

WARHAMMER  
40,000  
ROLEPLAY

# WRATH & GLORY

# DARK TIDES



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## THE CORE ACTIVITY

For *Dark Tides*, it is expected that the player characters are all Imperial (meaning they have the Imperium keyword) and are part of a warband sponsored by Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius (see below). Adventure 5, however, expects that the player characters are all Craftworld or Corsair Eldar (possessing the appropriate keywords), operating as a group hand-picked by an Eldar Farseer. If your group is using a completely different framework, the Game Master must make adjustments to many of the read-aloud sections of the adventures to make them a better fit.

### ROGUE TRADER JAKEL VARONIUS

The Gilead System lies on the border of the Segmentum Solar and the Segmentum Obscurus. It is a cluster of worlds isolated within the Dark Imperium, cut off from Imperial reinforcements and astropathic messages, and left to fend largely for itself against myriad threats. A glimmer of hope arrived in the form of a fleet of ships belonging to a charismatic and influential Rogue Trader—Jakel Varonius.

Varonius and his flotilla accomplished a feat considered nigh impossible: crossing the Great Rift from the Imperium Sanctus to the other side. Many claim that only great fortune and the presence of an ancient, highly skilled Navigator of House Omincara aboard his flagship—the grand cruiser *Ducal Circlet*—could explain such a miraculous event. Upon his arrival, Jakel Varonius engaged with the rulers of the system as a peer. His fleet, his Warrant of Trade, and the weight of House Omincara's alliance provided him with enough authority to assume a prominent role in the system's governance. Ever since, the Rogue Trader has used several warbands of agents to intervene in any situation that might affect the welfare of the Gilead System.

Sinister schemes are afoot on the ocean world of Charybdion. Beneath the placid surface of this Imperial world lie roiling currents of ambition, heresy and horror. Welcome to *Dark Tides*, an adventure anthology book for *Warhammer 40,000 Roleplay: Wrath & Glory*.

## OVERVIEW

*Dark Tides* is composed of five distinct adventures set on the planet of Charybdion. All of the adventures are linked together as part of the overall narrative of the threats facing this ocean world. However, each adventure can also be used individually as a stand-alone event in your *Wrath & Glory* campaign, if you so choose.

### ADVENTURE 1: DESCENT (FOR TIERS 1-2)

The capital hive city of Charybdion seethes with discontent. The Imperial Governor is missing and presumed dead, and a series of mysterious murders have threatened to destabilise the succession. The warband is asked to investigate and discover just who is behind these horrific acts of violence. The hunt for the killer takes the player characters on a grand tour of the capital hive, from the luxurious heights to the scurrilous depths.

### ADVENTURE 2: SLEEPWALKER (FOR TIERS 2-3)

Terrifying dreams and savage violence threaten a large region of the capital hive. These are no normal nightmares—they are visions of soul-searing fear and despair. More and more of the citizenry are falling asleep, unable to wake, and wreaking bloody havoc in their slumber. The warband must seek out the source of these horrific nightmares before the sleepwalking phenomenon spreads to the rest of the city.

### ADVENTURE 3: CAUGHT BETWEEN (FOR TIERS 3-4)

The planetary governor of Charybdion, Ganthet Veneratio, is missing and has been declared dead. His twin heirs squabble over the succession, for



each has a valid claim to the seat of power. Your warband has the deciding vote to determine which of these quarrelsome siblings becomes the next ruler of Charybdion. There are far more dangerous plots going on beneath the surface, however, and the heroes must take great care to survive long enough to make their judgement.

### ADVENTURE 4: IRONWATCH (FOR TIERS 4-5)

Psykers intended for the Black Ships have been gathered at Ironwatch, an Enforcer prison. However, since the coming of the Great Rift, the Black Ships have not yet arrived. The prison has slowly transformed into a psychic locus of suffering and terror. The facility has become corrupted into a horrific lair for rampaging, out-of-control psykers... and much worse. The warband must enter Ironwatch

and engage a failsafe measure to cast Ironwatch into the sea, before the dark forces within the prison break free to ravage the rest of the planet.

### ADVENTURE 5: TWISTED STRANDS (FOR TIERS 3-4)

This adventure is very different from the others. In **Twisted Strands**, the player characters are a group of Eldar seeking to eliminate a particular prisoner within Ironwatch, lest his powers affect the myriad possible futures facing their people. This adventure presents a look at Ironwatch from an entirely novel perspective, and there is even an optional encounter for the Eldar player characters to encounter the characters going through Adventure 4!

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### TIERS OF PLAY

Each adventure in *Dark Tides* has a suggested Tier; warbands with characters of these Tiers will find the encounters challenging and engaging. However, each adventure also has some advice on how to adjust the threats presented for a different Tier. If your group is of a different Tier than the adventure you would like to use, check out the presented sections on adjusting the Tier.

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### CHARYBDION GAZETEER

**Classification:** Hive World (Sub-category: Ocean World)

**Population:** Approximately four billion

**Geography:** Rocky islands, long, jagged cliffs, massive reef structures

**Planetary Governance:** Governor Ganthet Veneratio

**Tithe Grade:** Aptus Nihil (no longer capable of paying Terra's Due)

The “black pearl” of the Gilead System, Charybdion is a world mostly composed of dark, roiling oceans seething with pollution and rich with chemical waste. A handful of rocky continental plates rise above sea level, and the planet’s hives cling to these islands like drowning men. The planet possesses numerous promethium refineries that support military and industrial efforts across the system.

Established by the original Adeptus Mechanicus Explorator fleet that discovered the system thousands of years ago, the refineries are confined within sealed machine-temples on the ocean's floor. Some of these machine-temples have fallen silent and lie dormant, whilst others have been torn apart by ravening riptides and geological events. Tech-Priests organise small teams and dispatch them to the depths to salvage some of these ancient technologies.

The planetary governor's enforcers maintain a sizable prison facility named Ironwatch. The governor has been forced to confine psykers gathered for the tithe to the Black Ships in this forbidding tower. The prison is connected to the capital hive, Aidon, and has numerous failsafes intended to cast the tower down into the sea should it become necessary. In recent years, the buildup of psykers has caused Ironwatch to

become a haunted, horrific place, filled with misery, terror and the collected psychic nightmares of its growing population of prisoners.

Rising sea levels have swallowed many of the smaller islands, and the lowest levels of many hives now lie beneath the waves. In the underhive regions on Charybdion, the inhabitants struggle to seal leaks and deal with corrosion, lest they drown in the foul seawater kept outside the hive's hull-like outer walls. Some regions have been abandoned wholesale to the ocean depths.

Much of the industry of the underhives on this world revolves around the hunting of worldfish, huge, bloated sea creatures heavily mutated by the ever-present pollution. Worldfish produce flesh, bone, oil and many other by-products that are prized amongst the populations of the lower hives across the planet.





# DESCENT







## INTRODUCTION

When the Cicatrix Maledictum tore the galaxy asunder, Charybdion found itself terrifyingly severed from the guiding order and power of the Imperium. In its wake, chaos and confusion bred mistrust and deceit among the ruling elite of Hive Aidon. Planetary Governor Veneratio and his court thought a great doom would immediately be visited upon the hives of Charybdion. Fearing for their very survival, the noble houses became even more bitterly entrenched against their rivals, both real and imagined. It looked like Hive Aidon, even the whole of Charybdion, might tear itself apart in its own desperation.

During this dark and threatening time, Governor Veneratio held the planet together, aided with the guile of his chief assistant, Praetor Borst; the efficiency of his chief administrator, Prefect Orrilus; all backed by the might of the planetary defence force garrisons and Enforcers stationed on each hive. Soon, news of the Indomitus Crusade started to reach the beleaguered world, and it didn't take long before the full force of the war was felt on Charybdion. Governor-Militant Taleria Fylamon demanded the chemically processed algae ration pack tithes Charybdion paid to the Astra Militarum be radically increased to feed the swelling armies of Roboute Guilliman's crusade—armies swollen in no small part by also stripping the planet of most of its garrisoned troops.

To fulfil Charybdion's obligation, Governor Veneratio ordered the hives' production of processed algae be doubled. It was a divisive decree among both his noble court and the general population, as it forced the noble houses that controlled the production farms to press their labourers into even harsher working conditions. The citizens of Charybdion's hives, whose lot in life was bleak to begin with, now became even more oppressed. To make matters worse, the Black Ships that were meant to gather a tithe of psykers from the planet were long overdue. This meant that the governor was forced to order the psykers confined to Ironwatch, an Enforcer prison facility resembling a tower, which jutted from one slope of the capital hive.

Then, the planetary governor retired to his chambers one night and never returned. It was

as if Governor Veneratio had vanished, for no one knew what had become of him. Weeks passed, and the governor's councillors felt they had no choice but to declare their ruler dead and begin the succession process immediately. Without the governor's firm hand and powerful authority, his councillors struggle to maintain Charybdion's precarious status quo.

Veneratio's absence has done nothing to ease the plight of those living and working deep within the hives. They continue to toil unrelentingly under the unceasing and uncaring dictates of the lords above. The untold millions of workers who farm, process, pack, and haul the algae rations know only that this is a sacrifice all must make in order for humanity to survive. None of them can even imagine the gulf between their meagre, squalid lives and the state of grandeur, luxury and ease within which their ruling elite resides.

Recently, a series of brutal murders has occurred within the capital hive city, Aidon. Many of these murders matter little to the hive at large, for the toiling masses continue on, oblivious, and the majority of nobles that grace those gilded halls are ignorant or indifferent to such insignificant passings. However, a pair of more prominent deaths have put these events into new perspective. Members of two powerful families have been killed, and each of the families is on the verge of accusing the other of the foul deed, which could precipitate violence between them and destroy the fragile peace that exists in the wake of the governor's disappearance. It could potentially engulf the entire hive in open conflict, and thus is a serious threat that can no longer be ignored.

That is the situation on Charybdion and in Hive Aidon as this story starts. The protagonists are tasked by Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius to look into these problems: the governor's death must be verified, if possible, and the warband may be able to solve the murders in the upper hive district. These murders may seem of little consequence, but they have the potential to destabilise the ruling class ahead of deciding Governor Veneratio's successor. Acting as the Rogue Trader's agents, the warband's investigation is crucial to determine what is next for this beleaguered world.

## OVERVIEW

**Descent** is an adventure suitable for *Wrath & Glory* characters from Tiers 1 and 2. Characters from higher Tiers may find the difficulties of this adventure too easy and the opponents lacking any challenge.

### ACT ONE

The protagonists start by attending an audience with Prefect Orrilus, the interim head of planetary government until either Veneratio's whereabouts have been ascertained or a worthy successor has been appointed. From Prefect Orrilus the protagonists learn some of the details of the murders before heading to the scene of the most recent death. There, they meet Praetor Borst, an important member of the missing governor's council, who is conducting his own investigation. Borst is convinced the slayings are connected to political machinations amongst rival nobles. However, the protagonists uncover evidence—specifically, missing valuables stolen from the victims—that suggests the assailant came from lower down the hive, hinting that something far more sinister is going on.

### ACT TWO

Having discovered clues that points to involvement from lower down the hive, the warband investigates their lead. To do so, they must first negotiate with Magos Carborast, a Tech-Priest of the Adeptus Mechanicus who controls and maintains the vast transportation network that threads through the hive. Getting Magos Carborast to even admit the possibility that someone could use his network to pass unseen throughout the hive is a challenge. If the protagonists don't tread carefully, they may find that they have made an enemy. Whether with Magos Carborast's aid or reluctance, the protagonists eventually locate Sub-junction Intendant Ivill Kreet. Kreet is corrupt, taking bribes to smuggle people up and down the hive through his junction. In a panic, Kreet and his cronies attempt to kill the protagonists.

### ACT THREE

The trail now leads deep into lowerhive itself, where the protagonists enter into the territory of a savage underhive gang. Using either diplomacy or violence, they negotiate passage. While exploring lowerhive, the protagonists learn of a black market dealing in stolen upperhive luxury items, exactly like those taken from the murdered nobles. This in turn leads to the discovery of the Cult of Luxury—a

group corrupted by the influence of the Ruinous Powers—thriving in lowerhive. After finding out where the cult is located, the protagonists either infiltrate or raid its next meeting. Therein they witness the cult's leader, known only as Gerrit, brandishing a skull, which he claims to be that of the missing governor, and prophesising the imminent doom of Hive Aidon and all of Charybdion. With the warband in pursuit, Gerrit flees to kill his next victim, Prefect Orrilus, leading to a climactic fight on the carriages of Magos Carborast's freight network as they speed up the hive. If the protagonists kill Gerrit, Prefect Orrilus is saved and indebted to the warband.

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### A SENSORY TOUR OF THE HIVE

This story is designed to give the protagonists a comparative view of the different strata of life throughout Hive Aidon. From the heights of upperhive to the depths of lowerhive, they are exposed to the splendour and the squalor in which the different citizens live, work, and die. As they descend through the hive and encounter increasingly more desperate people and living conditions, the protagonists should build a picture of just how uncaring the Imperium is to the individual for the survival of humanity as a whole. In order for this to be most effective, remember to describe the protagonists' surroundings in detail at key locations as highlighted in the story. Create a comprehensive description and first impression of needed locations and scenes ahead of time. Use this as a basis for improvisation whenever members of the warband take actions. Try to utilise all five senses as much as you can and reinforce them with repetition. For example, emphasise the peace and quiet of the governor's audience chamber by having them hear the smallest rustle of a robe or the squeak of a boot on the polished floor so that later, when they are in the depth of lowerhive, the constant clamour of the machinery drowns out every attempt they make to talk with one another, forcing them to shout to be heard. Or even describe how something as simple as light changes depending on where the protagonists are: bright, clean light in the halls of upperhive; dim, utilitarian yellow light in the industrial areas; flickering, intermitting light tinged green from stray algae growth in the depths of lowerhive.



## ACT ONE

This act opens in the vaulted halls of upperhive, in the very seat of its glory and power: the governor's throne room. From there it moves into the estates of the upperhive nobles as the protagonists investigate a series of murders. Finally, an encounter with Praetor Borst presents a very convenient solution. Clearly the protagonists' investigation is no longer welcome.

### STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins with the protagonists receiving a message from Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius. They are told of a development that is occurring in Hive Aidon and is threatening to destabilise the planet's precarious ruling council: a series of gruesome murders have been committed soon after the mysterious disappearance of the governor, Ganthet Veneratio. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*You receive a message from your patron, Rogue Trade Jakel Varonius on your data-slates. The message is short, almost curt, describing the current mission for your warband.*

*"Charybdion is an ocean world of significant value to the Gilead System. The planetary governor, Ganthet Veneratio, has gone missing, and we have reason to believe he is dead. As such, this planet needs a new governor—and I'm going to ensure that the succession proceeds quickly. Charybdion's production of food is too important to the Gilead System to let it fall into anarchy.*

*One of the largest problems involves the nobles of the capital hive, Aidon. These upperhive elite relish taking insult at any opportunity. There has been a series of apparent murders amongst their ranks. Eventually, one will use these deaths as an excuse to accuse a rival, and the planet's industry will fall apart as the nobles war amongst themselves. I want this murderer found, and swift, retributive action taken against them, understood? At the same time, verify the governor's death if you can—Veneratio's disappearance was far too convenient for my taste. I'll not have these trivialities distract from the greater threats to the Gilead System.*

*Your first step should be to contact Prefect Orrilus, the current highest ranking Administratum official—and interim governor—to gain more specific details about the murders."*

The warband is already en route to Hive Aidon aboard an Arvus shuttlecraft, sent down from the Rogue Trader's flotilla, as the adventure begins.

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### STAND-ALONE ADVENTURE

This adventure can be run as a stand-alone adventure or as part of the larger *Dark Tides* narrative. To run it as a stand-alone, without the presence of Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius or his attempts to install a new governor, just change the beginning to have Prefect Orrilus assemble the protagonists as a neutral group that can investigate without any political bias. Some minor details of the protagonists' interactions with Prefect Orrilus may need to be changed to reflect this, but his goal is essentially the same as Jakel's: stop the nobles from warring with one another.

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### MEETING THE PREFECT

The warband's shuttle lands on one of the private landing pads that protrude like blisters from the top of the hive. There the protagonists are met by a squad of hive Enforcers—well-armed representatives of the planetary authorities—and escorted through the wide and elaborate promenades of upperhive towards the governor's palace. Take this opportunity to describe to your players the lavish nature of upperhive. It is a place of wide avenues and high, vaulted arches where huge statues of Imperial heroes and Aquila icons loom above every corner. Servitors patrol the streets, keeping them constantly clean. Bright illumination floods down from the strip-lights above. As the player characters pass through the plaza outside the palace, they see a singular wonder: an actual living tree.

The inside of the palace is no less lavish. The grand hall, wide enough to fit three Leman Russ tanks abreast, is lined with plush red carpets. The protagonists see a series of gigantic paintings, each depicting a period from the Imperium's history or the hive's past. Eventually, they are led into an antechamber where they wait for their audience. This is an opportunity to let them discuss the murders with Prefect Orrilus. Give the player characters a moment to react to what they've seen and prepare for the meeting.

Eventually, after some time, they are led into the main audience chamber. Just off to the side of the governor's throne stands Prefect Orrilus, who is casually eating extremely rare and very expensive purple grapes from a bowl. As the protagonists reach him, he says:

*"So, you're Jakel Varonius's 'neutral investigators' I take it?" He regards you all critically, sniffs, and then pops another grape in his mouth. "You'll do, I suppose. But understand this: Jakel may operate under an Imperial warrant, but you do not. I allow you as a courtesy to the esteemed Rogue Trader, on account of our mutual goals, but you are not—I repeat, not—under any circumstances, to make this situation worse, is that understood? There are to be no accusations without proof. Your presence here is under the auspices of the Rogue Trader, and that grants you certain latitudes and liberties, but it does not grant you authority. You are to extend the hive's nobles the respect they are accustomed to during the course of this investigation, is that clear? Good. Now, what do you need to know? Quickly, I don't really have the time to spare on this endeavour."*

Orrilus sighs. "Normally, the Enforcers would handle something like this," he mutters. "But they are busy suppressing riots in the other hives. Charybdion is suffering from seething, planet-wide unrest, and if we don't solve this murder quickly, things are only going to get worse."

For this part of the story, it would be a good idea to re-familiarise yourself with the Social Interactions rules on page 251 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*.

Orrilus's responses from this point on are dependent upon how successfully the protagonists interact with him. Refer to Orrilus's entry in the Dramatis Personae (see page 25) to get a feel for how Orrilus would react.

Prefect Orrilus begins the scene as Uncooperative. Depending on how well they do using a Persuasion test, the player characters will get the following information from Prefect Orrilus:



- ◆ **Basic Success:** Regardless of how well the heroes do, they learn that there have been four bodies found in the last month: Mirrit Terimnar, Keeven Triss, Larsen Keel and Aksen Vollus. The last body, Aksen Vollus, was found just last night (and is what prompted Rogue Trader Varonius's involvement). The crime scene is still relatively fresh and should be investigated next. Each victim was found to be missing certain valuables, which originally made linking them together more difficult—as many Enforcers focused on the robbery aspect.
- ◆ **Neutral:** Orrilus gives the warband more detail: *"Infighting isn't uncommon amongst the younger nobles. Rivalries flare in these uncertain times, but they rarely lead to deaths, and never four in such a short time. Our greatest worry is that this is a prelude to a war among the nobles, or is being framed as such by unknown parties for political gain. We just don't know by who or for what gain."*
- ◆ **Friendly or Higher:** Orrilus is not party to the details but he understands the murders have been 'gruesome' in some regards, but that is being kept secret for now at the request of Praetor Borst, who is conducting his own investigation.

After the interview with Prefect Orrilus, the player characters are assigned a high-priority mass transport tram that travels along a convoluted rail system between different levels of the hive to take them to the site of Aksen Vollus's murder. The servitor and transport are at the protagonists' disposal for the duration of the investigation.

If players roll complications during this scene with the prefect, they cause some kind of social faux pas that has unfortunate consequences: the character suffers a loss of 1 point of Influence until the end of the adventure.

## SCENE 2: IN THE ESTATES OF THE MURDERED

Aksen Vollus's apartment is bright and spacious, with an open plan living area rising up over two levels. A bedroom balcony overlooks the living area, directly below which is Aksen Vollus's body, which has been covered by a deep green, expensive-looking cape. A dark stain of blood has spread from underneath, with a curious gap interrupting its even spread.

## FAILING-FORWARD

This adventure is largely focused around the investigation of the hive killer. Thus, many tests are orientated towards gaining information for the players and moving towards the eventual confrontation with the main villain—the killer. It is important to remember that failing these tests should not stop the player characters from gaining information (after all, the fun part of an investigation is *interpreting* the clues, not gaining them). Look at Failing-Forward on page 63 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules* for more information on how best to keep failures interesting without stopping the game's forward motion.

For **Descent**, failing tests during the investigation should make the killer and the Cult of Luxury (see page 80) more aware of the heroes' interest and interference. This can be represented by gaining Ruin for the GM, adding more enemies to the combats, or inflicting 1 Shock on the characters to represent a growing exhaustion and stress. As always, the most effective consequences for failure tie into the individual character's own story.

From this initial tableau, the protagonists will likely have several areas of interest they'd like to investigate. Below is a summary of what they find relating to the topic of their inquest:

- ◆ **The Body:** Aksen Vollus's body, still in his sleeping robes, is a bloody and crumpled mess, his neck twisted at an unnatural angle. However, that is not his only injury: both of Vollus's hands have been removed, causing the pools of blood. A successful Medicae test (DN 3) reveals the hands were cleanly snipped off immediately post mortem, hence the lack of blood splatter, by some sort of powered clippers. His other injuries are consistent with a fall. Also, rigor mortis is just beginning to fade, so death occurred approximately 36 hours ago, sometime between 12 and 2am.

- ◆ **The Blood Stain:** An Investigation test (DN 3) tells that whatever was here was round and removed after the blood had stopped flowing.

Judging by the size and position, and a few fur fibres left behind, it was most likely a rug made from some exotic off-world beast. A quick check shows it is no longer in the apartment; the killer must have taken it for some reason.

- ♦ **How did the killer get in?**: It is obvious from the outside that the door's metal locking control panel was cut into by powerful clippers. Once inside the mechanism, the killer was able to manually release the lock and gain entry. The clippers don't seem to be that big, only about the size of a servitor's hand. If the heroes know how Vollus's hands were removed, then yes, it is most likely the same tool.

- ♦ **What happened in the bedroom?**: There are some signs of a struggle: tossed sheets, knocked over tables, scattered personal effects. It looks like Vollus awoke before the killer could murder him in his bed and he attempted to fight back. However, it is unclear if the fall was accidental or deliberate. If the player characters make a Challenging (DN 5) Investigation test, they notice that Vollus had set aside his clothes for the morning: boots, britches, undergarments, jacket, belt and jewelry. However, it seems out of place that there is no shirt laid out. It's impossible to tell if it's just an oversight or if it's missing but, judging by the rest of his wardrobe, it would have been silk and most likely purple.

- ♦ **Who is Aksen Vollus?**: Talking with the Enforcer sergeant posted outside reveals that Aksen is a minor noble in the Vollus clan. The Vollus clan operate most of the algae export docks on the east side of the hive. Clan Vollus swears fealty to House Gaellen, which is an important house that controls all the algae processing factorums in the lower-east side of the hive.

- ♦ **Did anybody hear or see anything?**: The Enforcer sergeant tells the protagonists that they asked around as soon as the body was found by the cleaning servitor. The bulkheads are thick and provide a lot of privacy, thus, no one saw or heard anything.

- ♦ **Anything else after looking around?**: The protagonists do spot something that seems out of place: just outside and inside the door, and also next to the body, there are some smudges

of dirty grease, as if an oily satchel or bag was placed on the floor there. Mixed in with the grease are some tiny flecks of spongy green mass. If they ask around, no one from upperhive has any idea what it is. In addition, if they make a Challenging (DN 5) Investigation test, they notice a few other things missing, such as one of a pair of candle holders, a solus night-lamp from one side of the bed (in the style of an *art deco* Sororitas Seraphim), and some bottles of alcohol from the liquor cabinet. All of these items are of fairly low value and relatively easily obtained by anyone from upperhive.

- ♦ **What about the other victims?**: The Enforcer sergeant tells the heroes what he knows of the other murders.

- Larsen Keel was the first. Initially it was viewed as a fatal robbery. He had been stabbed to death after leaving a delinquent smoking den that nobles often frequent. All of Keel's custom smoking paraphernalia was taken—along with his ears. It was as though this disfigurement was symbolic, that Keel had overheard something he shouldn't have. The Keel clan is beholden to House Haestus, which control the algae processing factorums on the lower-west side of the hive.

- Keevan Triss, another very minor noble, was killed walking home from seeing her lover. She was also stabbed and robbed. The embroidered cloak her lover said she was wearing was never found; nor were her feet, which the killer also took. The Triss family are prominent members of House Gaellen.

- Mirrit Terimnar, a lesser noble of a family associated with House Haestus, was knifed to death in his own bed five days ago. Both legs were removed, though the killer did leave the feet behind. The Enforcers didn't think to look to see if anything else was missing.

- ♦ **Other murder scenes?**: The first two will offer up no further information, having been thoroughly cleaned by servitors. However, Mirrit Terimnar's apartments can be viewed. His apartments are of a similar level of luxury to Vollus's, and examination indicates that the lock was forced in the same way.

Additionally, a successful Investigation test (DN 3) reveals other, similar inconsistencies to those found in Aksen Vollus's home. It appears that some items are also missing: part of a set of silverware cutlery, volumes 1-3 of a six-volume set of historical data-slates and maybe some clothing, though that last one is difficult to be sure of. Finally, there are also some oily patches with the same tiny bits of green sponge-like material in it.

- ◆ **Any suspects?**: The Enforcers say that is beyond their purview and that it would be best to talk to Praetor Borst about such matters.

### SCENE 3: CASE SOLVED, PROBLEM OVER

At this early point in the investigation, the player characters probably have some theories but no solid leads. Some things they may want to follow up on are: a possible black market in stolen goods, the tool used to cut the limbs off, the significance of the green stuff, and what suspects there are already. However, before they can follow up on any of this in earnest, the protagonists are visited by Praetor Borst.

Borst arrives at their location (either Vollus's or Terimnar's apartments) with a squad of Enforcers in tow. He speaks to the heroes in private, while the Enforcers form a secure cordon. Praetor Borst is an imposing and intimidating figure; see his entry in *Dramatis Personae* page 25-26 for detail on how to portray him.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*"I am Praetor Borst. If Prefect Orrilus is Governor Veneratio's right hand, then I am the left. The prefect keeps the hive running, I keep the hive safe. Safe from itself. The nobles of this great hive are... proud of what they have attained throughout its tumultuous history. That 'pride' can often be provoked to rash action, should they feel their honour is challenged. Such as in the case of these recent, unfortunate deaths. Houses Gaellen and Haestus both feel aggrieved by these tragic losses, and both seek a swift—and amicable—end to this whole unpleasantness."*

*I have reviewed all the available evidence and have concluded that the murders of Vollus, Terimnar and Triss were retaliatory*

*strikes precipitated by the unfortunate—and accidental—death of Larsen Keel after a drunken argument in an unsanctioned Obscura smoking den. It is, no doubt, deplorable, yet I have seen similar altercations escalate like this many times before. I have spoken with and convinced Arbiram Haestus that the Gaellen scion responsible for Keel's death has been found and dealt with. Now, as you can see, this matter is resolved, and I assure you and the honourable Rogue Trader Varonius that there is no need for you to pursue this further."*

After this, the player characters will likely be confused and concerned. Praetor Borst has no actual idea who the real murderer is, but his only goal is to stop these two houses from breaking into all-out war with one another. As such, he has framed a young noble associated with House Gaellen with the initial Keel murder, and convinced the leader of House Gaellen to give him up to House Haestus to placate them and stave off further bloodshed. Both houses accept Praetor Borst's proposed solution, as it allows them both the minimum loss of status. Neither of them care about the dead, just what the fallout could mean for their power and influence.

Borst is keen to put an end to this and to communicate to the Rogue Trader that it has been dealt with efficiently by him. To this end, he will suffer answering any questions the protagonists may have to get this over with and move on to the next brewing crisis he has to avert. His answers to some of the possible lines of questioning are given below:

- ◆ **Who killed Larson Keel?**: *"An impetuous youth called Geeger Vaton. He and Keel had a history of arguments, it seems one of their disagreements got out of hand and he killed Larson. Of course, he pleads his innocence but which guilty person doesn't? I have a witness that puts them together on the night of the murder."*
- ◆ The truth is that though Vaton and Keel were together that night and did argue, Borst has no evidence Vaton killed Keel. He's just using the circumstances to frame Vaton as it provides Borst with his best solution.
- ◆ **Then who has been killing the others?**: *"Truth be told, I don't know exactly—and we may never find out. Yet it seems to me that it is not just one*

person. The most likely scenario is that agents of the two great houses took action of their own against the other until the original culprit was revealed and reparations made."

- This is actually pretty close to what Borst actually thinks happened. Though they deny it, Borst believes the leaders of the houses had more knowledge and involvement than they are admitting.

♦ **Why take body parts?:** "Most likely as proof that the assassin's task had been completed and by them. These mercenary types are interested only in their rewards and such proof likely guarantees that."

- Borst doesn't know why the limbs are being taken. This aspect of the crimes doesn't fit neatly with the narrative he's trying to create.

♦ **Why steal items then?:** "Items? I'm unaware of things being taken from the deceased. However, if things are missing, either from the victim's person or their abode, they are most probably just misplaced."

- This is genuinely the first Borst has heard of this, it's another thing that doesn't fit his narrative so he's trying to brush it off as best he can.

♦ **What about stains found that suggest it's the same killer?:** "Stains? That sounds inconsequential to me. If it's at multiple murder scenes, then it is most likely leakage from a servitor or something."

- This is another genuine reaction from Borst. He is growing increasingly annoyed at these inconsistencies that threaten his solution.

♦ **What about this green stuff found at the scenes?:** "Green stuff? What green stuff? Look, your attempted diligence is commendable. I'm sure Rogue Trader Varonius will be suitably impressed when I report to him of your worthy actions here. However, the case is now closed and the hostilities the honourable Rogue Trader sought to avoid have been averted."

**Note:** With regard to the overall investigation, each of Borst's declarations above counts as a fraud. Using any of these arguments in their presentation to the Judge later on only hurts the heroes' cause. See Investigations on page 259 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules* for more information.

It should be clear to the heroes that there are some inconsistencies with the scenario Praetor Borst is presenting. Yet it seems that Borst and the two houses involved, even the rest of



the hive's hierarchy, are all happy to accept it for the sake of continued peace. Now would be a good time for the player characters to review what they know before reporting back to the Rogue Trader. In fact, the Game Master should have Jakel Varonius (or possibly Prefect Orrilus) prompt the player characters to summarise the situation for them.

Some of the leads, clues, and unanswered questions are summarised below:

- ◆ **Why are body parts being removed?**: Borst's story of mercenaries taking proof of completion doesn't entirely make sense. In fact, the similarities of the parts removed, and the tool used to remove them being the same as that which broke the locks to both Vollus's and Terimnar's apartments, points to there being only a single killer.
- ◆ **What about the stains?**: This evidence being at both—and presumably all—crime scenes points to a single killer with the same modus operandi. Also, the oiliness of the stains seems inconsistent with the general cleanliness evident throughout upperhive.
- ◆ **Why are items being stolen?**: None of the items are particularly rare or valuable within upperhive society. The consistent and deliberate removal of items from the person or scene seems relevant. Is the killer collecting them as trophies?
- ◆ **Just what is that green stuff?**: So far, nobody in upperhive has recognised these tiny green flecks of sponge. Moreover, nobody seems to have heard of anything like it either. What is it and where does it come from?

If the protagonists don't take the initiative to contact Varonius, the Rogue Trader will message them over the planetary vox-network, requesting an update. Varonius will ask for a summary of what they have discovered and, more importantly, their opinion of it. If the heroes express an unease or distrust of Praetor Borst's 'solution' and that further investigation and information is needed, then Varonius agrees with them. He suggests speaking with Magos Carborast of the Adeptus Mechanicus, who is knowledgeable of, yet largely independent from, the hive's hierarchy, as its purview is maintaining the vast network of machines that go towards the algae processing and shipping

industries. However, if the player characters support Praetor Borst's version of events and his solution, Varonius agrees in part that it solves his immediate problem but that the inconsistencies are troubling. In which case, he orders the protagonists to continue pursuing this matter, in secret, as he feels that until the true killer is found, more murders may occur and Borst can only cover for so many before the houses retaliate. Again, he suggests speaking with Magos Carborast next.

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## SKIRMISH!

Act One is primarily about exploring the hive, meeting the important NPCs, and following the killer's trail. If the Game Master wishes, they can include a brief combat scene to shake things up.

As an optional encounter, the warband is ambushed by a group of combat servitors (see page 411–412 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*) sent by Ivill Kreet to bring their investigation to an abrupt halt. An informant in the Cult discreetly alerted Kreet to the warband's arrival, and Kreet saw the opportunity to end their meddling early on.

The Game Master should find an appropriate moment when the player characters are pausing in between scenes or about to move to Act Two. Then, the combat servitors arrive and begin the attack, gaining an Ambush (see page 206 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*) unless the heroes succeed at a DN 5 Awareness test (since servitors are fairly ubiquitous amongst the hive).

There should be a number of servitors equal to the number of characters +2. The servitors are somewhat sluggish and slow to react, suffering a +1 DN penalty to all tests.

If the heroes confront Carborast about the servitors later, the Magos will quickly examine the machine-spirits of the servitors it controls. It reports that those units went offline earlier that day while attending a maintenance issue in upperhive, and that their memory caches were wiped and new protocols were implanted. These new protocols are primitive and limited, clearly input by someone with only rudimentary knowledge of servitor rituals.



This act starts with the heroes visiting the enigmatic Magos Carborast of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Here they must negotiate with this somewhat eccentric personage to get further information and clues. The Magos eventually points them to one of its sub-junction commanders, Ivill Kreet, who turns out to be corrupt and attempts to protect himself by killing the player characters.

## SCENE 1: AN AUDIENCE WITH THE ADEPTUS MECHANICUS

To meet with Magos Carborast, the protagonists need to make their way deeper down the hive into the industrial mid-section of Hive Aidon. It's actually a relatively easy journey for the heroes to make as they are heading into the administrative heart of the vast industrial zone that figuratively and literally props up the lavish lifestyles of upperhive. An ornate thoroughfare leads down, flanked by giant statuary depicting a procession of Adeptus Mechanicus Magi from ages past. At the end are giant riveted gates festooned with a complicated network of cogs and gears that forms its lock. Permanently patrolling the entrance are units of Skitarii Vanguard. A Vanguard alpha checks the protagonists' credentials before letting them through. They are assigned a servitor guide and instructed to follow it, they are also warned that any attempt to leave it and explore on their own is forbidden. Ignoring the Adeptus Mechanicus' protocol on this matter may result in the player characters permanently losing 1 point of Influence.

The servitor trundles along on its tracks leading the player characters deeper into the heart of the Magos's domain. The journey takes them past innumerable pipes, ducts and junctions with countless bulkhead doors leading off to who knows where. Red-robed Enginseers direct legions of servitors as they work throughout the halls. Eventually, the servitor brings them to a large silo-like chamber. Steam and smoke pour down from far above. Snaking down out of the mists are countless wires and cables that loop off to connect to the wall of displays forming a Mechanicus augury station, which looks to the protagonists capable of monitoring the whole of the hive. In the middle of all this is what initially appears to be an enormously corpulent robed man.

This is Magos Carborast—refer to the entry in *Dramatis Personae* on page 26–27 for a description of Carborast's appearance and personality. At the protagonist's entrance, Carborast rises onto metal centipede-like legs and shifts over to them, addressing them directly.

*"Emissaries of Rogue Trader, designation: Jakel Varonius, your presence is acknowledged. Commence your data transfers and query requests. Note: Enforcer processes already formatted, duplicate data submissions will be refused."*

The heroes may want to ask Magos Carborast questions on a number of subjects; the Magos's responses to some of the likely topics raised are given below:

- ◆ **What tool was being used?:** "Current iteration, designation: model T234 through model T688, servitor waste dismantling apparatus, colloquial designation: 'powerclaw', requires Thermic Plasma induction coils mounted on tracked chassis, designation: model UZ34. Main application: Worldfish dismantling. Improper application against door and bio-parts. 82% chance tool was obsolete model, designation: T100 through model T233. Smaller, hand portable, integrated power core. Redundant tools disposed of through standard channels."
- "Standard channels," should they ask, are to be dumped in lowerhive.
- ◆ **What are the stains?:** "Standard Hive Aidon lubricant, designation: L32. Bi-product of natural Worldfish oil. Harvested and processed in lowerhive. Harvesting protocols not optimised, unacceptable wastage due to sub-optimisation. Process not within the Adeptus Mechanicus remit."
- ◆ **What is this green stuff?:** "Aquatic biomass, designation: species B267675-86. Main purpose of Hive Aidon production facility. 6,467.24 million tons harvested, processed and shipped last Imperial year. Principal ingress via lowerhive docks."
- ◆ **What do you think of Borst's solution?:** "Armed conflict among superfluous upperhive communities

*projected to impede ration production by negative 22.3%, with further escalation if immediate action not taken to suppress. The protocol implemented by civil functionary, designation: Praetor Borst, projected 78% successful, given current variables, with diminishing probabilities should additional biomass terminations ensue."*

If the player characters infer a connection between the murderer and lowerhive, Magos Carborast will concur. If they still haven't made the connection, Carborast will point it out for them. Either way, it is clear that Varonius wants them to pursue the lead. The pertinent question is, if the killer is from lowerhive, how are they getting up and, presumably, back down again? If the protagonists don't raise the issue, Magos Carborast will. In response to the query, Carborast will posit the following:

*"Ingress and egress is through limited transit points, each active flow monitored by Skitarii Vanguard firewall protocols. Unsanctioned biomass contamination from lowerhive via sanctioned portals calculated as highly unlikely. Biomass infiltration through secondary systems*



*predicted. Highest probability, weak point is via biomass, industrial transit network. Corrupt biomass component required for infiltration protocol's completion. Scanning performance data stream. Complete. Sub-junction shunt station, designation: SJST386, performance analysis report predicts 48% likely that biomass component, designation: Ivill Kreet, vulnerable to outside protocols. Recommendation: submit queries to Ivill Kreet, before biomass is euthanised for spare servitor parts."*

Servitor unit K98 is assigned to guide the heroes to sub-junction intendant Ivill Kreet at shunt station SJST386.

## SCENE 2: THE RAIL YARDS

The player characters are led out of the Magos's sanctum by K98 and taken to a heavy-duty cargo transport. They set off downwards through the industrial zones of Hive Aidon. This area is dimly illuminated except for the occasional flashing yellow hazard light and at work sites. Despite the industrial nature of the area, it is kept relatively clear of debris and obstructions. Servitors crawl all over the place, accompanied by hive citizen workers. The most notable feature of the area is the intense and loud noise of machinery.

Eventually, after some miles of travel, K98 stops the transport at a bulkhead door and announces their arrival at sub-junction shunt station SJST386. Going through the door, the player characters are assaulted by a wall of noise and rushing air, created by the rhythmic chugging and clanking of hundreds of industrial carriages constantly moving up and down rail tracks. The door opens onto a metal walkway overlooking a vast drop that appears to fall all the way to the bottom of the hive. Running vertically on the opposite wall are the tracks, making a giant rail yard. Occasionally, a train of carriages slows and stops before being re-routed. Each carriage carries a giant ladle, mounted on a gimbal frame, filled with a spongy green mass. This is how the algae collected from Charybdion's oceans are transported up the processing plants. A walkway to the right leads to a dirty-windowed control centre filled with levers and monitors, attended to by several workmen. Running it all is a Tech-adept, presumably intendant Ivill Kreet.

How this plays out is dependent on how the protagonists approach it. One option is to use

subterfuge to try to convince Ivill that that the heroes want to smuggle something. If the player characters succeed in a Challenging (DN 5) Interaction skill test (most commonly Cunning, Deception, Intimidation, Persuasion, or Tech), Ivill will admit to running a smuggling network using the access to the carriages to move items, and sometimes people, between lowerhive and upperhive. He handles the upperhive part of the operation but it is the Piscator gang that takes care of the lowerhive side. However, if the protagonists get a complication on the test, Ivill becomes instantly suspicious of the heroes, prompting him to attempt to kill them and flee lowerhive.

Should a fight ensue, Ivill and his loyal workmen pull out weapons and shoot to kill. Use the statistics for Scum on page 416 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*. Ivill and the workmen will attempt to take whatever cover they can behind the levers and desk, but it is likely to be a short and bloody fight. The gangers form three mobs, with each mob containing a number of gangers equal to the number of player characters. The Game Master should adjust this number up or down (2 fewer or

additional gangers is a good rule of thumb) if the warband is particularly strong or particularly low on resources.

Should the player characters take any prisoners alive for interrogation, a successful Standard (DN 3) Intimidation test is needed to reveal the same information as above. Alternatively, if Ivill and all his cohorts are dead, a successful Standard (DN 2) Awareness test finds documentation that gives the same information.

It should be clear that the heroes need to travel down the hive on one of these carriages to follow the lead to the Piscator gang. If they don't do this of their own initiative, they will be instructed to do so by Jakel Varonius as soon as they report in. The Game Master can use this opportunity to have the Rogue Trader contact the warband if they do not reach out to him first. Jakel explains this as wishing to "oversee this personally" when the task is this important. He is also trying to become more familiar with how the warband reacts in a crisis, evaluating them for more dangerous missions in the future.

## ACT THREE



This act leads the player characters down into the lowest recesses of the hive, giving them a view of how the dispossessed and forgotten live among the squalor. First, they must negotiate passage past the Piscator gang before locating the black market that trades in luxury items from upperhive. Finally, they confront the Cult of Luxury and its leader before the cult can kill again.

As the protagonists descend further down the hive, moving from the industrial zone into the slums of lowerhive, remember to describe the change in environment and living conditions to the players. The industrial zone, while dirty with oil and grime, and noisy with the sound of production, is still functional and in good repair.

Once in lowerhive proper, describe to the players the prevailing squalor and derelict nature of the whole level:

- ◆ Rusted and collapsed passages
- ◆ Damp walls and stagnant pools

- ◆ Blacked-out corridors, with vermin scurrying in the darkness
- ◆ The stench of briny air and rotten fish
- ◆ Mounds of refuse and discarded litter
- ◆ Makeshift barricades and hovels
- ◆ The sounds of dripping water, clangs echoing through the metal and distant, unfathomable rumbles

Lowerhive is cramped, claustrophobic, dank and frequently without power, leaving it dark and cold. The people they see huddling for cover at their passing are frightened, malnourished, and caked in grime. Almost all have their teeth stained green from feeding on scavenged raw algae.

### SCENE 1: THE PISCATOR GANG

The protagonists can get to lowerhive by riding in one of the exposed operator cabs of an empty carriage, as it descends back down the hive to

be refilled with raw algae. The carriage moves at speed and soon comes to a halt on the lower levels, in an area that is primarily storage silos. Workmen on the walkways above proceed to refill the carriage's ladle from an articulated pipe. This area is caked in overspill from the algae. It's obvious to the heroes that this is the same spongy green residue as found at the murder locations.

There is some initial confusion from the workers when they see the player characters as they simply weren't expecting them. One of the workers hurriedly leaves to find the Piscator representative that handles anything coming down from upperhive. As the protagonists dismount onto the walkway with the workers, several Piscator members show up to find out what's going on.

The Piscator gangers are all heavily muscled men in thick, dirty yellow rubber waders and rebreather masks. Each is carrying a heavy tool repurposed as a weapon. The leader steps forward and demands to know who the heroes are and what they are doing here.

From this point, the encounter can go several different ways depending on what the player characters do. The Piscator gangers are aggressive, so a fight is certainly possible. If that happens, the workers flee while the Piscator gangers attempt to bludgeon the protagonists into submission to find out what's going on. Once the gangers have the truth from the heroes, they'll dump any survivors into one of the algae ladles and send them back to upperhive, telling them never to come back.

The default reaction of the Piscator gang is to fight these interlopers. Aggressive and territorial, the gangers typically fight to kill. However, at the GM's discretion, they may instead offer mercy or simply return unconscious heroes to upperhive to "send a message".

Perhaps a better option is to try to negotiate with the Piscator gangers. Some of the options the player characters may take are to present themselves as fellow hive scum looking to offload some items from upperhive into the lowerhive black market. In which case the protagonists need to make a successful Deception test (DN 6) to convince them. Alternatively, the protagonist could proclaim they are on official hive business, hunting for an upperhive murderer. In which case, an Intimidation test (DN 5) is needed to force their

compliance. Characters with the Scum keyword gain a +2d bonus to the Deception or Intimidation tests.

If the heroes successfully get the gangers' compliance, then they give the player characters directions to and the name of a contact for the black market in lowerhive.

## SCENE 2: BLACK MARKET

The journey through the depths of lowerhive is a very different experience to anything the heroes have seen before. It is a claustrophobic labyrinthine wasteland of rusted metal, seeping water, and mould. The warband eventually locates the black market, either by following the directions the Piscator gangers gave them if they successfully gained compliance, or by questioning the workers.

The smell of mould, decay, and toxic waste sits foul on the nose as the heroes move through the poorly lit corridors. Some of the areas they move through are inhabited by scabby and dirty vagrants swathed in what rags they could scavenge; any exposed flesh is pockmarked and covered in sores. Sometimes scores of these people, including entire families, huddle together in a section, taking advantage of any dry space they can find to live in.

Eventually, the heroes are led to the Worldfish dismantling yards at the end of the vaulted in-hive waterway known as the Piscator Docks, the location where the Piscator gang derives its name. As the player characters see the dismantling yards for the first time, they are amazed at the sheer scale of the Worldfish and the operations around their dismantling. Worldfish themselves are true sea monsters. They are gigantic, whale-like sea creatures of leviathan proportions, ten stories high and a hundred or more metres long. Around each creature has been erected scaffolding, allowing various groups to slowly take them apart piece by piece, stripping the fish of every usable part. Their meat forms an alternative to the algae most of the desperate citizens of lowerhive eat to survive. The oil is used as an industrial lubricant while the blubber is rendered down into cheap fuel for lamps in the dark of lowerhive.

Around the edge of these vast creatures, a shanty town community has grown based on a foundation of trade, centred around the commodities of the Worldfish. The protagonists find their way (or are



led by a local guide) into the centre of this trade town and to Orvis Keller's stall. Orvis is covered in the same level of grime as everyone else the heroes see in lowerhive, but with exceptionally bright white teeth. This seems incongruous until it's realised the teeth are actually fake, carved from a single Worldfish's tooth, as evidenced by the many other sets laid out for sale in his stall. Orvis's inventory consists of various Worldfish by-products, but behind the counter he keeps his meagre stock of upperhive luxury items.

Orvis is always happy to speak with prospective customers and welcomes the player characters to his humble establishment. The protagonists can negotiate with Orvis to try to find out more information about the black-market trade network that exists here. A successful Standard (DN 2) Persuasion test is required for him to open up about what he knows. Here's what he can tell them about various subjects.

◆ **Where do you get your stuff?**: “Would you believe gravity? When things fall, they fall down ‘til they reach the bottom, and that’s where I am. Actually, no. There are those who acquire items in upperhive through various means, the specifics of which I don’t ask, that for whatever reason, they can’t get rid of up there. I’m always happy to take these things off their hands. Now, I would never divulge their identity, but they have developed an

‘appreciation’ for a narcotic made from fermented algae, and as long as that continues, we’ll both have need of each other.”

- ◆ **Who buys luxury items down here?**: “It tends to be only a select clientele. Mainly those who can afford it, such as prominent members of the Piscator. My customers have been loyal to me for years and I shall remain so to them too. Having said that though, I do hear tell of a group, a ‘cult’ if you will, seeking to get their hands on as many of these kinds of items as they can.”
- ◆ **Have you traded any of these items (referring to the items the heroes know to have been stolen from the murder scenes)?**: “No. I can honestly say that neither I, nor my contacts, have ever come across such items as you describe. If someone has brought them to lowerhive, they have not done so through me. They haven’t brought them through this trade point either—I would have heard of the competition.”
- ◆ **What more can you tell us of this cult?**: “Honestly, not a lot. I understand their leader is a “prophet” called Gerrit and they can be found down in the sump pits.”
- Orvis is even willing to organise a guide to take the player characters there, for a price.

This is also an opportunity for the protagonists to look around the markets and maybe even indulge themselves by buying any illicit or illegal items they feel they may need. Refer to page 267 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules* for more information on acquiring such rare items. You should decide what items are and are not available based upon which items you want your characters to have access to in your game.

After negotiating with Orvis in the shadow of the Worldfish, the protagonists should be ready to go seek out Gerrit and his cult.

### SCENE 3: CHASE DOWN THE KILLER

Without a guide, the heroes would have little hope of navigating the sump pits area of the underhive. If they do wish to go it alone, they would need to make a Difficult (DN 7) Cunning test to be able to use local knowledge to find their way. If they fail, they will likely be waylaid by desperate lowerhive scum bent on killing them and taking their stuff. Should that happen, use the profile for Scum on page 416 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*. There should be three mobs of scum with each mob made up of a number of gangers equal to the player characters.

Whether with a guide or on their own, journeying through the lowerhive wastes is arduous. Unstable floors that can give way suddenly to precipitous



drops, weak ceilings that can collapse down at any second, and the threat of drowning due to a flash flood caused by a corroded seal finally giving way. Feel free to beset the player characters with as many of these hazards as you think they can handle. Refer to Chapter 5: Adventuring in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules* book for more information on how to adjudicate such hazards as falling or drowning.

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### THE FLOODED CHAMBER

As an optional challenge to throw at the warband, the Game Master may choose an appropriate moment when the heroes are traversing the lowerhive wastes. Weak piping splits, shooting brackish water into the chamber they are travelling through. Automatic safety hatches grind and creak into slow action as they descend to lock off the breach. At this depth in the hive, each section's hatchways are crucial to keep flooding under control.

Have the characters make Athletics tests (DN 5) to make it out the door before they are sealed in. If they fail, the heroes can attempt an improvised bypass of the hatches (A DN 6 Tech test), or force it open with brute strength (a DN 6 Strength test). Failing these tests consigns the characters to a watery grave! The GM may choose to treat this situation as a Threatening Task Resolution (see page 254 in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*).

Other hazards could make this challenge even more deadly, such as a radiation leak or chemical toxins suffusing the water (see pages 246–248 in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*).

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As the protagonists make their way closer to the sump pits, they realise that they must also be getting close to one of the rail network junctions due to the noise and vibrations that rumble through the area. Eventually, they reach an area of abandoned algae storage silos. One of which has fallen on its side and seems to have been repurposed as some sort of a building, with makeshift doors and windows welded onto the frame. Guards can be seen outside, keeping an eye open for interlopers, as small groups of ragged locals regularly wander up and are given entry. It seems as if a sizable congregation is building.

Gaining entry by a direct frontal assault is an obvious unwise choice. For one, the heroes don't know how well it will be defended or by how many and with what weapons. A better option may be by stealth, subterfuge or both. Of course, it is still acceptable for a protagonist not well versed in these methods to wait outside while more adept player characters infiltrate the silo.

**Stealth:** A Stealth test (DN 3) will allow them to reach the silo without being detected. From there, an Awareness test (DN 4) allows them to find a way inside without raising the alarm. Once inside, another Stealth test (DN 5) allows them to get to the meeting hall unseen, where they can view the next part.

**Subterfuge:** By getting rid of any weapons or gear that would give them away, and disguising themselves in the filthy rags the rest of the desperate locals wear, the protagonists can pass in alongside all the other lowerhivers that are arriving, being taken straight into the meeting hall to view the next bit. However, they must also pass a Deception test (DN 5) to be convincing enough not to raise suspicion.

If the heroes fail in any of their attempts to infiltrate, then they will be turned back or ejected before the sermon starts. Note, only the individual who failed will be denied entry. Some may be successful while others may not. Those that are successful witness the sermon as described below.

*A hush falls among the hundred or so that fill the meeting hall as a figure walks on to the raised dais at the end. It looks to be a slim man, though it's difficult to tell from here. The figure is a contrast to those below him. Where they wear dirty rags, he wears a lilac-coloured silk shirt. Where their hair is matted and dull, his is a shiny, wavy blond. Where they are huddled and desperate, he is smiling and open. As soon as all the attention is on him, he begins to speak.*

*"Welcome to you all, those who are already enlightened and to those who are new and wish to be enlightened, all are welcome here. I am Gerrit.*

*Without enlightenment, you would have been born, worked to the bone and died here with no knowledge of anything different. This would have been your entire life, your entire existence, because you knew of no other life that there*

*could be. There is another way, there is another life. I am here to tell you of that life, to show it to you and to let you feel it.*

*Your world is rags for clothes and slop for food, you think this is all there is because you don't know of an alternative, you don't know that things can be different, that things should be different. Only by following my lead will you make it different.*

*For this is not 'just how the world is'. No, your world is like this because others have made it so. A ruling elite that lives high above us, sucking everything towards themselves, taking what the God-Emperor fought for us all to have and keeping it just for themselves. They deny you food, they deny you clothing, they deny you your future and they deny you happiness."*

*Attendants start to give out items for the congregation to pass around.*

*"These are examples of what you have been denied, of what you can claim back. The soft shirt is the clothing they wear, the bottled scent is the air they breathe, and this," he holds up a bunch of vibrant, succulent purple grapes, "is the sweet food they eat."*

*The items you see being passed around are the ones noted as taken from the murder scenes, such as the Sororitas Seraphim lamp, purple silk shirt, and exotic rug. The items are being marvelled at by the congregation, pawed over and touched, and sensually rubbed against skin. Some are even brought to tears experiencing sensations for the first time that they never even knew existed.*

*"The elite of upperhive will no longer hoard to themselves these pleasures—all are worthy of them. You deserve to indulge in such pleasure and happiness too. And I am here to help you achieve that." He brings onto the stage a large, oily work bag. Most likely the bag that caused the stains you found.*

*"There is a doom coming, a great levelling. I have dreamt of it night after night. I have seen the hive itself split and the top spire fall into the ocean below. I have taken this as a prophecy and, on your behalf, I have acted upon it. I tore down the head of state."*

*Gerrit reaches into the bag and pulls out a severed head, which you instantly recognise from countless statues and paintings adorning the buildings of upperhive. It is the slack, lifeless face of Governor Veneratio. Curiously, it also looks like the top of the head has been opened and the brain removed.*

*"We will work together to even the score. You will go out and spread the word and recruit more to our cause while I will go, this very moment, back up to sever Orrilus's head. I will continue to topple this hive one tyrant at a time until we are ready to rise up as one and take back what is ours by right!"*

*The crowd, whipped into a frenzy, cheers at this. At which point, Gerrit turns to leave.*

If Gerrit is going to kill Orrilus now, he'll be heading to the transit junction nearby to make his way to upperhive. Once there, he certainly has the manner, bearing and clothes to blend in with upperhive society, making him hard to find. The player characters need to either follow Gerrit, catch up with him and stop him, or get ahead of him to warn Orrilus. Either way, they need to act right now.

Knowing the rough direction Gerrit will be heading in, the protagonists can set off immediately in pursuit and not be too far behind. In fact, as they reach the marshalling yard, they see Gerrit up ahead on one of the carriages. However, the train containing that carriage begins to pull away. The heroes have to make the split-second decision to either jump on the train several carriages below Gerrit and work their way up, or let him escape. If they attempt to jump on, they need to make an Athletics test (DN 3) or miss and be left behind.

Being left behind means they need to catch a faster train to catch up (see below for details).



Once on the train, the player characters have to make their way up to Gerrit. However, he and the small group of cultists he's brought with him see the protagonists and a fight ensues.

This is a challenging fight as it takes place on board a rapidly moving freight train. Should a protagonist or enemy be thrown from a carriage, they must make an Athletics test (DN 4) to catch hold of a lower carriage or fall to their death below. If a protagonist wants to take advantage of a faster-moving adjacent train, they need to pass an Athletics test (DN 4) to jump across onto the train and then another to jump back. Of course, there is nothing to stop Gerrit trying to flee by jumping onto a faster train, in which case the heroes need to follow him across to keep up. Ultimately though, it is in Gerrit's best interests to kill the player characters.

Gerrit has a Fanatical Protector with him (see page 29) and is also accompanied by a number of cultists equal to the player characters (see Cultists on pages 419–420 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*). Keep track of everyone's relative position on the various trains and carriages as the fight progresses. Because this is a running battle as they scramble across the carriages, taking pot shots when they can, a round during this fight takes approximately one minute. The protagonists know that after ten rounds, the carriage will reach the sub-junction stop where Gerrit will likely escape into upperhive. They need to stop him before that happens; however, each 'faster' carriage Gerrit moves to reduces the time needed by one additional round.

## CONCLUSION

If the heroes manage to stop Gerrit on the train, they find the evidence they need to prove he was the murderer. He has a blood-stained model T198 portable power cutter and various personal items linking him to the murdered victims. Also in the bag is the head of Governor Veneratio. When this is revealed to Varonius, Orrilus, and Borst, there is shock... but not surprise. At this point, they were expecting him to turn up dead, just not necessarily like this. The gruesome way the governor died is kept secret, as is Gerrit's involvement. With no threat of further murders, Borst's plan is implemented to best keep the peace and the completely innocent Geeger Vaton is sentenced to death for the crimes. The player characters are praised and rewarded by Rogue Trader Varonius and afforded grudging respect from Orrilus and Borst. The only lingering questions are what happened to all the body parts Gerrit took? And where is Governor Veneratio's brain? (see Adventure 4: *Ironwatch* for answers!)



What follows are the principal characters that appear in this story and, in some cases, beyond. Included is pertinent information needed to portray these characters in your game.

## PREFECT ORRILUS

Prefect Trontus Markaven Orrilus has served faithfully as Governor Ganhet Veneratio's administrative right-hand man for decades. He and his numerous Administratum staff take care of most of the bureaucratic functions and red tape that is required for the smooth running of Hive Aidon—and much of Charybdion proper. With the sudden disappearance of Governor Veneratio, Prefect Orrilus was thrust into the position as the de facto interim governor, at least until the dispute over succession is resolved. Orrilus has no political aspirations—he is fully aware of his limitations as an administrative functionary, however competent or essential he may be in that role. His main concern is keeping everything functioning, food and water coming in, and the Astra Militarum ration packs flowing out. The truth is he is not a strong enough personality to keep the disparate factions of the hive under control. When Rogue Trader Varonius arrived in the Gilead System, Prefect Orrilus thanked the Golden Throne that someone truly competent had arrived to sort out the mess.

## APPEARANCE

Orrilus is a pallid man of medium height. He is bald, though many pipes, ducts and wires emerge from the top of his head to bend down behind and over his shoulders, terminating in a cogitator attached to his chest. A scroll emerges forth from that cogitator, updating Orrilus on pertinent information about Hive Aidon. His robe of office is red and somewhat ragged—he is often far too busy with his duties to worry overmuch about fashion.

## PORTRAYAL

Orrilus is determined yet worried. He knows he is in way over his head, but is savvy enough to understand he can't show that. However, there is always the niggling doubt that all the others

can see right through him. He knows his position as interim governor is weak and is thankful for the apparent legitimacy the Rogue Trader's endorsement has given him—but he knows even that won't last should he make a mistake. Orrilus does not care in the slightest about the ordinary populace of Hive Aidon; they are but a resource necessary for ration production. After all, the population of lowerhive far exceeds his labour requirements, so he can always find more workers. To the Prefect, the nobles of upperhive are what truly matter. Orrilus is unashamedly condescending to those clearly lower than him in the social order, and suspicious and conniving with his peers. If Orrilus meets a truly strong personality of sufficient rank, the Prefect reverts to the obsequious nature he had under Governor Veneratio.

## PRAETOR BORST

The great houses of Hive Aidon all know Praetor Piscillan Borst well, for each has suffered under the surveillance of this zealous Enforcer chieftain at some point. Commissioned by Governor Ganhet Veneratio himself, Praetor Borst is tasked with being watchdog over the activities of the noble houses in Hive Aidon. To curb, balance, and contain the excesses of their political machinations, to counter and diffuse potentially volatile situations by interceding, bargaining, bribing, or even outright threatening those involved to avoid escalation. Intensely disliked by the lords of each house, Praetor Borst has survived and even prospered because the lords all recognise two things in him: his unimpeachable neutrality and his unwavering devotion to his duty—for Praetor Borst, the good of Charybdion (and Hive Aidon) *always* comes first.

The recent death of Governor Ganhet Veneratio has thrown all his hard-fought-for stability into disarray. Now, with no governor to support his authority, the lords of Hive Aidon are beginning to ignore him and find their own, more self-serving solutions to the hive's problems. And to top it all off, inciting his ire to even greater heights, the interloping Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius has arrived, presenting another threat to his prized sense of order and stability.

## APPEARANCE

Praetor Borst's is a dark presence in court, favouring fine clothes of black and dark green. He is tall and lean, with a severe facial structure. His left arm is entirely cybernetic, and he is rarely without his eagle-headed cane. Aquilas are worked into his belt-buckle and boots to signify his allegiance to the Imperium.



## PORTRAYAL

Praetor Borst has an obvious disdain for those outside of the ruling class of Hive Aidon and cares nothing for the millions who toil and live below, seeing them as no more than mere cogs in the great Imperial machine. Only the power, influence, and control of the great houses are of any consequence to the Gilead System and therefore must be maintained at any cost. Possessing a cold and ruthlessly calculating mind, Praetor Borst will use his intimate and extensive knowledge of the lords of Hive Aidon and their houses to devise a solution that will appease the majority and, above all, maintain stability.

## MAGOS CARBORAST

Magos Carborast is as old as the bones of the hive. So old, in fact, and so augmented as to have transcended any biological notion of age or gender, to the point where it truly considers itself an 'it'. Magos Carborast's life has been a long pursuit of efficiency and performance. To that end, Carborast has intergraded itself with every machine-spirit and operation until it and the hive are virtually indistinguishable as separate, autonomous units. Unfortunately, the parasitic biomass that infests the hive is still currently needed for a lot of functions, including labour. But ultimately, Carborast sees the future of itself as the hive—a self-sustaining single entity void of any needless biomass entities. The Magos wants to become Hive Carborast, an autonomous facility, all for the glory of the Omnissiah.

## APPEARANCE

Magos Carborast has replaced most of its original organic body with a corpulent mass of synthetic and cybernetic components. The bulbous bulk of which is moved on a network of spindly, centipede-like metal legs. The large mechanical body is swathed in the iconic red robes of the Adeptus Mechanicus.

## PORTRAYAL

Due to the myriad tasks that occupy Magos Carborast as the Adeptus Mechanicus representative in Hive Aidon, it rarely leaves its sanctum within the Mechanicus enclave, deep in the hive's industrial zone. As such, Carborast has trouble relating to organics through the inadequate vocal spectrum;

it is much more used to and comfortable with the direct transfer of data. This means that when Carborast does have to talk with a human being, its vocalisations appear as a synthetic monotone. Which, when accompanied by a highly idiosyncratic speech pattern, can be very disconcerting to hear. People often leave a conversation with Magos Carborast with the impression that they were listening to a machine trying to mimic a human, which isn't actually that far from the truth.

## Ivill Kreet

Ivill Kreet has worked this sub-junction shunt station all his life, just as his father did... and his brothers, sons, and cousins. Kreet inherited the position of intendant from his father after witnessing a horrific accident. His father's head was unceremoniously transformed into a servoskull that now aids Ivill in the daily operations of the sub-junction. Witnessing the accident and the callous way in which his dead father was treated hardened Kreet, making him resentful of the hive and his place in it. It wasn't long before he used his position to smuggle things up and down the small part of the algae transport network for which he was responsible.

## APPEARANCE

Ivill has the rough and haggard face common to most of the labour-intensive workers found in the hive, possessing deep-set, tired eyes, unkempt hair and an unshaven face. He wears the same bulky protective clothing as the rest of the workforce, with no insignia of rank; none is needed as all the people he works with are family relations and they all know who he is. Concealed somewhere upon his person is an autopistol.

## PORTRAYAL

Ivill Kreet is inherently suspicious of anyone who isn't one of his family. He's even more suspicious of anyone who looks like they have no honest business being at his sub-junction. There are only two reasons someone outside of the family would come here: to attempt to smuggle something or to expose the smuggling. He hopes for the former but is prepared for the latter. If they want to smuggle something, Ivill will feign ignorance unless they name-drop one of his other customers. However, if he suspects they are on to him, or if they outright accuse him, he and his family will pull out what

meagre weapons they have and try to kill the interlopers. Once they are dead, he and his thugs will gather what they can and flee to lowerhive, where he knows they can disappear and never be found.

**Threat Classification:** Elite for Tiers 1-2.

<b>Strength</b>	3	<b>Intellect</b>	3		
<b>Agility</b>	3	<b>Willpower</b>	3		
<b>Toughness</b>	3	<b>Fellowship</b>	3		
<b>Initiative</b>	4	<b>Defence</b>	3		
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	4		
<b>Shock</b>	3	<b>Soak</b>	3		
<b>Resolve</b>	3	<b>Conviction</b>	3		
<b>Passive Awareness</b>		5			
<b>Resilience</b>		5			
<b>Skills</b>	Stealth 7, Default 5				
<b>Size</b>	Average				
<b>Keywords</b>	Human, Scum				

## ATTACKS

**Autopistol:** (Damage 7+1ED; AP 0; Range 20m (R); Salvo: 2; Pistol)

**Knife:** (Damage 6+1ED; AP 0)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Without Honour:** Scum cheat in any fight; they may substitute their Stealth for Ballistic Skill or Weapon Skill tests in the first round of combat.



## GERRIT

Gerrit is proud to tell his congregation of his origins, about being born in the deepest sump-pit of the underhive with nothing to his name. About being found by slave hunters and subsequently sold into servitude to the upperhive elite. About how he witnessed, first hand, the callous disdain those people had for the people who lived beneath them. About how they suppress and control the lowerhivers to maintain their luxurious way of life. He tells also of how his anger at this inequality fuelled his determination to escape and flee lowerhive to bring this message to the downtrodden masses: you *can* have it too.

However, all of that history is a complete lie. Gerrit Haestus is the seventh son of Lord Vanyar Haestus, head of House Haestus. Growing up, Gerrit became increasingly jealous and bitter at all the privileges his older siblings were getting. He saw them all being moved into positions of wealth, power and influence... and it just wasn't fair that he wasn't being given anything himself. Hating his family and the established elite, Gerrit fell into a self-destructive path of delinquent smoking dens, illicit crime, and unsanctioned prostitution. It wasn't long before someone began to whisper heresy in his ear—and he listened.

Gerrit now wants to tear down the entire social order of the hive, destroying everything the upperhives strive to maintain. What he seeks is a chaotic and anarchic world where everything is up for grabs and he can get what he feels he has been unfairly denied, yet deserves. Gerrit is on a trajectory that will turn himself and his Cult of Luxury towards Chaos and Slaanesh.

## APPEARANCE

Gerrit is youthful and handsome, slim with an attractive physique and long, wavy blond hair. The clean-shaven face, slim frame, and immaculate hair all give Gerrit androgynous appearance. His clothes tend towards luxuriant fabrics such as silks, furs, or soft leathers, in hues of purple and lilacs. He also wears a lot of jewellery and bangles of various designs; one which the protagonists may or may not recognise is that of a small symbol of Slaanesh. Gerrit dresses this flamboyant way to show his congregation what is possible for them to attain too. At least that's what he tells them, the truth is he loves the sensual luxury they provide.

## PORTRAYAL

Gerrit is a passionate and effective firebrand public speaker, he speaks with a rhythm and cadence that immediately invites you to listen. He is theatrical, knowing when to pace or gesture to emphasise a point or hold the audience's attention. In private, he is attentive to whomever he is speaking with, happy to listen and engage. Yet always he is edging the conversation towards manipulating them into agreeing with his opinions. He is also happy to be tactile, to shake hands, clasp a shoulder, or even embrace to endear people to him. However, as soon as no one is looking, he wipes himself down with a shudder to cleanse himself of their poverty.

**Threat Classification:** Adversary for Tiers 1-2 and Elite for Tier 3+.

<b>Strength</b>	3	<b>Intellect</b>	4
<b>Agility</b>	4	<b>Willpower</b>	4
<b>Toughness</b>	5	<b>Fellowship</b>	4
<b>Initiative</b>	3	<b>Defence</b>	2
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	4
<b>Shock</b>	4	<b>Soak</b>	5
<b>Resolve</b>	4	<b>Conviction</b>	4
<b>Passive Awareness</b>		5	
<b>Resilience</b>	9 (Flak Armour: 3)		
<b>Skills</b>	Deception 7, Default 6		
<b>Size</b>	Average		
<b>Keywords</b>	Human, Heretic		

## ATTACKS

**Autopistol:** (Damage 7+1ED; AP 0; Range 20m (R); Salvo: 2; Pistol)

**Chainsword:** (Damage 8+1ED; AP 0; Brutal, Parry)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Harbinger of Ruin:** Gerrit generates 1 point of Ruin per round for every 6 cultists present at the start of each turn.

**(Ruin) Kill them All!:** As a free action, Gerrit may spend a point of Ruin to let a mob of Cultists within 3 metres take one combat action.

**(Wrath) The Unseen:** Gerrit gains +2d to all Interaction Attacks.

## FANATICAL PROTECTOR

Veteran gang warriors and bodyguards, these grim, hard-set men and women work with the Piscator gang and the criminal scum of Hive Aidon. Loyal, skilled and alert, these warriors might well make excellent soldiers in the Astra Militarum—but they are far too canny to be caught up in the tithes of troops organised by the planetary governor.

**Threat Classification:** Elites at Tiers 1-3, Troops at Tiers 4+

Strength	3	Intellect	3
Agility	4	Willpower	4
Toughness	4	Fellowship	3
Initiative	4	Defence	3
Speed	6	Wounds	4
Shock	4	Soak	4
Resolve	3	Conviction	4
<b>Passive Awareness</b>		6	
<b>Resilience</b>		6	
<b>Skills</b>	Awareness 8, Weapon Skill 7, Default 6		
<b>Size</b>	Average		
<b>Keywords</b>	Human, Cultist		

### ATTACKS

**Autopistol:** (Damage 7+1ED; AP 0; Range 20m (R); Salvo: 2; Pistol)

**Knife:** (Damage 5+1ED; AP 0)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**(Ruin) My Life for Yours:** As long as the Fanatical Protector is adjacent or within 5 metres of Gerrit, the GM may spend one Ruin to allocate all damage caused against Gerrit with a single attack to the Fanatical Protector.

**Unbreakable Oath:** A Fanatical Protector is immune to all morale effects while Gerrit is alive. However, should he be slain, they must immediately attempt to retreat with him to safety.





# SLEEPWALKER







## INTRODUCTION

**Sleepwalker** is a Tier 2-3 adventure in which the warband must enter a nightmarish realm accidentally created by a rogue Psyker, to stop it from spreading across the entire world and engulfing the populace in eternal sleep, or worse. Waves of psychic energy are turning the ordinary citizens of Hive Aidon into depraved, sleepwalking killers, and the heroes—armed solely with their courage and fortitude—are the only ones who can stop the madness from propagating.



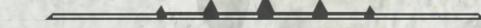
### RUNNING SLEEPWALKER AS A STAND-ALONE ADVENTURE

Though **Sleepwalker** is designed to fit into the overall plot of *Dark Tides*, an enterprising Game Master can run it as a stand-alone adventure. If so, keep in mind the following things:

As a stand-alone adventure, **Sleepwalker** does not tie into the events in Adventure 1, particularly the serial killer stalking the lower levels of the hive.

Similarly, **Sleepwalker** foreshadows the daemonic invasion seen in Adventure 4. Once the rogue Psyker Skoteinos Andras is dead or contained at the end of this adventure, the nightmares and epidemic of narcolepsy end; the heroes do not need to follow up to investigate the mysteries of Ironwatch prison.

If the Game Master wants to include some of the horrific imagery of the corruption of Ironwatch, Skoteinos has already been transported there by the time the warband arrives. The continuing nightmares are echoes of his power, but fade with time. The real danger is what could be unleashed at the prison once he arrives there.



### RUNNING A HORROR GAME

**Sleepwalker** is a horror adventure, which is different from the type of adventures roleplaying games usually focus on. The GM has some extra work to do to keep the players in a proper state of fear and tension. While it's good to lighten the mood with an occasional joke (just as the best horror movies do), the characters—and the players—should always worry about what's going to happen next. Here are a few tips to keep the tension high during your game:

- ◆ **Get the jokes out:** Before the game begins, let the players catch up and get the jokes out. This helps them let some of the steam off and builds better immersion. Take frequent breaks away from the table for the same reason.
- ◆ **Find out what frightens them:** When you start the game, ask each player to recount a time when they were genuinely frightened or what they find personally scary. This brings their minds to a darker place and help set the mood. Be careful with this technique, however. Many people have suffered traumatic events in their life they have no wish to relive.
- ◆ **Make sure they're invested in their characters:** The game works best when the players are personally invested in their characters. That way, when the characters are in peril, the players care about what happens to them.
- ◆ **Dim the lights:** Begin with the lights on, but when the action starts, dim them.
- ◆ **Use your voice:** Modulate the tone of your voice. There are times you'll want to whisper, and times when you'll practically shout.



- ◆ **Actions have consequences:** Make sure the characters' actions count. If actions have real—and possibly deadly—consequences, the players pay attention. One character's foolish action doesn't just hurt that character, it hurts the whole group.
- ◆ **Use vivid descriptions:** Illustrate what they see, hear, touch and smell. Describe the screams of the dying, the cold night air, the stench of excrement. But never tell the players how their character feels. Don't say, "You are terrified." Say instead, "The madman grabs the old woman and shakes her like a dog worrying a toy. She screams as her blood sprays across the corridor and splatters across your face. Her eyes meet yours for an instant, pleading for help, then she convulses and goes limp. The madman drops her, hot blood dripping down his face and staining his shirt, and growls at you. What do you do?"
- ◆ **But don't describe too much:** A murderous enemy chasing you for an hour is dangerous, but it's not horrifying. Describe the overall situation in general terms, blurry glimpses, foul smells, horrible noises, but don't explain what's really going on. The unknown is always more terrifying than the known.
- ◆ **Don't let them catch their breath:** Keep the game, and the characters, moving. Don't let them feel safe for more than a few minutes at a time, unless it's just a ruse to get them to let their guard down before you spring the next horror on them.
- ◆ **Trust no one:** Finally, use information compartmentalisation and character conflict to remove the feeling of safety. The characters need to rely on each other to survive, but perhaps they never fully trust each other. All of them have their own goals, desires and secrets. Use the nightmares to reveal (or at least hint at) these dark secrets, to keep the characters guessing at one another's motivations. Keep them almost as worried about each other as they are about what's going on around them.

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## PULLING TRIGGERS

Running a horror game is fraught with horrors of its own. The goal is to try to frighten the characters, make them feel adrift in a hostile and dangerous world where nothing is as it seems. You want to leave them with a deep impression that something is horribly wrong, and there is no escape. This is why you should try to tailor the nightmares and the encounters to the characters—to make it personal for them. It's difficult to think logically and clinically when your own late father, whom you feel guilty about abandoning, arises from the grave to accuse you of leaving him to die alone.

However, frightening the characters and frightening the players are two different things. While you want your players to have a sense of unease, you do not want to trigger a real-life panic attack. Here are a few ways to ensure all your players feel safe and comfortable, even as their characters are being put through an emotional, physical, and spiritual wringer:

- ◆ **Talk it over ahead of time:** While you shouldn't tell the players the exact nature of the adventure, let them know ahead of time the adventure is horror-themed and contains horrific images and events that may disturb them. Give them time to prepare themselves mentally and emotionally for what is about to come. After all, nobody would like it if they went to the cinema expecting to see a family-friendly action movie and instead got a gore-soaked horror film. Don't surprise your players either.
- ◆ **Know your players:** If possible, know what your players are up for ahead of time. Some players embrace frightening scenarios with gusto. Others are more squeamish. Push the boundaries a little bit, but allow them to direct how far you go. If you see one of your players reacting viscerally to something, dial it back. The last thing you want to do is trigger a real phobia.
- ◆ **Play on the fears of the characters, not the players:** Similar to the last suggestion, remember you are out to frighten the characters, not the players. If one of your players has a

phobia of spiders, don't send a swarm of giant spiders after him. At the very least, let him know something arachnid-related may come up in game, so he can prepare himself or object.

- ◆ **Be ready to move on:** If a player objects to a particular scenario, move on to something else. Do not belabour a situation or describe it in gory detail, just wrap it up and move on to the next encounter.
- ◆ **Create a safe environment:** If the players know they are in a safe environment, they feel freer to get into character and really experience the dread the PCs are feeling. Whatever happens at the gaming table should stay at the gaming table.
- ◆ **Spread the horror:** Make sure every character gets a chance to face their fears. Don't single out a particular character for special treatment, even if they are the weakest link or have the greatest number of psychological problems.
- ◆ **You are not out to get the players:** Remember you are playing a collaborative game. You aren't in competition with the players; you're all there for the same reason—to have fun. Always keep in mind you aren't out to get your players, the horrors of the warp are. Challenge them, but be a neutral arbiter.
- ◆ **Use an X-Card:** At the beginning of the game, give each player a small card with a large red "X" drawn on it. If the scenario becomes uncomfortable for one of the players and they don't want it to go on, they can hold the card up where you as game master can see it. When you see the card, end the scenario without any further fuss. The player does not have any obligation to explain why they are uncomfortable or talk about it. It is enough to know they are not prepared to deal with it, and move on.

Keep these things in mind and you can create a memorable and frightening experience for all your players, without causing anyone any undue psychological torment.

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## CHARACTER TYPES APPROPRIATE FOR THIS ADVENTURE

Most of the Tier 2 characters are appropriate to play through **Sleepwalker**. Archetypes with the Imperium keyword are best, while archetypes without that keyword are going to have a hard time fitting into the adventure. Due to the nature of the horrors they confront, the warband will find it very useful to have characters with the Psyker or Adeptus Ministorum keywords on board.

Tier 3 characters, such as Crusaders, Inquisitors, Tech-Priests, Skitarii Rangers and Tactical Space Marines also work well, though the Game Master will want to make modifications to the threats they face during the adventure. Add a well-armed and motivated street gang to the challenges they face in the underhive. Enhance the dangers the heroes face in the Enforcer facility by adding Daemonettes or other horrors of the warp, which the warband must fight. Give Skoteinos Andras additional powers, perhaps some usable simultaneously, to increase the threat he represents.

Tier 1 characters will probably find themselves outmatched by the power and scope of the challenges they face, so be careful if your adventurers are not sufficient to meet these tasks. There are several ways to make this adventure suitable for lower-powered characters. First, you can decrease the difficulty of the challenges the warband must face. Remove some of the fights from the adventure, or reduce the number of enemies in each fight. You might select just one encounter in each section—one in the underhive, one in the enforcer station and one in the prison before they reach Andras. Finally, remove Andras's ability to use multiple powers at the same time, which makes that encounter considerably less challenging.

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## OVERVIEW

**Sleepwalker** is an adventure suitable for *Wrath & Glory* characters from Tiers 2 and 3.

**Part One:** Denizens of the lower levels of Hive Aidon are suffering from terrible nightmares, which grow worse and worse until these hapless citizens begin committing terrible acts of violence and depravity, all while apparently sleepwalking. Dubbed Sleepers by the beleaguered Enforcers of the hive, these citizens have a deceptively placid appearance. However, when they encounter anyone who is awake, Sleepers are savagely aggressive and exceptionally dangerous, especially in large groups.

As the nightmares and acts of violence begin to spread to the higher levels of the hive, the authorities are helpless to stop the Sleepers—or even explain what is going on.

**Part Two:** The warband must find the cause of these walking nightmares and put an end to them. However, as not even the heroes are immune to the effect of the nightmares, time is of the essence. Perhaps the warband can find the answers at the prison known as Ironwatch.

**Part Three:** In the lightless lower levels of Ironwatch, the warband must face off against a Psyker whose out-of-control dreams of terror and death are spreading across the planet. Can the heroes put an end to this threat before the walls of reality completely break down?

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## MORAL CHOICES

This adventure contains some difficult moral choices the warband must make. Do they kill those citizens infected by the madness before they can cause more harm, or are the people innocent of the crimes their nightmares force them to commit? How do they face up against their own nightmares; do they confront them boldly or run from them? And should they destroy the Psyker who caused this nightmare, or find some way to save his soul and rescue those trapped in these horrific dreams? If your group is the type to shoot first and ask questions never, and are not interested in exploring questions of sanity, corruption and innocence, they may not find this adventure particularly satisfying.





## ACT ONE: TROUBLE AT THE WATERLINE

Waterline is a district in the lower parts of Hive Aidon. Once, perhaps, it was above sea level. But despite its name, the region is now far below the actual waterline. This district is dark, lit irregularly by flickering electric lamps. The cramped halls echo with the sound of water dripping or flowing from rusty walls and pipes. Ancient pumps work constantly to keep the water out and the air circulating, but the atmosphere still stinks of rust, mould, and seawater. Condensation drips from every surface, and sometimes the halls fill with mist as the humidity grows too great for the pumps to keep up with. Over and above all this, the sounds and smells of the pressed masses permeate this crowded district.

Though Waterline is not a particularly pleasant place to live, its inhabitants make do. Most people have enough to eat most of the time—they subsist on slimy, processed algae mass-produced from elsewhere in the hive, and large outbreaks of violence are rare. But lately there's been a change. Denizens of Waterline have begun suffering from a strange form of narcolepsy, where they fall asleep suddenly and cannot wake up. That's when the danger begins, because these "Sleepers" are committing acts of violence and depravity, all while still seemingly sound asleep. These afflicted citizens have been roaming the district in packs every night, savagely attacking anyone they find until they eventually manage to awaken.

During this first act, the warband learns the Sleeper attacks are being caused by terrible nightmares, and the nightmares are centred on the Enforcer prison facility named Ironwatch—but they don't yet know who, why, or how to stop them.

The violence embroiling the district is threatening to spill out to its neighbouring districts, so Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius orders his people to investigate and put an end to the chaos. The heroes are already in Hive Aidon, or are able to get there without trouble or delay, when they receive a message from the Rogue Trader.

### LINKING SLEEPWALKER WITH DESCENT

One of the open questions raised in **Descent** is why Gerrit, the leader of the so-called Cult of

Luxury, was collecting body parts from his victims as well as luxury items? If he was only interested in bringing the luxury of upperhive to the people below, why was he not stealing everything he could grab from his victims and their domiciles?

The sump region (featured in Adventure 1: **Descent**) is directly below the Waterline district so, just as Rogue Trader Varonius feared, the uncontrolled power of Andras was unconsciously influencing Gerrit and his cult; Gerrit wasn't just greedy and fanatical, he was driven slowly insane by the Psyker's nightmares. However, due to the sump region's distance from the heart of the disturbance, the nightmares do not take the same form as those in Waterline.

If Gerrit was susceptible to the nightmares, there might be others in nearby districts who are unstable enough to be similarly affected. Could there be a rash of other serial killers throughout Hive Aidon, perhaps ones who have not made as large a splash as Gerrit because they are not targeting nobles?

### A TASK FROM THE ROGUE TRADER

Varonius sends the warband a message via data-slate:

*"Once again, I require your expertise and courage. An outbreak of unexplained violence has engulfed the underhive district called Waterline in Hive Aidon. Two days ago, ordinary citizens began rioting, rampaging, and even tearing apart other residents with their bare hands. This strange epidemic seems to be growing worse with every passing day. During these tense political times, extreme unrest is the last thing we need."*

(If the warband played through Adventure 1: **Descent**)

*"Thanks to your efforts, we know that Governor Veneratio is dead."*

(If the warband **did not** play through Adventure 1: **Descent**)

*"Ganhet Veneratio, the Planetary Governor of Charybdion, has vanished, and he is presumed dead. His inner circle fears the worst."*

(Continue with the following:)

*"This world is far too important to fall into anarchy and despair. Therefore, it requires a new governor, and I intend to ensure that the succession goes smoothly. If violence in the underhive spills out to other districts in Hive Aidon, it may trigger more displays of unrest across the planet, and spell doom for a peaceful succession."*

*My advisors suggest the violence may be linked to cult activity, but we do not know for certain the nature or the cause of these disturbances. This is why I have tasked you with investigating. I have a contact among the Enforcers in the Waterline district, a man named Bir Sidirou. Get to Waterline, contact Sidirou at Enforcer station alpha-six, and find out what is going on. You must stop this violence before it spreads... or escalates. May the Emperor's light guide you."*

## THE WATERLINE

The warband must take a slow, creaking mass-transit carriage down into the darkness of lowerhive. The air grows cold and damp as they descend hundreds of levels below sea level. The superstructure of the hive groans from the weight of the water as they go deeper and deeper. The heroes' ears pop as the air pressure changes. Condensation builds on the walls, ceiling and floor of the elevator, and even begins to bead on their armour and equipment. The air smells of salt, mildew, and humanity. Finally, the carriage lurches to a halt and the doors shudder open to a rusty, cramped, dimly-lit passageway.

Contrary to the reports, there is no riot going on, at least not now. There are no signs of violence. In fact, the place seems eerily deserted. The warband knows where to meet Enforcer Sidirou (Enforcer station alpha-six), so they can go straight there or they can explore the area to see if they can discover what's going on by themselves. Far from being the bustling district the warband expected to find, Waterline is nearly deserted. Sometimes they spot inhabitants at the far end of a long corridor, but those people always flee as soon as the heroes approach.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE DARK

As the warband moves through the nearly deserted district, they may encounter a number of strange, inexplicable, or deadly things. There are two types of scenarios listed below: those which add to the terrifyingly odd ambiance of the Waterline district, and those which challenge the warband directly. Roll on the **Strange Happenings** chart to set up each encounter, then select a number of **Optional Encounters** (see page 39) that the warband must deal with to get the bottom of the mysteries of this district. To make things particularly interesting, roll two or more times on the **Strange Happenings** table and combine the results.

Additionally, feel free to look through the **Perils of the Warp** table in the core book (see pages 338–341) for more nightmarish ideas.



## STRANGE HAPPENINGS

d66	Strange Happening	
11-13	An obscuring mist slowly fills the air, and soon visibility is limited to just a metre or two. Sounds seem strangely muffled or amplified. Auspexes throw out strange signals that appear and disappear randomly. While engulfed in the mist, any encounters the warband experiences happen at point-blank range.	
14-16	The ancient pumps in this section of the district no longer work, so the corridors are filled with black, brackish, ice-cold, knee-deep water. Moving through the water counts as difficult terrain. Anyone who falls asleep or is knocked unconscious while in the water begins to drown.	
21-22	The warband enters a large chamber, apparently an “open-air” market. Dozens of people lie motionless on the ground, seemingly sound asleep. The Sleepers do not wake up, no matter what methods the heroes employ (see <b>Waking up the Sleepers</b> on page 40).	
23-24	The warband encounters signs of a recent riot: smouldering fires, smashed doors, broken machines, and discarded weapons. There is, however, no sign of any people.	
25-26	The warband hears the sounds of screaming, crying, or desperate praying, which stops as the heroes get closer. They cannot find whoever was making the noise, no matter how diligently they search the area.	
31-32	The warband discovers dead bodies scattered around on the ground. They appear to have hacked each other to pieces with hand weapons.	
33-34	A corridor is entirely covered in recent graffiti. Much of it is unintelligible, but the heroes can pick out a few words: “Help us” “Trapped in dreams” “We are in hell” “Ironwatch” “Beware the Sleepers” “What are you afraid of?” “It isn’t me” “The Black Lighthouse beckons” Some of the graffiti is written in blood.	
35-36	The warband sees shadows in the darkness ahead move as if they were alive, but whatever it was disappears before the heroes can get close enough to get a look at them.	
41-42	The warband becomes lost in the cramped and twisting passageways of the underhive, and must backtrack to find another route. As they go back, they find graffiti on the walls that was not there the first time they came through here, but there is no sign of who painted it.	
43-44	A dozen skulls, still covered with blood, form a pile in the centre of the corridor. No one is around, nor are there any other signs of violence in the immediate area.	
45-46	The warband comes across an area that the local Enforcers have sealed off with tape, flashing lights and a digital recording warning people not to cross. However, why they sealed off this area is not evident.	
51-52	A young woman sits in the centre of a corridor, blood streaming down her face. She has plucked out her own eyes. She is crying, saying over and over, “I can still see them!”	
53-54	The heroes hear terrified screaming. They find a person sound asleep, but screaming without cease. The heroes cannot wake them up.	
55	The warband stumbles across a grisly scene. A large group of people—at least fifty—all chose this spot in which to kill themselves. Entire families are lying together, hanged, shot through the head, or with their wrists slit. None remain alive.	
56	Roll twice and combine the results.	
61-66	One member of the warband has a vision. See <b>The Visions</b> on pages 40–41.	

## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Below are a number of optional encounters the warband can face as they move through the Waterline district. Some of them are potentially deadly, others are mere nuisances. The warband can avoid some easily enough, while others force the warband to deal with them. If the warband makes a

beeline straight to the Enforcer headquarters, they may only run into one or two of these encounters. If, however, they spend a lot of time exploring, they run into more of them. Select the encounters that seem most interesting and rewarding to the GM and the players.

- ◆ **Open-Air Market:** The warband enters a large chamber, apparently an “open-air” market. Dozens of ordinary citizens lie motionless on the ground, apparently sound asleep. As the heroes move through the area, the Sleepers rise as one and attack the warband, using primitive hand weapons or their bare hands. The Game Master should treat this as a mob with a number of Sleepers equal to twice the number of player characters.
- ◆ **Riot in Progress:** The warband encounters a riot in progress: dozens of people are smashing everything they can find and lighting fires. Strangely, they are all completely silent as they do this. The rioters attack the warband as soon as they notice them. Though dangerous, the rioters are asleep or sleepwalking.
- ◆ **Pantomime Fight:** The warband stumbles upon a strange fight—a group of citizens armed with primitive weapons attack one another but make no move to defend themselves. They stumble through the battle as though they are performing a bloody pantomime. If the heroes interfere, the killers all turn as one and attack the warband.
- ◆ **Asleep at the Post:** The heroes find a group of Enforcers standing guard. All of them are asleep at their posts. If disturbed, they attack the warband without seeming to wake up.
- ◆ **The Madman:** A madman, naked, raving, armed with a hatchet, and covered in blood, leaps out of a concealed opening to ambush the warband as it passes. If subdued, he wakes up and doesn’t know where he is or what is going on. He has no idea where the blood came from or how he got a hatchet. “I’m just a shopkeeper,” he sobs, confused and terrified.
- ◆ **Ambush!**: Someone with an excellent vantage-point begins firing a lasrifle at the warband. If taken alive, the sniper is sound asleep and cannot wake up.

- ◆ **Sleepwalkers:** A group of people shuffles along silently, moving in perfect rhythm. They are sleepwalking. If disturbed, they attack without mercy.
- ◆ **Silent Gang War:** Two minor street gangs, armed with primitive hand weapons and small pistols, sit silently across from each other, staring blankly at one another. Every few minutes, one of them gasps and falls over dead. If the heroes get between them, they rise up as one and attack the heroes, ignoring each other.
- ◆ **A Lynching:** A large group of rioters is attempting to hang a young man. That man may be an innocent bystander, a mutant, or recently detected Psyker. The rioters blame the victim for the current troubles, but the victim claims innocence and begs for help.
- ◆ **Food Riot:** The warband comes across a group of rioters attacking a food distribution point, while exhausted guards and workers try to fend them off. These rioters are not Sleepers; they’re simply taking advantage of the chaos and lack of law enforcement.
- ◆ **Xenos:** The warband encounters a group of Eldar who have sneaked onto Charybdion for reasons of their own. See page 98.
- ◆ **Borst’s Troubleshooters:** A team of troubleshooters who work for Praetor Piscillan Borst (see page 79) is investigating the crisis. They are belligerent and demand the warband shares any information it has (the heroes—of course—refuse to share any information they may know), but they don’t attack unless provoked.
- ◆ **Piscators:** The Piscator gang (see page 80) has sent a crew to find out what’s going on and take advantage of the chaos. They might be looting, or just investigating. They are belligerent and attack the warband if they feel they have the advantage.
- ◆ **Silent Suplicants:** The Silent Suplicants gang (see page 80), send a group of juves (younger gang members) to investigate the goings-on in this district. They are drunk or drugged and are very belligerent towards anyone they find, whether asleep or awake.

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## WHAT TO DO WITH THE SLEEPERS

The people performing these acts of violence are all ordinary citizens. Some are even noteworthy individuals like Adeptus Administratum personnel, members of the planetary defence force, or Enforcers. This is the first ethical decision the warband must make—do they kill the Sleepers, disable them somehow, or flee from any fight? Are the Sleepers guilty of crimes against the Imperium, or are they being manipulated by some unseen force?

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## WAKING UP THE SLEEPERS

It's nearly impossible to awaken those who are suffering from the strange narcolepsy that infects this district. Yelling at them, splashing water in their faces, even physically harming them won't wake them up. The only real way to snap them out of their trance is using some sort of psychic power.

A Psyker can use *Deny the Witch* (DN 3) to counter the psychic effect on specific Sleepers. However, the DN gradually progresses higher the closer the warband gets to the rogue Psyker—DN 3 while in the underhive (Part One of this adventure), DN 5 inside the Enforcer station (Part Two), and DN 7 when in the prison block of Ironwatch (Part Three).

At the GM's discretion, a Psyker can also use powers from the Telepathy Discipline to break a Sleeper free from their fugue state, as follows:

- ◆ **Telepathy:** If used on Sleepers, the Psyker can see the nightmares they are suffering. Use an opposed test—Psychic Mastery Test versus Willpower to wake up a sleeper this way. A complication during the Psychic Mastery Test might have the Psyker lost in the same nightmare! This result only lasts for a minute or two before the Psyker returns to normal.
- ◆ **Terrify:** The *terrify* power doesn't wake up the Sleepers, but it does make them react violently on a complication.

◆ **Mind Probe:** This power functions exactly like *telepathy*, above.

◆ **Other Powers:** The Game Master should consider any powers that have an effect on the mind as having the same effect as *telepathy*, above. Any other appropriate powers or effects—as determined by the Game Master—fall into this category as well.

A Psyker can attempt to pinpoint the centre of the psychic disturbance in the underhive using *psyniscience*. Normally the range is 100 metres, but the amount of psychic energy in the area expands this throughout the entire district. To track the location of the disturbance, the base DN is 5.

Powers from the Divination Discipline act oddly during this adventure, tapping into the subconscious nightmares of nearby Sleepers or the rogue Psyker rather than working precisely as intended. This happens when the Psyker rolls a complication on their psychic mastery test.

Characters experiencing a vision (see **The Visions**, below) are similarly impossible to rouse until the vision's end. A vision lasts only a moment or two from an outside observer's perspective, but they seem to last for hours or even days from the perspective of the person experiencing the vision.

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## THE VISIONS

As the warband goes deeper into Waterline, one or more of the characters begins having visions. Select a character at random, choose the one with the most compassion, or select any character with the Psyker keyword if the warband has one. The others see that character simply "zone out", standing still and staring into the middle distance, not responding to stimuli. Do not subject characters to a vision while in the middle of a fight, or where the characters are particularly vulnerable.

The visions, at first, are cryptic but terrifying. They grow steadily clearer, though no less terrifying, as they continue. The Game Master should introduce one vision per encounter, and add more visions if needed to offer clues, hints, and even direction. Read each of the following paragraphs aloud when the warband experiences visions.

*In the first vision, you see a dark spire, reaching up towards the sky from the hive proper, wreathed in storm clouds and illuminated by lightning. The spire is a beacon, screaming out in rage, fear, and pain to the heavens. You are terrified to go there, but you know you have no choice. And when you go there, you will never see your home or your family again. Then the vision ends.*

*In the second vision, you see a mighty but ancient citadel; a gothic cathedral that radiates authority. You feel yourself dragged down into the darkness beneath this citadel, then everything becomes a nightmare of masked guards, squalid conditions, beatings, pain, and fear. The air stinks of fear and blood; the sounds of weeping, screaming, and praying echo through the blackness. In the dark, there are only dreams—and the dreams are nightmares. In a blind panic, you try to send out a warning, a cry for help, but no one answers, no one hears. You cry out louder and louder until something breaks—not you, but reality itself. Then the vision ends.*

*In the third and final vision, you look down on a man, nearly naked, shivering from the cold, pale-skinned and emaciated. He sits cross-legged in a tiny cell. The man looks up at you, an expression of sorrow on his face. "I didn't mean to do it," he says. "I was just so terrified. You don't know what it's like; the fear, the pain. I can't control it. I was just calling for help. I feel everyone of them," he points to his temple, "here. I'm so sorry." As you watch, the cell slowly fills up with blood. The emaciated man sits, unmoving, as the blood swirls around him, rising up until it swallows him completely, and he is gone. Then the vision ends.*

## ENFORCER STATION ALPHA-SIX

When the warband arrives at the Enforcer station where they are to meet Enforcer Bir Sidirou, they find the place looks like a battlefield. Bodies lie scattered around the area. Most of them are ordinary citizens. Some of them are members of the Enforcers. Many of them were hacked to pieces with sharp objects; others seem to have been beaten or torn apart; a few were shot or burned. The battle is over, but the detritus remains as a grim reminder of what happened here.



Though the façade of the building suffered some battle damage, the doors to the station are open. Inside is a small, poorly maintained office, decorated with Imperial symbols but cramped, aged, and depressing. A number of citizens lie sleeping on the floor or on chairs in the vestibule. The desk sergeant sits at his post, staring blankly. The sergeant does not respond if addressed, and does not wake up from his trance. It is a simple matter to get past him and into the station proper.

The warband might find useful equipment or weapons within the station if they take some time to search. Make an Awareness (DN 3) test to locate small things like ammo reloads, las weapons, knives or other small melee weapons, or other common items.

The station is abandoned, except for the small lockup in the back. Several petty criminals lie sleeping in their cells, but one of them is awake. Desperate and crazed, he begs the warband to release him. He says his name is Damo; he was arrested for pickpocketing and he hasn't eaten or had any water for a day. Damo is desperate to get out of here; he's terrified of what's happening and he just wants to get away. He's afraid he's going to starve to death in this cell. He is happy to tell them everything he knows, if they treat him with a modicum of respect. If they treat him poorly, it's harder to get information out of him.

Damo has a Willpower of 3 and doesn't bother to lie.

- ◆ **Insight (DN 2):** Learn Damo's state of mind based on his behaviour and words. He's scared but reacts well to positive social interaction.
- ◆ **Deception (DN 3):** An appropriate lie, especially one that hints at Damo's release, can get him to talk. Damo won't react well if he realises the warband is lying to him though (+1 DN to further interactions).
- ◆ **Intimidation (DN 5):** Threats and belligerent words don't work as well on Damo, and he's more likely to clam up afterwards.
- ◆ **Persuasion (DN 3):** This is the best way to convince Damo to talk. Reassurances and honest promises to help are what he wants to hear. The GM should consider giving the rolling character an extra 1-2 bonus dice depending on the approach. Damo begins with a Neutral reaction (see the Reaction Table on page 253 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*).

*"It all started just a few days ago," Damo says. "People started falling asleep. Didn't matter what they were doing—working, sitting, talking, walking, fighting, or making love. They'd just lie down and go to sleep. Or sometimes they'd fall over like they'd been hit. And nothing would wake them; slap 'em, hit 'em, didn't matter, they were out. Next, the bad dreams started. Nightmares, really. People would wake up screaming. Or start screaming but not wake up. Dreams about a place of darkness, a black prison, the end of everything. Then people started really going crazy. Riots, fighting, rape, murder, anything you can think of, and it just got worse and worse. I got arrested during those early hours. I figured I'd take advantage of the chaos. Just my luck, I ran into the last Enforcer on the beat. Hah. Then the rioters attacked the station here, I guess, maybe twelve hours ago? I was already in my cell, but I heard some of it. Sounded bad. And then, it was over. I don't know what happened, but everything's been quiet since then. I haven't seen anyone—at least, not anyone awake—since then. And that's everything I know."*

Although there are no Enforcers here on duty, the warband can still search the office. Enforcer Sidirou's desk is easy enough to find, and contains a data-slate with notes about his investigations.

## SIDIROU'S DATA-SLATE

Sidirou's data-slate is encrypted, so it takes a bit of work to find his latest entries detailing his investigation into this case. A Tech test (DN 4) can decode the data-slate. This requires roughly half an hour to break the encryption. Shifted Exalted Icons can reduce this time or gain more data as usual. If any of the player characters have the Scum keyword, they may attempt an Insight or Cunning test instead of Tech (it is assumed that the character knows their way around an Enforcer station).

The relevant entries are as follows:

*"There must be a cause for the sleeping sickness sweeping over the district. The medicae say this disease—if that's what it is—is not biological in origin, which leaves few other options, all of which are terrifying."*

*"Violence. Screaming nightmares. The whole district is affected. Even my fellow Enforcers are not immune to this infection of the mind. Must not fall asleep until I find its origin, may the Emperor guide me."*

*"It seems to be centred on the Ironwatch prison complex which the locals call the Black Lighthouse. So many Psykers—we had to house them somewhere. Has something broken loose in Ironwatch? Must investigate further."*

*"Records indicate a rogue Psyker named Skoteinos Andras was brought to the Black Lighthouse the day before the first Sleepers were reported. This seems too solid a link to just be coincidence. Tired, but I mustn't fall asleep. I need to get to the Lighthouse... I mean, Ironwatch... before the riots grow any worse. I will report on my findings when I return."*

That is the last entry, dated from only a few hours ago.



## THE ENFORCERS

On the world of Charybdion, the local law enforcement is known as the Enforcers. They administer and enforce local laws and the decrees issued by the governor and his surrogates. Do not confuse them with the Adeptus Arbites, who enforce Imperial decrees. Though brave and faithful to the governor of Charybdion (and to a lesser extent, the Imperial Creed), and though they work in a dangerous profession, they are not armed and armoured as well as even soldiers in the Imperial Guard, nor are they usually expected to engage in stand-up battles against determined foes.

## NIGHTMARE ENFORCERS

As the warband leaves station alpha-six, they see a group of Enforcers in riot gear, lined up before them. "Put your hands where we can see them," call out the Enforcers in perfect unison. "You are under arrest." They are clearly affected by the same narcolepsy plaguing this district, but without waiting for a response, the Enforcers attack with their shock mauls. If the heroes flee, the nightmare-infected Enforcers do not chase them very far. The heroes find their way to the Adeptus Administratum building without further delay.



## ACT TWO: NIGHTMARE AT IRONWATCH



Ironwatch is imposing and mostly inaccessible. It stands apart from the rest of the Waterline district, a tower that extends high above the slopes of the hive proper, casting its merciless shadow across the bottomless seas below. Locals call it the Black Lighthouse, for it is an ancient construction that looms upwards until lost in the darkness. It radiates the sinister authority of the Enforcers.

Ironwatch serves as a prison for all kinds of criminals and recidivists. Lately, the number of Psykers (and those with psychic potential) confined there has grown. At the same time, the Adeptus Astra Telepathica Black Ships, which are supposed to gather up these Psykers to bring back to Holy Terra, are long overdue. The prison is rife with overcrowding, and something broke loose.

In this act, the warband must get into the lower levels of Ironwatch to find out what's going on. However, the Black Lighthouse has itself become a nightmare, and the answers they seek are not easy to come by.

## THE GATES

As the warband approaches the main gates to Ironwatch's lower levels, a storm is brewing. The gates themselves are in an open section of the hive, some several hundred feet above the oily seawater below. Gathered at the exterior passage

that leads to these gates is a large crowd. However, these are not mere citizens—they're Sleepers.

They stand motionless and staring at the Lighthouse, blocking the entrance. If anyone attempts to push their way past the Sleepers, they attack, using primitive hand weapons and light pistols. This battle is particularly dangerous because of the precarious situation and the nearby drop.

Characters who suffer a complication during the battle must pass a DN 4 Athletics Test to avoid tumbling over the side. The GM can allow another character to spend a Glory to interrupt and make their own Athletics test to catch their falling comrade. Aggressive Sleepers take advantage of this dangerous position, and do not seem to care if they fall.

If a character falls, they can attempt a DN 5 Athletics test to catch themselves on an overhang about 6 metres (20 feet) down, suffering 12+1ED damage from bouncing off of the hive's rusted, metallic shell. If they fail this test, they fall into the ocean and are out of the adventure—given the polluted nature of Charybdion's seas, survival is frankly unlikely unless the hero is wearing sealed armour (such as the power armour of a Space Marine or a Sister of Battle). Climbing up from this distance without assistance requires a DN 4 Athletics test. If someone tosses them a rope or otherwise renders assistance, the climb is accomplished without needing a test.

Once the warband successfully deals with this threat, the way into the Black Lighthouse is clear.

## THE BLACK LIGHTHOUSE

Even in the best of times, the Black Lighthouse is not a friendly place. This is where the Enforcers have been corralling Psykers on the orders of the planetary governor. Men and women are dragged screaming to this dark place, never to see their homes or families again. It has always been a twisted, dark place, filled with the voices of the damned pleading for mercy. But since the coming of the Great Rift, the walls between what is real and what is not have grown very thin, and something is leaking through.

The horrors that Ironwatch has witnessed have oozed into the very walls; old memories of separated families seep from the floors. Violence, death, and terror drip from the vaulted ceilings. Those who worked here—from the highest Enforcers and

adepts to the lowliest servitors—have become infected and corrupted by the nightmare. The place is a horror-show threatening to engulf the warband, who must protect themselves body and soul using only their faith, courage, and fortitude.

A recently imprisoned Psyker manifested unexpected power, drawing on the terror and pain of those around him and pushing it out into the surrounding world. Enforcer Bir Sidirou learned about this and came here to investigate, but hasn't been seen since.

When the warband enters the building, they find what should be a bustling place to instead be dark and silent. There are few working lights; those that still function flicker dimly. There are no guards on duty, no seneschals to greet them, not even servitors performing maintenance on the ancient building. The place radiates an aura of menace which is palpable even to those without psychic talents. Psykers can feel centuries of imprisonment, torture, and loss pressing down on them.



## ENFORCER STATION ALPHA-SIX AND IRONWATCH

Do not confuse the Enforcer station with the Ironwatch prison. Though they serve similar functions, they are not the same thing.

The Enforcer station is a home base for the Enforcers posted in the Waterline District.

Ironwatch is a holding facility for prisoners after they have been tried and found guilty. Psykers are kept in the lowest level. Overcrowding in the Black Lighthouse is an issue right now, due to the unrest afflicting Hive Aidon.

Governor Veneratio ordered that the lower, non-specialised areas of Ironwatch serve as a holding pen for the overflow of Psykers awaiting the coming of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica Black Ships. Since the Black Ships are long overdue—thanks to the Cicatrix Maledictum splitting the galaxy in half—overcrowding and mismanagement have caused major problems within Ironwatch itself.

## NIGHTMARES CREEP FROM THE WALLS

As the warband explores this haunted place, they move from the real world into realms of nightmare, and then back again. As the two worlds blend together, the warband becomes unable to tell what is real and what is not—with potentially deadly consequences.

Waves of uncontrolled psychic energy flow through the Black Lighthouse, twisting the boundary between what is seen and what is only imagined, causing nightmares to become real. This means while they are within the facility, the heroes will encounter a number of things which may or may not be real, but which can still destroy them, body or soul. This psychic energy can also cause the warband to fall asleep, and this might be the deadliest encounter of all. There are two types of scenario listed below: Those which press against and attack the heroes' minds, and those which challenge them physically. Roll on the **Dark Nightmares** chart to build up a feeling of terror and oppression, then relieve the tension with an encounter from the list of **Optional Encounters**.

To keep the characters' fear honed to a razor edge, occasionally roll again on the Dark Nightmares table whenever it seems appropriate, to represent the world shifting suddenly and inexplicably from one nightmare to another.

## DARK NIGHTMARES

### d66 Dark Nightmares

11-12	Ironwatch is burning—someone carelessly set a fire. The fire is consuming all the available oxygen, smoke fills the air making it impossible to see, flames creep up the corridors, lighting everything with a hellish glow, the heat causes your skin to smoulder...	15-16	Your body is changing, warping, mutating before your eyes. The corruption of the warp infects you, twisting your flesh and bone into something terrifying and evil.
13-14	A mighty fleet is attacking your home planet! Giant ships—large enough to be seen even from the surface—materialise from the warp directly above your world. You see flashes of light as their massive weapons begin to fire, lancing down to the planet's surface. You see the impact: a flash of blinding light and a cloud of smoke, moments before you hear the rumble as the ground erupts beneath you. Then... nothing.	21-22	A horde of biting, stinging insects flies out from a hole in the wall and attacks you—swarming over you, climbing under your clothes and your armour, in your eyes and ears, biting and stinging, burrowing into your skin, laying their eggs inside your body.
23-24		23-24	The walls begin to bleed. They are, in fact, made of flesh; wounded and diseased, the hot stink of rot permeates the air as skin sloughs off the walls and bloody pus dribbles to the floor.
25-26		25-26	You see someone you know is dead—a loved one, a comrade, even an old enemy. But they are clearly still alive! They've come back here to see you, to tell you something important that they never had a chance to say. They silently beckon you to follow them into the darkness.
31-32		31-32	You suddenly realise you are wounded; a gaping hole opens in your midsection with a spray of gore. You fall to your knees, struggling to breathe and to hold your organs in place as your lifeblood spurts to the floor.
33-34		33-34	A Xenos appears at the end of the hallway, its evil alien face split by a horrifying grin. It charges at you with blinding speed, blades extending from its misshapen arms.
35-36		35-36	The hallway twists and contorts, stretching and spinning maddeningly. The floor rolls underneath you, making it impossible to keep your balance. The end of the hall stretches out further and further away until it's just a tiny speck of light, then it rushes back like a freight train.
41-42		41-42	The ground rumbles as if from a distant explosion. There is a loud creaking sound from the ceiling above you, then the metal begins to twist and sag. Within seconds, the whole ceiling comes down, pinning you beneath the wreckage. What dim light there is flickers and goes out, leaving you in total darkness.

43-44 You hear squeaking, and see thousands of pairs of tiny red eyes glowing in the darkness. Without further warning, a wave of huge black rats pours out of the shadows, crawling over you, biting and scratching, the stink of their fur like rotten meat. They climb under your clothes, digging at your flesh.

45-46 You hear the call of the dead; ghosts from your past who've come back to haunt you. "You left us behind," they whisper harshly. "You only lived because you took our chance away." You feel their touch, soft as a feather, against your skin. "It's time for you to join us in the beyond. We will take you there, just come with us." You feel yourself being gently pulled towards the darkness, though in some ways it feels like you are going home.

51-52 A stream of warm, fresh blood runs down the centre of the corridor. It grows in volume. First it is a mere trickle, then a stream, then a river. It begins to fill the corridor, washing bits of debris along and attempting to carry you away with it. You must struggle against the current to make any headway. Those who lose their footing are swept back into the darkness.

53 The lights go out. Even characters with enhanced optics, which normally allow them to see in the dark, are completely blind. You cannot see. You are completely alone, cut off from the other members of the warband. Then you hear something coming slowly towards you. Footsteps, heavy breathing, or just a change in the air that lets you know you are no longer alone.

54 The ground becomes sticky or marshy, making it difficult to walk and impossible to run. Any enemies encountered are not hindered by the ground in any way. Reduce Speed by half, and the Dash manoeuvre is impossible.

55 One of the nearby walls ruptures, letting in a flood of black, ice-cold seawater. The tunnel quickly fills with water. But worse than the prospect of drowning is what the seawater contains: protoplasmic balls of jelly with paralytic stingers, tiny fish with oversized jaws and enormous teeth, and something huge, unseen and deadly, swimming through the dark water around your feet.

56 Roll twice and combine the results. Ignore any further results of this entry for these rolls.

61-66 One member of the warband has a vision. See **Ironwatch Visions** on pages 48–49.

## PERSONALISE THE NIGHTMARES

To truly generate a feeling of horror or dread in your game, use the nightmares in the table above as your starting point but fill them out with details provided by the players. If a character has a dead friend or relative in their background who they feel guilt over, select Dark Nightmare 45-46 and personalise it to them. Have their dead loved one speak to them and tell them something that may change their life (either for good or for ill). If one of them suffered a near-fatal wound recently, select Nightmare 31-32 and have them relive the pain and shock of nearly dying. If one of them had an encounter with a Xenos in the past that left them scarred, the same creature (or one like it) shows up in Nightmare 33-34. The goal is to frighten the characters (though not necessarily the players), and the best way to do that is to make the nightmares personal to each of them.

Additionally, these nightmares can help tell part of the character's story. The GM can use the visions to challenge a character's beliefs, reveal their history, illuminate their personality, and bring out those things they truly value and care about as well as the things they fear and revile.

Are the nightmares real? They feel real to those experiencing them, but these experiences are not limited to one character. All the characters might see the ghosts of their past (45-46), whispering different things to them. While only one of the characters is affected by the flesh-warping vision





of 15-16, the others see his skin and bone mutating before their eyes. These dreams seem fully real; they bend the boundaries between reality and fantasy. The visions can last for as long as the GM requires—fading quickly as the heroes continue to move through the nightmarish landscape, or remaining in place until such time as the warband finds and neutralises the rogue Psyker Skoteinos Andras, who is imprisoned somewhere within the Black Lighthouse.

If characters encounter physically dangerous hallucinations (such as 55 in the table above), roll combat as normal for one full round, then resolve it quickly (as if fighting a Troop). If a character is hurt during the battle, any damage inflicted is Shock instead of Wounds. However, if the character rolls a complication during a vision, they suffer a Mortal Wound.

## BREAKING FREE

As the warband struggles through the nightmarish world, they need to find some way to break free of these visions, to distinguish reality from fantasy. Additionally, if some unlucky soul falls asleep here, they become caught up in a nightmare, which can become deadly very quickly. How can the characters break free from these nightmarish visions?

- ◆ A Psyker can use their powers to shield the others from the visions. Make a Psychic Mastery test (DN 3). Add +1 DN per person (beyond the first) that the Psyker is trying to protect. Shifted

Exalted Icons can add extra people. Protecting comrades this way counts as sustaining a power.

- ◆ The characters can make a Willpower test (DN 5) to temporarily break free and see reality for what it truly is. The visions once again seem like they are only dreams, and the real world becomes plain to see. This lasts for about an hour before the dreams begin intruding once more into reality, and the heroes need to make another Willpower test of the same difficulty.



## TRINKETS AND CHARMS

Many characters carry a trinket (see page 327–331 in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*)—a charm they believe brings them luck, or helps focus their faith, or reminds them of a happier time. Having a trinket is a great boon as the nightmares roll over and through the warband. If a character carries their trinket with them, if they are able to touch it and use it to centre themselves, it allows them to remind themselves what they are experiencing isn't real, to ground themselves in the real world rather than the Empyrean. Anyone carrying a trinket gains +1d to their Willpower test when resisting the effects of the nightmares, including falling asleep and remaining safe while asleep.



## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Below are a number of optional encounters the warband can face in Ironwatch's upper levels. Most of them are deadly, so the warband is well-advised to pick their fights carefully lest they not live to see the next battle. Select one or more encounters that seem most interesting and rewarding to the team.

- ◆ **Fight to Stay Awake:** A strange fugue overtakes the heroes, and they begin to grow sleepy. It is difficult to keep their eyes open, their limbs grow heavy and their minds start to wander. They each must make a Willpower test (DN 3) to stay awake. Those who fall asleep cannot wake up through conventional means; shaking them, slapping them, splashing water on them—none of these has any effect. See **Waking the Sleepers** on page 40 for more details about this condition. Anyone who falls asleep finds their dreams are filled with death, darkness, and inescapable imprisonment. These nightmares grow so terrible that if they die in their dreams, they may die in real life. Each hour they remain asleep they must make another Willpower test (DN 3, increasing the DN by 1 for each hour) or suffer one Mortal wound. Anyone who falls asleep, however, also has dreams, mixed in with the nightmares, about what is truly going on here, and why.
- ◆ **Grotesque Guards:** The soldiers who once guarded this facility are warped by the nightmares. They are now grotesque mockeries of humanity, with twisted limbs and distorted faces bulging out of their armour. These guards are now just as devoted to protecting the prison from outsiders as they once were devoted to keeping their charges behind bars. They stalk and attack the warband, using their knowledge of the facility's layout to try to stage ambushes when they can. The Game Master should use Mutants from page 413 in the **Wrath & Glory Core Rules** to represent these creatures.
- ◆ **Mad Psykers:** A number of rogue Psykers have escaped their imprisonment, all of them driven mad by the nightmares as well as by the torture they've faced here. They thirst for revenge for the indignities they've suffered, and their powers are out of control. They lash out at anyone they encounter.

◆ **Murder-servitors:** Hundreds of servitors used to service and maintain this facility. The nightmares have corrupted these mindless automatons, and now they attempt to lethally "clean" and "repair" any organic creature they find in the Black Lighthouse.

◆ **Beast of Chaos:** A Khymera—a minor daemon-like warp creature born of nightmares—comes out of the walls to attack the warband. If not killed, it harries them as they move through the facility, attacking from out of nowhere and disappearing just as quickly.

◆ **Borst's Troubleshooter Team:** A team of troubleshooters, sent by Praetor Piscillan Borst to investigate the breakout of violence in this district, came to investigate the upper levels of Ironwatch. They bravely journeyed deep into the heart of darkness, but the things they saw have driven them to the brink of madness. They barely hang on to the shredded remains of their sanity. They are desperate to get out of this hell, and they let nothing stand in the way of their freedom.

## IRONWATCH VISIONS

The visions the heroes experienced in the Waterline district grow more distinct here, blending with the nightmares. The Psyker is calling out for help, begging for mercy, and though he knows his powers are hurting others, he is unable to control them. Note these visions—though horrifying—are part of the nightmare landscape infesting the prison. These are messages, twisted by fear and pain, sent subconsciously by Andras, who is calling for help. Here are some potential visions the warband experiences, but again the Game Master should tailor much of this to match the characters and their own fears, feelings, and backgrounds. Read each of the following paragraphs aloud when the warband experiences each vision, respectively.

*In the first new vision, you look up at a man looming above you as though he were sitting on something very tall. He is nearly naked, and his body is covered in cuts and scars. The scars seem to form a pattern, but the pattern twists and changes such that it is hard to look at and impossible to discern. Looking down, you see what he is sitting upon—a pile of dead bodies, each of them torn to shreds as though by a wild animal. "They wouldn't listen," he says, as tears*

of blood roll down his face. "I tried to tell them not to do it, but they wouldn't stop. I begged them for help. Now look at them. And now I can't control it any longer. This will spread and grow worse, and there is nothing anyone can do to stop it." As he speaks, the bodies begin to twitch and move as though they are still alive. They writhe with pain, and with excruciating slowness begin to pull themselves up to their feet. As one, they turn to stare at you with cold, dead eyes. Then the vision ends.

*In the second vision, you see the same man as before, clothed as a ragged lowerhive dweller. His life is hard, but it is his own—until the authorities pick him up and drag him out of his home, into this vast, black place. Trapped in a cold and lightless cell, punished for something he didn't do, knowing that someday, the Black Ships will come to carry him off across the stars to feed the insatiable hunger of a distant and cruel god. Then the vision ends.*

*In the third vision, you see a black tower jutting up from the side of Hive Aidon. You somehow know this is Ironwatch. You see the black tower twist and groan as though it were a living thing, writhing in agony. The main gates of the tower stretch and whine as though under unbearable pressure. Through it all, you hear voices crying out in terror, in pain, in fervent and desperate prayer. Then the gates break open, releasing hell. Unimaginable creatures burst forth as what was once a prison becomes a doorway, and this watery world drowns in oceans of blood.*

Feel free to add additional details to make each of the visions more personal to your warband. The closer a connection they feel with what they're seeing, the more motivated they are to stand against the tide of chaos when the time comes.

## OFFICER BIR SIDIROU

The Black Lighthouse is unguarded so the warband can make their way in without trouble. Once they have begun to experience the nightmares contained here, they find something quite real: Enforcer Bir Sidiou, huddled up in a corner, shivering, terrified, and badly injured. He is conscious, but is half mad from the nightmares. He is unsure if the heroes are real or more phantoms of the mind, but if they can convince him they are real and they are here to help, he tells them what he knows.

"The nightmares started when we brought in a rogue Psyker named Skoteinos Andras. Somehow, he's the key to this. I think he's trying to communicate, to call for help, or to issue a warning. But everything's gone wrong. The madness is spreading. I came here to stop it, but I'm not strong enough. I can't tell what's real and what's not anymore. I was going to the Records Department to find out where he is, but I can't go any further. I can't. You need to find him, and stop him, before this engulfs the whole world."

The warband might calm the Enforcer's mind and repair his body enough for him to accompany them, but he is too shaken to offer much assistance at this point.

## THE RECORDS ROOM

The records room is normally a very busy place, with scribes, servo-skulls, and servitors quietly bustling about, recording the details of everything and everyone who passes through this place, or filing the volumes of information on the towering stacks of shelves. Within Ironwatch, this room is known as the Provincia Indicia. But now it is empty and quiet. The only sound is an electro-pen scratching busily on paper. Dominating the room is a huge podium, looking more like the walls of a fortress than a simple writing desk, covered in symbols of the Adeptus Administratum. Sitting behind the desk is a clerk, hooded in voluminous robes, purposefully marking something down. Several servo-skulls hover nearby, waiting for orders.

As the heroes approach him, however, they see everything is not right here. The scribe is somehow fused with both the desk and with the servo-skulls, his flesh and the machinery twisted together in some nightmarish melding. The scribe does not glance up from his work as the warband approaches him. "State your names for the record, and your reason for this inquiry," he says in a flat, hollow voice.

Though warped and distorted by the nightmarish world he's stuck in, all the scribe wants is to do his job. He is generally unaware of the conditions of the facility, and does not care even if told of it. That's not his job. He is officious and bureaucratic, but not combative. He wants everything done by the book, in proper order, and does not release information just because the warband wants it.

Should the warband kill or disable him and try to take the information they need, they find the filing system here is opaque to the point of being indecipherable, making it nearly impossible to find anything about the rogue Psyker they are looking for. They need to roll an appropriate skill to find information without the scribe's help.

The heroes may make an Investigation, Tech, or Scholar test (DN 5) to find the information. Any character with the Inquisition or Adeptus Administratum keywords gains a +1d bonus to the attempt. This task takes at least an hour, but shifted Exalted Icons can reduce this time by ten minutes per shift. A complication means that the character must pass a Corruption test (DN 5). During this time, roll on the **Dark Nightmares** table and introduce at least one **Optional Encounter** (pages 45–48).



Convincing the twisted scribe to help the warband requires a Deception, Insight, Leadership, Persuasion, or Scholar (DN 5) check to persuade him they are cleared for this information. Once they do so, he sighs dramatically, as though he were performing some great and difficult task, and sends one of his servo-skulls to acquire the information. Within moments, he produces a data-slate with a map of the facility. The prison ward where they are holding Skoteinos Andras is highlighted, along with details of his case. Unfortunately, the prisoners are held deep in the bowels of the facility, which means the warband must press on through the horrors they've already witnessed.

To progress, remember the fail-forward philosophy—even if the player characters fail the test, they still get the information. In this case, failing gives the GM a point of Ruin as the consequence, since this means the enemies have that much more time to grow stronger whilst the warband struggles to put the pieces together.

## USING DREAMS

Dreams are a good way not just to frighten the characters, but also to impart information to them—information about the current situation, things that have already happened, and also of things yet to come.

It's often useful to recap situations that have come up in the past. You can remind players of these past encounters by showing them in a dream. This is a useful way of bringing back important plot points they may have missed or forgotten about.

Dreams can also show characters things that they themselves have not experienced, or were not present for. For example, why is the Ironwatch prison such a wretched and overcrowded place? The characters would not necessarily know the Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica have not yet come to pick up their tribute, but if the warband sees it in a dream then they can start to put together the pieces and begin to understand the bigger picture.

Dreams are often used to foretell the future. Perhaps the heroes see Hive Aidon burning and falling into the sea, overrun by Daemons and the forces of Chaos. The dream might expand to show the entire world poisoned, tainted and destroyed, then show the Gilead System falling into ruin.

What happens if the warband fails in its mission?  
Only the end of everything.

This is the greatest fear of the Imperium, that one minor crisis can reverberate throughout dozens or hundreds of worlds. This is why its servants must ever stay vigilant against the seduction of Chaos. If the warband knows what it's fighting for, the characters will rage on all the more diligently, putting their hearts and souls into succeeding against all odds.

Dreams can also send messages. The rogue Psyker Skoteinos Andras is sending out waves of distress, begging for help and warning of the horrors of Ironwatch to anyone who can hear him. Unfortunately, his message is tainted and distorted by his own pain and misery, which makes his message difficult to understand and interpret.

But dreams should never reveal too much information. They should remain cryptic and mysterious—especially those dreams that reveal the future. Use symbols or images to impart information without giving everything away. This way, you can still surprise the players with what happens. Using vague symbols instead of concrete descriptions has the added bonus that if things do not come to pass exactly as you intended, the players can still interpret the cryptic dream in a way that makes it seem like you planned everything ahead, making you look like a genius.

Dreams are ephemeral and quickly forgotten when we wake up. To duplicate this, write down the dream on a piece of paper and hand it to the player. Let them read it, then take it back. What they remember from your note is what they remember of the dream. Or take them aside and describe their dream privately, not allowing them to take any notes. You might find the players forget interesting details, or even add new things you did not depict, when they try to describe their dream to the other players.

Another way to emphasise the unworldliness of a dream is to have the player close their eyes and relax. Describe the dream in a soft, slow, almost languid voice. As the dream becomes a nightmare and becomes more intense, speed up your voice. You can speak louder, or lower your voice even more to make them strain to hear you, and build up a dark and menacing tone.

## HIVE AIDON

**PROVINCIA COERCITOR**  
“PROTEGO ET SERVO”

**SUSPECTED ROGUE PSYKER:**  
**SKOTEINOS ANDRAS**

### INCIDENT DATA

Incident Type	Rogue Psyker
Address	8th and Artillery, Waterline District
Time Reported	5:25

### SUSPECT

Name	Skoteinos Andras
Race	Standard Human (possible mutant?)
Home Address	Unknown

### NARRATIVE

Andras was picked up on a vagrancy charge, but when the arresting Enforcer attempted to detain him, he suddenly manifested unexplained abilities, hurling Enforcer Surrash ten metres through the air. The Enforcer's partners subdued the suspect using standard-issue shock mauls, then took him to Ironwatch for processing as a potential rogue Psyker.

Suspect was processed and placed into detention in the prison level due to overcrowding.

How you handle the nightmares encountered in the upper levels of Ironwatch determines how the players and the characters react to the horrors they see, so make sure to ratchet up the feeling of dread and otherworldliness!



## ACT THREE: DARKNESS DESCENDING

The warband must now go lower into Ironwatch, to the holding cells where prisoners are awaiting the Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica.

A powerful Psyker is absorbing, amplifying and releasing the terror and woe of hundreds of Psykers who were forced through this facility. He is simply trying to call for help, to warn people about the horrors of the prison, but his powers have surged out of control. Though he does not understand what he is doing, and he is not doing it maliciously, his power worked free of the holding facility and is doing untellable harm to the nearby city. That harm will only grow unless it is stopped here and now. The Great Rift is ultimately to blame both for the horrors of the prison and for what is happening to the Psyker; the heroes should feel regret for having to deal with him.

### INTO THE DARKNESS

The large industrial lifts that access the highest levels only work intermittently, so the warband's best bet is to descend the little-used stairs. These stairwells are dark, narrow, and claustrophobic, rising level by level to the heights of this ancient edifice.

The lower levels of Ironwatch seem almost calm. The warband hears chanting, crying and praying coming from the darkness below, but the nightmarish fantasy realm they struggled through near the entrance gates is not found here. In fact, everything seems relatively normal (for whatever definition of "normal" a Psyker holding facility maintains).

This is, of course, a ruse. The madness here is as strong as or stronger than elsewhere.

As the warband descends lower, they find themselves far below the hive proper. The facility is rusting, leaking, and groaning from the immense pressure of the depths. The place stinks of mildew, sea water, rust, human waste, and terror. The lights are out, except for a handful of intermittent, flickering bulbs, making most of the lower levels pitch black.

The holding facilities are shaped like a vast wheel, spokes radiating out from a large central chamber.

The warband, entering from the stairs, comes in along the outer rim of the wheel. The entire detention level stinks of death and terror. Most of the holding cells are still closed and locked, but some swing open, their locks and security devices protecting them burned out, melted, or blown away. Someone scrawled random words and indecipherable images on the walls, using human waste and blood.

While the heroes don't have far to go to get from the stairs to the central chamber where the mad Psyker "holds court", they are likely to run into trouble along the way.

### ENCOUNTERS IN THE PRISON

The halls are dark, lit only intermittently and fitfully by broken electric lights. There are numerous twists and turns, and many of the cell doors are no longer locked and sealed. The entire lower level of this facility is just one big ambush waiting to happen, so characters are wise to move slowly and cautiously as they explore. Here are a few optional encounters they might run into as they look for the cause of the outbreak of madness.

◆ **Murder-servitors:** Skoteinos Andras unconsciously suborned the programming of the servitors who maintain the facility, and turned them into murderous, mindless guards. Servitors travel in small groups, but do not retain enough of their minds to plan ambushes or tactical assaults. They simply attack any intruders until they are blown to pieces.

◆ **Mindwiped guards:** Guarding these prisoners was never a good job. Those unfortunate troops assigned to this place had to listen to the mad screaming and crying of the doomed and damned throughout all hours of the day and night. It is enough to drive even the strongest men mad—and these were never the strongest men. This was a punishment for those deemed unfit for other assignments. They were cruel, or stupid, or lazy, or simply bad at their jobs. They took out their cruelty and stupidity on those they were supposed to watch. When Andras's powers went out of control and he escaped

their tender mercies, his mind lashed out at them, tearing their souls from their bodies and leaving them empty husks. Now they roam the dark halls, searching for new targets to vent their engrained mindless savagery on.

- ◆ **Rampaging Psykers:** Many of those imprisoned and awaiting transport to the Black Ships have managed to escape from their cells, but the experiences they've had here—beatings, starvation, exposure, the general bad conditions the prisoners are kept in and the nightmares Andras unconsciously drew forth from them—have driven them mad. There is little human left inside them. They attack savagely, unleashing the power of their minds at anyone who disturbs this haunted place. They often have several mind-controlled prison guards or servitors slaved to their will, who they send into battle without regard for their servants' safety.
- ◆ **Beasts of Chaos:** Several Khymerae—minor daemon-like warp creatures born of nightmares—have arrived at these fertile hunting grounds. They shift from the Empyrean to the real world at will, leaping from the walls, ceiling, or floor to attack the warband. They use pack tactics, with surprise attacks and rapid disappearances.

If the warband makes too much noise fighting any of these creatures, this alerts Andras of their presence, and it may attract the attention of more guardians.

## THE SOURCE OF THE NIGHTMARES

Skoteinos Andras, the rogue Psyker, sits in the central chamber amidst a pile of bodies—guards and administrators for the prison—and surrounded by murder-servitors he unconsciously controls to defend himself. A handful of other Psykers, freed from their chains, roam the area, driven mad by the darkness and terror of this bleak place. As Andras utilises his uncontrolled power, the characters' own nightmares come to life to torment them.

Andras exists in a sort of trance state. He is awake, but not fully aware of his surroundings. Everything is a nightmare to him, and his powers are no longer under his control. In his most lucid moments, he begs the heroes to help him. There are several options the warband can take at this point.

- ◆ A Psyker—one with control over his own powers—could enter Andras's dream-state and guide him out of the nightmare, bringing him back under control. This is an opposed test, Psychic Mastery versus Andras's Psychic Mastery.

- ◆ A member of the Adeptus Ministorum could likewise use their unshakable faith in the power of the Emperor to guide Andras back into the light. This is an opposed test using an Interaction skill versus Andras' Psychic Mastery.

- ◆ This is a chance for the warband to work together to find a solution to the problem. A Ministorum Priest could work together with a Sanctioned Psyker, an Inquisitor Adept, and a Tech-Priest to find the answer. This is a good place to use the Combined Action rules.

- ◆ Alternatively, the GM can describe this scene as a Threatening Task (see Threatening Tasks in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules* for details).

The heroes can, of course, simply use the most direct approach and attempt to kill Andras. However, depending on how you want the game to go, killing him outright might have an adverse effect—the dream-state people have fallen into becomes permanent, or killing him kills them as well, or his death opens up a portal to the warp, which the warband then needs to seal forever.





## DRAMATIS PERSONAE—PART ONE

### THE SLEEPERS

These are ordinary, everyday Imperial citizens—shopkeepers or labourers, the average men and women who make up the bulk of the population. Without any kind of psionic awareness or mental defences, they've been hit especially hard by the Sleepwalking sickness. They are mostly armed with makeshift weapons such as hammers, knives, or a heavy iron pot, though a few might have an autopistol.

**Threat Classification:** Troops for all Tiers. Sleepers almost always appear in mobs.

Strength	3	Intellect	2
Agility	3	Willpower	2
Toughness	3	Fellowship	2
Initiative	3	Defence	2
Speed	6	Wounds	1
Shock	2	Soak	3
Resolve	1	Conviction	2
Passive Awareness			2
Resilience	4		
Skills	Weapon Skill 5, Default 3		
Size	Average		
Keywords	Imperium		

### ATTACKS

**Improvised Weapons:** (Damage 6+1ED; AP 0)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES:

**Sleepwalking:** Sleepers always pass Resolve tests and are immune to Intimidation interaction attacks.

**(Mob) Walking in a Nightmare:** In a mob, Sleepers gain +1ED on any successful attack against any character who has had a vision during the adventure.

### DAMO

Damo is a simple thief, a pickpocket who plies his dishonest trade in the crowded corridors and open chambers of the Waterline district. He's never been particularly successful, but he makes enough to eat regularly if not well. He's never joined a gang because he hates violence; he just tries to keep his head down and hopes his illicit activities are not noticed by the authorities.

**Threat Classification:** Elite

Strength	3	Intellect	4
Agility	4	Willpower	3
Toughness	3	Fellowship	3
Initiative	3	Defence	3
Speed	6	Wounds	4
Shock	6	Soak	3
Resolve	4	Conviction	3
Passive Awareness			4
Resilience	3		
Skills	Cunning 6, Stealth 6, Weapon Skill 6, Default 3		
Size	Average		
Keywords	Imperium, Scum		

### SPECIAL ABILITIES:

**Sneaky Git:** Damo gains +Tier bonus dice to Stealth tests and Athletics Interaction attacks.

**Damaged Sanity:** Damo endured much since the nightmares began, and he's barely keeping it together. Add +Tier bonus dice to resist psychic powers and effects. If Damo suffers any Shock or Wounds, he becomes Frenzied (see page 230 in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*).



# DRAMATIS PERSONAE—PART TWO



## MURDER-SERVITOR

The massive Black Lighthouse requires hundreds of servitors to clean and maintain its facilities. Normally, these near-mindless servants take care of their jobs quietly and efficiently. Within the nightmare realm that the Black Lighthouse has become, though, the servitors are now uncontrolled killing machines, attempting to “clean” and “repair” any living creature they happen upon.

**Threat Classification:** Elites at Tiers 1-3, Troops at Tier 4+

<b>Strength</b>	4	<b>Intellect</b>	2
<b>Agility</b>	3	<b>Willpower</b>	2
<b>Toughness</b>	5	<b>Fellowship</b>	2
<b>Initiative</b>	5	<b>Defence</b>	4
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	3
<b>Shock</b>	8	<b>Soak</b>	5
<b>Resolve</b>	2	<b>Conviction</b>	2
<b>Passive Awareness</b>	3		
<b>Resilience</b>	8 (2)		
<b>Skills</b>	Weapon Skill 7, Default 3		
<b>Size</b>	Average		
<b>Keywords</b>	Imperium, Adeptus Mechanicus, Servitor		

### ATTACKS

**Servo-arm:** (Damage 9+2 ED; AP -3; Brutal, Unwieldy [2])

### SPECIAL ABILITIES:

**Incantation of the Iron Soul:** Murder-servitors are unaffected by powers and abilities that affect the mind. They never need to make Resolve Tests to continue fighting.

**(Ruin) Synchronized Assault:** Spend 1 Ruin and one action. The murder-servitor may make two melee attacks at no penalty.

## MUTATED ADMINISTRATUM CLERK

Rudlinus is the chief record-keeper of the Black Lighthouse, supervising a small army of servoskulls, servitors and junior clerks in their duties. He's been performing this job for decades, and even in the face of the horrendous nightmare this place has become, he has no intention of failing at his duty. The nightmares have twisted his body, making him physically a part of his precious records office.

**Threat Classification:** Adversary at all Tiers

<b>Strength</b>	2	<b>Intellect</b>	5
<b>Agility</b>	2	<b>Willpower</b>	5
<b>Toughness</b>	3	<b>Fellowship</b>	3
<b>Initiative</b>	3	<b>Defence</b>	2
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	6
<b>Shock</b>	8	<b>Soak</b>	3
<b>Resolve</b>	4	<b>Conviction</b>	5
<b>Passive Awareness</b>	6		
<b>Resilience</b>	7 (*3)		
<b>Skills</b>	Insight 7, Investigation 7, Scholar 8, Default 6		
<b>Size</b>	Average		
<b>Keywords</b>	Imperium, Adeptus Administratum, Mutant		

### ATTACKS

**Lashing tentacle:** (Damage 8+1 ED; AP: -3)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES:

**Administratum Records:** Rudlinus is particularly adept at navigating Imperial Bureaucracy. Add +Tier to Investigation tests to acquire information. Any effort to research such information takes half the usual time.

**Mutated:** Every time Rudlinus deals a Wound to a protagonist, the Game Master gains 1 Ruin.



## BIR SIDIROU, ENFORCER COMMANDER

Detective Sidirou is a veteran of the Hive Aidon Enforcers. He's been on the job for years, and despite the many terrible things he's seen, he remains smart, loyal and dedicated to serving the people of his city. He has a perspicacious mind and a discerning eye, making him one of the best detectives in the city.

### Threat Classification: Elite

Strength	4	Intellect	4		
Agility	4	Willpower	4		
Toughness	5	Fellowship	4		
Initiative	4	Defence	3		
Speed	6	Wounds	8		
Shock	5	Soak	5		
Resolve	4	Conviction	4		
Passive Awareness		5			
Resilience		11 (Enforcer Carapace 4)			
Skills	Intimidation 7, Investigation 6, Weapon Skill 6, Default 5				
Size	Average				
Keywords	Imperium, Scum				

### ATTACKS:

**Combat Shotgun:** (Damage 10+1ED; AP 0; Range 24m; Salvo 2; Assault, Rapid-Fire [1], Spread)

**Shock Maul:** (Damage 8+2ED; AP -1; Agonising, Brutal)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES:

**Brutal Discipline:** Sidirou gains +2d to Ballistic Skill and Weapon Skill tests against targets with the Scum or Heretic keywords.

**Ear for Lies:** Sidirou gains +2d to Insight Tests specifically to resist Deception (or add +2 to Insight for purposing of making Deception Tests against Sidirou)

**Hive-Trained:** Sidirou does not suffer Difficult Terrain penalties when moving through crowded or cluttered urban areas. Sidirou also gains an additional +1 to his Defence when using cover in an urban setting.



## KHYMERA

Khymerae are frightening creatures, born from an intelligent being's nightmares and spawned in the warp. Khymerae coalesce into existence around the psychic echoes of fear and anguish. Some amongst the Ordo Malleus consider them warp creatures, not actual daemons, but none can say for certain. They lack a proper corporeal form, appearing momentarily before a foe and then vanishing suddenly to launch an attack from an unexpected direction. Their phasing powers mean they can appear inside areas that otherwise seem secure.

**Threat Classification:** Elite at Tiers 1-3, Troops at Tier 4+

Strength	4	Intellect	3
Agility	5	Willpower	5
Toughness	4	Fellowship	2
Initiative	6	Defence	5
Speed	7	Wounds	6
Shock	6	Soak	4
Resolve	4	Conviction	5
Passive Awareness	6		
Resilience	9		
Skills	Awareness 7, Weapon Skill 8, Default 6		
Size	Average		

## ATTACKS

**Razor Claws:** (Damage 10+1ED; AP -2)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Daemonic:** This threat may attempt to Soak Mortal Wounds. Soaking does not cost any Shock for this threat.

**Fear (3):** This threat causes fear. Enemies are required to pass a Fear test (DN 3) to act normally.

**Insubstantial:** A Kymera can move effortlessly through solid objects. They ignore Difficult terrain.

## SKOTEINOS ANDRAS

Andras is thin to the point of being emaciated, with pale skin and a full beard. His eyes have a hollow cast with deep circles around them, as if he hasn't slept in days. He looks much older than he is, both due to his hard life and the strange power behind his eyes. He shows signs of being beaten recently. He wears the beige remnants of his prisoner uniform, ragged and torn, with a green sash around his waist.

**Threat Classification:** Adversary

Strength	3	Intellect	4
Agility	5	Willpower	6
Toughness	5	Fellowship	3
Initiative	5	Defence	4
Speed	6	Wounds	14
Shock	12	Soak	5
Resolve	4	Conviction	6
Passive Awareness	6		
Resilience	14 (*4)		
Skills	Psychic Mastery 9, Default 7		
Size	Average		

## ATTACKS:

**Psychic Powers:** Andras possesses the following powers: *inflict pain, puppet master, regenerate, smite, waking nightmare*

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Unconscious Control:** Andras can use *puppet master* or *waking nightmare* in addition to one other psychic power each round.

**Psychic Shield:** Andras generates a field of psychic energy around himself, granting him the effects of a force shield. Andras may attempt to Soak Mortal Wounds.



# CAUGHT BETWEEN





## INTRODUCTION

A storm is brewing in Hive Aidon. The lights blaze from all of the shining spires long into the cold nights, and deep in the underhive the crowds are whipped into a frothing fury by the coming winds of change. Lord Ganthet Veneratio, the planetary governor, is dead. Worse, his line of succession is not clear. Two candidates vie for his empty throne: Mina, his dour, dutiful daughter, and Farsheed, his boorish but charismatic son, returned from a prodigal journey. The late governor's councillors are split evenly between them—only the intervention of Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius (and his agents, the warband!) can break the tie and allow Charybdion to move forward.

Every day more riots are put down by the overworked Enforcers, and they spread to the other hives of Charybdion. Political assassinations and suspicious suicides skyrocket amongst the spires of all the hives while the political powers that be are distracted by this crisis. Secret societies flourish, and gangs gather their forces to settle old rivalries and grow their territories like algae spreading across the ocean's surface.

Something must be done, but like so often during his tenure, Veneratio failed to live up to expectations. His eldest child, Farsheed, absconded with funds many years prior and lived life amongst the hive gangs as a petty king ruling his debauched corner of the underhive. Yet, the prodigal son has returned, as uncouth as ever, but contrite and publicly wishing to reconcile with his father. Veneratio even proclaimed that his son would become his official heir, but before he could make it official, he disappeared. After an investigation by his councillors, the governor has been officially declared dead. Farsheed declared his father's proclamation legally binding, and half of the council has fallen in with him.

The other claimant to the governor's position, Mina, was ever the perfect child. When it was made official many years ago that she was to be the heir, she put aside her wild dreams of becoming a Rogue Trader, and began studying in earnest to be the best governor she could be. This left her with little social time beyond the required state functions, and she has grown into a stern, thin-lipped taskmaster. With her brother's return, Mina

has flown into a quiet rage. It is said that her grey eyes glow the deep green of a brewing storm. She argued before the council that she is still technically the heir, and while not as charismatic as her brother, she has the training necessary to rule Charybdion in a way that won't cause the other important officials in the system to shun her world—something her father risked on numerous occasions.

Salvation from the rising tide of riots and the winds of rebellion is aboard a voidship elsewhere in the system: the Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius. The governor's councillors have requested that the Rogue Trader use his authority to break the tie and name a successor. Jakel is aware that a poor choice for governor will set the planet on a course for ruin, and potentially endanger the entire Gilead System in the process. For him, there is only one solution: he plans to send in a warband of trusted agents and employ them to select the successor in his stead.

## OVERVIEW

**Caught Between** is an adventure suitable for *Wrath & Glory* characters from Tiers 3 and 4.

The introductory text above gives a good, quick overview of the inciting event for the adventure within this chapter. However, there is much more going on. A full-scale Chaos cult attempt to take over the hive and the leadership of the planet is in motion. Both candidates are in the dark, despite some questionable ties on both sides. It is up to the players to save the hive from the Chaos incursion and decide the fate of the next ruler.

## ACT ONE

The warband receives a priority message from their patron, Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius. The heroes are informed that the situation on Charybdion has grown worse, now that confirmation of the planetary governor's death has spread. The two possible successors to the planetary governorship have both declared themselves the rightful heirs. The governor's councillors are evenly split over whom they support. In desperation, the councillors have requested that Jakel Varonius use his authority

to make the decision. However, the Rogue Trader is engaged in other efforts in the Gilead System—thus, he has chosen the warband to act as his proxy in this matter. The heroes are to meet the council and both heirs. They have three days before the succession must occur. After the protagonists have made their introductions, they are invited to an upperhive party thrown by Farsheed—one of the two heirs.

## ACT TWO

The warband attends Farsheed's party and discovers that he is in league with an underhive gang known as the Piscators. The heroes get a chance to know Farsheed during the party, but the festivities are cut short when assassins attack, trying to slay the heir. The assassins are all surgically altered to appear identical, and they all seem to be members of a rival gang known as the Silent Supplicants. Farsheed is certain that his sister, Mina, sent the assassins to kill him. Next, the warband meets Mina, the second heir to the planetary governorship. Mina presents her case in a very organised and thorough manner. The heroes see their opportunity to speak with Mina about her intentions when another assassination attempt occurs—this time targeting Mina. Again, the assassins are all surgically altered to appear identical, but this time they look to be members of the Piscator gang.

The warband then picks up an investigation to figure out who is behind the attacks, and discover the vile heretical group—the Cult of Luxury (see page 23)—is behind both the assassins and the unrest.

## ACT THREE

Just as the warband is completing their investigation, full-scale open violence breaks out between the two rival gangs. Hive Aidon is in uproar, the heroes must make their way to an upperhive spire palace where the council is waiting for answers. The warband must fight through the assassins on their way to upperhive, and once they arrive, they make their decision for the planetary governorship. During the coronation of the new governor, the cult strikes one final time, targeting both the new governor and whichever heir was not chosen. The heroes must defend the governor against these attackers to ensure that Charybdion does not descend into anarchy.

## CUSTOMISING THIS ADVENTURE

When you run this adventure there are a number of ways you can tailor it to your group and/or circumstances. First, this adventure is self-contained—if you wish to run this as a one-off or as a single session with some minor tweaks, you can do so. However, this adventure is designed to work alongside the four other adventures in this book to tell the story of Charybdion.

- ◆ **Adjusting Tiers:** The easiest way is to lower the level of Wounds, Resilience, Armour Rating and weapon damage for the enemies to be slightly below that of the party members, especially if the adversary is a mob.
- ◆ **Adjusting Running Time:** This adventure usually runs about two to three game sessions, depending on the number of players and how involved/difficult the various encounters are for the warband. To make this adventure shorter, scale down the number of assassins in both attempts. Instead of making the players search for their various answers in the investigations with the resulting scenes, give them a quick single-scene montage of them investigating and what they find from their investigations.
- ◆ **Running as a stand-alone adventure:** If you wish to run **Caught Between** as a stand-alone adventure, ensure that the warband has an appropriate reason to be on Charybdion. If necessary, you may need to include a different NPC than Jakel Varonius (someone with enough authority and presence in the Gilead System that the councillors would request help from for making the decision about the succession).

## CHOICES, CHOICES

This section outlines advice for the important choice that the player characters are asked to make regarding the future of Charybdion: namely, who rules the planet? This adventure is written so that both candidates are innocent of collusion with the Cult of Luxury, despite the initial evidence to the contrary. Both are decent choices to be the next planetary governor. Mina can oversee the rulership of Charybdion efficiently, although she lacks the charisma that Farsheed possesses. Farsheed, while well-liked and popular with the citizens (and many allied organisations), lacks the know-how to rule without falling into obvious pitfalls and traps that Mina has trained to avoid.

The best possible outcome for the future of the planet would be to choose to place either one as the governor and appoint the other as a

permanent advisor so they can handle the areas in which their sibling is weak. If the warband comes to this conclusion, Varonius will be very pleased. Of course, the warband may choose to implicate one or both of the siblings as complicit in the uprising of the Cult of Luxury and the assassins. The heroes will have the chance to point out the “guilty” parties at the end of Act II.

## ENDINGS

- ♦ **If Mina is chosen:** Charybdion’s output of chemically processed algae to the rest of the Gilead System prospers, but her blunt and outright rude demeanour will put off the other planetary governors and sector leaders. This makes it difficult for Charybdion to make meaningful progress—the world is placed as a low priority for the Adeptus Administratum, Adeptus Mechanicus and other groups. The Gilead System has more resources in total, but Charybdion’s future remains precarious.



- ♦ **If Farsheed is chosen:** The planet’s production output plummets, meaning that other worlds in the Gilead System must pick up the slack in providing foodstuffs to the starving populations—and especially any movements of troops to defend against attack. However, Farsheed is very popular, and he is able to skirt disaster by allying with other leaders from the Adeptus Mechanicus, Adeptus Administratum and other groups. These alliances give Charybdion a real chance at surviving—and even thriving—in the long run.

- ♦ **If both are killed:** Hive Aidon quickly succumbs to lawlessness and debauchery as the Cult of Luxury rises to prominence. Indulgence and hedonism overtake every aspect of industry and governance, until the hive is naught but a den of vice and corruption. Prefect Orrilus orders Praetor Borst to put the hive into a full lockdown, but this only delays the inevitable. Charybdion seethes with violence as the Enforcers attempt to quell uprising after uprising across the entire planet. Years later, the warband and Jakel Varonius are infamous as the instigators of Charybdion’s descent into madness. The Rogue Trader disavows the heroes amongst his peers—any further mistakes mean that they are cut off and on their own in the Dark Imperium.

## IMPORTANT SKILLS/ABILITIES

Many significant roleplaying scenes in this adventure involve discussions with important NPCs: Interaction skills are an absolute must. Failing to convince key councillors regarding the succession could lead to some dire consequences for Charybdion. Likely, one side of the council will be upset with the outcome—even if both are chosen (one governor and one councillor). Using Influence or Wealth during the final decision (or at earlier points in the adventure) will also help the various factions become more or less favourable with the warband.

There is an Investigation at the end of Act II. The rules for running Investigations are on page 259 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*. The Judge, clues, cues and so on are all set up for you to guide the warband through the investigation and determine the truth about the assassination attempts and the sinister Cult of Luxury.

Finally, combat skills are important if the warband wants to survive the assassination attempts!

## ACT ONE: THE KING IS DEAD, LONG LIVE THE KING



Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*Your warband has been enjoying the hospitality of Spire Aeschyron, a palatial section of Hive Aidon. It is an excellent location for rest and relaxation, many of its features catering to the needs of shipping crews that haul processed algae from Charybdion to the rest of the Gilead System. While you have been enjoying the entertainment, shops and chapels of this select locale, your data-slates receive a priority message sent by the Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius. He is your patron, and your service to him is how you have come to enjoy the benefits of the upperhive spire while so many toil thanklessly in the hive city below.*

*The message requires you to gather in a private location before displaying the rest of its contents—a transmission that details your next mission as the Rogue Trader's agents:*

*"Greetings,*

*The situation on Charybdion is not yet stable. I had hoped that the succession of the new planetary governor would go smoothly—especially after the problems with the murderer. However, a deadlock has arisen amongst the councillors of the slain governor, a tie that they have petitioned me to break.*

*There are two heirs apparent, and the governor's councillors are split evenly between the candidates. Without a clear successor, the planet's stability—not to mention its resources shared amongst the rest of the Gilead System—are in jeopardy. I must make a decision in favour of one heir or the other to set the succession back on track. However, time is short—rioting amongst the other hives across the planet is growing worse. Charybdion will fall into complete anarchy if we do not have a planetary governor in place within the next three days. Accomplish the task I am assigning you by then, or the consequences will be dire.*

*The choice of planetary governor will have a massive impact on all our futures. Charybdion's processed algae feeds much of the Gilead*

*System. A bad selection of governor could represent a setback, not only for myself, but for many of the other organisations in the system.*

*So here is the challenge: I am certain that neither candidate is perfect for the position. The technical heir is Mina Veneratio, the younger of the two potential heirs. She is a very capable woman, if it were not for her cold demeanour and ruthless actions, which undermine her social standing with the more important leaders of the sector. Her father appointed her as his official heir. But that's not the full story...*

*The eldest, Farsheed Veneratio, is a pleasant and popular fellow. However, he's full of flights of fancy and his understanding of government, and more importantly of business, is questionable. He recently returned from many years of self-imposed exile down in lowerhive. Upon Farsheed's return, his father welcomed back his prodigal son, toasted him, threw massive parties for him, and in a speech before the entire planet declared that he was going to reinstate his son as the legal heir to his position of governor.*

*Of course, the night after that speech, before any formal declarations could be ratified, Ganthet Veneratio was slain by a deranged murderer. The two heirs quarrelled bitterly over which of them is the true successor. The council—fools that they are—split evenly, and they have requested that I step in to make a decision that will affect this world for decades to come.*

*You will be my proxies in this undertaking. I need you to go to Hive Aidon and act as my representatives. Investigate the two heirs, and choose the best possible candidate. Again, time is running out—you have, at most, three days to reach a conclusion. I recommend that you spend at least one day with each heir so that your decision is an informed one.*

*Whichever heir you find to be best for the job, I will accept. This succession must proceed. Without effective leadership, Charybdion's riots will consume the entire planet in flames.*

*I've included files on both heirs and the four other council members. Go now, and act in the name of the Emperor for the good of the Gilead System."*

#### **<END TRANSMISSION>**

If the warband participated in the events of Adventures 1 and 2, then they are already present in Hive Aidon. If you are using **Caught Between** as a stand-alone adventure, Jakel Varonius provides transportation from his flotilla to the hive: an Aquila Lander. The lander takes the warband directly to the governor's palace.

Otherwise, the warband may proceed directly to the palace using the hive's transport carriages.

### **IN THE TYRANT'S LAIR**

If the warband is arriving at Hive Aidon from the flotilla, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The lander swoops down through a thunderstorm. You almost cannot tell where the ocean begins and the clouds end. Everywhere is water. Beads of rain race across the view ports on your transport and break the golden light from the Hive Aidon spires into a thousand candles within each rain drop. The spires play a dual role of beacon and mansion for the wealthiest members of the hive with each spire flashing a golden light at its pinnacle. The ocean below crashes against the sea breaks and high walls at the base of the hive, green, blue and black water etched with a foamy tracery of spume. Massive ships bounce and plunge atop the waves as they move to the leeward side of the hive and relative safety. Tiny white specks grow into a horde of scavenger avians circling about the hive at all levels, and as your transport banks and rises up to land, you are momentarily blinded by the blazing beacon atop the highest spire of the governor's own palace.*

*When you exit the transport, the wind grabs at any loose clothing you have in a vain attempt to rip it from you. The rain pelts you incessantly, and even from this height you can hear the endless susurru of the ocean's infinite war breaking against the hive.*

*The governor's Honour Guard, led by a Lieutenant Mortimer, meets you on the landing pad and escorts you inside.*

If the warband is already present on Charybdion and arrives via the hive transport carriages, proceed directly to entering the palace:

*You are allowed a few moments in an antechamber to make yourselves presentable and hand off your luggage to the household staff for transport to your rooms across the Government Complex to private rooms. Then you are escorted by palace guards to the Council Chamber several floors above.*

*The smell of exhaustion fills the air. Discarded cups and bone-strewn plates litter the massive exotic wood table that is the demarcation line between the two factions assembled here.*

*On your left sits a fit and muscular young man dressed in a red coat trimmed in gold. His face is roguishly handsome, and his dark eyes and wavy black hair shine with excitement and mystery. He breaks into a perfect smile as you enter the room. Flanking him are two of the councillors: Master Foreman Dresdor Kant and Enginseer Shadi Madani.*

*You would assume Kant was an Ogryn if you hadn't seen his file. He dwarfs the others in the room, and his hairy forearms rest on the conference table like two huge ham legs. He wears a clean and bright yellow waterproof jumpsuit. He has dark blue tattoos along his neck, and letters spelling 'HOLD FAST' across the knuckles of his hands. The first two of the three black wavy lines of the Piscator gang symbol can be seen peeking out from his collar on the side of his neck. Madani is almost his opposite. She wears the red robes of the Adeptus Mechanicus and is quite short in height. Very few cybernetic parts are visible, although you can tell her eyes have been enhanced in some fashion, as they reflect back the light of the room when she turns to look at you. A small servo-skull floats at her shoulder recording everything in the room and her fingers fly inhumanly fast across a tablet as she sends and receives messages. You note that when she moves about, she seems to hover a few inches off the floor.*

*To your right stands a woman that normally would appear to be as controlled and tight as a drum. Her face, similar in shape to her obvious brother, is flushed with anger as she bites back a shot when the doors open to admit you into the chamber. Her perfectly manicured finger is*

caught in the air pointing accusingly towards her brother, and her entire body is coiled with tension inside her scarlet, gold and green clothing of a hive lord. Massive binders full of paper act as sandbags around the chair she has leapt from, and she is flanked by two allies: Administratum Prefect Orrilus and Praetor Piscillan Borst.

Borst looms over all, tall and gaunt in his pitch-black clothes with perfectly etched silver thread. His sunken eyes glow with malevolence as he recognises your warband entering the room. His cybernetic left hand grips the head of his exquisite ebony cane, while his right hand falls to his waist below the table.

Bracketing Mina opposite Borst is a man hunched over the stack of binders and tomes. He wears red, ragged robes and clutches a cogitator mounted on his chest that is constantly updating a scroll emerging from the bottom with data about the hive. This is Prefect Orrilus, the one person who keeps the lights on, the water running and food delivered, as long as the workers work. His nearly bald head is surmounted by numerous pipes and cables connecting his higher brain functions to the cogitator on his chest.

"Our saviours have arrived!" proclaims Farsheed as he leaps from his chair to greet each of you personally. He then introduces his two councillors and then waves towards his sister with less enthusiasm and adds, "And this is my sister, Mina, and her advisors, Orrilus and Borst. Please, introduce yourselves so we might get down to business."

After introductions, refreshments will be served. The warband may now mingle with the councillors and the heirs, and listen to their arguments about why one or the other heir should be made governor. The players may question them, and will gain more information per person based on their checks. Spend time letting the players talk to the other characters and, using your own words, offer the information related below based on checks the players rolled. Using the Reaction table (see page 253 in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*), Borst begins as Hostile, Farsheed and Orrilus are both Friendly, while the rest are Neutral to the warband.

The following information is gained from any Interaction checks regarding the two heirs. The

standard difficulty (DN 3) should be used unless the GM chooses to adjust to make the adventure more or less challenging, depending on the Tier of the warband.

### FARSHEED

- ◆ His father publicly proclaimed him heir
- ◆ He's the oldest
- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** People of all social ranks, from highest to lowest, like him far more than his sister

### MINA

- ◆ She's her father's legal and technical heir—despite what he said, he never made the change official
- ◆ She has trained for this job since her brother disappeared a decade ago, and is an expert at it, as Orrilus can attest
- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** The hive is only functioning now because of her continued work along with Orrilus's and Borst's efforts

The warband may gain the information below from an Interaction check with the NPCs. Certain information is only available with Shifted Icons, each is noted, and the GM may decide which piece the warband receives if they only spend enough to receive some (but not all) of the information. The test difficulty ratings are based on what the NPC's likely attitude is towards the warband. If they have previous experience with these characters and the attitudes of the characters are different, then adjust the tests accordingly. Each of the following is more careful and experienced amongst the planetary court.

Interaction skill tests with the following NPCs are at DN 5:

### BORST

- ◆ Mina is the only legal and thus logical choice
- ◆ It is for the good of the Imperium, and therefore anyone who decides otherwise goes against the Emperor's Will

- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** Mina will increase the functioning of the hive
- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** Farsheed has many bad habits—he sees him as lacking a serious approach to rulership, and his love of carousing is not fit for a planetary leader

### MADANI

- ◆ Farsheed isn't a fool; he knows how to delegate to the proper people, even if he isn't perfectly skilled
- ◆ The engines of the hive only run because Madani oversees them. Borst, Orrilus and Mina aren't the only ones keeping the lights on, she is literally keeping the light machines running
- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** Her hive servants all speak highly of Farsheed
- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** She has witnessed Farsheed in action and is impressed with his non-augmented abilities

### ORRILUS

- ◆ Mina understands the hive accounts like no one except Orrilus, and she will triple profits in five years without the drastic measures her father put into place

- ◆ He doesn't care that she's cold and unlikable, she's a prodigy, according to him, with economics and production quota plans

- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** He thinks Farsheed might be Chaos tainted because of Farsheed's perfect smile and deep blue-green eyes

### KANT

- ◆ All the workers of the hive back Farsheed; they know him and understand him as he understands them
- ◆ If Farsheed isn't made heir, the workers' demonstrations might break out into a planet-wide riot
- ◆ Skill and numbers don't matter if everyone hates you
- ◆ Mina is a haughty upperhive leader who has never seen below the top levels and can't hold down a pint of good Aidon Ale.

Once all questions have been asked and answered, the council agrees that they can wait three days for the warband's decision, although Borst believes you should declare Mina immediately and doing anything else is sacrilege. Mina quiets him and states that she is fine with their choice (as it is the Rogue Trader's) and will prepare the accounts to be viewed by the warband for tomorrow, as well as a tour of the government facilities.

Farsheed jumps in and also agrees with the Rogue Trader's intervention. He adds that he has planned a fabulous dinner party for the warband this very evening in a warm nook far away from the rain and wind. It is filled with all sorts of good ale, good music and, hopefully, good friends. He promises to show them the best time the hive can offer and tells them to dress casual and ready to relax. He also seems to know the preferred ways each member might relax (thanks to his informants) and suggests to each of them that those vices/virtues await them at the party he is throwing. He will have a transport sent for them at the appointed hour. Mina agrees that they should attend to see what sort of debauchery Farsheed enjoys.

## ACT TWO: MEET THE NEW BOSSSES



The warband prepares itself for the party and is informed by the driver that no external armour or weapons beyond knives and side arms are allowed at the party, as there will be excessive carousing. The warband is given access to a luxuriously appointed Aquila lander—a flying vehicle for Imperial nobles and other very important personages. Once aboard, the pilot takes off to deliver the heroes to their destination.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The wind and rain rip at your transport violently for a few moments before you are distracted by the fast drop of the vehicle. Your stomach leaps into your throat and you feel almost weightless as you plummet towards the hive in a flat drop for almost a minute. Short course corrections lead you lower and lower until you level out and swoop forward along a dark canal of inky blackness. It is as wide as the two streets that parallel it combined and could easily fit your transport ten times across its width. The rain has driven most indoors, but a few scattered folk scurry along the roads.*

*After travelling along the canal for nearly fifteen minutes, your pilot pulls the transport into a massive cargo lift and softly lands before nodding to an attendant in a nearby shack. The doors shut and the lift drops deeper into the hive. If you keep count, 93 levels pass before the lift comes to a halt and the doors open. A dull roar fills your ears as you exit. You see to your left the same black water pouring down a vertical sluice and into another, much smaller, canal about as wide as your transport. The craft again parallels this canal. The ceiling is only about fifteen metres above the floor and your driver slides uncomfortably close to the top when it turns at the end of the canal and lands on the roof of a single story building. From inside your vehicle two sounds now dominate. First, you can hear the quiet roar of the ocean waves breaking against the hive, and second, the faint sounds of refined music. When you exit, you see a massive mural of the canal. For those skilled in such things, the artist is clearly a master painter.*

*"This way," calls your driver, and he leads you down a series of steps and covered hallways, and finally out into a massive court yard filled with people of the hive. The beat of the music vibrates in your chest. Almost a hundred people, dressed in drab clothing with bits of bright yellow, dance in a massive mob of lowerhive workers and their families.*

*The walls of this courtyard have been scoured until they shine, and in the centre of every wall there is the logo of the Piscator gang. Along these walls are numerous stands that fill the air with the smells and sounds of sizzling meats, fried foods and boiling noodles. There are lines at every stall. However, the longest lines seem to grow from the corners where massive metal tanks rest. They are stamped with the names of various intoxicating drinks.*

*You hear a voice shout, "Friends! You have arrived! Thank you for honouring us with your presence. This is but a small gathering of my friends amongst the hive, in celebration of your arrival." It is, of course, Farsheed. His outfit is even more outrageous than when you last saw him. He wears a massive great coat with an oversized collar and buttons, and the entire thing is bright yellow, almost golden. His shirt is a light grey, his trousers and boots are black as coal, and at his waist is a blood-red sash.*

*Farsheed embraces each of you in a bear-hug and smiles warmly while holding you by the shoulders and personally thanks you all. He and his bodyguards of Piscator toughs lead you through the crowd where you are constantly stopped by well-wishers and hive workers thanking Farsheed for some gift or act he had done for them. What would normally be a short walk through a crowd takes much longer, and Farsheed apologises to you constantly for the wait, while also introducing you to all the people around him. They, in turn, welcome you and many press you with food and drink and small gifts or prayer ribbons.*

*Farsheed finally brings you to an enclosed patio a floor above the party. Sliding windows have been closed so that the din of the music and*

*crowd is lessened here. Kant and Madani are also present here relaxing, drinking, eating and conversing. A curved couch fills the centre of this room and Farsheed gestures for you all to take a seat while he sits in the middle. Madani and Kant are already sitting at the ends and greet you all warmly. Farsheed toasts you with the statement, "May our friends be guided by the wisdom of the Emperor and vote for the most beloved of the heirs to be governor!"*

At this time the warband may enjoy the festivities while conversing with Farsheed. They may ask him, Kant or Madani anything they like. Using various Interaction skills, the party can tease their stories from the three leaders. Farsheed even instructs everyone to be open and honest with the warband. The party can again interact with Kant, Madani, Farsheed himself or some of the leaders of the Piscator gang. All interaction tests are DN 3, unless Intimidation is used, then the members will be hostile, and the difficulty jumps to DN 5.

If the warband asks about Farsheed's background:

- ◆ He left the palace because he didn't think he was qualified to run an entire planet, nor did he wish to be a cruel taskmaster crushing out the lives of the people around him.
- ◆ He didn't take any money, which is a rumour his sister started to discredit him.
- ◆ He did not seek to be the heir, but after many nights talking with his father, he was convinced that the elder Veneratio wanted him to be the next governor.
- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** He actually cares for his younger sister, and wishes she was never forced into her role. That is the thing he most regrets about leaving. He remembers her playing pretend as a child, and taking on the role of a Rogue Trader.
- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** Since he left, he joined with the Piscator gang and worked his way up through the ranks, which is how he met both Kant and Madani.
- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** The money he made he invested into the planet's infrastructure.

If the warband asks about the Piscator gang (Kant will answer most of these):

- ◆ They try to keep addictive drugs and bad elements out of the hive.
- ◆ They are very devout.

◆ They will not start fights, but they are happy to end them and defend what is their territory.

◆ **Costs one Shift for all the information below:** The colours of the frames represent the different ranks within the order, as they call it.

- Yellow: it symbolises the hard work of the dock workers and represents strength of body
- Grey: it symbolises the colour of the coverall worn by the reclamation specialists and represents strength of body and knowledge needed to reclaim old parts and ships
- Red: This represents the colours worn by the workers assigned to assist the Adeptus Mechanicus, who must know far more than anyone to coax the machine-spirits into doing the bidding of the workers.
- Black: It is the colour worn by the leaders and experts within each group, who have taken the swim to the bottom of the canals and survived to return.

◆ **Costs one Shift:** Kant recommends that the warband should look into Mina's own association with an underhive gang: the Silent Suplicants. Rumour has it, according to Kant, they are all reckless, over-indulged dilettantes. Farsheed will deny this accusation, but agrees that his sister is likely a member.

If the warband asks Madani about herself:

- ◆ She often works with the Adeptus Mechanicus, helping the planetary governor understand the needs and traditions of the Tech-Priesthood
- ◆ She worked with Farsheed when he had left his life as a noble behind and entered the underhive. He was a simple line boss in a manufactorum, and she was an overseer. She saw then how he motivated his crew and how they performed better than anyone else because of their desire to please Farsheed
- ◆ She is not part of the Piscator gang, but finds them useful and employs them as steady workers for certain difficult and dangerous jobs
- ◆ **Costs one Shift:** She respects Mina's skills, but sees her as unskilled in the social aspects of leadership

If the warband asks Kant about himself:

- ◆ He was born two levels below this level of the hive. His family have been involved with the Piscator gang for as long as he can remember
- ◆ He was the youngest member to ever gain his Black rank at only 14 standard cycles

- ♦ **Costs one Shift:** When he dived into the canal for his gang initiation, he discovered an old cogitator in the muck that was home to a vicious sump eel. He fought off the eel, and brought both the eel carcass and the cogitator back to the surface. He gave the cogitator to the Adeptus Mechanicus, who were pleased with it.

Just as the warband is wrapping the questions up, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*There is a commotion at the entrance to the section where the warband is sitting. A number of men, all of whom look like brothers at first glance, are attempting to force their way in. A Piscator guard shrieks in pain as one of the intruders whips out a long, thin blade and guts the guard with a vicious blow. The party erupts in panic as more assassins—all of whom look identical to one another, dressed in grey underhive leather gang uniforms—stalk into the room intent on murder.*

## NOW IT'S A PARTY

Just as the warband is getting comfortable, assassins attack, intending to end Farsheed's ambition to become planetary governor. The assassins are intent on murdering Farsheed, Kant, Madani and the player characters as well.

The heroes' main objective is to survive the attack and keep Farsheed alive. Secondary to this, keeping Kant and Madani alive is also important. Lastly, they may wish to try and capture an assassin alive for questioning.

A mob of 10 Piscator gangers (use the profile for the Ganger in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*) assists the player characters, as will Farsheed, Kant and Madani.

The enemies are Cult Assassins (see page 81). The number of assassins should equal twice the number of player characters, plus three assassins who focus solely on slaying Farsheed, Madani and Kant.

The Piscators are caught off guard and will not act for the first round (many are cut down by the assassins). The assassins want to push into the room and kill as many Piscators as possible, but go for Farsheed, Kant and Madani if able. All three defend themselves, although Farsheed is the least capable.

In truth, the assassin's master doesn't actually care if they succeed in killing Farsheed. The purpose of the attack is to sow suspicion and discord. Any captured assassins bite down upon a poison-filled fake tooth, killing themselves in sweet agony.

## WHO ARE THE ASSASSINS?

The heroes can take a closer look at the assassins either during the combat (by making a DN 5 Awareness test) or after the fight (no roll needed) to make out some interesting details. Each assassin looks identical to the others—they look youthful, handsome, with a slim physique and wavy blonde hair. If the warband went through Adventure 1: **Descent**, then they realise that the assassins look just like the Cult of Luxury killer, Gerrit. Each assassin is wearing grey leathers that identify them as members of the Silent Suplicants gang. Each also has a tattoo displaying that gang's symbol: a skull with its mouth bound in a prayer scroll.

If the player characters wish to study the assassins and their gear in more detail, see Investigation: Behind the Masks on page 71 for what they uncover.



## SURGICAL ALTERATIONS

Any heroes who wish to may make an Investigation test (DN 5) when checking over the assassins. Success means the character locates several micro-surgical scars on the assassin's faces and bodies. These scars indicate that they have been cosmetically altered—in some cases, even to the extent of shortening bones and facial reconstruction. Such procedures are not cheap or plentiful in the underhive, suggesting that these assassins may not be gang members at all.



## REACTIONS

Kant wants to storm the palace and kill Mina and her allies as she's clearly behind this. Farsheed and Madani, however, are more cautious. They ask the warband to keep quiet about the attack and see if they can uncover the truth. The Piscators will dispose of the bodies, any Tech or Medicae characters may take samples before this happens.

As it is nearing dawn, Farsheed suggests the warband return to their rooms and rest up for their meeting with Mina. The Aquila lander flies them back to the rooms within the Government Complex.

## AFTERMATH

Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*The morning of the second day dawns too early for you. You receive a message from Mina telling you that she awaits your attendance, as she has prepared the accounts for your perusal and organised a tour of the facilities.*

*Once prepared, a government page waits at the door and brings you across the public square and up into the Governor's Palace. In a meeting room, Mina awaits, along with Praetor Borst and Prefect Orrilus. Clerks, pages and various functionaries and assistants crowd the back of the room watching or working diligently on various tasks.*

*Mina greets you all with a nod, a glance and a clipped, "Good morning, shall we begin?" Chairs are pulled out for each of you and a large scroll is placed before each chair. You can see markers and blessings attached to the scroll's contents.*

*"As you can see, we have a large amount of territory to cover today, and once we finish with the accounts and standing of the planet and each hive, I will take you on a tour of the facilities here, and note the differences between Hive Aidon and the other hives on this planet."*

*Mina has prepared a copy of a massive prospectus for the entire planet for each member. It outlines her five-, ten- and twenty-year plans. She has listed estimates of production outputs, alliance and trade deals, and future expansion of the planet's facilities.*

Mina describes at length her view of Charybdion's economy and her plans for the future. If any of the warband inquire about the Silent Supplicants, she clears the room except for Orrilus and Borst.

When confronted, Mina acknowledges her membership in the Silent Supplicants. Praetor Borst is surprised at this information. When asked about the tattoos on the assassins, she will hold out her right hand, where she has a ring with the same symbol on one of her fingers. Mina tells the

warband she has no idea about the assassins and states that the Supplicants do not get tattoos, they are given rings. She states this with authority, since Mina is one of the Silent Supplicant's greatest supporters. If any player character wishes, they may attempt an Insight test (DN 5) to determine that Mina is telling the truth as she knows it.

Let the player characters roleplay with Mina and her advisors for a bit. When the time seems right to move the scene along, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*Mina begins to suggest a tour of the algae-processing facilities, but she is cut off. The windows suddenly burst in and black-clad figures tumble into view, wielding blades with murderous intent. Mina looks shocked, as do her advisors—but that does not deter the assassins, all of whom are dressed in the gang colours of the Piscators!*

## THE ATTACK ON MINA

Call for an Awareness test (DN 5). Any of the characters who pass are not caught off-guard by the assault. Any who fail are considered ambushed and may not act during the first round of combat.

The assassins' goal is to kill Mina, then Orrilus, then Borst. The warband are also fair game if they interfere (which they almost certainly will). There are a number of assassins equal to the number of player characters plus four. These last four concentrate on killing Mina, Orrilus and Borst. All of the assassins are wearing the distinctive colours of the Piscator gang.

Just as in the last battle, characters who wish to take a closer look at the "gangers" may make an Awareness test (DN 5). If the hero succeeds, they notice that the gangers are all identical—they have the same facial structure as the assassins who attacked Farsheed.

A group of three planetary defence troopers (use the Imperial Guardsman profile from page 409 in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*) act as allies in this combat. The Game Master, at their discretion, may focus the assassins' attacks on them in the first round to cut down on the number of combatants active in the fight. Prefect Orrilus runs for cover as soon as he can and takes little part in the actual battle. Borst and Mina fight as effectively as they can.

The assassins, like before, have poison-filled fake teeth they can bite down on if captured alive. However, these assassins are particularly fanatical, and many bit down on the tooth early on in the fight. The Game Master may describe some of the assassins with green-tinged foam on their lips as they battle to represent this.

If the player characters wish to study the assassins and their gear in more detail, see Investigation: Behind the Masks for what they uncover.

## REACTIONS

Mina is furious about the attack. Initially, she accuses the warband of working with Farsheed to assassinate her. A successful Interaction skill test (DN 5) can convince her of the truth. Instead, she insists that the warband are being deceived by her brother—and that the attack on Farsheed at the party was nothing but a sham. The real assault, she claims, was here, to try to eliminate her from the succession.

Mina demands that the warband gets to the bottom of this and finds the truth. Mina reminds the player characters that they have only until tomorrow to resolve the succession and speak to the councillors about whom is their choice to be the next planetary governor.

## INVESTIGATION: BEHIND THE MASKS

If you are not familiar with the rules for running Investigations, see page 259.

The warband needs to determine who is behind the assassination attempts, and maybe it will help them decide who should be governor.

As usual, keep in mind the fail-forward philosophy: failing any of the tests for these clues means that the warband still gets the information. However, each failure adds 1 Ruin to the GM's pool, since the player characters have to spend more time and effort learning the information—time that the assassins are putting to good use.

**Judge:** The councillors (Borst, Orillus, Kant and Madani). At the Game Master's discretion, Jakel Varonius, given his authority in the Gilead System, can also act as the Judge.

### Clues:

- ◆ **The Surgical Alterations:** Learning more about this clue requires a Médicae test (DN 5). Very precise surgery was required to make all the assassins resemble one another to such a high degree. Such expertise would be very rare in the underhive. **Costs one Shift:** The tools used for this surgery are very fine and delicate. Such tools are more likely to be found in an artist's studio than in a back-alley chirurgeon's shack.
- ◆ **The Mask-Maker:** Asking questions about specialised surgical services in the underhive can lead to another clue. If the characters succeed at a Cunning test (DN 7), they learn that an artist named Jomas Gartten has, on more than a few occasions, used his skills to change the faces of certain wanted citizens. (for more about Jomas Gartten, see Perfection on page 73). Characters with the Scum keyword gain +1d on this test.
- ◆ **The Assassins' Weapons:** The killers were all armed with uniquely shaped knives. The hilts appear to be two naked bodies wrapped around each other. To learn more requires a Weapon Skill test (DN 9) or a Tech test (DN 7). Characters that succeed learn that the alloy of metal used in these knives has a unique pattern. Questioning knife-makers (the characters could visit the Black Market from Adventure 1: **Descent**—see page 20) or a successful Cunning or Investigation test (DN 5) reveals that the



pattern belongs to an artist named Jomas Gartten. He owns an art gallery in upperhive that is called Perfection (see Perfection on page 73).

- ◆ **The Poison Teeth:** Learning more about the poison teeth requires an Investigation test (DN 7), a Medicae test (DN 9), or a Cunning test (DN 5). The poison has a name in the underhive: "sweet release". No one is certain of the origin of the poison, although it



is known to cause the victim extreme pleasure before they die from shock, aneurisms and a heart attack at the same time. Any character with the Chaos or Ordo Malleus keywords may spend a Shift for the following information: this particular poison is very similar to drugs that are often associated with worship of Slaanesh and the corruption of the Ruinous Powers.

#### Cues:

- ◆ **Questioning the Piscators:** If/when the party questions any Piscator members, they discover that they know nothing of the assassins beyond the attack they experienced. Investigation, Awareness and Insight tests may all be used to determine this.
- ◆ **Finding the Silent Suplicants and questioning them:** Mina is the only public member the party has knowledge about. If they ask her, she will point them to one of the gang's leaders. He and Mina are both in the dark about the assassins, again this can be uncovered with successful Investigation, Awareness and Insight tests.

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## THE LITTLE DEATH

**Cue:** If the warband chooses to investigate the report of Governor Ganthet Veneratio's death, they discover that trace elements similar to "sweet release" have been found in the remains. This strongly suggests a link between the governor's murder and the attacks on his successors.

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#### Locations:

- ◆ **Farsheed's Party:** No clues from the bodies can be found here now as the Piscator have disposed of them already. However, they saved most of the knives and will gladly give the warband one or two to investigate.
- ◆ **Mina's Briefing:** Bodies can be recovered here as the government will store several in a nearby morgue, as can weapons.
- ◆ **Perfection (see below):** Numerous clues can be found here, including samples of "sweet release", the assassins' weapons, and the surgical tools that have transformed many of them into exact copies of one another.

## PERFECTION

Investigating the assassins eventually leads the warband to an art gallery called Perfection.

Located in the poorest region of the upperhive, this gallery is known for its bizarre and vivid exhibits. Many of the paintings on display vary from outright grotesquery to portraits of haunting beauty. The artist, Jomas Gartten, lives in his studio above the gallery itself. The building is rather plain, but meticulously clean on the exterior. A simple sign reading "Perfection" hangs above the door, flanked by carven cherubs blowing trumpets in a silent fanfare.

When the warband enters the gallery, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*The interior of Perfection is a scene straight out of an abattoir. Corpses lie scattered across the floor of the gallery in languid poses, their faces displaying rapturous delight, but extreme violence is displayed on their flesh. Blood and other viscera have been liberally spread around, used as pigment to form a mural of a human figure on the north wall. This vile piece of art rests in between framed images of a blond, handsome man—dozens of paintings, all of them displaying the same, symmetrical face. Strange symbols have been daubed onto the floor and on the foreheads of each corpse—symbols that cause your eyes to wrench just gazing upon them.*

All characters who enter the gallery must immediately make a Corruption test (DN 5) or suffer 1 point of corruption.

The corpses are easily identified: many of them are members of the Silent Supplicants or the Piscator gangs. One of them has a data-slate on him that says he is Jomas Gartten. An Investigation or Medicae test (DN 3) shows that the people here were killed with sharp blades. Using a Shift for more information reveals that there are traces of poison—"sweet release" was used for each and every one. A character with the Chaos or Ordo Malleus keyword can identify the strange symbols as those belonging to the Chaos God, Slaanesh.

Any character investigating the scene should make an Awareness test (DN 7). Success reveals that a

smudged set of words has been written in blood by Jomas Gartten sometime before he died: "All revere the Perfect Man."

A metalworking shop used to make the knives is here, as well as several of the weapons themselves. Nearby is a chemistry kit—and many vials of "sweet release". There is also a closet full of longshoreman-like coats with the Piscator gang symbol. Worse, they find a tattoo apparatus and images of a symbol identical to the Silent Supplicant's emblem.

## THE FREAK-SERVITORS

An Investigation test (DN 6) can discover a hidden data-slate tucked behind one of the paintings. This data-slate contains information about a particular group of servitors that went missing from the algae processing centre. According to the data-slate, these servitors have been altered by Jomas Garnett. Dubbing them "Freak-servitors," the artist layered human skin in a grotesque parody of the assassins' appearance over the servitors' flesh and metal.

A successful Tech test (DN 7) reveals that the servitors have been armed with razor-sharp blades on their manipulators. Using a Shift for more information uncovers a series of strange bits of "scrapcode" used to modify the servitors' programming.

If the player characters discover this information, they can predict some of the servitors' attack patterns. Grant the heroes a +1 Defence bonus during the final encounter (see page 76) against the Freak-servitors.

## THE SOLUTION

The warband realises that neither faction instigated the attacks. The Cult of Luxury—led by someone calling themselves "the Perfect Man"—is not only behind the former governor's death, but they are actively trying to kill his heirs as well. Destroying any strong leadership puts Charybdion on a path towards doom.

Of greatest import is this: neither of the heirs understands the truth of what is going on. Neither Mina nor Farsheed are aware of the threat, much less just how dangerous their enemies truly are.



## ACT THREE: BLOOD IN THE WATER

As the warband leaves the gallery, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*Night falls as you leave the gallery, but flickering orange lights draw your attention towards a nearby section of the hive. Flames blaze across several hab-stacks, fed by torch-wielding figures wrapped in upperhive fineries, silks and tapestries, smeared with filth. Wild-eyed men and women shout with ecstasy as they engage in unhinged riots, draping themselves with the soiled trappings of wealth and nobility robbed from some of the burning spires. You are witnessing a storm of insurrection, and the cultists responsible are intent on reducing Hive Aidon to a charred husk.*

*You hear the crump of a large explosion far above you, feeling vibrations rattling through the street as one of the spires above shatters and begins to topple into the lower level. Smoke, weapons fire and screams fill the air. The Cult of Luxury has begun its uprising.*

### REVENGE OF THE CULT

The Cult of Luxury has been preparing for this moment for some time. Its prophet, Gerrit (see Adventure 1: **Descent**) murdered the planetary governor, Ganthet Veneratio, and enacted a series of murders to set the nobles of the upperhive spires against one another. After Gerrit's plan was foiled (by the warband if they participated in Adventure 1: **Descent**, otherwise, Praetor Borst eventually dealt with him), the Cult turned to Jomas Gartten—an artist with a talent for carving flesh. Jomas and his gallery, Perfection, became the new centre of the cult—and Jomas began to think of ways to finish what Gerrit began. Namely, to eliminate the governor's heirs and set Charybdion on a path towards complete anarchy.

Jomas and his fellow cultists—at the direction of the mysterious "Perfect Man" (for more about this villain, see Adventure 4: **Ironwatch**)—have attempted to seduce and manipulate two underhive gangs (the Piscators and the Silent Supplicants). The Cult's plan was for the two gangs to break out into open war in the underhive, each blaming the other for slaughtering the two heirs, Mina and Farsheed.

Tonight is the Cult's last opportunity to disrupt the succession. Thus, they have fully played their hand, spreading throughout Hive Aidon to launch a series of bloody riots and fires. If the Cult can slay both heirs in the process, so much the better. If they are not stopped now, Hive Aidon will burn... and the uprisings will surely spread to the rest of the planet.

However, this is also a key moment where the warband's efforts can head off disaster.

### SOLVING THE PROBLEM

The player characters may get involved in a number of ways. The most appropriate methods for dealing with the riots is either to treat the entire obstacle as a threatening task (recommended; see page 254 in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules* for threatening tasks) or to fight a series of combats. The player characters may wish to come up with another creative solution—the GM should use their discretion as to what would best suit their group of players.

#### SOLUTION A: THREATENING TASK

To deal with the riots raging across the hive as a threatening task, treat this as a threatening task with 3-5 steps that must be completed. Below are some suggested steps that the player characters can attempt to complete before time runs out:

**Recruit the Gangs:** The heroes may attempt to recruit the Piscators or the Silent Supplicants (or both) to assist in defending the hive against the cult's uprising. Cunning or Interaction skills, or Influence tests can be particularly appropriate in securing the gangs to help. At the GM's discretion, this can actually count as two steps, one for each gang. Characters with the Scum keyword gain a +1d bonus to all tests to resolve this step.

**Rally the Enforcers:** The Enforcers are nominally led by Praetor Borst; however, the riots have made coordinating their efforts difficult, and the cult's pernicious infiltration has rendered many of the Enforcers leaderless. The player characters can step in with Interaction skills, Leadership, or Influence tests (just as some examples) to rally the

Enforcers and direct their efforts more efficiently to deal with the crisis.

**Call for Reinforcements:** Some characters may wish to call for help from Jakel Varonius or his flotilla. However, sending a signal is no simple matter—a powerful vox transmitter must be located, and the cult makes travelling through the hive difficult to begin with. Player characters could use various skills to fight their way to the transmitter and send out a signal asking for aid. Reinforcements in this case may also come from the planetary defence force troopers stationed elsewhere on Charybdion.

**Rescue Citizens:** Death and carnage are left in the cult's wake as they rampage through the hive. If the warband wishes, they may use various skills (Athletics, Medicae and Leadership are just some examples) to help rescue citizens of Hive Aidon that are in danger from the spreading flames, destruction or execution from the Cult of Luxury. Those who are rescued from certain death are grateful, of course, and the warband's efforts may help create a stable island of calm and order that other forces fighting against the cult can use as a base of operations.

**Extinguish Fires:** The flames that are blazing across the hive are not just for background colour—they are a serious danger. The player characters may wish to find a way to put out these fires if possible. Tech, Leadership and other skill tests can direct normal firefighting efforts—but the warband may be able to siphon off some of the leaking seawater from the underhive and use that to smother the flames.

**Slay the Cult Leaders:** Naturally, the Cult of Luxury has its own charismatic and inspiring leaders. Attacking these important leaders can cut off the cult's efforts at the knees and severely hinder any further escalation of their attacks. Weapon, Ballistic and Interaction skills are just some examples of how the warband can track down and eliminate these cult leaders to slow down the damage dealt to the hive.

#### **SOLUTION B: FIGHTING THE CULT DIRECTLY**

If the warband wishes to engage the cult directly, the Game Master should arrange this as a series of combats. Three is the recommended number of fights that the group should engage in to end the riots. Each combat should be challenging. To

fight the Cult of Luxury, the GM should arrange a number of cultists equal to three times the number of players, assisted by 1-3 Cult Leaders (see pages 419 and 420 in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*). To make these combats run faster, organise the cultists into mobs. To make the fights more difficult, ensure that each mob of cultists is armed with one flamer or one heavy stubber.

## **CHOOSE THE SUCCESSOR**

After the player characters have dealt with the uprising of the Cult of Luxury, they may then go to the Governor's Palace to check on the two heirs. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*The smell of smoke and blood hangs in the air. Dark burns stain the walls of the Governor's Palace as surviving guards escort you towards the councillors' chamber. Fortunately, the council and the heirs (those who survived the assassination attempts) made it through the riots unscathed. Praetor Borst nods with grudging respect at your warband's survival, fresh burns marking his usually immaculate clothing.*

*The moment to decide has come. The hive leans over the precipice of chaos, it cannot take another day without a leader and strong action to rule the planet in the Emperor's name.*

The warband needs to decide now who they think should be the new governor. Have the siblings ask them about the assassinations:

Mina asks, "Was my brother behind the assassinations?" Farsheed counters and asks the opposite. Give the players a chance to explain about the Cult of Luxury.

Let the players ask Mina and Farsheed about how they see themselves as governor. Mina keeps accounts and grows the finances, but will avoid social functions as much as possible. Farsheed is skilled at handling diplomacy, but will avoid the economy like the plague.

Give this scene breathing room, let the players argue, throw in arguments for both sides via the NPC councillors. If the player characters do not think of it, Prefect Orrilus suggests a power-sharing arrangement where one is governor and the other is a permanent right-hand advisor.

Once the warband has made their decision, move on to the final scene.

## SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS

Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*Hive Aidon is filled with the ringing of bells from the great cathedrals and hymns blaring from laud hailers on every spire. The day of the coronation has arrived. The hive is settling back into a normal routine thanks to the hard work of the Enforcers and with help from both the Supplicants and the Piscators working to keep their territories in line.*

*A massive crowd has filled the Palace Square and your walk from your rooms to the cathedral is a short one. Enforcers stand guard at each entrance. Planetary defence force troopers patrol the palace to head off any further riots.*

*Inside, sunlight blazes through the 30-metre-tall stained-glass windows depicting the Emperor and the Holy Saints of the Imperium of Man. A golden hue fills the nave, while the rafters are still hidden in shadow. A crimson red carpet runs the length of the black-and-white tiled floor. Incense fills the air and arrays of candles surround the pews with even more light. The cathedral is bursting with upperhive dignitaries. However, seats at the front have been saved for you as representatives of Varonius and the Governor's Council.*

*Moments after you take your seats, the ceremony begins. Row upon row of Adeptus Ministorum priests march down the aisle and take their places around the alter. Finally, the Arch-Deacon steps forth and is handed the golden chain of the Charybdion Planetary Governor. The heir, [Farsheed or Mira] is dressed in their finest clothes and walks slowly towards the alter flanked by their two councillors.*

*The crowd falls silent as [Farsheed or Mira] takes their seat upon the throne. The Arch-Deacon opens his mouth to begin his sermon when screams arise from the crowd behind you followed by the sounds of bloody carnage. The assembled nobility tumble over each other as they flee the stage. One of the enforcers shouts, "Protect the governor!"*

*You turn to see a large group of hunched creatures dropping down from the shadows of the rafters above. They resemble combat*

*servitors, but bloody scraps of flesh have been sewn over their faces and torsos in a mockery of the by-now-familiar appearance of the assassins who struck earlier at Mina and Farsheed. Stolen faces adorn the servitors' skulls, lips stretched in a rictus grin. Lurid symbols have been carved into their flesh, and gleaming, razor-sharp blades jut from their fists. The servitors stalk the cathedral, rending the dignitaries into gory ruin with their implanted weapons. Somehow, the cult must have sequestered these foul things within the cathedral as a final effort to end the succession before the new governor can be confirmed. These corrupted monsters are lunging to attack anyone they can reach... but they are also on a direct path for the designated heir!*

Faced with these foul creations (these are the Freak-servitors created by Jomas Gartten), all of the player characters must make a Corruption Test (DN 5) or suffer 1 point of corruption. At the same time, the characters must also pass a Fear test (DN 5)—this is one of the Freak-servitors' abilities (see page 81).

The warband faces a major threat: there is a full dozen of the Freak-servitors launching their attack in the cathedral. Two more Freak-servitors are engaging the palace guard (at the Game Master's discretion, these two forces spend the battle wiping each other out, leaving the player characters as the main focus of the battle). These lurching creatures are corrupted by the Cult's scrapcode, and they are intent upon slaying the new Governor.

The warband's main objective is to keep the heirs alive, protect as many of the council as possible and end the threat. Whichever heir has been chosen as governor fights with the heroes, whilst the other works with the councillors to try to evacuate as many attendees as possible from the battleground.

At the GM's discretion, a squad of 6 palace guard (use the Imperial Guardsman profile from page 409 in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*) may fight with the heroes as allies.

## AFTERMATH

**If the governor and their sibling lives:** After the battle ends the Arch-Deacon performs the ceremony of office faster than it had ever been performed in recorded history of the planet,

speeding through the requisite prayers and admonitions before placing the chain of office around the new governor's shoulders.

Meanwhile, the palace guard are clearing out the dead and wounded, and have set up a triage outside while transports rush the worst-injured to the closest medicae station. The governor thanks you and all their defenders for helping them survive this attempt on their life. They vow before the altar of the Emperor to hunt down any vestiges of this Cult of Luxury, and scour it clean from every hive on the planet.

Praetor Borst turns to each of you and gruffly admits that the warband performed admirably.

**If the governor dies, but their sibling lives:** A great wail arises from the assembled crowd as word of the governor's passing spreads through the mass. Soon, however, shouts of, "Long Live the Governor!" arise from within the ruined nave of the cathedral.

**If both siblings die:** A great wail explodes from the assembled masses as word of the deaths of Farsheed and Mina spreads like wildfire through

the crowd. Riots break out and the Enforcers do everything they can to keep the crowd under control. Unrest erupts throughout the hive as word spreads and the surviving dignitaries, Ecclesiarchy and councillors retreat to the relative safety of their spires. Praetor Borst (or another councillor if he is dead) points directly at the warband and banishes you with a growl. "Be gone from this place lest you bring more ruin upon us!"

## REWARDS

Successfully placing one of the heirs as the new planetary governor earns each member of the warband +1 Influence. Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius also rewards them each with +1 Wealth. At the Game Master's discretion, the Rogue Trader may allow the heroes to select a single item (up to Value 9 and Very Rare) from his personal armoury.

If one of the siblings dies, each player character suffers a loss of 1 point of Influence. If both heirs die, the influence loss is 2 points instead. Meanwhile, the consequences for Charybdion are dire—without any heir, disaster is all but assured.





## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

This section details all of the important characters met during this adventure and their relevant stats. If they are mentioned during the adventure you can reference them here.

### FARSHEED VENERATIO

Farsheed Veneratio is incredibly charismatic and seeks to befriend the warband and sway them to his side with his smooth talk and party.

<b>Strength</b>	4	<b>Intellect</b>	3		
<b>Agility</b>	3	<b>Willpower</b>	5		
<b>Toughness</b>	4	<b>Fellowship</b>	6		
<b>Initiative</b>	4	<b>Defence</b>	3		
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	6		
<b>Shock</b>	5	<b>Soak</b>	4		
<b>Resolve</b>	4	<b>Conviction</b>	5		
<b>Passive Awareness</b>		4			
<b>Resilience</b>		7 (Armoured Greatcoat 2)			
<b>Skills</b>	Ballistic Skill 6, Persuasion 8, Default 5				
<b>Size</b>	Average				
<b>Keywords</b>	Imperium, Scum				

### ATTACKS

**Las pistol:** (Damage 7+1ED; AP 0; Range 20m (R); Salvo: 1; Pistol, Steadfast)  
**Knife:** (Damage 6+1ED; AP 0)

### MINA VENERATIO

Mina Veneratio's green eyes glint with controlled emotions and she never seems to smile or frown.

<b>Strength</b>	3	<b>Intellect</b>	6		
<b>Agility</b>	5	<b>Willpower</b>	5		
<b>Toughness</b>	4	<b>Fellowship</b>	2		
<b>Initiative</b>	5	<b>Defence</b>	4		
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	6		
<b>Shock</b>	6	<b>Soak</b>	4		
<b>Resolve</b>	4	<b>Conviction</b>	5		
<b>Passive Awareness</b>		6			
<b>Resilience</b>	7 (Bodyglove 2)				
<b>Skills</b>	Ballistic Skill 8, Default 5				
<b>Size</b>	Average				
<b>Keywords</b>	Imperium, Scum				

### ATTACKS

**Twin Duelling Laspistols:** (Damage 10+1ED; AP 0; Range 20m (R); Salvo: 1; Pistol)  
**Knife:** (Damage 5+1ED; AP 0)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Gunfighter:** Mina may make a single attack against one target with both laspistols. Make a single Ballistic Skill test, then (if she hits) apply the results and add the total damage value of her pistols together. Lastly, double the target's Resilience, then apply the total.



## PRAETOR PISCILLAN BORST

Borst is tall and gaunt. He does not so much move about a room as loom over others in his pitch-black clothes with perfectly etched silver thread. His sunken eyes glow with malevolence at all who he believes to be unworthy, which is most people.

<b>Strength</b>	3	<b>Intellect</b>	5
<b>Agility</b>	3	<b>Willpower</b>	5
<b>Toughness</b>	4	<b>Fellowship</b>	4
<b>Initiative</b>	4	<b>Defence</b>	3
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	6
<b>Shock</b>	8	<b>Soak</b>	4
<b>Resolve</b>	4	<b>Conviction</b>	5
<b>Passive Awareness</b>	5		
<b>Resilience</b>	8 (Refractor Field 3)		
<b>Skills</b>	Ballistic Skill 6, Intimidation 7, Investigation 6, Default 5		
<b>Size</b>	Average		
<b>Keywords</b>	Imperium		

### ATTACKS

**Master-crafted Laspistol:** (Damage 7+1ED; AP 0; Range 20m (R); Salvo: 1; Pistol, Steadfast; +2d to all Ballistic Skill Tests)

**Knife:** (Damage 6+1ED; AP 0)

**Refractor Field:** Borst may attempt to Soak Mortal Wounds.

## DRESDOR KANT

Master Foreman Dresdor Kant is built like an Ogrym. He wears a clean and bright yellow waterproof jumpsuit. He has dark blue tattoos along his neck and the letters, HOLD FAST across the knuckles of his hands. The Piscator gang symbol can be seen peeking out from his collar on the side of his neck.



<b>Strength</b>	7	<b>Intellect</b>	3
<b>Agility</b>	4	<b>Willpower</b>	4
<b>Toughness</b>	6	<b>Fellowship</b>	3
<b>Initiative</b>	4	<b>Defence</b>	3
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	9
<b>Shock</b>	10	<b>Soak</b>	6
<b>Resolve</b>	3	<b>Conviction</b>	4
<b>Passive Awareness</b>	4		
<b>Resilience</b>	9 (Displacer Field Implant 4)		
<b>Skills</b>	Tech 7, Default 5		
<b>Size</b>	Average		
<b>Keywords</b>	Imperium, Adeptus Mechanicus		

### ATTACKS

**Bolt Pistol:** (Damage 10+1ED; AP 0; Range 20m (R); Salvo: 1; Brutal, Pistol)

**Boarding Axe:** (Damage 12+1ED; AP 0)

## ENGINSEER SHADI MADANI

The Enginseer wears the red robes of the Adeptus Mechanicus and is quite short. The only visible cybernetics are her eyes that still appear to be mostly human. When she moves she hovers a few inches above the floor.

<b>Strength</b>	5	<b>Intellect</b>	3
<b>Agility</b>	6	<b>Willpower</b>	3
<b>Toughness</b>	3	<b>Fellowship</b>	3
<b>Initiative</b>	4	<b>Defence</b>	3
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	7
<b>Shock</b>	9	<b>Soak</b>	3
<b>Resolve</b>	2	<b>Conviction</b>	3
<b>Passive Awareness</b>	4		
<b>Resilience</b>	7 (Displacer Field Implant 4)		
<b>Skills</b>	Tech 7, Default 5		
<b>Size</b>	Average		
<b>Keywords</b>	Imperium, Adeptus Mechanicus		

## ATTACKS

**Weapon Implant (Plasma Gun):** (Damage 15+1ED; AP -3; Range 48m (R); Salvo: 2; Rapid-fire [1]; Supercharge)

**Bladed Mechadendrite:** (Damage 9+1ED; AP 0)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Displacer Field Implant:** This character may attempt to Soak Mortal Wounds.

**Magnometric System:** This character may fly up to her normal Speed.

## PREFECT ORRILUS

**Administratum Prefect Orrilus** is an older man wearing red, ragged robes and clutches a cogitator mounted on his chest that is constantly updating a scroll emerging from the bottom with data about the hive.

Strength	4	Intellect	3
Agility	3	Willpower	3
Toughness	4	Fellowship	3
Initiative	4	Defence	3
Speed	6	Wounds	4
Shock	6	Soak	4
Resolve	2	Conviction	3
Passive Awareness		4	
Resilience	4		
Skills	Insight 7, Scholar 7, Default 5		
Size	Average		
Keywords	Imperium		

## ATTACKS

**Ceremonial Knife:** (Damage 6+1ED; AP 0)



## MAJOR FACTIONS

These two groups will often ally with the warband if they are treated in a positive way, but that all depends on the warband. They could easily become enemies.

## GANG MEMBERS

**The Silent Suplicants** are a gang/secret society/ order that is composed of the upper level members of the hives of Charybdion. They seek to prevent corruption from spreading and work in secrecy to obtain and control the hives across the planet. They tend to be important members of a hive and wear muted colours along with a deep purple. They can be identified by their symbol: a skull in a purple cowl, its mouth wrapped in prayer tape. They often wear this symbol on rings or pendants.

**The Piscator Hive Gang** are a typical hive gang that controls most of the lower hives across Charybdion, but are strongest where they originated in Hive Aidon. They are composed of mostly dock workers and manual labourers, most members, men and women, trend towards the larger sizes. Some, however, are low-level workers for the Adeptus Mechanicus. They all are tattooed with the gang's symbol: three black wavy lines parallel and stacked on top of each other. They get their name from the Piscator, a large canal filled with black water that runs through Hive Aidon. They tend to wear bright yellow coveralls, waders or rain slickers. Otherwise, they wear dock worker clothes. They often carry heavy tools they can use as improvised weapons.

## CULT MEMBERS

The Cult of Luxury has taken root within Hive Aidon and seeks to spread chaos across the entirety of Charybdion. They killed the last governor, and are seeking to disrupt the selection of a new governor and possibly kill off the heirs so that the planet falls into lawless chaos as the hives erupt into mass riots and protests. Typically, they adorn themselves with torn and soiled fineries worn by nobles and upperhive dignitaries far above their station. They often have the symbol of Slaanesh carved into their skin.

## CULT ASSASSINS

Surgically altered to appear identical to the killer Gerrit, these fanatical cult members are cold-blooded murderers. They impersonate gang members of both the Piscators and the Silent Supplicants during the course of the Cult of Luxury's attempt to destabilise Charybdion. These assassins also have a poison-filled fake tooth implanted to prevent being taken alive.

**Threat Rating:** Adversaries for Tier 1-2, Elites for Tier 3+.

<b>Strength</b>	5	<b>Intellect</b>	3
<b>Agility</b>	5	<b>Willpower</b>	5
<b>Toughness</b>	5	<b>Fellowship</b>	3
<b>Initiative</b>	5	<b>Defence</b>	4
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	5
<b>Shock</b>	9	<b>Soak</b>	5
<b>Resolve</b>	4	<b>Conviction</b>	5
<b>Passive Awareness</b>		5	
<b>Resilience</b>	8 (Bodyglove 2)		
<b>Skills</b>	Ballistic Skill 8, Stealth 9, Weapon Skill 8, Default 6		
<b>Size</b>	Average		
<b>Keywords</b>	Heretic, Scum		

## ATTACKS

**Hand Cannon:** (Damage 9+1ED; AP 0; Range 20m (R); Salvo: 1; Pistol)

**Mono-Blade:** (Damage 8+1ED; AP -1)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Identical:** The surgical procedures that transformed the assassins into identical copies of one another make fighting them very confusing in the heat of battle. Whenever the assassin is engaged or adjacent to any other character, the assassin gains +2 Defence.

**Killer Instinct:** Whenever this assassin takes the Aim or All-out Attack options in combat, they gain +1ED to damage for any successful attacks that round.

**Uncanny Reflexes:** The assassins may attempt to Soak Mortal Wounds.

## FREAK-SERVITORS

These threats are the final attack, in this adventure, of the Cult of Luxury. They are mindless berserkers who have been taken by the Cult and twisted to their dark needs. The symbol of Slaanesh has been engraved into their flesh. They are hulking monstrosities of flesh, bone and mindless muscle that will kill all who come before them. They appear to gain great pleasure from each kill.

**Threat Rating:** Adversaries at Tier 1-3, Elites at Tier 4+.

<b>Strength</b>	7	<b>Intellect</b>	2		
<b>Agility</b>	6	<b>Willpower</b>	3		
<b>Toughness</b>	6	<b>Fellowship</b>	2		
<b>Initiative</b>	6	<b>Defence</b>	5		
<b>Speed</b>	6	<b>Wounds</b>	10		
<b>Shock</b>	14	<b>Soak</b>	6		
<b>Resolve</b>	4	<b>Conviction</b>	3		
<b>Passive Awareness</b>		5			
<b>Resilience</b>	9 (Sub-dermal Armour 3)				
<b>Skills</b>	Weapon Skill 9, Default 6				
<b>Size</b>	Average				
<b>Keywords</b>	Chaos, Heretic, Servitor				

## ATTACKS

**Implanted mono-blades:** (Damage 11+1ED; AP -2)

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Slaughter Dispensers:** The corrupted arco-flagellants ignore up to +2 DN penalty for using the multi-attack option in melee.

**Fear (3):** This threat causes Fear. Enemies are required to pass a Fear test to act normally.

**Fearless:** These creatures always pass Resolve tests and are immune to any Fear effects or Intimidation interaction attacks.

**Pain is Pleasure:** These creatures may attempt to Soak Mortal Wounds.





# IRONWATCH







## INTRODUCTION

**Ironwatch** is the climactic adventure for *Dark Tides*. This is an adventure suitable for characters of Tiers 4-5 in which the warband discovers the ultimate source of the evil plaguing Charybdion. The heroes travel to Ironwatch—a dark and hellish Enforcer prison facility, corrupted by the seething power of Psykers confined there by the planetary governor's order. The warband must activate a series of failsafes to cast the prison into the raging seas before the rampaging Psykers unleash a wave of unnatural terrors across the planet. Should the heroes fail, this world—and possibly the entire Gilead System—could be doomed.

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### CHARACTER TYPES APPROPRIATE FOR THIS ADVENTURE

- Most of the Tier 4 and 5 characters are appropriate to play through **Ironwatch**. Archetypes with the Imperium keyword are best, while archetypes without that keyword might have a harder time fitting into the adventure. The GM must come up with reasons for non-Imperium characters to join in the warband; perhaps Rogue Trader Varonius recruits an Eldar corsair to help stem the madness, for example. Due to the nature of the horrors they confront, the warband finds it very useful to have characters with the Psyker and Adeptus Ministorum keywords on board. A character with the Adeptus Mechanicus keyword is also extremely useful.

This is a difficult adventure where the characters are tested to the limits of their physical, emotional and mental endurance, so to make it appropriate for lower-Tier characters, the Game Master needs to scale back the challenges and the opposition quite a bit. Depending on the makeup of the warband, you might consider removing one or two of the failsafes the characters must activate. Additionally, reduce the number of enemies the heroes have to face during their battles. A warband that is not well-equipped with wargear such as force weapons or heavy firepower may struggle to deal with the forces of the warp.

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### RUNNING IRONWATCH AS A STAND-ALONE ADVENTURE

**Ironwatch** is the climax to the *Dark Tides* series of adventures, and as such it isn't really designed to stand alone. The backdrop of chaos across Charybdion—the murdered governor, the butchered noblemen, the outbreaks of violence in the underhive, the confusion regarding the succession of a new ruler—all of these things are essential to the feel and flow of this adventure. **Ironwatch** links together the plots from each of the previous adventures. If you have not run these other games, you should make sure the players are aware of the goings-on across the beleaguered planet of Charybdion, so the things happening here don't come as a surprise to them.

With some work, an enterprising Game Master could slot this adventure into a different campaign. The concept of an overcrowded prison filled with Psykers, bursting at the seams with horrors and psychic energies, could fit just about any Imperial world in the Imperium Nihilus. Cut off from the rest of the Imperium, the press of Psykers within the prison only grows as the Adeptus Astra Telepathica Black Ships are overdue to claim their harvest. The Great Rift is at the core of these problems, increasing the occurrence of Psykers amongst the population, and ensuring the Black Ships have a far more difficult time reaching their appointed routes.

Perhaps on a different world, a greater daemon is manipulating events and using the raw, untamed Psykers trapped within the prison to further their own schemes. In this case, change the “Perfect Man” sub-plot into a scheme to transform a powerful captive Psyker into the perfect vessel to contain the greater daemon’s monstrous power within the material realm.

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## FACING THE HORROR

**Ironwatch** is a horror adventure that tests your warband's ability to deal with the true nature of reality. Most of the tips and tricks listed in Adventure 2: **Sleepwalker** are appropriate for running **Ironwatch**, so brush up on those. Pay particular attention to the "Running a Horror Game" and "Pulling Triggers" sidebars (pages 32–33). You want to terrify the characters and make sure they are aware of the astronomical stakes of this adventure, but you also want to make sure all your players are comfortable and having fun.

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### OVERVIEW

**Ironwatch** is an adventure suitable for *Wrath & Glory* characters from Tiers 4 and 5.

#### ACT ONE: SOUND

The warband must enter an infamous Enforcer prison facility named Ironwatch. Inside, all bedlam has broken loose—the planetary governor has been forced to confine Psykers in Ironwatch to await the Black Ships. However, the Great Rift has only made things worse, and a mighty source of corruption has infected the prison's population, causing them and their unnatural powers to go out of control. The only way to deal with the rampaging Psykers in Ironwatch is to activate a series of failsafe locks. Once fully active, the failsafes are designed to release Ironwatch's physical structure from the hive itself and cast the entire facility into the lightless depths of the raging sea below. In part one, the warband must locate and activate the first failsafe.

#### ACT TWO: SILENCE

The warband ascends into the upper levels of Ironwatch, encountering further madness and corruption. The heroes must activate the next failsafe. Here, they meet the "Perfect Man"—the architect behind Charybdion's upheavals.

#### ACT THREE: FURY

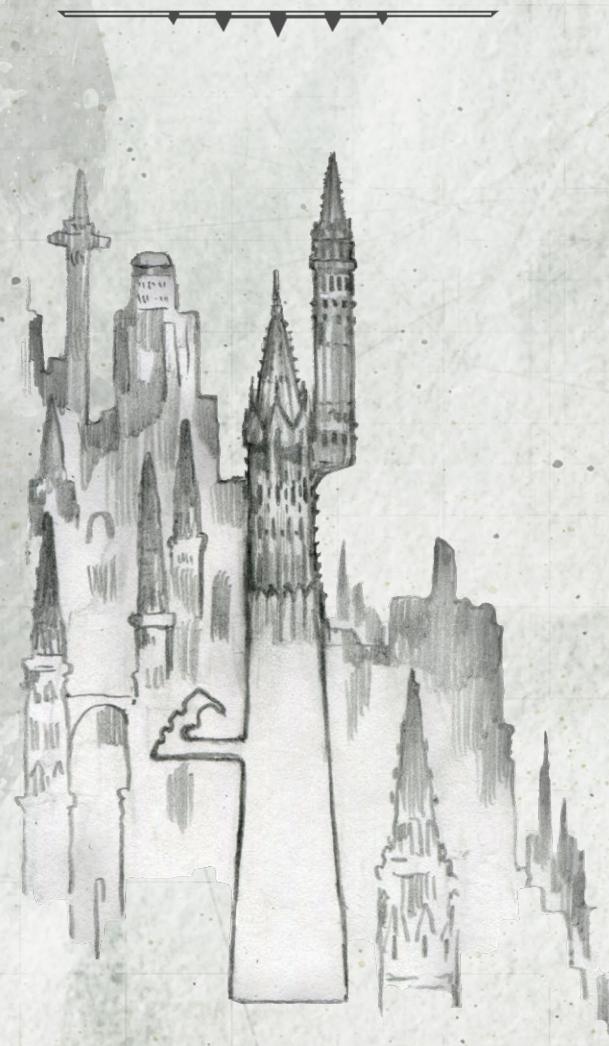
The warband reaches the final failsafe. The source of Ironwatch's corruption lurks here, ready for a final confrontation with the player characters. The force behind the "Perfect Man" is revealed as a Greater Daemon of Slaanesh—a mighty foe indeed. Here is where the fate of Charybdion is decided.

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## GROUPS WITH NO PSYKERS

Some warbands might not have a Psyker among them, which makes successfully completing this adventure considerably more challenging. However, with a little work it's not difficult for the GM to challenge the warband without making this scenario impossible to defeat. First, you'll want to substitute other skills for Psychic Mastery tests. Consider Tech, Faith, Investigation, Scholar or Insight as substitutes, depending on the situation at hand. And of course, there's always the Imperium's solution to many problems: good, old-fashioned firepower can take care of a great many physical trials.

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## ACT ONE: SOUND

Ironwatch is a mighty citadel atop Hive Aidon, capital of Charybdion. Overhead, the Great Rift is a faint, malevolent glow across the stars. Facing a swelling population of Psykers, the planetary governor authorised Ironwatch to house some of them to await the overdue arrival of the Black Ships. These dangerously untrained Psykers are kept in Ironwatch's bleak cells, their gifts ripe for corruption. A dark place even in brighter times, Ironwatch has become a horror show of pain, terror and madness—and this tide of darkness threatens to break free from its cage to corrupt the entire world.

An oppressive atmosphere lingers over the prison, giving the entire structure a feeling of slow-building tension that is impossible to defuse. The prison itself, from the gates to the halls within, appears twisted, broken and decayed. It is clear something is just not right. As the warband moves deeper into the darkened corridors of Ironwatch, the feelings of oppression and terror only grow stronger.

During the first act, the heroes learn how the horror of Ironwatch was born, and they discover the extent of the problem. They learn that three failsafe devices can be activated to detach the prison from the hive and cast it into the sea, destroying the facility and the Psykers together in one necessary sacrifice. Within, the warband meets a powerful Psyker, Dymphna, who can help guide them through the horrors of the prison to find the failsafes they seek.

### THE MISSION

Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius meets with the warband in one of his many trophy rooms aboard his flagship, the Grand Cruiser *Ducal Circlet*. Give your players the opportunity to roleplay and introduce their characters before, during and after the initial meeting with Varonius.

*The trophy room is resplendent and ancient, panelled with the hull plates of vanquished foes, from the pitted casings of traitor ships, to the crude riveted iron of Ork vessels, to the smooth, iridescent curves of wraithbone. The table is fashioned from the bole of a single massive tree, its surface so polished it shimmers under the rich yellow lumogloves. Slight depressions*

*in the otherwise flawless surface of the table lie before each chair, worn into the wood by the elbows and arms of countless taskings. At the head of it all, in an ornate chair somewhere between throne and naval wheel, the Rogue Trader Jakel Varonius lounges with a large snifter of amasec, a splash of the amber liquid swirling about the bottom of the glass.*

*Varonius welcomes the heroes warmly, but does not relax the ever-present sense of his own authority. His voice is deep, rich and accustomed to command without needing to be raised. He gets quickly to the point.*

*"I have an important assignment for you. There is an Enforcer prison facility here on this world, a spire rising from the high slopes of Hive Aidon known as Ironwatch. The former planetary governor had no choice but to confine his world's Psykers inside this prison safely away from the populace. There, they would stay until the Black Ships can come and take them away to Holy Terra. Unfortunately, the Great Rift has made warp travel difficult... and the Black Ships are long overdue. This has led to a massive problem with overcrowding and mismanagement of the prison. The situation has only been growing worse since Governor Veneratio was murdered by a group of cultists intent on destabilising the entire government of Charybdion and endangering the Imperium's control over this system.*

*Today, all signals from Ironwatch have been silenced. We've lost all contact with the Enforcers stationed there, and attempts to reach it by vox only receive static and strange, disturbing echoes. My navigator, an old and skilled member of his house, tells me that something very dangerous is stirring within Ironwatch. Perhaps the prisoners have gone mad, or perhaps they have taken control of the prison from within. Whatever the truth, if these Psykers manage to break free from Ironwatch, they could wreak havoc all across the planet.*

*The new governor has given us full access to the facility. I'm told there are three failsafe locks,*

constructed by the Adeptus Mechanicus in ages long past. When activated, these failsafes will detach the prison from the hive itself, and the entire structure will tumble down into the sea. Taking this action will destroy the prison and anyone inside of it, but it is the only way to be certain.

*The prison itself is sealed up tight, so once inside, you will be beyond our ability to support. You are my most trusted agents, so I'm sending you inside to activate the three failsafes and escape before the facility sinks forever into the ocean. Anything that could have overwhelmed the Enforcers on station inside Ironwatch must be formidable indeed, so time is of the essence. If whatever is inside Ironwatch escapes—the entire planet could be at risk.*

*The failsafes are in the upper levels of Ironwatch. You have access to an Arvus lighter and a pilot. This shuttlecraft should get you to the facility and will stand by to extract you once your task is complete. I wish I could offer more, but my resources are stretched thin defending worlds across the system.*

Varonius pauses, his face stony. "The stakes here are high, so if I do not receive a signal from you in six hours, my flotilla is standing by to bombard the prison from orbit. It is unlikely Hive Aidon would survive the flotilla's lance strikes, but it would be a necessary sacrifice."

*The Rogue Trader toasts your warband with his amasec. "Good luck, and remember that the Emperor protects."*

Jakel entertains a few questions, but his knowledge beyond these points is limited—this is why he needs the warband, to find out what's going on and to put a stop to it.

Varonius supplies the warband with a data-slate that contains a map of the facility. However, Ironwatch is an ancient edifice, built ages ago, and few maps of the entire structure exist. Therefore, this map does not reveal much more than the general location of the failsafe locks—one is near the only entrance to the prison, another is in the Astropathic communications tower, and the final one is at the very core of the prison.

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## USING PSYCHIC POWERS WITHIN IRONWATCH

The veil between the real world and the Empyrean is thin in Ironwatch. It feels ragged, stretched and torn. Therefore, all Psykers must add one bonus Wrath die to all powers at all times to represent how much more potent—and dangerous—their abilities are here.

Additionally, any NPC (aside from the Greater Daemon of Slaanesh) who uses a psychic power while in the prison automatically rolls on the Perils of the Warp table (see page 338 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*).

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## THE PRISON SPIRE

*The journey from orbit is a rough ride as atmospheric conditions buffet the tiny lighter mercilessly. After what seems an eternity flying through the thick grey cloud cover that shrouds the world, the Arvus lighter breaks free over the ocean. It skims over the dirty grey-green foaming tips of waves the size of battle titans. Fog, rain and sea spray wash over the lighter's ports. Flashes of lightning illuminate the black, storm-tossed water. The wind howls and shakes the ship as the storm grows more intense, and the seat restraints cut into your shoulders.*

If one of the PCs pilots the lighter, successfully navigating the storm is a DN 5 Pilot Test. Failure won't crash the ship—though the warband does not need to know that—but forces them to approach Ironwatch from a higher altitude and less advantageous position, giving some of its residents warning of their arrival. This consequence adds 1 Ruin to the GM's pool.

*Without warning, the capital hive city suddenly looms up out of the water. Like a metal mountain jutting up out of the sea, the hive is a fist raised against the heavens. Waves the size of hab-blocks crash up against the hive slopes, surrounding the base in a cloud of oily, polluted mist. The rain and sea foam sluice down its sheer, pitted sides as though nature itself were*



trying to wash the hive city off the face of the world. As your ship rises up, you glimpse a dark, needle-like spire rising up from the hive's upper portion. This is Ironwatch—your destination. Unlike the rest of the hive, there are no lights gleaming on Ironwatch—the spire looks dark, grim and silent. The landing pad near the entrance to the upper levels of the prison is a rain-slick shadow, requiring a display of skilful piloting for the lighter to set down there safely.

### THE FIRST FAILSAFE

Winds and driving rains lash across the landing platform, causing the Arvus lighter to shake and groan with every gust. As the shuttle's ramp opens, swirling gusts of wind drive a stinging spray into your faces. The pounding rain raises a fog-like haze from the outer walls of the prison. Yet at the entrance to the prison, the red glow from the hatchway seems to repel the storm.

*The entrance to Ironwatch's secure upper levels is a massive circular hatch, adorned with an equally large emblem of the Imperium.*

*Worryingly, the hatch bulges from within, as if containing some enormous pressure. Some force inside the prison has warped the structure, with cogs, rods and girders protruding from its bowed surface. A dull red glow seeps from between the gears and bulwarks of the hatch as if it were containing the energies of a soon-to-erupt volcano. As you look over the damaged hatch, you can see it flex slowly in and out, as if the structure itself is breathing.*

Give the warband a few moments to look around or investigate. A successful Tech test (DN 4) allows the warband to force the much-abused mechanism of the hatch to grind open, just wide enough for human-sized creatures to walk through. A failure (or a complication) here causes the seal to spring open unexpectedly, giving the opponents waiting within a surprise round.

Opening the hatch begins a combat, as a number of rogue Psykers emerge. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*The hatch grinds open with a horrendous screech. A cold, damp breeze blows out from the open portal, bringing with it the smell of salt, mildew, rust and something darker—the stench of death. You hear a sound like debased laughter mixed with crackling electricity, and then a number of people, their skin tattooed with profane symbols, step out. They stink of blood and decay, and their eyes reflect nothing but madness.*

There are two rogue Psykers per PC, and they attack without pause or mercy. Once they are dead, the heroes can move on.

### ACTIVATING THE FIRST FAILSAFE

*Entering the prison feels like an unbearable pressure building and building in your ears, your sinuses and your lungs. Once you get inside, you see the bodies of a dozen guards, broken and shredded, scattered across the chamber as though tossed around by some titanic force. Four autocannon emplacements guard the entrance, but their barrels are twisted and riven. Unholy sigils are scratched into the*

*floor and painted on the walls with blood; the symbols seem to writhe and change when you look at them.*

*Next to the entrance is the first failsafe lock—a massive switch adorned with yellow-and-black sigils of warning. Rust has accumulated on the failsafe's surface, and it looks as though the metal is slightly twisted. It will take serious effort—and a not-insignificant amount of time—to activate.*

*In the darkness beyond the meagre light, something is moving, shuffling closer...*

Before the heroes have a chance to examine the room closely, more rogue Psykers crawl up out of the darkness, crackling with uncontained power. The Psykers are less interested in attacking the warband than they are in escaping through the hatch. It should become clear very rapidly that the heroes must close the entrance. Activating the failsafe, however, takes considerable effort.

During the first round of combat, there are two Psykers per PC. Each subsequent round, another Psyker and a Khymerae crawl up out of the darkness and attempt to escape the prison, attacking anyone who gets in their way.

Closing the hatch and activating the failsafe involves repairing it, as it is so badly damaged it cannot properly function. This is a Threatening task (see *Wrath & Glory*, page 254) of DN 5. There are four steps:

- ◆ **Step 1:** Assemble the components of the hatch into the proper configuration. This is a Tech, Investigation or Scholar test.
- ◆ **Step 2:** Pull the failsafe switch into alignment, allowing repair. This requires a Strength or Athletics test. Clever players might leverage psychokinetic powers or Tech know-how to substitute for physical ability.
- ◆ **Step 3:** Execute the repair in accordance with the will of the Omnissiah. This is a Tech, Faith (with the Adeptus Mechanicus keyword) or Scholar test.
- ◆ **Step 4:** The repaired failsafe must be activated by throwing the switch. An Athletics or Tech test activates the failsafe, beginning the process to detach the prison from the hive city.

If one of the warband rolls a complication, select a setback from the following list:

- ◆ **Critical Obstruction:** Smaller pieces of the failsafe pop off or are broken by the Psykers and fall to the ground. The assembly must begin anew.
- ◆ **Hindrance:** One of the components has broken in two and requires extra care to fit into place. The pressure inside the antechamber increases momentarily, needing even more strength to bend the hatch back into place. The original assembly utilised a special tool not available to the PC at the moment. Increase the DN for this task by 1.
- ◆ **Delay:** A critical element of the switch remains outside. Add an Awareness test to locate it in the driving tempest.

At least one character needs to fight off the enraged Psykers and the Khymerae as the others complete the Threatening Task. Otherwise, at least one rogue Psyker escapes per round. The warband has six rounds to complete the Threatening Task, before they are overwhelmed by rogue Psykers and Khymerae. Once the PCs successfully repair the hatch and throw the switch to activate the first failsafe, the Threatening task is complete and the



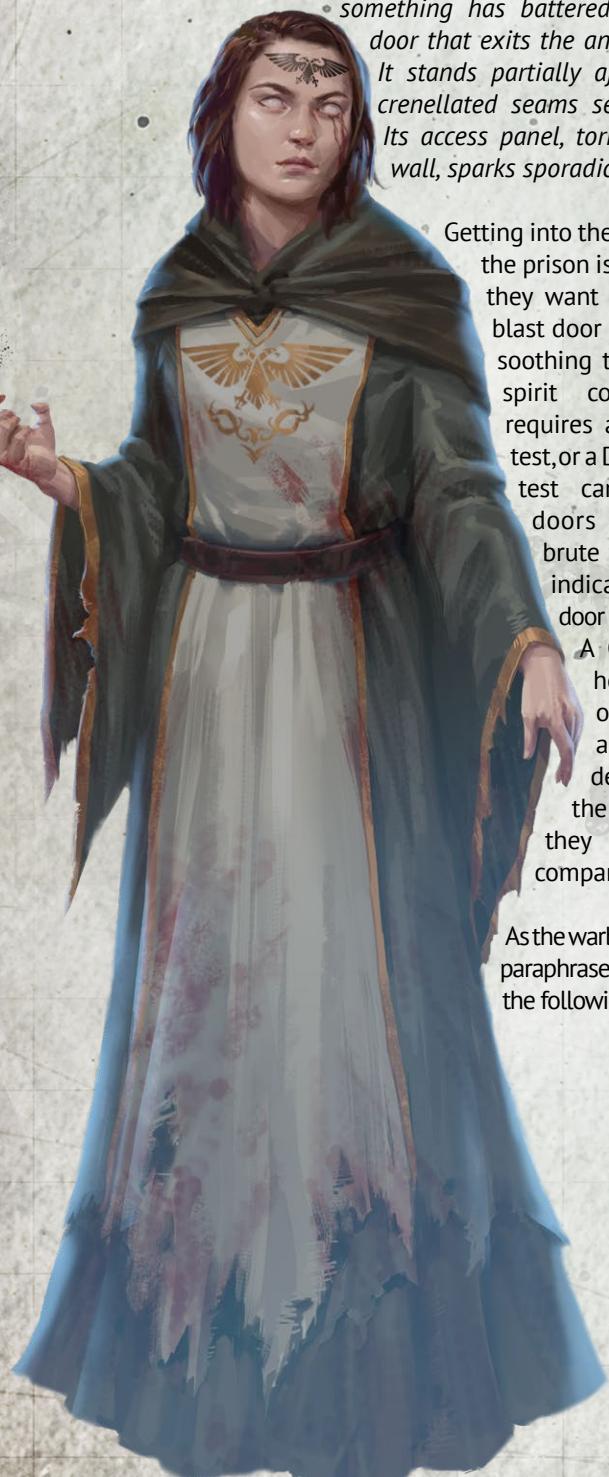
scene draws to a close. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*The mighty hatch door slams shut. The first failsafe activates, and you can hear a distant clang as the lock disengages. The madness is now contained within the prison... but so are you.*

*Now that you have time to look around, you see something has battered the blast door that exits the antechamber. It stands partially ajar, but its crenellated seams seem intact. Its access panel, torn from the wall, sparks sporadically.*

Getting into the main part of the prison is easy. Should they want to close the blast door behind them, soothing the machine-spirit controlling it requires a DN 5 Tech test, or a DN 7 Strength test can push the doors shut with brute force. Failure indicates that the door remains open. A Complication here may set off an alarm, alerting those deeper within the prison that they can expect company.

As the warband proceeds, paraphrase or read aloud the following:



*You look out upon a broad causeway stretching out over a seemingly bottomless octagonal shaft, extending both up and down. The darkness here is oppressive; what lights you have barely seem to cut through it at all. It seems to bear down on you like a weight. The air stinks of mildew and rust, cordite smoke, fear and blood. From somewhere far above, you hear the faint sounds of weeping, screaming and praying echoing through the blackness. On the higher floors, you see flashes of light, as though from gunfire, and then nothing. A sound like distant lightning catches your attention, and you spot the central lift, rising from the depths with a crackle of arcing electricity as it passes each level.*

## DYMPHNA

*As the lift platform rises from the stygian deep, you see a single figure sitting cross-legged at its centre. She is a young woman, dressed in flowing robes that appear torn and bloodied, with short dark hair and an Aquila tattoo on her forehead. When the lift reaches the top, she opens her eyes, revealing milky-white, unseeing orbs. She "looks" at you and says, "You must be those I dreamed would liberate us. Welcome to Ironwatch. I am Dymphna."*

If the warband attempts to remove the perceived threat before the lift makes it to their level, their attacks scorch or scar the plasteel surface of the platform, but have no effect upon its occupant; she is merely a psychic projection. She does not blame them for their hostility; under the current circumstances she realises it's much better to be safe than sorry.

*"My strength wanes," she says in a soft voice. "There are many things I must tell you, and little time. This madness was born because too many poor souls have been imprisoned here for too long. The Black Ships are supposed to come and take us away, but they are long overdue.... very long indeed. The psychic screams of this many lost souls cried out for release, and something awful broke through to answer them. Some of us tried to hold it back, but we failed. All of this you see around you is the result of that failure." She pauses, her face wracked with grief, but then she regains control of her emotions.*

*"There are three failsafes within this prison. When all three are activated, the prison will be no more. Ironwatch will fall, and our suffering will end. You*

have activated the first failsafe, and that is good, but it is not enough. You must deal with each of them, before it is too late.

*Atop the tallest tower is a lighthouse that shines in the void. But the darkness clouding this place has swallowed that light. If it goes out, we are lost forever.*

*She closes her eyes again, and her image seems to waver. "I'm being swept away," she says in a voice barely audible, and then she vanishes.*

The lift stands empty before the warband; now they must decide how to proceed.

## USING DYMPHNA

Dymphna is a very powerful Psyker, imprisoned in Ironwatch at a young age. She is a small woman with short dark hair and sightless, milky-white eyes. Her physical body is near the final failsafe, which she has chosen to defend. While her outward form likely inspires trust, many players distrust appearances in an otherwise corrupted environment, which is perfectly reasonable.

Dymphna is the closest thing to an ally the warband is likely to find in this terrible place. However, she is not a character the warband meets, interacts with, or changes in any way beyond her brief psychic messages to them. She is mostly intended as a tool for the Game Master. She can provide direction if the warband is floundering, or cloud the waters if they are having too easy a time of things. If a Psyker in the warband attempts to use *telepathy* to contact her, they receive nothing but static. Dymphna can contact them, but they cannot reach her.

If you find her to be a useful and interesting NPC, feel free to use her more often than suggested in this adventure. She can appear any time the warband needs information or is unsure of what direction to take, to offer useful advice or guidance. Keep in mind though that Dymphna does not necessarily know everything that is going on here; the same psychic forces that hinder the heroes may also be hindering her. Or you can use her to emphasise the horror that this place has become, describing visions of terror she has witnessed, or begging the heroes to hurry before it's all too late.

## RE-EQUIPPING THE WARBAND

During their assault on the prison, the heroes may find themselves running low on ammunition or supplies. Unless you want the warband to constantly worry about running out of ammo, they can easily find reloads and weapons from the bodies of dead guards, or by raiding armouries placed strategically throughout the prison. However, the guards here are typically armed with shotguns or las-weapons, so their weapons might not be as deadly as those the heroes of this Tier are used to.

## THE HORRORS OF IRONWATCH

Ironwatch has become a place of nightmares. The Great Rift has cut off this part of the galaxy, rendering it into the Dark Imperium. Warp travel is even more difficult and unreliable, and the Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica are greatly delayed in their route that includes Charybdis. Thus, the Adeptus Astra Telepathica has not collected its tithe of Psykers from this world in some time, and the incidences of Psykers on the planet have only grown more numerous. Governor Veneratio was forced to confine the Psykers to Ironwatch, but this has led to overcrowding, misery, and in some cases, madness.

When the pressure grew too great, the psychic activity in Ironwatch drew the attention of K'cyaela, a Greater Daemon of Slaanesh. This debauched being emerged in the heights of the prison and has been infecting the structure with its twisted dreams ever since. Hundreds of Psykers are housed in Ironwatch, and though many have died as a result of the horrors they've witnessed, most of those remaining have been driven insane or corrupted by K'cyaela's seductive presence.

The rampaging Psykers overwhelmed the Enforcer garrison here, and the veil between reality and the warp has grown thin. Reality shifts and distorts, turning what was once a prison into a feeding ground for the Ruinous Powers. What this means for the warband is that they are going to encounter many strange and deadly things that defy description or explanation.

There are two types of scenario listed below: those that press against and attack the heroes' minds or souls, and those that challenge them physically. Roll on the **Horrors of the Warp** chart to demonstrate the awful haunted place the prison has become, then relieve the tension with an encounter from the list of **Optional Encounters**. To keep the characters' fear honed to a razor edge, occasionally roll again on the **Horrors of the Warp** table, to represent the world shifting suddenly and inexplicably from one nightmare to another.

For other reality-bending ideas, consider rolling on the **Dark Nightmares** chart found on page 45, or look through the **Perils of the Warp** table in the core book (page 338).

### HORRORS OF THE WARP

#### d66 Horrors of the Warp

- 11-12 The warband hears a faint scuttling sound, then suddenly the corridor they are in is filled with thousands of tiny crabs crawling over everything—the floor, the walls, the ceiling, even climbing up onto the characters. The crabs are harmless, but each displays unsettling human-like faces wrought with extreme emotion.
- 13-14 The warband stumbles on a grisly scene. It appears two groups of prison guards fought one another. A dozen Enforcers lie scattered around the area, shot to death. There is no indication of why they were fighting.
- 15-16 There was a mighty battle here, between a small group of prison guards and a number of escaped prisoners. The Enforcers gave their best, until they were overwhelmed. Their brutally butchered bodies, most still clutching weapons, are piled up behind a makeshift barricade. Several rogue Psykers lie dead around them. There are no survivors.
- 21-22 This is the scene of a horrendous battle. The walls are pocked with bullet holes and scorched with las-fire. Broken weapons and equipment lie scattered around the ground. Pools of still-warm blood congeal slowly on the floor. But there are no bodies, and no sign of where they went.

- 23-24 The walls of this corridor appear to be made of warm, living flesh. If touched, the flesh quivers, shudders and produces a sensual moan as if from intense pleasure. If cut or damaged, hot, honey-scented blood pours out, pooling up on the floor.
- 25-26 The warband hears a sound like someone enjoying a delicious but messy meal. As they approach, they find one of the prison guards kneeling over the dead body of another guard, feasting on its entrails. If subdued, the living guard's mind is completely gone; he attempts at every chance to resume his meal and if prevented, he attempts to make a meal of the one who is stopping him.
- 31-32 The warband hears the distant sound of discordant music and hysterical laughter, but as they get closer, the sounds stop. There is no sign of where the sound was coming from.
- 33-34 The walls of this chamber are painted with an intricate, though indecipherable, mural. The medium used to create the mural appears to be blood and human excrement.
- 35-36 The warband hears the sound of hysterical laughter. As they grow closer, they see a prison guard kneeling on the floor and rocking with insane mirth. Before the heroes can say or do anything, he raises his laspistol to his head and kills himself.
- 41-42 The warband discovers a makeshift torture chamber. What was once apparently an Enforcer ready-room has become a scene of horror. Bodies are strapped to tables or nailed to walls, their skin sliced up into intricate designs and carved with unholy sigils. The implements used were ordinary kitchen tools. There is no sign of who did this, though all evidence indicates there was more than one torturer involved.
- 43-44 A man-sized hole is melted in the floor, apparently by some kind of caustic acid. The hole drops down into the darkness. Even the brightest lights do not reveal how deep it goes.

45-46 The warband hears the sound of singing in an unknown language. It varies from moment to moment, from hauntingly sensual to screechingly discordant. They find the noise is coming from a vox-unit; someone is broadcasting this madness, but there's no way to tell who is doing it or where the broadcast is coming from.

51-53 The temperature of the hallway the warband is in suddenly drops precipitously. It goes from uncomfortably warm to bitterly cold in a matter of seconds. Ice begins to form on the walls, floor and even the warband's own equipment. If a fight takes place here, the icy floor is considered difficult terrain.

54-56 The heroes encounter a blue-robed adept lying on the floor. Underneath his robes, his body has begun to change into some sort of disgusting gelatinous mass. Through shapeless lips, he begs them to kill him. If they attempt to question him, he just cries as his body morphs agonisingly.

61-63 The warband finds a pair of boots lying on the floor. A few metres later, they find a guard helmet and body armour dangling at the edge of a precipice leading downwards into darkness.

64-65 The warband catches the scent of freshly baked bread and roasted meat, perhaps the most appetising aroma they've ever smelled. The scent is coming from the dead body of a guard lying on a table, his entrails ripped out and scattered across the room. A bloody fork lies on the table next to him. Someone, or something, was eating the guard mere moments ago, but who or what it was is gone now.

66 Roll twice and combine the results. Ignore any further results of this entry.

## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Below are a number of optional encounters the warband can face as they move through the dark, seeking to activate the failsafes. Some of them are potentially deadly, others are mere nuisances, and one may prove ultimately helpful. The warband can avoid some easily enough, while others force

them to deal with the situation. We recommend introducing at least one encounter each time the warband is hunting for one of the failsafes. Select the encounters that seem most interesting and rewarding to you and your players.

- ◆ **Corrupted Guards:** Some Enforcers who survived the initial attacks were driven insane by the psychic terrors infusing Ironwatch. They mercilessly assault anyone they encounter. A group of 3-4 Enforcers stalk and attack the warband, using their knowledge of the facility's layout to try to stage ambushes when they can. Use the Enforcer profile from page 413 in the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*.
- ◆ **Hold Fast, Men!**: A small team of five dedicated Enforcers defend a small outpost. They've barricaded themselves into a guard room or dead-end corridor, and they fight hard against anything that comes their way. They are nearly out of ammo, several of them are injured, and they stand on the ragged edge of endurance. Though grateful relief has arrived, they've seen some terrifying things and are paranoid and trigger-happy. If the warband can convince them to help, they are useful allies. They count as a mob of Troops (composed of five Enforcers) under the warband's command.
- ◆ **Rogue Psykers:** Driven to rampaging fury by what they've endured in this lightless place, these Psykers know only fear and pain and hatred, and they want to take their agony out on any and all living creatures.
- ◆ **Murder-Servitors:** Hundreds of servitors used to service and maintain Ironwatch. The festering energies of the warp have corrupted these mindless automatons, twisting not just their bodies but also their programming. They butcher anyone they catch.
- ◆ **Khymerae:** Drawn by the terror and despair experienced by the Psykers within Ironwatch, several Khymerae—minor daemon-like warp creatures born of nightmares—hunt through the darkened corridors. They shift from the Empyrean to the real world at will, leaping from the walls, ceiling or floor to attack the warband. Though not intelligent, they have a type of low animal cunning, attacking by surprise and using pack tactics.



## ACT TWO: SILENCE

Heading up into the higher levels of the prison feels more oppressive with every step. The darkness grows, the air gets heavier with the smell of blood and las-fire, and the echoing sounds of screaming and laughing grows clearer but never fully resolves. It feels as though the weight of the world rests on the warband's shoulders.

During this act, the warband must activate the second failsafe. In doing so they meet their ultimate foe, the cause of all the horror and chaos trapped here within the prison—the “Perfect Man”. This strange being is composed of various body parts from murdered upperhive nobles (see Adventure 1: **Descent**) gathered by the Cult of Luxury’s prophet. Each portion of dead flesh has been lovingly stitched together, creating a grotesque puppet of human meat and bone. Perhaps most disturbing of all, the brain of the former planetary governor now resides inside this body.

However, it is not the former governor who controls the Perfect Man’s form—instead, it is a vessel for the essence of K’cyaela, a Greater Daemon of Slaanesh. K’cyaela has great plans for Charybdion, and it does not intend to allow an insignificant team of mortals to stop them.

Paraphrase or read aloud the following as the warband continues upwards:

*The timbre of the prison seems to change in a manner that is, at first, hard to describe. It's subtle to begin with. The sounds and sights of this horrible place are different. The screams and cries of pain fade, replaced by laughter, or sighs of pleasure. The foetid stink of blood and sweat and mildew become the enticing scent of incense, perfume or even freshly baked goods. It's hard to know*

*which is more terrible—the torture of things that are, or the promise of things that are never to be.*

Remember to roll on the **Horrors of the Warp** table (page 92) and add at least one **Optional Encounter** (page 93) to keep the tension amped up and make sure the warband remains on its toes.

### THE SACROSANCTORUM

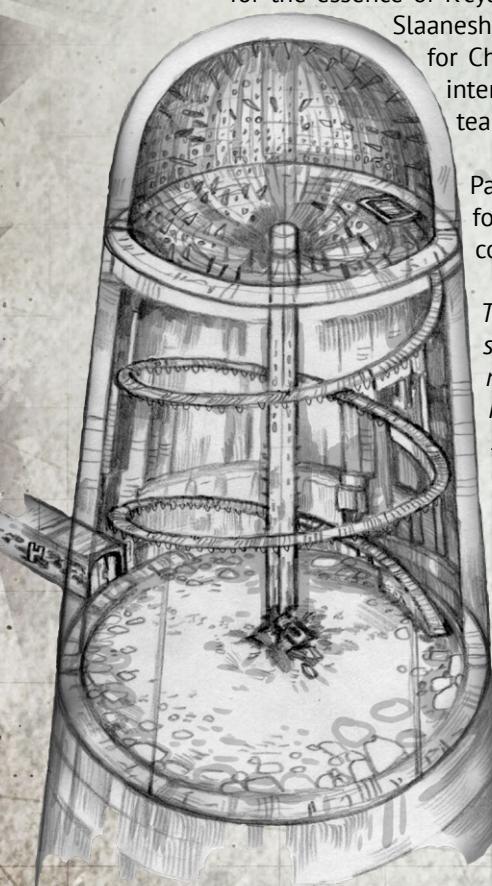
For security purposes, the central lift governs all vertical movement within Ironwatch, so if the warband wants to go up or down, their only options are to use the lift or to climb. Climbing is extremely dangerous; make a DN 4 Athletics test. A complication indicates the character has slipped and fallen. Make another Athletics test at DN 4 or disappear forever down the shaft. A character lower down can spend Wrath to catch a falling comrade. To get to the second failsafe, they need to go up a hundred metres to the top level of the prison.

*The shaft grows narrower as the lift slowly climbs higher. After an interminable amount of time, the lift grinds to a halt—this is as high as it goes. A small walkway spans the top level of the shaft, leading to an unmarked door that opens onto a long passageway. Halfway down the corridor are the bodies of six rogue Psykers. You recognise the tell-tale signs of heavy bolter fire, though there is no sign of any opposing force.*

Two combat servitors defend this hallway. There's a trigger plate on the floor—the servitors are hidden inside the walls further down the hallway. An Awareness test (DN 5, or DN 3 if the heroes are actively looking for some kind of trap or defence system) reveals the pressure plate. A DN 5 Tech test can disable the pressure plate. If they fail to notice the pressure plate, the combat servitors gain a surprise round.

Each combat servitor is armed with a heavy bolter. Use the combat servitor profile from page 411 in the **Wrath & Glory Core Rules**.

A character with the Adeptus Mechanicus, Inquisition or Adeptus Astra Telepathica keywords can use a Tech test (DN 4) to command the servitors to shut down.



Just past the servitor alcoves, the corridor ends in a steel door with a brass inlay of the symbol of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. The door has no apparent opening mechanism, nor any control panel.

Opening the door requires a DN 5 Psychic Mastery test; characters with the Imperium keyword gain +2d to this test. In theory, this limits access to sanctioned Psykers such as astropaths and their minders. The door has a Resilience of 12, and can also be opened by a combined total of 20 points of damage. The warband can try to force the door, either physically or using telekinesis, in which case it is a DN 7 Strength or Psychic Mastery test.

## INSIDE THE ASTROPATHIC CHOIR CHAMBER

*You find yourselves in a large, round chamber—what you assume is the bottom of the prison's Astropathic communications tower. It spirals up even higher than the main tower. Another lift would normally take you to the top, but the wreckage of the lift lies in a twisted, mangled wreck near you. Some of the shattered pieces bear las-burns. Coils of steel cable as thick as a man's arm have drizzled down upon the remains. A stairway curves around the inside of the tower walls, ascending in a narrowing spiral to the gloom above. You hear a soft, eerie moan, rising and falling, which seems to permeate the air, but there is no way to tell where it comes from.*

If the warband checks the cable, they'll see it was intentionally cut. The only way of climbing the tower are the stairs, which go up 50 metres before joining the upper platform. The moaning grows louder the higher the warband climbs. The top of the stairs is haphazardly blocked with scriptorium desks, shelving and a sizable cogitator. It's clear that this was not done by anyone with any skill in building fortifications or blockades, though it remains a formidable obstacle.

The warband can shift the crude barricade enough to pass through with a DN 3 Strength test, though the opening is narrow, allowing only one person to pass through at a time. They can also hack or blast through it. It has a Resilience of 6 and takes 15 points of damage, though shooting their way through attracts unwanted attention (see below).

*An armour glass dome spans the entire breadth of the tower. Nature's fury rages impotently outside; sheeting rain cascades down the dome, water falling off the lower edge. Lightning arcs in actinic, eye-searing lines, their afterimages burning into your retinas. Beneath it, strobed by the incessant lightning, is a row of bodies in neat, blanket-covered repose. Someone cleared the space for this macabre arrangement; massive vox transponders and Astropathic amplification chairs have been shoved to one side.*



*The room is ringed with some kind of intricate arcane device that looks like a halo of red stars circling the dead. The incessant moan you've been hearing is coming from within the ring, from among the corpses.*

If the party includes a character with the Inquisition or Adeptus Astra Telepathica keyword, they immediately recognise this room as a sacrosanctorum, a special chamber used to protect Astropathic choirs from the ravages of the Empyrean. For any other Psyker, identifying the significance of the room is a DN 3 Scholar Test. For a non-Psyker, the Scholar test DN is 5.

A DN 5 Awareness test, difficult because of the cacophony of the surrounding storm and strobing lightning, shows one of the "corpses" is still alive.

Laying amidst her slain compatriots, lactis Finamore is the last surviving Chorister. The psychic feedback from the emergence of the Daemon K'cyaela from the warp killed the others. Only luck or her faith in the power of the Emperor kept her from sharing the same fate. However, their psychic death screams broke her spirit. She barricaded the room as best as she could, brought all her friends within the circle of protection that saved her, and wails at their passing—the low moaning that has haunted the warband since they entered the tower. She lies at the centre of the neatly arranged corpses, under a blanket like the rest. She crossed the arms of the slain in the sign of the Aquila, and placed a small offering in their hands to give to the Emperor as he eases their souls across the divide.

The second failsafe lock cannot be activated physically—it is built so that an astropath is required for it to function properly. Even if the warband contains a character with the Psyker and Imperium keywords, they cannot access the failsafe themselves—at least, not right away. The Psyker needs to be attuned to the failsafe's wards, a process that takes more time than the warband currently possesses.

## ACTIVATING THE SECOND FAILSAFE

To activate the second failsafe, the warband must snap lactis out of her self-imposed protective trance, restoring her faith and sanity. Her mental signature is keyed to the failsafe: she is the only one left alive who can activate it. This is a

roleplaying challenge, where the heroes need to figure out what is wrong with her and bring her out of her self-imposed trance—gently or not—so she can engage the second failsafe. There are several ways they can go about bringing lactis back to consciousness and lucidity.

You might consider awarding those who roleplay this challenge well a bonus of +2d for any tests they make.

- ◆ First, they might go about restoring her physical health. She hasn't eaten or had any water since all this began, days ago, and she's severely dehydrated. She does not resist if given small amounts of water and soft food. Assisting her this way, perhaps along with a Medicae test (DN 5), helps her regain her physical strength.
- ◆ The heroes need to be aware that although physically she isn't in good shape, her spirit is more broken than her body. They might use an Insight test (DN 5) to realise this.
- ◆ lactis is utterly faithful to the Emperor, and an Insight or Investigation test (DN 7) reveals this. One way to bring her out of her psychic exile is to restore her faith, perhaps by exhorting her to be strong, by praying over her, or by giving her dead comrades the proper funerary rites.
- ◆ Additionally, the heroes could use a Deception, Persuasion or Intimidation test to make her more willing to listen to them or to obey them.
- ◆ Due to her unwavering faith in the Emperor, anyone with the Adeptus Ministorum or Adepta Sororitas keyword who tries to use an Influence test on her gets a +2d bonus. Anyone without the Imperium keyword increases the DN by 2, due to the trauma she has suffered. She fears and hates xenos and heretics, so any non-human increases the DN by an additional 2 (4 total).

To increase the stakes here, as the warband tends to lactis, they hear the sound of the steel door at the base of the tower crashing open. A group of rogue Psykers (equal in number to the warband's size) charge into the room and up the stairs, attacking furiously to prevent the Astropath from resuming her duties. If the warband blasted their way through the barricade, the noise attracts these madmen, and they automatically attack.

Upon coming out of her trance, a look of serenity comes to lactis's face. She concentrates on activating the second failsafe's ancient mechanisms with her attuned psychic powers. The tiny lights within the

room begin to change hue from red to amber, blue and finally green, like a halo of stars.

From here, Iactis can send a signal to Hive Aidon for help, but the warband should not expect support to arrive soon enough to assist with the current crisis. Additionally, she reactivates the outer defences, telling the warband she is safe now and they must resume their duty to find and activate the last failsafe. Iactis is serene and comfortable with the idea of dying here to save the rest of Charybdion. She refuses any offers to take her with the warband—her place, she insists, is here, doing the Emperor's work.

### IACTIS FINAMORE

Iactis is a willowy woman, made more so by dehydration and near starvation. An Aquila-emblazoned silver band covers her eyes, sightless from soul binding with the Emperor. Her head is shaved, and she wears blue robes with the symbol of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica embroidered over it. She wears several medallions and talismans around her neck indicating her loyalty and dedication to the Cult of the Emperor.

Iactis does not know much about the layout of the prison or the location of the other failsafes; her duties keep her confined to this tower. She knows one other failsafe lies at the very pinnacle of the prison spire. She knows the only way to get there is by using the main lift in the centre shaft.

### DYMPHNA, PART 2

When the warband returns to the main lift, they find Dymphna's psychic projection waiting for them.

*"I sensed you were successful in activating the second failsafe," she says softly. "But your mission is not yet complete. There is still one more remaining, and if you fail, the world may die." She closes her eyes and her voice changes in tone and timbre again.*

*"Hidden in a vessel of flesh, a being of lurid desires awaits. At the very pinnacle of the Black Lighthouse is a chamber of terrors—a place of torture and despair. What you must find is there."*

*Her unseeing eyes open again to "look" at you, and she psychically projects a map of where to find the next target in the air before her,*

*allowing you to note its position before it, and she, fade to nothing.*

From here, there is only one place to go: to the very top of Ironwatch.

### OPTIONAL: A XENOS ENCOUNTER

This section features an encounter with a band of alien Eldar intent on their own mission (see Adventure 5: **Twisted Strands**). The Game Master should consider carefully before using this encounter; it can be quite interesting to meet and interact with the Eldar (especially if the players are intending to play as the Eldar when playing through Adventure 5). However, if the players are likely to get distracted or go off-mission, the GM should feel free to either skip this encounter or adjust it accordingly. This encounter has the potential to derail the rest of the adventure if the warband wishes to track the Eldar back to where they came from, if they want to attack these Xenos, or if they allow the Eldar mission to distract them from their own task.

### THE ELDAR WARBAND

With Dymphna's map fresh in their mind, the warband must journey down overlooked passageways and isolated corridors to reach the final failsafe. This section of Ironwatch feels abandoned and remote, likely a section shut down long ago and forgotten. There are no lights here but those the warband brings with them. Signs promising dire punishment for any who cross them indicate they are going in the right direction. After the madness and cacophony of the rest of the prison, these halls are eerily silent.

Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*You hear a sound up ahead—voices, but not human ones. The lilt and cadence of the words is clearly xenos! The voices stop almost as soon as you hear them; likely they heard you at the same time. There is a long, drawn-out moment of silence, then a voice calls out. "Humans?" it says, using syllables unfamiliar to its tongue. "We wish no quarrel with you. We have our own mission here, and do not care to interfere with yours."*

The warband can hide and attempt to ambush the Eldar, who are wary but do not expect such

treachery. If the warband doesn't respond, the Eldar leader repeats his request for parlay. They have come to this cursed place to destroy a threat to their people, and after doing so intend to depart at once. If the warband approaches them peacefully, they explain their mission here. They feel no need to lie in this hour of desperation.

*"One of your 'witches' is imprisoned here in this place of darkness," the Eldar leader states in oddly accented Low Gothic. "His existence is a threat to our people. His power has grown out of control, a symptom of the sickness afflicting this place. He has screamed out his pain to the warp and it has answered. His name is Konrad Boyer, and for the sake of the craftworld, he must die. Once the deed is done, we shall leave here forever. Do we have an agreement?"*

It is trivial for any character with the Administratum or Adeptus Mechanicus keyword to find the records of Konrad Boyer, an otherwise unremarkable rogue Psyker and petty criminal who arrived in Ironwatch only a few months ago. There is nothing in his record to indicate he is special in any way, but the Eldar are strange folk who see the universe differently than humans. He is being held in the Obsidian Block, a high-security section of the prison just a few levels above the warband's current location.

For more information about Konrad Boyer and the Eldar's mission to kill (or capture) him, see page 109 in Adventure 5: **Twisted Strands**.

#### **DEALING WITH THE ELDAR**

If the heroes kill the Xenos rather than parlay with them, they are risking losing precious time and the advancement of the Rogue Trader flotilla's deadline for bombardment of the prison. In this case, the Game Master gains 3 Ruin.

If the warband forms a temporary alliance with the Eldar, they can allow the Xenos to take care of Boyer themselves. In this case, the Eldar destroy their target without any further need of the warband's intervention.

The heroes may take on the task of eliminating Boyer themselves—see page 120 for more about him. However, this is a serious distraction from their mission and there is a high risk of running out of time. In this case, the Game Master gains 2 Ruin.

If the heroes help the Xenos find their target (or at least utilise their access to the prison records to locate him) the Eldar finish their mission and exit the prison shortly before the warband must face their final challenge. The Eldar leader contacts the warband over their vox to tell them they have completed their mission, wishes them luck, and then is heard from no more.

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## **THE ELDAR**

Ideally, the Eldar are player characters you intend to use in Adventure 5: **Twisted Strands**. Allowing the players to see their own characters from a different point of view gives them an entirely different perspective of this adventure. If, however, you have not (or do not intend to) run chapter five, the following characters make up the Eldar troupe:

**Faenmes Myrakae** is a leader of the Rangers of the Ul-Khari Craftworld, one of the few Eldar who took up the Path of War before the devastation the Great Rift wrought on his home. Armed with a power sword and a shuriken catapult, he is a reluctant warrior who prefers the path of peace to that of war, but is prepared to do whatever it takes to protect his people. He is willing to work with the humans as long as they allow him to finish his mission. (Use the Eldar Pathfinder profile on page 438 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*)

**Ashenae Telmia** is a Ranger in the service of the Ul-Khari Craftworld. In her long career as a scout, she has been on nearly every type of world, from barren deserts to toxic wastelands to lush jungles, but she has seen none so terrible as this dark, stinking prison. She follows the lead of Faenmes as her leader and superior, but she longs to see the sky and breathe clean air again, so she wants out of this place quickly. (Use the Eldar Ranger profile on page 437 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*)

**Ylbyn Osulyth** is an outcast, a thief and a corsair. He is here as a personal favour to his captain, the Corsair Princess Ferianwyr Greensteel. He has a devil-may-care attitude and is always looking for an easier way to do things. If these barbaric humans can help them achieve their goals, he sees absolutely no reason to not assist them in meeting theirs. (Use the Eldar Corsair profile on page 438 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*)

**Denkra Tintiren** is a corsair and wandering starfarer who has, in the past, worked closely alongside the Mon-keigh. She understands their ways better than most Eldar, and has even grown to appreciate them in some ways. But even she hasn't seen anything this bad. The darkness, oppression and horror of Ironwatch are outside of her experience. Still, she intends to make sure their mission is accomplished, whatever it takes. (Use the Eldar Corsair Felarch profile on page 439 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*)

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## DYMPHNA, PART 3

When the warband returns to the main lift, they find Dymphna's psychic projection waiting for them.

*"Have you made allies?" she asks quietly as though she knows everything that has happened. "Or merely pushed back one enemy to a later date? I wonder. But little time remains." Her voice changes once again and she seems to be looking past you with her unseeing eyes. "The storm rages both without and within. The waves pound against the breakwater and threaten to shatter it, just as a creature of dark hungers attempts to shatter the third failsafe." She closes her eyes and her voice returns to normal. "Go now. They will find me soon. I cannot remain, time runs short and my strength is waning." And with that, her psychic image fades and vanishes.*

The echoes of terror and battle have faded by this point, but the feeling of dread continues to emanate from the core sections of the prison's upper levels.

## THE PERFECT MAN

As the warband heads back to the lift, they suddenly feel the temperature drop. Ice begins to form on the walls and walkway. Hundreds of tiny, scuttling crabs crawl underfoot. They hear the distant sound of dissonant music, laughter and the tinkling of bells, and the dim light grows even dimmer as the darkness seems to press in against them.

They see a figure walking slowly towards them, moving jerkily, like a marionette. Following it are several mad prisoners, crackling with psychic rage and murmuring vile suggestions. The scent of expensive perfume and rotting meat wafts over you. Then the figure steps into the light, revealing a naked human form. Its limbs are perfectly proportioned but appear to have been roughly and inexpertly stitched together from a variety of different sources.

Perhaps worst of all, it has no head—or rather, it is carrying its own head in its hand.

*"Hello, my darlings," a soft, seductive voice whispers from the severed head. "Are you the ones trying to stop me? I'm so glad to finally meet you. I'm called K'cyaela. You've caused me*

*no end of problems, and that makes me sad. You don't want to see me sad, do you, darlings? It's time to end this little game. You can bow down to me now, like sweet little darlings, or you can die. It's all the same to me."*

Each member of the warband needs to make a Corruption Test (DN 7).

If the warband accepts K'cyaela's offer, Chaos is unleashed, dooming Charybion and, eventually, the entire system. But no hero worth his or her name would fall so easily to the lures of Chaos. In that case, K'cyaela and its rogue Psyker followers attack without mercy.

Otherwise, a combat begins. The Perfect Man is accompanied by a number of rogue Psykers equal in number to the warband.

When the warband emerges victorious from a hard-fought battle, the severed head of K'cyaela laughs cruelly. "Fools," it whispers. "While you've been frolicking with my playthings here, I've been tearing apart the final failsafe. You may have destroyed this fragile shell, but still you've lost the war."

With that, the head dies. The way is now clear to the final failsafe, but can the warband arrive in time?



## WHAT IS K'CYAELA?

K'cyaela, in its true form, is a Keeper of Secrets, a Greater Daemon of Slaanesh. To make itself manifest in this reality, it has possessed a stitched-together corpse made from the bodies of a number of nobles who were recently murdered in Hive Aidon (see Adventure 1: **Descent**). Investigators never recovered all the body parts, and it was assumed they were lost or discarded by the murderers. That turns out to not be the case. In fact, the body parts were smuggled here to this prison by cultists working in secret. They were sewn together to create a vessel suitable for the Keeper of Secrets to possess. Though powerful and horrendous, the "Perfect Man" is not K'cyaela's final form; its true shape is at the final failsafe, attempting to destroy it so its armies can march forth and destroy this puny world.





The lift does not quite reach the core of Ironwatch, instead stopping above a maze of catwalks and stairs leading further into the centre of the facility. The steel passageways are thick with rust, creaking ominously under the heroes' feet. The warband must be careful not to slip on the heavy moisture or fall through holes in the poorly maintained structure.

As the warband travels towards the final failsafe, call for an Agility Test (DN 4). On a failure, the character suffers 1 Shock as the floor gives way or a handrail lurches out from under their grip.

The heroes can feel palpable waves of dread emanating from the core, every instinct urging them to turn back and flee this cursed place. During this act, the warband must face the power of K'cyaela in its true form as the Greater Daemon attempts to destroy the final failsafe lock. Making their lives even more difficult, the warband must also activate that failsafe to prevent this horror from ever happening again.

During this act, roll on the **Horrors of the Warp** table (page 92) to create ambience, but unless the adventure has been extraordinarily easy on the warband so far, **do not** add in any **Optional Encounters**. The heroes need to get to the final seal in a hurry; throwing cannon fodder in front of them as they make their way to the final encounter only breaks the tension. Instead, describe them defeating, evading, or cutting down the occasional rogue Psyker or insane guard as they hurry to the highest level of the prison, barely slowing down as they step over the bodies of the fallen.

## THE FINAL FAILSAFE

As the heroes approach the core, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*The air grows denser and more humid as you approach the core of Ironwatch. The smell of incense, rust, blood and sweat is strong here. A fug of intoxicating perfume nearly conceals all of these other scents beneath its blanket. Your ears are assailed with the sounds of hysterical laughter, and sighs that could signify either ecstasy, agony or both.*

*The bulky steel doors, which were supposed to protect the core, have been torn off their hinges by some titanic force. Within, you witness a scene not unlike that of a debased orgy. Beautiful and terrible, the monstrous servants of Slaanesh whirl and pirouette around the room in a profane dance. In one far corner of the room, surrounded by a crackling shield of psychic energy, is the kneeling form of a young woman you recognise: Dymphna. She appears unharmed, but she is concentrating fiercely—her powers focused on weakening the power of an even greater enemy—a threat that the warband cannot possibly ignore.*

*Looming over her is a sight out of darkest nightmare: a towering, four-armed Greater Daemon, its twisted form bizarrely both terrifying and alluring all at once. This must be the architect of Charybdion's woes, K'cyaela the Keeper of Secrets, in all its vile glory. Laughing, the Greater Daemon is tearing pieces off from a set of switches that could only be the final failsafe lock.*

The heroes must muster their faith, their skills and their powers to defeat this challenge, repair the failsafe and banish K'cyaela back to the warp. The Daemonettes fight fearlessly to protect their master.

This is the final battle of this adventure, the climactic moment when the heroes at last confront the threat that has been plaguing Charybdion and plotted to drown the entire world in a dark tide of madness and corruption.

In this scene, the warband must face K'cyaela and a number of daemonettes equal to the player characters. However, just fighting the Greater Daemon is not enough—they must also repair the failsafe itself and activate it.

Treat this scene as a Threatening Task with a DN of 8 and four steps.

- ◆ **Step 1:** The heroes must make a Tech, Scholar or Investigation test to figure out how to piece the failsafe together again.



- ◆ **Step 2:** Now the warband must gather the broken pieces together, using Athletics (working your way through the battle), Stealth (avoiding attention as you gather parts), Weapon Skill (fight your way through) or some other skill that the GM deems appropriate. Let the players be creative, and if they have an interesting idea of how to accomplish it, the GM should consider allowing an attempt.
- ◆ **Step 3:** Repair the broken failsafe via a Psychic Mastery (attuning to the failsafe lock and drawing it together) or Tech test (old-fashioned hammering and fastening the pieces into a whole).
- ◆ **Step 4:** Finally, the heroes must physically activate the switch on the failsafe using Strength, Willpower or Toughness (representing brute force, sheer determination or pushing themselves past their limits).

Do not allow this to become a simple series of dice rolls; this is the climax of an epic adventure, with the fate of an entire world in the balance. Describe each step as a battle against the forces of Chaos, the heroes clinging to their sanity as reality crumbles around them and they are faced with powerful and grotesque temptations. Each character should participate, helping narrate the outcome—success or failure—at each step of the way, and as always, feel free to award Wrath for excellent roleplaying.

The warband can gain time by directly confronting K'cyaela, though the focus of this Threatening Task is the failsafe lock itself. Inflicting Wounds on the Greater Daemon gains the warband an additional round for the Task, but K'cyaela spends its next action striking out against whomever dared to attack it. This tactic can also counter an increase in DN resulting from a Complication, or grant bonus dice to an ally's roll against the Task. For the most part, K'cyaela regards these puny mortals as nothing more than annoyances; its only goal is to tear apart the failsafe, but if they force its hand, it defends itself.

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### USING DYMHNNA IN THE FINAL FIGHT

If the heroes are struggling in their battle against K'cyaela, Dymphna may intervene to assist them. The GM should consider carefully before using these options, as this final battle should definitely feel difficult and risky. Below are some possible ways that Dymphna may help the warband during this encounter:

- ◆ Dymphna distracts the Greater Daemon from attacking a weakened player character (or one that is unconscious and making Defiance Checks), drawing K'cyaela's attention for one round.
- ◆ Dymphna uses her powers to telekinetically drag a wounded character away from melee.
- ◆ Dymphna sacrifices her own life to save one of the player characters, diving in the way of an otherwise-fatal attack.

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Once K'cyaela is defeated, it dissolves into a screeching, stinking mass which bubbles and disintegrates within moments. Any surviving Daemonettes likewise scream and vanish—disorporated by the psychic backlash. For the first time since the heroes arrived at this terrible place, they feel a sort of peace.

Once the final step is accomplished, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*The structure of Ironwatch lurches all around you, and you can hear a series of thunderous booms as the failsafes begin to disengage the spire from the hive's surface. The floor shudders, visibly flexing as the prison sways and shudders as if in pain. It is a matter of minutes before the entire facility detaches from Hive Aidon and falls into the sea.*

If the characters roll a complication, select a setback from the following list:

- ◆ **Critical Obstruction:** K'cyaela lashes out, shattering the work done thus far.
- ◆ **Hindrance:** Daemonettes block the way or snatch pieces of the failsafe. Corruption seeps into the pieces of the seal, making them unresponsive. K'cyaela pounds on Dymphna's shield, making her cry out telepathically, which inflicts pain on the warband.
- ◆ **Delay:** Nightmarish visions of the Psykers imprisoned within Ironwatch assault the warband, causing them to reel with images of pain and despair.

## DYMPHNA, PART 4

Once the battle is over, the psychic shield around Dymphna fades and she shakily rises to her feet. She looks exhausted, barely able to stand on her own. "You came," she says. "I knew you would. The Emperor guided you, may you carry his blessings all your days."

Dymphna can answer any questions the warband ask, but she refuses to leave Ironwatch, even as the entire structure begins to pull away from the hive's outer shell. She explains sadly that her place is here, bearing witness to the final end of the Black Lighthouse.

## IRONWATCH FALLS

The warband has to move quickly to make it to the landing pad—and their waiting Arvus shuttle—before Ironwatch fully peels away from the hive shell and tumbles into the ocean below. Describe their harrowing journey as the corridors shudder and twist, detail how the floor tilts alarmingly, or

how they can feel the entire structure swaying to one side or the other. Another great option here is to ask each player to describe one or two obstacles on the way out, and how their character deals with or evades those problems along the way.

Once each player has had an opportunity to contribute to the narrative of escaping in the nick of time, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The engines of the Arvus lighter howl as rain pelts down all around you. You and the rest of your warband sprint towards the hovering shuttle as Ironwatch heaves and tilts beneath your feet. The slick landing pad surface seems to twist sickeningly as cables and connections between the prison facility and the hive stretch, then snap in two. The pilot frantically waves you on, and you all manage to clamber into the shuttle's interior only seconds before the end.*

*With all the failsafes activated, ancient locks holding Ironwatch in place pry themselves open, and the prison rips itself free from the hive that has supported it for centuries. The facility drops like a felled tree, tumbling end over end as it drops for several long seconds towards the raging waves. It strikes the sea's surface with a thunderous crash, splashing polluted spray hundreds of feet into the air.*

*The impact crushes most of the spire into broken, crumpled metal. One last, long, shuddering groan can be heard as the prison's structure is torn apart, then sinks below the swirling waters of Charybdis's ocean surface. Ironwatch is, at long last, no more.*

*The shuttle boosts towards high orbit above the planet, and the waiting Rogue Trader flotilla of ships encircled there. In very short order, you are escorted in to Varonius's stately trophy-room, where you last met with him only a few hours—and a lifetime—ago.*

*"Well done," Varonius smiles and greets each of you. "You've done the impossible and saved this world from a fate too horrible to contemplate. You have a right to be as proud of yourselves as I am of you. I want to hear all about everything you encountered in that hellish place, but that can wait until later. For now, enjoy a well-earned rest as well as my gratitude."*

Due to their success, Varonius is in a generous mood and is happy to reward each of the survivors with a high-quality piece of equipment appropriate to their Tier and upgraded at no cost. Each character may select a new piece of equipment, or an upgrade to an existing piece of equipment, worth up to value 11.

Perhaps there is further discussion to be had about what to do with Psykers in the Gilead System. Cut off by the Great Rift, the system is unlikely to receive regular visitations from the Black Ships. Thus, Psykers are likely to build up on Charybdion again, as well as the other heartworlds. The problem may be forestalled for now, due to the number of Psykers who died within Ironwatch, but the long-term problem still remains. It may take decades for such a build-up to generate another disaster, but clearly some permanent solution is called for. This may be a question for a future adventure, should this problem interest the players.

### THE NIGHTMARE ENDINGS

If the heroes failed to stop K'cyaela... well, there won't be a debriefing. At the first sign of a

daemonic incursion escaping from Ironwatch, Jakel Varonius's flagship, in orbit high above the planet, begins bombarding the prison spire with the heaviest firepower it can bring to bear. Though this stops the invasion, it wreaks untold havoc on Hive Aidon and renders Charybdion nearly useless to the Imperium. Thousands go mad during the Daemons' initial assault, but millions starve over the next several months as the algae that feeds this world dies off. It takes generations to undo what has been wrought.

Alternately, Chaos cultists aboard Varonius's ship manage to sabotage his weapons just long enough for the daemonic incursion to begin in earnest. Cults to the Prince of Pleasure, long hidden in the dark underbelly of the hives, spring into action, backed up by daemonic warriors, and within weeks this world falls into anarchy and corruption. Secret cults on other worlds throughout the system grow bold and begin agitating, stretching Imperial forces thin across this region of the galaxy, and without a way to call for reinforcements through the Great Rift, there is no guarantee that the Gilead System survives much longer.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

What follows are the principal characters that appear in this story and, in some cases, beyond. Included is pertinent information needed in order to portray these characters in your game.

### MURDER-SERVITOR

Ironwatch requires hundreds of servitors to clean and maintain its facilities. Normally, these near-mindless servants take care of their jobs quietly and efficiently. The taint of Chaos crept into their programming now, so the servitors have become uncontrolled killing machines, attempting to "clean" and "repair" any living creature they happen upon.

### MAD PSYKERS

Many of the Psykers who were imprisoned in Ironwatch—those who did not die or go mad when the forces of Chaos attacked—have broken free. They were never particularly stable, chained up and tortured in the darkness of this terrible place, but now things are so much worse. They use their

powers to attack anyone and anything they find, without mercy.

### IRONWATCH PRISON GUARD

Guards assigned to Ironwatch are soldiers from the Imperial Guard or the Charybdion planetary defence force, handpicked for their steadfastness and strength of will. They are hard men and women tasked with doing a difficult job. When all chaos broke loose, most of them stayed at their posts, fighting to their dying breath. Those who lived... well, the changes in the prison have not been kind to them, body or soul.

### ELDAR WAR PARTY

The Eldar are not deliberately hostile, though if the warband attacks them, they fight fiercely to defend themselves. To keep things simple, the war party share the same basic stats. Individuals may have modified Attributes, Skills, Wargear or Special Abilities, in which case, they are noted.

## “THE PERFECT MAN”

Created from the stitched-together body parts stolen from the butchered nobles of Hive Aidon (see page 13) and possessed by the spirit of a Greater Daemon of Slaanesh, K’cyaela wishes nothing more than to turn this world into a playground of torture and pain.

### ATTRIBUTES

Strength	6	Intellect	5
Agility	5	Willpower	6
Toughness	6	Fellowship	7
Initiative	6	Defence	5
Speed	7	Wounds	9
Shock	15	Soak	6
Resolve	5	Conviction	6
Passive Awareness	8		
Resilience	12 (stitched hide 2)		
Skills	Athletics 12, Deception 13, Weapon Skill 13, Default 10		
Size	Average		

### ATTACKS

**Bludgeoning Cranium:** (Damage 9+2ED; AP 0; Penetrating [1])  
**Thrown Gnashing Head:** (Damage 9+2ED; AP 0; Range 12m; Salvo –; Penetrating [1])

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**(Ruin) Champion:** The Perfect Man may take Ruin Actions.  
**(Ruin) Harbinger of the Ruinous Powers:** The Perfect Man generates 1 Ruin at the beginning of every round.  
**Daemonic:** This threat may attempt to Soak Mortal Wounds. Soaking does not cost any Shock for this threat.  
**Fear (5):** This threat causes fear. Enemies are required to pass a Fear test (DN 5) to act normally.  
**Sinful Thoughts:** The Perfect Man reaches into the mind of its target and draws out his innermost, hidden desires. Conjuring images of their desires fulfilled and whispering promises of greater pleasures, The Perfect Man distracts, stuns and leads astray its victim. The target must make a Conviction Test (DN 5). On a failure, the target suffers 2d6 Shock.

**(Ruin) Sinful Cascade:** By spending a Ruin, The Perfect Man may use its Sinful Thoughts ability over a Small Blast radius.

## K’CYAELA, GREATER DAEMON OF SLAANESH

This is K’cyaela in its true form, displaying all its terrible glory. In this form, K’cyaela is more of a force of perverse nature than a foe to be stopped through strength of arms. The warband’s only hope is to restore the final seal and banish K’cyaela back to the storms of the warp.

### ATTRIBUTES

Strength	14	Intellect	5
Agility	5	Willpower	8
Toughness	15	Fellowship	7
Initiative	8	Defence	3
Speed	10	Wounds	18
Shock	20	Soak	10
Resolve	7	Conviction	8
Passive Awareness	9		
Resilience	16		
Skills	Deception 14, Weapon Skill 15, Default 12		
Size	Gargantuan		

### ATTACKS

**Massive Pincers:** (Damage 18+2ED; AP -3; Brutal)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**(Ruin) Champion:** K’cyaela may take Ruin Actions.  
**(Ruin) Harbinger of the Ruinous Powers:** K’cyaela generates 1 Ruin at the beginning of every round.  
**Daemonic:** K’cyaela may attempt to Soak Mortal Wounds.  
**Beyond the Pale:** As a greater daemon, K’cyaela causes Terror.  
**Monstrous:** K’cyaela is a Monstrous Creature, and is immune to Fear, Bleeding, Pinned, Restrained and Poisoned combat effects.  
**(Wrath) Corrupting Touch:** When K’cyaela rolls a 6 on its Wrath die while making a melee attack, a flood of corrupting warp energy assaults its target. The victim must make a Corruption Test (DN 7) or suffer 1d3+1 Corruption and 1d3 Mortal Wounds.



# TWISTED STRANDS







## INTRODUCTION

*Dark Tides*' final chapter, **Twisted Strands**, brings a band of Aeldari into the prison of Ironwatch with a very different goal than the humans of the Imperium. As turmoil seethes upon Charybdion, numerous Psykers have been confined to the Enforcer prison facility of Ironwatch, awaiting the long-overdue Black Ships to take them away. However, servants of the Chaos God, Slaanesh, have emerged within the prison, corrupting the Psykers within.

Meanwhile, the Aeldari of the Ul-Khari Craftworld face their own threat. One of the prisoners within Ironwatch, Konrad Boyer, is a Psyker of tremendous raw power. Boyer is entangled in threads of destiny that, when tugged, might unravel the very future of the Ul-Khari Eldar. Some of the Eldar leaders insist that the human's thread must be cut—but others believe that his power could instead be harnessed to benefit the desperate Aeldari.



This adventure is a mirror-image of the events of Adventure 4: **Ironwatch**, and is otherwise unconnected to the rest of the adventures of *Dark Tides*. **Twisted Strands** offers a unique look at the events unfolding within Ironwatch, but it is not necessary to play through this adventure to complete the story of Charybdion's survival.



## OVERVIEW

**Twisted Strands** is an adventure suitable for *Wrath & Glory* characters of Tiers 3 and 4. This adventure is designed for a band of characters who are all of the Aeldari species—other species, such as humans or Orks, are not appropriate.

### ACT ONE

**Twisted Strands** begins with the Aeldari warband on the crashed craftworld of Ul-Khari. The Aeldari of this place are resilient survivors, their home having suffered in the wake of the Great Rift that tore the galaxy in two. The warband is summoned by Farseer Tylanriel Tarnalys and given an important task. A specific human on the Ocean World of Charybdion must be slain before his destiny threatens the Craftworld's future. The heroes receive another offer, however, from the

roguish Corsair Princess Ferianwyr Greensteel. She wants the human brought to her alive, to find some way to benefit from his terrible potential.

### ACT TWO

A stealthy Aeldari craft—a Vampire Raider—delivers the warband to the Ironwatch prison on Charybdion. There, the heroes find themselves accosted by an Inquisitor of the Ordo Hereticus who is thankfully willing to negotiate with the Aeldari. The Inquisitor has their own business inside Ironwatch, investigating the dark threat growing within the prison. Can the warband negotiate with the Inquisitor, and what assistance might they receive from the Imperial agents in exchange?

### ACT THREE

To reach the target, the warband must navigate the corrupted halls of Ironwatch. They are accosted by horrors on all sides, threatened with mad Psykers, warp beasts, and servants of the Ruinous Powers. If they survive, the heroes can locate their goal: Konrad Boyer, a human Psyker with immense hidden power. The rampaging Psykers inside the prison have worn thin the veil between worlds, and the minions of the Chaos God Slaanesh have their own plans for Boyer. The warband must face a maelstrom of madness, defeat the out-of-control Psykers and Daemons infesting the prison, and then make their final, fateful choice to capture or slay their target. Do they end Boyer's life as the Farseer commanded, or hand him over to the whims of the Corsair Princess?



## THE PAST IS PROLOGUE

The craftworld Ul-Khari was once a peaceful place, as the Aeldari measure such things, small in size and content to avoid humanity's notice and threat. The Eldar of Ul-Khari have been forced to rapidly mobilise and militarise after finding themselves threatened, and in fact almost destroyed, by the Great Rift's emergence. The Farseers of Ul-Khari have reawakened dormant Aspect Shrines, encouraged Guardian training, and reshaped ancient wraith-constructs into weapons of war instead of tranquil advisors.





The first act is set upon Craftworld Ul-Khari itself, a place of shattered crystal spires and rampant, rapid militarisation. The Aeldari of the craftworld may have been knocked to their knees by the tremendous power of the Great Rift, but they have not been defeated. They are determined to resist, and even thrive, thanks to the guidance of their vaunted Farseers and the foreseen assistance of some rogue elements that have returned to the fold. The wounded Farseer Tylanriel, spiritual leader of the craftworld, and the dashing Corsair Princess Ferianwyr Greensteel may not see eye to eye, but they are agreed on one thing, for certain: the player characters have a key role to play in the future of Ul-Khari.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The opening scenes offer players a chance to fit their character into the crashed Ul-Khari Craftworld, to introduce themselves to one another or establish how and why (if they already know one another), and to be tasked with doing their part to save their people.

Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*The beauty of Craftworld Ul-Khari can still be found, beneath the sounds of militia-Guardians drilling in the courtyards, the sights of long-dormant Aspect Shrines now filled with grim, stoic warriors, and the soul-deep thrum of ancient wraith-constructs guarding the streets, bristling with heavy weapons, ready to pour out violence as they once dispensed wisdom and serenity.*

*The militarisation—the response to the fantastic threat of the Great Rift—has left signs as indelible as the crash itself, but there is still hope and light, and grace to your damaged and broken home. This is what you are fighting for. Some wraithbone spires still stand tall and defiant against the damage the crash has wrought. Some Aeldari—your kin—still dance, still sing and create.*

*Your warband makes its way to the Starsong Chamber, where you have been summoned by a Farseer, one of your people's leaders. The wraithbone chamber is cracked, but those*

*wounds are slowly healing as the craftworld repairs what it can. The Eldar are a resilient people, and this, your home, is a resilient place.*

Players should have some opportunity to roleplay and introduce their characters here during the initial meeting, while they wait for the Farseer to speak to them. Play up the damaged-but-persevering nature of the battle-scared Ul-Khari home, as well as the relatively recent militarisation. A peaceful and isolationist craftworld, only since the Great Rift tore the galaxy asunder has Ul-Khari been forced to arm itself for full-scale war.

*Precisely when the time is right, Farseer Tylanriel limps into the Starsong Chamber to speak with you. Like the craftworld itself, he was grievously hurt when Ul-Khari crashed into a rogue exoplanet on the fringe of the Gilead System. Like the craftworld, he fights on. Clad in the silver and deep purple robes of his office, Tylanriel exudes wisdom and power despite how his near-crippled body leans heavily on his singing spear. Softly glowing runes adorn his robes and helm, each one a symbol of the Eldar's fated destiny.*

*"Kith and kin, we face a dire peril, and you are the ones to forestall it," he says, voice quiet but certain, weary but resolved. "Far away, on the blue pearl of Charybdion, the humans and their primitive Psykers have drawn the attention of She Who Thirsts. Their crisis unfolds almost as swiftly as our runes can keep track of it. Their petty cults and venal hungers have brought doom to that misbegotten water-world. However, it is not the fate of the pollution-ridden planet that concerns us. Instead, there is a great danger hidden on Charybdion, a threat that must be destroyed completely to make certain the survival of our craftworld."*

*This threat is a single human: one of their Psykers, named Konrad Boyer. He has great power within him, power that—left unchecked—will alter the strands of destiny and set loose events that will cause great suffering for Ul-Khari. Boyer is confined within a prison connected to the planet's capital hive city, a corrupted and vile facility the humans call Ironwatch.*

*"One of our craft will deliver you to Ironwatch. Enter the prison, locate Boyer and slay him. Disturb the humans as little as you can. Drawing their eye threatens to bring us to the attention of She Who Thirsts, for her minions feast upon the dark passions within the prison facility. Charybdion's doom must not reach us. Kill Boyer, elude the creatures of Slaanesh, and leave the humans to their unending war."*

*"Ul-Khari will owe you, heroes, for the blood you spill this day. The portents align—so make yourselves ready to depart at once."*

Tylanriel has never been to Charybdion himself, and knows only what his divinations have shared: Konrad Boyer is a human male, a Psyker, and an inmate in Ironwatch. Charybdion is known to be a hotbed of Slaaneshi cultist activity of late, and might yet fall to She Who Thirsts. But even if that happens—before that happens—this Konrad Boyer must be killed. His fate is to bring ruin to the Aeldari, to doom the Craftworld Ul-Khari, and the Farseer is counting on the players not letting that happen.

As they leave the Farseer and make ready, however, the players are presented with another point of view. It would seem not every resident of the Craftworld has interpreted the human's future the same.

The Greensteel Wanderers are a band of Anhrathe—Eldar Corsairs—who have returned from their self-imposed exile to help the Ul-Khari in their time of need. Their dashing leader, the Corsair Princess Ferianwyr Greensteel, has other plans for the human. One of her paramours is a gifted Psyker known as a Void Dreamer amongst the Corsairs. This consort has been whispering wisdoms into Ferianwyr's delicately pointed ear.

Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*"A graceful Aeldari, swaggering and wearing a dazzling array of jewellery and exotic weapons, waits to speak with you just outside. She brazenly approaches you in the very shadow of the wraithbone tower where Ul-Khari's Farseers deliberate and meditate. The Corsair Princess, Ferianwyr Greensteel, is not one for sneaking and skulking when a bolder approach will leave a stronger impression."*

*"Fresh from a grim meeting with the limping lord Tarnalys, are we? Allow me to present a dissenting opinion. My consort, as you may know, is a Void Dreamer of no small power. My beloved saw what the Farseer saw, but he read it differently."*

*"I know what the Farseer has asked of you, and I tell you, it is a waste. The mon-keigh's power is brittle and sharp? I say... so what? Let us break him if he is fragile, and use the shards to slice at our foes. He is a battery. He is fuel for a fire. He is power. Why waste it? Tylanriel is being overly cautious, as is his way. But you, I'm sure, have bolder spirits than he."*

*"The Corsair Princess, Greensteel, arches one sharp brow and dares your small band of Aeldari to follow her lead."*

*"The Farseer should be satisfied so long as the man is plucked from the madness-garden of that mon-keigh prison and kept from the clutching fingers of She Who Thirsts, no? What will it hurt him, hurt Ul-Khari, to keep the human alive? Let us use him, rather than discard him, and perhaps we might restore a bit of glory to this*



*dull and dreary craftworld. What's more, when the deed is done, I'll gift you with spoils I've taken from the void... quite a handsome reward."*

The players' choice is simple here, if not easy. If they kill Konrad Boyer, the powerful Farseer of their craftworld will be pleased with them. If they spirit Boyer away from Ironwatch, instead, to hand him over to Ferianwyr, they'll find their boldness and dashing rewarded by the Corsair Princess.

## ENTANGLEMENTS

There shouldn't be too much that can go wrong in this early scene. It's primarily for some introductory roleplay, and presenting players with a decision to make—one they don't have to make right now—between letting some strange human live, or die.

Below, find a few likely questions or concerns that players may have for these two NPCs, along with general answers they'll provide. Take inspiration from them to answer any additional questions players have, but generally try not to let the adventure get too bogged down in what is ultimately a simple choice: kill Boyer or don't, gathering more spiritual or more material rewards in the process.

### Likely Questions for Farseer Tylanriel:

What exactly makes this Konrad Boyer so dangerous?

*"His potential makes him a notable thread, but, as always, it is the overall tapestry of fate that concerns us. Pluck on one string, and watch whole lives unravel. He is that string, that thread, that flaw in the weave. Whether he knows it or not, no matter how indirect or ignorant a threat he may be, he is a threat. We dare not risk leaving him alive."*

What happens if human authorities spot us?

*"The humans of Charybdion have a bloody future unfolding even as we speak, and we want little part in it. They will not notice a few more corpses amidst their current strife, and they will have little time on their hands to chase rumours and whispers of Aeldari in their midst. Elude them if you can. Defend yourself if you must. Aid them against She Who Thirsts if you are able. Your destiny is your own, but tread lightly."*

(Upon returning) Corsair Princess Ferianwyr Greensteel, of the Greensteel Wanderers, said she wants us to give this Konrad Boyer to her, instead of killing him. What about that?

*"I see," the Farseer's broad shoulders slump, not in defeat, but in weariness. "Such insubordination is to be expected from those who swagger along the Path of Outcasts, I suppose. Her heart is out of balance, and so is Rhystellan's, her Void Dreamer. I will not order you, but I will ask you—for the sake of all you know and all you love, do not tempt fate by trying to alter—rather than end—this human's path."*

### Likely Questions for Corsair Princess Ferianwyr Greensteel:

What is it you want this Konrad Boyer for?

*"Who knows?" She shrugs carelessly. "But I'm sure we'll find a use for him. Maybe we'll just let him loose on some rivals, trade him to some Drukhari to play with, or have my pretty little consort really test his power. I just don't see the benefit in wasting such potential based on nothing but Tylanriel's fear. Plus, it will irk the Farseer—a minor repayment for his tiresome lectures."*

How will you reward us?/What's in it for us?

*"I will owe you a boon, no small gift from a Corsair Princess. Also, I possess many rare and unique items and baubles from my raids—they could be yours, if you do as I ask."*

Notes on end-mission results are at the end of the adventure, but this starting conversation can be used to gauge player interest and desires, and adjust rewards accordingly.

What about Farseer Tylanriel?

*"Tylanriel needs the help of my Greensteel Wanderers, just as he needs yours. He cannot afford to chastise either of us, and we are not his slaves to be ordered about based on his own incomplete rune-castings. Tylanriel may be wise, but he's not infallible, and he may be respected, but his authority is hardly absolute. Whatever you're worried he'll do, he'll not."*



## ACT TWO: THE NIGHTMARE OF IRONWATCH

Once they have spoken to both the Farseer and the Corsair Princess, the warband is escorted to a dome containing several Eldar war craft. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*Inside the dome is a sleek, heavily armed transport, commonly used for stealthy assaults—a Vampire Raider. Concealed by powerful holo-fields, the Vampire Raider smoothly and swiftly takes off from the dome and makes the journey into the Gilead System's inner heartworlds. The blue-black world of Charybdion soon gleams in the black void, and the Vampire Raider descends towards the capital hive city. The sophisticated holo-fields cloak the craft from Imperial devices, ensuring that the warband is delivered to a landing pad attached to the prison spire. Your warband swiftly gains access to the prison facility, for several of its entry gates are silent and unguarded. The mon-keigh prison is as dark as a tomb, its inmates rampaging throughout the structure.*

*Once you enter, you sense a weight of psychic oppression all around. Darkness and fear wrapped up in madness and hubris, the bitter stinks of urine and blood, of terror-sweat and coarse mon-keigh hair: humanity at its worst.*

*The voices that echo through these halls are coarse things, gruff and bestial. The human language is as graceless as the creatures that speak it, but even compared to the most base of savages, the howls and cries that ring out in the halls of Ironwatch are... wrong. You know the Imperial tongue, and this is not it, not truly. These are not merely the savage grunts of lowly humans any more than a tortured animal's plaintive howl is the same as the bark of a common dog, or the pain-whimpers of a half-vivisected cat are the same as a lion's roar. You have heard the gruff sounds of Low Gothic before, heard the contempt in Imperial voices. The howls ringing out now, though, are not even as civilised as that; they are throat-bloody roars of pain that have no end, the gibberings of shattered minds that know not what they speak, and the cries of the damned.*

*These may be the **least human** human sounds to ever accost Aeldari ears.*

*Welcome to Ironwatch.*



### IRONWATCH IS BROKEN

The madness pooling about the Ironwatch prison is deep and rich, but the activity of human cultists elsewhere on Charybdion, the surging power of the Great Rift, and the baleful gaze of She Who Thirsts, have all set that still pool of power and insanity to boiling over. Never a place of safety under the best of conditions, it has become a pit of despair and Chaos, terribly dangerous even to the powerful minds of the Aeldari.

- ◆ For every hour spent in Ironwatch, every player character must make a Corruption test.
- ◆ Add an automatic Wrath Dice to any psychic powers used by player characters.
- ◆ Any NPCs attempting to use psychic powers automatically roll on the Perils of the Warp table.



The interior of Ironwatch is dank and dark, cold and unfeeling, and it stands as a testament to humankind's cruelty towards itself. Sharp xenos eyes and ears or not, Ironwatch is a horror show, a place of shadows and screaming, disorientating and terrible. Compared to the graceful, living architecture of a craftworld, Ironwatch would be miserable even if it weren't for the prisoners housed therein and the madness tearing at them in the wake of the Great Rift.

The players find themselves, then, in a labyrinthine darkness, far below the main floors of Ironwatch.

### INQUISITORIAL OFFERS

If you are not using a customised Imperial authority and retinue based on player characters (see sidebar and Chapter 4), commence with the following introduction and Inquisitorial retinue. Make adjustments as necessary to customise this scenario for a cameo from familiar faces, otherwise continue as written.

As the warband begins to explore inside the prison, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*You are not alone wandering the halls of this dank sub-basement for long, trusting your instincts and the Farseer's rune—always gently tugging at your minds, showing you the way back—for guidance. You hear footsteps ahead. Loud ones. And demands from a subordinate, in the dog-barking human language.*

"It was here? You are certain?"

*There is no attempt at stealth, no caution, no shame or fear. They are martial. Confident. Arrogant. Her voice rings out again, louder this time, calling out.*

"Who is there?"

*She strides into the room just behind a soldier, a grim man in blue-black carapace armour and a full-face helmet, clearly a warrior-acolyte. The leader is next, just behind him and his oversized las-weapon. Behind her trails an age-spotted bald man with a ridiculous beard and a scholar's robes, carrying some beeping human-tech device in his hand. Then comes a dandy dressed in silks and treasures, gaudy from head to toe but comfortable with the power sword at his hip, and next to him a grim, leather-clad man draped in blades, whose feral grace does most humans proud. As for the leader herself? She wears armour not terribly dissimilar to her bodyguards, but with a fine, almost military coat layered over it. A crude human plasma weapon thrums quietly on one hip, and her hand never strays far from it; but most importantly, she bears an iconic golden rosette around her neck.*

An Inquisitor searches for you.

*Then, the Imperial's crude mouth struggles to form new words. Graceful words. Her accent is atrocious, but there's no mistaking her attempt at the noble Aeldari tongue. Fortunately, translation circuits in your wargear render her clumsy efforts more clear:*

*"We are not here to fight you, xenos. I am Inquisitor Emeline Smythe, and I wish to parlay."*

The warband are certainly free to attempt to hide from the Inquisitor, though with her scribe's Auspex,

a keen-eyed Assassin, and whatever technology the warrior-acolyte may have in his helmet, they shouldn't be able to hide indefinitely without excellent rolls. If they continue to hide instead of simply using their stealth for a dramatic entrance, have Inquisitor Smythe continue to beseech them, in halting, terrible, Aeldari, promising that she only wishes to talk and, in fact, that she would ask them for a favour.

Hopefully, players will indulge the Inquisitor and join her in conversing, rather than combat. If they opt for neither option, and manage to make an impressive string of tests to finesse their way past without being noticed, that's all well and good, but they'll miss out on the opportunity to gather valuable information, and the retinue may still be available, and in a sour mood, to throw a monkey-wrench into the warband's escape plans later in the adventure.

If the heroes decide to listen to the Inquisitor's offer, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*"Our world is under attack from the Ruinous Powers. Ironwatch has become a cage, sealing in uncontrolled Psykers. There are a series of failsafes we need to activate to destroy this place, and the evil within it. If your task takes you into the Obsidian Secure wing, then I beseech you to destroy the security station there. Without this, my team will have a difficult time accessing the second failsafe."*

Continue in a similar vein until the point is clear; Inquisitor Smythe, scion of the Ordo Hereticus, is attempting to switch on a number of failsafes inside Ironwatch. When all the failsafes are activated, the prison will be destroyed—the spire will detach from the hive city and fall into the sea.

Though she has sensed their incursion (no doubt thanks to her sage's Auspex), she has no idea why the Eldar are here. The player characters can remain aloof and mysterious, of course, or be as forthcoming (or deceitful) as they'd like; if they are honest, and explain their mission to the Inquisitor, she will be able to offer them more information than assistance (especially as she is grateful to them if they agree to destroy the security station, regardless).

- ◆ Konrad Boyer is, indeed, a Psyker and a prisoner here. He is in the "Obsidian Secure" wing, a

special holding area for long-term prisoners (and she can point them in the right general direction).

- ◆ There has been no word from the staff in the Obsidian Secure wing, but so far all the Enforcers she's seen elsewhere in Ironwatch have been killed. The prisoners are not to be taken lightly.
- ◆ She is willing to leave them to their task unmolested by her and those she holds authority over.
- ◆ She and her retinue are not available to assist them directly, however. There are other problems that demand her attention, and a million other crises spread across Charybdis, besides.

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## THE INQUISITIVE INQUISITOR'S RETINUE

Ideally, rather than Smythe, there may be player characters available from having run Adventure 4: **Ironwatch**. Having Eldar players confront their old Imperial characters (and giving the GM the opportunity to roleplay as them) is probably the most fun way to handle this exchange, but if you'd prefer to keep things simpler, or if your group hasn't played through the prior chapter, Smythe and her stand-in retinue will work just fine.

**Inquisitor Emeline Smythe, Ordo Hereticus:** a Cadian, albeit a short one, whose martial prowess (particularly with her plasma pistol) is matched only by her keen intellect and dedication to the Imperium. She has long had a curious mind to go with her sharp mind, and she is willing to, at least temporarily, set aside long-running Imperial/Eldar feuds to, in desperation, ask for assistance against a shared threat. She knows more than most that desperate times might call for desperate allies, and the last thing Smythe wants is to see another Imperial world fall to darkness.

**Gaius Krake:** a veteran warrior-acolyte, he's an Imperial soldier through and through, the very model of a no-nonsense military man. Krake is clad in dark carapace armour and carries a hot-shot lasgun as comfortably as he does his faith in

his Inquisitor and the God-Emperor of Mankind. His tremendous loyalty to, and trust in, Inquisitor Smythe curbs his usual anti-xenos bent, and his quiet professionalism keeps him from being overtly antagonistic. He is the least trusting of Smythe's retinue, but the most obedient.

**Old Cobb:** Smythe's sage is a liver-spotted, wrinkled, rail-thin old man whose cowardice is overshadowed only by his brilliance. He's had extensive cybernetic modifications to his skull, and the auspex he is never without is linked barbarically to a plug in his head. He is a walking database even without the augmentation, a living omnibus of lore and wisdom, but is of little use in a fight.

**Sir Kaltos van Trantor Rabalius Fitz-Drake:** A nobleman of the Volpone branch of the sprawling Drake family, Kaltos is a descendant of a Rogue Trader of middling repute, a rogue, a gambler, a duellist, and an unrepentant rake through and through... but one who has still, somehow, come to be an Inquisitor's Interrogator—her strong right hand and apprentice—implying there must be more to him than meets the eye. His golden hair and chiselled features may be appealing to members of his own species, but he's as ugly as any other human to the Aeldari (a fact to which he seems blissfully unaware).

**Mercy:** His name is entirely ironic. A mute assassin in tight leather wrapped with weapons belts, Mercy bristles with blades, exudes quiet menace, and eyes up the Aeldari like targets to be chopped down. Mercy's skin is dark and scarred, his head shaved spear-bald, his features neutral, and eyes sharp. He is eerily calm and quiet, and his body remains taut and coiled as a spring, ready to attack at a moment's notice. He is purely a weapon in Inquisitor Smythe's hand, a grim, efficient killer.

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## ENTANGLEMENTS

The likeliest things that can go wrong with this quick interaction with the Inquisitor is that players could get too antagonistic, either via roleplay or just by outright attacking/ambushing the retinue. Should the players decide to kill the Inquisitor and her chosen few, simply let them; the Imperials are not expecting an attack at the time, and a long,

drawn-out combat isn't what Inquisitor Smythe is here for. While players might be understandably disappointed should their experienced player characters (from their own run-through on Chapter 4) be ambushed and cut to ribbons, taking apart Smythe and her group should be handled with just a few abstract attack rolls and some descriptions of Eldar lethality. The end result should be that the Aeldari have maintained their secrecy, while the plot continues with minimum disruption.

## SCREAMS IN THE DARK

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### ON 'MADNESS'

Throughout this adventure, and this scene in particular, words like "crazed" and "insane" or "shattered" have been used to describe the minds of Ironwatch's prisoners. Untrained Psykers who have suffered from overcrowding and cruelty, then assaulted by Chaos, these NPCs are not in any way meant to represent real-life people with mental illnesses, but rather cinematic, grim oversimplifications of people broken by external horrors. They do not reflect on the real-life struggles of internal demons, but rather the fantastic struggles of those afflicted by actual warp entities and the grim realities of an over-the-top setting.

The issues with the Psykers in Ironwatch is less about insanity, and far more about uncontrolled power. These Psykers are lashing out with abilities they barely understand. Imagine trying to cry out for help, and that plea emerging as a sheet of crackling lightning that destroys one who could have provided the very help you wanted. Some Psykers are, in fact, mad—but many others are not, like Dymphna.

When describing the Psykers of Ironwatch, and when dealing with the visions the described trio can inflict upon players, always be aware and respectful of the comfort level of players at the game table. Some groups are more willing to tackle hallucinations of distorted passion than others, for instance, or visions of any sort of mania or obsession. Be respectful and keep the game fun.

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Once the warband has concluded negotiating with the Inquisitional agents (peacefully or otherwise), paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*With the direction of your target's last known location, the Obsidian-Secure wing of this blighted prison, you are once again on your way. The tactical lights of Smythe's retinue fade in the distance and you're left with only the emergency lighting—crude, electrically powered stuff—to guide your way. Even those lights flicker and burn out as you follow Smythe's instructions, however, as the screams of the damned grow louder, as the shadows seem to writhe and wriggle at the edges of your vision.*

*Before long, it feels like only your softly glowing spirit stones light the way, or perhaps only your souls in general. Reality is a grim and twisted thing in a place like Ironwatch even at the best of times, and Charybdion is far from its best self of late.*

*Just when you are certain your imaginations must be worse than what you'll find in the darkness of this place, you find your first corrupted prisoners.*

*There is a dribbling, drooling woman, likely never comely for her species, but certainly less so now, with shrivelled holes where her eyes should be. She squats in her filth next to a gaunt-faced older man, who stares up at you, but has only ruinous scars where he should have ears, and the wretched stub of a tongue left in his toothless mouth. The third of them is a morbidly obese man, though you shudder at how he grew to be so, as his mouth has been sewn shut, and only the barest mewling sounds can now escape the tiny, puckered orifice that remains below his nose.*

These three will respond to the attention of Eldar in terrible ways. The blinded woman will unerringly turn her empty sockets towards a character; the deafened old man will claw at the scarred-over patches that were once his ears, wailing mutely and gumming his lips to try to scream yet more; the sewn-shut lips of the third man will strain against the wires that bind his mouth shut. They will be clearly agitated, clearly in pain, clearly responding to external stimuli, but never in any reasonable or meaningful way.

If the trio of Psykers are physically touched, probed via Psyker powers, spoken to, or otherwise directly interacted with, they will lash out with their powers in harmony at whoever has drawn their ire.

When that happens, nearby characters are sent reeling with powerful visions, projected realities that show just how far gone the poor creatures are. These Psykers have been less than sane for quite a while, but the eruption of the Great Rift, and the incursion of Slaanesh onto this world, have done them no favours. All they experience now, they experience through a haze of unwholesome experiences, of pleasures turned inside out and twisted by the influence of She Who Thirsts.

The only way they can communicate now—such as to warn of oncoming danger, or to cry for help while being attacked—is to manipulate those visions and flood them with violence, trying to snap their victims out of it.

Roll a die (or choose one, based on the character affected) to see what flood of sensations

characters are hit by, until it's time to end one of these visions by starting combat against the warp beasts prowling Ironwatch's halls.

(1) *You've never tasted anything so sweet in your life, never bitten into pastries so flawless, never cut into meat cooked so perfectly rare and juicy. The seasonings, the smells, the treasures on your palate. The wine gives everything a lovely bit of blur to it, dulls all of life's pains quite wonderfully, until all that's left for you to worry about, to think about, to remember, is the feast laid out before you. Responsibilities fade, duties fade, fears and hatreds, loves... you only need to eat. Just one more bite, another, another. Taste that delicious morsel, sample this one, gorge yourself on the other. The meat is a bit too tough on your next bite, so you find a rarer cut. Then a rarer. Then a rarer. The last is bloody and raw, but not cold, no; not cold, because it's not dead. You're gnawing and gnawing on it, lapping up the blood, chewing and chomping and gnashing and biting and biting and biting...*



(2) Nothing compares to the pleasures of the flesh. The nibbling and teasing, the smells and tastes of passion, the feeling of an eager partner or two, or three, writhing alongside you, above you, beneath you. Incense and wine round out the experience, making it all a pleasure-filled haze, a blur, a twisted, tangled mass of flesh and hair and passion. The pleasure is spiked with pain at first, just a bit, but then a bit more. And more. And more. Then the only pleasure is the pain, the blood, the rending and tearing, the killing, the feel of flesh parting beneath your claws and fangs...

(3) Ah, comfort. Warmth. Serenity. Rest. Leisure time is surely the best time, and what better way to be idle than to indulge in a quick nap? How better to reward yourself for a job well done than to rest? How better to make a place feel like home than to sleep? To wrap yourself in blankets, bundle up snug and tight and warm, and to just close your eyes and feel safe, secure, certain of your place in the world? Until the blankets feel too tight, at least, until the pillows and silk sheets turn rough against your skin, wrap about you, constrict you, choke you, until you've got to tear at them with your hands and your teeth, lash out and carve your way free so that you'll be able to rest again. Tearing and tearing, slashing, hacking...

(4) There is a wondrous serenity in perfection. There is no sense like the sense of accomplishment, no pleasure so pure as in knowing you've done something flawlessly. But not a fluke, no! You need to do it perfectly again, to prove it wasn't dumb luck, wasn't some happy accident. Then do it again, to silence any doubters. Then do it again, to prove to yourself you can. Then again—whatever the task!—to show off to any new watchers. Then again, play the song, paint with the brush, cook the meal, swing the sword, step to the music, write another verse, run another lap, again, again, again. Perfect, again. Perfect, again. Perfect, again. Leave no question as to your dominance. Brook no criticism. Accept no failure. Kill your rivals. Perfect. Again. Kill!

(5) It's always a pleasure to be better than someone in a clear, convincing way. It doesn't matter the contest, it's the win that's the thing. Playing regicide, running a footrace, arm wrestling, love-making. Anything can be

a competition if you find some fool to stand against you. Boxing, wrestling, fencing. The important thing is that you win. That you win, and crush your opponent completely, establishing yourself as their better. Beat them. Beat them and stab them. Destroy them. Gnaw their bones. Gnaw their bones!

(6) There is no pleasure in a place like Ironwatch. It is beaten from you. Taken from you. Carved out of you. If they dislike what you see, they take your eyes. If they dislike what you say, they take your tongue. If they know you hear their whispered secrets, they take your ears. If you bite them, they take your mouth. If you touch them, they take your hands. If you run, they take your feet. They don't care about any of your parts. They only care about you, your core, the essence of you, shining bright, glowing with power. Burning like fire, like a sun, like the Golden Throne and the death it promises you.

When an appropriate vision has been rolled (or selected), that segues nicely into combat, startle the characters back to the present by starting the adventure's first dedicated combat scene:

A creature all of blood-red and bone-white tears the trio of hapless prisoners limb from limb, even as a second comes bounding, phasing through the wall to join in the monstrous feast.

Khymerae!

They are warp beasts, creatures born of fear and pain, spawned in the immaterial realms between worlds that the webways criss-cross. Known to sometimes be bred and used by Drukhari raiders, the totemic Beastmasters of the Wych Cults, Khymerae are fearsome pack predators capable of leaping in and out of real space at will. They are not of this physical realm. They do not belong here. That does not stop them from lashing out with spikes and tentacles, chest talons and gnashing claws, reducing the maimed Psykers before you into hunks of red, wet meat... and then turning their many-eyed skulls your way, all slavering tongues and legs coiled to pounce.

Begin a combat, including one Khymera per hero, with a minimum of four and a maximum of eight. The GM may, at their discretion, increase the

number of Khymerae (adding 2 per additional Rank or hero is a good rule of thumb) if the group is higher Rank or has exceptionally good wargear.

Call for an Awareness test (DN 4). Those in the warband who fail are considered ambushed and may not participate in the first round of combat.

After the fight is over and the beasts are either slain or have fled, it's time for the party to move on:

*An oppressive silence replaces the sounds of battle that rang out in Ironwatch's accursed halls just minutes ago. The prison holds its breath in the wake of the Khymerae's death, and you are free to continue on your journey to the Obsidian Secure wing. There are far-off sounds*



*of fighting and dying in the distance, but there is a knot of tense peace around you, a quiet at the heart of the storm, as you make your way through the bowels of this terrible human place.*

*Memories of your interrupted visions tease you as you probe deeper into Ironwatch, chasing your destiny. Instead of cries of pain you sometimes think you hear sighs of pleasure. Instead of the mildewed, dank smell of this watery prison, at times you are sure you smell freshly baked goods, sickly sweet incense, or your beloved's hair. You remember the delectable sights and sounds of the combat, as well, the thrill of the fight mingled with the unreal sensations poured over you by the maimed human Psykers.*

*There is no mistaking the nearness of She Who Thirsts or her attempts at luring you from the path. There is no misunderstanding her desire for you, no forgetting the Aeldari's shame at her birth, no taking for granted the discipline and balance each and every one of you strive for—and the humans of Charybdion clearly do not!—to avoid her seductive influence.*

*There. At last. Scrawled out in the crude sigils of Low Gothic, on a sign adorned, of course, with all manner of skulls and warnings, are the blocky letters: OBSIDIAN.*

*Carved into a doorway that hangs ever so slightly ajar, as though opened just enough for someone to slip through.*

*You have found the secure wing, but you will not be alone. Already, you hear the sounds of conflict within.*

## ADJUSTING THE BATTLE

A pack of Khymerae can be a tough encounter, especially striking from ambush against distracted foes. For an easier fight, players may be able to get in a free action each while the warp beasts devour the entrails of the helpless Psykers. For a tougher fight, only have the two visible warp beasts distract themselves on the easy meat, and have another two phase in through a wall or ceiling from an unexpected direction, ambushing players and catching them unawares.



Up ahead, the players see a T-intersection, which also serves as the primary security post of the Obsidian wing. This place is also under siege as the Eldar intruders arrive.

Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*The distractingly drawn-out silence breaks with roars of combat and the thunderous boom of primitive human ballistic weapons. Directly in front of you is a small, uniformed group of humans, taking cover behind crude furniture and impromptu barriers, firing steadily into an oncoming horde of gibbering lunatics assaulting them from the leftward hallway. Their ugly shotguns roar and buck as they spit death, and the wave of rushing attackers breaks and recedes, cursing and screeching, into the darkness. A handful of bodies, burnt and ravaged by las-fire, are left in their wake, and even as you watch, the Enforcers put finishing shots into the wounded prisoners left behind.*

*“Security station clear,” one of the uniformed men states matter-of-factly. He and three others man the barricades next to a bank of monitors and control panels.*

*There are no lights in Obsidian-secure wing, you realise. After the unsteady lighting, the flickering, haunted lighting, the half-real lighting, of the rest of this madhouse, it took several moments to realise the difference. The security station is like a craftworld, in a way, a tiny island of light and reason amidst an ocean of darkness and madness.*

The players have a choice to make here. Do they approach the humans with an offer of assistance or inquiry as to what's going on, or simply go in for the kill? Unlike the unflappable Inquisitor and her loyal retinue, however, these four guards present an additional challenge; if they are approached by a band of strange xenos, they'll likely respond in an aggressive manner. While they aren't likely to shoot first, they'll certainly be brandishing their weapons, and even a shotgun is intimidating when one is pointed at you by a nervous-looking Enforcer who might, after all, have been driven mad already by recent events.

Warden Corporal Jacen Kaer, only just recently promoted, is the ranking officer of the Obsidian-Secure wing at present. The burly, black-bearded

man has three subordinates overseeing the wing with him. They are, perhaps understandably, paranoid. They have only their mercy-kill shotguns to defend themselves with, and are running low on ammunition. They have received no communication or support from the rest of Ironwatch (much less the outside world). The additional defences leading into the Obsidian-Secure wing seems to have protected them—at least partially—thus far, but their tempers are still frayed, their situation is still desperate, and a band of heavily armed xenos are the last thing they'd be expecting to come and ‘rescue’ them. The band of Aeldari may be mistaken for servants of Slaanesh, radical xenos cultists behind the recent chaos, or simply psychically induced hallucinations; depending on their approach and appearance, the encounter could turn ugly quickly. It may take a good deal of negotiation for the Aeldari to calm Watch Corporal Kaer and his men, and that amount of negotiation may certainly be more emotional capital than some Aeldari care enough to invest.

Kaer and his men begin at the Hostile Reaction (see Reactions on page 253 of the *Wrath & Glory Core Rules*). Persuasion or other Interaction skills are needed to convince him and his men to be more helpful.

Information Corporal Kaer (or his men) can provide:

- ◆ Konrad Boyer is a prisoner in the Obsidian-Secure wing, along the Alpha branch. The guards haven't seen him during any of these other frantic mass-charges.
- ◆ There are 18 prisoners in Alpha branch (minus the four that lay dead after the recent skirmish), and 16 prisoners in Omega branch (who have yet to assault the terminal).
- ◆ The system has gone haywire, cells are unable to be closed, servitors are offline or dead, and no communication has come in from outside the secure wing.
- ◆ The standing orders for Obsidian-Secure personnel in such a meltdown is a total kill order, a complete prisoner purge. They lack the men—and frankly, the courage—to initiate such an order now, however, and have contented themselves with holding the hallway and praying for reinforcements to arrive.

How players get that information, or if they get that information at all, is entirely up to them. Kaer and his men can be easily wiped out (none of them are paying much attention to the exit hallway), they can be left to die (another push from the remaining Alpha prisoners is imminent, as the Alpha branch inmates are frantic to get away from Boyer), or they can be assisted and negotiated with.

Regardless of how players choose to approach the Watch Corporal, the remaining prisoners in the area (a group of Rogue Psykers equal to the number of player characters plus four) will initiate a fresh combat encounter not long after their last push failed. Unless the barricade is breached, one of Kaer's men will stay at the barricades (watching their backs), while Kaer and the other two try to keep back the rushing inmates.

At any point in the oncoming fight, the players can choose to aid these desperate humans... or not.

When the rogue Psyker rush comes, make the almost feral, animalistic desperation of their attacks clear, coupled with the miserable nature of incarceration at Ironwatch. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*They rush the barricade as a howling, gibbering mob, roughly shaven creatures bearing ugly old scars, both mental and physical. Many are missing eyes or ears, thumbs or whole hands, and a few charge the security station on weeping stubs rather than whole feet. These Psykers possess power too minor or unpredictable to be of interest to the Imperial authorities proper.*

A captured prisoner provides little by way of new information. Their minds have been broken by their proximity to Boyer's wild, out-of-control powers, and by the Khymerae drawn to this place like moths to a flame. Their attempts to overrun the security station are a trapped animal's wild lashing out, a desperate, instinctive need to get away from Konrad Boyer. The corruption inside Ironwatch has reduced them to their most primal of selves, regressed them to the babbling, howling brutes some Aeldari insist all humans yet remain.

If they are not stopped—with Eldar help or, somehow, by the guards alone—at the makeshift fortress of the security station, the inmates rush down the entrance/exit hallway, likely forcing a confrontation with the xenos warband.

## EYE OF THE STORM

Once the warband has dealt with the inmates at the security station, they must then choose whether or not to destroy it as the Inquisitor had asked. Kaer and his men are not willing to stand idly by as the control panels they had risked their lives defending are torn asunder. It will require some serious negotiation (likely a Persuasion test at a +4 DN penalty) for Kaer to agree to allow any demolition of the security station. Of course, if Kaer and his men are dead, they do not object.

The security station is relatively easy to destroy—using any destructive grenade, inflicting 5 wounds on the panel (Resilience 8), or a successful Tech test (DN 5) ensures that the security station is no longer functional.

After the warband has destroyed the security station (or not!) and they wish to move on to Konrad Boyer's cell, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*With the rest of the fearful, gibbering inmates put down, what remains is the target of your mission, the human who has drawn the ire of Ul-Khari: Konrad Boyer himself.*

*Down one last dank hallway he waits, sitting in a half-lotus several feet off the ground. Power roils and swirls around him, wrapping him in blankets of madness and force, washing away from him in walls and waves.*

*His posture might be meditative, but his expression is not; clearly he is in tremendous pain, features tortured and drawn, veins and muscles of his neck straining, hands clenched and clawed in agony. His eyes roll wildly in his head like a scared beast of burden's, desperately wide-open, bloodshot, unblinking, filled with fear. Something of the Rift has triggered whatever latent abilities he had, magnified them a hundredfold, and overridden his pitiful human attempts at control.*

*The Farseer Tylanriel warned you that a wild strand of fate can entangle others and create a knot. Konrad Boyer has done that, clearly. He has become a snarl in the fabric of destiny, a messy thread, a kink in fate that has wrapped others and tightened them all together.*

*He is as much a witness to the madness swirling around him as you are, his floating body spinning*

*and rolling madly. Mimicking the erratic but generally circular patterns of his storm-tossed form, a pack of Khymerae circles him, baying, hissing, howling for blood. The warp beasts are here to feast, drawn by Boyer's wild power.*

*A wave of power washes over you, pulsing from Boyer in the heart of the room as a Khymera lashes out against the bubble of energy surrounding the rogue Psyker. Even the warp beast is not immune to the swirling immaterium forces that engulf him, raging out of his control; even as Boyer himself howls in agony at the energy coursing through him, the Khymera shrivels and dies, the blue-white energy of its daemonic soul flashing from it in a dramatic display.*

*As if on cue, fate twists again. A sense of heaviness, of lethargy and weight, like the air has turned to cement, slows you as you hear a blood-curdling, soul-wrenching cry from behind you.*

*The inmates of Omega branch arrive in a roiling mob, a frenzied rush, not an animalistic surge like the desperate escapees of Alpha branch, but in an orgy of violence. Fleshy and heaving, writhing as they advance, shoulders and hips wrenching and popping as they try to charge as quickly as their new leaders, limbs hyper-extending, tongues out, eyes half-lidded in pleasure even as tears of pain roll down their scarred cheeks.*

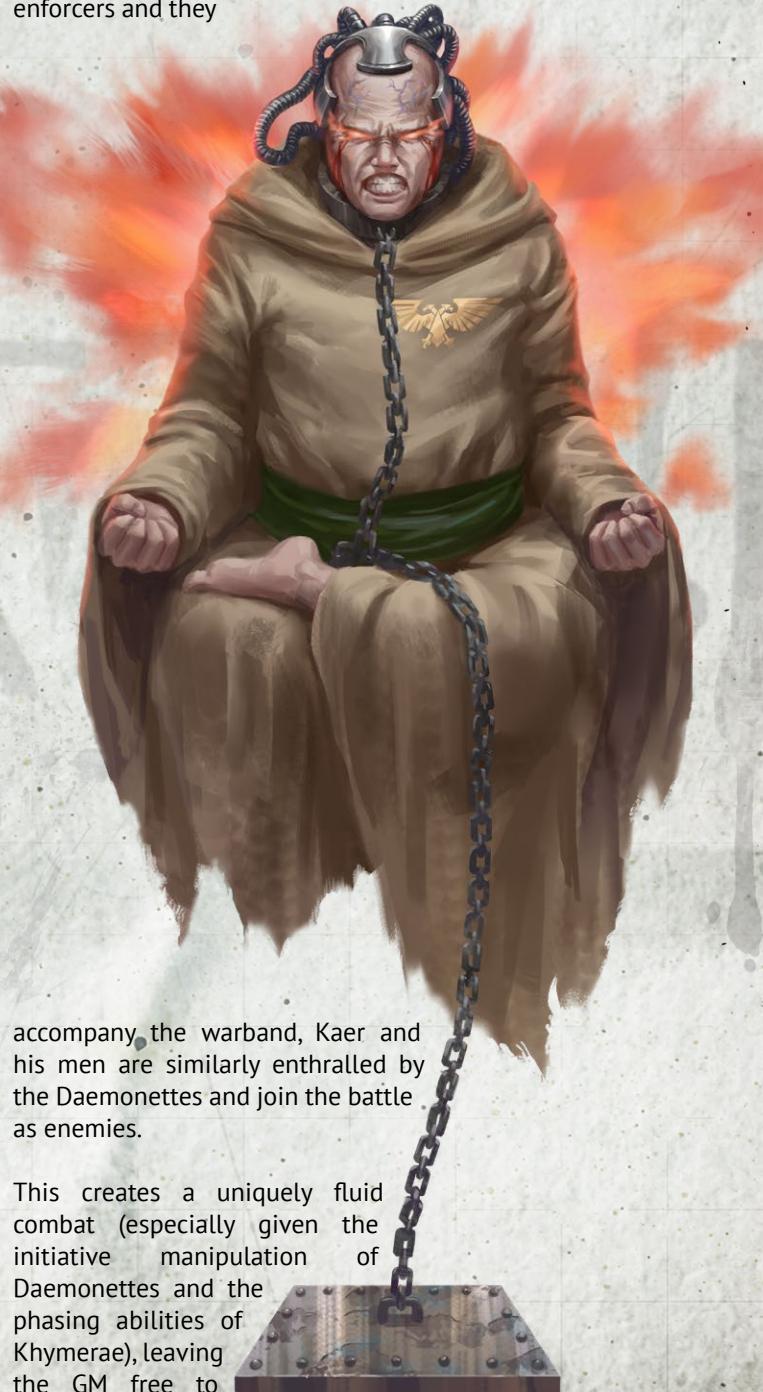
*Weaving through them, leading their dance, you see the direst of threats to ever set foot in Ironwatch: Daemonettes. Slender, androgynous, and more beautiful and terrible than even any Aeldari warrior, the monstrous servants of She Who Thirsts twirl and pirouette through the mob they've assembled.*

*The Khymerae, the cavorting Daemonettes and the Omega branch inmates they've seduced into following them... All are converging, drawn to this moment in time as inexorably as you.*

*Konrad Boyer, wailing in agony, is in the centre of it all. He is the tangled thread that has spun into a web. And you? You are tied up in it, tight, left only to cut your way free.*

The final battle for the fate of Konrad Boyer is a messy affair. Daemonettes, those lethal servants of Slaanesh, are eager to get their (literal) claws on him, to seduce him to the path of She Who Thirsts,

to twist and mould his madness into something they can draw pleasure and power from. Khymerae, meanwhile, are simply drawn by the surges of power around him, his untapped Psyker potential that's now overflowing so wildly, and—most of all—by the blood and meat they can gain in the ensuing chaos. Lastly are the twisted, controlled inmates, the last survivors of the Obsidian-Secure wing of Ironwatch prison, who dance to the distorted, impossible siren's song of the Daemonettes in their midst. If the player characters rescued Kaer and his enforcers and they



accompany the warband, Kaer and his men are similarly enthralled by the Daemonettes and join the battle as enemies.

This creates a uniquely fluid combat (especially given the initiative manipulation of Daemonettes and the phasing abilities of Khymerae), leaving the GM free to

tailor the specifics of the fight by pitting enemy factions against one another, aligning them against the players, having warp creatures come and go from the battlefield to fluctuate their numbers, etc. The only physical constant in the setup to this fight is the number of rogue Psykers (initially equal to the number of player characters), and even that is variable with a few snips of a Daemonette's claws (for the pleasure of taking a head, or to motivate any reluctant inmates) or the lashing talons of a Khymera or two.

By default, opponents for this scene include a six-strong hunting pack of Khymerae, two Daemonettes, and a single Alluress leading her sisters into battle, alongside the rogue Psyker prisoners.

As the combat begins, the player characters must all pass a Corruption test (DN 5).

Throughout the fight scene, Boyer is held aloft in an impenetrable cocoon of Psyker power, a bubble of fate. He is the prize that is being fought over, not a fighter himself, at this stage.

If the players fall, dark forces will gain power over Boyer and his grim destiny will unfold. The good news, such as it is, is that the players need not concern themselves with what comes next. Being dead spares them that. If the players win the fight, outlasting the Khymerae and Daemonettes, putting down the last of the enthralled humans, they will be left with Boyer's fate in their hands.

When the players win, instead, paraphrase or read aloud the following.

*...and with that, it ends. Not merely the pleasure-pain gibbering of the soul-seduced prisoners, not just the scratching at reality walls from the fierce Khymerae, not only the perverse dance of the Daemonettes—all of it. All of it, at once, fades and undoes. As the last threat falls, even the reality of them ever having existed falls away like a stone hurled into a pond. The warp beasts fade to nothingness, the servants of She Who Thirsts return to their unholy homes, the corpses of the Ironwatch inmates unravel and transmute to soul-energy, leaving behind dried-out husks that look centuries dead.*

*And, most notably, the aura of power around Konrad Boyer blinks out. A gaunt, wrecked little*

*man, he kneels on the cold, wet stone of this miserable prison, weeping and shaking. Spent. Done. Exhausted.*

*The humans are finished with their years of toying with him. The warp beasts have had their chance to feast, and failed. She Who Thirsts has been denied the pleasure of him as her plaything, at least for now.*

*All that remains of his fate... is you. You, and your Vampire Raider transport that will take you—and, perhaps, Boyer?—back home to Ul-Khari.*

*Boyer is harmless, weak as a babe, and mewling like one. Warp energy has flown through him in ways he never imagined, and it has left him spent and almost broken. Killing him now would require no more effort than drawing a blade, guiding him back through the eerily silent halls of Ironwatch would be as simple as picking him up and carrying him.*

*All that is left is the choice to be made. Does Konrad Boyer travel with you, to be delivered to Corsair Princess Greensteel and her leering Void Dreamer? Or does he die here, in the cold and wet, where he has spent so many years already?*

*His fate is in your hands.*

And here the players must make their choice. No other threats face them in Ironwatch, the prison has had its chance to stop them, and has failed. Charybdion is done with the Ul-Khari, just as the Ul-Khari are done with Charybdion. All that remains is the decision to kill Boyer, or not.

## THE FATE OF THE CRAFTWORLD

When the decision has been made, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

*The holo-fields conceal the Vampire Raider from Charybdion's distracted defenders, appearing—at best—as a signal ghost intermittently glimpsed on an auspex screen. The reliable transport delivers you back to Ul-Khari, unharmed.*

*Farseer Tylanriel Tarnalys awaits you, leaning upon his singing spear. The crippled Farseer raises one elegant brow.*

If the players executed Boyer, read the following:

*Tylanriel lets out a soft sigh at the news of Boyer's death, and, just for a moment, the craftworld feels a small bit safer.*

*"You have done Ul-Khari a great service, heroes. We are so few, no threat to us can be tolerated for long. You have earned us another chance at a future. The decline of the Aeldari has been delayed, at least for now. You have my thanks, and that of the craftworld."*

*As the Farseer questions you about the rest of your mission, you see Rhystellan over his shoulder, lips in a tight line, shoulders knotted. He is unafraid to show his disappointment in your decision, and he isn't even the Greensteel Wanderers' leader.*

*You're not sure if you'll get a scathing earful from the Corsair Princess some time in the near future, or if she'll simply show her displeasure by snubbing you. Either way, it's best to focus on your Farseer's gratitude rather than the Corsair's disappointment, surely.*

*You have helped the Aeldari. You have done your duty. Let the predator Corsairs find their amusement at the expense of mon-keigh, not their brothers and sisters of Ul-Khari.*

If Boyer comes with them, respond to Farseer Tylanriel's quirked eyebrow with this:

*Just before the Vampire Raider's troop compartment closes, Boyer's emaciated form stumbles out of it. The Warlocks on either side of the Farseer slide their feet into combat stances and reach for the witch blades at their belts. The Void Dreamer smirks and crosses his arms.*

*The Farseer's twisted leg tenses beneath him, and his grip on his singing spear shifts to something close to combat readiness.*

*"What have you d-?" Tylanriel starts to ask.*

*"My bidding," he is cut off by the smug, confident voice of the Corsair Princess, Ferianwyr Greensteel.*

*She nods, and her consort, Rhystellan, stoops to gather up the collapsed human Psyker.*

*"I sent them to fetch him, Farseer," Greensteel says, putting herself bodily in front of Tylanriel and his Warlock students, cutting them off from the human, her Void Dreamer, and you. She is true to her word, at least, and her promise to deflect blame.*

*"Re-cast your runes, O Limping Lord, and I'm sure you'll see all's well. The prison is no more. The human has been torn from his place and fate. Whatever destiny had planned for him, it did not account for me and my orders. He will not harm this craftworld under my protect—"*

*"Get him away," Tylanriel Tarnalys's voice is almost a growl, almost a hiss, as close to angry as you have ever heard him. As he repeats it, the butt-end of his singing spear slams against the wraithbone floor of the chamber, and the whole tower shudders as exclamation. "Get him **away** from me, from us, from this place! Take your 'prize,' Anhratthe, and your crew, and begone. In accordance to your oaths, you will come when we summon you."*

*The Farseer recoils as the Void Dreamer carries the human past him.*

*"But so long as that... thing... is kept on your ship, know that you will not be called for unless our need is great."*

*Tylanriel steps aside pointedly, making way for your group to leave—at least for now—with the Corsair Princess, her consort and her trophy human.*

*"We will speak on this later," the Farseer chokes out as you pass. "In the meantime, pray that I am wrong and you have not doomed us yet further."*

All that remains is for the players to collect their payments. If they stayed true to Farseer Tylanriel's wishes (and Boyer is dead for the good of all the Ul-Khari), all player characters gain +1 Influence.

If, instead, they opted to gather great treasures by serving the Corsair Princess of the Greensteel Wanderers, Ferianwyr Greensteel, reward them with some fine, exotic piece of Aeldari equipment according to their desires, enhanced in some small way (either by adding an Aeldari-appropriate upgrade of any value to an existing piece of equipment at no cost, offering each of them a new piece of equipment worth up to value 8, or allowing them to pool their reward, starting with a base value of 8 and increasing it by +1 for each of them that pitches in).



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

What follows are the principal characters that appear in this story and, in some cases, beyond. Included is pertinent information needed to portray these characters in your game.

### TYLANRIEL TARNALYS, FARSEER OF UL-KHARI

#### BACKGROUND

A veteran of the Path of the Seer who should be in his mental and physical prime, Tylanriel Tarnalys instead finds his body shattered, and his willpower alone holding him—and, it feels at times, the craftworld—upright. He was a Warlock when the Great Rift opened and wreaked havoc on both his injured body and Ul-Khari itself, and was left with one leg twisted and weak, no matter the best efforts of the healers; but he bears his scars with a perverse pride, and the sarcastic mantle of 'Limping Lord' as a badge of honour. He, like his beloved craftworld, has persevered, and there is a power and wisdom that comes only from adversity. He has found himself trapped on the Seer's path as surely as he was once trapped beneath the wraithbone rubble of the city he fought to protect, and became a Farseer in the wake of the Rift's tragedy.

The same catastrophe that crippled him and his craftworld decimated the leaders of Ul-Khari, leaving him one of the few remaining Farseers of his beloved home. He has a handful of Warlocks to serve him, and no real rivals. The Ul-Khari are doing what can be done to train a new generation of Farseers, weaving new designs into the tapestries of the craftworld's future, but in the meantime he has precious few threads to work with, and a universe of enemies to cut short.

#### APPEARANCE

Tarnalys wears robes of black and purple, etched with silver runes of power, and has stark white hair and scholar-pale skin. Even prior to his injuries he was seldom without his singing spear, but now it is ever at hand, used as a cane as much as a badge of office or weapon of war. He is not stooped or weak, but still rather broad-shouldered and physically strong... save his crushed leg, which will never straighten properly again.

#### PORTRAYAL

Tylanriel is on edge throughout **Twisted Strands**. He feels the weight of Ul-Khari on his shoulders, but knows he cannot bear the burden alone, and so has trusted other Aeldari. With so much of his sight and rune-casting focused on the broader picture of the craftworld's survival, the quirks of fate and fortune related to the futures of individual Eldar sometimes elude him; though he, of course, knows of Greensteel's machinations, but even the Farseer cannot tell what his strike team will do. With a thousand other strands of fate to disentangle, all he can do is trust in his craftworld's protectors to do what's right.

If they do not, he will be more disappointed—and afraid—than angry. The Corsair's meddling and the adventurers' going along with her has left Konrad Boyer's tangled knot to snarl and grow, and given Tylanriel a terrible threat to maintain a careful watch over.

### FERIANWYR GREENSTEEL, CORSAIR PRINCESS OF THE GREENSTEEL WANDERERS

#### BACKGROUND

A swaggering rogue once of the Biel-Tan Craftworld—and bearing their fierceness, if not their serious mien—but one who has spent decades on the Path of the Outcast, Greensteel finds herself torn between melancholy and spite... and spite is winning. While she long ago formally forsook all bonds of loyalty and dedication to her former home, and swore herself, instead, to her pirate band, a part of her shining Aeldari soul weeps that she was not there when Biel-Tan needed her the most.

Doggedly loyal to her raider crew, but quietly longing to be there for another craftworld closer at hand, Ferianwyr has sworn her Wanderers to the service of Ul-Khari, instead. She wants her Corsairs to be needed, but not taken for granted; it is a fine line for a princess to walk, trying to still feel the freedom of the Outcast's Path while being useful to a new home.

## APPEARANCE

Ferianwyr is the very model of an Eldar Corsair, a vision of grace and lethality in equal measure, bedecked in a gaudy mixture of skintight leathers and flowing capes and sashes, half grim monochrome and half dazzling brightness. She favours green, white and black in her garb (and her pirate fleet's hull coloration), and has inky black hair as dark as the void she and her Greensteel Wanderers slice through.

## PORTRAYAL

Greensteel gives every appearance of resenting and rebelling against her oaths of loyalty to the Craftworld, but deep down she knows she'd give her life should Tylanriel need her to do so. She is determined to undermine him in petty ways to constantly assert her independence, and especially on the matter of this mon-keigh Psyker; she trusts her confident paramour more than the grim, serious Farseer, and while her Biel-Tan soul burns for vengeance against the humans, if she can *use* one instead of simply killing him, all the better.

## RHYSTELLAN, VOID DREAMER OF THE GREENSTEEL WANDERERS

### BACKGROUND

Rhystellan carried tremendous power with him as he danced and stumbled off the Witch's Path and onto that of the Anhrathe, years ago. With his Psyker potential being squandered as a work-a-day Corsair raider, it wasn't long before Ferianwyr Greensteel saw to his training, ensured he took his place as a Void Dreamer and cheerfully pleased him with an exotic assortment of Aeldari drugs—all the better to serve her. Rhystellan is completely content with his lot as her advisor, consort and enforcer, which delights Ferianwyr entirely; it is novel for a Corsair Princess to have a strong right hand she can trust completely, rather than having to constantly stay on alert for a grasping mutiny.

## APPEARANCE

The Void Dreamer isn't favoured by the Corsair Princess for his powers alone; he is strikingly good looking, with cream-white skin and hair like spun gold. Bedecked in black-and-green robes befitting his position in the Greensteel Wanderers, he is the

very image of an Eldar battle-Psyker, and by far Ferianwyr's favourite consort.

## PORTRAYAL

Rhystellan's worldview is a unique mixture of insufferable certainty waging war against his devotion to his princess. He has no desire to be the commander of a Corsair band, but every desire to help see the Greensteel Wanderers run well, run cleanly, and run in such a fashion as to make the most of their every opportunity. He is certain the runes cast over this human Psyker were misinterpreted by the ever-cautious, all-too-responsible Tylanriel, and he has every confidence that Ferianwyr will find a way to use the captured Konrad Boyer to her, the Greensteel Wanderers', and ultimately the craftworld's advantage.

## EMELINE SMYTHE, INQUISITOR OF THE ORDO HERETICUS

### BACKGROUND

Smythe, like all Cadians, grew up preparing for war. Able to strip, clean, and reassemble a lasrifle almost as soon as she could read, it wasn't long before the girl learned that *both* skills were of the utmost importance. No mere officer, but someone with a keen mind and an even stronger sense of purpose. She was drafted into a passing Inquisitor's retinue, and worked her way up the ranks, making up for her small stature with a fierce spirit and sharp eyes, transitioning from bodyguard to trusted ally, then Interrogator, then Inquisitor.

Smythe is doing what she can to stem the tide that threatens to overwhelm Charybdion. When word reached her that the Ironwatch prison was becoming corrupted by madness and Daemons, Emeline was quick to assign herself to secure and destroy it; she might put her skills and talents to use. Bright-eyed and optimistic despite her role, Smythe feels that a new age is dawning for the Imperium, and that perhaps compromise and even alliances with the Eldar may be the way forward.

## APPEARANCE

Emeline is striking for a human, with soft, smooth skin and lustrous red-gold hair over startlingly Cadian-lavender eyes. She is short, but fit, albeit more built for speed than strength. She wears

sturdy carapace armour of black and grey, and the oversized black longcoat she wears over it speaks to just how rarely she takes that armour off. Two things she carries draw the eye: a powerful plasma pistol constantly humming with human-tech fire, and her *real* power, a golden Inquisitorial seal, one of the most dangerous weapons in the galaxy.



## PORTRAYAL

Smythe is eager to see this crisis handled so she can move on to the next—such is her lot in life—but is also well aware that a satchel charge from Gaius or a blast from her plasma pistol wouldn't be the safest way to destroy the threat of Ironwatch's Psykers. If humanity is going to survive, Emeline is certain, they'll need to ally with *someone* else in the vastness of the universe—why not the Eldar? And why not here, and now, when they share a common foe? Stumbling across an Aeldari warband is serendipity—or the Emperor's blessing—so strong she does not question or doubt it. Throughout the conversation with the Aeldari, proud of herself for learning their tongue, she will be as friendly as a mon-keigh can manage. Her accent is terrible, but her request for help is sincere.

## KONRAD BOYER

### BACKGROUND

Konrad Boyer does not remember a life before the cells of Ironwatch, he knows only cold, stone walls and cold, cruel guards. He does not remember a life spent reaping algae to feed other Charybdians, he does not remember a young wife, he does not remember a growing family. He does not remember the day his heart and soul and mind fell apart, and these accursed powers emerged. At least, these denials are what sustains him within his darkened cell, day in and day out.

### APPEARANCE

Boyer has never been a particularly hale and hearty man, and his time spent in Ironwatch's Obsidian-Secure wing has done him no favours. A gaunt figure, little more than a skeleton wrapped in pallid flesh and adorned with wild hair, he is not physically impressive; his powers are of the mind and spirit, not the body.

## PORTRAYAL

Boyer's mind is essentially gone, he has little personality to speak of. By the time the heroes locate him, he is a husk, a shell, a container for Psyker energy. There is no personality there, only power. Yet, there is still a chance he could regain his sense of self, given time. Then, there is no telling what he might do with his power.

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