provide 3 Armour Points on all locations, and increase the Difficulty of detecting the wearer on scanners by -30, and grants them a +10 bonus on Concealment Tests. By constraining their bodies and commanding the shrouds to conceal them, the Slaught can pass for misshapen humans.

Enunciator: Held in front of the creature's many-tendrilled mouth, this jagged metal orb translates its gurgling rasps into audible speech using sampled fragments of the voices of its many victims, as well as using tailored sub-harmonics to work upon the emotion centres of the human brain. The device lets them speak any language at will, and adds +20 bonus on any test to influence, frighten or interrogate humans.

Parasite Eyes: Numerous glowing implants, studded into the writhing clump of worms that compose the creature's head, allow it to see with Dark Sight, as well as see into the electromagnetic spectrum. These eyes give the Slaught a +40 bonus on tests made to resist blinding attacks.



“WE ARE AT WAR WITH FORCES TOO TERRIBLE TO COMPREHEND. WE CANNOT AFFORD MERCY FOR ANY OF ITS VICTIMS TOO WEAK TO TAKE THE CORRECT COURSE. MERCY DESTROYS US; IT WEAKENS US AND SAPS OUR RESOLVE. PUT ASIDE ALL SUCH THOUGHTS. THEY ARE NOT WORTHY OF INQUISITORS IN THE SERVICE OF OUR EMPEROR. PRAISE HIS NAME FOR IN OUR RESOLVE WE ONLY REFLECT HIS PURPOSE OF WILL.”

CREATING YOUR OWN XENOS CREATURES

Use the following guidelines to create aliens for use in games. Obviously, there is no limit in the variety or type of such creatures, and the options you can find on the following tables are by no means exhaustive. Instead, they are intended to provide you with a springboard for the creation of your own xenos creatures for use in your games, and both the universe of Dark Heresy and the wider world of fiction can offer you many examples and ideas.

You will notice from even a casual inspection of this generator that what you are likely to come up with will be hostile, monstrous or just plain strange at best. This is quite intentional. In Dark Heresy, the universe does not love you, and alien creatures wish to kill, eat, lay their eggs in, subvert or enslave you—remember Acolytes: suffer not the alien to live!



XENOS GENERATOR

You can create a xenos creature by following these easy steps:

Step One: Choose Type

This process focuses on two basic types of creature: Xenos Races (sentient creatures with their own civilisation and culture) and Indigens (indigenous creatures—covering a range of alien fauna). Choose whichever is appropriate to your needs.

Step Two: Roll Characteristics

Roll characteristics for your creature using Table 2-1: Xenos Characteristics.

Step Three: Choose Form and Size

Choose or roll randomly for which form your creature will take. The “default” option for a xenos race is bipedal and for an indigen is bestial, although each can conceivably be of any type. Regardless of their form, xenos races are assumed to have the capacity for delicate physical manipulation (for example: hands with opposable thumbs, pliant tentacles or some such) and communication with others of their own kind. It is always better to choose the xenos’s form, after all it’s no good randomly rolling a raving giant beast that won’t fit down the corridors of the base where your adventure is going to be set! In terms of size, xenos races should be on the whole no greater than one “step” away from Average for the sake of usefulness and believability, whereas indigens can be of any size appropriate to your setting. Depending on your creature’s form and size, various modifiers will be applied to the characteristics you have randomly rolled up. Also, if a form other than humanoid is chosen, a number of Traits and penalties may also be gained.

Step Four: Roll Xeno Classification

Roll for or choose an entry on Table 2-4: Xenos Classification. This features a number of Characteristic modifiers and Traits. Your creature’s Xenos-Classification broadly describes its fundamental nature taken as a whole. On both the Xenos Race and Indigen sections of the table, rolls of 01–90 indicate largely “natural” creatures no matter how otherworldly, while results of 91+ are a different matter....

Step Five: Roll Distinctive Features

Roll for or choose one or more distinctive features for your creature. These add a little character and help define your creations. Most results here can “stack” in the manner of Skills; simply re-roll duplicates that cannot stack. Around 2–5 features are recommended for any creature you’re creating.

Step Six: Finishing Touches

It’s now up to you to flesh out your creature and fill in the details, such as deciding on any additional relevant Skills, Talents, Traits and gear you think it should have, and of course giving it a name. The rest of this chapter has many examples that can help you with this. In the case of an alien bounty hunter, for example, its Skills would not be too different from the human ones presented in Dark Heresy on page 336.



SOME NOTES ON MODIFIERS, USE AND CHANCE

When applying modifiers, the best thing to do is keep a running tally of the modifiers you acquire and work the final numbers out at the end. No characteristic should ever be reduced to less than 5 or raised higher than 80 by modifiers, unless in very exceptional circumstances, and if modifiers would take them past these thresholds, just ignore the excess. It's always best to use Traits to reflect extraordinary abilities, so if you want your critter to be able to punch through rockcrete, give it Unnatural Strength instead of giving it a ludicrously high Strength Characteristic—that's what the Trait's for! Also, when using this generator, treat it as a set of useful guidelines rather than iron-clad rules to be draconically adhered to. It's your game, and you as GM know best what you're after, so be sensible as to what you pick and what you leave up to random chance. Simply discard or re-roll anything that doesn't fit your plan.



EXAMPLE

You want to come up with a nasty xenos predator lurking in the ducting of an abandoned grist mill; you might choose to make it Indigen, Bipedal and Predatory, leave it at Average size so it can get through the ducts, give it three rolls on the Table 2-5: Distinctive Features (re-rolling anything that doesn't fit with your idea), give it Concealment, Silent Move and Scale Sheer Surfaces (all of which it needs to fulfil its role properly) and leave the rest up to chance.

CHARACTERISTICS

Roll for characteristics using the guidelines described on **Table 2-1: Xenos Characteristics**. In addition, xenos gain the following Skills and Traits.

Starting Skills: Xenos races all begin with Speak Language (native) (Int), while indigens begin with Awareness (Per).

Starting Traits: Indigens begin with the Bestial trait.

TABLE 2-1: XENOS CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics	Xenos Race	Indigen
Weapon Skill (WS)	15+2d10	20+2d10
Ballistic Skill (BS)	15+2d10	—
Strength (S)	15+2d10	20+2d10
Toughness (T)	15+2d10	20+2d10
Agility (Ag)	15+2d10	20+2d10
Intelligence (Int)	20+2d10	0+2d10
Perception (Per)	20+2d10	25+2d10
Willpower (WP)	20+2d10	10+2d10
Fellowship (Fel)	15+2d10	—
Wounds (W)	5+1d10	7+1d10

PHYSICAL FORM AND SIZE

Most xenos have one of the forms detailed below. Choose or roll for the form on Table 2-2: Physical Form. Then roll for or pick a size from Table 2-3: Sizes.

TABLE 2-2: PHYSICAL FORM

Roll	Type
1-25	Bipedal
26-65	Animalistic
66-75	Crawler
76-95	Avian
96-00	Amorphous

TABLE 2-3: SIZE

Size	Example	Effects
Miniscule	Tox Scarab	Gain Miniscule trait, -30 WS, 1 Wound only, 1/4 S, -10 T.
Puny	Rat, Servo-Skull	Gain Puny trait, -20 WS, -6 Wounds, 1/2 S.
Weedy	Child, Ash Slug	Gain Scrawny trait, -10 WS, -3 Wounds, -5 S.
Average	Human, Eldar	—
Hulking	Grox, Ogyrn	Gain Hulking trait, +10 WS, +1d10 Wounds, +10 S, +10 T.
Enormous	Silt Spider, Carnosuvar	Gain Enormous trait, Fear 1d5-2 (min. 1), +20 WS, +2d10 Wounds, 15 S, +15 T, 50% chance for Unnatural Strength, 0% chance for Unnatural Toughness.
Massive	Scar Wym, Crotalyd	Gain Massive trait, Fear 1d5, +30 WS, +4d10 Wounds, +20 S, +20 T, 80% chance for Unnatural Strength, 80% chance for Unnatural Toughness.

Bipedal

This is the default form for most xenos races. There are no additional benefits or drawbacks for this form.

Animalistic

This broad category includes most sorts of animals, beasts and other fauna.

Talents: Animalistic xenos have a 25% chance of gaining the Sprint talent.

Traits: The xenos gains the Quadruped trait and has a 50% chance of gaining the Sturdy trait.

Crawler

These creatures are worm-like or insectoid. Indigen crawlers will often have no arms or legs, while xenos race crawlers will have manipulative limbs of some sort.

Skills: Crawlers have a 25% chance of gaining the Climb skill.

Traits: These xenos gain the Crawler trait and have a 25% chance of gaining the Burrower trait.

Avian

These xenos have wings or some other ability to fly.

Characteristics: Reduce the xenos's Toughness by 10.

Traits: The xenos has either the Hoverer trait (01-50) or Flier trait (51-00).

Amorphous

Amorphous xenos have formless, ooze-like bodies with no limbs or separate body parts. Xeno races with this form can generate manipulative pseudo-pods from their body mass as needed, and may need technology to communicate vocally.

Characteristics: Increase Toughness by 10.

Skills: The xenos has a 25% chance of having the Climb skill.

Traits: Amorphous creatures gain Amorphous, Fear 2, Unnatural Senses (1d10+5 metres), and have a 25% chance of gaining Regeneration.

CLASSIFICATION

Classification determines the xenos' type and its role in its environment. Roll or select one from Table 2-4: Xeno Classification.

TABLE 2-4: XENO CLASSIFICATION

Roll	Xeno Race	Indigen
1-20	Atavistic	Herd Creature
21-30	Covert	Darkling
31-60	Warlike	Predatory
61-70	Exotic	Carion Eater
71-80	Feral	Arboreal
81-90	Avaricious	Apex
91-95	Mechanistic	Warped
96-97	Psyker	Silicate
98-00	Transient Being	Gestalt



Apex

These creatures are at the top of their planet's ecology, and are often highly developed and adaptable with few or any natural predators, some may even be on the verge of sentience. Increase their Intelligence and Fellowship each by 1d10, and their perception by +5. They gain 1d10 additional Wounds, and acquire any two Talents.

Arboreal

Some creatures adapt to live above ground in trees, or even in vast forests of massive fungi or razor-sharp stalactites. These arboreal creatures are renowned for their agility and speed. They add +10 to Agility, and gain Acrobatics +20, Climb +20, Dodge and the Catfall and Lightning Reflexes talents.

Atavistic

Although evolved to sentience, these creatures remain closely linked to their biological forbears in physical form. Roll again using the Indigen column, ignoring results of Herd Creature.

Avaricious

This race cares only for the acquisition of resources and wealth. They trade (grudgingly) with those that they perceive as strong, and raid and enslave those they see as weak. These creatures increase Ballistic Skill and Intelligence by +1d10 each. They gain the Awareness, Barter, Evaluate and Deceive skills. Most are likely to carry plentiful weapons and armour as well as trade goods and illicit items, and frequently employ more warlike species as mercenaries.

Carriion Eater

These creatures feast upon the dead and the dying. Natural survivors, they are often very tough and resilient. They increase their Weapon Skill and Toughness by 1d10 each, gain the Resistance (Poison) talent, Dark Sight trait, and gain a 20% chance of gaining the Toxic trait.

Covert

These creatures' culture, or perhaps their biology, focuses on deceit, secrecy and stealth. Increase the creature's Intelligence and Perception by +10. It gains the Awareness, Concealment, Deceive and Silent Move skills.

Darkling

Darklings are xenos that are native to lightless worlds or dwell in lightless environments. Increase their Strength and Toughness each by +1d10. They gain the Climb, Awareness and Silent Move skills. They also gain the Blind and Unnatural Sense (30m) traits.

Exotic

These creatures are strange and bizarre beyond understanding, with unknowable motivations and blasphemous "otherness". Increase any two Characteristics by +10. They gain the Fear 1 talent, and take a -20 penalty to Fellowship Tests made to deal with humans. Finally, when rolling for Distinctive Features, roll twice and pick the highest result.

Feral

This xenos race has a very primitive understanding and use of technology, either because the race is relatively young, or perhaps because it has suffered a catastrophic decline. Modify Characteristics as follows: +1d10 to Weapon Skill, Strength, Toughness and Perception, and -1d10 to Intelligence. They gain +1d10 Wounds and the Athletics, Awareness, Survival and Tracking skills. These xenos tend to only use Primitive gear.

Gestalt

A gestalt is not a single living being, but a united colony of smaller interdependent creatures formed and operating as a single whole. Gestalts increase their Toughness and Willpower by 2d10, reduce their Intelligence by 1d10 and their Fellowship by 2d10. Gestalt creatures cannot be stunned and may always roll twice (taking the better result) when testing to resist mind controlling or mind influencing effects. When rolling for Distinctive Features for these freakish creatures, roll twice and pick the highest result.





Herd Creature

Usually grazers, these creatures are often physically large and have developed to suit a nomadic lifestyle. Their main defence is often their physical bulk and strength in numbers, and many stampede when threatened. Increase Toughness by 1d10 and they gain an additional 1d10 Wounds. Herd creatures also gain the Stampede trait, and have a 50% chance of gaining Sturdy, 25% chance of gaining Natural Weapons (horns, 1d10+SB I or R), and a 20% chance of gaining Natural Armour (1d5 points).

Mechanistic

Members of this race have given themselves over to the pursuit of technology and integrated it into their forms. Increase Intelligence by 10 and decrease their Fellowship by 10. These xenos always have at least one implant. They may, at your option, gain the Machine trait.

Predatory

That nature is "red in tooth and claw" is a universal truth, and savage and powerful predatory species abound on many worlds. Increase these creatures' Weapon Skill and Strength by 1d10+10, and add 1d10 to their Toughness, Agility and Intelligence. These creatures gain the Silent Move and Tracking skills, and have a 50% chance of gaining the Sprint talent. Predatory xenos also gain Dark Sight, Natural Weapons (claws or fangs, 1d10+SB I or R), have a 25% chance of Natural Armour (1d5), and a 20% chance of being Toxic.

Psyker

This entire race has evolved great powers of the mind at the expense of their bodies. Modify these creatures' Characteristics as follows: Reduce Weapon Skill and Strength by -10 and increase Willpower by +10. In addition, these xenos count as having

a Psy Rating of 2 and have three Minor Psychic Powers and two Powers from a single Psychic Discipline (most commonly Telepathy). Finally, these creatures gain the Psyniscience skill.

Silicate

While much of the life in the known universe has evolved (or sometimes engineered) from broadly the same basic building blocks (carbon, iron, amino acids, etc.), occasionally life forms are encountered with radically different structures. Silicate species are one example of this, bizarre creatures seemingly evolved from "living" crystal or minerals. Silicates reduce their Agility by 10 and cannot swim (or take the Swim skill). They gain Natural Armour (1d5+1), Unnatural Strength and Unnatural Toughness. They do not suffer Blood Loss, and all Impact and Explosive Critical Damage they take always counts as 5 points higher.

Transient Being

Also known as fade-kind, these ghostly species exist at least partly out of phase with reality, although this classification may also be used to create a creature composed of coherent energy. These creatures have the Incorporeal or Phase traits (50% chance of either). At your discretion, their passage may be blocked by certain materials or phenomena (such as lead, energy fields etc.) and may have one or more conditions placed on its use.

Warlike

This xenos race is highly aggressive, striving to conquer, plunder and destroy. Increase the creature's Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Strength and Agility each by +1d10. It gains the Awareness skill and has a 25% chance of gaining the Swift Attack talent. Furthermore, it gains two combat-oriented talents or the Natural Weapons Trait (1d10+SB I or R). Warlike xenos races will be habitually well armed and protected.

Warped

When living worlds are exposed to the raw power of the warp, either through being engulfed in a warp storm or by the intervention of the Ruinous Powers, the usual outcome is simply the annihilation of life. Sometimes, however, terrible obscenities that should not be able to live in a rational universe are given form. Warped creatures gain 1d5 Mutations, increase their Strength and Toughness by 2d10 each, and gain 1d10 extra Wounds. Reduce their Intelligence by 2d10. They do not have Fellowship scores. These creatures gain the Frenzy talent and the Fear (1d5) trait.

A NOTE ON THREAT RATINGS

Inevitably, this is going to be a judgement call on your part, although most creatures and races created from this generator will come out as Xenos Minoris. Particularly small and inoffensive beasts will be Xenos Minima, while creatures with one or more "unnatural" characteristics, numerous distinctive features or high technology xenos races will be likely be Xenos Majoris.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The last step is to generate distinctive features. Roll for or pick one of the features described on Table 2-5: Distinctive Features.

TABLE 2-5: DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Roll	Feature	Effects
01-10	Heightened Senses	Gain the Heightened Senses talent for one of the five senses.
11-20	Natural Armour	Gain the Natural Armour (1d5) trait or increase Natural Armour by 2.
21-30	Natural Weapons	Gain the Natural Weapons (claws, teeth, horns, 1d10+SB I or R) trait. If the creature already has this Talent, remove its Primitive quality.
31-35	Strong	Increase Strength by 1d10.
36-40	Tough	Increase Toughness by 1d10.
41-45	Fast	Increase Agility by 1d10.
46-50	Durable	Gain 1d10 Wounds.
51-55	Night Adaptation	Gain the Dark Sight trait.
56-60	Disturbing	Gain Fear 1 or increase Fear by 1.
61-62	Nimble	Gain the Dodge skill and the Catfall talent.
63-64	Bio-Shock	Special attack deals 1d10+SB-1 E Damage.
65-66	Flexible	Gain +10 to Grappling and Climb.
67-70	Venomous	Gain the Toxic trait.
71-74	Extra Limbs	Gain an extra manipulative limb (arm, prehensile tail, tendril), the Ambidextrous and Swift Attack talents, and +20 to Climb tests.
75-77	Sustained Life	The creature does not need to breathe and can survive for long periods without air or in hazardous environments.
78-80	Resistant	Gain the Resistance (Poison) talent.
81-83	Fearsome	Gain Fear 2 or increase Fear by 2 (to a maximum of Fear 5).
84-85	Regeneration	Gain the Regeneration trait.
86-87	Breath Weapon	The creature can spew acid, fire or sludge (5m; 1d10+TB I or E; S/—/—; Shots unlimited). If the creature has no BS, it gains BS 15+2d10.
88-89	Death Frenzy	The creature gains the Frenzy and Iron Jaw talents and +10 Strength when it takes Damage equal to half or more of its Wounds.
90-91	Unnaturally Agile	Gain the Unnatural Agility trait.
92-93	Unnaturally Tough	Gain the Unnatural Toughness trait.
94-95	Unnaturally Strong	Gain the Unnatural Strength trait.
96	Warp-Touched	Gain one Mutation
97-98	Acid Blood	If the creature takes 5 or more Damage or Critical Damage, it spews any adjacent creature with corrosive blood dealing 1d10+TB E Damage ignoring Armour Points. This can be Dodged, but not Parried.
99-00	Innate Psyker	Gain a Psy Rating of 1 and one Minor Psychic Power.

SAMPLE CREATURE

THE KALF SAND DEVIL

In an ongoing campaign, the Acolytes, chasing up some leads, decide to investigate the goings-on in a forgotten, dusty backwater world called Kalf. The GM wants to be prepared with a few nasty critters living out in the deserts of Kalf to provide a bit of dangerous “window dressing” for the adventure should the PCs decide to stray off the beaten track. The GM comes up with the name “Sand Devil” first and sets out to generate the beast.

First, the GM settles on making an indigen and generates Characteristics as follows: WS 27, BS —, S 26, T 30, Ag 38, WP 23, Int 17, Per 28, Fel —.

The creature is about average physically, and not the sharpest tool in the box, but quite quick. The GM decides that the creature should be one size class smaller than human, as he wants it to be a menace but not knocking over houses or anything! Next the Physical Form and Xenos Classification are randomly rolled with “Crawler” and “Carrion Eater” coming up. Already the “Sand Devil” is starting to look like some sort of corpse-eating desert worm. The modifiers for these two results are noted down and the potential “chance” Traits from these results are rolled for. Only one—Burrowing is passed; this is also noted down.

With a better idea of what the “Sand Devil” is, the GM decides to go for four rolls on the Distinctive Features table, getting 18, 67, 99 and 07, for Natural Armour, Venomous, Innate Psyker and Heightened Senses respectively. Natural Armour, the GM reckons, should be tough abrasive hide worth 3 AP. Venomous and Heightened Senses (Smell—to find those bodies) are both fine, but the GM decides that the Innate Psyker trait isn’t right for this dumb corpse-chewer so rolls again getting a 56—Disturbing, which works, making it a particularly scary-looking beast. Now the finishing touches. The creature already has a name, but it needs a few Skills to round it off. The creature seems to be almost like a “worm-hyena”, searching out carrion to feed off and making its own kills when hungry enough. To reflect this, the Concealment, Silent Move and Tracking skills are added to let it hunt down dinner.

The fully written up and worked out monster looks like this:

Kale Sand Devil Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
22	—	21	35	38	17	28	23	11

Movement: 1/2/3/6

Wounds: 7

Skills: Awareness (Per), Concealment (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Tracking (Int) +10.

Talents: Resistance (Poison).

Traits: Bestial, Burrowing, Crawler, Dark-Sight, Fear 1, Heightened Sense (Smell), Natural Armour 3, Natural Weapon (Bite), Toxic, Weedy.

Armour: None (Head 3, Body 3, Legs 3).

Weapons: Bite (1d10+2 R; Primitive, plus Test Toughness or 1d10 Damage).

Threat Rating: Xenos Minima.



RULES FOR POISONS & TOXINS

Poisons and toxins are substances that attack the body's natural systems causing harm. There are endless varieties of poisonous substances within the Calixis Sector; from natural venoms to toxic pollutants that can kill as quickly and surely as any blade. In game terms, poisons and toxins are divided into three factors; their speed, their strength and their effect.

SPEED

Speed defines how quickly the poison will enter the victim's system.

Instant: the poisons effects occur as soon as the victim is exposed; venoms and poisoned-attacks operate at this speed unless noted.

Swift: the effects of the poison will occur 1d5 hours after exposure; includes subtle poisons such as those favoured by assassins to taint food.

Slow: the effects of the poison will occur 1d5 days after exposure; includes environmental poisons and taints.

STRENGTH

In order for the poison to take effect, the victim must fail a Toughness Test. The strength of the poison is the modifier to this Test. Some relatively weak poisons will provide a bonus rather than a penalty to the Test. Note that "-" denotes that the poison has no Toughness Test modifier.

EFFECT

Poisons are grouped into four types of effect; however, numerous "more unique" effects are also possible.

Lethal: these poisons cause harm by directly attacking the body's functions; damaging the nervous system, causing cardiac arrest, etc. The victim suffers 1d10 temporary Toughness Damage plus a further 1d10 per degree of failure. If reduced to "0" Toughness, they will die unless they receive immediate medical help (or burn a Fate Point to avoid such a demise). Additionally, if more than half of the victim's Toughness is lost they will also become comatose for 1d5 hours.

Paralytic: these poisons paralyse the musculature, rendering the victim immobile or helpless without rendering them unconscious. The victim suffers 1d10 temporary Strength Damage plus a further 1d10 per degree of failure. If reduced to "0" Strength, they are completely paralysed and unable to act. This paralysis and Strength Damage wears off in 2D5 minus the victim's Toughness Bonus in hours.

Sedative: these poisons incapacitate and render the victim unconscious. Those failing the Toughness Test are Stunned for 1d10 minutes, however, if the Test is failed by 3 or more degrees the victim falls unconscious for 1d5 hours.

Necrotic: these poisons cause localised damage to the body by corroding or otherwise damaging tissue and cells. Many acids and industrial pollutants cause damage this way, as do many natural types of venom intended to liquefy and digest flesh. Victim's failing a Toughness Tests against this form of poison suffer a variable amount of extra Damage to their Wounds (usually 1d10) with no reduction for armour or Toughness Bonus.

EXAMPLE

Morphia-V (Instant/-20/Sedative). Morphia-V is a quick-acting poison, its effect occurring as soon as it enters the victim's system (Instant). The poison is strong, designed to "over-power" its victims (-20 Toughness Test). Lastly, once within a victim's system, the poison works to incapacitate; if the victim fails the Toughness Test they are Stunned for 1d10 minutes (Sedative).



INFAMOUS POISONS OF THE CALIXIS SECTOR

Here are but a sample of some of the most infamous poisons to be "found" in the Calixis Sector.

BLACK JANIX VENOM (Instant/+10/Lethal)

This is derived from the venom of the Black Janix snake found on the death world of Woe in the Josian Reach. Victims, who survive, are traumatised by the horrific hallucinations this deadly venom brings (victims must also roll on the Hallucinogen Effects Table on page 137 of Dark Heresy).

MORPHIA-V (Instant/-20/Sedative)

Widely utilised by Maflian nobles wishing to send their enemies a "warning"—the next time the poison is used it won't incapacitate, it will kill!

DUSK LOTUS A.K.A. "THE WRACK" (Swift/-10/Lethal; plus Toughness Damage is permanent)

Another example of the foul and deadly flora and fauna of the feral world of Dusk in the Malfian sub. The toxin is extracted from the beautiful white flower of the Dusk Lotus, a plant also known as the "death's head bloom" by the natives of that troubled planet. Called "the wrack" because the victim is literally wracked with pain as the toxin courses through the system.

TOX-JACK (Instant/-10/Necrotic (1d10))

This is the standard "load" for many of the needle pistols and rifles to be found in the Calixis Sector. The reason that tox-jack is so prevalent is its ease of availability as it is derived from the standard industrial coolant used in factorums and hives across the sector.

SUMP VINE SAP (Slow/-/Lethal)

A straightforward naturally occurring poison, usually consumed by drinking water contaminated with the sap of the Sump Vine (found on the agri-world of Dreath). There is a lucrative black market trade in exporting Sump Vine sap off-world.

ARS IMPERIALIS MORTUA (Instant/-30/Lethal)

An Officio Assassinorum signature poison, Mortua is very rare, hard to trace and highly valuable. The "grey death" as it sometimes known, is quick enough to kill its victims mid-

word while speaking; their pallor greying visibly and their eyes whitening over in the moments after their death.

POWDERED MAIDENSFOIL (Swift/-/Sedative)

Must be ingested in food or drink for it to take effect. Taken from the pollen and ground-down petals of maidensfoil, a common hedge plant found on the feudal world of Acreage, the plant is exported by enterprising traders and has many medicinal as well as nefarious uses.

TYCHE'S KISS (Slow/-30/Paralytic)

This poison's effects last for days rather than hours and victim will appear dead unless examined medically. Ground from the seed pods of a strange blood-red orchid reputedly to have first been hybridised from the Ghostfire flowers of Iocanthos, its ability to "fake" death has been used to cheat justice and as a particularly sinister tool of murder; with victims coming round to find themselves buried alive.

ASH SLUG SECRETION (Instant/+20/Paralytic and Necrotic (1d5))

A caustic slime that is secreted by the carrion-eating Ash Slugs found in the waste zones of many of the sector's hive worlds. This foul ichor is enough to make the slow-moving beasts a serious danger to the unwary. Some scav-gangers and dregs harvest this toxic filth to coat their blades and set poisoned traps.

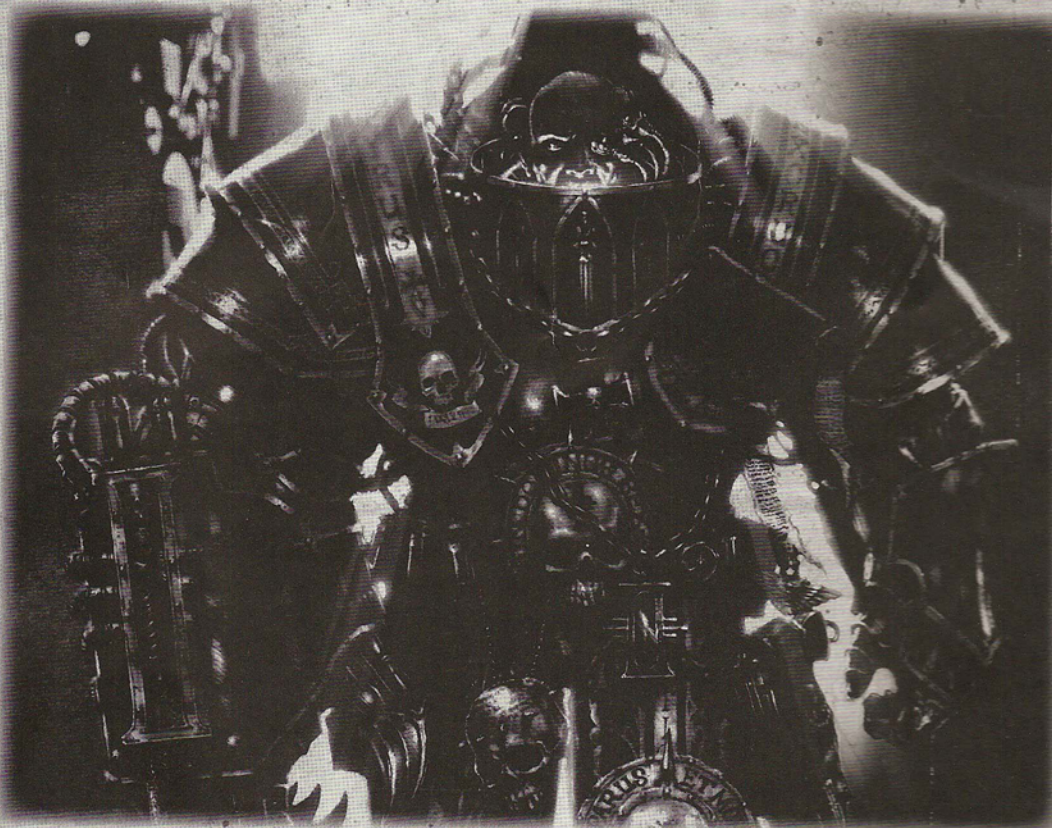
TABLE 2-6: CALIXIAN POISONS

Name	Cost†	Availability
Black Janix Venom	800	Rare
Morphia-V	550	Scarce
Dusk Lotus	1,000	Rare
Tox-Jack	10	Abundant
Sump Vine Sap	50	Common
Ars Imperialis Mortua	5,000	Very Rare
Powdered Maidensfoil	200	Average
Tyche's Kiss	450	Rare
Ash Slug Secretion	55	Average

† Cost indicates one dose.

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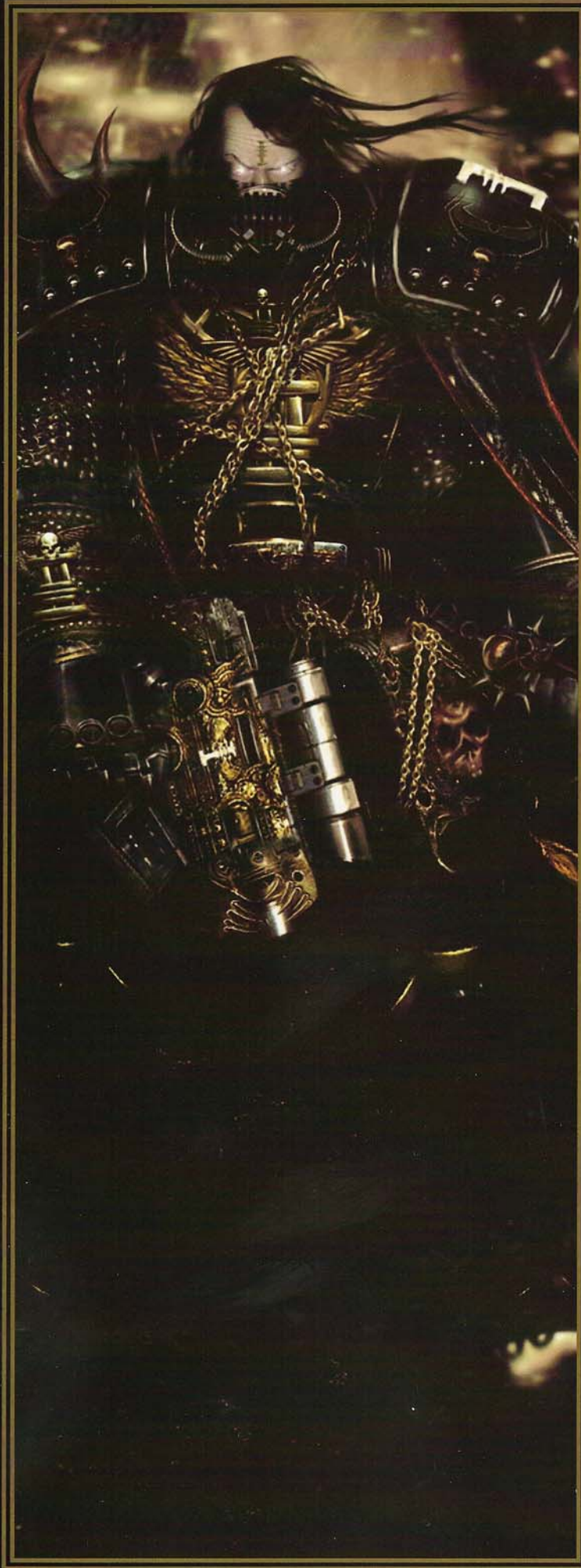
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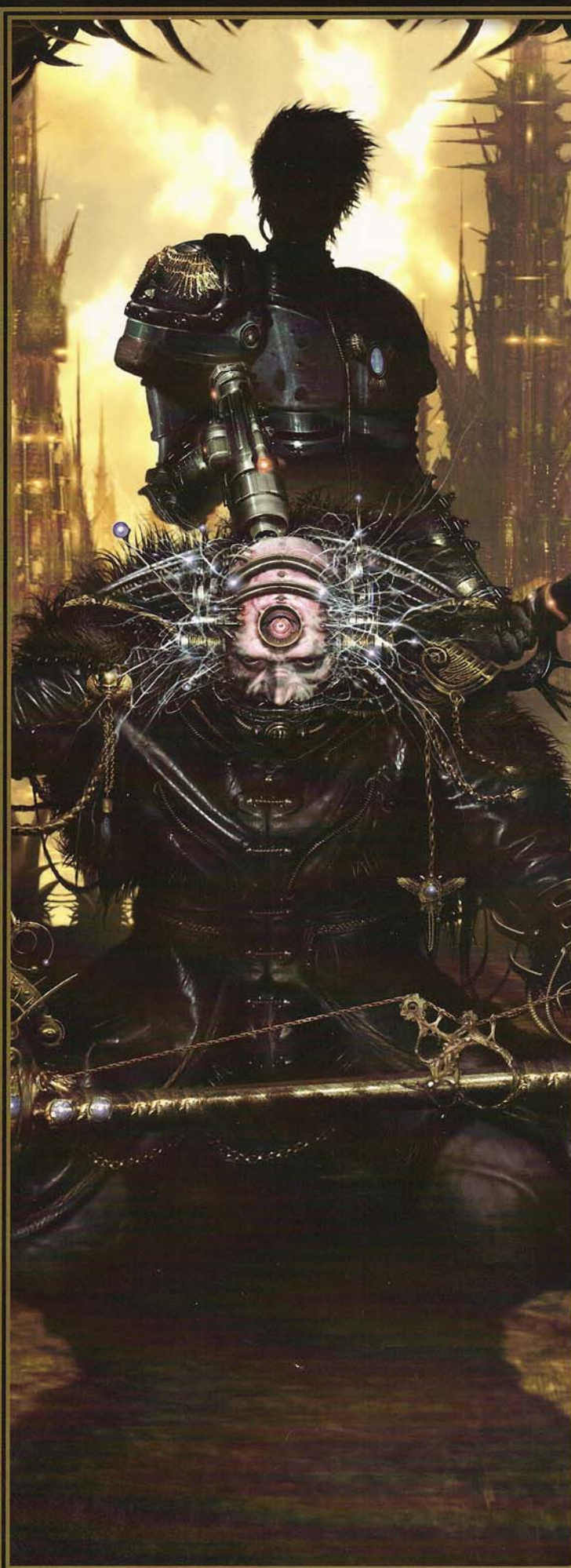
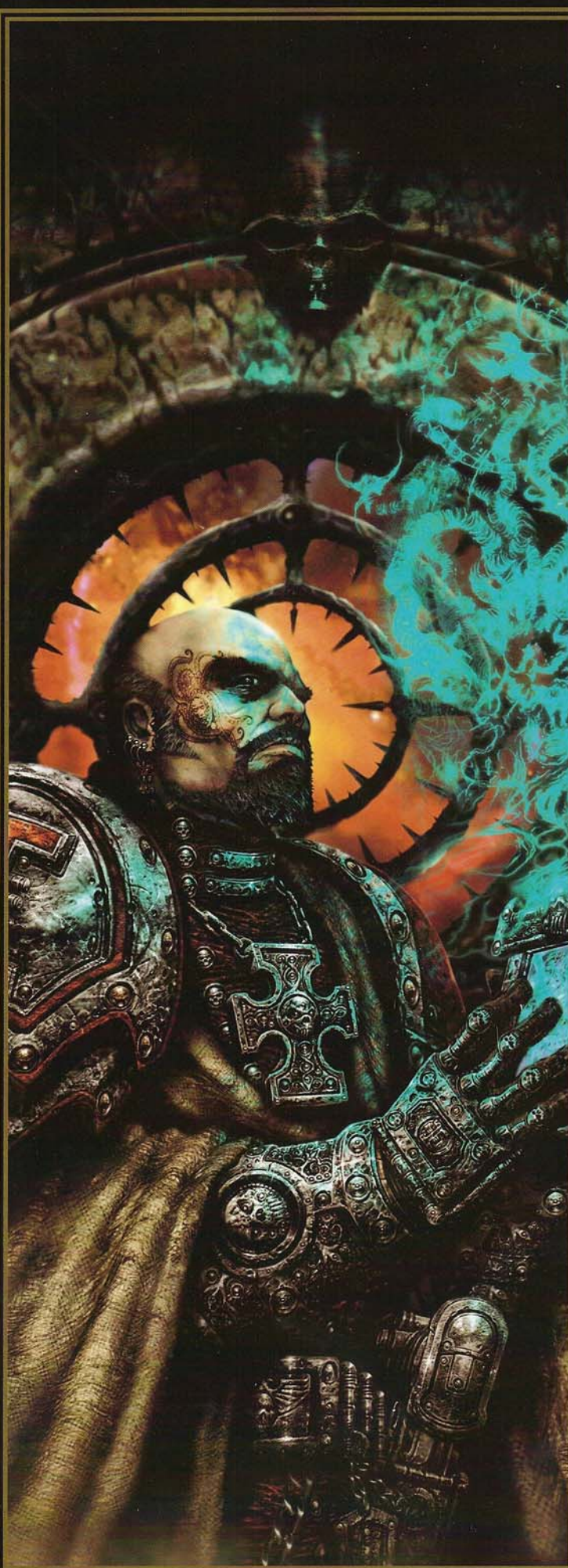


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MELEE WEAPONS

Name	Class	Range	Dam	Pen	Special
Axe	Melee	—	1d10+1 R	0	Primitive, Unbalanced
Brass Knuckles	Melee	—	1d5-1 I	0	Primitive
Club	Melee	—	1d10 I	0	Primitive
Flail†	Melee	—	1d10+2 I	0	Flexible, Primitive
Great Weapon†	Melee	—	2d10 R	2	Primitive, Unwieldy
Hammer	Melee	—	1d10+1 I	0	Primitive, Unbalanced
Improvised	Melee	—	1d10-2 I	0	Primitive, Unbalanced
Knife	Melee, Thrown	3m	1d5 R	0	Primitive
Throwing Star/Knife	Thrown	5m	1d5 R	0	Primitive
Shield	Melee	—	1d5 I	0	Defensive, Primitive
Spear†	Melee, Thrown	10m	1d10 R	0	Primitive
Sword	Melee	—	1d10 R	0	Balanced, Primitive
Staff†	Melee	—	1d10 I	0	Balanced, Primitive
Chainsword	Melee	—	1d10+2 R	2	Balanced, Tearing
Chain Axe	Melee	—	1d10+4 R	2	Tearing
Power Blade	Melee	—	1d10+3 E	6	Power Field
Power Sword	Melee	—	1d10+5 E	6	Balanced, Power Field
Shock Maul	Melee	—	1d10 I	0	Shocking
Electro-Flail†	Melee	—	1d10+2 I	0	Flexible, Shocking

† This weapon requires two hands to use.

Note: Characters using melee weapons add their SB to the Damage they inflict.

WEAPON JAMS

An unmodified roll of 96-00 weapon Jams. Full Action and BS Test to clear. Semi- and Full Auto Fire Jams on a 94-00.

TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

Only one-handed weapons. Either make a single attack with either weapon (-20 for off-hand), or if you have Two Weapon Wielder talent, spend a Full Action to attack with both weapons, but at -20 to each (drops to -10 with Ambidextrous talent). If shooting with a gun in each hand, your targets must be within 10m of each other.

USING WEAPONS WITHOUT TALENT

-20 penalty when using a weapon without the appropriate Talent. In the case of Flame weapons, targets receive +30 to Agility Test to avoid being hit.

UNARMED COMBAT

WS to hit, inflicts 1d5-3 I+SB. Armour Points count as double. In addition, successful hit also inflicts 1 level of Fatigue.

COMBAT DIFFICULTY SUMMARY

Difficulty	Skill Modifier	Example
Easy	+30	Attacking a Surprised opponent. Shooting a Massive target. Shooting a target at Point Blank range.
Routine	+20	Close combat with foe who is outnumbered three to one or more. Attacking a Stunned opponent. Shooting a target with Full Automatic fire. Shooting an Enormous target.
Ordinary	+10	Close combat with a foe who is outnumbered two to one. Attacking a Prone opponent. Attacking from higher ground. Shooting a target with Semi-Automatic fire. Shooting a Hunking target. Shooting a target at Short range.
Challenging	+0	A Standard Attack.
Difficult	-10	Attacking whilst you are Knocked Down. Fatigued. Attacking or Dodging whilst in the mud or heavy rain. Shooting a target at Long range. Shooting a Scrawny target.
Hard	-20	A Called Shot to a specific location. Shooting into melee combat. Dodging whilst Prone. Making an unarmed attack against an armed opponent. Secondary hand attack. Attacking with a weapon in either hand. Close combat attack in darkness. Shooting at a target in fog, mist or shadow. Shooting a Puny target. Using a weapon without the correct Talent
Very Hard	-30	Attacking or Dodging in deep snow. Shooting a Minuscule target. Shooting a target at Extreme range. Shooting at a completely concealed target. Shooting at a target in darkness.

DAMAGE

When a character has sustained Damage equal to their Wounds, all further Damage is Critical Damage. When Critical Damage is suffered, consult the relevant Critical Table (pages 202-209), determined by the type of Damage (Energy, Impact, Rending or Explosive) and the Hit Location of the attack, and apply the effect. All Critical Damage is cumulative.

FATIGUE

Can suffer a number Fatigue equal to TB. Fatigued characters -10 all Tests. If you suffer more Fatigue than TB, fall unconscious for 10-TB minutes. Each hour of complete rest removes 1 level of Fatigue; after 8 hours, Fatigue is reduced to 0.

STUNNED

Stunned characters cannot take Actions (including free ones), opponents receive +20 to hit.

LIGHTLY WOUNDED

If Damage taken is equal or less than twice TB.

HEAVILY WOUNDED

If Damage taken is more than twice TB.

BLOOD LOSS

10% chance of death each Round unless treated.

COMBAT ACTIONS

Action	Type	Description
Attack Actions		
All Out Attack	Full	+20 to WS, cannot Dodge or Parry.
Charge	Full	Must move 4 metres, +10 to WS.
Defensive Stance	Full	Enemies -20 WS, you cannot attack.
Feint	Half	Opposed WS Test, if you win, your next attack cannot be Dodged or Parried.
Full Auto Burst	Full	+20 to BS, additional hit for every degree of success.
Grapple	Full	Make a Grapple attack (see page 197).
Guarded Attack	Full	-10 WS, +10 Parry and Dodges.
Knock-Down	Half	Try and knock an opponent to the ground (see page 190).
Multiple Attacks	Full	Use Swift Attack or Lightning Attack talents to make multiple attacks.
Overwatch	Varies	Shoot targets coming into a set kill zone, targets suffer -20 to Pinning Test (see page 190).
Semi-Auto Burst	Full	+10 to BS, additional hit for every two degrees of success.
Standard Attack	Half	Make one melee or ranged attack.
Stun	Full	Try and Stun an opponent.
Suppressing Fire	Full	Force opponents to take cover, -20 to BS (see page 191).
Move Actions		
Disengage	Full	Break off from melee and make Half move.
Manoeuvre	Half	Opposed WS Test, if you win move enemy 1 metre.
Move	Half/Full	Move up to your movement as a Half Action or twice your Movement as a Full Action.
Run	Full	Triple Movement, enemies -20 BS and +20 WS.
Stand/Mount	Half	Stand up or mount a riding animal.
Tactical Advance	Full	Move from cover to cover, gaining benefit of cover throughout.
Miscellaneous Actions		
Aim	Half/Full	+10 bonus to hit as a Half Action or +20 to hit as a Full Action on your next attack.
Delay	Half	Before your next turn take any Half Action.
Dodge	Reaction	Test Dodge to negate a hit.
Focus Power	Varies	Use a Psychic Power.
Jump/Leap	Full	Leap or Jump (see page 214).
Parry	Reaction	Test WS to negate a hit.
Ready	Half	Ready a weapon or item.
Reload	Varies	Reload a ranged weapon.
Use Skill	Varies	You may use a Skill.

WEAPON SPECIAL QUALITIES

Accurate:	Additional +10 to hit when used with an Aim Action.
Balanced:	+10 Parry.
Blast (X):	All within the weapon's blast radius in metres is hit. Roll Hit Location and Damage individually for each person affected.
Defensive:	+15 to Parry, -10 to hit.
Flame:	No BS Test. All creatures in a 30 degree arc make Agility Test or be struck by flame and take Damage. If Damage is taken, the target must succeed on second Agility Test or catch fire.
Flexible:	Cannot be Parried.
Inaccurate:	No bonus gained from Aim Action.
Overheats:	Unmodified roll of 91 or more on to hit roll causes Overheat, see page 129.
Power Field:	When Parrying an attack made with a weapon that lacks this quality, there is a 75% chance of destroying the attacker's weapon.
Primitive:	AP doubled, unless armour also has Primitive quality.
Recharge:	Can only fire every-other Round.
Reliable:	If Jam, roll 1d10 and only on roll of 10 has it Jammed.
Scatter:	At Point Blank range, each 2 degrees of success scores another hit. AP doubled at Long and Extreme ranges.
Shocking:	If weapon causes Damage, Test Toughness or Stunned (+10 bonus per AP).
Smoke:	Creates smoke screen 3d10 metres in diameter, lasts 2d10 Rounds.
Snare:	The target must make an Agility Test or be immobilised. An immobilised target can attempt no other Actions except to try to escape the bonds. He can attempt to burst the bonds (a Strength Test) or wriggle free (an Agility Test) in his Turn. The target is considered helpless until he escapes.
Tearing:	Roll two dice for Damage, take the best result.
Toxic:	If weapon causes Damage, Test Toughness at -5 for every point of Damage taken, if failed take extra 1d10 Impact Damage (no reduction for armour or Toughness).
Unbalanced:	-10 when used to Parry.
Unreliable:	Jams on roll of 91-00.
Unstable:	On a successful hit, roll 1d10: 1: Inflicts half Damage, 2-9: Inflicts normal Damage, 10: Inflicts double Damage.
Unwieldy:	Cannot be used to Parry.

HIT LOCATIONS

Roll	Location
01–10	Head
11–20	Right Arm
21–30	Left Arm
31–70	Body
71–85	Right Leg
86–00	Left Leg

FALLING DAMAGES

Distance Fallen	Damage
3 metres	1d10+3
6 metres	1d10+5
9 metres	1d10+7
12 metres	1d10+9
15 metres	1d10+11
18 metres	1d10+13
21 metres	1d10+15
24 metres	1d10+17
25+ metres	1d10+20

TEST DIFFICULTY

Difficulty	Test Modifier
Easy	+30
Routine	+20
Ordinary	+10
Challenging	+0
Difficult	-10
Hard	-20
Very Hard	-30

CRITICAL TABLES

Energy (page 202 to 203)

Impact (page 204 to 205)

Explosive (page 206 to 207)

Rending (page 208 to 209)

RANGED WEAPONS

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special
Autogun	Basic	90m	S/3/10	1d10+3 I	0	30	Full	—
Autopistol	Pistol	30m	S/-/6	1d10+2 I	0	18	Full	—
Blind Grenade	Thrown	SB×3	—	—	0	—	—	Smoke
Bolas	Thrown	10m	S/-/-	—	0	1	—	Primitive, Snare, Inaccurate
Boltgun	Basic	90m	S/2/-	1d10+5 X	4	24	Full	—
Bolt Pistol	Pistol	30m	S/2/-	1d10+5 X	4	8	Full	—
Bow	Basic	30m	S/-/-	1d10 R	0	1	Half	Primitive, Reliable
Combat Shotgun	Basic	30m	S/3/-	1d10+4 I	0	18	Full	Scatter
Crossbow	Basic	30m	S/-/-	1d10 R	0	1	2Full	Primitive
Fire Bomb Grenade	Thrown	SB×3	—	1d10+3 E	6	—	—	Blast (3)
Flamer	Basic	20m	S/-/-	1d10+4 E	3	3	2Full	Flame
Flintlock Pistol	Pistol	15m	S/-/-	1d10+2 I	0	1	3Full	Primitive, Unreliable
Frag Grenade	Thrown	SB×3	—	2d10 X	0	—	—	Inaccurate
Grenade Launcher	Basic	60m	S/-/-	*	*	6	Full	Blast (4)
Hallucinogen Grenade	Thrown	SB×3	—	Special	0	—	—	*
Hand Bow	Pistol	15m	S/-/-	1d10 R	0	1	Full	—
Hand Cannon	Pistol	35m	S/-/-	1d10+4 I	2	5	2Full	Primitive
Hand Flamer	Pistol	10m	S/-/-	1d10+4 E	2	2	2Full	—
Heavy Bolter	Heavy	120m	-/-/10	2d10 X	5	60	2Full	Flame
Heavy Stubber	Heavy	120m	-/-/10	1d10+4 I	3	200	2Full	—
Hunting Rifle	Basic	150m	S/-/-	1d10+3 I	0	5	Full	—
Inferno Pistol	Pistol	10m	S/-/-	2d10+4 E	12	3	Full	Accurate
Krak Grenade	Thrown	SB×3	—	2d10+4 X	6	—	—	—
Lasipistol	Pistol	30m	S/-/-	1d10+2 E	0	30	Full	—
Las Carbine	Basic	60m	S/2/-	1d10+2 E	0	40	Full	Reliable
Lasgun	Basic	100m	S/3/-	1d10+3 E	0	60	Full	Reliable
Long Las	Basic	150m	S/-/-	1d10+3 E	1	40	Full	Reliable
Meltagun	Basic	20m	S/-/-	2d10+4 E	12	5	2Full	Accurate, Reliable
MP Lascannon	Heavy	300m	S/-/-	5d10+10 E	10	5	2Full	—
Musket	Basic	30m	S/-/-	1d10+2 I	0	1	5Full	—
Needle Pistol	Pistol	30m	S/-/-	1d10 R	0	6	Full	Primitive, Unreliable
Needle Rifle	Basic	180m	S/-/-	1d10 R	0	6	2Full	Inaccurate
Photon Flash Grenade	Thrown	SB×3	—	Special	0	—	—	Accurate, Toxic
Plasma Gun	Basic	90m	S/2/-	1d10+6 E	6	20	8Full	—
Plasma Pistol	Pistol	30m	S/-/-	1d10+6 E	6	10	4Full	Recharge, Overheats
Pump-Action Shotgun	Basic	30m	S/-/-	1d10+4 I	0	8	2Full	Recharge, Overheats
RPG Launcher	Heavy	120m	S/-/-	*	*	1	Full	Scatter
Shotgun	Basic	30m	S/-/-	1d10+4 I	0	2	2Full	*
Sling	Basic	15m	S/-/-	1d10-2 I	0	1	Full	Scatter, Reliable
Stub Revolver	Pistol	30m	S/-/-	1d10+3 I	0	6	2Full	Primitive
Stub Automatic	Pistol	30m	S/3/-	1d10+3 I	0	9	Full	Reliable
Webber	Basic	50m	S/-/-	—	0	1	Full	—
Web Pistol	Pistol	30m	S/-/-	—	0	1	Full	Blast (5), Snare

*Damage, Armour Piercing and Special Qualities are determined by the ammunition (i.e. the grenade) fired.

COVER TYPES

Adds extra AP to locations hidden by cover.

Cover Type	AP
Light Wood, Armour-glas, Light Metal	4
Heavy Wood, Flakboard, Sandbags, Ice	8
Rockcrete, Thick Iron, Stone	16
Plasteel, Armaplas	32

WEAPON CRAFTSMANSHIP

Poor: -10 to hit. Jam on any failed to hit roll.

Good: +5 to hit.

Best: +10 to hit, +1 Damage.

SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPONS

+10 BS, for every 2 degrees of success gain another hit, as indicated on Multiple Hits Table (page 190), or can be allocated to another target within 2m. Result of 94-00 on BS test indicates weapon has Jammed.

FULL AUTOMATIC WEAPONS

+20 BS, for every 2 degrees of success gain another hit, as indicated on Multiple Hits Table (page 190), or can be allocated to another target within 2m. Result of 94-00 on BS Test indicates weapon has Jammed.

OVERWATCH

You take a Full Turn to establish a kill zone 45-degrees from your facing and up to half the Range of the weapon. You may spend subsequent Turns waiting for targets to enter the zone. You may take the Full Auto Burst Action to shoot any targets entering the zone, targets must make a Hard (-20) Willpower Test or become Pinned. Overwatch may be maintained up to your WP Bonus in hours, or until the Full Burst Action has been used.

SUPPRESSIVE FIRE

You can suppress an area 45-degrees from your facing and up to half the Range of the weapon. Targets within this area must make a Hard (-20) Willpower Test or become Pinned. Make a Hard (-20) Ballistic Skill Test to determine if anyone in area has been hit, GM assigns hit to random target. An extra hit is scored for every 2 degrees of success. Result of 94-00 on BS test indicates weapon has Jammed.

PINNING

Pinned targets have Half Action only and suffer -20 BS and must keep cover between them and the shooter. Test Willpower to recover at the end of the Turn, +30 if not shot at. If engaged in melee, automatically escape.

MULTIPLE HITS FROM SEMI AND FULL AUTO FIRE

Location	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Each Additional Hit
Head	Head	Arm	Body	Arm	Body
Arm	Arm	Body	Head	Body	Arm
Body	Body	Arm	Head	Arm	Body
Leg	Leg	Body	Arm	Head	Body

MOVEMENT (METRES/ROUND)

AB	Half Move	Full Move	Charge	Run
0	1/2	1	2	3
1	1	2	3	6
2	2	4	6	12
3	3	6	9	18
4	4	8	12	24
5	5	10	15	30
6	6	12	18	36
7	7	14	21	42
8	8	16	24	48
9	9	18	27	54
10	10	20	30	60

ARMOUR

Armour Type	Location(s) Covered	AP
Primitive Armour		
Gang Leathers	Arms, Body, Legs	1
Heavy Leathers	Arms, Body, Legs	2
Quilted Vest	Body	2
Beast Furs	Body	2
Grox Hides	Body	3
Chain Coat	Arms, Body, Legs	3
Feudal Plate	All	5
Xeno Hides	Body	6
Flak Armour		
Flak Helmet	Head	2
Flak Gauntlets	Arms	2
Light Flak Coat	Arms, Body, Legs	2
Flak Vest	Body	3
Flak Jacket	Arms, Body, Legs	3
Flak Cloak	Body	3
Guard Flak Armour	All	4
Mesh Armour		
Mesh Cowl	Head	3
Mesh Gloves	Arms	3
Xeno Mesh	Arms, Body, Legs	4
Mesh Vest	Body	4
Mesh Combat Cloak	Arms, Body	4
Carapace Armour		
Carapace Helm	Head	4
Carapace Vambraces	Arms	5
Carapace Greaves	Legs	5
Enforcer Light Carapace	Arms, Body, Legs	5
Carapace Chest Plate	Body	6
Storm Trooper Carapace	All	6
Power Armour		
Light Power Armour	All	7
Power Armour	All	8



Scatter Diagram