

DARK HERESY™

EDGE OF DARKNESS™



AN INTRODUCTION TO
DARK HERESY

WARHAMMER
40,000
ROLEPLAY

CREDITS

LEAD DEVELOPER

Ross Watson

DESIGN AND WRITING BY

Alan Bligh

EDITING

Mike Mason

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Mark Raynor, Adrian Wood

LAYOUT

Trent Urness

COVER ART

John Blanche

INTERIOR ART

John Blanche, Paul Jeacock, Adrian Smith, Karl Kopinski,
and Andrea Uderzo

CARTOGRAPHY

Mark Raynor

MANAGING DEVELOPER

Michael Hurley

PUBLISHER

Christian T. Petersen

DARK HERESY DESIGNED BY

Owen Barnes, Kate Flack, and Mike Mason

SPECIAL THANKS

John French

GAMES WORKSHOP

LICENSING MANAGER

Owen Rees

LICENSING & ACQUIRED RIGHTS MANAGER

Erik Mogensen

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY MANAGER

Alan Merrett

HEAD OF LEGAL & LICENSING

Andy Jones



**FANTASY
FLIGHT
GAMES**

Fantasy Flight Games
1975 West County Road B2
Roseville, MN 55113
USA

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For more information about the Dark Heresy line, free downloads, answers to rule queries, or just to pass on greetings, visit us online at

www.FantasyFlightGames.com

THE EDGE OF DARKNESS

It is the 41st Millennium. For more than a hundred centuries the Emperor has sat immobile on the Golden Throne of Earth. He is the master of mankind by the will of the gods, and master of a million worlds by the might of his inexhaustible armies. He is a rotting carcass writhing invisibly with power from the Dark Age of Technology. He is the Carrion Lord of the Imperium for whom a thousand souls are sacrificed every day, so that he may never truly die.

Yet in his deathless state, the Emperor continues his eternal vigilance. Mighty battle fleets cross the Daemoninfested miasma of the Warp, the only route between distant stars, their way lit by the Astronomican, the psychic manifestation of the Emperor's will. Vast armies give battle in his name on uncounted worlds. Greatest amongst his soldiers are the Adeptus Astartes, the Space Marines, bioengineered superwarriors. Their comrades in arms are legion: the Imperial Guard and countless planetary defence forces, the evervigilant Inquisition and the TechPriests of the Adeptus Mechanicus to name but a few. But for all their multitudes, they are barely enough to hold off the everpresent threat from aliens, heretics, mutants—and worse.

To be a man in such times is to be one amongst untold billions. It is to live in the cruellest and most bloody regime imaginable. Forget the power of technology and science, for so much has

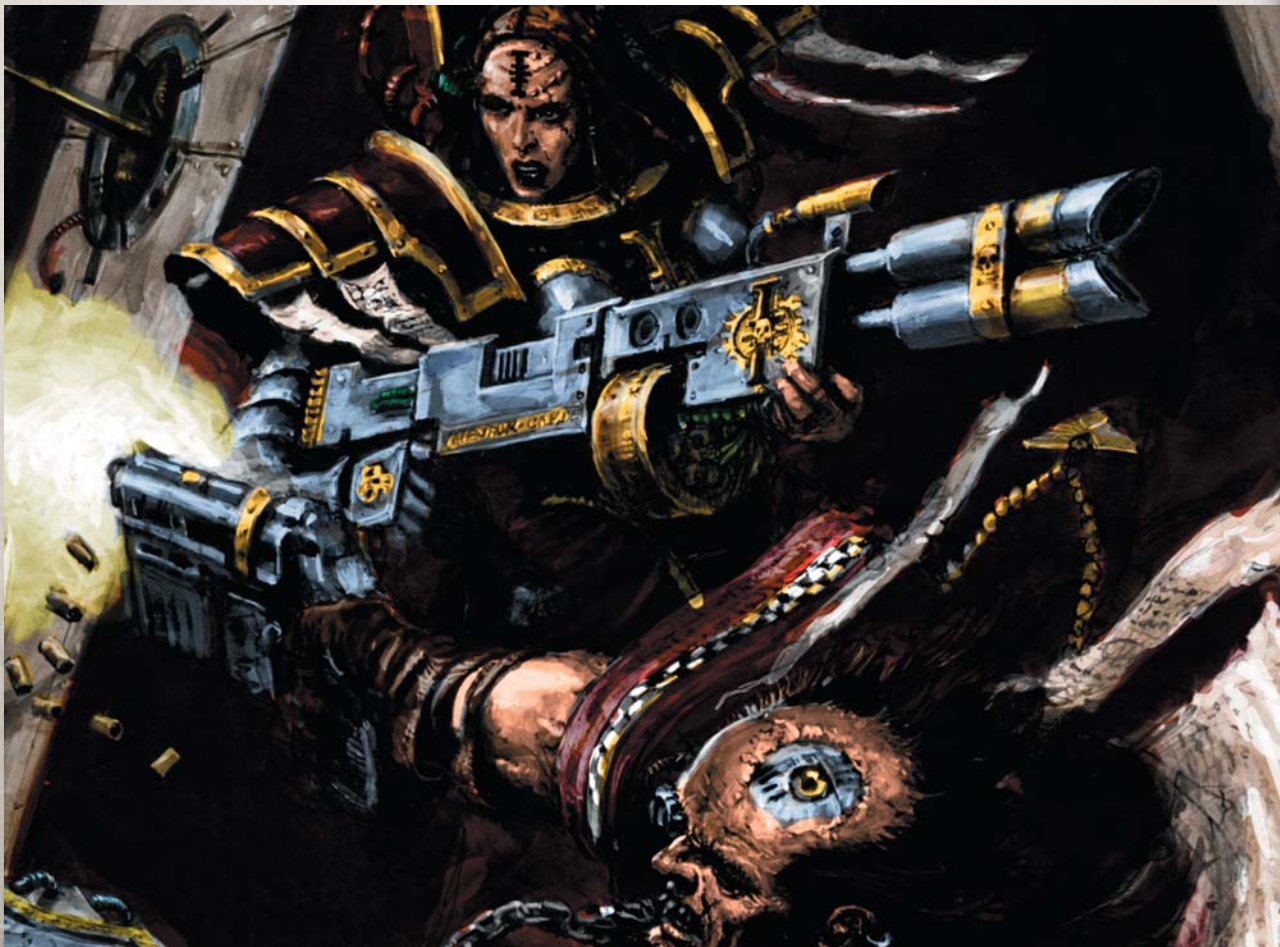
been forgotten, never to be relearned. Forget the promise of progress and understanding, for in the grim darkness of the far future, there is only war. There is no peace amongst the stars, only an eternity of carnage and slaughter, and the laughter of the thirsting gods.

INTRODUCTION

"The greatest resource our Holy Imperium possesses is the fathomless multitudes of humanity itself. No power is mightier and no force more dreadful when turned to a single purpose. By human hands alone we have remade stars in our image. By this token the wise know that true power lies in the mastery of blood and bone, in the very meat of mankind."

—Quastor General, Brantus Hurst, Departmento Munitorium Penitential Command.

The Edge of Darkness is an investigation-based introductory adventure for use with **DARK HERESY**. It is intended for a group of two to four players and will probably take three or six evening sessions of play to complete. The adventure starts with a mysterious death connected to a forlorn district of the vast hive city of Scintilla. The circumstances surrounding this death have piqued the interest of the Inquisition and the player-Acolytes will be called upon to act covertly to explore the matter further. If you're planning to play an Acolyte in this investigation, you should read no further—as you'll spoil the mystery! However, if you are going to be the Game Master (GM), then read on.



USING THE EDGE OF DARKNESS

This adventure is intended as a prelude to **DARK HERESY**—Fantasy Flight Games' role playing game of intrigue, adventure and horror in the 41st Millennium. This adventure focuses the Acolytes being "undercover" agents. **EDGE OF DARKNESS** is a self contained adventure intended for Acolytes fresh to the Inquisition's service and can be used as a taster for some of the themes and stories that the game focuses on, as well as, an immersive introduction to the whole Warhammer 40,000 universe.

The adventure also makes an excellent prelude to a start of an ongoing series of adventures if you already have the **DARK HERESY CORE RULEBOOK** in your hands; in which case just ignore the Quick Start Rules listed here.

For obvious reasons, the full extent of Dark Heresy's rules and systems cannot be repeated here, however a sampling of basic game mechanics can be found in the Quick Start Rules on page 36 (we suggest that GMs print off these rules pages for their players to use as handy reference). Additional rules and GMs tips have been strategically dotted around the scenario—do make sure to read through these rules carefully. Six introductory Acolyte Player Characters (PCs) have also been created for your use and these can be downloaded from the Fantasy Flight Games website. Other than this adventure, you'll need some tensided dice (d10) ideally two per player, and of course some willing players!

GMs BRIEFING

The Edge of Darkness is a mystery adventure and has much in common with a detective story, with the first "clue" being the discovery of the body of a habworker named Saul Arbest. From here the PCs are presented with a number of different leads to follow, which in turn will generate further clues and information, leading them ultimately to the uncovering of a conspiracy of heretical science which, if not stopped by the Acolytes, could lead to the deaths of a great many more people.

As with many such investigation and interaction based adventures, there is no exact "right" or "wrong" path in Edge of Darkness. Although some approaches and pursuing certain leads will be more effective than others. Indeed, the wrong question in the wrong ear, or the overt display of force too early in the adventure will have very unpleasant consequences as the villains of the piece will become aware of the PCs investigation and consequently come "gunning" for the Acolytes with possibly fatal results. Open adventures (like this one), reward clever, imaginative and involved players, and unravelling secret plots, pursuing the truth behind strange events and uncovering dark conspiracies in this fashion are some of the core themes that Dark Heresy deals with. This is not to say that adventures such as this lack action, or indeed horror, far from it, as in this case the villains behind the plot are monstrous individuals guilty of gruesome crimes who will have to be stopped by force. In addition, the setting itself is a dangerous one, where violence threatens at any moment. As a result a mixture of combative and more cerebral characters

are recommended, as each will have more than a fair chance to shine as the adventure progresses.

In order to help out novice GMs a far amount of advice on running the adventure and using the rules has been included in the text.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Heresy and evil takes root most readily and most easily in forlorn and forgotten places, be they on distant worlds, in isolated communities or, as here, in a place that has become the victim of disaster, economic starvation and slow neglect. In the shadows of the mighty spires of Hive Sibellus on the world of Scintilla, in a run down and decaying district called the Coscarla Division, a criminal and heretical conspiracy has taken hold. Using the destitute and fearful populous as a shield and a ready supply of "material" when needed, an individual going by the name of "the Churgeon" and her lackeys have set up a hidden medical facility to conduct horrific and forbidden experiments. In order to mask their activities, the tech cult has infiltrated and secretly usurped control of both a local Alms House and the area's enforcers to further their ends, and is supplying chemical serums to criminal narcogangs in order to induce their complicity in the cult's dark plans.

The Churgeon is a renegade techadept in the employ of the heretical cult known as the Logicians. She is a biosculptor whose particular area of interest is the creation of (illegal) alchemical serums and artificial organs to augment human biology. She requires live human subjects for experimentation and the downtrodden people of Coscarla have proved a ready source of victims. She has no care for the lives of her servants or for those her macabre experiments kill or mutilate, and already her servants have "vanished" scores of Coscarla's people. One such abducted experimental subject, a man named Saul Arbest, managed to escape before dying on the transit rail. It is his body, once discovered, that sparks the Inquisition's interest in the matter and the involvement of the Acolytes.

Once the Churgeon's current round of tests are concluded,

FROM SHATTERED HOPE TO THE EDGE

DARK HERESY's first published demo adventure **SHATTERED HOPE** was an actionoriented adventure that dealt with events at the Gorgonid Mine on the world of Sepheris Secundus. This adventure, however, assumes no need for that demo to have been played first and starts with a group of newly recruited Acolytes for convenience of play. You can of course carry on one adventure from the other (in either order). If you wish to follow on from **SHATTERED HOPE**, then it is reasonable to assume that sufficient time has passed for wounds to heal, during which the Acolytes will have been thoroughly questioned and tested for contamination.

Both this adventure and **SHATTERED HOPE** make for excellent preludes to **ILLUMINATIONS**—the larger starting adventure contained within the **DARK HERESY CORE RULEBOOK**.

she intends to cover her tracks by releasing a biological agent to mimic the effects of a plague outbreak, killing perhaps tens of thousands of people in the process. She has done it before, and if not stopped, shall do it again.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ADVENTURE

The adventure is divided into three distinct parts, the first is a narrated introductory section where the Acolytes are brought together by the Inquisition and briefed on the matter at hand. In the second part, the Acolytes are left to their own initiative to explore and investigate the dead man and the Coscarla Division district where the adventure's action is set. Depending on the fruits of their progress (or indeed as a consequence of their blundering,) the third part of the adventure, where the uncovered conspiracy must be fought and defeated, can kick in at any point, proving the adventure's conclusion in a fastpaced kill or be killed conflict.

Part I: Among the Missing

The Inquisition's attention has been stirred by the discovery of a body on the Sibellus transit rail. This is not in itself an uncommon occurrence; however the body, under forensic examination, showed extensive signs of surgical tampering and illegal organgrafting indicative of heretical science. The Inquisition has kept the body and the incident under wraps, and has determined it to be that of a missing habworker called Saul Arbest. Arbest was reported missing over a month ago by his sister, from his home in the dilapidated Coscarla Division area of Hive Sibellus. The Inquisition is interested in just how this heretical biocraft wound up in the body of this otherwise unremarkable citizen and will brief the Acolytes as to what is known and dispatch them to covertly investigate matters.

Part II: The Twilight City

Here the Acolytes travel to the Coscarla Division to investigate the dead man and gather as many clues as they can. They will find an area of the city dying from slow urban decay and held hostage to a nameless fear, and if successful, they will uncover evidence that something truly evil is coiling at the heart of things. There are opportunities for numerous encounters here, including interaction with local NPCs both fair and foul, and although combat is by no means guaranteed, the Acolytes may end up in a violent confrontation with local criminal gangs, corrupt enforcers, murderous dregs or even a barroom brawl. If the Acolytes are circumspect and successful, they will be drawn to what goes on behind the public façade of the Tantalus Alms House for their answers. If they have aroused the suspicions of their unseen enemies, they might find themselves dragged to the Alms House as the Churgeon's latest victims.

Part III: The Chamber of Horrors

The true face of what lurks behind the fear gripping Coscarla is exposed and the horrors of the Churgeon's alchemlab are revealed— one way or the other. The results of this exposure may well force the enemy into the open and the Acolytes will find themselves fighting for their lives with no escape readily available. If this comes to pass, the Acolytes will have to be smart to survive and overcome the Churgeon and her minions, perhaps enlisting help from some unexpected sources to do so. Triumphant over the evils of the Churgeon will be difficult but rewarding, and ultimately will save a great many lives, as well as proving the Acolytes' worth as new agents for the Holy Ordos.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Here are several important Non Player Characters (NPCs) involved in the adventure, detailing their personalities and motivations. Owing to the adventure's set up and freeform structure, there are quite a few characters involved, not all of



ADVICE TO NOVICE GMs: ON RUNNING EDGE OF DARKNESS

The Edge of Darkness is an adventure based on an ongoing situation into which the Acolytes are drawn and as such, the events and characters involved in the conspiracy in Coscarla have their own motivations with which the Acolytes, as outsiders, interact.

Once inside Coscarla's environs the Acolytes have a free hand about how to proceed and what leads and clues to follow, and it is up to you, as the GM, to respond to their actions as you feel appropriate. When GMing a "nonlinear" adventure like this one, you should always feel free to embellish the details, come up with new encounters and have events and individuals react to the Acolytes' actions as this will always make for a tighter story, a sense of empowerment for your players and, accordingly, a better game all round.

Adventures like this one can demand a little more from the GM and you'll be required to think on your feet, keep an idea of what's going on in your head and respond to whatever plans and ideas your player's might come up. The key things are to be firm but fair; don't be afraid to have NPCs act or react adversely and violently if the Acolytes' actions make this the logical outcome, and of course reward quick thinking and good ideas on the players' part with additional clues, information and assistance as warranted. Also, even more than with more linear adventures, it is important to be familiar with the details of the adventure itself, not simply so you know who is where and doing what, but also how the significant NPCs will react to the unexpected, and so you can add to things as you go along without risk of messing up your own plot!

Although it may sound obvious, a handy notebook to record names and the like as you go along, or to record what the Acolytes have learned so far, is heartily recommended! If this all sounds like a fair amount of work for the GM, that's because it is. But at the same time, if you're something of a storyteller at heart, it can be a very rewarding game experience indeed.

these characters may actually come into play as their roles in the adventure are dependent upon the Acolytes and how your players approach things.

Interrogator Sand: A senior agent of the Inquisition, scholar and medicae. He comes across as a superior and somewhat jaded man. Sand is the one who charges the Acolytes to undertake the investigation into Saul Arbest.

Saul Arbest (Deceased): Saul's fate is the root of this investigation; this missing worker's corpse and, in particular, its hidden modifications are the reason for the Acolyte's involvement. In life Arbest was a man on the slide, laidoff from his indenture, without work and without a future, he drank too much, used his mouth too freely and paid a very heavy price.

Lili Arbest: Saul's sister, Lili is a young woman grown old with worry before her time. She is a skilled worker who fears to leave Coscarla before the mystery of her missing brother goes unsolved. However, when the Acolytes first encounter her, she

will be in fear of her life and about to flee.

Warden Locan: A simpering, middleaged man, Locan is the corrupt enforcer officer nominally in charge of maintaining order in the Coscarla. Abandoned to this "graveyard posting" by his superiors in the Magistratum, Locan is an obscura addict, a shadow of his former self and long since compromised by the local narcogangs. He is now under the direct control of the Logicians and his troopers replaced with their own. Torn between his addiction and his terror, he will make a poor show of the pretence of normality if encountered.

Evard Zed: Another victim of the district's economic woes, Zed was one of Saul Arbest's drinking cronies. He was with Saul on the night that he vanished and holds some of the secrets of Saul's disappearance. He is laying low spending his time in the templum, helping out and hoping to go unnoticed.

Preacher Fayban: Winesoaked, dishevelled and thoroughly useless religious minister of the Imperial Creed. He rarely leaves his small templum and conducts faltering services for the faithful. Sorrowful, maudlin and broken in spirit, he is wilfully ignorant of the extent of the suffering and fear around him.

Sikes the Reclaimator: An itinerant scavenger and techreclaimator, Sikes has set up an impromptu business in a burned out store selling and bartering odds and ends of scrap with the impoverished locals. Sikes is an outsider to the district, making his living parasitically from its troubles, however, there is a good deal more to him than meets the eye.

Hosteller Maxus Drayelok: Proprietor of the district's only hostel, Drayelok is a gaunt, tattered figure and his establishment sinister and dilapidated. A psychotic obscura addict, barely in control of his cold sweats and twitches, Drayelok has the unpleasant habit of using downhiver dregs to murder his guests in the night so he can rob them to fund his vice.

"Chord" Luntz: A hatchetman for the narcogang syndicates, Luntz is here to take the syndicate's due from the Churgeon and has a dozen stubjacks and gang blades at his beck and call. Privately he has his own reservations and fears about the Churgeon's other activities (and worsening death toll), and is taking out his anger on the patrons of the Third Worker's Union Hall, where he and his gangsters have taken up residence.

Director Sybas Moran: The director of the Tantalus Alms House, Moran presents himself as a cold but efficient adept, administering a dwindling supply of alms and assistance for the good of the workers on an everdecreasing budget. In truth he is a practiced deceiver and ruthless killer, but one on who the mask of charity is wearing thin. An senior agent of the Logicians, Moran would rather see the Churgeon's work done and the Coscarla choking on its own dead, so he can move on to greener pastures.

The Churgeon: The woman known as the Churgeon is more machine than human and quite insane. A renegade techadept she is hidden behind the scenes of the Alms House where she works her profitable alchemy to win over the compliance of the narcogangs so that she may continue her murderous experiments uncontested. The spate of disappearances in the district are largely down to her need for fresh test subjects, and her appetite for new stock is beginning to prove hard for her lackeys to hide.



AMONG THE MISSING

THE TRADERMAN'S
ENTRANCE

•

SIZING UP THE
SITUATION (AND AN
INTRODUCTION TO TESTS)

•

THE BODY IN QUESTION

•

OUTFITTING FOR A TRIP
DOWN HIVE

PART I: AMONG THE MISSING

The adventure begins with the summoning of the Acolytes to service for the first time as operatives of the Inquisition, and their briefing into the mysterious circumstances surrounding a death.

If you haven't played before, ensure that your players each have an Acolyte character to play and have familiarised themselves with the Quick Start Rules. Tell them that they are all fresh recruits to the service of the Imperial Inquisition and that they have been chosen to serve it as Acolytes—agents, experts and specialists. They are to become front line soldiers in the Imperium's shadowy war against the forces of corruption within and the horrors without that wish to subvert and overthrow the rule of the Golden Throne of Terra. Having undergone initiation and testing they have been left waiting, concealed in plain sight among the teeming billions of Hive Sibellus on the world of Scintilla, capitol of the Calixis Sector, awaiting their new masters' summons.

THE TRADESMAN'S ENTRANCE

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"After being singled out and inducted into the service of the Inquisition, things have not quite gone as you had imagined them. Removed from your past life, you have been tested and measured, questioned and interrogated. But aside from a few lectures given in darkened chambers that left you sick to your stomach and a seemingly endless stream of codes and ciphers given you to memorize and destroy, you have been left largely to your own devices. Lodging under a false name in an anonymous habblock in Hive Sibellus, on Scintilla, the capitol planet of the Calixis Sector, you have bided your time for weeks waiting for the call from your masters, and perhaps, their verdict.

At last that call has come and a blankeyed courier has delivered to you a note featuring the cipher of the Holy Ordos. The message within was simple and perfunctory, containing a time, a date and a location. The instruction to come prepared and expect company is signed off with a single epithet—The Emperor Protects"

Just what each Acolyte thinks of the summons, (whether they see it as a chance to prove themselves, a chance to fight the good fight, an unique opportunity to go far and see much, or as the first step on the path to fame, glory and power, or simply as a way to survive), is a matter for their player to decide. Regardless, it can be assumed, that with some measure

of trepidation, they each answer the call at the appointed time, taking with them any gear they possess and saying farewell, perhaps for the last time, to their temporary and anonymous lodgings.

If your players have any last minute questions about their Acolytes, the rules, the Inquisition or Scintilla, now's the time to answer them the best you can, in particular the Dark Heresy website holds a lot of information you can add to what's presented here at www.FantasyFlightGames.com

Once your players have sorted themselves out and have a handle on the import of what is happening, read or paraphrase the following:

"At the appointed hour, you have made your way through the bustling faceless masses of the Administratum quarter to an unmarked service elevator platform set in the rear of a vast and imposing building covered in basreliefs of skulls, half draped urns and other symbols of death, crowned by an immense statue of a weeping saint. It appears that you are expected; the wizened face of the platform's inbuilt servitor studies you and pronounces "Pass" as you climb on board. As the note implied, you were not the only person called, and you make for an uncomfortable and diverse looking group standing in tense silence as the crowds throng by. The servitor control chimes active as the last one of you boards the platform and the elevator descends as the hatchway closes above you all with a thunderous boom. The platform continues downward for some minutes through maintenance levels, deep into the bowels of the government district."



FOR THE GM: TESTS AND DIFFICULTY

Not all activities are equally difficult and certain things that would in the normal course of events be considered quite easy, suddenly become a lot more difficult with bullets ricocheting around you! The GMs principle task in adjudicating a character's Tests is by setting a Difficulty rating for them. The baseline for Difficulty assumed in Dark Heresy is Challenging (+0) for a Test that poses a reasonable challenge to a competent character's level of ability.

Depending on what a character is trying to do and the circumstances in which they are trying to accomplish it, the GM should impose a modifier to their Tested score in + or – increments of 10, to a maximum modifier of +30 or –30 to the Tested number (this is the number you need to roll equal to or under, not the dice roll itself).

It's always up to the GM to determine whether a Test is appropriate and how difficult it should be, and you should never be afraid of simply stating that with perhaps a little time and effort a character simply succeeds, or on the other hand can't even hope to try—whichever seems appropriate to you. From this point on in the adventure, where a Test is suggested the text will list what Characteristic or Skill should be Tested and a suggested Difficulty level for that Test. This is of course all subject to the GMs own good sense of what's actually going on their adventure!

At the end of the elevator's slow decent the Acolytes will be deposited at the end of a wide grey corridor, lit by pale lumen globes in the shape of cherubs holding torches. Only the first part of the corridor is lit and the rest trails off into darkness. As they step off the platform more globes will illuminate to show them their path and, as they walk forward, more will flicker into life before them, while those behind them will extinguish. There is but one path, the corridor is featureless and smells faintly of chemical disinfectant.

After about five minutes, the corridor ends in an armoured metal door, which unseals and unlocks with a hiss of pressurised air and opens with a loud grinding of heavy gears. The room inside has a jumble of dusty metal crates (branded with unintelligible symbols) stacked against one wall, while a hospital gurney complete with restraint straps has been left toppled over on one side against the other. The room's most striking feature is a wide mirror which fills the upper half of the opposite wall from the entrance. The mirror will slowly clear to transparency to reveal a glittering steel chamber beyond. Inside the chamber looking out is a tall, thin faced figure wearing white medicae robes with (rather incongruously) a red leather coat draped over his shoulders. Behind him, covered by a mottled grey sheet, is what looks like a body on some sort of frame raised upright for inspection. While above them in the air, a pair of white enamelled skulls, encrusted with a variety of brass instruments and long hypo needles, hover expectantly.

SIZING UP THE SITUATION
(AND AN INTRODUCTION
TO TESTS)

Given the unusual and somewhat sinister nature of the unfolding situation, it is likely your players will want to know more about what's going on and see if they can notice any pertinent details beyond the obvious. This is a good point to introduce the game system for Tests. Tests are the most basic and widely used set of rules in Dark Heresy, in essence they are dice rolls made on the character's abilities to achieve something tangible, like performing a physical activity, solving a puzzle or recalling some particular information or, as in this case, spot fine details not noticed by a causal observer.

Tests aren't needed for every single action and idea that the Acolytes have, far from it, but rather should be used when what they are attempting is important, difficult, has important consequences if it is botched or excelled at or when the Test's success or failure will add to the drama of things. For more information on Tests and rolling dice see page 36.

If your players are novices to role playing games, you may wish to help them out by suggesting the following Tests that they can make or they may volunteer their desire to know more themselves. The following are all appropriate Tests in this situation and all will tell them a little more about the mysterious figure behind the glass:

A Perception Test at Routine (+20), if successful, will reveal that the man's leather coat conceals armoured panels in its construction and that the bulge under his arm can only be a gun of some sort.

A Common Lore (Tech) Test at Ordinary (+10), if successful, will identify the hovering skulls to be medicae servoskulls of the highest quality; machinespirit controlled drones, fashioned from preserved human skulls and fitted with sophisticated medical systems whose secrets are restricted to the highest orders of the Adeptus Mechanicus.

A Common Lore (Imperium) Test at Challenging (+0), if successful, will recognise the small, stylised raven and scroll insignia on his robes as belonging to the Hetaireia Lexis, a distinguished and famous order of scholars.

GM ADVICE: KNOW YOUR ACOLYTES!

This slightly tense journey down the elevator shaft and walk down the grey corridor might be passed in stony silence, alternately this might be a good place for the players to have their Acolyte's converse with each other for the first time—it is suggested that your player's describe their Acolyte's physical description and demeanour to each other. This is always a good thing to do with a new group of characters as it helps everybody (the GM included) set the scene in their own imagination.

THE BODY IN QUESTION

The figure in the chamber will beckon the Acolytes up to the glass with a gloved hand and after a static rattle, his voice will issue from a small grill set into the ceiling:

"Greetings Acolytes, I am Medicae-Interrogator Sand and you are the new blood, are you not? Worthy additions to our holy war? Well we shall see, far be it from me to doubt my betters' judgement, eh?"

"Well to the matter at hand. I represent the Holy Ordos of the Imperial Inquisition that we all serve. Our masters have called you here to assist us in the investigation of a matter of interest that has recently and unexpectedly come to light."

"Oh, yes, for your information, you are now in the depths of the Templum Mori, the house of the dead where the Lords Prefecta Mortem hold court and the fallen and the lost of the great city are named and counted. It will not surprise you then to know you are here to view a corpse, I doubt it will be your first, but it is, shall we say, quite singular!"

Sand will causally brush aside any questions and carry on with his lecture, pulling aside the grey sheet to reveal the dissected and eviscerated body of an adult human. As he continues to talk, the servoskulls will dip and bob out of sight to reappear with messy looking organic specimens in tests tubes and jars, clutched in their dextrous brass callipers, displaying them in turn for the Acolytes' edification:

"Now if you will kindly attend and pay heed, I will take questions afterward."

"The body has been positively identified as that of one Saul Arbest, male, 23 years of age, hive worker, unskilled labourer certified. Formerly of the Tantalus Indenture, registered habitation: chamber 6/23 stack 717# Coscarla Division, southern zone, Hive Sibelius."

"Subject found dead on the midhive transit rail three days ago as the car returned to the main depot. Preliminary examination at the scene suggested death by drug overdose. Post mortem performed by the biologis forensic, however revealed certain anomies that necessitated our involvement."

"The cause of death was in fact total systemic failure brought on by tissue rejection of an implanted synthetic graft organ. Said organ destroyed his central nervous system while attempting to overcome the immune response."

"In short this..."

The servo skull displays a sample jar containing a ten centimetre long whitish cord of waving glassy tendrils, still in motion, still alive.

"...crushed the life out of him from the inside."

"What's it for? Unknown, but my opinion would be, in a word, 'control'—neural and synaptic override, perhaps worse."

"There were other grafts and surgery of a less singular kind also; one lung replaced by a concealed storage cavity, possibly for his use as a courier. Also, one optic nerve removed, skin flayed from his stomach, I've no idea why. His system's awash with alchemic traces, clotting agents, panimmune and the like."

"The surgery was expert, but by the lesions and tissue stresses, I doubt any care was given to whether or not it was painless. In fact, by the damage to his vocal cords, my guess was that he probably screamed as long as he was able to."

"But this little monster is what concerns us. Oh, you don't need to know the genelore or the Ommissian edict, just that this is not only illegal, it is forbidden, it is heresy. Merely tampering with this kind of dark tech is enough to warrant a death sentence from the Holy Ordos, the Arbites or the Mechanicus."

"And I'm sure that you, as well as I, am wondering how such a rare and vile thing ended up wrapped round the spine of some anonymous habprole from the dusty end of the stacks."

"The man has no prior criminal record, he was rendered invalid by indenture—laid off if you will, some sixty days ago now and was reported missing thirtytwo days ago by his sister, one Lili Arbest, resident of the same habstack. More than enough time to get himself into all sorts of trouble, I'm sure you'll agree. These grafts are no more than eight or ten days old at most. We have nothing else on him."

"This is to be a shadow investigation, no open official involvement and no notification of the local authorities, and no one knows he's here either. Coscarla's down hive, so a covert approach will draw far less attention than a boot through the door, and be far less likely to kill any leads to our heretic."

"Find out why and where if you can, better yet, find out how. Best of all, find out who is responsible. Go with the grace of the GodEmperor, oh and additional samples would be a blessing if you can procure them."

At this point the players (or at least the Acolytes at any rate) will no doubt have a number of further questions and Sand will happily answer anything reasonably put to him. He has looked up what little the Ordo has on the Coscarla Division and has a brief for them (see Appendix III on page 45) and knows much of its sorry recent history. However, his information is all facts and figures, he knows nothing of the reality on the ground or the corruption and terror reigning there. What he wants is for the Acolytes to do is some old fashioned ground work, trace down the leads that may remain as to Arbest's fate and get a feel for what might have happened and, if possible, uncover the facts of any conspiracy involved. The head of the heretic on a platter would be a considerable bonus but not something he is expecting as a likely outcome.

Sand has procured for them a "kit" of additional equipment but won't acquiesce to any demands for further arms or manpower as he believes the Acolytes well armed enough to defend themselves, and that they should be talented enough to adapt and overcome if needs be. Added to which, he feels

that any flashy displays of high quality gear will only get them noticed more easily and be counterproductive to the investigation.

Any request to confirm Sand's authority to be able to send them on this mission, or to see his bone fides, he will meet politely and without irony or scorn. His credentials are all in order and he is operating under the seal of a legate investigator of the Holy Ordos. He has every right and title to send them where he wants, and an astute Acolyte might notice, the right to pass judgement on them too if they prove unworthy.

If any of them complain that they are of insufficient skill or ability to accomplish the task, need more weapons, or go so far as to ask if their Inquisitor will accompany them, or perhaps hold forth with other uncertainties, feel free to read out or paraphrase the following:

"Yes, well I'm afraid the great chapters of the Astartes and the Blessed Choirs of the Saints Militant are all busy right now, so you'll have to do..."

"But I am being churlish. Let me instead ask you a question: What do you imagine the Inquisition seeks for in its agents? Are you to be slavish lackeys? Simpering torchbearers to trail around your master, fawning and muttering his praises? Of course not. Such creatures are commonplace, turn over any rock in the Administratum or, Emperor save us, the Ecclesiarchy, and you'll find a score of such worthless invertebrates wriggling out. No, our wars are best waged with agents to whom action and intent are things bred in the bone—we need initiative and will, cunning, savvy, courage and purpose. No, an Acolyte that cannot act on their own to help overcome mankind's many foes had better die quickly lest they kill others with their shameful inadequacies!"

"Well, enough of that talk, I'm sure this matter will be a simple one, a mere skirmish with the foe at best. All we are asking of you is that you carry out a basic investigation, something that should be well within your capabilities, dig out a few facts, question, probe, charm and dissemble. See what you can find out about our dead man here without making too much of a mess. It's a chance to see how you perform in the field as well, consider this a test of your quality, because in many ways, that's just what it is."

OUTFITTING FOR A TRIP DOWN HIVE

Once the Acolytes' questions are answered and Sand has cajoled, lectured and perhaps chided them sufficiently, he will direct them to one of the larger storage crates lined against the wall where he has had prepared some equipment for their use, which he will talk through with them.

Coscarla Pass Tokens: (One per Acolyte) These coded devices, each about the size of a small thick coin, will allow them legal clearance for the Coscarla Division and free passage on the transit rail around the midhive area.



LIES, DAMN LIES AND ACOLYTES

The cover identity that Sand has provided for them is that of roving agents for the Coblast Assay. Such men and women are known in hive "cant" as regulators—hired guns, couriers, tracers, manhunters, mercenaries and other specialists. Coblast's less than savoury reputation makes their appearance in Coscarla an "easy sell" to the casual observer, and their cognomen of course will stand up to any official scrutiny. Indeed, if the Acolytes continue to look and act the part, award them a +30 bonus to any Deceive Test to carry such an impression off.

This deception is of course entirely up to them and they can claim to be who and what they like, but the more wild or unbelievable the story, the more likely the wrong people will come to hear of it and wonder. Claiming to be servants of the Inquisition is of course going to be considered an outrageous and dangerous lie by most in Coscarla, to whom the Holy Ordos is a near mythic entity of distant power and terror. In fact, the only ones likely to take such a claim on face value are the Churgeon and the Logicians, if it comes to their ears—the techheretics are always in dread of such discovery. If this happens the consequences are likely to be direct and unpleasant for the Acolytes.



Coblast Assay Cognomen: (One per Acolyte) These encrypted metal punch cards are identity markers, there is one tailored for each of the Acolytes and they include an enforcer code tag allowing them to carry arms for self defence. They signify that the Acolytes are “bonded agents for the Coblast Assay”, a Sibellian mercantile operation of somewhat dubious repute but not inconsiderable power, specialising in tech salvage and “manpower services”. Note that these are not “false” identity cards, the Coblast has actually been a secret Inquisition organisation for some time.

Hand Vox: (One per Acolyte) These are cheap and battered looking personal communication devices that use a private encrypted channel, and are good for a range of a few kilometres in the hive. Sand will happily explain that thanks to signal interference in the areas of the hive where they are going, vox traffic is almost impossible over any real distance or between levels, except by wire station, but these hand vox will let them keep in touch with each other at least.

Low Hiver’s Overcoats: (One per Acolyte) These voluminous and somewhat tattered patchwork leather and canvas highcollared overcoats are common lowhiver garb in Sibellus and will easily fit over anything the Acolytes are wearing. They are also quite tough and will provide them with 1 Armour Point (see the Combat Rules on page 38).

Chem Lamps: (One per Acolyte) These small portable lamps use a chemical reaction to provide light and operate continuously while their shutters are open. Such lamps will illuminate an area of about a three metre radius around it or provide a six metre directed beam of whitish light.

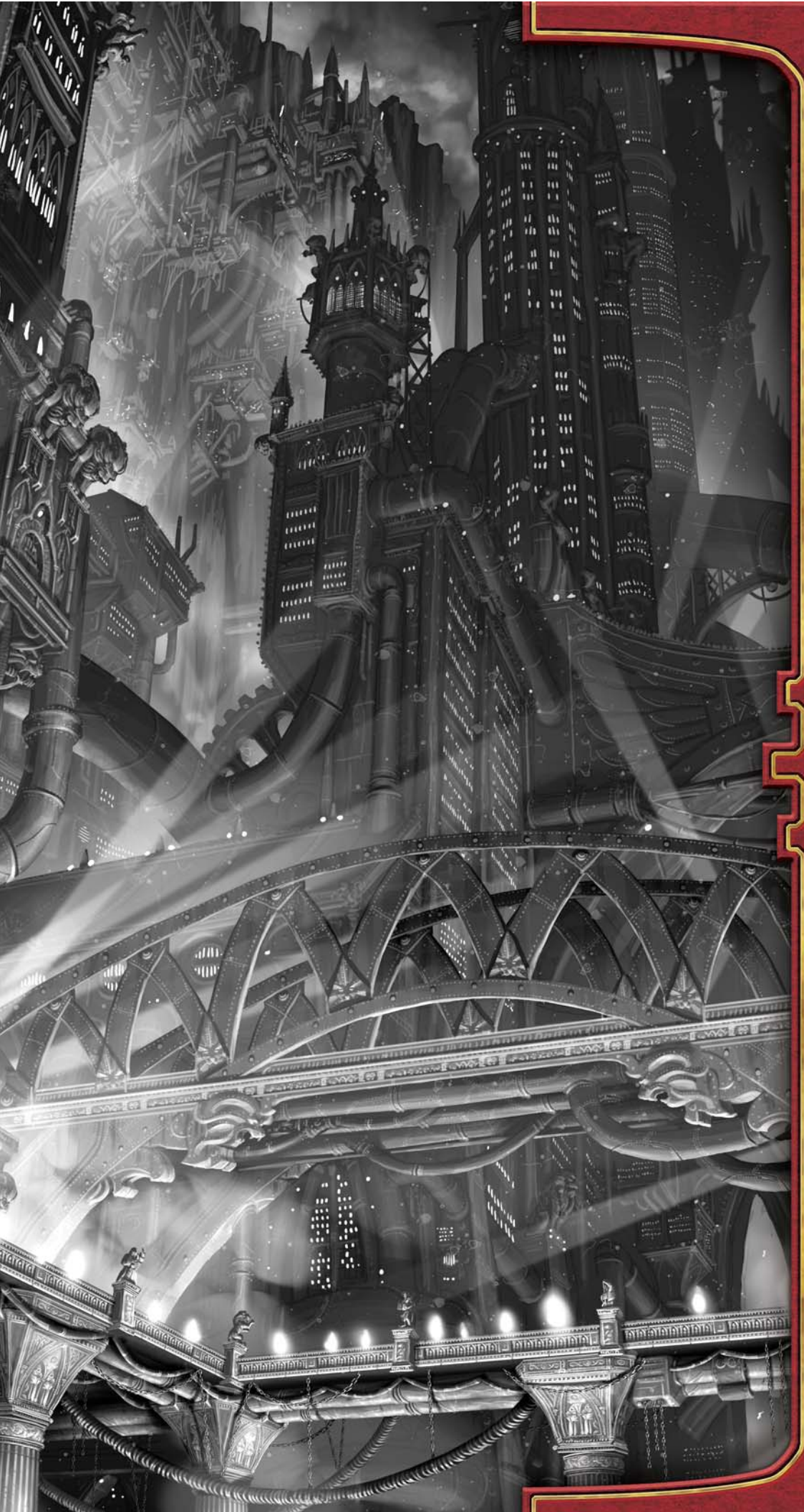
Coded DataSlate: This worn-looking brass cased dataslate carries basic copies of the information found in their briefing, a series of maps and data about the Coscarla and (largely empty) files on the Arbasts, including pictures of them and addresses taken from the Administratum register. The slate also has basic short range audio and visual recording and playback functions. The slate features a five key input code which Sand will give them, if it is accessed without this, its core memory will be wiped.

BioSample Kit: Added as something of a hopeful afterthought, this satchel carries three small biostorage tubes and a small bioauspex with a range of about a metre or so. Set for human tissue, the indicator on the auspex will flash red and whine with increasing volume in the proximity of anomalous tissue. The kit also comes with a long bladed, razor edge mono scalpel (this will inflict 1d5–1 plus the wielder’s Strength Bonus (SB) Damage and ignores the first 2 Armour Points (AP) of the target). If one of the Acolytes makes mention of the scalpel and kit and just what they are expected to achieve, Sand will shrug and smile saying, *“Well I’m not expecting deft surgery, but try not to hack at it like an underdone Grox steak and get it in the jar, eh?”*

Money Pouch: This pouch contains 120 Thrones in loose coin and used notes, *“For sundries and bribes. I’m sure if you need more you can be resourceful,”* Sand puts it.

It’s up to the Acolytes how they distribute the gear and gelt, and Sand is eager for them to get on their way. Sand will also encourage the Acolytes to converse with each other if they haven’t already done so, pointing out that their lives may well depend on at least a passing knowledge of each other’s abilities in the field. He will also impress on them that he expects them to cooperate to get their mission accomplished as befits the Inquisition’s chosen, and to “defer to the wisest in their own field when needs be”.

Coscarla is no more than a few hours away by transit rail car. Telling them he expects their report in, *“A few days, no more,”* the Acolytes are now on their own.



THE TWILIGHT CITY

THE END OF THE LINE

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THE ACOLYTES PROGRESS

•

THE SHADOWED
MASSES: THE PEOPLE OF
COSCARLA

•

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS
IN THE SOUTHERN
COSCARLA DIVISION

PART II: THE TWILIGHT CITY

THE END OF THE LINE

The journey to Coscarla will take several hours by transit rail car, during which time the Acolytes will have to change rails repeatedly (into increasingly dilapidated and vandalised cars), and their pass tokens and cognomen will be repeatedly checked by suspicious Magistratum enforcers, dulleyed carriage servitors and unctuous looking officials.

As their journey progresses they will pass from the relatively open spaces and clean air of the government district, down and across whole hive levels, passed collapsed finery and the fallen architectural splendours of the “good of olden days” and through vast steel sky vaults filled with endless rows of habstacks and kilometre after kilometre of thunderous manufactora. The further they go the more depressed, illmaintained and decayed things will become; these are the lower stretches of the mid hive, beyond these no transit rails run. Beyond this outer circle is the underhive where no law holds sway. Long stretches of the journey will be spent in the stale tainted air of the wormholelike tunnel passageways within the Hive’s thick supporting bones and in the nameless black voids of deserted spaces between, the car’s lights flicker and fail regularly.

After your players have had sufficient time to converse or lay out their plans, read or paraphrase the following before allowing them to explore:

Alone in a single car, now deserted but for your group, the rattling carriage breaks into another vast and dilapidated habvault and begins to slow. You look out upon a vista of vacant and decayed buildings in a worse state than any that you have seen up until now, stretching beyond sight into a dark horizon beyond.

The rail car shudders to a stop and the doors open onto a wide, raised platform devoid of passengers save for a single huddled figure dressed in rags. The figure quickly bundles themselves onboard, flashing a pass to the door mechanism with unseemly haste and takes up a seat as far from your group as possible. A moment later a dull, crackling servitor intones:

“Coscarla Southern Railhead. Passengers to Coscarla to disembark. This conveyance will depart in...” The rest is lost in a howl of static.

This is Coscarla and you have arrived.

THE ACOLYTES PROGRESS

Up to this point the Acolytes’ course has been set for them, now it’s up to their own initiative and abilities to get the job done. Hopefully Part I: Among the Missing should have



given them an idea of what they are up to, the situation they face and what the Inquisition expects from them. Now it’s up to them to deliver the goods and investigate the life and death of Saul Arbest.

The inhabited southern portion of the Coscarla Division is open before the Acolytes and they have around four hours left of the day cycle to use to their best advantage. Their most obvious clear leads are the dead man’s home and seeking out the sister who reported him missing, both of which will lead them to the same habstack. Other clues, suspicions and leads will be thrown up by their own actions, observations and progress in conducting the investigation, and the course they may take can have a wide variety of permutations and paths. With this in mind, rather than provide a linear list of events, much of Part II is laid out as a series of locations, each with its own NPCs, details and encounters, which the Acolytes’ may or may not visit and interact with. It is up to the GM to facilitate this process, handle any bridging material or description as needed and mark a reasonable passage of time within the game as they think is appropriate. Indeed, several days and nights may pass, and the Acolytes, being human, will need to rest; finding a safe place to do so might prove to have its own dangers. GMs are encouraged to embellish the details provided here, add more encounters and modify things in reaction to the way that the Acolytes’ behave and how well (or poorly) they are managing things.

DESOLATION AND URBAN DECAY: THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF COSCARLA

Coscarla has the feel of a buried and abandoned city, shrouded in darkness beneath a steel sky. It is a cold and empty place, where whole tenements and habstacks are blacked by fire, or stare silently with a hundred vacant smashed window eyes, while ancient and seemingly purposeless columns and arches of black granite soar high into the darkness.

The power supply is poor and the streetlamps along the main thoroughfares flicker and cast a pale twilight, while refuse and debris clogs the alleyways where shapeless and half-hidden forms of dregs (and perhaps worse) haunt. The skyline near the southern portion of the district is crisscrossed by the overhead rail lines of Sibellus's mass transit network, which clatters and sparks intermittently through the cycles. Far above, in the high shadowed skies, the periodic exhalations and clamour of the hive's vast air processing network is muted into distant thunder, the action of which materialises later at ground level as squalls of sudden chill wind, and even the occasional curtain of dirty rain lasts too briefly to wash the grime from the streets.

There are people living in Coscarla, thousands of them in fact, but they are so swallowed up by the vast and darkened spaces around them that they seem very few, nor do they linger outdoors, rushing silently to their destinations with their collars turned up and their heads firmly down. They are dishevelled, threadbare and have the look of frightened men and women, determined to get on with life the best they can.

As the night cycle comes on, the whole district takes on a truly nightmarish aspect as the power fades, the lightlevel falls and the inhabitants scurry to place bolted doors between themselves and the night. Now the darkness becomes total and oppressive, the habstacks stand like cyclopean tombstones in some immense graveyard. Such light that remains comes from patches of luminous mould growing in the cracks of the rockcrete buildings, radiating a faint and eerie glow, and the few harsh pools of illumination found around locales such as the Workers' Union and the transit railhead, seem like mere faltering islands of light amid an abyssal sea.

The Acolytes' investigation into the twilight city of the southern Coscarla Division will continue until one of two events happens: firstly, they may settle on the idea that Saul Arbest ran into of his dark fate at the Alms House and investigate that place further; or, until you as the GM decides that either through incompetence or ill fortune (on the Acolytes' part), they arouse the direct suspicion of the Churgeon or Moran and the Logicians take direct action against them. In either of these cases, proceed to Part III: The Chamber of Horrors.

THE SHADOWED MASSES: THE PEOPLE OF COSCARLA

The inhabitants of the Coscarla Division are a sorry and diminished lot, worn down by poverty, uncertainly and, more recently, ruled by fear. Most would be described as "unskilled labour" by work designation; poor families, the old and the infirm. They have been living on a reduced food supply and with failing utilities for some time and consequently are a gaunt, often sickly and halfstarved lot. They are not evil, nor are they complicit in the troubles of the area, but they are trapped in the Coscarla through a mix of poverty, legal constraint (many are still bound by a worker's indenture to the Tantalus Combine) and by virtue of simply having nowhere else to go. The key point to get across when portraying the habcitizens of Coscarla is that they are afraid; this is not simply a matter of their economic plight as they are used to hard times (even though these are harder than most), but genuinely fearful of what is going on around them. They fear the narcogangs and the violent strangers who have started coming and going in the area. They fear what will happen should the Tantalus Combine abandon its involvement with them entirely. They fear the dregs and the vermin prowling the derelict habs in evergreater numbers. But most of all, they fear what is happening in the night with increasing frequency, redeyed shapes glimpsed moving in the darkness and another citizen added to the roster of the missing by morning.

TALKING TO THE LOCALS

The best way to get information from the people of Coscarla is to interact with them and simply to talk to them. Your players may choose to play through these social situations or you may wish to have them employ Social Skill Tests—for

FOR THE GM: DEGREES OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Often it's useful to know how well a character succeeded in a Test (or how badly they've failed) as a guide for you to determine the outcome of things. Dark Heresy uses as system of degrees to grade success and failure in this way, and working this out is simple: just compare the results of the Test with the tested Characteristic and for every 10 full points by which the score is passed, 1 degree of success is achieved. Similarly if a Test is failed, each 10 full points indicates a degree of failure.

For Example: Junt has ducked into an alleyway and is trying to climb a wall quickly to escape a mob of mutants. The wall is quite high and slick with rain, and so the GM calls for a Challenging (+0) Climb Test. Junt has the Climb skill and a Strength Characteristic of 38. Junt's player rolls a 14, beating his characteristic by 24 and passing the Test with two degrees of success ($24/10 = 2$). Thanks to his fine success, the GM judges that Junt is up and over the wall quickly before the mutants round the corner, making a clean getaway.

TABLE 2-1: INQUIRIES IN COSCARLA

Test Result	Information
Standard Success	<i>"Since the Combine sold off so many indentures and the blackout fires, the whole district's gone to ruin! Now I can barely keep clothes on my back and food in my children's mouths! I don't know where we'd be without the Alms House some weeks." Or "This used to be a good place, but now, it's as if the Emperor has forgotten us. I don't know, perhaps we sinned and are being punished." Or "This place is dying and the carrion rats have come to feed on the carcass. The narcogangs, the scum at the Worker's Union, the dregs, scavs and reclaimators too... no insult intended. It's the way of the hive I know, but I wished I hadn't been here to see it."</i>
One Success	<i>"I don't know anything, make it my business to keep my head down and my door locked at night. But if your looking for answers, go talk to that reclaimator, Sikes. Out by the burned out technomat. He's the curious sort, seems to know too much of everyone's business." Or "It's that black pit that worries me, cavedin during the big fires a year or so, way up at the north end of the Division. Empty up there now. Leads right down into the underhive—all the way down. That's where it's all coming from, the dregs, the vermin and the bad luck. All from that black pit like the breath of hell!"</i>
Two Successes	<i>"Don't get caught outdoors in the night cycle my friend. You think it's dark now... When the power level drops what light is left will go with it and... well... Throne help you if you're caught out in the black, that's all I'm saying." Or "All those dead, burned alive in their habs in the blackouts. Souls burning still... can't rest easy I say. A friend of mine swore she saw wraiths lurking the other night as she was hurrying home late from the railhead. Where? Oh, out long passed the square. Their eyes burning red in the dark. Coscarla's a cursed place now."</i>
Three or more Successes	<i>"There have been disappearances... vanishings, you know. People won't talk about it, not right out, but everyone knows its happening. At first people said it was just desertion, but people don't just up and leave what little they own behind... do they? Some whisper it's the those dregs you see in the abandoned stacks or maybe that blade scum hanging round the Worker's Union, but you don't see them too eager to run around in the dark either, eh?"</i>

example, an Inquiry Test made after an hour or so of picking up stories in the market area, or by using the Charm skill to converse freely with a particular individual and overcome their natural wariness of armed strangers!

Getting information from the citizens of the Coscarla has a Difficulty of **Ordinary (+10)**, although this may vary depending on what questions are being asked and how the approach is made. The **Inquiries in Coscarla** table (following) shows a spread of rumours and information that might be gleaned from the common citizenry—rumours, reports and opinions both true and false (although believed by the speaker), and the GM is encouraged to add to these as they see fit. The better the Acolytes' do, the more that people are likely to open up to them and express their fears, and in doing so let important nuggets of information slip out.

BRIBERY AND OTHER MEANS OF PERSUASION

There have been enough strangers around recently—mostly scavengers and reclaimators, as well as, some "dangerous sorts" hanging around the Workers' Union—that the Acolytes will be noticed as newcomers but won't be singled out unless they do something to draw attention to themselves. Most of Coscarla's residents will react poorly to threats and intimidation (imposing a -10 penalty to Tests made to interact with them), but will open up considerably if the Acolytes spread a little cash around. A few circumspect bribes in the right place will do wonders (worth an additional +10 bonus or +20 bonus on interaction Tests).

As a marker for working out such bribes, a monthly wage for a common hablabourer (if they are lucky enough to draw the work shifts with Tantalus) is about 25-30 Thrones.

Have you seen this man?

One specific course of action is for the Acolytes to question the people of Coscarla directly about Saul Arbest or his sister. The answer from most will be "never heard of them" which is quite true, however, a generous GM might allow the Acolytes to encounter some citizens who are acquainted with them. Such people are likely to be those who have served on work crews with the Arbests in the past or who live in the same habstack. With sufficient persuasion they may bring forth some information:

Saul Arbest: Information gleaned about Saul will paint him as a solid worker, but someone whose temperament and behaviour has worsened recently with his increasing hardship. Some will have seen him running his mouth off and drinking at the Workers' Union and "no good'll come of that", but no one will have seen him for ten or twenty days or more. If told that he has been reported missing or is dead, the speaker is likely to quickly fall silent and find urgent business elsewhere all of a sudden.

Lili Arbest: Clearly thought well of by those that know her, it will be harder to get any information on her than with Saul as people will not wish her any ill (consider this a **Difficult (-10) Charm, Inquiry or Intimidate Test**).

OPPOSED TESTS

Sometimes a character will be called on to match their ability or Skill directly against that of another (such as an arm wrestling contest or trying to sneak passed a guard without them noticing), this is called an **Opposed Test**. In this case, both participants make a Test and the one with the greater degree of success wins. In the case of a draw, the participant with the higher **Characteristic Bonus** wins (with standard success). If the participants' Characteristic Bonuses are also equal, the GM can decide that either a deadlock has been reached (neither has gained the upperhand this round) or that the Test should be retaken etc. as suits the situation.

If Acolytes can allay the fears of those they are plying for details, they will discover that Lili is a young widow, her husband having died in the blackout fires a year ago. She is a literate and skilled worker, with no ties to hold her here but her brother, some wonder why she has remained in Coscarla so long.

GETTING AROUND COSCARLA

The only practical way to get round Coscarla is on foot. Whilst this in itself doesn't present a problem on the main thoroughfares which, while strewn with old rubbish and abandoned debris, are broad and built to accommodate far more foot and road traffic than they now handle. Away from these broad streets, the side alleys and gantry walks between the stacks are a different matter, and many are choked with old refuse, scorched wreckage from the blackout fires and worse. The footing is treacherous and you never know when you're going to stir up a nest of vermin or if that bundle of rags you accidentally tread upon will turn out to be a maddened dreg.

Anyone moving at any speed faster than a "careful walk" through the worse areas must take a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test** or they will loose their footing, or perhaps some other unpleasant incident occurs. (See **Appendix II** for the Dreg and Vapour Rat profiles).

Looking for the Way Out

Astute Acolytes, who pay attention (an **Ordinary (+10) Awareness Test**), will notice that there appears to be only two viable ways in or out of the Coscarla Division: the intermittent transit rail service and a single main exit to the hive's arteria network, through which heavy goods, vehicles and a few battered looking quadwheelers pass very infrequently. There are other portions of the Coscarla Division still inhabited and operating outside of the malign influences described here, they are also clustered around a functioning railhead, but these are all tens of kilometres away through a wasteland of abandoned and desolate habs.

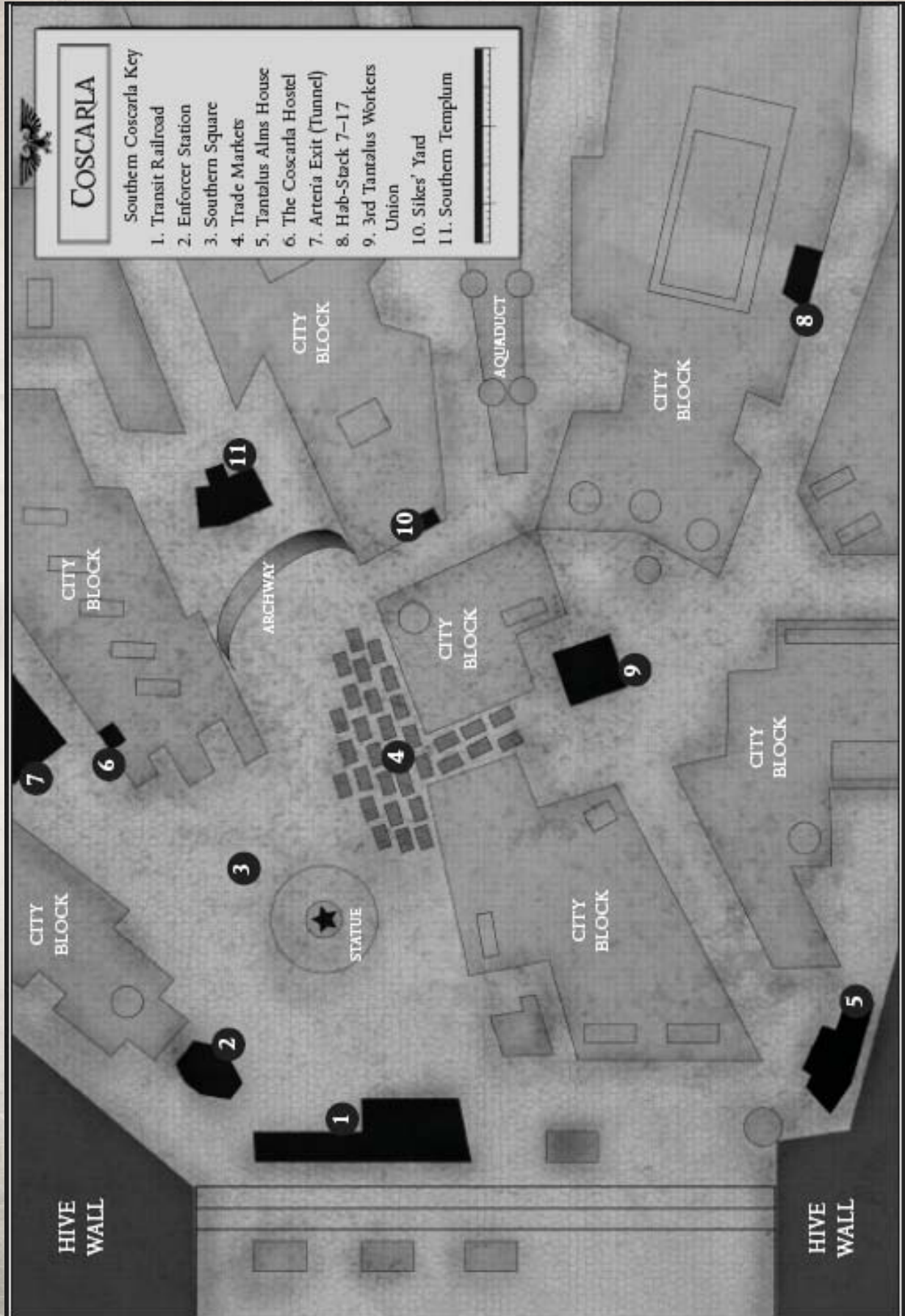
Welcome to the Night Cycle

When the night cycle kicks in and the district's power fades down to emergency levels, the Acolytes are left with a whole new range of problems. Outside the immediate areas of lamp light or the pools of illumination provided by a few buildings that have their own power supply, it is almost pitch black and **Perception** and **Awareness Tests** (such as finding your way if lost), as well as attempts at gunplay and the like all suffer a -30 penalty.



II: THE TWILIGHT CITY

MAP 2-1: IMPORTANT LOCATIONS IN THE SOUTHERN COSCARLA DIVISION



Moving around in the night also has the chance of attracting some very unwelcome attention. For every hour that the Acolytes spend outside and away from the light, they risk a 20% chance of being pounced upon by 1d5 Body Snatchers (see page 44). The Body Snatchers will retreat if met with stiff resistance, retrieving their fallen comrades and vanishing into the dark.

LOCKDOWN!

Should the Acolytes battle or kill any of the Churgeon's Body Snatchers or the enforcers, or rouse any of the Logician's suspicions for any reason, Moran will order a lockdown until further notice. When this happens armed guards will be placed on the transit rail and access to the arteria will be completely blocked. All wire voxlines in the area (save for the one in the enforcer station) will be cut, effectively sealing the Acolytes in. It's up to them now...

THE VANISHING

The reason why so many of the Coscarla's residents disappear during the night is because that is when the Churgeon unleashes her squads of Body Snatchers. These dark techaugmented servitors, created from her victims, target and abduct members of the citizenry and take them to the Churgeon's facility (concealed within the Alms House) for experimentation and organ harvesting. Waste biomatter and failed experiments are then (horrifically enough) disposed of by "recycling" them into the Alms House's food handouts. The Churgeon's experiments are reaching a critical stage and she has increased her quota to four victims per night, as a result the situation is starting to spiral out of control for Moran, and the fake enforcers' abilities to control or cover up.

Location 1: The Transit Railhead

The railhead consists of three raised metal transit rails, held up a hundred metres off the ground by an ornate skeletal framework of riveted girders and beams. A cluster of huge metal platforms, winches, hoists, gear houses and signal boxes make up the embarkation area, while a score of wide, metal spiral staircases and gantries provide access to the division's ground level. Clearly built to accommodate thousands of passengers at a time, the railhead now has a barren and empty look. Rust and decay clings to everything, windows are smashed, the paint flaking and signs that once contained inspirational slogans for the workers that passed this way have all been vandalised and torn down.

The railhead's control room has been sealed closed and the process is now entirely automated. A public wire voxterminas has also been deliberately vandalised and smashed.

Location 2: The Enforcer Station

A squat, rockcrete pillbox three stories high, the enforcer station sits in a permanent state of shuttered lockdown. Most of the division's real enforcers are now dead and those on display are in fact Sybas Moran's men. Only their figurehead



leader, a broken obscura addict named Locan, survives from the real Magistratum force to maintain a façade of normality with his distant and uninterested superiors.

There are twelve Logician agents posing as enforcers at the station, stone killers all. Locan, when not passed out in an obscurafuelled haze in his chamber in the station, can sometimes be found wandering fitfully around the market area or drinking alone in the Third Workers' Union.

The false enforcers limit themselves to brutally enforcing order over the area of the Square and making periodic sweeps, killing vermin and dregs when they grow bored. Any attempts by the Acolytes to get information out of them will be firmly and flatly rebuffed.

The current batch of enforcers have an evil reputation with the habcitizens and a Routine (+20) Perception or Awareness Test will notice that the twoman foot patrols that pace the Square occasionally are given an abnormally wide berth by the wary proles.

Importantly, while the enforcers represent a direct danger to the Acolytes if they suspect them, they are mindful of the deception they must maintain and so the enforcers will not openly come after the Acolytes, unless the Acolytes themselves are foolish enough to give them an excuse by overt lawbreaking or firing first. Instead the Churgeon will use her own tools for the job. Profiles for Locan and the enforcers can be found on page 41.

GMs OPTION: GETTING LOCAN TO TALK

If the Acolytes can get Locan to talk to them and if the GM wishes to give them a few more clues, it is possible (but not easy) to force out of him some of what is going on; this should be a **Challenging (+0) Charm** or **Deceive Test**. Torn between guilt, fear and selfrecrimination, he might let slip dark hints about what is going on, mutter the name “Logicians” or warn the Acolytes against going near the Alms House or Moran, or mutter about the vanishings or anything else you see fit. It’s worth noting that while Locan is allowed to wander, the Logicians keep him on a short leash and there should always be another enforcer or one of Luntz’s blades somewhere nearby, keeping a discreet eye on him, a fact the Acolytes might notice.

Location 3: The Southern Square

The Southern Square operates as the hub of this portion of the Coscarla Division, it is bounded at one side by the railhead and several broad roadways radiate out from it, populated by habstacks and the numerous important locations of this adventure. The square’s most singular feature is a fifty metre tall granite statue of a winged felid. The statue is millennia old and headless, a testament to when this entire region was once a single great noble’s estate.

Location 4: The Trade Market

Occupying the area of the Square furthest away from the Enforcer Station, this ragged sprawl of stalls, pedlars, openair cook shops and scavenger piles is now what passes for open commerce in southern Coscarla. At any time during the day cycle, fifty to a hundred habcitizens, as well as reclaimators, dregs and a handful of cocky gang blades, will congregate here to do business. The goods on offer are such things as salvaged and illrepaired household items, patched clothing, and food rations supplemented with barely edible cooked vermin. The Acolytes can purchase little of worth here, however information can be gathered from the people. About an hour of listening and questioning is enough to allow for an **Inquiry Test** (See page 12).



This area is also an excellent place to fit in any additional encounters or events you may wish to add, whether to provide extra clues for the Acolytes or the chance to run a small combat scene. These might include a chance encounter with a group of surly gangers looking for someone interesting to bully and rob, a display of heavy handed enforcer tactics, a robbery from one of the stalls or a hysterical woman screaming for a child or husband vanished in the night.

Location 5: The Tantalus Alms House

Provided in Coscarla’s better days as a display of the Tantalus Combine’s power, benevolence and largesse, this large building is fronted with green marble, decorated and oversculpted, prominently displaying the Combine’s crest of a gilded scarab before a crossed pair of burning torches. The building’s ground floor is made up of large refectories, a lecture hall, kitchens and store rooms, while its upper floors comprise a medicae wing and offices. Like the rest of Coscarla, the building has become dilapidated and run down, most of its services have been closed down and its staff reduced to a single director—an adept called Moran, who has but two juniors and a few servitors to help him. Once a day, at the mid point of the day cycle, the refectory serves a bowl of protein gruel and a hunk of starchbread from its soup kitchen (until its vats run dry) to all that can provide a valid citizen pass or pay the demi-Throne for the meal.

While these food handouts are vital for the community, Moran himself and his attendants are not well liked, both because Moran is a cold and authoritarian figure and because they represent the Tantalus Combine—who are to be blamed for much of Coscarla’s woes. Those with connections to Coscarla’s darker side also suspect that there is a link between Moran and the narcogangs, imagining petty corruption, pay offs or drugrunning involved in the food shipments to the Alms House, accounting for some covert comings and goings between the Alms House, the Enforcer’s Station and the Workers’ Union.

The truth of things is much, much worse than is commonly suspected, Tantalus actually suspended alms shipments months ago and covertly the Logicians and the Churgeon moved in. The building is now a front for the Churgeon’s work, its upper floors a chamber of horrors and the contents of the gruel are best not described...

Though they may not guess it, venturing to the Alms House is walking straight into the heart of the enemy for the Acolytes and a sure way to get into trouble if they are not careful. More on the Alms House’s ugly secrets can be found in Part III: The Chamber of Horrors. Profiles for Moran and his helpers can be found on page 42.

Location 6: The Coscarla Hostel

This crumbling tenement building of knocked through dwellings is marked by the cracked paint of the sign above the door as the “Coscarla Hostel” and is the only option in the area for a paid night’s lodgings. Even compared to the rest of the area, the hostel is in an awful state, the walls are blighted with damp, the plaster peeling and the furnishings covered with patches of mould and unidentifiable stains. The

hostel's proprietor is a bulbousheaded, sickly looking man with large bloodshot eyes and pale clammy skin, perpetually drenched with sweat, who calls himself Maxus Drayelok. Despite his fawning pretensions of grandeur, his only workforce consists of his seemingly mute, witheredlooking wife—a minor mutant with a skeletally thin build and a badly malformed right hand.

Drayelok offers his twelve double rooms at a rate of a half-Throne a night—"light and bedding generously included"—and at the moment, save for the occasional overspill from the Workers' Union, he gets very little trade, which is perhaps just as well.

Drayelok is addicted to spiral black, a particularly potent variant of obscura. Drayelok is in debt to Luntz at the Workers' Union and he will inform the gang boss of anything he can find out about his guests, the Acolytes included. Drayelok has developed one particularly unpleasant sideline however, and in league with several of the area's vilest and most fargone dregs, he has taken to murdering any guests that his paranoid mind takes issue with and robbing them to fund his drug habit. If the Acolytes' stay in the hostel for more than one night, it's likely they will have some unwelcome callers (see Room Service at the Coscarla Hostel).

Acolytes with an enforcer, Arbites or criminal background can make an **Ordinary (+10) Scrutiny Test** to realise, with certainty, from his appearance and mannerisms that Drayelok is a drug addict, and far on along the path to ruin.

What Drayelok Knows

In his capacities as informant, addict, trafficker with dregs and nocturnal murderer, Drayelok knows a surprising amount about what's really going on. He will volunteer none of it unless forcibly interrogated or pleading for his worthless life (a **Routine (+20) Intimidation** or **Deceive Test** in this circumstance). A success gleans the following information:

"South Coscarla's knee deep in blood and there's worse than my sins going on out in the black of the night"

If pressed about what he means, he will claim (though he hasn't seen them himself) that the dregs are frightened to leave their bolt holes in the dark hours because of:

"Red eyes they call them, body snatchers that carry men and women off... and no, I don't know where and I don't want to know! Spire knows there's enough habproles gone missing, dozens, scores perhaps, but they're all too terrified to say it!"

Drayelok knows nothing of Saul Arbest, but if severely frightened or if the questioning Acolyte gains two or more degrees of success on their Test, he will also offer the opinion that even Luntz, the narcoboss currently ruling the roost at the Third Workers' Union won't let his men out far after dark unless they go together and well armed, and that:





"The enforcers are involved in it... the missing proles I mean. Stands to reason, as anybody who complains too loudly that suchandsuch has vanished, soon vanishes too."

Profiles for Drayelok and the dregs can be found on pages 40 and 41.

Room Service at the Coscarla Hostel

In the dead of the night cycle, if Drayelok has determined to kill and rob the Acolytes in their beds, he will open the back door for his "friends". A number of dregs (equal to the number of Acolytes lodging at the hostel +2) will stalk up the stairs, the lead one having been given a pass key to the upstairs doors by Drayelok. The dregs will attempt to be stealthy on the way to the Acolytes' rooms, but will attack savagely and recklessly when the time comes—more than willing to batter down doors if needs be. The dregs will only retreat if half of their number are killed or incapacitated.

Sleeping Acolytes may take a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** to detect the dregs approach as they mount the rickety stairs and fumble at the locks. If the Acolytes are surprised, the dregs will get a free round of attacks as they try and murder them in their beds, gaining a +30 to hit any surprised Acolytes in the first round of combat.

If the dregs are defeated, Drayelok will shut himself behind the flimsy door of his office, weeping until the Acolytes come for him, while his wife will flee into the darkness, not to be seen again.

Location 7: The Arteria Exit

Southern Coscarla's other exit point to the rest of the hive is a yawning roadway tunnel entrance, wide enough to fit two huge macrohaulers through at once. During the night cycle, the arteria exit is blocked by two automated steel and mesh gates which drop down to cover the tunnel's lower half. The only control system for the gates sits safely inside the Enforcer Station.

Location 8: HabStack 717

HabStack 717 is a boxy, grey tenstory block decorated with arched window surrounds and stacked tiers of carved scarab blazons. The stack sits about twenty minutes walk along one of the main roadways from the square. It can be identified by what's left of the roadway signs that haven't been vandalised or burned with a **Routine (+20) Intelligence Test**, or by getting directions from the locals. Despite a generally dishevelled appearance, it seems outwardly to be in as good an order as any in the area.

Inside, the main entrance doors have been broken open and much of the foyer has been vandalised and thoroughly scavenged. The elevator doors are stuck open, displaying a black void, the only way up is by a stairwell decorated with damaged murals depicting active and happy workers, stylised representations of hive nobles dispensing bounty from on high and icons of the city's powerful.

Aside from some muted noises from behind a few shuttered doors, the whole building seems empty, silent and devoid of activity. Acolytes may take a **Challenging (+0) Perception Test** or a **Routine (+20) Psyniscience Test**. Succeeding at either will confirm that a definite abiding sense of dread hangs over the place, far worse than anything they have encountered so far.

Assuming the Acolytes make a beeline for Saul's chamber, they will find the door ajar and the lock broken. It is a simple

eight metre by eight metre box chamber with a water closet and a single arched window. Making a fairly poor job of hiding behind the bed in the corner is a frightened looking woman, huddled in an overcoat too large for her and clutching a rucksack to her chest. They will recognise her from her pict—this is Lili Arbest.

Lili Arbest's Story

Lili will seem relieved when she sees the Acolytes, however her level of cooperation with them will depend entirely on how they treat her. She is intelligent and believes, quite rightly, that she is in immediate danger and that her brother is most likely dead. She will respond better to the truth than some fabrication on the part of the Acolytes.

If the Acolytes' give her proof of her brother's fate she will be appalled but satisfied to know the truth, and open to any questions that they might have if they indicate they are looking to deal with whoever is responsible.

If the Acolytes threaten, overtly lie or withhold information from her, she will tell them no more than she must in order to get away and flee if she feels threatened.

The following are a few pertinent answers that she can give to the Acolytes; read out or paraphrase the following as needed:

OPTIONAL ENCOUNTER: A DEVIL'S BARGAIN

If word comes to Luntz that the Acolytes have proven particularly effective in "dispatching" gangers, Drayelok's murderous dregs, or (better yet) disposing of some of the enforcers or Body Snatchers, Luntz might approach the Acolytes to do a "job" for him. Luntz believes the Acolytes are new blood for hire and wants to hire them to kill the Churgeon at the Alms House. He believes this "decapitation" of the top boss will allow him to make a clean break with his ill gotten gains and his skin intact.

Luntz will pay the Acolytes 500 Thrones each for the task and arm them with shotguns and as much ammo they can carry for the job. Importantly, he will also give them a copied passkey that allows entry to the Alms House's rear service door, as well as several other locks in the place. Luntz can also arrange for the enforcers to be "occupied" by diversions if needs be. He will tell them all he knows, which isn't much: he knows his end of the deal, which he was put on to by "high grade players in the narco-syndicates" and he'll tell them how badly things have soured over time. As for the Logicians, he knows the organisation's name, but nothing beyond the fact that they're some kind of "tech cult" and "highly connected." He knows that they are up to something at the Alms House and he believes that that is the cause of the night cycle disappearances. In addition, Luntz knows that Moran and the enforcers are "stone cold pros, mercenaries would be my guess—the expensive kind". He has met the Churgeon only once and she scared the hell out of him.

Whether the Acolytes take this bargain with Luntz is entirely up to them.

On Saul's disappearance:

"To my shame, I didn't know he was gone till days afterwards. I'd had a contract to work uphiv and was too wornout to care. To be honest, Saul had been drinking a lot, drowning his sorrows and sleeping it off. By the time I realised that he'd vanished he'd been gone for days. I looked everywhere. I even went into the Worker's Union to look for him, even though the place makes my skin crawl. Everyone just stared blankly back at me and I knew, I knew! Something terrible had happened."

On reporting Saul missing:

"I was frightened to report him missing at first, but I saw Warden Locan on his own in the Square, he looked... I don't know... lost. I told him Saul was gone, he seemed angry at first, then he just went quiet and looked like he was going to break down in tears right there. He made me swear by the GodEmperor and by Saint Drusus not to mention this again, especially not to the other enforcers. It was strange but I believe he was even more frightened than I was. I had no idea he'd actually reported it."

Why she is so frightened:

"I'd made my mind up to leave; There are more vanishings every night, I don't know how many and nobody will say anything! I stayed here last night, just one last night, hoping he'd come home, foolish I know, but it saved my life."

What she's planning to do now:

"Escape. I was just waiting till the work shift ets of what little coin the masters have paid returns and the last rail cars come in, and then them. The establishment has suffered greatly I'll make a dash for the last car out. I have an old under its current sponsor, the Sibellian narcofriend who works as a scrivener in the Porphyry gang syndicates. Vandalised, brutalised and District, she'll let me stay with her if I ask. Not bulletridden, the bar is not a welcoming place much, but it's better than dying isn't it?"

The Acolytes have no reason to detain her and she has no reason whatsoever to stay. She does not know who took Saul, only that she is in dire peril and there is nothing left for her but "evil" in Coscarla now. If they try to detain her she will scream blue murder just as the work shift returns and the Acolytes will have some very awkward questions to answer as several dozen angry labourers appear to find out what's going on. If the Acolytes try to help her, perhaps offering money, providing her with a weapon or even escorting her to the railhead, she will favour them with one last fragment of information in gratitude before she flees:

II: THE TWILIGHT CITY



"You might try and find Evard Zed, he was one of Saul's friends. They used to drown their sorrows together. He's a drink-sodden fool, but he's been avoiding me and might know something. I think I saw him at the Templum when I went to light a candle for my brother's soul this morning."

Stake Outs

Enterprising Acolytes may come up with a plan to stake out Lili's or Saul's chamber that night cycle in the hope of discovering what's afoot. In either case they will be rewarded by the appearance of one or two Body Snatchers in the dark. See page 44 for their profile).

Location 9: The Third Tantalus Workers' Union

The Workers' Union hall is a bar and venue that was provided by the Tantalus Combine for the use of its workers, a common practice that attempts to empty their indentures' pockets of what little coin the masters have paid them. The establishment has suffered greatly under its current sponsor, the Sibellan narcogang syndicates. Vandalised, brutalised and bullet-ridden, the bar is not a welcoming place for the Acolytes, filled with nervous gang blades, morose drinkers and smashed-up addicts. The only regular clientele are the gang boss "Chord" Luntz and his crew who use the upstairs rooms in the hall as a base of operations. Various drifting scum, gangers and recidivists regularly come to arrange deals with Luntz.

The Workers' Union is not a place to gather rumours or ask direct questions, as the clientele and staff are well aware of what Luntz would do to them for talking to strangers. However, some time spent here and a successful **Challenging (+0) Inquiry Test** will find out that the hall is clearly being used as a centre for illegal drug distribution, a narco-boss called Cord Luntz is in charge and for whatever reason, he is not a happy man. A failure on this Test could be enough to start a potentially lethal bar fight (and the Acolyte's behaviour might do this anyway regardless). Such fights are common in the Union and unless the Acolytes make a point of storming Luntz's operation on the upper floor, no particular repercussions will ensue.

"Chord" Luntz, Gang Boss

Luntz knows this should have been a sweet deal for him as the supply of sophisticated chemicals from the Churgeon has brought him huge profits. However, as time has passed the deal appears to have soured; trade is drying up because word is getting out that Coscarla is a "bad place to do business" and Luntz is beginning to realise that he is trapped in a situation where things could easily turn for the worse. The Churgeon represents something far worse than he is used to dealing with and, with Moran's killers posing as enforcers, Luntz knows that he (and his crew) are outclassed and outgunned. Profiles for Luntz, and his gangers can be found on page 43.

Location 10: Sikes' Yard

Sikes is a reclaimator from out of the district (from the deep underhive if truth be told) and he, his two "apprentices" and their crudely augmented vermin hound have set up a stall filled with all manner of refuse, buddle rags, scavenged tech and megre goods in a burned out technomat's shop, just off from the trade market. Sikes is a wily, mercenary character and has lived this long by keeping his eyes and ears open. He

TABLE 2-2: SIKES' INFORMATION

Test Result	Information
Standard Success	"It doesn't take a savant to see there's something awry here, honest citizens going missing, enforcer's doing nothing about it and a narcoboss sitting scared in that bar yonder with his hand out eh?" Or "Alms House eh? Well I'll have none of it, any man that offers you something for nothing, well, that just means what he wants ain't so obvious, nor as clean as coin—so they say in my trade."
One Success	"Enforcers, hab! Have you seen 'em, the way the stand, the way they watch? The utter disinterest in an honest bribe or two? If they're local Magistratum lads, like what you get in this neck of the wastes, then I'm Miss Fancy Knickers, Queen of BloodSoaked Malfi!"
Two Successes	"Oh I've seen 'em and they aren't ghosts either, the 'red eyes', they're as solid as this scattergun. Stalking about here and there in the night, dragging off honest proles. Odd that, when you think of it, isn't it? No sudden drop in the dreg numbers, nor are me and my kind bothered, almost like some one thought we wasn't good enough eh?"
Three or more Successes	"There it stands, the Alms House. They all go drudging in and out, meek as cattle. Ever sees it once the black comes? Pale lights burning in the dark up high and I've seen the long shadows them inside cast. A downbiver like me learns to read shadows as good as an adept reads script, sees what's coming round the corner by it. No, I'll have spent my last round before any o' 'em drags me to that place."

has an idea about what's going on even if he hasn't got the full story. Sikes has discovered some good salvage in Coscarla, however, with developments being what they are, his self-preservation instinct is kicking in and he feels that he should be moving on soon.

Sikes is quite willing to barter information for cash—he will give nothing away for free. He is a skilled liar when he needs to be and not easily intimidated (he will meet threats of violence in kind). In order get anything useful out of him, a **Challenging (+0) Barter** or **Charm Test** is called for; if the Acolytes sweeten the deal with cash, trade goods or a few choice purchases, they may have a +10 or higher bonus to this Test as the GM feels appropriate. If the Acolytes' money keeps flowing, Sikes will keep talking—he has a talent for crouching pertinent facts and leading statements in rambling anecdotes or rhetorical assertions, saying much without seeming to say much at all.

If successfully questioned about Saul, Sikes will venture that he knows Arbest's sister was looking him (she came to him and made inquiries herself after he brother), and if the Acolytes pay well, he will tell them where they are likely to find Evard Zed, Saul's old drinking partner at the Templum—“Hiding under that worthless preacher's skirts, that'd be my reckoning.”

The Acolytes may be interested in Sikes' junk as he has a small quantity of arms and ammo for sale. He will sell five stub pistol rounds or shotgun cartridges for a Throne (and has a total of 30 of each ammo type for sale). He also has a battered looking stub revolver for ten Thrones and his “star buy, one careless owner, regrettably now defunct”, an old autopistol with a rebuilt grip and two clips for 40 Thrones. (See page 39 for details of the automatic fire rules).

Location 11: The Southern Templum

This small chapel to the Imperial Creed is the domain of an alcoholic wreck of a preacher called Fayban. Inside the icons and statuary are alight with hundreds of tallow candles, all lit by the lost and the desperate, each one for a vanished friend, family member or a scream heard in the night. This is perhaps the truest and most visual indicator of just how bad things have become in Coscarla.

When Coscarla burned in the blackout a year ago, the other Templum clerics went to help the victims and died for their faith, however, Fayban stayed behind and his conscience has been eating him alive ever since. Now a new terror has come and Fayban's wilful ignorance and cowardice has come to the fore again. He rarely leaves the templum and never goes out at night. He is a weak man and should be portrayed as such, which should strike anger into the heart of any Acolyte cleric encountering him.

Evard's story

Also hiding out at the Templum is Evard Zed, one of Saul Arbest's drinking companions who was with him on the night of his disappearance. Zed is another man plagued by his conscience and once he is identified and questioned, getting him to unburden his soul is a **Routine (+20) Charm** or **Intimidate Test**. A success means that he sobbingly relates his story:

“I was with him the night... the night he vanished. We were drinking in the Union, not much you understand, just enough to pass the time... Anyway, this gang blade, I didn't know him, hadn't seen him before... Anyway, this blade takes issue with Saul. Well he was being very loud, running his mouth, you know. Well, this blade goes and cuts him, not bad you understand, just enough to show him who's boss... just a cut in the chest, we've all had worse at the manufactorum a dozen times.

Well we weren't wanted at the Union anymore, not that night, so we turfed out. I was for heading straight for home, but Saul, he was moaning about that cut, wanted to go to the Alms House, see if one of them charity sirs would stitch him up or, you know, give him something for the pain. The lights were on you understand—in the Alms House. We could see it over there, shining in the dark. Me though, I went home, that old place gives me the shivers.

That was, you see, before all the vanishings really started, Saul, he was one of the first.”





CHAMBER OF HORRORS

THE TURN OF EVENTS

•

THE LAYOUT OF THE
ALMS HOUSE

•

END GAME

PART III: THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

The third part of the adventure is focused around the secrets of the Alms House and it is here that the answers to the mystery of what happened to Saul Arbest can be found. It is also here that the key to the Acolytes' continued survival lies.

THE TURN OF EVENTS

Sooner or later, one of two things will likely occur:

- The Acolyte's suspicions will have been directed to the Alms House and its part in the disappearances. Thus they will seek to find out what lurks behind its public front. Or...
- The Logicians themselves (their suspicions aroused due to the PCs actions) will come after the Acolytes—or at least seek out whichever force they suspect is at work against them in Coscarla.

In both cases, the physical location of the Alms House is likely to play a significant part in what transpires and for this reason it is explored here in detail.

THE LOGICIANS ON THE HUNT

As previously noted, once the Logicians' suspicions are aroused they will seal off the area as a precautionary measure (see Lockdown on page 19) and conduct their own investigations into who has come to oppose them. Even if they don't know for sure that it is the Acolytes, given the Logicians' resources, they effectively "are" the local law enforcement and the fact that they can use Luntz's criminal contacts and informants to track down the group of "strangers" who are asking too many questions, it is only a matter of time before the Acolytes are exposed.

Once this has occurred, the Logicians will firstly seek to move covertly against them and will seek to capture rather than kill them outright—at least while this seems a viable option. The reasons for this are twofold, firstly the Logicians' (justified) paranoia works against them—despite their obvious power, they are completely outnumbered by the local population and Moran is under no illusion that the balance of terror they have created will not last long if they have the enforcers opening fire into crowds or setting loose the Churgeon's playthings in broad daylight. Secondly, they will not be content just to kill the interlopers, they will want to find out who sent them and all that they know, and at the Churgeon's hands this will not be a pleasant experience.

If the Logicians take the offensive in this way, Moran will coordinate matters from the Enforcer Station, leaving the defence of the Alms House to the capable hands of the Churgeon and her creations.

WHO ARE THE LOGICIANS?

The Logicians are an alliance of heretic factions who have long been a thorn in the side of the Calixis and the nearby Ixaniad Sectors. Founded not around a single charismatic figure or dark religion, they find their inspiration in a forbidden heretical text called "In Defence of the Future: A Logical Discourse",

banned now for several millennia. The Logicians are a so-called "progressive" cult, they favour the advancement of mankind through progress and the acquisition of technology, believing that they should cast off the oppression of the Ministorum, overthrow of the High Lords of Terra and put an end to the smothering constraints of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Ultimately, the Logicians aim to bring about a return to the mythic power of the Dark Age of Technology.

Finding adherents through a secret network of ruthless mercantile interests and powerhungry nobles, they are a haven for hereteks and rogue techpriests, and are highly organised and well resourced. Although no Daemonic force or apocalyptic agenda lies at their heart, the Logicians are still a phenomenally dangerous group, utterly callous in their pursuit of power and unceasing in the hunt for ever better weapons and tools by which to achieve their ends.

MOVING AGAINST THE ACOLYTES

Once the Logicians have identified their targets and where they might find them, they will wait until the next night cycle to send out the Body Snatchers. Such a hunting party will contain several Body Snatchers (one for each of the Acolytes is advised), lead by a plainclothes enforcer armed with a silenced weapon and a dark vision visor. The hunters will stalk and try to overwhelm the Acolytes with brute force, as long as they can avoid crowds in doing so. They plan to capture alive as many of the Acolytes as possible in a surprise attack. This capture team will retreat if they take heavy casualties, attempting to take their fallen with them. If they fail, they will escalate matters and try again on a subsequent night. However, if their entire force is overwhelmed, they are obviously betrayed by Luntz or become the subject of a mob attack, then Moran will instigate their destruction protocol instead (see Countdown to Destruction) before dissolving their operation and escaping in an armoured cargo hauler (with enforcer escort) he has concealed for this purpose out in the waste zone of Northern Coscarla—killing anyone that gets in the way.

COUNTDOWN TO DESTRUCTION

It has always been the Logicians' plan to cover their tracks with an act of mass murder by a biological weapon in the shape of a concentrated plague bacillus. This will only occur during the adventure if they feel that their whole operation is threatened or if their position in Coscarla has become untenable.

Their original plan (once their work in the Coscarla was completed) was to taint the Alms House's last food handout with a dilute solution of the plague bacillus, which would have the effect of a widespread contamination (the infected also becoming carriers) providing a suitable delay while the Logicians could escape. However, if they feel the game is up in Coscarla, their method will be far cruder and blatant. Any surviving Body Snatchers will be dressed with bandoliers of plague vials, hidden under dreg's clothing. They will then smash the vials systematically in the entryways of habblocks, public buildings and the like, causing a huge diversion while the Logicians flee. If this attack occurs, then burning the Body Snatchers (preferably from a distance) is the only even vaguely safe means of counter attack.

THE LAYOUT OF THE ALMS HOUSE

THE GROUND FLOOR

The following are detailed descriptions of each area in the Alms House.

Security and Dispositions at the Alms House

During the day cycle the Alms House maintains a deception of normality, Moran and his two aides carry out the business of the food distribution, aided by the kitchen servitors, while the

BROKEN TILES AND LINGERING SCREAMS: SETTING THE SCENE IN THE ALMS HOUSE

The Alms House is a large and ornate building, its architecture and scale designed to impose and leave those who humbly enter its halls with no doubt as to the power and wealth of the Tantalus Combine. The building is fronted and tiled inside with a funerary green marble, the ceilings are high and vaulted, and the walls studded with mouldings and statuary. Now largely disused and abandoned, tiles cracked and statues vandalised, the building's scale and largely empty rooms are filled with dust, leaving it with a haunted, desolate feeling.

The rooms of the first floor, beyond locked doors and outside of public scrutiny, are in a worse condition with broken and overturned furniture, scattered papers, torn draperies and the occasional old bloodstain from the Logicians' unobserved takeover.

The third floor, originally set up as a small medicae facility for the Combine's workers, is where the Churgeon has her lair and is a place of unspeakable suffering and horror. The air is filled with a coarse disinfectant reek, barely covering the stench of blood. The lights flicker and the filthy walls and floor are sticky wet in places and covered in drag marks, blood splatters, desperate scratches and hand prints.



GETTING IN

There are a number of ways that the Acolytes can gain entrance to the Alms House: they could break in, use a passkey (all of the Logician agents carry such a key) or even try and hide among the crowd entering for food and conceal themselves till later.

Most of the internal locks and the rear door use the same passkey (unless noted in the location), attempting to overcome these sturdy mechanical locks is no easy task—treat this as a **Challenging (+0) Security Test**. Forcing the lock—treat this as an “automatic hit” attack against an object with a combined Toughness & Armour value of 10, thus requiring a total of 12 or more points of damage in one hit to break it—although this second option is likely to be very noisy, especially if it takes the Acolytes numerous hits to break the lock.

When moving round the Alms House, stealth is likely to be the order of the day, fortunately the building's solid construction, general abandonment and layers of dust make this fairly easy. Each Acolyte wishing to move stealthily must make an **Ordinary (+10) Silent Move Test** Opposed by Awareness (35) for any patrolling guard in a position to discover them.

upper floors are barred and off limits. During the night cycle, Moran (unless called away) and the others sleep on the second floor, while a Body Snatcher patrols the ground and second floors once every hour. Each night, two to six Body Snatchers are sent out to “collect” the night's crop of subjects, while the remainder await, hooked up to chemical canisters, on the third floor. The Churgeon and her two homonculites do not sleep.

The Main Portico and Reception Chamber

The main entryway is made up of a set of high bronze doors, flanked by wide marble columns; these doors are open during the day cycle and barred shut from within during the night. Within, the wide lobby is covered by a mosaic floor featuring the icon of the Tantalus Combine, now mostly obscured by a thick layer of grime and dirt. A wide archway to the left leads to the refectory area, while its parallel, to the right, leads to the lecture hall. Directly across from the entrance, two inward curving stairways ascend to the landing on the second floor and beneath them a high marblefaced reception desk stands, bracketed by two tall and grim statues depicting robed adepts holding burning torches aloft. Day or night, the waning light from lumen globes mounted within the statues' torches is the only source of light, casting long shadows across the dirty floor. Behind the desk a doorway leads to a disused office and storeroom and off to one side, is a locked cage elevator.

When food is being handed out, one of Moran's men poses as an adept at the desk and checks citizens for their identity or takes coin, before allowing them to pass into the refectory for meals. At all other times it is deserted.

The Refectory Wing

This long, square hall is able to seat up to a hundred at a time on long, battered tables set with mismatched benches and chairs. The walls are lined with inspirational scripture and scenes. Food is served through a series of metal hatches from the kitchens. A large cracked mirror has been set into the wall beside the hatch—an Ordinary (+10) Perception Test will reveal that this mirror is a relatively recent addition.

Breaking the mirror will reveal that it is twoway glass and that a false compartment has been set into the wall, forming a compact booth. Inside there is a scanning device and a small portable cogitator. A Routine (+20) Tech Use or Common Lore (Tech) Test will reveal these to be a bioauspex, set to take readings from those who pass by the mirror, while the cogitator contains medical and personnel files for the Tantalus Combine's workforce. Note that the cogitator's liquidcore data cell can be removed for evidence.

The Lecture Hall

Conceived so that the workforce could receive edifying instruction on the value of unquestioning obedience and the joy of tireless toil for their masters, this austere auditorium has long been entirely disused and has no viable light source still working within.

The Kitchens and Stores

The kitchens and stores are dusty, dirty and entirely unsanitary. The main storeroom contains surprisingly little by a way of food except for some stacked crates of protein concentrate and a vat of fungal medium. An area has been set aside with a supply of concentrated militarystyle rations, complete with its own sets of cutlery and utensils; these (unlike the rest of the kitchen) are scrupulously clean. The main kitchen area is dominated by two huge soup vats with gas burners underneath, beside which a pair of ancient and decrepit looking servitor drones sit deactivated when not in use.

A locked pair of metal doors lead from the back of the stores to a yard at the rear of the Alms House (locked with the standard passkey), whilst a pitchblack lift shaft leads upwards. There are several side doors from the kitchen leading to small storerooms and pantries, a palpable smell of blood issues from one of them (see The Protein Store).

The Protein Store

Entered through the locked side door from the kitchens, this box room contains a series of stacked, metal drum canisters and smells heavily of blood. If these heavy canisters are pried open, they will reveal a thick, clotted red liquid whose coppery stench will be overpowering. Close inspection will reveal codes and dates stamped onto the sides of them. If the Acolytes have already looked at the cogitator data from the hidden room, an **Ordinary (+10) Intelligence Test** will realise the code patterns tally.

Realising what the contents of the canisters are is definitely worth a Fear Test (see page 37).



THE FIRST FLOOR

The landing and the Empty Offices

Accessed either as the first stop upward on the elevator or from the landing, the majority of this floor is made up of a series of unused offices or austere (former adept's) chambers dived into corridors by thin partition walls. Many are filled with scattered papers and three have been used as quarters by Moran's aides. The cage elevator from the lobby stops on the landing and, behind a locked side door, a staircase leads from the end of the landing to the wards on the upper floor.

The Director's Chamber

Accessed from an ornate locked door off the landing, Moran has maintained a pretence of normality in this room and the imposing chamber has been maintained in a pristine condition. The room is dominated by a large mural of the Tantalus Combine's symbol on the panelled wall behind the director's marbled desk.

The desk contains a functioning auto quill, neatly stacked layers of clean parchment and a small (deactivated) matriculation engine of nickelplated metal. The desk draw is locked (only Moran has the key) but easily forced open with a **Routine (+20) Strength Test**. Contained within are several bound parchments, some dataslates and a laspistol with a spare charge pack.

A quick scan of the dataslates from the desk (taking about

five minutes) and a successful **Ordinary (+10) Search Test**, will reveal a receipt acknowledging of the director's request to the Tantalus Combine to suspend normal food shipments some thirty days ago.

A small side door from the chamber leads to a sleeping cell that Moran has kept like a soldier's billet.

The Alchemy Lab

What was a washroom area at the very end of the floor has been converted into an alchemy lab and is filled with benches stacked with bubbling glass crucibles, sparking apparatus and whirling centrifuges, tended by at all times by one of the Churgeon's Homonculites (see page 44), which will attack intruders remorselessly until destroyed.

This is the lab where the Churgeon's cover business as

THE DOCTOR IS IN...

The Churgeon is obsessed, far from sane and at a critical juncture in her work. If the Acolytes are detected in the building, she will dispatch any remaining Body Snatchers to deal with the problem and vox Moran and the enforcers to come and assist her. She will not, however, stop her work, no matter how badly things are going until the Acolytes enter her operating theatre.

III: THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS



a dealer in illegal formulas and reagents for the narcogangs is carried out. The apparatus is delicate—stray shots or smashed vessels might result in a fire or even perhaps a small explosion.

JUST WHAT WAS THE CHURGEON UP TO?

The Churgeon's principle goal has been the perfection of a genetically stable, biocultured neural control graftorgan which would enable the Logicians to rapidly create armies of obedient soldiers and servants from healthy human stock. If perfected, the subjects would retain their memories and skills (unlike common Imperial servitors), but be entirely controlled by their parasitic implants, which would also be able to override and regulate their pain receptors, as well as some other useful tricks. Unfortunately the tissue rejection factor has been a huge problem, killing the vast majority of test subjects or at best destroying their higher brain functions entirely—although these were successful enough for her to create the Body Snatchers. Even the better ones (such as the unfortunate Saul Arbost) have proved unreliable, suffering slow deaths and regressions after periods of functionality. The Coscarla, with its ready supply of good quality subjects, provided an excellent opportunity to carry out a large study on rejection factors and, although the fatality rate has been huge, the raw data gathered has been very promising. If the Churgeon escapes, sooner or later she will move to the next stage in her experiments...

THE THIRD FLOOR

The Medicae Wards

Two medical wards dominate the third floor, with the main cage elevator from the lobby ascending to a central reception point between them. Curtains of semi transparent rubberised slats hang at the entrances to the two wards, while the lights overhead flicker and pulse slowly, as if power was being bled away. On the other side of the ward reception area a blank armoured door has been fitted recently (the previous door lies on its side nearby.)

The two wards are draped with crude partitions made from plastek sheeting and torn cloth, behind which twenty blood spattered gurneys are hidden from view. Eight of the gurneys are currently occupied by the dead bodies of the Churgeon's mutilated victims, covered by sheeting. The sight of what has been done to these unfortunates is truly horrific, beyond any "normal" violence or sane mind. A shelf along one wall holds jars of harvested organs and limbs in fluid suspension, while in the far corner a lone "survivor" can be found. This comatose man has fresh surgical scars on his chest and is hooked up to arcane looking machinery and drip fed chemicals, while a cogitator next to him chatters and spools a printed sheet into a waiting hopper.

The Armoured Door

The armoured door is icycold to the touch and is featureless except for two diagonal metal notches at waist height—the lock. A special encoded accessor key is needed to gain entry and these can only be found in the personal possession of the Churgeon, Moran and the Homonculites. Getting through the door by force would need heavy weapons, explosives or cutting equipment, alternately the Acolytes could wait for something to come out and then wedge it open, as the heavy pressurised door swings very slowly.

The Operating Theatre

Beyond the armoured pressure door is the Churgeon's domain. It is a large chamber made from knocking down several partition walls and crudely sealed off with tape and sheet metal plating. An open lift shaft, covered by a grate, sits off to one side. The room is icy cold and a heavy mist of vapour hangs above the floor. The walls are lined with a tangle of hissing and crackling machinery, lit by corposant arcs of energy, rack upon rack of bubbling sample tanks, containment vessels and bewildering alchemical apparatus. One whole wall is given over to a series of hanging canisters—the Body Snatchers are hooked up to these between missions. The opposite wall holds a single large transparent chamber, filled with a clear fluid in which floats a large whitish mass. The thing in the chamber is being tended by a Homonculite. Acolytes may realise that the thing in the chamber is a far larger specimen of the forbidden bioconstruct Sand showed them at their initial briefing.

At the centre of it all is the Churgeon. Read or paraphrase the following:

The centre of the chamber is dominated by a large operating table, surrounded by all manner of strange instruments, flashing cogitator displays and armatures ending in clusters of blades, manipulators and drills.

On the table, strapped down and laid open as if an anatomical exhibit, his heart still pumping in his splayed ribcage, is a young man, clearly conscious and terrified out of his mind.

Looming above him is a narrow and impossibly tall figure, shrouded in black robes edged with a bloodred cogtooth pattern, who can only be the architect and master of this chamber of horrors. Perched on the figure's back is a heavy mass of burnished metal, surrounded by dozens of twitching mechanical limbs, like some obscene clockwork spider.

The cowed head turns toward you and as the light catches the face within, you can see what remains of a living woman's face stitched to an iron skull. Glowing lenses set in the woman's dead face focus on you and a grating artificial voice issues forth:

"Foolish meat! In coming here you have only hastened the harvesting of your unworthy flesh!"

Viewing the Churgeon at her work in this chamber of horrors requires a Fear Test (see page 37).

END GAME

The Churgeon distains physical confrontation and if attacked, will detach her "scalpel familiar" from her back and call on the Homonculite tending the biotank, and any remaining Body Snatchers in the chamber, to attack the Acolytes while she attempts to withdraw to the rear of the room, giving her the opportunity to take shots at the interlopers with her laser. If it looks like the fight is not going in her favour, she will quickly programme the machinery to overload (this will take two combat rounds) and flee down the waiting lift shaft, her internal maglev system allowing her to escape swiftly and safely down the shaft.

Alarms scream, arcs of electrical discharge will cascade around the room as the machinery begins to overload. Soon after the various tanks start to shatter, spilling foul smelling ichor on to the floor and surfaces. The Acolytes have about five minutes to grab whatever evidence they can and get clear before the power chamber goes critical and blows the top off the building in a fireball of plasma.

Moran and his enforcers are trained professionals not insane fanatics and if the Alms House is destroyed or the Churgeon is killed (or has fled), he and his men will seek to cut their losses and attempt an escape. In doing so, they will set fire to the Station House and flee through the arteria network in an enforcer halftrack unless stopped. A running gun battle with Luntz's men (and possibly the Acolytes) will ensue as they make their break for it.

THE AFTERMATH

If the Acolytes are victorious in defeating or successfully driving off the Logicians, they can quickly reestablish contact with the wider hive and an Inquisition-backed sweep by the Magos Biologis and the Adeptus Arbites will soon follow. The sweep will round up everybody who hasn't already fled (there will be no sign of Luntz or Sikes) and the local inhabitants will be processed, while forensic teams will sift through the evidence with a finetoothed comb.

The Acolytes will be checked over for contamination and thoroughly questioned about the matter. Sand, speaking to them over a vox from his own lab, will grant that they "Haven't performed too badly," and he'll be particularly pleased with any samples that they might have preserved for him.

The longterm outlook for the Coscarla will be bleak. For the people of the southern district, rumours will begin to circulate as to what took place, some of them true, some verging on the heretical. Soon horror and mass hysteria will take hold, and as the rumours spread the Coscarla will become an even more shunned and blighted place.

THE END?

Once matters are settled, Sand will say (with some humour) :

"I'm sure we can find a few more little tasks that might suit your talents. Why, now that I think on it, I have the very thing in mind...simple job off world, a restful journey on the way, why it'll be no trouble at all..."

DEVELOPING THE PLOT FURTHER

Many questions may lay unanswered at the end of this adventure. What were the Logician's wider plans? What other horrors or conspiracies might fester in the wasteland of the Coscarla Division? Were there elements in the Tantalus Combine responsible for turning a blind eye to the situation? Is some faction in the Combine involved with the conspiracy? How deep do the links between the Logicians and the rulers of the narcosyndicates (far above the likes of Luntz) go? And, on a more practical level, if Moran, Luntz or the Churgeon escaped, the hunt for them will continue apace.

One other mystery that remains lies with the missing; Moran's fake adepts kept meticulous records of those they had targeted for abduction along with their eventual fate, and once their encryptions have been broken by the merciless minds of the Mechanicus, it will be noted that they simply do not tally. Some six test subjects, Saul Arbest among them, appearing to be the most successful and stable of the Churgeon's creations, are not accounted for—where are they? The conclusion drawn by Sand will be that they were dispatched to some other locale for study, "Site X" as he will dub it remains to be found, and the supposition occurs that Saul Arbest, who's dead body found on the transit rail started all of this, was not escaping from Coscarla at all, but rather died trying to return home...

In all these cases, with their first hand knowledge of events, the Acolytes are the perfect candidates for the job of finding out more.





APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUICK
START RULES

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APPENDIX II: NPCs AND
ANTAGONISTS

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APPENDIX III: PLAYER
HANDOUT

APPENDIX I: QUICK START RULES

THE DICE AND MAKING TESTS

Like most other roleplaying games, **DARK HERESY** uses dice to determine chance of your character succeeding at an action and to determine lots of other viable events and outcomes.

This game uses ten sided dice (d10) and it is recommended that each player have at least two ten sided dice of different colours to play. Most times when you roll dice in the game you will be making a **Test**, in order to do this you roll two dice to generate a number between 01 and 00 (100), reading the results of one of the dice as “tens” and the other as “units” (which is why its handy if you can tell the dice apart!) with the aim of rolling **equal to or under** a Characteristic score, usually with a modifier to that score, depending on the Difficulty of what you are trying to accomplish.



EXAMPLE

When making a Test you might roll a red dice and a white dice, you say first that the red one will be “tens” and roll a 5 on the red dice and a 3 on the white dice, so the score you have rolled is 53.

The game also uses dice for other variables such as weapon Damage, in this case you simply roll the number of dice indicated add the totals and that's your result.



EXAMPLE

Example: A laspistol might inflict 1d10+2 Damage, so when shooting something you would roll one die and add +2 to the

Sometimes you will be asked to roll a d5, if you don't have one handy (yes such things do exist!) roll a d10 instead and half the result (rounding up).

YOUR ACOLYTE

In Dark Heresy you take on the roll of an Acolyte—this is the catch all title for the many different agents in service of the Inquisition who are fighting a shadowy war to keep the Imperium of Mankind safe from its many enemies. Your

character is defined and described in a number of ways, including Characteristics which provide a rough measure of their mental and physical abilities and are expressed as a numbered score (the higher the better!) and their Skills and Talents which define their various special areas of expertise, training and gifts.

If you take a look at and compare the Acolytes provided you will see that they each have differing Characteristics scores, Skills and Talents which make them individual and different to play.

CHARACTERISTICS

Each Acolyte (not to mention all the game's opponents and supporting cast of characters controlled by the GM) has the same set of comparable characteristics, these are:

TABLE 4-1: CHARACTERISTICS

Name and Abbreviation	Description
Weapon Skill (WS)	A measure of skill at hand to hand fighting.
Ballistic Skill (BS)	A measure of skill with ranged weaponry (guns etc.)
Strength (S)	A measure of how physically powerful a character is.
Toughness (T)	A measure of stamina and resistance to injury.
Agility (Ag)	A measure of physical speed and coordination.
Intelligence (Int)	A measure of general intelligence, reasoning and erudition.
Perception (Per)	A measure of sensory awareness and perceptiveness.
Willpower (WP)	A measure of mental and spiritual fortitude.
Fellowship (Fel)	A measure of social ability.

You will also notice that your Acolyte has a number of **Wounds**, this indicates the maximum amount of Damage that your Acolyte can take before going out of action or dying.



FEAR!

Fear, horror and corruption are all things that an Acolyte must confront in Dark Heresy, and are covered in detail in the main rules. However, for this demo adventure we use a simplified version of the Fear Test. When your Acolyte is confronted by something that causes Fear (this will be noted in the adventure) they must Test their Willpower score (rolling two ten sided dice to get a number equal to or below their Willpower Characteristic), if they fail this Test they are subject to an ongoing penalty of -10 to all Tests while in proximity to the frightening thing, or in the case of a frightening opponent, until that opponent is destroyed or escaped from.

You will also notice that the “tens” digit of many of your Characteristic scores are highlighted, this number represents your **Characteristic Bonus**, this is used in certain game rules such as the combat system.



EXAMPLE

Some hand to hand weapons state that their Damage is 1d10+1+SB. This tells you to roll 1d10 and add +1 to the result, then add your SB (Strength Bonus) to give a final total.

Your Acolyte also has a set of Movement rates used in the combat system to define how fast they are, these rates are listed in metres and equate to Half/Normal/Charge/Run.

FATE

Chosen men and women, Acolytes have the hand of destiny on their shoulders. In order to reflect this, each Acolyte has a number of Fate Points which they can spend each session of play. Fate Points can have many uses but for the purposes of our demo we can limit them to the following:

The Second Chance: You may use a Fate Point to reroll a failed Test. However, you must take the second result even if it worse! Any failed Test may only ever have one reroll.

It was Just a Flesh Wound: You may use a Fate Point to regain 1d5 lost Wounds when you have been injured, unless you are killed outright, or suffer some utterly terrible fate (so no escaping a severed head! Etc.)

SKILLS

Your Acolyte has a set of Skills, each representing a particular field of training, education or expertise. Each Skill operates off a particular Characteristic which is noted next to it (for example, Dodge is an Agility based Skill). In order to Test the Skill your Acolyte is trained in you simply Test the Characteristic associated with that Skill.





EXAMPLE

Jarres wants to swim across the canal. The Swim skill is based upon the Strength Characteristic, Jarres has 32 Strength, so he must roll equal to or less than 32 to pass the Test.

Some Skills everybody can do (or greater or lesser degrees), even if they aren't trained in them. These are called Basic Skills and have the word "Basic" written next to them. When testing a Basic Skill, you simply halve the Characteristic score you are Testing.

TALENTS

Talents are special areas of expertise or innate ability, this wide category ranges from the ability to enter a homicidal frenzy, to manifesting psychic powers or the cybernetic implants of the techpriests. A list of the effects of some pertinent Talents can be found at the end of these Quick Start Rules.

QUICK RULES FOR COMBAT

DARK HERSEY offers detailed and fastpaced rules for savage combat, including a great many options covering different types of damage, parrying, critical effects, body locations and lots of weapon types, as well as, numerous manoeuvres and actions. The rules presented here are a simplified version to those found in the rulebook.

The Combat Turn

At the beginning of a combat, all participants roll 1d10 and add their Agility Bonus (AB) to the result; this is their Initiative score for that combat.

Combat then occurs in the order of Initiative, the character with the highest score goes first, then the next highest score and so on. Each takes it in turns to act (see Actions) until all those involved have done so; this completes a combat turn. The combat continues turn after turn (using the same Initiative order) until one side is victorious or the fight otherwise ends.

Making An Attack

When you make an attack, you must pass a Weapon Skill (WS) or Ballistic Skill (BS) Test (depending on the type of weapon that you're using) in order to hit your target.

The combat rules assume that your enemy in any given fight is aware of what's going on and is attempting to not get shot/hit etc. If you catch a target completely unawares or by surprise, you gain a +30 to hit during the first round of combat only (your surprised opponent can do nothing during this first round).



Inflicting Damage

When you successfully hit your target, roll the weapon's Damage. Reduce this Damage by your target's Toughness Bonus (TB) and any Armour Points (AP) they might have, the result is how many points of Damage you have caused them (they remove this number from their total Wounds).

If you are using a close combat weapon you may add the value of your Strength Bonus (SB) to the amount of damage you inflict.

If you roll a "0" (a "10" in other words) on your Damage dice, you may have inflicted **Righteous Fury!** Immediately roll another attack Test, if this is also a success, you inflict and additional 1d10 damage. Damage points scored against a character are cumulative.

Getting Hurt (and Killed)

If your character is reduced to 0 Wounds then they are hurt badly, suffering a -10 to all Tests. If they are reduced to -5 Wounds or more, then they have been killed and are out of the game.

Note that Non Player Characters (NPCs) and antagonists reduced to 0 Wounds are assumed to be killed or otherwise out of action.

Reaction

In addition to their action in a given turn, a character can react once per turn to a successful attack made on them by attempting a Dodge Skill Test to get out of the way, negating the hit so that no damage is rolled. You cannot dodge an attack if you were completely unaware of the danger.

Actions

The following are all Actions you can take in combat turn:

TABLE 4-2: ACTIONS

Name of Action	Description
Aim	Aim: By spending an Action aiming a gun, or sizing up your opponent in fight, you gain a +10 bonus on your next attack Action against them.
Charge	Charge: You can run directly at an opponent moving at your charge move rate and attack them in close combat, gaining a +10 bonus as long as you have moved at least 4 metres to do so.
Run/Evade	Run/Evade: You can run at your full running speed (but take no other Actions). Until your next turn, ranged attacks against you suffer a -20 penalty.
Reload	Reload: You can reload a weapon (some weapons are cumbersome and you might take several rounds to reload them—this is noted in their description).
Stand up/Get into cover ect.	You can get on or off your feet or dive into cover and move your standard move rate in metres in an action.
Other Actions	Other Actions: You may attempt to make any other Actions your GM allows you in a combat turn, bearing in mind this represents only a few seconds of “real” time, complex actions may take several turns to perform.

Some Additional Rules for Gunplay

A weapon's different rates of fire (RoF) will be noted in their description as S (single shot)/SemiAuto rate/Full Auto rate. When these weapons fire, they expend ammunition equal to the number listed in the rate of fire for that mode.

SemiAuto attacks benefit from a +10 to hit and for each two degrees of success made on the BS Test (see page 26) an additional hit is made against the target (to a maximum number of hits equal to the weapons Semiauto rate).

Full Auto attacks benefit from a +20 to hit, and for each degree of success made on the BS Test (see page 26) an additional hit is made against the target (to a maximum number of hits equal to the weapons Full Auto rate).

TABLE 4-3: GUNPLAY

Term	Description
Short Range	Shooting a weapon against a target that is less than half the weapon's listed range away adds a +10 bonus to hit.
Long Range	Shooting a weapon at targets that is over the range of the weapon and up to twice that distance suffers a -10 penalty to hit.
Point Blank	Shooting a weapon at a target up to three metres away (unless they are in close combat with the shooter) adds a +30 bonus to hit.
Semi-Automatic and Full Auto Weapons	Some weapons are capable of firing several shots in rapid succession or a burst of fire as their attack Action if the shooter wishes (this must be declared before firing the gun).

WEAPON QUALITIES

Some weapons have very particular or unusual qualities than others, such as enhanced armour penetration or accuracy etc. and **DARK HERESY** uses a number of weapon qualities to illustrate this, two are present in the adventure:

Tearing: Weapons with this quality have a tendency to gouge, rend and shred, when rolling for Damage with a weapon with this quality, roll an extra 1d10 and pick the highest result of the two dice rolled.

Primitive: Certain lowtech or lowimpact weapons have difficulty in penetrating advanced armours and defences, and Armour Points are doubled against their Damage (unless the armour also has the Primitive quality).

APPENDIX II: NPCS AND ANTAGONISTS

THE INHABITANTS OF THE COSCARLA DISTRICT

COSCARLA HABWORKER

The following profile exemplifies most of Coscarla's downtrodden and fearful population, they are ordinary men and women, enduring the worst of hard times with little more than faith and a desire to survive to sustain them.

Coscarla HabWorker Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
20	20	30	30	30	20	30	25	30

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Trade (labourer or manufactorum worker etc.) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+1†, Primitive) or bludgeon



(1d10+3† Primitive).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: None

Gear: Drab citizen's garb, 1d5–3 Thrones, Tantalus Indenture cognomen.

LILI ARBEST

Lili Arbest Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
20	20	30	30	30	33	32	36	34

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Literacy (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Trade (manufactorum worker) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+1†, Primitive).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: None

Gear: 28 Thrones, a battered writing kit, several changes of clothes, a worn prayer book and some family pics jammed into a rucksack.

EVARD ZED

Evard Zed Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
20	20	36	30	30	21	30	26	30

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Trade (manufactorum worker) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+1†, Primitive).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: None

Gear: 4 Thrones, drab citizen's garb, Tantalus Indenture cognomen.

HOSTELLER MAXUS DRAYELOCK

Hosteller Maxus Drayelock Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
20	20	18	30	30	28	33	25	26

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium, Underworld) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Speak Language (Low

Gothic) (Int), Trade (Hostelry) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Weapons: Hatchet (1d102† Primitive).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: None

Gear: Badly soiled but once good quality clothing, hostel keys, hand lamp, 7 Thrones.

PREACHER FAYBAN

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T) +10, Charm (Fel), Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Ecclesiarchy) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Literacy (Int), Performer (Orator), (Fel), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Weapons: Unarmed (1d51†, Primitive).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: None

Gear: Unkempt clerical robes, a silver aquila on a chain and a hip flask filled with fortified wine.

WARDEN LOCAN

Warden Locan Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
23	21	30	31	26	22	30	20	26

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Common Lore (Imperium, Underworld), Inquiry (Fel) and Scholastic Lore (Judgement) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

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

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+1†, Primitive) or chastisement baton (1d10+3† Primitive).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: None

Gear: Dirty and dishevelled enforcer flak coat (2 Armour Points) with tarnished rank insignia, unloaded sub automatic, and an obscure injector in his coat pocket.

SCAVS AND RAG PICKERS

Little better liked than the dregs, these types have come to scavenge and pick over the bones of the district for what they can, and are easily distinguished from the locals by their distinctive patchwork overcoats, their many bags and trinkets and the vulture's gleam in their eyes.

Scavs and Rag Pickers Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
20	20	30	30	30	20	30	25	30

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Search (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Trade (exlabourer or exmanufactorum worker etc.) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Weapons: Bludgeon or staff (1d10+3† Primitive) about 50% also carry a black powder pistol

(15m; S/-/-; 1d10+2; Primitive; Pen 0; Clip 1; Rld 3Full).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: Leathers or scavenged gear (Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1).

Gear: Scavenger rags, trinkets, odds and ends, 1d5 Thrones, 6 bullets if pistol is carried.

SIKES THE RECLAIMATOR

Sikes is a shrewd faced, sharpeyed man of indeterminate middle age. He has the greyish pallor and colourless hair of the true downhiver, and his wiry build is hidden beneath a layer after layer of scavenged clothing. He is also covered in a seemingly disordered jumble of harness pockets, tool belts and bags. He perpetually carries a pump shotgun dangling on a sling underneath one arm and is a good deal more spry and dangerous than he looks.

Sikes the Reclaimator Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
28	37	33	40	34	40	40	37	33

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 11

Skills: Awareness (Per), Barter (Fel) +10, Carouse (T), Charm (Fel), Climb (S), Common Lore (Underworld, Sibellan Underhive, Imperium, Tech) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Evaluate (Int), Intimidate (S), Navigation (Underhive) (Int), Search (Per), Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Gang Cant, Dark Hiver) (Int), TechUse (Int), Trade (Rag Picker, Prospector, Technomat), Survival (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (SP), Light Sleeper, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (SP), Resistance (Poison).

Weapons: Pump Shotgun (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+4; Pen 0; 8 Clip; Rld 2Full), hammer (1d10+2†; Primitive).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: Missmatched scavenger's garb (Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)

Gear: Various tools, trinkets, oddments, spares, charms and tokens, 30 Thrones, a scavenged and repaired matriculator, an old dataslate with a cracked case, a water bottle and a spyglass. Plus two reloads for his shotgun.

DOWNHIVE DREG

Dregs are the lowest of the low in the hive, a faceless, numberless morass of addicts, wasters, madmen, petty mutants and the lost existing scavenging on the fringes of

society. Filthy, illconditioned and often diseased, dregs are broadly shunned and feared, not simply because of what such desperate and degenerate people might do, but because they have nothing to lose.

Downhive Dreg Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
18	18	25	25	26	16	25	20	10

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 8

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Common Lore (Underworld) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Deceive (Fel), Intimidate (S), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive). **Weapons:** Improvised clubs, axes, pipe shivs and rusted blades (treat as 1d10†, Primitive)

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: None.

Gear: Filthy rags, soiled trinkets and keepsakes.

VAPOUR RAT

Solitary scavengers and carrion eaters, these mutated vermin can prove dangerous to the unwary. The taste of blood can drive them into a feeding frenzy and they readily kill and eat their own kind. Vile to look at, they appear to be almost skinless, their wet flesh glistening as they blend with unnatural ease into their surroundings.

Vapour Rat Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
22	—	13	10	30	11	35	13	—

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Climb (S) +20, Concealment (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +10, Swim (S).

Talents: None.

Traits: Bestial (subject to Fear from fire, loud noises etc.), Quadruped, Size Puny (–20 to hit), Feeding Frenzy (if they inflict Damage with their bite, they gain +10 to attack in the next combat round).

Weapons: Bite (1d5+1†; Primitive).

†includes Strength Bonus.

LOGICIAN AGENT

Lean and hard looking men, Logician agents are trained professionals, calm, ruthless and efficient. There are fourteen such agents currently in the South Coscarla district, two posing as adepts at the Alms House and the remainder acting as the area's Magistratum enforcer detachment.

Logician Agent Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	35	35	35	35	30	35	35	30

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Ciphers (Logician) (Int), Common Lore (Imperium, Military, Tech) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Drive (Ground Vehicle), Intimidate (S), Interrogation (WP), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

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

Weapons: Autocarbine (60m; S/3/10; 1d10+2; Pen 0; Clip 30; Rld Full), stub automatic (30m; S/3/–; 1d10+3; Pen 0; Clip 9; Rld Full), chastisement baton (1d10+3†; Primitive).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: Guard Flak Armour (All 4).

Gear: Enforcer uniform, two spare clips for each weapon, microbead vox, respirator mask, photovisor, hand lantern, Alms House passkey.

Note—Moran's Agents: Moran's Adepts are identical to this in profile, however they lack the enforcers weapons and armour, instead they wear greengrey adept's robes with the insignia of the Tantalus Combine and they carry a stub auto (30m, S/3/–; 1d10+3; Pen 0; Clip 9; Reload Full), concealed in a shoulder rig at all times.

SYBAS MORAN

Sybas Moran Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	42	35	35	35	35	35	40	30

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 13

Skills: Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, Military, Tech, Underworld) (Int), Deceive (Fel)+10, Demolition (Int), Dodge (Ag) +10, Drive (Ground Vehicle), Inquiry (Fel), Intimidate (S), Interrogation (WP), Scrutiny (Per), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

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

Weapons: Autopistol with silencer (15m, S/–/6; 1d10+1; Clip 18; Pen 0; Rld Full), monoedged combat knife (3m; 1d5+3†, Ignores 2 AP of armour protection).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: Moran wears a mesh bodyglove under his robes, providing him an AP of Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3.

Gear: Alms House director's heavy dark emerald robes and gorget of office, microbead vox, a passkey and one of the accessor keys to the surgical chambers. Two spare autopistol clips.

You are so far from being a madman.



NARCO-GANGER

Narco-Gangs are the blight of the Sibellan underworld, made up of cutthroats and petty thieves. They are criminal scum with no loyalty but to the next payoff or drug hit. Narcogangers are hated by the lower hivers.

Narco-Ganger Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
32	28	35	30	33	20	30	25	20

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), ChemUse (Int), Common Lore (Imperium, Underworld) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Gang Cant) (Int).

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

Weapons: Blade (1d5+3†; Primitive), Stub Revolver (20m, S/-/-; 1d10+3; Pen 0; Clip 6; Rld 2Full).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: Gang shreds (Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1).

Gear: Ragged clothing marked with gang colours, glyphs and kill scores, 1d5 Thrones, an obscura injector, two spare reloads for stub revolver.

GANG BOSS "CHORD" LUNTZ

Gang Boss "Chord" Luntz Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
36	37	35	38	33	35	35	38	34

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), ChemUse (Int) +10, Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, Underworld) (Int) +10, Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Drive (Ground Vehicle), Evaluate (Int), Intimidate (S) +10, Scrutiny (Per), Security (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Gang Cant) (Int).

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

Weapons: Blade (1d5+3†; Primitive), stub revolver (20m, S/-/-; 1d10+3; Clip 6; Pen 0; Reload 2Full), custom hand cannon (20m, S/2/-; 1d10+5; Clip 4; Pen 0; Rld 2Full)

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: Flak Jacket (Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3).

Gear: High grade ganger's garb marked with numerous kill glyphs, fake cognomen, silver and iron finger rings, personal vox, small chemtesting auger, obscura injector, 30 Thrones, two reloads for each weapon.

THE HIDDEN HORRORS

THE CHURGEON

Very heavily augmented with cybernetic systems and implants, her only visible living flesh is the rictuslike mask of skin attached to the metallic skull that houses her living brain. Long since having left sanity behind, she doesn't recognise her own sadistic and macabre compulsions, believing them to be purely scientific in motivation. While she makes for a vicious and tough combatant, she has no interest in physical struggle and will seek to flee to continue her work if seriously threatened.

The Churgeon Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	40	45	38	48	35	55	20

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 17

Skills: Awareness (Per), ChemUse (Int) +10, Ciphers (Logicians) (Int) +10, Common Lore (Machine Cult, Tech, Imperium) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) (Int), Logic (Int) +10, Medicae (Int) +20, Pilot (Grav Vehicle) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Chymistry, BioSculpt) (Int) +10, Speak Language (Low Gothic, Tech) (Int), Secret Tongue (TechnoCant) (Int) +10, TechUse (Int) +10.

Talents: Numerous, including Pistol Training (Las), Melee Training (Primitive), Fearless.

Traits: Various implanted systems, including full life support, augmetics and maglev suspensors (can fly at speed 4), Dark Sight and armour plating.

Weapons: Scalpeltipped augmetic hands (1d10+5†), implanted las mechadendrite (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip unlimited).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: None (All 4).

Gear: Various scientific, surgical and technical equipment, implanted auspex, vox and cogitator systems.

THE SCALPEL FAMILIAR

Detached from its mistress's back, the scalpel familiar is a spiderlike construct of glittering metal with scores of whipthin metal limbs, most ending in some sort of drill, needle or blade, and is controlled by the Churgeon via an underslung human skull equipped with dripping hypodermic fangs and multifaceted lenses for eyes. It moves with shocking speed and will bloodily dismantle anything it can get its blades into in a shower of gore. Despite possessing no visible living components, it will scream like a child and bleed heavily when destroyed.

Scalpel Familiar Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	—	30	30	36	20	38	40	—

Movement: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 8

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Dodge (Ag), Trade (Vivisection) (Int) +20.

Talents: Sprint, Swift Attack (it may strike twice as an attack Action), Fearless.

Traits: Natural Weapons, Machine (3), Armour Plating, Multilegged (bonus move already included) Small Size (–10 to hit), Dark Sight.

Weapons: Various surgical blades, needles, drills and saws (1d10+4†; Tearing).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Armour: None (All 5).

Gear: None.

THE HOMONCULITES

The Churgeon's two Homonculite assistants are golem—biological constructs built using forbidden science from vatgrown flesh and stolen human organs. They are horrifically distorted creatures to look at, with cancerous weeping flesh, cataractwhite eyes and emaciated bodies studded with gurgling pipes and chemimplants. They have no real free will or capacity for original thought, but their viciousness and cruelty is no mere accident of their twisted creation.

Homonculite Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
28	20	30	40	30	20	30	20	10

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Skills: Awareness (Per), ChemUse (Int) +10, Speak Language (Low Gothic, Tech) (Int), Trade (Butchery).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Chain), Fearless.

Traits: Fear (viewing these foul creatures causes all to make a Fear Test).

Weapons: Chain Cutter (1d10+2†; Tearing).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: Bloody aprons, stained medicae robes, sewn-on cloth breather masks and chem rigs, passkey and accessor key.

THE BODY SNATCHERS

The Body Snatchers are the result of the Churgeon's failed experiments in synthetic grafted control organs and made from hive workers stolen in the night. They are partly clad in tattered clothing and their waxy flesh writhes and pulses unnaturally beneath their almost translucent skins. Their

joints and fingers have been reenforced with metal bracings to stop their overpowered flesh from tearing itself apart and their heads have been encased in taunt, stitchedshut masks through which implanted augmetic eyes glow a dull red. As the adventure begins, the Churgeon has ten Body Snatchers, but can conceivably make more from fresh victims if needed and time allows.

Body Snatcher Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	15	50	40	20	17	25	30	08

Movement: 2/2/6/–

Wounds: 14

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

Talents: Fearless. **Traits:** Natural Weapon (Fist), Natural Armour, Dark Sight, Fear (being attacked by these deathly silent monsters in the dark causes a Fear Test).

Weapons: Augmetic Fist (1d10+5†).

Armour: None (All 3).

†includes Strength Bonus.

Gear: Internal MicroBead (to receive/relay instructions only).

Note: The spine, brainstem and nervous systems of these unfortunates are laced with the synthetic control tissue.



APPENDIX III: PLAYER HANDOUT

COSCARLA DIVISION BRIEFING

Reference/Subject: Coscarla Division, (Geo/Dem) Designation: Workers Habitation Zone
 Locale: Mastraven Zone, Lower MidTiers, Landward Quadrant, Hive Sibellus
 Hive Co/Ord: 2345#ΣΩ/789/9870001 Preparation: Autosavant Dal Maxentia
 Attribution: Interrogator Omardha Sand
 Ordininator: Conclave Calixis/Covenant Sibellus/Chamber Obscuro
 TFTD: "History is but a catalogue of counted sins"

Geohistorical and Demographic Overview:

The Coscarla Division is a subdistrict of Hive Sibellus on the Sector Capitol world of Scintilla. Built in the remains of what was once the splendour of the House Coscarla Estates, the district is a seventy kilometre square conglomeration of warrenlike tenementhabs and their attendant infrastructure that has grown up between the vast ruined arches and fallen statuary of its noble past.

The Coscarla was until recent years a relatively prosperous midhive district, predominantly populated by indentured labour classes, but has since suffered deprivation, disaster and a loss in status thanks to a series of misfortunes and incidents. Primary among these have been the damage caused by unrestrained wildfires during the recent Rienholt Blackouts (the Coscarla being one of seventeen effected hive zones), although the long term withering of the fortunes of the Tantalus Combine, (see Addendum) had begun to have significant adverse effects long before that calamity.

The Coscarla Division currently awaits Administratum revaluation of its status (projected due process time until preliminary ruling: 37 years standard), but unsubdata indicates over 60% of the Coscarla is now effectively a waste/scav zone and the viable population is now confined to smaller subzones clustered around transit and utility access points.

The division's population is also in catastrophic decline, its infrastructure remains effectively crippled and lawlessness, poor social cohesion and poverty all exponentially increasing year on year.

Addendum: [The State of the Tantalus Combine]

The Combine, a longstanding cartel of several Houses Minoris of the Sibellian nobility has seen a drastic decline in its fortunes over the last decade. Its fall from power has been brought on by hostile competition from the SkaelenHar Hegemony and severe damage to its assets and prestige endured during the period of intrigues and vendettas known popularly as the "Vthorran Promenades" [cert.ref: Activities of the Lucid Court].

The resulting effects on several districts of the Sibellus and Tarsus Hives, formerly under the Combine's sway, have been profound. In the Coscarla Division where Tantalus was the majority power, the Combine has sold on the indenture contracts of thousands of skilled workers and the labour force that remains now works only to meet their master's debts. As a result, whole swathes of families have been uprooted or have deserted from the district, thus the effective economic and monetary input to the region is now negligible.

The Tantalus Combine is suffering a long, drawnout death and is kept going only by its own fading inertia and the legal wrangling over the disposition of its carcass. It has ceased to exist effectively as a cohesive organisation or political entity.



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