

MUTANT

CHRONICLES



3RD EDITION

VENUSIAN APOCALYPSE

CAMPAIGN BOOK

MODIPHIUS™
ENTERTAINMENT

FATE™







2D20 LEAD GAME DESIGN
JAY LITTLE

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

WRITTEN BY
CLIVE OLDFIELD, MARC LANGWORTHY, NATHAN DOWDELL

ORIGINAL CREATIVE TEAM
RICHARD DAKAN, MICHAEL MORSARE, HENRIK STRANDBERG, NILS GULIKSSON, FREDRIK MALMBERG

EDITED BY
BRIAN CASEY

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY
MATTHEW COMBEN

LAYOUT BY
THOMAS SHOOK

COVER ARTWORK BY
RED SCAR, TOMA FEIZO GAS

ARTWORK BY
RED SCAR, TOMA FEIZO GAS

CARTOGRAPHY BY
RED SCAR

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

PRODUCED BY
CHRIS BIRCH, MISCHA THOMAS

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

ART DIRECTED BY
TOMA FEIZO GAS, MISCHA THOMAS

COMMUNITY MANAGERS
ZARINA KADYLBK, JOHN DODD

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

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

Modiphius Entertainment Product Number: MUH050017. ISBN: 978-1-910132-56-2

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THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This is the first part of the four-part Venusian Apocalypse campaign. It can be played alone, but works better as part of the whole. This part involves the player characters journeying to a mysterious pyramid in the Venusian jungle. Getting there alive, and exploring the pyramid, is the adventure, but it is what the players unwittingly release and help to bring back from the jungle that is crucial to the subsequent parts of the campaign.

Hundreds of years ago, when the more remote parts of Venus were first being explored, a Bauhaus noble discovered a mysterious black pyramid in the middle of the jungle in the inhospitable Ring of Fire area. What he discovered there made him decide to hide the existence of the pyramid and protect it from humanity forever.

Now, unfortunately, dark forces are at work on Venus. Moves are afoot to 'accidentally' rediscover the pyramid and release its secret. The players will be part of the expedition sent into the jungle to

survey the area. Forces are also at work to stop the expedition and the players' journey will be fraught with danger.

If they make it to the pyramid, the players must face their own worst fears if they are to avoid becoming utterly lost to the Dark Soul.

HISTORY

ANCIENT HISTORY

Aeons ago, mysterious beings battled the forces of the Dark Soul across the universe. This time is shrouded in myth and the players will only ever get a distant glimpse of the truths behind these legends. Even though their schemes and true purpose are lost to time and beyond humanity's comprehension, the power of these ancients is still felt today. Their influence still shapes events, even if not in the way they precisely intended.



Martin Renauld found something in the Venusian jungles.

The events of this campaign are centred on an ancient pyramid that was originally erected to the Dark Soul. This was then conquered by the ancient warriors, and the Darkness was sealed within. This is the Second Seal of Repulsion, but it is barely known, even among the deepest scholars of the Brotherhood. The chances are that during the course of the game, the pyramid will be entered once more, and the seal will be broken. This will release the Dark Temptor upon the universe.

DISTANT HISTORY

In the 24th century, during the early expansions of the colonies on Venus, the head of House Renauld, Martin Renauld, purchased a swathe of the southern jungle with a view to turning it into a plantation. He had already successfully farmed a lot of the land around Heimburg, and believed that the hot and wet climate in the south would be perfect to expand his empire.

He led an expedition to survey this land. However, the survey did not go as expected. Renauld discovered an alien black pyramid there, and became distracted by the mysterious structure. Upon blasting and cutting a way to the centre of the pyramid, Renauld sensed an evil in the place. He brought in scientists to discover what they could, and was left in no doubt that this was a place of transcendent evil. He ordered the pyramid closed, never to be opened again. He even ordered the murder of those who had been into the central vault of the pyramid so desperate was he that its secrets should remain hidden to humanity.

Then he set up a research station nearby for the sole purpose of creating a genetically modified intelligent predator species, perfectly adapted to the jungle conditions. These predators would keep any humans from rediscovering the pyramid. Ten years later, once that project had come to fruition, he had every member of the research team killed. The soldiers that were ordered to do the deed all died too, when their flight mysteriously went down on the way back to Heimburg.

Renauld also put much of his fortune into buying up huge tracts of land all around the original area. On his death, he left clear instructions that this was to remain jungle and should never be sold. He also sowed the seeds of the idea that the land was cursed and should never even be explored.

And Renauld was correct. There is indeed a malevolent force trapped within the black pyramid. It is the Dark Temptor, an agent of the Dark Soul who is fated to return to the universe to spread its nefarious influence now that the First Seal of Repulsion has been broken.

RECENT HISTORY

Now that the first seal is broken, moves are afoot to break the second. The Cartel is being manipulated into sending an expeditionary force to the black pyramid in order to fulfil ancient prophecies that the seal will be broken. The nature of these forces is beyond the scope of

Obscure Texts from the Cathedral of Heimburg

...And there were three monarchs who did rule in the land and they were strong and they roused their people for war. And the Darkness was put down. And for a long time did these three rule and the land was made good.

But then through the passing of time like the wind upon the mountains or the sea upon the cliffs was their rule diminished. And the Darkness did come into the land once more. And again there were wars, and brother turned against brother and nation against nation and they were made weak.

And then were the monarchs tested and through age and weariness they did fall before the Darkness and they were cast down and enslaved. And the Darkness ruled.

But the Darkness retreated and became trapped. And the people made a seal and they imprisoned the Darkness. For that was the Second Seal of Repulsion...

...and thereby were the Guardians created, unnatural creatures that lurked in the forest. And there did come to that place travellers from beyond the world.

And they were assailed on all sides by the Guardians. And these creatures did rend and tear the flesh of the travellers. But the travellers did not relent and so the Guardians were put to the sword.

And the way was open to the travellers. They came across the Second Seal of Repulsion and did break the Seal and the Darkness did return to the land and with it was Pestilence and was War and was Famine and was Death...

this book. This will be explored in the finale to this campaign, but for now the players will not get an opportunity to discover, or even many clues, that they are being manipulated.

The land upon which the black pyramid stands is being put up for sale by the ailing Bauhaus House of Renauld. This is controversial because there is a long-standing order within the family that this land should never be sold, or even explored. This has split the family. The head of the house, Theresa Renauld sees this course, however, as the only way to reverse the fortunes of the failing house. Not only will it bring in much needed capital, but it will lift the supposed curse that has been associated with the land and the house ever since the black pyramid was discovered.

Capitol is interested in buying the land to increase its relatively small influence on Venus and to begin an ambitious hydroponic biotech project that would take advantage of the local climate. At about this time rumours began to surface of a Dark Soul presence in the area, based on the strange activities of Martin Renauld. This was controversial enough in Bauhaus and also among Capitol's other rivals for the Cartel to be brought in to oversee the purchase.

The Cartel has decided to send a survey team, under the auspices of the Venusian Archaeological Survey, to the area to make a detailed report before it would be prepared to make a ruling on the land sale. Capitol has reluctantly agreed to this arbitration.

THE VENUSIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The Archaeological Survey is the division of the Cartel that is in charge of discovering ancient sites and artefacts that might help in the struggle against the Dark Soul. The office is run by the Cartel in order to ensure as much cooperation as possible among the various interested factions. However, it is closely associated with the Brotherhood, and the majority of its most important discoveries find their way to that organisation.

The Venusian Archaeological Survey is simply the Venus branch of that operation. The expedition will be under the oversight of Philippe Schwarz, an eminent archaeologist and head of the Venusian Archaeological Survey. Schwarz is a dedicated scientist and remarkably unconcerned with House or corporate politicking. He is old enough and wise enough to stay in Heimbürg while the expedition travels to the jungle.

The players, over the course of the campaign, may wonder exactly who decided to send the expedition, and which side, ultimately, is pulling the strings. The fact is the Archaeological Survey is an entirely legitimate organisation, which has the search for knowledge in mind and the wellbeing of humanity at its heart. It is controlled by a confusing variety of powers from all the corporations working as the Cartel, and it has close links with the Brotherhood.

The Dark Soul, however, moves in mysterious ways and it is quite possible that its dark influence has led, in some roundabout way, to the expedition. This is not a line of enquiry that the players will find fruitful at this stage and even if they have time to look into it, the links are so tenuous and the manipulation so subtle that they will not be able to uncover anything of note. Suffice to say, the decision to survey the pyramid can be reached entirely reasonably and in good faith and it is as proper and legitimate a decision as could be made, despite its potentially disastrous consequences.

Technically, the Venusian Archaeological Survey is heavily influenced by Bauhaus and run semi-independently from Heimbürg under the

auspices of the Archaeological Survey, which is an office of the Interior Department of the Cartel in Luna City. The Brotherhood and Capitol seem to be the most dominant influences in this wider organisation.

Bauhaus liaises with the Survey through its department of Bauhaus Ancestral Heritage. The Brotherhood's membership of the Survey comes through its office of History and Antiquities. For Capitol, it is run through its highly respected historical research and educational publishing giant, the Capitol Geographic Society.

SURVEY TEAM

The players will be chosen as part of a survey team that has been instructed to investigate the Renauld estates on southern Venus. The expedition on the ground will be made up of many respected experts from various fields, under the command of Randall Harding, a Capitol military agent.

This is potentially an important mission for the Cartel, and a controversial one within it. As such, it was deemed expedient to come up with a team representing all the factions of the Cartel. There was lots of jostling for position among the petty bureaucrats and diplomats deciding upon the final makeup of the team.

Therefore, the player characters were not chosen by accident or by some dishonest patron trying to hoodwink them. This is a legitimate mission, and the players are there for good reason. If the players are making characters especially for this campaign, they should try to make ones who are likely to be called upon for such a mission. They do not need to be world famous experts, but they should be someone with a reputation for reliability and competence in a relevant field.

If the players come to this adventure through the course of an existing campaign, then they need to have made their reputation doing some of the sorts of things that will be expected to be useful during this expedition. Being there merely for security is a last resort, but probably not the best solution. As mere grunts, the players will not be so involved in the decision making and the important knowledge gathering that is vital to the plot.

One of the reasons for this is that player characters are often chosen for missions they are not entirely suitable for by unscrupulous patrons especially so they can be double-crossed, made scapegoats, or framed. Even though this is common gaming practice and often accepted by players, it is very important to the shape of this campaign that the players do not feel they are being set up for a fall in this manner.

The players can come from virtually any background and have their own loyalties, but they must have been chosen by someone to join the team. Therefore, they must be recognised by someone

of influence. If they are loyal corporate employees, then they are probably on the team, at least to an extent, to represent their corporation. If they are freelancers, then they would need to be outstanding in their field or perhaps chosen especially for their neutrality as a compromise between two better, but more controversial candidates.

The Cartel has lined up the other personnel for the survey team. They are detailed in this chapter. These team members represent a variety of backgrounds, loyalties, and expertise. The GM should try to bring as many of them as possible on the mission, but he should be wary of duplicating the players' roles too closely. Essentially, they should all be on the mission, except when a player character can replace one of them. On the other hand, it could be fun to set up a dynamic where one of the players' duties is exactly mirrored by one of the NPCs, so they can spend their time squabbling over who gets to do what.

The players can be recruited by anyone in the right sort of position of authority in their corporation in order to represent that corporation, or they can be recruited directly by Harding. They should be offered the going rate for the job, but this will be upped slightly if they hold out for more. Unless the players are absolutely prominent in their field, however, the expedition should be quite capable of recruiting someone else who might be just as good.

The player characters need not know each other. If they have formed a party before now, in another adventure, then perhaps they are brought along as a unit specifically because they have performed this sort of mission as a team before. If they are starting with fresh characters, then they can join the mission as individuals just like all the NPCs. Inevitably, one would imagine, they get drawn together through some sort of ineffable attraction that player characters always seem to feel for each other.

Despite the expertise and authority of the other crew members, the players should not be made to feel like passengers on this venture. They should not feel like they are simply being told what to do. Therefore, they need to have a certain amount of authority and expertise themselves, and when it comes to the crunch the other members of the expedition, despite everything, must look to the players for guidance and action.

The other members of the survey team are barely mentioned during the adventure. This is because the GM is free to go with whichever members he requires, and has free rein to kill them off as the game progresses. However, he should make sure that the ones that are around play an active role in proceedings and appear as genuine and plausible people to the players. The NPCs should work together with the player characters, develop mutual respect, grow to like



Commander Randall Harding checks the perimeter while Paul Renauld and Sister Bernadette look on.

each other, form bonds with them, and so on. This is what would happen normally over the course of such events, of course, but it is especially important in this part of the adventure because the players' relationship with some of the survey team members will become vital later on. The GM should accrue some good will for his NPCs, if only to cynically exploit this further down the line.

COMMANDER RANDALL HARDING

"We go in, survey the area and catalogue any unusual items taking care not to disturb the native context, and get out. Nobody gets hurt."

As Capitol's representative on the expedition, Commander Randall Harding is head of the mission. He has a shady background in various clandestine affairs. He appears to be a Commander in the Capitol army, specialising in jungle warfare, but he has more experience in covert ops and intelligence work.

Harding is gruff and domineering; he seems to deliberately play up to the stereotypical Capitol army drill sergeant, despite being of a much higher rank. Harding will be straight forward about the mission and up front about the risks. He has already looked into the players' backgrounds and history as much as he can before meeting them, and will be clear about this.

If he has a few questions about the players' activities, he will ask them immediately. It could be good for Harding to put the players on the spot about any shady activities they have done in the past. This will let them know that Harding knows, but also hint that Harding may have a similar sort of *résumé*.

Even though Harding has command of the mission, the collaborative nature of the expedition has been made clear to him. Harding is aware of the delicate balance of interests and personalities on the team, and is under an obligation to accommodate this as much as he can. Though this goes against the grain of a career soldier like him, he will do his best to rule by consensus. This is just another way of saying that if the players wish to move the expedition in a certain direction, the GM should probably let them. However, if the GM needs to move the mission in a certain direction, Harding is capable of doing that.

COMMANDER RANDALL HARDING ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
9	10	9	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	9	9	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: **AJHMPS-12 Panther Armour:** (Head 1, Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **M516D (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Knockdown, Spread 2
- ◆ **.55G M15 'Ironfist' (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑5, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters
- ◆ **GL-240 Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Range M, 2+↑6, Munition, Blast (Close)
- ◆ **'Harbinger' Survival Sword (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H, Parry 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Command, Control, and Coordinate:** Randall has been chosen to lead the mission not only on the merit of his command ability, but also his skills at integrating individuals into a team. He has Command Expertise 4 and Command Focus 3. He reduces the difficulty of all Command tests by one and may immediately roll an additional d20 on any Command or Persuade test that generates at least one success. Additionally, any time he is involved in a teamwork test, even if he is not the leader for that test, all characters involved may choose to re-roll any die that results in a failure on the initial roll, though they must accept the new result.
- ◆ **Covert Ops and Special Forces Training:** Randall is one of the best within his field. He may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation, Stealth, or Thievery test, but must accept the new result.
- ◆ **Shadowy Contacts:** Randall has built up a lot of contacts throughout his clandestine career. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Lifestyle test to appropriate sensitive information or military assets, but must accept the new result. Additionally, reduce the difficulty of the test by one any time he needs to request assistance that pertains to a military operation, which may eliminate the need for a test.

PAUL RENAULD

"Not quite the best spot on Venus for a bit of shootin', don't you know."

Paul Renauld is representing the Renauld family on the expedition. He is the son of Theresa Renauld. In truth, there is not much reason for him to be here. The Renaulds have little to do with the events now, even though they still technically own the southern estates. His presence is merely a thank you to House Renauld for its cooperation.

Paul Renauld is a dashing and handsome young man. He reeks of old money and old world charm; he has even brought a butler along with him. He has the easy manner of someone used to getting his own way. Paul has become interested in all the talk and controversy surrounding the expedition and insisted that he might be part of it; he is after a bit of adventure and excitement, nothing more.

However, Paul is genuinely pleasant and amenable. He should get on well enough with everyone on the expedition. When things get difficult, he will cope surprisingly well despite being out of his depth. He is the only one on the expedition not remotely qualified to be here. Despite doing a bit of game hunting on the Renaulds' more civilised estates up north, Paul has never been involved in anything like this before. He has no real knowledge of his family history from the time of Martin Renauld and no opinion on the land transfer, other than that he is happy for his mother to get her way.

PAUL RENAULD ★

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

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

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **PSG-99 (ranged):** Range L, 2+ \uparrow 6, Semi-Automatic, Unwieldy, Unforgiving 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Dashing, Affluent, and Adventurous:** Paul has an easy manner and intrepid spirit, which has largely sprouted from the financial freedom that he has experienced throughout his life. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Lifestyle or Willpower test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he may substitute his Lifestyle skill for Command when attempting to spread a message across a region or a large group of people. Finally, each successful Persuade test he makes yields one additional point of Momentum.
- ▶ **Overwhelmed but Tenacious:** Paul is out of his depth on this expedition, but this has tapped into his inner courage. Whenever he is in a tense situation, such as combat or negotiation, increase the Repercussion for all tests by one. Conversely, any time this occurs, he may decrease the difficulty of any Willpower

test triggered by exposure to a traumatic event by one, which may negate the need for a test.

SISTER BERNADETTE

“Do not disturb what you do not understand.”

Sister Bernadette is an enigmatic character. She is always, it seems, swathed in her heavy Brotherhood robes, and speaks quietly, but authoritatively from the dark depths of her cowl. She is a sister of few words, but those words seem wise and should be heeded.

It is only possible to catch the odd glimpse of her face from beneath the shadows. Such glimpses might be considered mysteriously enticing. Despite her robes, there is no doubting the athleticism of her tall frame, and she seems to glide when she walks.

Bernadette is on the expedition as the Brotherhood's representative. She has been studying old records from the time of Martin Renauld's expedition, and though they are sparse, she is the nearest thing to what could be described as an expert on those events.

Though she has no real authority, because of her demeanour, her expertise, and that she is from the Brotherhood, her opinion does carry a lot of weight with many in the expedition. During disputes Bernadette can be used to settle matters, at least temporarily. She is calm and wise, so her solutions will likely be good ones.

SISTER BERNADETTE, ORDER OF LOCATORS ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	8	7	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	10	11	9

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

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Armoured Vestments: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Brotherhood Martial Arts (melee):** 1+[DS2], 1H, Knockdown, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Devoted in Body, Devoted in Spirit:** Bernadette believes that spiritual and physical enlightenment are synonymous.

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

She eschews ranged weaponry, but has Unarmed Combat Expertise 3 and Unarmed Combat Focus 2, and may re-roll up to three damage dice when making an unarmed attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, following a successful Unarmed Combat test, the Momentum cost to disarm an opponent is reduced by one, whilst each point of Momentum spent on a Called Shot may shift the hit location roll by up to two points. Further, Bernadette may attempt to parry using her Unarmed Combat skill, even when she does not have a close combat weapon drawn. Finally, her attacks gain the Knockdown and Stun weapon qualities whenever she successfully makes an Unarmed Combat attack.

- ◆ **Historian and Artefact Hunter:** Bernadette works within a field largely reserved for Inquisitors and Mystics. She prepares well, remains focussed, and is more often than not successful; three reasons that she is often chosen over any rash rising star attempting to make a name for himself. She may immediately roll an additional d20 on any Education test that generates at least one success. Additionally, she may reduce the difficulty by one step for any Education test that deals with her current mission. Finally, Bernadette has studied intensely and prepared carefully for the hardships of the southern jungles; she may substitute her Education skill for Resistance or Survival whenever she is called upon to take a test that relates to coping with the hostile environment of the jungle.

DOCTOR MAKI TORU

“Despite your perfidious Bauhaus ways, I am prepared to stem the flow of blood.”

Toru has been chosen as the expedition medic. She is also a fine warrior and respected Samurai. She has a stern demeanour and keeps to herself, only breaking her silence, occasionally, to point out where something might be improved by Mishiman influence, or to point out the failures of some rival corporation.

Toru is from the Mishiman province of Quan on Venus. She seems to be an odd choice for a delicate Cartel mission because of her forthright devotion to Mishima and her intolerance of other corporations. She is especially disparaging of Bauhaus, and can name a dozen incidents where Bauhaus has cheated Mishima out of Venusian territory or influence. And she does, often.

In fact, she has been chosen especially for her expertise in survival medicine earned in the jungles of Quan. Toru is one of Mishima’s leading experts on diseases, venoms, and poisons typically found in the southern hemisphere of Venus. There is not much one could catch down there that she would not have a good idea of how to cure.



Major Hayward Harris and Dr. Maki Toru listen to yet another of du Strange’s tall tales.

DOCTOR MAKI TORU ★

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

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Corporate-sponsored Reinforced Lab Coat: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Hana-Bi 30 (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
- ◆ **Katana (melee):** 1+↑5, Unbalanced, Parry 1
- ◆ **Wakizashi (melee):** 1+↑4, 1H, Parry 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Expert in Pathology and Toxicology:** Not only a competent Doctor, Maki is also an expert in treating the deadly concoctions that are prevalent within the southern jungles of Venus. She has Medicine Expertise 4 and Medicine Focus 3. She may also re-roll any dice that did not generate a success when making a Medicine test, or one d20 when attempting a Treatment test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, she can attempt an Average D1 Medicine test to identify the specific poison, drug, or disease affecting a patient, and may then spend Momentum to have the antidote or medication at hand, although the exact amount required is at the GM's discretion based upon the potency and rarity of the toxin. Finally, Maki does not suffer penalties for Medicine tests attempted without a medkit or stocked medical facility.
- ◆ **Know Your Enemy:** Maki has made it a point of honour to study the flora and fauna of the Venusian jungles that are deadly to human life, and knows how to mitigate the risks involved. She may substitute her Treatment skill for Survival when attempting to avoid hazards in the jungle.
- ◆ **Loyal and Devoted:** Maki is a dutiful and honour-bound Samurai of the Mishima corporation, though this often gets in the way of her relations with non-Mishimen. She has Close Combat Expertise 2 and Focus to 2 when wielding her Katana or Wakizashi. Further, increase the Repercussion by one for any Command or Persuade test made against anyone who does not have Mishima as their birth faction.

MAGNUS DU STRANGE

"Never mind, mes amis, I am sure we can come to some sort of compromise. Meanwhile, a little sip from the bottle, n'est-ce pas?"

Magnus du Strange is the expedition's quartermaster. He is in charge of all the equipment on the mission except for those special items the members wish to bring for themselves. If the players had any requests for equipment this would have gone through du Strange and, within reason, he would have obtained it for them.

Du Strange is a large, likeable fellow. He is fond of food and drink, and this shows in his complexion and girth. Du Strange seems to have a *laissez faire* attitude to supplying the mission and an implacable *nonchalance* when he is challenged about this. He only got the job because he is a friend of Theresa Renaud and this is not his *forte*. He knows a lot about food and drink, but he knows little about the logistics of its supply. He knows even less about equipment like tents, climbing gear, and survival wear. It is hard to think of a worse quartermaster.

Although alcohol is banned from the expedition, du Strange has a number of bottles of finest Piquarde brandy secreted about the expedition stores. If any of the players befriend du Strange they will surely benefit from this stash.

If du Strange has access to his stash of alcohol as the adventure goes on and the situation becomes more and more difficult, he will become increasingly inebriated and useless. If he has lost his alcohol, then he will become withdrawn, rude, and similarly useless. It might be fun to have the players break open a crate of much needed supplies at a very vital time only to discover that the crate is full of alcohol, instead.

MAGNUS DU STRANGE ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	8	6	7
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	9	6	10

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

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **S&W.45 Revolver (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑4, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Charmingly Ineffective Coordinator:** Magnus moves in the right circles, and certainly knows how to curry favour, but that is pretty much his limit. Each successful Persuade test yields two additional points of Momentum for him. Additionally, he may re-roll one d20 when making a Lifestyle test, but must accept the new result. Further, he may reduce the Restriction rating of any item or service by two ranks, to a minimum of one. Asking Magnus to obtain something, however, can be somewhat risky; increase the Repercussion of all Lifestyle tests made to obtain an item by four. A Consequence resulting from such a test can range from an item being diverted for an indefinite period of time, to the item being replaced by a crate of the finest cognac.
- Quaff in the Face of Danger:** Magnus will either become more inebriated—or more surly and confused if faced with a lack of alcohol—the more dangerous the mission becomes. How his judgement is affected should be checked for during each scene that he is required, and is dependent upon the number of points in the Dark Symmetry pool:
 - Four or fewer Dark Symmetry points:** Magnus' speech may occasionally be slurred, but he is essentially compos mentis.
 - Five to seven Dark Symmetry points:** Magnus is finding it difficult to focus; he has the Dazed status effect.
 - Eight to ten Dark Symmetry points:** Glassy-eyed and barely lucid, Magnus has the Staggered condition, in addition to being Dazed.
 - Eleven or more Dark Symmetry points:** Magnus is completely unintelligible, incoherent, and intoxicated. In addition to being Dazed and Staggered, he must use a Free Action at the beginning of every turn to attempt a Dire D3 Willpower test (Dazed is already accounted for here). He loses the rest of his turn if the test fails, or may act normally if he passes.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- Unfit for Duty:** Overweight, unfit, and often inebriated, Magnus struggles with any form of physical exertion; the oppressive weight of the jungle rapidly takes its toll. He must spend a Dark Symmetry point any time he wishes to take a Restricted Action.

MAJOR SIMON HAYWARD HARRIS

"I've blown up more ancient mysterious temples than you've had hot dinners, sir."

Hayward Harris is the expedition's chief engineer and explosives expert. He is a major in the Blood Berets and has served in every theatre of war Imperial has been involved in the past twenty years. Hayward Harris is a red-cheeked, bluff man with the sort of jaunty swagger and indomitable spirit the Blood Berets are famous for.

Hayward Harris gives the impression of being rather jokey and casual. He affects a convincing air of being unconcerned by any dangers

around him, but when his expertise is required he is suddenly cold and calm, with his mind only on the job. He follows orders to the letter and has little sympathy or time for those who will not.

Hayward Harris is always immaculately turned out in his Blood Berets uniform, and he sports a great bushy moustache that he is very proud of. When relaxed, he enjoys telling tales of his exploits with the Blood Berets, preferring to concentrate on fun stories of R&R or mess hall banter rather than the realities of war.

MAJOR SIMON HAYWARD HARRIS ★

ATTRIBUTES

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- Plasma Carbine (ranged):** Range M, 1+ \uparrow 7, Burst, 2H, Ammo (Burning 1, Vicious 1)
- 12mm Negotiator heavy pistol (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
- Bayonet (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Explosive Love Affair:** Simon has a close relationship with explosives, including their application, composition, and countermeasure requirements. He may re-roll one d20 when making any Education, Heavy Weapons, or Mechanics test that involves the use or knowledge of explosive compounds, but must accept the new result. Further, each such successful test yields an additional point of Momentum.
- Pull Up a Sandbag:** Simon has an easy manner and a seemingly infinite back-catalogue of tales with which to defuse any potentially explosive social situation. Immediately following a story that he relates, the difficulty for all Persuade tests made by Simon are reduced by one for the remainder of the scene, which may eliminate the need for a test. Further, each such successful Persuade test made during the same scene yields one additional Momentum.
- Ready for Anything:** Although perpetually calm, relaxed, and cheerful, Simon reacts instantly to danger. He may re-roll one

d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he may spend one Momentum from an Observation test to recognize the reason a test was made. If this test was made prior to combat, he may add one d20 to any skill test made during his first turn, without paying any Dark Symmetry points.

PARIS DAY

“Ah, I see. You were asking me for a date. You were punning on the two meanings of the word: a chronological enumeration and a liaison with a view to a deeper relationship.”

Paris Day is the survey team’s archaeologist. She is a veritable computer bank of names, dates, and places of archaeological interest. She is not afraid to inform her colleagues of many of these, and will go on forever with her litany of historical data points if she is allowed to. Having said that, her vast historical knowledge is not likely to be much use during this expedition because the relevant history is barely known.

While Day is exemplary in pulling her weight during the expedition and following orders, she is loath to actually contribute anything creative. It is as if she has no imagination whatsoever. In addition she will always appear perplexed if any jokes are made. Sometimes she will ask that a joke be explained, but even then she will not ‘get it’, although sometimes she will attempt to explain the joke in more scientific terms.

Day is a powerfully built woman with dark, short-cropped hair and a swimmer’s physique. Her right arm is a cybernetic replacement, which possesses phenomenal strength.

PARIS DAY ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9 (+1)	8	7	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	9	6

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

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◀ **P1000 (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑3, Burst, 1H, Close Quarters

◀ **Steel Fist (melee):** 2+↑4, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Archive of Information:** Paris portrays the perfect image of a Cybetrican compu-brain, though she is, in actuality, a mnemonist; a trait that has also stymied her socially. She may immediately roll an additional d20 on any Education test that generates at least one success. Additionally, reduce the difficulty by one for all Education tests that relate to names, dates, and information of an archaeological nature, which may eliminate the need for a test. Finally, any Persuade test either taken by, or made against Paris has its difficulty rating increased by one.
- ◀ **Cybernetic Augmentation:** Paris’ state of the art enhanced cybernetic arm provides her with Supernatural Strength (1). Additionally, unarmed attacks made with the arm gain the Stun quality.
- ◀ **Highly Capable, Yet Unimaginative:** Paris operates highly efficiently when assisting with routine tasks, but will need to be directed during any situation, such as combat, that may require creative thinking. She will provide one additional bonus Momentum on any teamwork test that she assists with. Conversely, and at the GM’s discretion, a character must use the Speak Free Action to direct Paris in altering her current action (which may simply involve her standing and watching the action) to a new action during any complex or dramatic scene. She will continue with the new order until again directed, or the scene ends. She may defend herself normally if attacked and may even have the presence of mind to use her P1000 offensively, though she may not necessarily attack the most obvious threat.

STAYING ALIVE

There should be some significant death toll as the adventure progresses. Part of the feel of the adventure will be the expedition being gradually whittled down. This should mean that at the end the survivors will feel they have achieved something and the players should feel for the surviving NPCs; despite their differences they have come through things together. This should bring a feeling of camaraderie and fellowship.

This will be useful during the rest of this campaign as the trust of at least one, and preferably two, fellow expedition members is vital for the later parts of this adventure. The GM should make sure to keep at least a couple of the survey team alive in order to fulfil this role.

EXPENDABLES

To that end, there should also be a number of NPCs on the expedition who are really only there to make up the numbers and die when required. The GM should, of course, feel free to kill off any of the more important NPCs above when the time is right or promote those below to more prominent roles if it suits the game.

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

YASU KIDA

A young Mishima noble and martial artist. Kida is fond of meditating and practising with his blade. He is good in a fight but aloof and even haughty. When it comes to the crunch he will think of himself before others.

MEI TAMURA

A veteran Mishima Ashigaru skilled with a variety of heavy weapons and experienced in jungle survival. She is quiet and deferential but comes into her own during combat. Tamura will be inclined to selflessly sacrifice herself saving a more specialist member of the team.

THIERRY GENT

A captain in the Renault House Guard. He is avuncular and chirpy, preferring military banter among other warriors to pleasantries or serious conversation. He is here mostly to look after Paul Renault, and that will be his priority, though he tries to be inconspicuous about it.

ANDREA MACON

A historian of the Bauhaus Venerable Order of Savants. She has no particularly specialist knowledge of the black pyramid but a great general knowledge of the period of Martin Renault's expedition. She is in charge of writing a log of the expedition on behalf of the Venusian Heritage Museum in Heimbürg. She will be no use at all in a fight.

CAPTAIN WILF RANDALL

An Imperial Wolfbane Commando who is skilled in survival and demolition. Randall is only here because Imperial got into an internal spat about which demolition expert they would second to the Cartel. In the end, in a typical Imperial fudge, they sent both Hayward Harris and Randall. Randall cannot stop talking about his (imaginary?) sexual conquests.

TOBY RIPPON

A field medic from the Imperial Clan Murdoch. Rippon is quiet and determined, and stays very calm when the bullets start flying. He is a skilled fighter, but his priority will be to aid the wounded. Clan Murdoch used its influence to get him on the mission as it had heard rumours of the powerful weapon that might be hidden in the jungle and wanted to make sure it learnt the details.

STEPHEN BISHOP

SWI (Security Warfare and Intelligence) VAC from Cybertronic. Bishop does not say much, but shows a keen interest in everything that is going on around him. He always seems to be poking his nose into conversations and situations. No one is sure why Cybertronic sent such a lowly grunt on this mission. In fact, Bishop is a bunch of sensors and one huge data storage system. He is electronically recording as much as he can about the mission, which is a considerable amount.

FIRST LIEUTENANT TARA HODGSON

A Capitol Airborne Ranger and drop zone specialist. Hodgson is a no-nonsense, 'just get the job done' sort. She is on the survey team to command the drop zone and ensure all movement between the ground base and the air-transport goes smoothly.

LIEUTENANT HANK GREENE

An officer of the Capitol Venusian Navy. Greene is affable and optimistic. No one knows why a naval officer should be on such a jungle mission, however. Neither does Greene. He secretly suspects they intended to send his brother, who is in Alpha Force, but he will not let this on.

PART ONE: WHAT GOES UP

This part of the adventure deals with the journey to the southern Renault estates in the Ring of Fire. The players take an airship to the estates with the rest of the expedition. Some members of the Renault family are desperate that the survey does not succeed. This faction, under the leadership of Jean-Louis Renault, has plans already in place to sabotage the expedition.

JEAN-LOUIS RENAULD

Jean-Louis Renault is the patriarch of one of the branches of the Renault dynasty. He is not as powerful as Theresa but does hold a lot of influence. There are a number of stories that have been passed down through his side of the family about Martin Renault in the southern estates. These stories seem to have dissipated over the years among most of the family, but Jean-Louis is familiar with them and believes in them.

The stories tell of Martin Renault's expedition and play upon his fears of a great disaster should the expedition ever be repeated. Jean-Louis does not know what is waiting for the survey team, he does not even know of the pyramid, but he believes that whatever it is down there should never be disturbed again. Therefore, Jean-Louis is determined that no one will reach the area that Martin explored. To this end, Jean-Louis is prepared to use almost any means in order to ensure that the Glory of Heimbürg's mission fails.

He has a scheme to poison all the members of the expedition. If this fails, he has a back-up plan to blow up the airship over an unforgiving and dangerous jungle. The players will be in great danger. It might seem that they have been betrayed and their mission irredeemably compromised, but really the actions of Jean-Louis are little more than a family feud and have no wider bearing on the arc of this campaign.

It is unlikely that the players will be able to meet Jean-Louis (or even hear of him) prior to leaving for the south. However, they might be able to link him to some of the events and, if they survive their trip to the jungle, then they might want to talk to him on their return.

Jean-Louis is a civilised man, and despite having tried to kill the players could very well agree to meet them and explain what he was thinking, provided the players give the impression that they are prepared to be more polite about the whole affair than simply blowing his brains out in revenge.

Jean-Louis Renault is covered in detail in the fourth part of this campaign, *The Name of the Beast*, in the Chateau Renault section on page 139.



Jean-Louis Renault takes his family history seriously.

INVESTIGATING THE RENAULD FAMILY

There is not much time before the expedition leaves, but the players might feel the need to do some digging into the Renault family. This section may even be useful after the expedition is finished, as the players' research of their discovery might bring them to the Renault estate. Or, the GM may wish that the players are sent to the Renault estate before leaving for the jungle officially on behalf of the expedition.

The Renault family has been prominent in Bauhaus politics for as long as it has been on Venus. It prides itself on being one of the first families on the planet and has exploited its early position and power ever since. However, its fortunes have been on the decline for several generations and the Renaults are sneeringly considered as tired, old money among the newer movers and shakers of Bauhaus.

Theresa Renault, the matriarch of the family, is behind the sale of the southern estates. In the face of the waning fortunes of the family she is increasingly desperate for new investment successes but for this she needs to liquidate what family assets she can. In addition, she believes the vague stories of a curse that have been passed down among family members through the years, and thinks that getting rid of them will cause an upturn in the family's fortunes.

The heart of House Renault is the family pile not far from Heimburg. It is an ancient, pristine mansion set amid immaculately manicured lawns and landscaped gardens, a place that could not be in further contrast to the wild and inhospitable jungles where the players are heading. No real sign is to be found here of the hard times that House Renault is supposedly suffering.

As official members of the survey team, the players have every right to inspect the Renault archives and will be welcomed. They will be shown around by the family's amateur historian, Luke Renault. He is not in favour of the sale but will do his duty to the family. He is inclined to keep family politics inside the family, but if the players get on well with him he will actively aid them in their research and give them his opinion of the sale.

If the players bring it up, Luke Renault might reveal that Jean-Louis Renault is vehemently against the sale of the southern estates. His feud with Theresa over the issue is threatening to split the family in two. At the moment Theresa has many of the most powerful family members on her side, but if

anything about this sale should go wrong, or if her fortune continues to wane, then Jean-Louis has the potential backing to become the effective ruler of the family.

There is not too much to be found on the Southern Estates. This is remarkable in itself. The Renauld family records are generally exhaustive, especially from around Martin Renauld's era. The players could well get the impression that records of Martin's activities around the southern estates have been deliberately removed.

However, a relevant **Challenging (D2) test**, as indicated by the skill descriptor below, will bring up the following.

JOURNAL (EDUCATION)

There is a small leather bound, hand-written journal describing the events of Renauld's expedition. This is written by Ivan Renauld, Martin's nephew, who accompanied the expedition that discovered the pyramid (See Ivan Renauld's Journal).

BOX OF TRICKS (MECHANICS)

There is a small transmitter; it is a hand-size dark green box with a single on-off switch that does not seem to do anything except switch on a red 'on' light. In fact, it transmits some sort of telepathic frequency that deters Guardians (see page 37) over a very short range. If anyone has this box switched on when they get to Guardian territory, they will not be attacked by Guardians. The range is just a few feet, so this will not work for more than a single person.

PHOTO (OBSERVATION)

There is a single, blurred photograph showing what seems to be the peak of a pyramidal structure poking through a jungle canopy. There is no real clue in the picture as to where it could have been taken, as the background is just anonymous jungle.

THE LIBRARY OF THE VENUSIAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

If the players wish to research the history of the expedition area from the time of Renauld's expedition generally, then their best bet is the library of the Venusian Heritage Museum in Heimburg. However, despite that institution's exhaustive and well maintained records, there is no significant information to be found on the subject. This could be considered suspicious in itself.

THE GLORY OF HEIMBURG

The players and the rest of the archaeological survey team will meet up for the first time as they board the Glory of Heimburg at Helmbach Field. The Glory is a 100 metre long luxury airship, and possibly not the sort of craft the players were expecting to take them on their expedition. The airship was chosen as the base of operations as it can float above the jungle without needing a landing strip, and is much roomier than a chopper.

THE JOURNAL OF IVAN RENAULD

The journal itself is a leather-bound volume of 120 pages of vellum. It measures fifteen by eight centimetres, and has sustained heavy water damage. There are no dates in the journal, and it is impossible to guess at when it was written, although it is entirely possible that it dates from the earliest days of Venusian colonisation.

THE FIRST DAY

We have arrived on Venus, and what a glory it is to behold. After the horrors of Earth and the sterile bleakness of Luna, it is a wonder to be surrounded by such teeming life.

We stayed on in Heimburg for several days, and it was an amazing time. Everyone was full of energy and excitement about the future. I must have stayed out until the wee hours of the morning every night.

I have been remiss in my promise to my aunt to keep a journal of my life on our new homeworld. Now, though, I have some time on my hands, since we left the newly born city this morning and are now headed into the deepest jungles of the Virgin Planet.

We are flying along in a tremendous cargo craft, large enough to hold the entirety of my parents' estate back on Luna. The hold is full of survey equipment, scientific mechanisms, and all sorts of other exciting things. There are even a few flyers in here, and uncle has promised me that I will be allowed to fly one once we reach our destination!

We are going to scout out a new tract of land that has been granted to the family. It is said to be rich in all kinds of wonderful things: gold, rare plants and animals, and I don't know what else. I hear that there are Pythons there, and I'm eager to see one of these creatures for myself.

Uncle just told me that we will be arriving soon. They are going to use fire bombs to clear a large area of the jungle so we can land. Even though it is VTOL, it still needs a lot of room. I'm looking forward to watching the detonation, I wonder how they will keep the fire from spreading.

LATER

Well, now I know. They didn't keep the fire from spreading, and it ended up torching the entire jungle for miles around until it

was stopped at the banks of a wide river. Even in this humid, wet jungle, the incendiary bombs created such a raging inferno that nothing could stop it. The engineers say they planned this, but I think they're lying. Uncle seems quite upset.

Anyway, the landing area was soon clear, and so now we've touched down. I'm not allowed to leave the plane yet though. They're still making sure everything is safe for me down there.

I can look out the window and see them setting up camp: pre-fabricated homes, labs, and even greenhouses for storing samples. It's all wonderfully clever, and it only takes a few minutes to set up a whole building. Uncle assures me that my quarters will be so fine that I won't even miss home. I told him that I didn't mind roughing it a bit, and that I was looking forward to getting out into the jungle proper.

DAY TWO

I spent my first night in the jungle in the Base Camp, and it was like I never left home. Today, though, I took my first short hike into the jungle.

I just wasn't prepared for how damned hot it is here! I was almost instantly drenched in sweat, and if it wasn't for the GENSYN insect repellent we're all wearing, I'm sure I'd have been eaten alive by the insects by now. Some of those bugs are as big as my hand! Or bigger!

The jungle is really quite beautiful, I've never seen anything like it. The trees are as big as buildings, and even the Great Cathedral on Luna seems small in comparison to this vast jungle.

Is that sacrilegious? I'm not sure. I don't think so. Certainly the jungle—big as it is—was no match for our fire bombs, and I know we couldn't even begin to harm the Cathedral. Not that we'd want to of course.

I'm only allowed to venture a few miles from camp and only under heavy escort. Everyone here carries guns, mostly because they fear the huge cats and other beasts that lurk out there in the jungle.

They even gave me a gun. Of course, I don't know how to use it, but I was proud that Uncle trusted me enough to let me carry an honest-to-goodness pistol. I spent most of the morning on target practice, and now I think I'm pretty handy with it. I even shot a moth from thirty feet.

That probably sounds more impressive than it is, since the moth had a six-foot wing span. The thing looked just like a giant leaf, and when it moved I was so scared I shot at it. The guards laughed at me but said it was a good shot all the same.

DAY THREE

Well, things are settling down here now. Most of the survey teams are off in the jungle, and I'm pretty much left to hanging around in the camp. Uncle is still here running things, and he sometimes takes some time out to explain to me what is going on. Still, I'm getting bored. I want to go exploring too, but Uncle says I'm too young; I wonder why he brought me along then?

Everything is going smoothly, just as we planned. The geological survey crew found some promising mineral deposits just a few miles north of here. If they are as good as they say they are, then this mission has already paid for itself.

I've taken to starting a collection of insects. Uncle had one of the scientists show me how to mount the things so they would look nice. I took a bunch of their sampling cases and a net. I now have quite a collection of moths and butterflies, although nothing like the one I shot.

DAY FOUR

Things are still quiet around here, although I had quite a fright today. I was out with one of the scientists collecting insect samples from the surrounding jungle. He was trying to catch this strange bug that looked sort of like a praying mantis, but with ten legs. The thing was about six inches long and bright red. I thought it rather beautiful until it bit Prof. Hendricks.

All he said was "Ouch!" then he fell over and started convulsing on the ground! He was shaking all over and coughing up blood before I could scream. I ran back to camp and got Uncle and Doctor Prouse.

When we got back, Prof. Hendricks was in a coma but still alive. The Doctor says he'll live and is trying all kinds of drugs on him to bring him out of his coma. I'm not so excited about catching insects any more.

I stayed the rest of the day in the command tent, listening to the reports coming in from all the different survey teams. I thought it would be kind of boring, but it actually turned out to be really a

lot of fun. They were all so excited about each new discovery that it got us excited back at the Base Camp.

They were finding all sorts of interesting animal and plant life out there in the wild jungles. Luckily, no one besides Professor Hendricks has been seriously hurt. I wish I could be out there with them, even after the incident with the bug this morning.

At dinner tonight, I pestered Uncle even more about going into the field. Uncle got a little annoyed, I think. He threatened to send me back to the vineyards to spend my vacation with Uncle Claude and Aunt Vela! I stopped pestering him after that.

DAY FIVE

Today is another day, and everyone seems to be doing something fun but me. No one has time to escort me into the jungle now that Prof. Hendricks got bitten. He's still in a coma, and the doctor says it's getting worse. I don't think I was supposed to know that though. I overheard him and uncle talking about it.

The teams are pretty far out now, and there is practically no-one left here at the camp. They've covered lots and lots of territory in their explorations and have found all kinds of wonderful things. Uncle and everyone else is very excited, saying that we are all going to make a lot of money from this land, and how generous it was of the Electors to grant it to us.

I don't think it's that great. Just a lot of jungle.

LATER

Dinner tonight was interrupted by a report from one of the teams. They said that after they had set up camp for the night they sent up a weather balloon with a camera attached to it, just to see what the surroundings looked like from above.

I guess the camera isn't very good though, since they aren't sure what they've found. They say they can see what looks like some kind of building hidden out there in the jungle! I find that hard to believe, but uncle told them to investigate.

DAY SIX

There is a building out there! I couldn't believe it when Uncle showed me the pictures, but there is definitely a building out there. You can make out its top through the trees. It looks like some sort of spire made from stone, like a big spike rising from the jungle. We should know more later today.

LATER

They've found the building, whatever it is! They say we have to see it to believe it. Uncle is going to take the last flyer out to their position tomorrow morning.

I've begged and pleaded with him to let me come along, and he actually said he'd think about it. I think he doesn't trust me when he can't look after me himself, so he's just going to have to take me along!

DAY EIGHT

I didn't get a chance to write in my journal yesterday, what with all the excitement of travelling and so forth. The flyer trip was really neat. We flew in low over the tree tops, sometimes only a few hundred feet from the ground, but that was nothing compared to the pyramid itself!

I couldn't believe my eyes when we landed and I saw the thing. It's a big stone pyramid, kind of like a ziggurat, I guess. It's made of solid stone and has a pointy black cone on top of it. It looks brand new!

We have no idea who built it or when, but it can't be very old. The stone is perfectly smooth to the touch and shows no signs of weathering at all. It's cool and kind of slick, and dirt just seems to slide right off it. When no-one was looking, I tried to scratch it with my knife, but nothing happened.

The queerest part is the black stone cone on top. Uncle won't let me climb up there but the men say it's freezing to the touch! From here it looks hot, since it seems to be giving off steam all the time, but the men say that's just condensation because it's so cold.

There's no door or anything, and no-one can seem to figure out what it's for. Uncle seems very concerned about it. He's not happy at all. He's worried that some other House has tried to lay claim to this land or something. That's what I guess anyway; I'm not sure.

He wants to get inside the thing really bad, and he's called for some of the mining lasers and explosives to be brought up from the base camp. He says if the thing won't open up, he'll blast his way in.

We camped here last night, and it looks like we'll be here for a while. They've tried all sorts of things, but nothing seems to even chip the stone. The explosives and lasers will be here tomorrow. Then maybe we'll get a chance to see what the insides of this really look like!

DAY NINE

It's just after tea time right now, and they've been going at it all day. The noise is driving me crazy, but Uncle is too busy to pay attention to me and has ordered me to stay out of the way and not wander off. I spent most of the morning watching them break into the pyramid. But eventually that got boring, so I came back here.

The explosives and the laser seem to be working, but it's taking an awful lot of them. The engineers and miners are absolutely amazed at how tough this pyramid is. They say they could have stripped a whole mountain bare with the amount of laser power and shaped charges they've used.

They are slowly but surely cutting a passage into the thing, which is looking like it was made out of a solid piece of stone. The noise and the laser is becoming deafening. I'm sure I'll never hear the same again.

DAY TEN

They finally gave up for the day around sunset last night. They made it almost a quarter of the way into the thing before they quit. Uncle said that we're going to keep going until we get out the other side.

Today they started again, and by lunch time they had broken through! There was a great cheer from everyone, and I came running to see what all the excitement was about.

They had found a small chamber in the centre of the pyramid that had a hole in the floor leading under the pyramid. They had lamps strung up along the tunnel they had created, and everyone was crowded around the hole. The hole had a spiral ramp of some sort, and there was a cold, musty smell creeping up from down below.

Uncle noticed me and forced me to leave. Then he and four other men went down into the tunnel armed with hunting rifles. We all waited a long time, wondering what was going on. Then we heard some screaming and gun shots. A bunch of the men started to get lights and guns and head into the hole, but then my Uncle and another man came running up the ramp telling everyone to run.

Well of course we all ran, not even knowing what it was we were running from. Uncle said that his own men had tried to kill him, that there was something evil down in that hole. He wouldn't explain further.

He posted a guard and ordered that no one be allowed to go down there again. Then he put me on a flyer and sent me back to base camp with orders that I was to be sent home immediately. I didn't even have time to protest.

Now I'm here on the transport plane, winging its way back to the city. I don't even know what happened or what I did wrong! It's not fair!

EPILOGUE

Uncle stayed in the jungle for a long time after that, almost ten years. He came to visit on occasion, but very rarely, and never for the last three years. I never saw anyone else from the mission.

My father said that Uncle had fired them all, but I don't think this is the case. I'm friends with the daughter of one of the scientists, and she says her father never came home from the jungle.

Uncle never talks of what happened out there, and no one else in the family will talk about it either. No one goes to the jungle anymore, and no one is even allowed to even speak of the pyramid.

I still have nightmares of Uncle and his panicked look when he came running out of that hole. Some day I'd like to go back, but I'm not even sure how to get there. The place has been erased from all the family records and map. It is our greatest secret—the thing that no one talks about. But why?

The Glory belongs to the Bauhaus military but is by no means fit for battle. It is used more as a luxury venue for high ranking military meetings. It has been temporarily donated to the Cartel for the duration of this mission to show Bauhaus' support and good will for the endeavour.

The ship is amazingly well appointed with a swanky dining room, a couple of bars, a gym and a sauna, a huge meeting room, and several viewing areas. The relatively small number of expedition personnel should feel a bit dwarfed by their transport. Each of the players has a luxury bedroom more used to hosting top military minds and important diplomats.

The airship will be flying all through the night. It is due to reach the landing zone at about 6:00AM the next day. This will be perfect for the players to have a lovely night's sleep and wake up fully refreshed, ready to begin their survey.



GLORY OF HEIMBURG


QUALITIES	Aircraft, Enclosed, Ponderous			
CRUISING SPEED	130 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	0	
CREW	1 commander, 1 pilot, 4 gunners		CARRYING CAPACITY	30 passengers, 750 enc
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	7	13	9	6
MOTIVE SYSTEM	6	9	6	4
WEAPONS	4	5	3	3
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+↑7			
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4x K-60 Autocannon Turrets: Range L, 2+↑8, Semi-Automatic, Armour Piercing 2, Vicious 1 			
NOTES	Four Reloads for each K-60 Turret.			

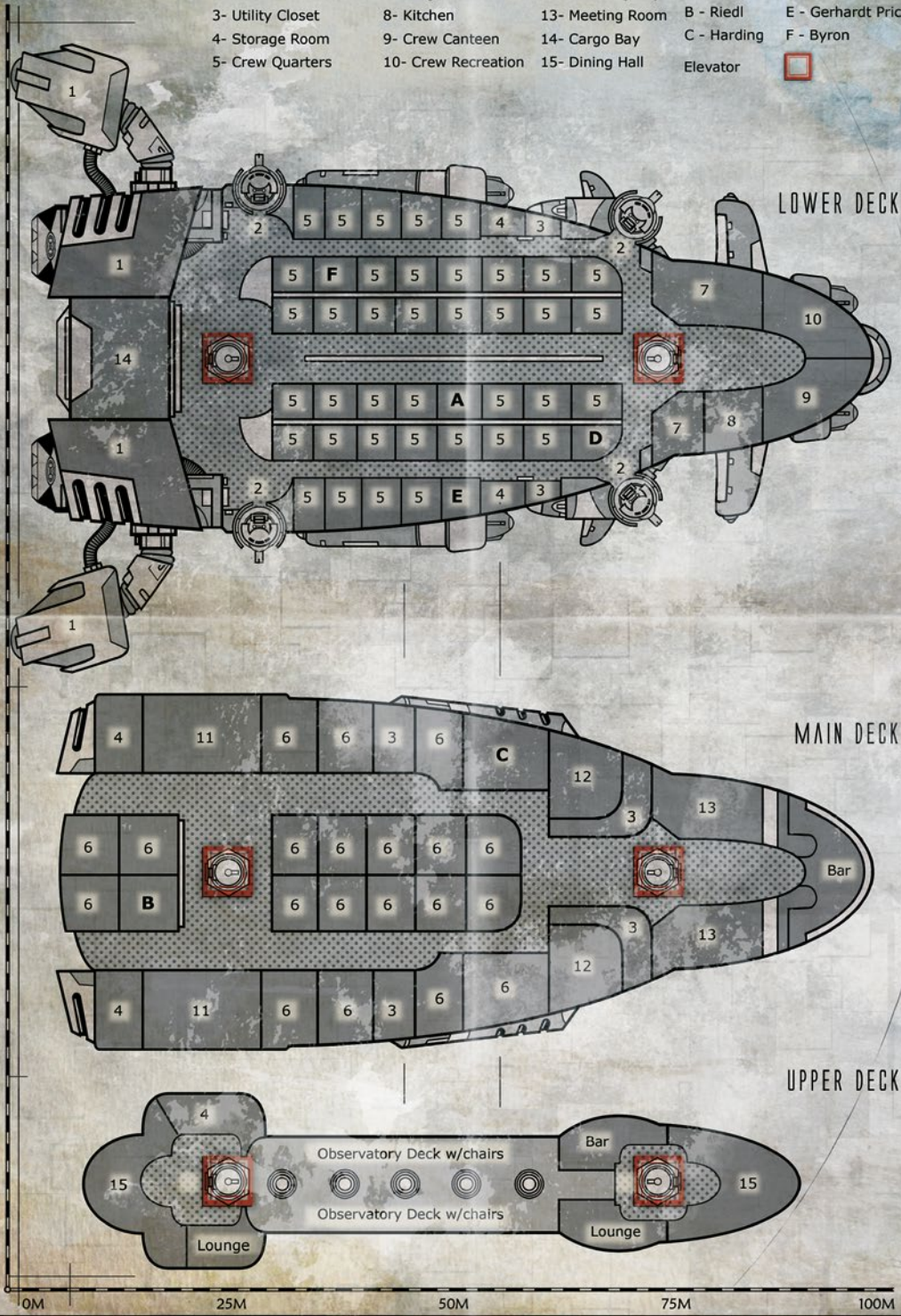


The Glory of Heimburg sets off on a (very final) voyage.

THE GLORY OF HEIMBURG

Compartments

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------|---|
| 1- Engines | 6- Guest Quarters | 11- Gym/Sauna | A - Sinclair | D - Samantha Price |
| 2- Auto-Cannon Turret | 7- Cargo Hold | 12- Boarding Bay | B - Riedl | E - Gerhardt Price |
| 3- Utility Closet | 8- Kitchen | 13- Meeting Room | C - Harding | F - Byron |
| 4- Storage Room | 9- Crew Canteen | 14- Cargo Bay | Elevator |  |
| 5- Crew Quarters | 10- Crew Recreation | 15- Dining Hall | | |



CAPTAIN RIEDL

"It may be the law of the jungle out there, but on this ship there is only one law, my law!"

Though not technically part of the Cartel expedition, Captain Riedl is the captain of the *Glory of Heimbürg*. He has the last say on all shipboard matters, but understandably will acquiesce to Commander Harding's wishes on all matters regarding the expedition itself. The only time Riedl will pull rank on Harding is if the safety of the ship or its personnel are in jeopardy.

Secretly, however, despite his Bauhaus credentials, Riedl is a spy for Imperial. Imperial has only gleaned vague snippets about the importance of this mission, and has planted Riedl to find out more. If the mission is as important as some are saying, then Riedl has also been given the discretion to sabotage the entire expedition.

If the discoveries on the site are as valuable as has been hinted at, if perhaps the southern estates contain a powerful weapon that could shift the balance of power between the corporations, for example, then Riedl has been given the authority to seize the weapon himself, or, more likely, simply leave the expedition on the ground and call in a specialist tactical Blood Beret commando unit to do the job. The brilliant subtlety of this plan, as far as Imperial is concerned, is that Major Hayward Harris is completely oblivious to the scheme.

Riedl is careful to come across as any conscientious airship captain, careful of his crew but a keen disciplinarian for the sake of his vessel. He is usually immaculately dressed and expects his crew to be the same.

CAPTAIN REIDL ★

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

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: **Bauhaus Fleet Uniform:** (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **HG-12 handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◆ **Duelling Sabre (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4, 1H, Duelling, Parry 3

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **My Ship, My Crew:** Reidl runs a tight ship. Although he acquiesces to Harding on expedition matters, he will not tolerate insubordination or ill discipline from either his crew or guests. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Command or Pilot test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he may reduce the difficulty of any Command test by one, which may eliminate the need for a test.
- ◆ **On Her Serenity's Service:** Reidl is an experienced and diligent spy. He will seek to keep the characters off-guard with his commanding presence when aboard his ship, in the hope that he may obtain valuable information. Each successful Persuade test made by Reidl yields one additional Momentum. Additionally, he gains one additional d20 to his Persuade test when lying to an opponent.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Call in the Claret:** Provided that Reidl would reasonably believe he has garnered sensitive and/or valuable information, the GM may spend four Dark Symmetry points at any time following this to have an encoded message sent to the Blood Beret commando unit that is on standby to 'assist' the mission. He will choose an opportune moment to do so—such as when the expedition team are on the ground—as the eight-strong section will take approximately one hour to arrive. Rappelling from a suitable transport (such as a *Doomlord Gunship* from the Imperial sourcebook), they will drop in hard, fast, and mercilessly on their objective.

THE BRIEFING

Harding has called a briefing to take place a couple of hours into the flight. This will give the players a chance to settle in to their luxury staterooms. When everyone is assembled, Harding will introduce himself and then go round the room allowing everyone to introduce themselves in turn with a few words about their background and their role on the expedition.

Then Harding will go into his prepared speech (see Harding's Briefing on the next page) to get everyone up to speed on the details of the expedition. The chances are that Harding would have revealed at least some of this to each player character when getting them to sign up to the mission, but he repeats some things here in order to get everyone on the same page.

ANY QUESTIONS

After the briefing, Harding asks for any questions. To give a feel for the conversation, the GM can convey some of the questions below. If the players have questions for Harding or the other expedition members then they will do their best to answer them. Some members of the team may have questions for the players, depending on their areas of expertise.

Toru asks what sort of living conditions they will be having and whether they are properly equipped for jungle conditions. Harding will throw that across to Magnus du Strange who will wave it away, insisting it has all been dealt with and there is nothing to worry about.

Hayward Harris asks Harding what sort of provision the Glory of Heimburg has for carpet bombing. Harding explains that he likes Hayward Harris' enthusiasm but does not see a need for that sort of thing at present.

Sister Bernadette asks Paris Day if there was any known settlement or civilisation in that area from a time before Bauhaus' colonisation. Day replies that she is not aware of anything. And then she assures the sister that were it known to history, then Day would indeed know of it.

Paul Renauld mentions that he suffers a bit from hay fever and wonders what it might be like in the southern estates. Doctor Toru tells him that she is sure she has something that will alleviate any symptoms.

However this scintillating conversation goes, eventually Paul Renauld will ostentatiously invite everyone to a formal dinner this evening (in a few hours). He will ask everyone to, "Try to dress a bit smartly, won't you, chaps?"

THE DINNER

During this formal dinner, Jean-Louis Renauld makes his first play to destroy the expedition. He has had Paul Renauld's favourite wine replaced by a poison that is capable of killing everyone at the meal.

Harding has made it clear that there will be no alcohol consumed for the entire expedition. This is one of his trademark leadership strategies and he was nicknamed 'hard labour' on his last posting. He is proud of this. However, to help break the ice, Paul Renauld has insisted on a dinner party for the first evening of the flight. He has

HARDING'S BRIEFING

Welcome everyone to the Venusian Archaeological Survey sponsored expedition. We will be travelling to the Renauld estates of southern Venus in the Ring of Fire, so bring your sun-tan lotion and insect repellent.

You may wonder what all the fuss and secrecy has been about. Well, now I can tell you. We will be investigating a site that was explored over 800 years ago by Martin Renauld of Bauhaus. There have been rumours of curses, buried treasure, and mysterious monsters surrounding the place ever since. But as far as we know, no one has set foot down there since Renauld evacuated the place.

What we do know is that he found something down there and spent ten years researching it. Then he suddenly upped and left and he left orders that the place not be disturbed.

But time moves on, ladies and gentlemen, and we can't stand in the way of progress, can we? No, we can't. So it's time for Capitol to go down there and sort it out. Unfortunately the Cartel wants us to check out everything is safe before Bauhaus can pass it on to us.

Renauld set up a research base or something or other in the jungle. We know the coordinates so that will be our landing zone. No idea whether there's anything still there, but that's the only place we know of, so we'll be using that as ground zero.

I'm in charge of the mission, but while we're on this ship, Riedl is in charge of all shipboard issues. Of course if there are any ecumenical matters, then Sister Bernadette's your man. If it's an archaeological issue, then Miss Day is in charge. A security issue you can refer to Major Hayward Harris. Medical matters are of course under the purview of Doctor Toru. Any problems with your equipment talk to Monsieur du Strange. Is that all clear?

What is important is that we don't break anything. Everything we find belongs to the Cartel until further notice. It may go back to the Renaulds, or it may come to Capitol, or it may belong in a museum somewhere, but Cartel get to decide. So no stealing any priceless ancient treasures.

That's a joke. Seriously though, we leave no stone unturned. We explore everything, and we catalogue everything. Anything that might seem like it shouldn't be there, or is of interest to anyone, we get it. That's what we do.

Anyway, that's enough from me. We're due at the landing zone at roughly 0600 hours. Hope you all get a good night's sleep. This will be your last access to air-conditioning for the foreseeable, so make the most of it. Oh yes, and our gracious host has invited us all to dinner this evening.

Any questions?

managed to convince Harding to agree that the mission proper will not begin until tomorrow and so technically, the alcohol consumed with this meal will not be breaking the rules.

The menu is rather sophisticated and while Paul takes it in his stride, most of the other guests should be impressed by the haute cuisine and fine wines. To be fair, Paul is showing off a bit and does not have quite such gastronomic tastes, normally. He is privately worried about the coming expedition and is treating this potentially as the condemned man's last meal.

Renauld is wearing his smartest tux and black tie, whereas most of the team, having packed only for jungle survival, must turn up in their fatigues and vests.

The first course, a pea and apricot *consommé* with a lime jus, is an opportunity for the players to talk with some of the other members of the survey team about the mission and their role in it, and get to know them. But this relaxed atmosphere ends abruptly with the main course.

THE WINE IS OFF

To accompany the pheasant medallions with cinnamon quince in a rustic almond ganache, Paul Renauld proudly calls for his favourite vintage of Pinot Volksburg. His butler delivers the wine to the table unopened and then leaves unobtrusively.

Paul makes a little speech about how this wine was cultivated in his own vineyards with grapes he himself selected. He then opens the bottle and as he attempts to pour it, his speech becomes slurred and incoherent and then he slumps to the floor, quite dead.

If the players are not paying attention, then around the table several other bottles will be opened before anyone realises what is going on. One of the players really needs to understand what is going on and bring everyone's attention to the fact that no more bottles should be opened. Otherwise the situation will become much worse. The players should make a **Daunting D3 Observation test** on the round of Paul's death in order to detect the faint smell of bitter almonds. Decrease the difficulty of this test by one during each subsequent round, to a minimum of Average D1. Detecting the odour may prompt a **Challenging D2 Medicine test** to identify the poison.

Releasing an extremely acute concentration of hydrogen cyanide, the poison in the wine bottle is deadly. Once the bottle is opened, it evaporates to form a poisonous gas. While it remains in the bottle, this can only evaporate slowly, but once poured this process speeds up. As Paul died and slumped to the ground, his bottle slipped from his hand and the poison began to pour from the bottle. The longer this goes on for, the more poison will enter the room. Each Dark Symmetry point the GM spends here represents an additional bottle having been opened by an NPC or member of the hospitality

crew, beyond Paul's bottle. It will require quick thinking for a player to grab the bottle and seal it again. None of the NPCs are going to do this. If anyone else around the table has opened a bottle, then that will also need to be closed as soon as possible. The players can nominate a leader and attempt a **Challenging D2 Athletics** or **Acrobatics teamwork test** to close a bottle. Each point of Momentum generated can be used to close an additional bottle. A **Daunting D3 Command test** can be made to order an NPC to close a bottle, with Momentum again being used to close additional NPC bottles. The room will also need to be vacated quickly, or the windows smashed, to allow speedy ventilation.

The GM should summate how quickly the players have acted to stop all the poison bottles. The number of rounds of exposure, plus the number of opened bottles, will determine the difficulty of their Resistance test:

- ◆ Rounds of exposure plus opened bottles totalling six or less: **Challenging (D2)**
- ◆ Rounds of exposure plus opened bottles totalling between seven and twelve: **Daunting (D3)**
- ◆ Rounds of exposure plus opened bottles totalling thirteen or more: **Dire (D4)**

These tests should be properly dangerous, and it should be explained to the players just how dangerous before they roll, to give them a chance to influence their dice pools. Bluntly: if they fail, they are likely to die.

This particularly nasty concentration of hydrogen cyanide is essentially a chemical attack. Failing the above Resistance test inflicts 2+**T**5 damage with the Incendiary X and Toxic X qualities to the torso of the victim, where X is equivalent to the difficulty of the Resistance test. The Burning condition caused by the Incendiary effect represents the victim's organs becoming rapidly starved of oxygen, as opposed to flame or heat; it will last indefinitely, or until treated with a **Challenging D2 Medicine test** and the application of a Coagulant dose.

This should also provide a guide to how many NPCs suffered. The NPCs sitting next to Paul Renauld, or any who opened their own bottles, are virtually certain to die. The GM should add to the death toll depending on how well the players acted. If the players were particularly useless, it is fair to have some of the NPCs act to save themselves and their fellows. But the players would still be making Dire tests to survive.

If the GM wants to keep Paul Renauld alive for the expedition, then it will be trivial to change the first bottle-opener to someone more expendable.

THE BUTLER DID IT

Paul Renauld's butler is called Sinclair. He has served Theresa Renauld's side of the family for many years. However, for all that time he has been keeping an eye on them on behalf of Jean-Louis. He volunteered to go on the expedition with Paul under orders from Jean-Louis and is responsible for the poisoned wine bottles.

After serving the wine bottles, Sinclair slopes off back to his cabin. Sinclair was in a difficult position, whether to obey his master, Jean-Louis, or serve the other side of the Renauld family. Ideally he would like to be loyal to both sides, but fate has made this impossible. He will sit sadly on his bed and open a genuine bottle of Pinot Volksburg to drown his sorrows. He will immediately begin to regret what he has just done.

No doubt Sinclair will eventually be found, either by the players, or by a third party, half drunk in his cabin. He will deny everything to start with, but will soon buckle under pressure. He will reveal he acted under orders of someone else in the family who did not want the expedition to go ahead. It will take a **Daunting (D3) Persuade test** to get Jean-Louis' name without spending a long time with Sinclair. Sinclair will make all sorts of excuses about curses and family honour but it should be apparent he does not have much detailed knowledge of Jean-Louis' motives or of the southern estates. It seems as if he is simply so loyal to Jean-Louis that he would do more or less anything he was told without even considering the consequences.

SINCLAIR, BUTLER

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

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

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS: None

SPECIAL ABILITIES

► **Unquestioning Loyalty:** Ever the lap-dog, Sinclair has irrevocably tied his loyalty to Jean-Louis. He is essentially immune to Command or Persuade tests made to glean information regarding Jean-Louis' motives, as he knows nothing

in relation to them other than his own fevered imaginings. The GM should instead use a successful test as an opportunity to impart an ominous portent or question the honour of Theresa Renauld. A player that can convince Sinclair of his own collusion in Jean-Louis' plans will gain a loyal companion for so long as Sinclair remains alive and convinced of his complicity.

THE BOMB

The poison in the wine bottles might seem like a strange and convoluted way to go about stopping the expedition, but Jean-Louis is a subtle man and that was more of a diversionary tactic. During the commotion caused by the wine incident, a couple of bombs were planted on board the Glory of Heimburg.

They are timed to go off over the impenetrable jungles of southern Venus, not far from the Glory's destination. They were set by three mercenaries posing as crew members. The plan is for the mercenaries to leave the ship during the dead of night and for the ship to blow up several hours later.

The mercenaries have an accomplice waiting with a helicopter (page 192 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core rulebook) in the jungle. They need to exit the airship at a very specific time in order for the chopper to find them quickly and take them away. They need to calculate this time in relation to the Glory's progress and so will not know the precise time until the last moment. As it happens, it is 1:47AM, so at about 1:40AM they leave their quarters, with their escape suits, and make their way to the cargo bay.

There, they are discovered by one of the crew doing her rounds. They shoot her and then jump from one of the cargo bay doors. For the record, they have calculated their position adequately. They land without mishap, and the chopper picks them up and takes them off to enjoy their payment.

If the GM wishes, he can allow a **Dire (D4) Observation test** to see whether the players are disturbed by the movements of the saboteurs. If they are, then they can discover them preparing to leave in the cargo bay. However, after a brief firefight, there is probably nothing they can do to stop them escaping. In any case, the gun shots bring many of the survey team and airship crew running to the abandoned cargo bay.

PIECING IT TOGETHER

No doubt the players will be keen to get to the bottom of this. They do not have much time, however. The bombs were timed to go off at 5:00AM, shortly before sunrise at their projected location, over twenty miles from the landing zone.

The mercenaries have left several clues behind in their haste to leave on time and it is up to the players to piece them together. It

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

will already be about 2:00AM by the time everyone is assembled in the cargo bay and so the players will have only three hours to save the expedition. The GM should keep careful track of the time to ensure whatever happens, happens just in the nick of time.

Harding is adamant that the expedition should continue on schedule and will be confident that whatever the problem is, it can be dealt with during the flight. Captain Riedl is inclined to agree with Harding.

The first thing to find out is who those people were. No one in the crew knows much about them. They were taken on just before this voyage and seemed like decent, hard-working crew. Their entries on the ship's manifest are genuine, but this is down to Jean-Louis' influence.

If their rooms are searched, then that will turn up a number of interesting things that will help the players work out what is going on.

SAMANTHA PRICE'S CABIN

Samantha Price's cover on this mission is as a member of the kitchen staff. Her cabin is in a section near the kitchen that is used to accommodate most of the kitchen and wait staff. She has already done a shift helping to prep the evening meal. She did not arouse too many suspicions, though with the benefit of hindsight a couple of the other staff will offer that she did not feel right to them. One of them will say she did not know how to make a proper roux, but he just put it down to the poor state of modern education and training.

In Samantha's room is the map they were using to plot the timing of their pick-up. The map has the Glory's course plotted across it going from Helmbach Field to the designated landing site. It has a big red cross marked across this course at the point where the saboteurs were intending to be picked up and this has 1:47 written next to it. A second cross is drawn much closer to the landing site and this has the number 5 written next to it.

There is a note book nearby with a few scribbled calculations in. These are Samantha's notes on air speed and wind speed, which she used to calculate the time they would vacate the ship. This has been done several times, as the readings change slightly over the course of the voyage. The latest calculation comes to the conclusion 1:47.

There is enough information on the map to give any of the players a good idea of what it all represents, and a player making a **Challenging (D2) Science test** should manage to work out precisely what it all means. The only thing he will not be able to work out from this is the exact significance of the second cross.

Other interesting things to be found in Samantha's room are a couple of books. One is a book about commercial catering, and the other is a quick guide to life on board an airship. She has been swatting up on her cover story.

GERHARDT PRICE'S CABIN

Gerhardt Price has managed to keep his cabin free of any incriminating evidence, or any handy clues.

CHARLES BYRON'S CABIN

If Charles Byron's room is searched properly, his suitcase will be found to contain a large hidden compartment secreted behind some fake clothing. The compartment is empty save for some thick padding and a large sheet of paper: a plan of the Glory of Heimburg. It seems to have contained something about 30cm x 30cm x 60cm that was probably quite delicate. (In fact it contained two identical items each 30cm cubes: two bombs.)



Damning evidence is found in Samantha Price's quarters.

There is a screwdriver and some pliers on the bedside table. If the floor is carefully inspected, a successful **Challenging (D2) Observation test** uncovers several short lengths of red and blue wire. This is where Byron prepared the fuses and connected them to the two bombs before the saboteurs hid them on board.

Byron's plan of the airship contains a number of pencil scribbles. These are rough notes, little more than Byron 'thinking out loud'. The notes relate to Byron's opinion of the best places to hide the bombs, places that will make them hard to discover but also that will cause the most structural damage.

A player looking over these plans will require a **Challenging (D2) Mechanics test** to make sense of them. If he does work out what the scribbling means, then this will narrow the potential bomb-hiding locations down to only eight, and these locations can be checked out in a matter of minutes. However, one of the locations is in Captain Riedl's cabin and he is refusing to let his room be searched. The other seven locations were not used.

SEARCHING THE AIRSHIP

From the clues found in the missing crew members' rooms, the players should be thinking: bomb! If they are not, then the GM should let them waste time on other things for a while. If they still do not think of it, one of the other members of the survey team will have to tell them.

They should also be thinking that the bomb will go off at exactly 5:00AM. Again, if they cannot work this out, someone should do it for them, because the whole point of this part of the adventure is to have a frantic search, followed by a tense attempt to defuse a bomb. Of course, if the players are slow on the uptake, any time it takes one of the NPCs to work it out will be time the players cannot use to solve the problem.

The players should take charge of the situation and will probably order the airship to be searched. This will take about half an hour if the entire crew helps. They will go through the entire airship, all the quarters and cargo areas, all the store rooms and public areas, everything anyone can think of. If the players want to come up with a cleverer, more targeted search, this will save time but also risk missing areas. The first run-through of the ship will not find anything useful at all unless they search Captain Riedl's cabin.

CAPTAIN RIEDL'S CABIN

The players might notice that Captain Riedl refuses to let anyone search his room. He will insist to the players that everything is in hand, and that he has thoroughly searched his room himself, but as the captain he does not wish to have crew going through his things. Even if the players offer to do the searching, Riedl will refuse. This should cause the players special consternation if they have deciphered Byron's structural notes and realise that Riedl's cabin is one of the indicated locations for hiding a bomb.

The reason Riedl is so set against his cabin being searched is because he is spying for Imperial and has his communication equipment hidden in his cabin. This is a sophisticated radio system that is designed to be undetectable and also scrambled to be indecipherable. This is some of Imperial's most advanced kit, and will be a coup for a rival corporation to discover. Riedl is under orders to give Imperial regular updates on the progress of the expedition, in order that it might choose the perfect moment to fly in and steal anything significant that has been discovered.

For this reason Riedl will be opposed to anyone entering his cabin. As the captain of the craft he will be within his rights to take this view. There could well be a long stand-off as the technicalities and etiquette of the situation are pored over, but all the while, the clock will be ticking. It could well come down to a use of force. The crew of the airship should be loyal to Riedl, but they have little firepower compared to the survey team. The players may have to convince Harding that Riedl's cabin should be searched through force. This becomes more and more likely the closer it gets to 5:00AM and the bomb has not yet been found.

DEACTIVATING THE BOMB

The first bomb is located under an inspection hatch in the floor of Riedl's office space, just where the scribbling on Byron's plan suggests it might be. Once the inspection hatch is opened, the bomb can be clearly seen and accessed. Catching sight of the bomb for the first time will allow the GM the opportunity to spend a Dark Symmetry point on inflicting an **Average D1 mental assault** and an additional one Dread to anyone present. It is quite plain, except for a display counting down the seconds towards its detonation. Someone who knows about bombs will need to pass a **Challenging (D2) Mechanics test** in order to recognise the sort of bomb it is and have an accurate idea of its construction and capabilities. A point of Momentum may be spent from this test to reduce the difficulty test to defuse the bomb from **Dire (D3) to Challenging (D2)**.

The device is strapped to a piece of the superstructure using a couple of plastic ties. These will need to be cut if the bomb is to be moved. However, integral to the bomb is a tilt switch, which will blow the device if it is handled too roughly. In order to move the bomb, a **Daunting (D3) Acrobatics or Athletics test** will be required, or the thing will blow. Of course, if no one there recognises the type of bomb, the players might not realise it has to be carried very, very delicately.

If someone wants to attempt to defuse the bomb in situ, then they will need some basic tools and to make **Challenging (D2) Athletics test** just to prize open the access panel. Then they will be required to make a series of **Daunting (D3) Mechanics test** in order to make the device safe. It will take three minutes and three Mechanics tests to defuse. Each test requires one minute of time, although Momentum may be spent to reduce this by twenty seconds for each point, to a minimum of twenty seconds. The first two tests

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

ESCAPE SUIT

An escape suit is a survival kit for air crew and passengers. It is part parachute, part glider, and part balloon. It is designed to get someone to the ground safely and automatically, requiring no skill from the user.

The equipment looks like a harness with a pack on the front and a similar one on the back, rather like a parachute. When worn the suit is able to sense when it is required (ie falling rapidly) and deploy a parachute-like device that slows the fall and short wings for stability. People used to the equipment are able to steer them quite accurately; a successful **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Pilot test** will allow the user to select a point of impact up to one kilometre distant from his point of exit.

As the ground approaches, an inflatable ball suddenly engulfs the wearer protecting him from the force of the impact. It might look bizarre, having these large plastic balls on a parachute falling from the sky, but they have saved many lives. The whole system allows the wearer to ignore all falling damage from impact.

One of the great advantages of the survival suit is that it works very effectively at low altitudes where normal parachutes would not have time to become effective. Also it is useful for landing on water, as the inflatable ball can also act as a life raft.

The survival suits are also fitted with water, rations, and rudimentary survival equipment; enough supplies to survive two days in the wilderness before foraging is required, with subsequent successful Survival tests generating one additional Momentum.



Escape Suits: falling with style!

may be repeatedly attempted. If the final test is failed just once, however, the bomb detonates immediately. This will likely mean certain death for those present as, in the unlikely event that they survive the blast, a **Dire D4 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** will be required to avoid falling to their deaths from the twisted wreckage of this portion of the Heimburg. If final test to defuse is passed, or a Complication is rolled, the GM should request that the player choose between cutting the red wire and cutting the blue wire. If the test was passed, he gets it right, whatever he chooses, but it will be fun to make him sweat over the choice. If it is the result of a Complication, the GM should roll one d2, stating clearly which number represents which wire.

The survey team does have an explosives expert at its disposal in the shape of Major Simon Hayward Harris. If the players would rather call on an expert NPC than do things themselves, then they might well insist that Hayward Harris deals with the bomb. This is plainly less fun than them doing it themselves, but might be safer. The GM, therefore, should consider whether he wants Hayward Harris to have already been killed during the poison wine bottle dinner the night before. Or perhaps he was winged during the saboteurs' escape and is temporarily out of action.

In any case, the GM should try to time things so that the bomb is defused in the nick of time. It is much more fun to cut the final wire stopping the countdown clock at 00:00:02 than it is to stop it at 01:39:47. To facilitate this, the GM may spend Dark Symmetry points during the final test to reduce the timer before the character's very eyes, with each point spent removing up to thirty seconds from the timer, to a minimum of twenty two seconds remaining on the timer.

◆ **The Doom of Heimburg (explosive device):** 4+**T**8, Armour Piercing 4 (vs. the Heimburg only), Blast (Medium), Dreadful, Knockdown, Stun, Vicious 2

THE SECOND BOMB

If the players manage to dispose of the bomb, their efforts will have been in vain, because there is another bomb on board. This second bomb will go off a few seconds after 5:00AM.

As the saboteurs were using the distraction of the poison wine bottles to hide their bombs, they were almost discovered after successfully planting the first bomb in Riedl's cabin. Therefore they abandoned their planned location for the second bomb and simply stuffed it into a rucksack and left it on a pile of luggage in a corridor. As it happens, this hiding in plain sight means that the bomb is not discovered during the searches of the airship.

The second bomb is in a poor location to cause damage, but the explosion will be serious enough to cripple the Glory. The bomb will explode, ripping through a portside access corridor and destroying a number of cabins. It will rip through the superstructure, buckling the ship, and dozens of gasbags will be punctured or loosed.

If the players manage to deal with the first bomb, and the GM is not happy about having a second bomb, or feels it is unfair on the players, then he can skip the next section, and have the airship arrive safely at the landing zone. This does not affect the adventure too much. It simply makes the players' arrival in the jungle less exciting, and puts more equipment and manpower at their disposal. The actual events at the pyramid are not affected a great deal by the players' manner of arrival.

GOING DOWN

When the second bomb explodes, the airship will shudder and grind from the explosion and then lurch suddenly to starboard. As the remaining airbags settle, the ship will lurch just as violently back to port and begin to drop very quickly. The players might wonder whether the ship is falling slowly enough to mean a survivable landing on the jungle canopy below. A quick look at the rapidly approaching jungle will reveal the answer to be 'probably not'. The best bet for anyone aboard the Glory is to get into a survival suit and jump out of the nearest handy hole.

Anyone who has a plausible reason to be close to a survival suit will need to make a **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics test** to get into it quickly under these difficult conditions, and then get themselves clear of the airship. If there are several crew members near a limited supply of survival suits, then they might have to fight each other for them.

If anyone fails to get into a suit or elects to stay on the ship, then they will suffer 3+**↑**7 damage with the Armour Piercing 1, Dreadful, Gruesome, Knockdown, Stun, and Vicious 1 qualities. This number can be reduced slightly by anyone making reasonable preparations for the impending impact; a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** will reduce the damage to 2+**↑**5, whilst each point of Momentum can be used to remove one special quality from the damage.

Anyone using a survival suit successfully should end up with a relatively soft landing onto the jungle canopy. The survival ball might make it down to the ground, or it could end up being stabbed by branches and held up precariously in the high jungle trees. In any case, because of the darkness, the lack of preparation, and the speed of the craft, the survivors will end up spread out over a wide area of jungle.

When the airship crashes, it disturbs a long swathe of jungle as it scuds through the trees, eventually coming to rest. As it slows, pieces of the ship are twisted and ripped away by the trees, equipment is thrown about, superstructure is buckled beyond recognition, large sections of ship break away, and fires break out all over the place, eventually joining up to engulf most of the ship. Anyone surviving the crash will probably need to get clear of the wreckage or be burned.

PART TWO: IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE

DOWN TO EARTH

If the Glory of Heimburg crashes then the players' introduction to the jungles of the Ring of Fire will be sudden and in darkness. Even before dawn, however, the jungle is hot and humid. The huge trees seem to support several different ecosystems depending on their level, but the darkest and most deadly of these is the ground level.

Wherever the players end up landing, it will take them some moments to get their bearings. The only visible landmarks will be the fireball that the main section of airship has turned in to, and a few other smaller fires scattered along the ship's path. Despite the density of the jungle, the main fire should be easy to see and acts as a handy beacon.

The cover of darkness will help any hungry creatures out there who might fancy a bite of crash survivor. One of the players should be attacked by a curious predator, but as soon as anyone gets remotely near the crash site these creatures will slope away for fear of the fire.

THE CRASH SITE

Less than an hour after the crash it will be starting to get light. It would make sense for all the survivors to head for the crash site, which is an easy target, else they will spend their time wandering aimlessly through the dangerous jungle.

When the players get there, they may wish to go through the wreckage to try to salvage what they can. A couple of other survivors may already be there. The GM should work out which of the survey team and airship crew survive the crash. There should be a decent number who were lucky enough, especially some of the stars of the survey team—it would make sense that they were more likely to have their wits about them and get to survival suits.

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

Harding will have survived and will insist on getting started for the landing zone as soon as possible. He is a good enough navigator and knows near enough where they are that he will be able to work out the rough direction to the landing zone. He also has a map, and so within a few miles of setting off he will know exactly where the party is.

There is an argument for staying by the wreckage and waiting to get picked up. However, Harding will insist that if anyone is to look for them, the landing zone is the only place to choose, and he estimates they are only just over a day's walk from there. In addition, while they are waiting for rescue, it makes sense they simply carry on with their survey. Harding will give everyone an hour or so to pick through the wreckage looking for suitable equipment and then lead them off into the jungle.

If any communication devices have survived the crash, then the team will be able to contact the Cartel and report the loss of the Glory. If so, they will be told that all is in hand and that they should proceed to the landing zone if possible and continue with the mission. The survey will send a vessel to rendezvous with them there, presently.

If any of the players wish to find some specific piece of equipment, then the GM should work out the chances of them finding it, and it surviving the crash. Even if a player cannot find his very favourite handgun, he will certainly be able to find one he can use. However, if he needs a unique, remotely delicate piece of kit, then there is very little chance of finding that.

The NPC survey team will salvage equipment associated with their specialty roles and also stock up on all those necessary items like food and drink, weapons, ammo, and tents. Essentially, if someone needs it during the course of the adventure, the chances are someone would have brought it with them, unless it is more fun to have left it behind.

ON THE ROAD

Harding will head off enthusiastically through the jungle towards the landing zone. He has paid no heed to marching order or a defensive formation, he believes the party is relatively safe and they should simply tramp along behind him in a long line. He is confident that they have enough fire power to scare off any of the more dangerous local fauna. If the players think they need a more defensible formation, then they will have to organise it themselves.

Even in the relative cool of the early morning the heat is already oppressive. It is so humid it can feel hard to breathe. Sweat seems to serve no purpose as it just pools on the skin and then drips down the body without cooling anything. The ground is often muddy and cloying, sapping the strength. The undergrowth is thick and tangled, snagging and pulling at the party. Annoying insects buzz incessantly and bite.

The air is filled with exotic sounds, from the delicate calls of unseen bird and insects to the loud bellowing of distant, but undoubtedly large, animals. The flora is so thick and the way through the trees so twisting, that the rear of the party would only rarely catch a glimpse of Harding at its head.

JUNGLE FEVER

The constant heat, humidity, and oppression of the Venusian jungle is extremely taxing to both mind and body. Refer to the rules for cold and heat hazards on page 104 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core rulebook, with the jungle temperatures qualifying in the above 35° Celsius range throughout the day.

JUNGLE HAZARDS

There are numerous dangerous animals and plants in the jungle. Most creatures are only looking for food, and the easier the prey the better. They are unlikely to attack the survey team as a group, but when one of the team gets separated or becomes vulnerable through injury or fatigue, then they might make ripe picking for a hungry creature. If a creature is unwittingly surprised or cornered it will lash out and attack before scurrying away. The list below contains some of the creatures the players might come across in this corner of the jungle. Many of the creatures below are detailed in the **Bauhaus Sourcebook**.

LOOTER MONKEY

Looter Monkeys are generally frightened of the Guardians (see page 37) so are quite rare around the survey area. However, having a piece of vital equipment stolen by a mischievous primate is always good fun, and so there should be the odd Looter troop around.

LOOTER MONKEY ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
5	5	13	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
13	3	6	3

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

WOUNDS: 2

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Bite (melee):** 1+▲3, 1H, Infection
- ◆ **Thrown Rock (ranged):** Range C, 1+▲3, Munition, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Infection:** When making a bite attack, if one or more Dark Symmetry symbols are rolled, the creature wounded by the Looter Monkey must attempt a Resistance test, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry symbols rolled, or suffer Infected Wounds (page 312 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook).
- ◀ **Little Thieves:** A trained Looter Monkey has Thievery Expertise 2 and Thievery Focus 2, but may only use that skill to pick pockets or otherwise steal small items unnoticed.
- ◀ **Ravager Monkey:** These symmetry-mutated primates are essentially identical to normal Looter Monkeys, but they have the Slave to Symmetry (3) ability, and their Infection ability inflicts Venusian Fever instead of Infected Wounds.

DEVILCAT

This animal is all teeth, claws and ferocity. The Devilcat is a large predatory feline that weighs as much as a full grown man. It has a shiny and short coat of black fur. Its musculature and body is similar in appearance to that of a cougar, but it is much more robust. The head is more primitive and its paws and claws are extremely powerful. Its canines are larger than those of any other known feline and in contrast to the animal's size it makes it resemble a prehistoric sabre tooth predator. Its black eyes gleam red when hit by light, and it has an eerie growl that makes the blood grow cold in one's veins. The Devilcat Rex is a particularly massive specimen, the size of a small tank and just as fearsome.

The Devilcat is a nocturnal animal, which hunts in prides. Beyond being very adept stealth hunters, and powerful, the animal has a bizarre vicious streak and is extremely aggressive. They tend to tear the limbs off their fallen and still living prey, ripping their abdomens open and feeding on their innards while the prey is still alive. The fur of a Devilcat is worth around 55,000 Crowns, while the entire pelt (with the head and claws intact and attached) of the larger Devilcat Rex is worth five times this amount.

Devilcats are common enough in the area of the jungle around the crash site, but their territorial needs conflict with the Guardians (see page 37). So, as the players approach the survey site there will be much less danger of being attacked by these fearsome predators.

DEVILCAT ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
16 (+1)	16	11	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
4	5	6	3

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

WOUNDS: 10

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Bite (melee):** 2+ \uparrow 7, Gruesome, Unforgiving 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Fear (1)**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Quadruped:** A Devilcat has forelegs instead of arms, and hindlegs instead of legs.
- ◀ **Supernatural Strength (1)**
- ◀ **Terrifying Pounce:** Devilcats are notorious for their savagery and ferocity, and the swiftness of their attacks is terrifying to behold. The first time in each scene that a Devilcat makes a Restricted Action move before attacking, it gains the effects of the Exploit Weakness action for free. If the target has not yet made a Willpower test because of the Devilcat's Fear ability, then the difficulty of that Willpower test increases by one step.

DEVILCAT REX ☹

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
15 (+2)	15 (+3)	3	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
4	5	6	3

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

WOUNDS:

- ◀ **Head 10**
- ◀ **Forelegs 12**
- ◀ **Serious 14**
- ◀ **Mental 6**
- ◀ **Torso 16**
- ◀ **Hindlegs 14**
- ◀ **Critical 11**

SOAK: Iron-hard Hide: (All 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Rending Bite (melee):** 3+ \uparrow 7, Gruesome, Unforgiving 2, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Dark Presence**
- ◀ **Fear (2)**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Monstrous Creature**

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

their prey with their sharp claws, cracking open their prey's skull and eating its brains whilst in the air.

Devilbats are attracted to the pyramid in the survey site and so there are a number of these to be encountered. Generally, they are too big to fly between the trees and so are of little danger to the survey team as they make their way through the deep jungle. Only when they cross clearings will the players be in particular danger. Or, if player climbs to the top of the canopy for some reason, he could be a prime target for a Devilbat.

The area around the pyramid and the research station is cleared to a degree, and the Devilbats seems to be attracted to that place. They seem to circle round and round above it endlessly. Therefore, once the pyramid or research station is reached, the survey team will have to be on the lookout for these predators. The GM should consider having one of the survey team carried off by a Devilbat soon after they reach the pyramid.

DEVILBAT ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
17 (+1)	12 (+2)	10	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
4	3	6	2

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

WOUNDS: 12

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Bite (melee):** 2+↑7, Gruesome, Vicious 2
- ▶ **Claws (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Flight:** Devilbats are winged creatures, able to soar and glide through the air as easily as humans walk. A Devilbat can move freely through the air, and can move as though there were additional zones directly above the battlefield.
- ▶ **Night Vision**
- ▶ **Supernatural Physique (2)**
- ▶ **Supernatural Strength (1)**

DARK SYMMETRY SPENDS

- ▶ **Swooping Attack:** A Devilbat that makes a successful attack with its claws may grab the target by spending one or more

Dark Symmetry points, exactly as if it had the Grasping special ability. Once it has a target grabbed, any bite attack the Devilbat against the grabbed creature automatically hits the target's head. Because the Devilbat flies, any creature that breaks free from being grabbed may take falling damage as a result.

PITCHER PLANT

These huge carnivorous plants resemble a great pitcher of foul, corrosive digestive juices. They burrow deep into the ground and grow a thin protective membrane across the mouths of their pitchers. Any hapless creature that steps on the membrane will fall through, and slide down the slippery sides of the pitcher itself, coming to rest in a pool of digestive acid.

One of the advantages of Harding leading his single file formation is that he is the only one likely to end up in the bowels of a Pitcher Plant. These are probably more of a threat to anyone who wanders off alone, or explores a new area.

A Pitcher Plant is an environmental hazard that costs three Dark Symmetry points. Spotting a Pitcher Plant's membrane requires a **Challenging D2 Observation** or **Survival test**, whilst avoiding the trap requires a **Daunting D3 Acrobatics test**, reduced to an **Average D1 Acrobatics** if the character succeeded at his Observation test.

Anyone falling into the pitcher plummets 1+1d3 floors into the pool of digestive acid and is subjected to the resultant falling damage. On each subsequent round, the victim must succeed at an **Average D1 Resistance test** to avoid the Staggered status effect as the fumes of the digestive acids begin to attack his internal organs. The difficulty of this Resistance test increases by one step for every ten minutes that the character is trapped within the pitcher. The acid and fumes also begin to blister the character's skin, inflicting 1+↑2 damage with the Vile and Spread 1 qualities per round, though Soak applies as normal.

Climbing from a Pitcher Plant is an exceedingly difficult task due to the saliva and fluids that line the pitcher's gullet. A **Dire D4 Athletics test** is required each round to make any progress at all, with success ensuring that the character is able to climb a distance of one floor. Use of some form of rope will decrease the difficulty of the Athletics test by two steps. Momentum may be used to climb additional floors. Note that the character is subject to the effects of the digestive fluids described above for the entire time that he is climbing free, plus for one round upon his exit.

BLACK LOTUS

These huge bell-blossomed plants are very beautiful and unintentionally deadly. They give out a strange cloying fragrance that fills the air around them. This fragrance is a subtle narcotic, which first intoxicates the victim, then lulls him into a deep, dream filled sleep. Falling unconscious can of course be fatal within the Venusian jungles, since many animals are immune to the vapours.

Black Lotus blossom is used as the basis for many illegal recreational drugs, which has produced the requirement for a regular supply of its seed. Numerous suitably protected freelancers scour the jungle for this plant in their efforts to earn a dishonest living.

There are very few Black Lotus plants growing in this part of the jungle and those there are generally young. As the players get closer to the survey site there are fewer and fewer. Anyone who knows much about the flora of this area would expect there to be many more, and certainly more mature specimens. The reason behind this is that the Guardians (see page 37) eat these plants and enjoy their narcotic effects. The deeper into Guardian territory the players get, the fewer Black Lotus they will encounter.

Black Lotus is an environmental hazard that requires three Dark Symmetry points to trigger. A **Daunting D3 Observation test** is required to detect its pungent odour at Medium range, alternatively, a **Daunting D3 Survival test** can be made to both detect and recognise the distinctive aroma. Either of these tests reduce to **Average D1** when within Close range. Recognising the odour at Medium range will allow the characters to bypass the Black Lotus completely. Passing a **Survival test** within Close range will allow a character the opportunity hold his breath until he moves to a safer distance (Medium range). Attempting to shout a warning to colleagues before exhaling will subject them to the effects of the Black Lotus as described below.

Black Lotus pollen is an inhaled narcotic with the following qualities:

- ◄ **VECTOR:** Airborne
- ◄ **VIRULENCE:** 4
- ◄ **INCUBATION PERIOD:** Instant
- ◄ **SYMPTOMS:** Patient is Dazed and Perplexed for the period of the Interval. The difficulty of the Willpower test to ignore the effects of the Perplexed condition is increased to Dire D4. The character cannot lose the Perplexed condition caused by the pollen for so long as he remains within Close range of the Black Lotus plant. The GM should roll three **↑** at the beginning of each round that an affected character remains within the Black Lotus' zone of influence and note down the total; for this purpose, Dark Symmetry Icons should also be recorded as though a two had been rolled. The GM may spend one Dark Symmetry point each round to increase the total by one. Once this total reaches ten and beyond, characters who fail (or choose not to roll) their Resistance test on rounds subsequent to this immediately fall into a deep, dream-filled sleep for 1d20 hours. Awakening from the slumber will immediately invoke a new Resistance test to avoid the plants effects, which may perpetuate the cycle; characters could literally waste away in a dream fugue—provided jungle predators do not take advantage first of course.

- ◄ **INTERVAL:** Hours (Acute 3). Once he succumbs, a character may not shake off the effects of the Black Lotus plant's cloying aroma at all whilst within Close range of it. The interval number listed is only relevant once an affected character is removed from the pollen's effective range.

ANACONDA

This huge non-venomous constrictor snake is at home in or out of the water. It likes to lie in wait for potential victims, remaining quite still until the moment it strikes. It can show unusual patience and intelligence. The creature can grow to lengths of more than seven metres.

ANACONDA ▲

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
8 (+1)		8		6		7	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
6		3		6		4	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS: 4

SOAK: Scaly Hide: (All 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◄ **Constricting Coils (melee):** 2+**↑**4, Knockdown

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◄ **Amphibious Jungle Predator:** The Venusian Anaconda is perfectly suited to jungle predation. It gains one bonus Momentum on any Athletics test made to climb or swim, and on any Stealth test made to ambush, hide, or sneak whilst within the jungle.

DEVILFISH

The Devilfish is a type of electric eel that inhabits still and fetid waters in the jungles of Venus. If an unwary traveller disturbs one while crossing such a feature, the creature will defend itself with a powerful electric shock before slipping away to safety.

DEVILFISH ▲

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
6		6		5		6	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
5		2		5		3	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: Rubbery Hide: (All 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Bite (melee):** 1+**T**3, Armour Piercing 1
- ◆ **Shock Pulse (ranged):** Close 1+**T**4, Munition, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters, Spread 1, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Cellular Discharge:** Its ability to shock is intermittent. The GM should roll 2**T** at the beginning of every round following a Shock Pulse attack. Shock Pulse immediately reloads itself if either dice rolls a Dark Symmetry Icon.
- ◆ **Night Vision**
- ◆ **Slippery Slime Hugger:** The Devilfish is at home amongst the slime and sludge of the jungle waterways. When attempting a test in relation to swimming, it has Athletics Expertise 2 and Athletics Focus 1, and does not suffer penalties for difficult terrain whilst underwater. Additionally, it gains one bonus Momentum on Stealth tests whilst submerged.

QUICKMUD

The jungle around this area is perpetually waterlogged. Areas of muddy ground are almost indistinguishable from pools of treacherous quickmud. Anyone stepping into an area of quickmud will need to make a **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics** or **Athletics test**, or become stuck in its unrelenting grasp. To free such a victim requires an **Epic (D5) Athletics test**.

The mud actually sucks its victim down extremely slowly. The more a victim struggles, however, the quicker he will sink. One of the disadvantages of being stuck in the mud in the middle of the jungle is that other predators will take advantage. Areas of quickmud are often patrolled by Pythons and Devilcats. Very often the quickmud's victim is not fortunate enough to live long enough to drown in the mud.

RIVER CROSSING

The sodden jungle floor is criss-crossed by myriad rivulets and streams. These are easy enough to cross, but occasionally a larger watercourse will need to be traversed. Sometimes these are extremely fast flowing and made treacherously slippery by slime and lichens.

The GM should throw a difficult water crossing at the investigators at some point in their jungle trek. As well as the fast-flowing water,

the place will be watched by predators ready to take advantage of a slip. Within the water devilfish and anacondas might lie in wait, while looter monkeys might be ready for anyone trying to cross by climbing the trees. The clearing created by the river might also give an opportunity for circling Devilbats to swoop and grab a victim while he is preoccupied with crossing the river.

A NIGHT IN THE JUNGLE

Eventually, after what seems like an interminable trek, the sun will begin to drop from the sky and it will be clear that the team will not be able to make the survey site by nightfall. In fact (as Harding will grudgingly admit) they are only just over halfway through their journey.

Choosing a decent place to camp takes experience of the jungle conditions. The lower branches of some of the trees are actually wide enough to pitch tents on. This can be the safer option, being clear of the jungle floor and also sheltered by the branches above.

Camping on an area of lower ground, especially in a gully, can feel safer and be hard to see, but flash floods can occur at any time. Such a flood will wash away the entire camp and threaten to drown anyone in it.

The night might offer no let up from the trials of the day. Looter monkeys can harass the party, trying to take things as soon as their backs are turned. Devilbats might swoop if the players have not chosen a sheltered area to camp.

To annoy the players after spending a day soaked with sweat, it can simply rain all night, and, of course, the tents salvaged from the burning wreck of the Glory are bound to be full of holes.

Perhaps one of the party is nowhere to be seen in the morning. He mysteriously disappeared during the night and there is no sign of him the next day and no clue to suggest what fate may have befallen him.

THE GUARDIANS

In order to ensure that the pyramid could never be opened, that no humans would discover it and live, Martin Renaud decided to create a race of guardians perfectly suited to jungle living who could survive and breed in the area and protect the pyramid for all time.

He got together some of the best Bauhaus scientists and set them to work in a camp in the shadow of the pyramid. The camp became its own community, working independently of the rest of civilisation for around ten years. The scientists were guarded by some of the finest Bauhaus soldiers and supported by a team of ancillary workers.

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

QUICK ADVICE

If you are running the *Second Seal* adventure as a stand-alone piece to your own campaign, and are planning to use the Huge Beast (see page 52) as the epic conclusion to these events, it may pay you to begin alluding to the creature's presence during this part of the scenario. Perhaps the Guardians have taken to worshipping the beast and are hoping to use the players as a meal ticket to appease it. Ominous signs of the creature's passage, strange talismans strewn around the jungle and possessed by the Guardians, and distant thunderous bellowing are some of the means that could be used to foreshadow the beast's emergence.

Particularly vindictive GMs may wish to make use of the Huge Beast despite the fact that they are planning to run the campaign in its entirety. All of the above will, of course, still apply in this case.



The Guardians: the night has a thousand eyes.

The scientists took many of the most adapted jungle dwellers, like the Devilcat and the Looter Monkey, and combined them with human DNA to create a brand new race of intelligent beings who could protect the pyramid savagely for all time.

The work took many years and Martin was an old man before he deemed the project complete enough to unleash the Guardians on the jungle. Martin felt he could not allow even the smallest risk of the secret of the Guardians becoming known. To make sure that no one would ever hear of the project or the pyramid again, Martin ordered the camp guards to murder all the scientists and ancillary workers. Then, inevitably, the craft sent to pick up the soldiers crashed mysteriously on its way back to Heimbürg.

The only legacy of the project is the community of Guardians who live in the jungle around the pyramid who have a species-wide imperative to protect the site from any encroachment.

GUARDIANS ▲OR★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	9	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	4	6	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS: 4 (Trooper) or 6 (Elite)

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◆ **Discarded Implements (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4, 1H

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Genengineered to Endure:** The Guardians have been crossbred to thrive amongst the jungle foliage. They reduce all climbing, jumping, and difficult terrain tests by one whilst using the trees for movement, which may eliminate the need for a test. Additionally, they never suffer any penalty for climbing without suitable equipment within the tree cover. Further, when calculating damage from a fall, they may reduce the distance fallen by up to three metres.
- ◆ **Hostile Cacophony:** The Guardians work in concert and use their voices to discourage visitors. Ten or more Guardians may raise a vocal din that targets any non-Guardian within Medium range. Those creatures must immediately attempt a Challenging D2 Willpower test, as though affected by the Fear (2) special ability.

◀ **In Defence of the Pyramid:** The Guardians can enter a frenzy when fighting to defend the Pyramid. By spending one or more Dark Symmetry points, all Guardians present enter a terrible rage. They gain one additional Momentum on each successful melee attack whilst in this state. The rage lasts for a number of rounds equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent.

◀ **Night Vision**

ON THE RUN

The players set out with the rest of the surviving survey team, following Commander Harding's lead. It soon becomes unbearably hot again and if the night provided any respite from the inhospitable jungle day that is soon forgotten. The morning can be largely uneventful, a calm before the storm, because the trek to the survey site is about to become extremely dangerous.

Towards the last few hours of the day, the survey team hears a strange new call from the depths of the jungle, the call of the Guardians. The trek has been full of the weird new sounds of unseen exotic beasts, and the players might not even notice this new call. But a few hundred meters later they will hear it again, and this time it is answered. The call is like a wolf's howl but more shrill and it carries through the jungle rather conspicuously.

The second call is a clear reply to the first. Then the first calls again. And there is another reply. The calls change subtly and soon it is apparent that these creatures are in a relatively complex conversation. Then a third voice joins them. At this point the players are only about a kilometre from the survey site. The Guardians are beginning to realise that the survey team is heading directly for their temple, and they are preparing their defence.

Soon, any number of calls ring out from the jungle. There must be dozens of the creatures. The players will get the impression of being entirely surrounded, and the strange and aggressive noises should bring an air of apprehension; the Guardians are acting in concert to use their Hostile Cacophony ability.

As the howling reaches a crescendo, the Guardians will suddenly pour forth from every angle. They creep through the undergrowth, or drop from the trees, and will engage every member of the survey team almost immediately.

They first appear as tall humanoid creatures, like some sort of feral human warrior, but as the players get clearer glances they will see the Guardians are more cat-like. They have green, brown, black, and white mottled fur, similar in pattern and variety to domestic cats. They are bipedal but move with a feline grace, and yet swing through the trees like monkeys. Their facial features are more cat than man or monkey. Their limbs seem too long for their bodies, like gibbons. The largest are about two metres tall, but appear larger when running or climbing.

They have opposable thumbs and carry a variety of weapons. Some of these have been taken from the Bauhaus research station, like knives, spanners, and other simple tools. One even has an old Bauhaus MG-40, which he uses as a club. Some weapons are made from sticks and bones. They adorn their bodies with rudimentary clothing, again made from bits and pieces from the research station, or created from things found in the jungle. One seems to be wearing a plastic, check table cloth, another, bits a tarpaulin.

There should be at least two Guardians for every member of the survey team. Most are the Elite warriors and leaders of the tribe. Once more than half the Guardians are dispatched, then they will retreat back into the jungle, disappearing as suddenly as they appeared.

TAKING STOCK

If the Guardian onslaught is survived, then there might be some discussion of what to do next. It should seem that the Guardians are defending some sort of territory and it will feel like the survey team is encroaching further upon that if they continue towards the research station. On the other hand, the research station is the only decent shelter and the only spot known to civilisation for hundreds of kilometres, and is the only place they could conceivably get airlifted from without going back to the wreck of the Glory and hoping someone will come across that.

Although it will be dangerous, there really is nowhere else to go. Harding and all the influential members of the survey team will reluctantly concede that that is the way forward. They will also want to get going as soon as possible as the night is beginning to draw in and they would rather be at the station when darkness falls than out in the jungle with those cat-things roaming around.

THE LAST STAND

If they press on, their route means that the survey team will discover the research station before the pyramid, but the pyramid will be easy enough to see beyond it, across the jungle clearing. The Guardians will defend their homes in the research station to an extent but will soon flee to the pyramid. The pyramid is their *raison d'être*. This is where they will make their last stand and fight to the death.

The Guardians have tried their massive ambush and it failed. They have lost many of their best warriors and their leaders. Therefore, although the defence of their home and their pyramid will be fierce and to the death, it will not be as coordinated as it might have otherwise been. There will still be a good number of them, however. Many younger Guardians who did not take part in the ambush in the jungle will be at the last stand around the pyramid. Most Guardians here will be Troopers, interspersed with Elites.

Eventually, if they survive, the survey team will get the upper hand and the Guardians' position will be seen to be hopeless. Despite

this they will still lay down their lives, virtually throwing themselves at the survey team in order to protect what they have been genetically programmed to protect. This should register with the players, and they should realise that there must be some reason the Guardians are doing this, beyond simply defending their territory.

The final stand of the Guardians at the pyramid will be carnage. To any balanced person this should seem like an atrocious slaughter. However, there is something about the pyramid: a malevolent pervasion that can bring out the worst instincts for chaos and violence. Anyone taking part in the fight against the Guardians around the pyramid should make a **Daunting (D3) Willpower test**. If they succeed then they are able to step back from the situation. If they fail, then they lose any inhibitions they had to the thrill of their bloody violence and continue their massacre enthusiastically until every last one of the Guardians is dead. Failing the Willpower test can also invite in the Darkness; the GM can opt to spend Dark Symmetry points here on Corruption rolls.

The players and other members of the survey team can put this down to whatever force they like. They could consider it a just and fitting end for savages who were trying to kill them, they could consider it a simple but unfortunate fact of war, or they could genuinely glory in the blood bath and revel in the murderous fun of it all.

PART THREE: THE RESEARCH STATION

A respectful distance, about half a kilometre, from the imposing pyramid sits Martin Renault's research station, all but reclaimed by the rampant jungle. It was here that Bauhaus scientists worked for nearly ten years on creating the creatures that might protect humanity from the pyramid. When they were finished, Renault had them murdered.

It is a fenced compound about fifty metres square, containing a number of small accommodation blocks, a recreation building, and a larger research building. The place is made from prefabricated modular concrete blocks of a style that was popular in the quick-build boom of the early colonisation period. Anyone who knows a bit about construction would realise the station could have been erected virtually overnight.

The station is situated in the flat of a valley and in an area relatively clear of the largest trees. It used to be clear for hundreds of metres around and have an adjacent landing strip. All this has been lost to the jungle over the years, but it is still easy to see where the cleared area used to be.



The research station: something has survived.

THE FENCE

The wire-link security fence still stands in places, and has become part of the jungle, intertwined with vines and undergrowth. In other places it has collapsed and is lost entirely to the flora. The buildings, where accessible, are now inhabited by the Guardians. A number of the infants will still be hiding in here, too frightened now that the fight is undoubtedly lost to sacrifice themselves to the defence of their pyramid.

The main gate is long lost, but next to the gap in the fence is a security station. This is entirely bare (except for some low-status Guardian nests) because the soldiers who manned it wished to leave no trace whatsoever of their presence.

THE ACCOMMODATION BLOCKS

The accommodation blocks are designed to house eight individuals in single rooms (though there are some double rooms) with shared toilet facilities. There are ten blocks lined up in orderly rows. All the blocks have been trashed and very little remains to give a clue to what happened here. Much of the bedding and fabrics left behind have been repurposed to line the Guardian nests or to make their rudimentary clothing. The plumbing has long since ceased to function, but this is not an issue as the Guardians go into the jungle to do their ablutions.

THE RECREATION BUILDING

The second largest building in the compound is this one, which acted as a canteen, meeting room, and leisure area. Now it has been turned into a sort of throne room for the king of the Guardians. In the large canteen area it is easy to make out where the king sits and sleeps. There is a pile of furs surrounded by crafted goods like crudely carved bones and pieces of interesting jungle flotsam. Other nests, of favoured courtiers, are dotted around the place.

The kitchen area looks almost functional, with shiny metal surfaces still barely visible beneath centuries of grime and the reticent incursion of jungle plants. The kitchen has long since been pillaged for knives and other utensils that have served the primitive Guardian community.

There is a metal padlocked door off the kitchen that leads down to the basement. This was used as a storage area, the underground situation helping to keep things a little cooler than the rest of the camp. Nothing much has been able to get into this well-constructed vault over the years, so it is in a different state to the rest of the camp.

The food in here is utterly rotten, but despite being hundreds of years old, the remains are largely intact. The whole place is rank with putrefaction. Anyone entering the storage room is required to make a **Daunting (D3) Willpower test** or immediately re-visit his last meal. If he wishes to stay in the room he will count as Dazed while down there.

Apart from the rancid food there is a tank that holds the camp's collection of rainwater, but there is too much dead stuff floating in it for it to be of much use. There are a couple of half full tanks of fuel, also, which are marked 'flammable' and 'explosive'. These can be utilised by the players.

THE RESEARCH LAB

The centrepiece of the compound is the domed research facility. It is nearly engulfed beneath vines, creepers, and other jungle plants, but is still recognisable for its early Bauhaus style.

Around the doorway to this area the Guardians have built a rudimentary porch-like structure out of branches and vines. Beneath this porch, before the main door to the facility, the Guardians have created a pattern out of whatever colourful items they could scavenge from the jungle and the camp. There are beetles, shellfish, furs, and plant matter all making up a deceptively complex design. The design is recognisable as the crest of the Renaults (a bunch of grapes within the Bauhaus cog). It seems that the Guardians have deemed the research facility and the Renaults worthy of veneration.

The door to the research lab is sealed shut. It requires a **Dire (D4) Athletics test** to force it open, but explosives or heavy weapons should manage it comfortably.

The interior of the lab building has not been touched by the Guardians. They either could not get it open or did not want to. The place is eerily similar to the moment it was closed off all those centuries ago. There is a mustiness in the air, but the place has not been touched by the jungle.

Some of the building has been set aside for six small office rooms. These have plainly been purged of any information. There is not a single scrap of paper to be found and even if the ancient computers could get booted up, the drives are empty, or missing. There is no sign of a rush at all. All the removal of data was done calmly and carefully.

Most of the building is laboratory space. There is a Mutant Growth living on the ceiling of the laboratory, which looks like little more than a stain on the ceiling. It requires a **Daunting (D3) Observation test** to notice it. If someone walks beneath the creature, it will drop down and attack him.

The laboratory smells of some strange acrid substance. It has a raised area in the centre upon which sits six transparent tanks. Three of the tanks have a greenish liquid inside. One of the tanks, the one the Mutant Growth developed inside, has cracked and there is a thick greenish residue within it and all across the floor where it has leaked. The other two are empty. There are a number of microscopes and similar sorts of lab equipment, but slides and samples have also been removed.

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

Anyone with any knowledge in the field would know instantly that this is some sort of genetic manipulation lab and the tanks were used for the speedy growth of genetically manipulated life forms. Otherwise it would take a **Challenging (D2) Science test** to work it out.

One side of the lab contains a row of cages. The cages range from cat size to human size. They are all empty but there is straw around and the odd food dish. A **Challenging (D2) Observation test** will reveal traces of a variety of hair and fur types. Most of the fur is similar to that of the cat-monkey-creatures that the players have just encountered.

MUTANT GROWTH

The Mutant Growth is a freak result of mixing genetic experiments, DNA-rich fluids, and hundreds of years. This weird creature has evolved while the laboratory has been sealed off from the outside world, sustained by the nutrient rich DNA soups that were left behind when Martin ordered the camp closed. It is very slowly crawling across the ceiling of the lab, an activity it has been undertaking for literally years.

If someone passes beneath it, it will drop down from the ceiling and envelope its victim. It will then attempt to ingest him by secreting a strongly acidic digestive fluid all over its victim. The real problem of dealing with the creature is not trying to damage it, as it is harmed easily enough, but in avoiding damaging whomever it has enveloped, or in trying to get it off its victim, which is much harder than it looks. Attempts to grab it simply tear through its thin jelly-like endoplasm.

MUTANT GROWTH ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
6	9	4	4
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
4	3	3	3

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

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Congealed Secretions: (All 1)

ATTACKS:

◀ **Acidic Secretions (melee):** 1+[†]3, Dreadful 1, Spread 2, Vile

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◀ **Braindead**

◀ **Enveloping Ooze:** The Mutant Growth gets one shot at engulfing its chosen victim and attacks from ambush if undetected. It must make a Ranged Attack test against the intended target. If successful, the attack deals no damage, but the target has been enveloped and is subject to the Mutant Growth's Grasping ability in subsequent rounds, in addition to its Acidic Secretions melee attack. Attacks targeting the Mutant Growth also affect its victim whilst it has a creature enveloped, although the engulfed creature gains one Soak against the attack, in addition to any other source of Soak it may possess. Grabbing and tearing at the Growth inflicts standard unarmed melee damage to it, but subjects the attacker to the Growth's Acidic Secretions.

◀ **Fast Healing (1)**

◀ **Grasping**

◀ **Miniscule Movement:** The Mutant Growth has no capacity for any kind of Movement Action, essentially landing where it falls. It cannot use Response Actions. Other than its Enveloping Ooze ability, the Growth may not take any Attack Actions.

◀ **Night Vision**

◀ **Translucent Growth:** The Mutant Growth is difficult to detect against the laboratory ceiling, requiring a Dire D4 Observation test to recognise it as anything other than a smear of congealed slime.

THE BURIAL MOUND

At the far end of the compound is a low hummock, about ten metres long. It is covered in undergrowth and has some larger plants growing from it. A **Challenging (D2) Observation test** would lead anyone with some experience of archaeology to suspect it of being some sort of burial site.

This is the mass grave for the camp staff that were murdered by the Bauhaus soldiers. They dug and filled this grave as a final act before leaving on their ill-fated trip back to Heimburg. The site is plainly many hundreds of years old. If the hummock were to be excavated, the bodies of the fifty or so scientific and ancillary workers could be found. While some have eclectic wounds, the majority have been shot in the back of the head: a clear indication of methodical extermination.



PART FOUR: THE PYRAMID

The black pyramid was created long before humans walked upon the Earth and the events of that time will never be known. Even its function is unfathomable. Is it a prison or a temple? Is its presence the will of the Dark Soul or its enemies? Is the players' encroachment unforeseen or part of some portentous plan? Is this the plan of the Dark Soul or those who have already seen its inevitable defeat? The pyramid itself is as closed to scrutiny and comprehension as the flat, dull material of which it is made.

The pyramid sits bizarrely untouched by the jungle around it. It is a black, clean pyramid of straight lines, right angles, and simple mathematical precision within the impenetrable tangle of the forest. It is roughly forty metres across at the base (this is measured roughly in metres because although the dimensions of the pyramid are precise and repetitive, they are not in any unit known to man). It has five stepped levels. Each level is about five metres high, and each step is five metres narrower than the previous one.

Atop the highest level is a conical apex pointing skyward, although it is difficult to make out the cone exactly as a cloud has formed around it. The cone is extremely cold, and in the hot jungle air a mist or cloud always seems to hang around it.

The structure looks like it has been polished absolutely smooth, although it is strangely unreflective. It looks like it might be made of marble or obsidian but it is much stronger than any of those. It is almost as hard to mark as diamond, but it is nowhere near as easy to shatter. The material cannot be marked. Any sort of substance, even paint or glue, does not adhere to it, and even a light rain will wash paint away.

Once the players have a chance to take stock outside the pyramid, they will notice that the jungle seems reticent to encroach too heavily upon the area. The trees get shorter and less impressive as they near the structure. The undergrowth becomes less insistent and the fauna (save for the Guardians and the Devilbats circling overhead) increasingly sparse. No plants, or even the most primitive life forms, grow upon the pyramid itself.

OUTSIDE THE PYRAMID

There is a wooden hut-like structure in front of the pyramid. This was created by the Guardians as a more accessible temple to honour the pyramid. It is similar to the porch they constructed outside the laboratory in the research station, except it is adorned with much more terrible and violent iconography.

The structure has a flat, grass roof and a single step that apes the pyramid. It is hung with hundreds of animal skulls and countless bones, representing the most impressive of the Guardians' victims

over hundreds of years. There is an indentation in the floor of this temple, a sort of pit that the Guardians have scraped out. The floor of the pit is stained black with the blood of countless jungle animals that have been sacrificed here to honour the pyramid (or its inhabitants).

Across the entrance are some steel double doors. These doors should immediately strike the players as out of place and time. The doors were installed by Martin Renaud and cast with the House Renaud crest. To finish the job, Martin had them sealed all around with wax to make them air tight.

Despite being finely made, the many years stood against the jungle elements have not been kind to the doors and they have weakened. It should, however, require a very good idea or an impressive force to open them. If the survey team have not managed to bring explosives with them, then the fuel barrels beneath the research station can be used to make some sort of improvised device that would be powerful enough to shift them.

INSIDE THE PYRAMID

Upon entering the pyramid, the players should feel immediately different. Those who failed their Willpower test when slaughtering the last of the Guardians are more susceptible now to the power of the pyramid, and will not notice the mood of the pyramid as much as their colleagues. Those who managed to pass that Willpower test will be able to feel a certain ominous pervading gloom. The hair on the back of their necks will stand up and they will feel the cold of the pyramid as some sort of malevolent chill.

The pyramid seems unnaturally dark. The players will have the odd notion that they cannot see as far as they should be able to. Torch light does not penetrate the darkness quite as much as it could. People's expressions are not quite as easy to read. Quick movements look strangely blurred, momentarily. All this contributes to the disconcerting air.

The Pyramid is much colder than it should be. It is a mystery how it could stay so cold in the heat of the jungle. After spending so long sweating under the sun, the cold of the pyramid starts as a welcome respite but should soon become uncomfortable. As the players get closer and closer to the heart of the pyramid, the darkness seems darker, and the cold colder. The entire interior of the pyramid seems strangely devoid of any intrusion of outside elements. There is no dust or dirt, no mould or insects. It is almost as if the place is entirely sterile.

THE CORRIDOR

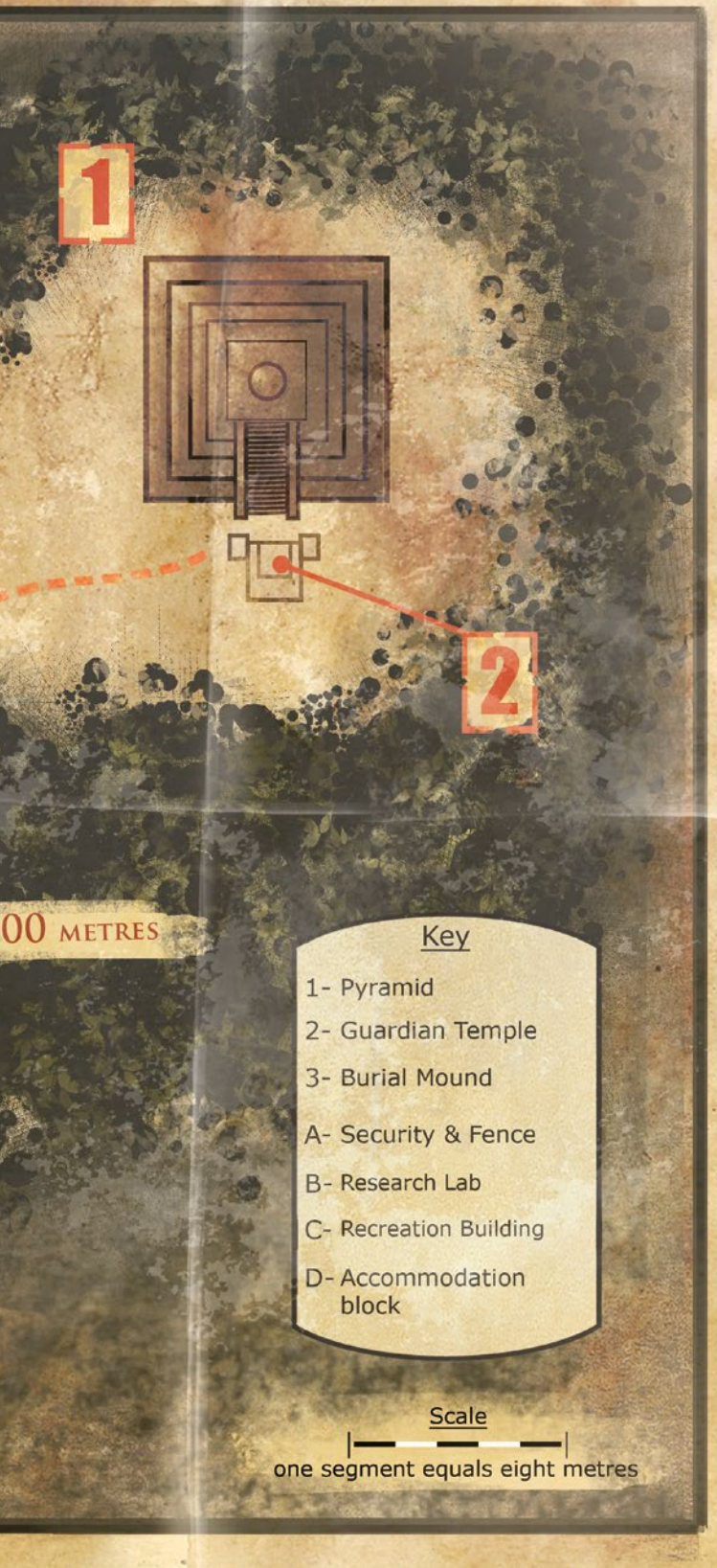
A single passageway penetrates into the heart of the pyramid. On a **Challenging (D2) Observation test** it could be seen that the walls of this corridor are more roughly hewn than the super-smooth exterior. Renaud had this way in cut by lasers in his attempt to find out what lay at the heart of the structure.

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

PYRAMID SITE



VENUSIAN APOCALYPSE PART 01



A few metres into the darkness lay the ancient remains of eight Bauhaus scientists. They have been remarkably preserved by the atmosphere within the pyramid: their skin remains intact, stretched taut over their bones, and their white lab coats still survive with their Bauhaus IDs attached. If any of the bodies are disturbed they will crumble to dust. Each one of the scientists was shot in the back of the head on Martin Renauld's orders. These were the only people in his expedition, apart from Renauld himself, who went into the tomb area at the heart of the pyramid, below.

THE VAULT

Beyond the bodies, the laser-hewn access corridor continues about fifteen metres before breaking into the central vault of the pyramid. This room is about ten metres across and very high. It narrows as it rises, and if there is enough light the inside of the conical peak can be made out.

At the centre of the room is a five metre diameter hole in the floor. This perfect circle drops straight down for thirty five metres. A one metre wide spiral ramp follows the wall of this circular hole all the way down. The cold in the room emanates from this hole.

Descending the spiral ramp, the gradient is quite steep and the perfect surface of the ramp, rather slick. It requires a **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics test** to get to the bottom without slipping. As they descend, any moisture the players have brought in with them from the jungle turns to ice on their clothing and equipment, while their breath turns instantly to mist.

The ramp drops thirty metres in four revolutions and ends five metres above a floor made of similar black material. The players will need to either jump for it, or work out some way of securing ropes to the black material, which will have already proven remarkably resistant to damage or adhesion.

THE TOMB

If the investigators can make the drop, they will land in the centre of a large room. It is square and forty metres across. Whatever light sources the players are using, it is difficult to see from one side of the room to the other, so much light does the black stone seem to suck from the air.

In the middle of each wall is an alcove, and each alcove contains a sarcophagus. Though it is difficult to keep one's bearings and navigational equipment ceases to work down in the tomb, the sarcophagi will still be referred to here by their compass positions. The north, west, and south alcoves are about five metres wide and deep, and the sarcophagi are about two and a half metres long and made of purple marble. Each sarcophagus has four panels of highly detailed bas relief carved in its side. The eastern alcove and sarcophagus is much larger. Each sarcophagus is also adorned with ancient and untranslatable runes.

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

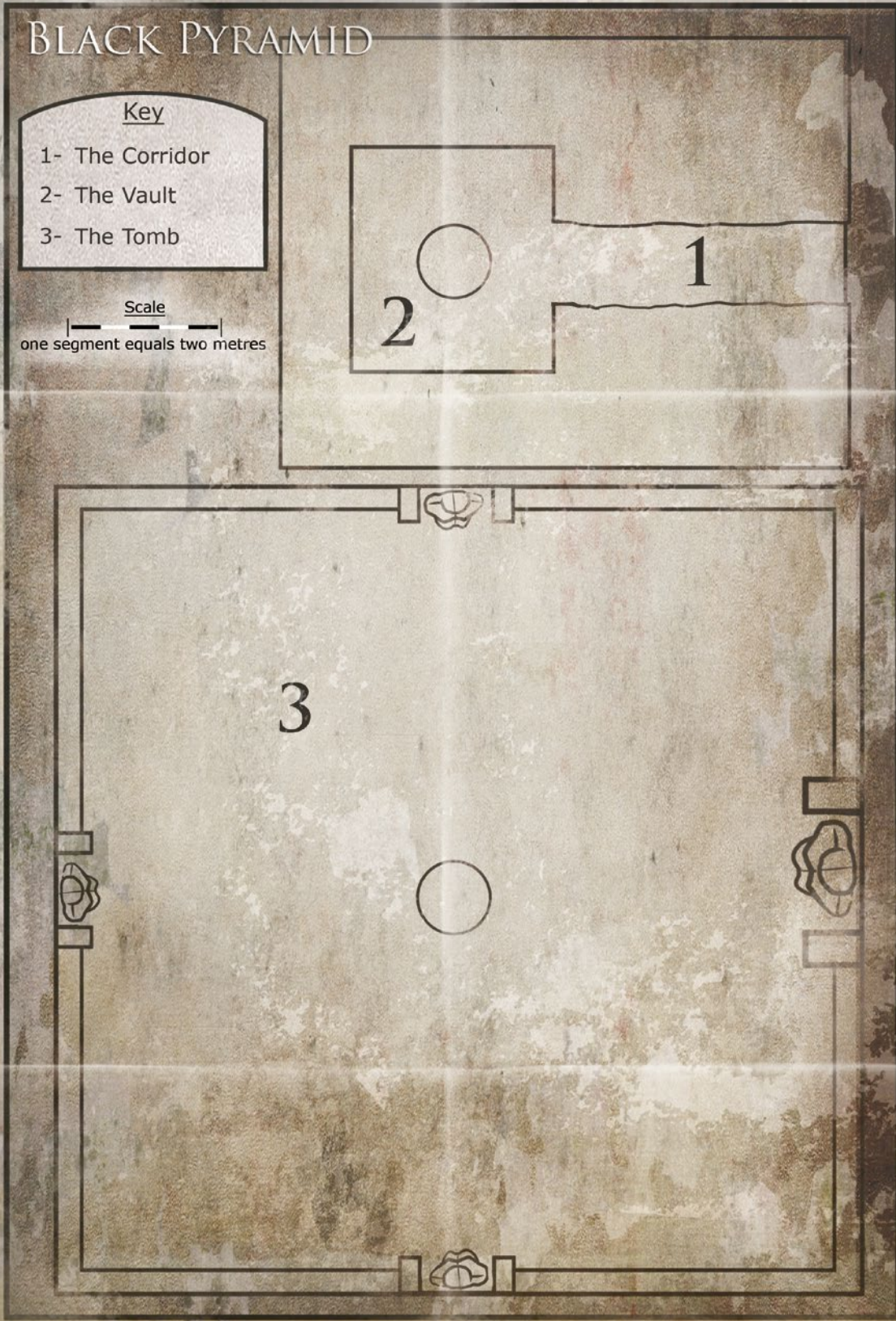
BLACK PYRAMID

Key

- 1- The Corridor
- 2- The Vault
- 3- The Tomb

Scale

one segment equals two metres



The three smaller sarcophagi are not sealed and simply require a **Daunting (D3) Athletics test** to slide the lid away. They are cold to the touch but no colder than the rest of the room. The weapons found in the sarcophagi are practical and effective despite their appearance, but as mystical antiques from an unknown civilisation would fetch a huge price on the open market. Under the terms of the players' contracts, however, they should belong to the Venusian Archaeological Survey, and therefore the Cartel.

THE NORTH SARCOPHAGUS

The carvings of the north sarcophagus depict a bearded, long-haired warrior wielding a large hammer. In the first panel, he is wearing powered armour and strongly resembles a lion. Although he looks too old to be a warrior in his prime, he is locked in battle with legions of evil, demonic creatures who are falling back before him.

The same man is depicted in the second panel, but this time at peace, in kingly robes. He is surrounded by many women in various states of undress, but he seems to disdain their advances haughtily. Meanwhile there is a young, bald, naked man observing this king from a distance.

In the third panel, this king is back in his powered armour. He is in a struggle with a bizarre ten-limbed octopus-like creature. Each of the creature's tentacles ends in a dog-like face which are trying to bite the king. There is a look of fear on his face as the creature seems to be getting the better of him.

In the final panel, the king is flanked by two women (the two women from the other sarcophagi). They are all in their powered armour and are ready for battle. They seem to stand against the young, bald man who is enveloped in flames and who seems to exude power.

Within this sarcophagus is the body of a man. The corpse has been utterly charred. It is wrapped in a white shroud. Upon the body has been laid a great jade hammer carved with a lion's head. At the foot of the body is a clay tablet shaped like one of the elements of a yin-yang symbol. It is half of a circle that would measure about ten centimetres in diameter.

THE HAMMER OF THE HEROES

Carved with the head of a lion, the hammer seems to be fashioned out of a single piece of jade, which is harder than any steel.

HAMMER OF HEROES

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
-	2+ [↑] 5	-	4	2H	5
QUALITIES Knockdown, Pious 2, Stun					

The character has his Corruption Soak increased by one whilst carrying the Hammer of Heroes.

THE WEAPONS OF THE HEROES

The weapons found among the grave goods in this tomb may seem like a little bonus for the players: a useful find. This is not really the case. They are, in fact, some of the most powerful artefacts this ancient civilisation ever produced. They might give small bonuses in combat, and not really much of an inkling into their intended use, but these weapons will be vital in the denouement of this campaign.

The Dark Temptor, the malevolent force imprisoned within the pyramid, which the investigators will not meet until much later, can only be destroyed through the use of these weapons. The players might cherish these items, so all well and good. But they might not take much care of them; they might not even bother to pick them up. This will not be a problem for the campaign, but the GM should make an effort to keep track of these items as interested parties will certainly be keeping track of them and trying to acquire them, as their existence becomes known.

THE WEST SARCOPHAGUS

The carvings on this sarcophagus are similar to the ones described above, with similar themes and carving style. These depict a younger woman with long, flowing hair who wields a spear. She is beautiful, almost angelic and seems to have a very calm demeanour. In the first picture, she is swimming and is beset by demonic sea creatures but she is getting the better of them with her spear.

In the second panel, she is wearing a long, flowing dress and standing beside a throne. Many men and women are bowing before her. She is staring off in the distance with an expression of serenity. She is about to step on an ornate crown. Similar to the second panel on the previous sarcophagus, the young, bald man watches over this scene ominously.

In the third panel, the young woman is suspended over a fiery pit by the thinnest of threads. Her spear is falling towards the flames as she clings on for her life. Her face is a picture of utter terror.

The fourth panel is very similar to the fourth panel of the previous sarcophagus, except that this young woman is now the central figure, flanked by the older man from the north sarcophagus and the woman from the southern one. Again they oppose the powerfully depicted younger man.

Within this sarcophagus is another horribly burned corpse. This one is wrapped in a red shroud. Alongside the body lies a spear made

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION



The Spear of Heroes awaits in the Tomb of Calith.

of a glass-like crystal. At the foot of the body are some sealing wax and a clay seal with a wooden handle. The seal has the impression of what looks like a 'K'.

THE SPEAR OF THE HEROES

Although it looks like it is made of glass, this spear is light, and extremely strong. If the spear is struck, it rings like fine crystal.

SPEAR OF HEROES

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
-	2+↑4	-	2	1H	5
QUALITIES	Armour Piercing 2, Pious 1, Reach				

The character has her Corruption Soak increased by one whilst carrying the Spear of Heroes.

THE SOUTH SARCOPHAGUS

The south sarcophagus features a woman with cropped hair. In the first panel she is in powered armour, flying through the air assailed by many flying demons. They are fleeing in terror from her sword.

In the second panel, the woman is dressed in a simple tunic. She is surrounded by mounds of treasure as coins rain down from the sky, but she is looking away from all that with an expression of disdain for the wealth. The bald man looks on, pensively.

In the third panel, the woman can be seen cowering in fear in a room of spiked walls. She has dropped her sword and waits helplessly for her impending doom. The fourth panel is again similar to the two described above, except the short haired woman is in the centre.

Inside this sarcophagus is the terribly charred body of a woman. It is wrapped in a green shroud. Upon the body has been placed a sword of what looks like platinum. At her feet is another clay tablet, the counterpart to the tablet in the north sarcophagus.

THE SWORD OF THE HEROES

Seemingly made of platinum, but really of an unknown metal, the sword's blade is as keen as any and is almost impossible to dull.

SWORD OF HEROES

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
-	2+↑4	-	3	Unblanced	5
QUALITIES	Parry 1, Pious 1, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1				

THE EAST SARCOPHAGUS

The eastern alcove is far larger than the other three, measuring around ten metres wide and deep. The sarcophagus itself is correspondingly larger. This one is made of obsidian. It has similar carvings upon it, but these carvings are more intricate and complex than the others. The most prominent rune upon the sarcophagus and appearing in several places is one that looks like a backwards 'K'.

The first panel depicts the powerful, bald man from the other sarcophagi. Here he is shown with king's robes and sat upon a throne before many of his subjects who are showing fear and despair.

In the second panel, the bald man is leading an army into battle. He is wearing powered armour and his army are similarly attired. The enemy are running before the bald man's might.

The third panel features the bald man leading his victorious army through a modern-looking urban landscape, burning and pillaging as they go.

The fourth panel shows him flying through the air supported by flying skeletons. He is scattering skulls across the landscape below.

There is a fifth panel on this sarcophagus. It shows the bald man with the three characters from the other sarcophagi. In this one, the three are bowing before him, plainly defeated. The bald man is bathed in fire. His head is split open and from it pours a multitude of strange creatures and demonic figures.

Unlike the other three, this sarcophagus is sealed all around the lid with wax. It requires an **Epic (D5) Acrobatics test** to open and is much colder than the others. It is so cold that bare hands can only touch it for a few moments.

Inside the sarcophagus there is no body, but at its foot there is a pile of, what seems to be, simple treasure. This includes gold coins and other tokens of valuable metal, gems, and jewellery. There are various weapons and other strange items with no apparent function. It would take a while to go through all this and catalogue it for the survey, but the other members of the survey team, on discovering this, will get excited about the cache. This is exactly the sort of find that archaeologists dream of.

This treasure is largely irrelevant to the players, unless they wish to steal some of it. However, there is one item among the haul that is very powerful indeed and is vital to the second part of this campaign. It can be described here simply as a stone disc with a large sapphire in the centre. It is not particularly spectacular or worthy of attention at the moment; there are many more attractive and valuable treasures in the pile.

In the centre of the sarcophagus is a round, convex trap door made of metal. Though the door has no hinges or handles, it should be apparent that it is a door and that it parts in the middle. Across the centre is a ten centimetre wax seal, and stamped upon the wax is the backwards 'K'. If this seal is disturbed it will break rather easily. The clay tablet upon which the wax is set will crumble away. The Second Seal of Repulsion will be broken and terrible forces will be unleashed upon the universe.

BREAKING THE SEAL

Someone will break the seal. If the players are too wary, then one of the others of the survey team will do it. The job of the survey team is to investigate the pyramid and this part of the pyramid had yet to be explored. It is entirely reasonable to break the seal, in order to open the doors to see what might lie beneath the sarcophagus. Even if the players insist it should not be touched, it will be. They do not have the authority and if all they have is 'a funny feeling about it', that will not be enough to stop one of the other members of the survey team from carrying out their orders properly.

As the seal is broken, a frigid wind blows the trap door open. Anyone standing on the door or within the sarcophagus will be blown back by the blast as it opens. Any unprotected light sources will be extinguished as the doors are flung open. The wind seems to carry darkness itself with it. As the darkness envelopes everyone in the tomb they will begin to lose their senses and in a few moments they will lose any perception of the tomb or their colleagues.

THE DARK TEMPTOR

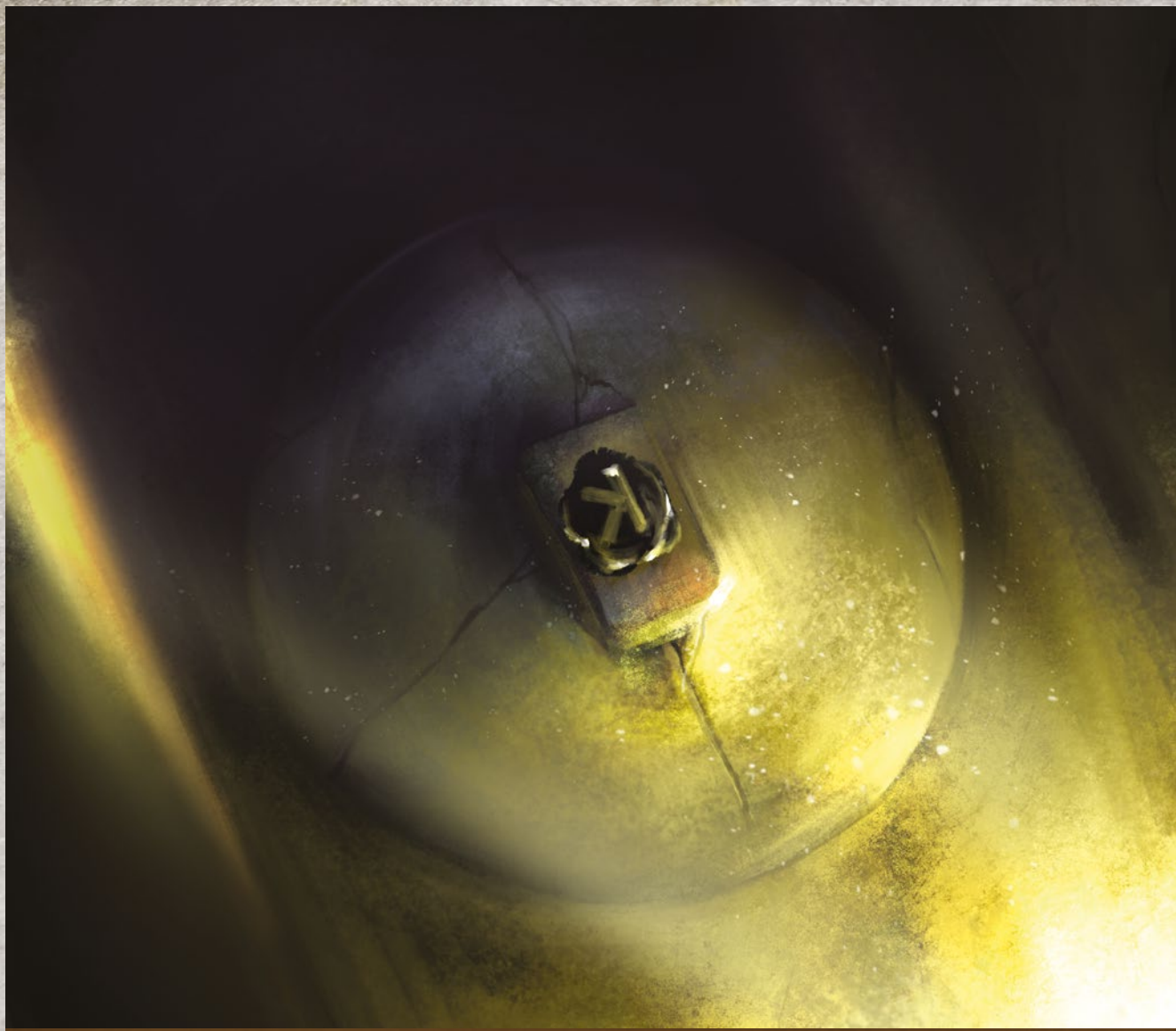
Imprisoned within the pyramid many aeons ago was the Dark Temptor, an aspect of the Dark Soul. Though not as terrible as the legions that were held back by the First Seal of Repulsion, the Dark Temptor is in its own way a terrible adversity for mankind. Its ways are subtle and pervasive especially as it cannot be detected by any but the most powerful of the Brotherhood tests of purity. The Dark Temptor is detailed fully in part two of this campaign, The Four Riders.

TEMPTATION

Now the spirit of the Dark Temptor has been released, it must possess at least one of the Survey Team. Everyone in the pyramid is susceptible to the creature. The Dark Temptor will seek out the thoughts and fears of each of the survey team in order to find their weaknesses and then attempt to do a deal with him. If the character agrees to the deal then he will be lost forever and part of the Dark Temptor will inhabit his soul. The Dark Temptor will then be free to roam the world doing the will of the Dark Soul.

The GM should try to tempt each player to the Dark Soul. If that character agrees to whatever deal the Dark Temptor proposes, then that character is lost to the player, and the GM has control of him, instead. Obviously, most players and most characters will want to fight against the temptation. Even if the player does not agree to any deal, the will of the Dark Temptor is strong and so the player will still need to succeed at a **Challenging D2 Willpower test** in order to turn the Dark Temptor down. The Dark Temptor will offer to help the player three times, and the player will need to make the Resistance test three times. The Dark Temptor will say clearly and unequivocally 'Will you let me help you?' It should be made clear to the player that this is an important offer, and is significant to the game, beyond the

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION



The Second Seal of Repulsion is deceptively simple to break.

scene being played out. If any of the tests result in the player gaining Momentum, then he will have resisted the Dark Temptor for good and the Dark Temptor cannot ask again.

THE IMAGINARY SCENE

Each player has been consumed by the darkness. The GM should construct a scene in which the investigator can be tempted. He should use his knowledge of the player's background in order to come up with something that the player may want, or a situation that will strike a chord with him. He should roleplay a scene where this, as far as the character is concerned, becomes part of reality.

The player should know the scene is not real and that he is being tested. The Dark Temptor is trying to trick the character, but the GM

need not try to trick the player. If the player wishes his character to become tempted then he may roleplay that, but his character will be lost. There is always a chance that the player may lose his character to this temptation against his wishes as he still needs to make his resistance rolls. There follows a few ideas for scenarios in which lone investigators might ask for help, but really the GM knows his game best and will know what might appeal to his players.

BATTLE

The GM could describe the player as finding himself alone in the pyramid in exactly the same position as he is actually in. Though this scene is happening in his imagination, it could appear to the player that this is real, and his colleagues have simply disappeared.

Out from the now-open gate will come a hideous demonic beast that will attack the player. The GM could run a normal looking encounter, except whatever dice are rolled the player is doomed to defeat. After a few rounds of combat the player will be almost dead and the creature will be about to make a final attack. Then one of the players' colleagues will appear from the shadows, it could even be one of his fellow player characters

He will be fit and looking ready to fight. Then the character, in a strange, somehow removed sort of voice, will ask 'will you let me help you?' If the player refuses, the terrible creature will come closer, and the Dark Temptor will ask again. And then just as the creature moves in for the kill, he will ask one last time.

If the player resists then he will feel the agony of death for a few moments, before coming to his senses in the pyramid, once more. However long this took in his head, only a moment has actually passed.

ESCAPE

The player has managed to escape from the pyramid. The GM can cut to the moment when he is being lifted up by an airship very similar to the Glory of Heimborg. He is on a rope ladder and only needs to climb it to get to the luxury and safety of the airship. He can see the black pyramid fading away into the jungle beneath him.

However as he climbs up and gets close to the airship, the rope ladder starts to disintegrate in his grasp. He must make a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** in order to keep his grip. Eventually he will fail a test or the rope ladder will disintegrate completely and there will be nothing to hang on to. At that moment a member of the airship's crew, or indeed a fellow player, will appear from the airship and offer his help.

A voice, not quite in sync with the crewmember's lips, will offer his outstretched hand and say 'will you let me help you?' The investigator must resist this three times or lose his soul to the Dark Temptor. If he succeeds, then he will drop from the ladder towards the canopy below. The player will sense himself falling, and then the moment he hits the ground will find himself back in the pyramid.

VENGEANCE

If the GM knows of a moment that still rankles a player, then he could go back to that time in order to offer to put things right. He can place the player in a situation from the character's past, either from his background or from a moment that has actually been played through in the game. This should be a moment when the player was wronged somehow by another, perhaps even another player.

However, in this recreation, the Dark Temptor is there in a capacity that is able to change those events. Whatever the situation is, the Dark Temptor should be seen to be able to put things right. And

then it will ask the player 'will you let me help you?' If the player accepts this, then the situation will be fixed, but his soul will be lost. If he is able to resist the offer three times, then he must suffer the effects of such an outcome one more time, before coming to his senses back in the pyramid.

DEATH

Somehow time has moved on. The player has left the jungle behind and is back in his home area. He has a vague recollection of the event that led to this, of how he escaped from the pyramid and was rescued.

And now he is at a funeral. He looks into the coffin to see the body of a relative or dear friend. Perhaps it is the body of another player who died saving him from the evil that lurks in the pyramid, someone who sacrificed himself so that the player could live.

And as he peers into the coffin, he hears a voice. He knows somehow that what the voice says is true. He knows that if he accepts the help, then he can go back to before the death and save the person in the coffin. He can save the life of someone who saved his life. The voice asks 'will you let me help you?'

REDEMPTION

The player finds himself in the Cathedral of Heimborg. He is being questioned about his escape from the pyramid and the betrayal of his colleagues. He has a vague memory of their deaths and him failing to help them in the face of terrible monsters.

He cannot answer the questions to the Brotherhood's satisfaction and is eventually brought before a packed cathedral gallery and Cardinal Durand himself to answer for his betrayal. It looks as if the player will be severely punished for his crimes, perhaps even put to death. Before sentencing, the Cardinal looks around the cathedral and asks if anyone at all will speak for the player.

At that moment an unexpected figure emerges from the crowd and offers to speak for the player. The figure explains that he can explain everything; if only the player will allow it, he will speak for him, excuse his actions, and save him. He asks 'will you let me help you?' If the player resists the Dark Temptor then he will feel some sort of religious shame as his failings are made clear to everyone. But mercifully he will awake suddenly back in the pyramid with no time having passed.

DROWNING

As the gate opens, despite the blast of chill air, the player feels himself falling forwards through the trapdoor into the blackness beyond. Suddenly he splashes into water. After a few moments of panic, he resurfaces and feels himself floating in the water in almost complete darkness. The only light is from the faint torches above him shining from beyond the perfect circle of the doorway.

THE SECOND SEAL OF REPULSION

There is nowhere to swim and no way of reaching the doorway, however long the player treads water attempting to find a way out. Eventually the frigid water begins to take its toll and the player feels himself losing the strength or will to stay afloat. The water begins to lick over the player's face.

At that moment an arm emerges from the doorway and reaches down for the player's flailing hands. The player will hear the offer 'will you let me help you?' He will know that this is the Dark Temptor and accepting the offer will be a betrayal of his beliefs. But it will keep him alive. If he resists the temptation then he will feel himself being dragged under the water, and as he gasps for a final breath his lungs will fill with water. But then he will suddenly find himself back in the pyramid, surrounded by his colleagues.

THE SURVEY TEAM

Even if no players are tempted, the Dark Temptor will still succeed at tempting some of the survey team. It is vital for the rest of the campaign that, unknown to the players, at least one of their number becomes corrupted. It is recommended he corrupts two or even more of the team as they can become useful adversaries as the campaign progresses. As this corruption will be unknown to the players, the GM can always retrospectively corrupt members of the survey team and have them turn up in this capacity later in the campaign. He should leave scope for this by having some of the survey team survive.

It is important that the players have no idea whether any of their colleagues failed the test, or what the consequences of that failure might be. If the GM wishes, he can kill one of the survey team now, leaving him dead of shock on the floor of the tomb as if to imply that might be the result of failing to resist the Dark Temptor.

A MONSTER

In the context of the greater campaign, this ending should work well enough, especially as the next part takes up almost from the moment this one finishes. But if this adventure is being played as a one-off without the rest of the parts of the campaign, it might feel like a bit of an anti-climax to have the tomb essentially empty and the only result of breaking the seal as a mental struggle with their own imaginations. In this case, if he wishes, the GM can have a huge, powerful monster emerge from the doorway to fight the entire survey team as some sort of grand climax.

HUGE BEAST ☹

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
18 (+4)	16 (+2)	9	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	6	12	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 11
- ▶ Torso 17
- ◀ Arms 13
- ▶ Legs 15
- ◀ Serious 15
- ▶ Critical 12
- ◀ Mental Wounds 12

SOAK: Impervious Hide: (All 4)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Rending Jaws (melee):** 5+ \uparrow 9, Armour Piercing 1, Dreadful, Gruesome, Stun, Unforgiving 1
- ◀ **Mammoth Blow** or **Sweeping Tail (melee):** 5+ \uparrow 11, Knockdown, Reach, Stun, Unforgiving 2
- ◀ **Ungainly:** A Colossal Blow or Sweeping Tail attack requires at least a Challenging D2 attack against anything that is not either a vehicle or Monstrous Creature.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Blood Frenzy:** The Huge Beast may enter a terrible rage upon tasting first blood, or any round thereafter, by spending one or more Dark Symmetry points. It gains two additional Momentum on each subsequent successful melee attack. This rage lasts for a number of rounds equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent.
- ◀ **Fast Healing (1)**
- ◀ **Fear (2)**
- ◀ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◀ **Huge Creature:** The actual type of beast is left to the GM's worst imaginings; perhaps it is an enormous form of carnivorous dinosaur, or a mutant ape. It is a titanic beast regardless, standing some five or six meters tall, and immensely strong. The Beast may treat any creature within Close range as being within Reach. Further, any creature making a Close Combat attack against the Huge Beast increases the difficulty by one step, but any creature attempting a ranged attack against the Huge Beast reduces the difficulty by one step instead. The Huge Beast inflicts an automatic 1+ \uparrow 3 damage with Knockdown quality on any creature that attempts a close combat attack against it and fails.

- ◆ **Inured to Cold**
- ◆ **Inured to Heat**
- ◆ **Inured to Pain**
- ◆ **Grasping**
- ◆ **Monstrous Creature**
- ◆ **Night Vision**
- ◆ **Ponderous:** The Huge Beast is unable to react quickly due to its sheer size and bulk. It may take no other action during a round in which it takes the Sprint action. Further, it may not take Response Actions.
- ◆ **Supernatural Strength (4)**
- ◆ **Supernatural Physique (2)**

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Bellowing Roar:** The Huge Beast unleashes a terrifying, deafening roar. As a Restricted Action, it may spend three Dark Symmetry points to unleash this roar. All creatures within Medium range must attempt a Challenging D2 Willpower test or suffer a mental assault. If one or more Dark Symmetry Icons are generated when rolling to determine how much mental damage is inflicted, that creature is knocked prone with shock and fright.
- ◆ **Thunderous Stomp:** The Huge Beast may stomp down on the ground, causing the ground to shake and knocking foes aside. The Beast spends two Dark Symmetry points, and automatically inflicts 1+**T**3 damage with the Dreadful, Knockdown, and Stun qualities.

CLOSING THE SEAL

No one will wish to enter the area below the tomb. It is simply beyond consideration. For anyone having just witnessed the merest stroke of the tentacles of the Dark Temptor it will be inconceivable that anyone should want to get closer to it. Left in no doubt about the great corrupting evil that lurks beneath the tomb the only options are to run or to try to close the seal.

Anyone resisting the Dark Temptor will be able to summon the courage to stay in the tomb and attempt to close the seal. Any uncorrupted NPCs in the survey team will



The Expedition have a huge problem...

certainly wish to close the seal. And members corrupted by the Dark Temptor will be playing their cards close to their chest and will not risk giving themselves away by opposing this action. If the majority are in favour then they will feign agreement, too.

The tools to close the seal are all in the tomb. The two pieces of clay tablet, the wax, and the seal in the various sarcophagi will be all the equipment required to recreate the seal that was broken. The investigators will just need to be able to heat the wax. The construction of a new seal requires a **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics** or **Thievery** test to get right.

COMING SOON

The second part of the *Venusian Apocalypse Campaign*, *The Four Riders*, will continue directly from this point.

THE FOUR RIDERS

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This is the second part of the Venusian Apocalypse campaign. The first part, The Second Seal of Repulsion, saw the players on an expedition to a mysterious black pyramid in the heart of Venus' southern jungle.

The chances are they helped release a malevolent force from the pyramid, which has tempted at least one of their colleagues towards the Dark Soul. If this is the case, they are well set up for part two of the campaign, which involves one of the artefacts discovered in the black pyramid.

Among the grave goods of one of the tombs within the black pyramid was a largely unremarkable disc set with a precious stone. This 'plague disk' has hidden properties that, if released by means of an ancient ritual, could cause a pestilence to ravage across the city of Heimbürg, killing the vast majority of the population.

During the adventure, the players should be tricked into stealing the plague disc on behalf of the Dark Soul and then releasing it to one of its agents in Heimbürg. The players' details are also given to the authorities, so they become wanted for their crimes.

The players must avoid arrest while racing against time to work out what has happened, and track down the heretical double-crossers in order to retrieve the plague disc before disaster can befall the entire city.

WHO WAS TEMPTED?

Imprisoned within the pyramid was an aspect of the Dark Soul, the Dark Temptor. The Dark Temptor is able to possess weaker souls instantaneously. In the first part of this campaign, the players are likely to have opened the Second Seal of Repulsion and faced the Dark Temptor itself. Those that survived such an encounter are now free to play this part of the adventure.

Some of the players' colleagues in the survey team have been corrupted by the Dark Temptor. Which team members these are, and indeed even which team members survived the expedition, will depend on how The Second Seal played out.

Those who were corrupted will be referred to as 'the Tempted' during this book. This could refer variously to one, several, or all of those that fell to the Dark Temptor. The GM should decide at the

start of this adventure, if he did not do this during The Second Seal, who has been tempted. But really, as this is entirely secret, he could probably get away with adding a new character to the list of the Tempted as the campaign goes on, if he requires it. Essentially, if the GM needs one of the survey team to have been tempted, then they have been.

AFTERMATH

The very act of breaking the Seal attracted the attention of the Brotherhood and the Dark Legion. Suddenly, the black pyramid has become an important point in the battle between Dark and Light. As soon as the Seal was broken, forces from across the system began converging on the Ring of Fire area in order to take the pyramid.

During this part of the adventure, the Brotherhood, aided by whatever factions it could muster, is beginning to gain control of the area. However the players got on at the end of the first part of the campaign, it is likely they can meet some allies of the Brotherhood and eventually be rescued from the jungle. It is also likely they can run into the forces of the Dark Legion, too.

RESEALING THE TOMB

If the players managed to reseal the tomb, then the Dark Temptor is trapped once more. If they did not, then when the Brotherhood seizes the tomb and holds it against the Dark Legion, it will reseal it and trap the Dark Temptor. However, because the tomb being left unsealed would have allowed the evil of the Dark Soul to pervade the area, the GM should consider how long the tomb is left unsealed.

If the players resealed it very quickly, then the effect should be almost negligible. If, however, they did not reseal it, and had to rely on the Brotherhood to do so, then this will affect the nature of things on Venus. An ineffable ill-will and malignancy will spread from the jungles towards the cities of Venus. This will take some time, but over the course of the adventure the people of Heimbürg will become infected with an increasing dissatisfaction. They will become rebellious. Those inclined to crime will become more flagrant in their criminal activities. Violent people will become more so, resorting to that at the smallest opportunity. Those inclined to rebellion will begin to organise and make protest. Those susceptible to the temptations of the Dark Soul will finally succumb. It is against this backdrop of despondence and anxiety among the people of Heimbürg that this part of the Venusian Apocalypse campaign will take place.

PART ONE: CLEAVING THE CANOPY

This part of the adventure should begin as soon as the Second Seal finishes. The players, together with the rest of the survey team, should be in or around the black pyramid in the middle of the Venusian jungle. They might be fleeing from the Darkness within the pyramid, or they may have carefully sealed the tomb and be wondering about cataloguing the grave goods.

REVENANT TEMPLARS

Whatever they are doing, within a matter of minutes a band of Templars will emerge from the jungle and attempt to take control of the pyramid. These Templars have been lying dormant at the bottom of a nearby bog for uncounted years, but have been awakened by the breaking of the Seal. No one knows how they got there, but many years ago, before even Martin Renauld came to the temple, they were thwarted in their attempt to break the Seal themselves. They were effectively dead, rotting in their watery tomb, but the breaking of the Seal has somehow roused them from their unlife as they once more join the Dark Legion.

These Revenant Templars certainly show the signs of their long wait beneath the bog. Their flesh has mostly rotted away, revealing mechanical body-parts. In places their flesh has been replaced by mosses or putrefying matter, and they are dripping with mud and slime. They move more slowly than a Templar, and are slightly weaker, but the sight of them emerging from the jungle, shambling towards the black pyramid, should strike fear into the stoutest player character.

If the Revenant Templars reach the tomb beneath the black pyramid, they will break the Second Seal of Repulsion once more (if it has been resealed) and prepare to defend the open portal until they are destroyed.

REVENANT TEMPLAR ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
14	11	9	6
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	3	10	9 (+1)

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

WOUNDS: 8

SOAK: Corroded Warplate: (Head 4, Torso 3, Arms 2, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

◀ **Blade of Ilian (melee):** 2+[†]9, 2H, Dreadful, Parry 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Braindead**
- ◀ **Fear (2)**
- ◀ **Inured to Pain**
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Sense Pain and Fear:** The Revenant Templars have retained their ability to perceive the agony and dread of living creatures, which functions accurately to a distance of 300 metres. Their unliving brains are no longer able to focus on individual creatures, however. If ever a test is required, it uses the Observation skill.
- ◀ **Shambling Horror:** Contrary to their living counterparts, a Revenant Templar's movements are slow and uncoordinated. It may not take the Sprint Standard Action or any Response Actions.
- ◀ **Slave to Symmetry (2)**
- ◀ **Unliving**

THE CAVALRY ARRIVES

Several hours after the Seal is broken, the Renauld House Guard arrives. This is the private army of House Renauld. It arrives so promptly that it must have been on emergency standby for just this eventuality. Actually, although he did not know the precise nature of the threat, Jean-Louis Renauld had organised the regiment behind the back of Theresa Renauld specifically because he feared something terrible like the breaking of the Seal might occur. The House Guard is airlifted in using all the resources that House Renauld can bring to bear. They arrive just in time as a mass formation of the Dark Legion attacks the pyramid shortly after.

If the players have been stretched to the limit and well and truly tested, then the Renauld guard can defend the pyramid without the players' help. The players can shelter in a safe area behind the lines while the battle rages on around them. On the other hand, if they still have some fight left in them, the players can be required to help out this small force of elite soldiers. The GM can run a section of the battle with the players in the thick of it, trying to hold off the Dark Legion. However that particular skirmish turns out, the House Guard will manage to keep hold of the pyramid and keep the Seal intact until, some hours later, an advance detachment of Doomtroopers arrives to drive the Dark Legion back into the jungle.

The players might wonder how the Renauld House Guard managed to arrive so quickly. They can interact with its commanding officer, Claudia Renauld. She knows Jean-Louis' mind quite well, so the players can learn from her. However, they will need to do this soon and in the midst of battle, as the Renauld House Guard is so dedicated to its mission and so eager that the failings of its house should do no wider damage to Bauhaus, that none of the guard leave the jungle alive.

CLAUDIA RENAULD

After a distinguished career in the Bauhaus Venusian Rangers, Claudia returned to her family to head the Renault House Guard. This is a small regiment dedicated to protecting the interests of House Renault. It is made up of mostly ex-conventional military personnel with ties to Renault. Though small, this unit is considered one of the most elite Bauhaus has to call upon, and its battle honours go back as far as any.

Claudia knows this engagement is close to Jean-Louis' heart. She has never known him to be so closely involved with, and so anxious about, planning a military operation before. The unit went on emergency standby a few days before (this date should coincide with the launch of the Glory of Heimborg), even though no one else seems to have got any indication that anything was amiss.

As they are operating on Renault land, Claudia has no doubt that the pride of Renault is at stake on this mission, and she is quite prepared to sacrifice herself and her entire unit to keep the reputation of the house intact.



Claudia Renault: upholding the pride of House Renault.

CLAUDIA RENAULD ★

ATTRIBUTES

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Guardsman Mk. III: (Head 4, Arms 3, Torso 4, Legs 3)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **MP-105GW (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑4, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters
- ◆ **GW-1055 Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Range M, 2+↑5, Munition, Blast (Close)
- ◆ **Anti-Personnel grenades and four Reloads**
- ◆ **RWD HG-12 (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◆ **Machete (melee):** 1+↑4, 1H, Parry 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Brave and Respected Leader:** Claudia has commanded troops throughout numerous battles. Her tenacity and fearlessness has earned her the respect of her troops. She may re-roll one d20 when making a Command or Willpower test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, reduce the difficulty of all Command tests and any Willpower test made due to exposure to a traumatic event by one, which may eliminate the need for a test. Finally, any time forces under Claudia's direct command must make a Willpower test, they reduce the difficulty by one step, which may eliminate the need for a test.
- ◆ **Decorated Officer:** Claudia has been well looked after for her service to both the Rangers and the Renaults. She may re-roll one d20 when making a Lifestyle test, but must accept the new result.
- ◆ **Retired Ranger:** Claudia spent many years with the Rangers, and fully appreciates the hazards of the southern jungles. She may re-roll one d20 when making a Survival test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, whenever she is travelling within a jungle environment, she may make an Average D1 Survival test to avoid all implicit dangers, including possible dangerous encounters. Each point of Momentum spent also protects one ally from these same risks.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

◀▶ **Carrying the Renauld Honour:** Claudia is well aware that the little pride and honour left to House Renauld is at stake. She will stride amongst her troops and push them to heroic action, which allows her to spend one or more Dark Symmetry points. Both Claudia and those under her command will subsequently benefit from one additional Momentum on each successful attack. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent.

THE RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

Over the coming days many troops from both sides will join the fray. The Brotherhood will throw every resource it possesses into the defence. The fighting will be fierce, but the Brotherhood and its allies will prevail. They will gradually extend their cordon around the pyramid for tens of miles in the face of the Dark Legion's desperate attempts to get to the pyramid.

They will call in as much support as they can from all the corporations. Bauhaus will bear the brunt of these requests, having the largest force close to hand, and this will cause a strain on Bauhaus resources, too, especially in Heimburg. This strain will be felt through the rest of this part of the adventure, especially if the Seal remained broken for a long time, as lawlessness and disorder spread through Heimburg's streets.

Some of the Brotherhood's most adept practitioners will be called to the pyramid. They will create a ritual that makes the Second Seal much stronger than it was, effectively shutting off the black pyramid from the rest of the universe. This will solve the problem going forward, provided they can keep the pyramid defended. However, the breaking of the Seal has already done some damage. A vague Darkness will spread across southern Venus and as far as Heimburg. That city will bear the brunt of the Dark Temptor's ill effects.

The survey team will suddenly become irrelevant to the huge conflict going on in the jungle. They will be airlifted back to Heimburg as soon as the Brotherhood has time to get round to it, but of course, sorting out the players will not be a high priority for anyone.

DEBRIEFING

The survey team will eventually land in Heimburg and be taken to an annex of the Cathedral of Heimburg. They will be detained in bare cells for a day until the relevant authorities get round to debriefing them.

The debriefing will be handled by the Brotherhood. The Venusian Archaeological Survey under the Cartel is a distant memory. The cataloguing of the grave goods and all issues around the pyramid are now solely under the purview of the Brotherhood.

The players and all the survey team will be debriefed individually. Inquisitor Stark, a frankly terrifying individual with a face like death, will head this process and will make a point of intimidating the survey team as much as he can. It would take a brave player to withhold vital information from him.

The players will be individually held in their cells for a number of days. Although they will be described as guests, it will be quite clear that they are not allowed to leave. Their first visitors will be minor officials of the Brotherhood, whose questions will be mainly about administrative details—full name and address, and things like that. After each visit will be gaps of many hours, which the player will have to spend alone in his cell, giving the impression of the slow bureaucratic process grinding interminably on.

The lower ranked members of the Brotherhood will ask certain questions about the expedition to the jungle. Most of these will be fairly easy to answer, and will be about the simple facts and details of what occurred. Gradually the interrogators will rise in rank, and although the same sort of questions will be asked repeatedly, they will focus on particular elements of the survey. Finally, Stark will arrive and have his key questions, which the investigator will have answered any number of times before.

The questions Stark is most interested in will concern the players' impressions of and feelings for the dark pyramid, and their impressions of the tombs and what they could see when the Seal was broken. He will also be very interested in whose idea it was to break the Seal, and whose idea it was to reseal it (if they did).

If any of the players reveals their confrontation with the Dark Temptor then Stark will be especially interested in that, and he will wonder why other players did not have a similar encounter. Of course, if they change their story and admit that they did, then Stark will wonder why. The cleanest way to get through the debriefing is for all the players to admit to their confrontation with the Dark Temptor, or for none of them to mention it.

Essentially, however, the players should have little to hide, and so the thoroughness of the Brotherhood is to their advantage and for their protection. Once Stark is satisfied of their innocence they will be allowed to leave the cathedral with the thanks and compliments of the Brotherhood.

The Tempted will be going through this process too. One of the gifts they have been given by the Dark Temptor is the ability to hide their taint. They will therefore pass the inquisition as well as any of the survey team.

In a matter of a couple of days the entire team should be cleared by the Brotherhood. They will be thanked for their time and paid the agreed amounts by the Cartel, and will be free to go about their business.

INQUISITOR STARK ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
7	8	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	10	12	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: **Inquisitorial Robes of Office:** (All 1)

ATTACKS:

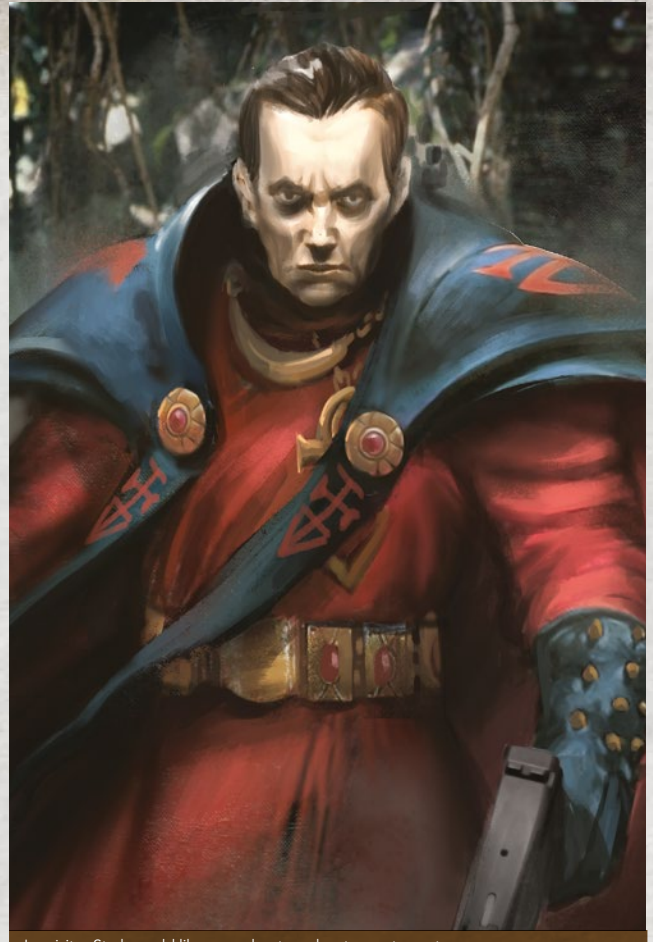
- ◀ **P60 Punisher (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 6, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown
- ◀ **Punisher Short Sword (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4, 1H, Parry 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Death Incarnate:** Stark's unsettling visage aids greatly during his interrogation of subjects, which is only reinforced by his apparent lack of human emotion. He gains two additional d20 when making a Command or Persuade test. Additionally, whenever a character within Close range suffers mental damage from his Fear ability, or from a mental assault that is a direct result of his interrogative ministrations, Stark benefits from the Feed Upon Fear Special Ability.
- ◀ **Fear (1)**
- ◀ **Truth Shall Be Told:** Stark is an Inquisitor of some standing who has served diligently in the Brotherhood for many years. He has Mysticism Expertise 3 and Mysticism Focus 3, knows the spells Blessing, Contempt, Succour, Missive, Hypnosis, and Discern Truth. Additionally, he gains one bonus Momentum when attempting any Personality-based skill test that scores at least one success. Finally, once per turn as a Free Action and immediately prior to a Persuade test, he can attempt an opposed Willpower test against a target. If he succeeds, he rolls one additional d20 on that Persuade test, plus another d20 for every two Momentum spent.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Punish the Heretic:** Stark's tender ministrations do not preclude the use of agonising torture from his attempts to fathom the truth. When interrogating a helpless target, Stark may spend one or more Dark Symmetry points to inflict an equivalent number of wounds on a location of his choice. The target is also immediately subject to a mental assault, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent.



Inquisitor Stark would like a word or two about recent events.

PART TWO: INTERMISSION

BACK IN HEIMBURG

The opening of the Second Seal has caused a distinct mood change in Heimburg. If the Seal was only broken for a few moments and the players managed to solve this problem, then the situation is not as bad as described below. The players should be rewarded for their prompt action by having the city a more pleasant and amenable place for them during the course of the adventure.

If the Seal was broken for a reasonable amount of time, especially if the players had to rely on others to reseal it for them, then the atmosphere in Heimburg has become toxic. The lowest of the populace, the hopeless and the homeless, have become increasingly belligerent. They seem to have a purpose now that was absent from their lives before. They are increasingly more likely to try to take what they believe they are owed, and their resentment of those higher than them in society is steadily growing, resulting in increased violence and other crimes.

The criminal classes seem to be bolder and more open in their activities. It is almost as if they do not care whether they are caught. Instead of skulking and opportunism, they now seek confrontation and violence. Even among the normal, loyal citizens an atmosphere of discontent and mistrust has crept into everyday life in the city.

A NEW JOB

A few months are required between the events in the black pyramid and the next part of the adventure. This is so the grave goods from the pyramid can be properly dealt with by the Brotherhood. During this time the battle that was raging in the jungle can settle down a bit, with the forces of humanity gradually getting the upper hand.

Over the next couple of months the GM might need to find some work to keep the players busy, and to keep them in Heimbürg. The GM could run another adventure or two during this time. One thing to keep in mind is that the players are (partly) responsible for unleashing one of the most dangerous forces in the solar system. They have come to the attention of powerful forces, and may have influential enemies or allies.

Another factor to consider is the mood in Heimbürg at the moment. It would be useful to demonstrate this by having the players come into contact with the discontented of the city, and to show them the effect that breaking the Seal is having on the people.

If the players began the Second Seal adventure as individuals, with nothing to tie them together, then keeping them together for a couple of months might be difficult. Presumably they would have found some sort of camaraderie and friendship during the events in the southern jungle. This may make them want to stick together and perhaps earn a living as freelancers.

PART THREE: TAKING THE DISK

THE TEMPTED

As discussed in the Second Seal, any of the surviving expedition members could have ended up tempted by the Dark Temptor to become a servant of the Dark Soul. The GM is free to choose whoever he pleases to fulfil this role. During this part of the adventure the Tempted will need to have the trust of the players, and he needs to convince them to unwittingly carry out illegal acts for the benefit of the Dark Soul. Therefore, the Tempted should be the sort of character that might be able to convince the players to do just that.

Two or three months after the expedition to the black pyramid things will have calmed down. Heimbürg will still be suffering from social unrest and a pervading sense of dread. This will of course depend on

THE TEMPTED

Those persuaded to darkness by the Dark Temptor become 'The Tempted.' They gain the following abilities immediately.

HIDDEN TALENT

The Tempted is able to hide his taint from any but the most powerful and direct scrutiny of the Brotherhood. Although the character is utterly corrupted it is almost impossible to perceive this, making this character a very important disciple of the Dark Soul. It requires an **Insight** or **Mysticism** test to sense the Dark Soul's influence, opposed by the Tempted's Persuade test. Tempted gain two additional d20 for this test, and may re-roll up to two d20 immediately following the test, though the new results must be accepted. This is in addition to any other source, such as a talent, that provides a re-roll, although each dice may only be re-rolled once. Further, the Tempted may also spend Dark Symmetry points to add d20s to his test, regardless of his NPC category. Finally, **Insight** or **Mysticism** tests made to detect the influence of the Dark Soul or use of supernatural powers upon characters that have been affected by the Tempted's abilities require at least an **Epic (D5)** test.

TEMPT

Tempted gain the use of the Snare the Unwilling Mind Dark Gift. Once per scene, following a successful use of this ability, the Tempted may immediately spend Dark Symmetry points to force a Corruption roll on the target. Detecting a Tempted's use of this Dark Gift is extremely difficult; Insight tests made to discern the use, presence, or effects of this power are increased to Epic (D5).

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Tempted may employ the Waking Nightmare Dark Gift to draw upon a target's childhood memories and fears. This is generally employed as a means of escape in an emergency, as use of this ability is not only obvious, but also draws deeply upon their link to the Dark Soul. Insight tests made to detect the use, presence, or source of this power are made at normal difficulty.

how quickly the tomb was resealed. The situation in the jungle will have steadily improved, and although the fighting is still fierce the general feeling is that humanity has dealt with that threat.

One of the members of the expedition will contact the players. Unknown to the players, this member will have been tempted by the Dark Temptor. It is very important to the adventure that this member (hereafter called 'the Tempted') is liked and trusted by the players.

THE FOUR RIDERS

The whole point of the Tempted's plan is that he will use the players because they are known to each other, enabling him to exploit the friendship and the *esprit de corps* they established over the course of the previous part of this campaign.

The identity of the Tempted is not specified, as this allows the GM the flexibility of using whichever character is most able to exploit the players. In addition, there may be other Tempted from the survey team helping with this plan and ready to step in over the course of the campaign.

THE SURVEY TEAM

The other surviving members of the survey team have generally been rewarded by their factions for their successful mission. This might require a generous interpretation of 'success' but really the survey team was always up against it, and barring complete disaster probably did as well as they could have. In addition, there are shadowy forces working behind the scenes (which should come into play in the fourth part of the campaign) who are able to influence things to get their pawns promotions if required.

COMMANDER RANDALL HARDING

Already a high-flyer in Capitol's security and information community, if he came out of the Venusian survey well then he would probably be able to write his own ticket. As the Tempted, this would mean him taking charge of the entire Heimburg operation for one of Capitol's spying agencies.

This would put him in a great position to orchestrate the events of this adventure and to keep a keen eye on the players. Almost any resource will be at his disposal. The one drawback for Harding is that Capitol likes to keep an eye on its own, and so Harding's abuses of his position will need to be done carefully, at least until his plans are nearing completion.

PAUL RENAULD

Renauld holds an interesting position within House Renauld. As the son of Theresa Renauld he was firmly in her camp, and is one of a number of candidates expected to be considered to head the house on Theresa's death. After leading (as the family might see it) an expedition back to an area associated with the glory days of House Renauld, he is now widely considered to be the favourite to succeed his mother.

If Paul Renauld were the Tempted, therefore, it would be simple for him to work out a way for his mother to meet a sudden death and thereby become the head of House Renauld, opposed only by the rival faction of the house headed by Jean-Louis Renauld.

SISTER BERNADETTE

Sister Bernadette was put on the survey team specifically to guard against the influence of the Dark Soul should it prove to be connected with the dark pyramid. With the experience of the

expedition behind her, Bernadette would be considered an even more useful member of the Brotherhood.

If she became the Tempted then this puts her in a very powerful position. She could end up in a prominent position at the Cathedral of Heimburg, perhaps even heading a department in charge of rooting out the influence of the Dark Soul wherever it may be found in the city. This position would be excellent to cover her tracks and also perfect for gaining the players' trust.

DOCTOR MAKI TORU

After the survey mission, Toru could be expected to rise in prominence as a warrior and as a medic. Perhaps if she became the Tempted, she might get transferred to a large Heimburg hospital to head its tropical diseases section. This would give her some power and influence, and would mean she could stay in Heimburg.

Those that know her might find it strange that she has chosen to work with Bauhaus, however, as it was quite plain during the expedition that she was not at all fond of that corporation. She might say that during the multi-corporation mission she learned valuable lessons about the nature of people, which made her determined to cooperate more fully with rival corporations in the future.

MAGNUS DU STRANGE

Du Strange was mostly useless during the mission and it would be interesting if he managed to survive it. If he did, then he becomes an instant celebrity among the nobs of Bauhaus, regaling many an important gathering with his (largely fictitious) anecdotes about the survey. At this stage he could get a job working for any number of Bauhaus nobles, or become head of logistics at House Renauld.

In such a position du Strange would be influential enough, able to pull a lot of strings in Heimburg and able to call on a number of favours when necessary. People may notice that his *nonchalant* attitude would disappear when du Strange lets his guard down, replaced by a seriousness (and a dedication to serving the Dark Soul) that he never displayed before.

MAJOR SIMON HAYWARD HARRIS

With another mission that ended in violence and mass bloodshed behind him, Hayward Harris is bound to get promoted within the Blood Berets. If he were the Tempted, however, it is harder to find a place for him as he needs to be based in Heimburg to manipulate events there.

Perhaps a change of direction for his career could see him join an Imperial diplomatic mission to Heimburg. As part of the Imperial diplomatic corps he would have access to a lot of people, and he could act without the authorities impeding him too much. The one downside of this is that Bauhaus would never fully trust him, and would be apt to keep an eye on him whenever it could.

PARIS DAY

Paris Day will not be the Tempted, as her use of the Cybertronic drug XLR8 precludes this.

Had one of the other, less prominent, members of the survey team become the Tempted, then they would have been promoted in similar ways to those detailed above.

The GM should consider whether to give the players this sort of reward. If the players were an already established freelancer team before this campaign began, then it is likely they were thanked for their trouble and paid off, and kept in mind for future missions. If they were a part of corporate and other factional interests, then they are likely to have been promoted within their organisations and given more responsibility. It would not hurt things for these promotions to strike the players as a bit strange.

If the players are from separate factions, then the GM has the problem of keeping them together as a group for this adventure. Perhaps they have all been fired by their factions for the disastrous outcome of the survey (this requires a disastrous outcome, of course). Perhaps they feel camaraderie between themselves, having survived

the rumble in the jungle, and are keen to work together in future. This sort of thing will be up to the players. If they are no help in this regard then the GM can use the Tempted to create the investigator group from scratch. He can visit his erstwhile colleagues separately to recruit them specifically to carry out this mission.

A CALL TO ARMS

Out of the blue, the Tempted will invite the players to meet at the Howling Monkey, a bar near the centre of Heimbürg. It is a popular venue for aspiring corporates to meet up. The place has booming music on the ground floor but is more civilised upstairs. The whole place is decorated to look like a jungle scene embellished with dozens of stuffed looter monkeys in various poses. Given their recent history together in the jungle, this must be some kind of joke from the Tempted.

He will seem very open and friendly to the players, and the first part of the meeting will be reminiscing about the Archaeological Survey. They can talk about the exciting moments and lament the passing of brave colleagues. The players should always get the impression that the Tempted is one of them and on their side.



The Howling Monkey: a flashback to the jungle.

Then, after a few drinks perhaps, the Tempted will confide in the players what happened when he was tempted by the Dark Temptor in the black pyramid. All the other players will be able to relate to this story because they would have been tempted too. The Tempted will pretend that he is unaware of their temptations but if they reveal to him that they too were tempted, this will seem to make sense and the Tempted will feign comfort from this knowledge. He is playing the long con and is good at it.

The Tempted will reveal that as soon as they broke the Seal, he found himself atop a tall building, with a view across Heimburg. At first the view was pleasant and the people were going about their usual business. Then suddenly, he caught a terrible glimpse of the streets littered with rotting bodies. A plague had struck the city and those who had survived shambled through the street in a dazed, sickened state. The few that were still healthy struggled with wagons, trying to take the bodies off to mass burials. Rats and dogs ran through the streets feeding on the diseased corpses. Then the shadow of the Dark Legions passed across the world; the city was in such a state there was no way it could possibly defend itself.

The Tempted was brought back to what he believed was the present, and a shadowy figure stood atop the building with him. The figure held a large sapphire in its fist. The tempted knew somehow that that sapphire was the cause of the plague; he knew that it was an artefact of the Dark Soul that had been sent to destroy the people of Heimburg and that if the shadowy figure was able to crush the sapphire it would release the plague, and the consequences would be as he had just foreseen.

The Tempted tried to grab the sapphire but somehow he was rooted to the spot and could not reach. Then he heard one of the players (the GM should choose one, preferably the one who gets on the best with the Tempted) ask, "Will you let me help you?". The Tempted will reveal that he was sorely tempted to accept this help, but somehow knew that there was deception at work and no good could come of this. So he refused. The voice, though he knew it was not really the player's voice, asked him three times if he would let him help, and he refused three times. Then he found himself back in the black pyramid. The players know the rest.

The Tempted will say that he simply put this to the back of his mind, suspecting that it was just a trick of the Dark Soul. However, a couple of weeks ago he came across the very sapphire that was in his dream.

The Tempted will describe how he was visiting the Venusian Heritage Museum and saw it there, on display as part of the exhibit on the black pyramid. He will show the players a picture of the sapphire from the museum's records. It is embedded in a stone disc about forty centimetres in diameter. The disc is carved with concentric circles of unknown runes, similar to the runes found on the sarcophagi in the black pyramid. The players, on a **Daunting (D3)**

Education test, might remember it from among the grave goods of the eastern sarcophagus.

The tempted will then confide to the players that he is very worried that the sapphire may get into the wrong hands. He will say that he has done everything he can to get hold of the sapphire through the proper channels but has made no progress. The Brotherhood, who technically own the sapphire and are lending it to the museum, insists there is no sign of taint upon the object and it is entirely safe. The museum will not let him examine it.

So, as the players are exactly the sort of people who might do this sort of job professionally as freelancers, the Tempted thought of them. He wants them to steal the sapphire and bring it to him so that he can keep it safe. It might shock the players that the Tempted is asking them to steal a priceless artefact from the Brotherhood and Bauhaus, but they will see that he is earnest. He will say he is desperate, and has tried absolutely everything else he can think of.

If asked what he is going to do with the sapphire, the Tempted will say that he has an idea of where it can be kept absolutely safe, though he is not prepared to reveal this location to the players. This should protect them as well as the sapphire.

If asked why he is not going to be joining them for the heist, the Tempted will tell the players that he has already caused a bit of a stir around the sapphire, and he has got into a number of arguments with the various parties already. He really needs an excellent alibi while the sapphire is being stolen. As he has already told a number of parties that he believes the Dark Soul is interested in obtaining the sapphire, if his alibi is good he will be able to tell them all, "I told you so". This will also serve to take the heat off the players.

The Tempted will probably not be able to offer much money for the job (he will offer whatever he can) but will make it clear he is asking more as a friend than as a genuine patron.

The Tempted will suggest that they should not be seen together again; they should communicate only by phone. He will hand them two phones, and he will show them he has two similar ones. Each pair of phones contain only its pair's number. They will start communicating on one of the pairs and, if that becomes compromised, they should switch to the second pair.

The Tempted will say that he has recruited an expert in the field in order to help with their task. This is a professor of history at the University of Heimburg. He will contact the players in due course. He is sympathetic to their cause and will offer whatever expertise he can. He is even prepared to join the robbery itself, if the players reckon they will require his presence. In any case they should deliver the disc to this expert who will be able to look after it before handing it on to the Tempted.

CHECKING OUT THE STORY

If the players look into the Tempted's story they are likely to find that it checks out. Everything he says is an accurate reflection of the truth (except his ultimate motivation, of course). The sapphire disc is part of the exhibit, and the Tempted has indeed tried several times to get hold of it and been rebuffed by the Brotherhood and the museum.

However, since the Tempted's attempts to get the artefact it has been reappraised by the museum's curator and is no longer on display; it has been moved downstairs to the secure vault. The Tempted is not aware of this yet, but any sort of reconnaissance undertaken by the players is bound to discover this fact. If they ask about the disc they will be told "it has been removed from public display for research purposes".

DAVID HARGROVE

The players will receive a call from David Hargrove. He will introduce himself as a professor from the university and tell the players he believes they have a mutual friend. He will be curt and tell them to meet him that evening in a bar called the Red Duke in the student area of Heimburg. He will tell them to mind they are not followed and to behave as inconspicuously as possible.

David Hargrove was a professor of Archaeology at Heimburg University. However, about a month ago he was killed by Gerard Fletcher. Fletcher then used his Dark Gift Steal Identity to take Hargrove's appearance and some of his mind. Fletcher is now posing as Hargrove. The Hargrove/Fletcher character will be referred to as Hargrove throughout this adventure, even though he is not really Hargrove. The GM should be careful to keep this in mind. The players will probably not ever learn the truth about or the identity of Gerard Fletcher, and will only know him as David Hargrove or eventually, if they find out what is going on, some dark entity that has stolen Hargrove's identity.

Hargrove, or rather the entity that has taken Hargrove's identity, is really the main villain of this adventure. The Tempted now becomes a background character keeping an eye on the players while Hargrove is the main driving force behind the Dark Soul's plan, here. The Tempted will be a major player in the next part of the campaign, Beyond the Pale. However, the GM should feel free to bring the Tempted in as a supposed ally of the players if this helps the plan.

Though the Tempted will be loath to risk revealing his true nature, he will be prepared to manipulate the players further if this is vital. The GM should not worry about having the Tempted discovered, as he should be able to bring another Tempted into the plot if the first one is discovered (if more than one of the survey team escaped from the black pyramid).

It is Hargrove's task to get hold of the plague disc and decipher the runes that hold the key to releasing the sapphire from the disc. Once the sapphire is released from the protection of the disc, it only needs to be smashed for a devastating plague to be loosed upon Heimburg. The details of how he will attempt to achieve this are discussed later on in this adventure.

GERARD FLETCHER

Gerard Fletcher was a mercenary and assassin. He was always sociopathic, even before he was tempted towards the Dark Soul. Now the Tempted considers him to be the perfect vessel to help him destroy Heimburg.

Fletcher is a mad man, a morose nihilist. He always wanted everyone to just go away and die. Now he might get his wish. After an early life of petty vindictiveness and mindless destruction, he gladly became a Heretic. This has seemingly given him direction and purpose. Though really he is entirely at the behest of his baser instincts and the whims of the Dark Soul, it has brought a focus for his misanthropy. Even before he fell to the Dark Soul he suffered from bouts of schizophrenia; his Dark Gift reflects this and makes use of this mental illness.

Since Fletcher has been able to steal identities, he has wandered through Heimburg as a confused and anguished being. He feels an urge to consume people and live their lives for a few months, until that identity starts to unravel in his fractured mind. Then he must choose another victim to consume and live their life, and so on. His consumption of David Hargrove's identity has been directed by the will of the Dark Soul in order to aid the Tempted in his mission to destroy Heimburg.

Fletcher killed the real David Hargrove over a month ago and assumed his identity using his Steal Identity Dark Gift. He has been living Hargrove's life ever since.

GERARD FLETCHER, SKIN STEALER ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10 (+1)	11 (+1)	9	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	11	9

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

WOUNDS: 8

SOAK: Mutable Flesh & Bone: (All 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Enraged Blows (melee):** 2+ \uparrow 5, Stun, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Accomplished Assassin:**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Inured to Disease**
- ◀ **Inured to Pain**
- ◀ **Inured to Poison**
- ◀ **Slave to Symmetry (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Physique (1)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Strength (1)**

DARK SYMMETRY SPENDS

- ◀ **Creature of Symmetry:** Fletcher has been given access to Dark Gifts by the Dark Soul in order to carry out its work. He knows the following Dark Gifts: Obfuscation, Dark Curse, Symmetry Burst, Lunacy, and Steal Identity (see sidebar on next page).

WHAT DO WE WANT? THE PLAYERS! WHEN DO WE WANT THEM? NOW!

Getting to the Red Duke might be a bit of an adventure in itself. Since the Seal was broken, the students have been more revolting than usual. There are any number of protest groups out on the streets. Many of these protests are turning to violence and many of the groups are turning on each other. The streets around the university resemble a warzone during the night though the students are generally not resorting to fatal violence, punching and kicking and the occasion Molotov cocktail are enough for them. The problem is exacerbated because many of Heimburg's troops have been called away to the southern jungles to defend the black pyramid.

If the players have not made a good job of looking as inconspicuous as possible, then the Students Against Militarism of the Ring of Fire and Friends of Green Spaces (SAMRFFGS) will notice them. SAMRFFGS are holding a rally a few blocks from the Red Duke. They have placards like 'Venus in Firs!' and 'Keep the Jungle Green!'.



Gerard Fletcher: Tonight, I'm going to be David Hargrove.

The players will need to push through their line to reach the Red Duke directly. If they try it, a petite protestor will suddenly turn on them and use any excuse she can think of to vilify them. If they look like they have just stepped out of the jungle conflict then that will be a particularly excellent excuse. But any sort of militaristic or even non-student aspect to their appearance should work.

Once that is done, the rest of the protestors will surround the players shouting angry protests and waving their banners in the players' faces. If the players keep cool and shuffle away slowly then the incident will naturally dissipate. If they react, however, then things could get nasty. The students will become increasingly belligerent, but actually the worst they could ever do is hit someone over the head with a heavy slogan or poke them with a sharp motto.

THE RED DUKE

The Red Duke is a bit of a dive. It is frequented by students and those wishing to capitalise on the bit of cash the students do have. This is known as the sort of bar to get hold of recreational narcotics, too. The place is hot, sweaty, and annoyingly hip. If the players are older than the students then they should certainly feel out of place and a bit self-conscious.

Hargrove is an attractive and studious looking young man. He looks too young to be a professor but his credentials are impeccable. He will be polite and considerate at the meeting. After briefly outlining the mission, which the Tempted has already explained to the players, he will listen to their suggestions and let them take the lead in coming up with any sort of plan.

Hargrove will be careful to keep the violence to a minimum and will press for a plan where as few people as possible can get hurt. This is all a ruse, of course, but he is enjoying trying to get the players to completely misunderstand and underestimate him.

STEAL IDENTITY

DIFFICULTY: D1+

DURATION: Two weeks per difficulty level

TARGET: Self

EFFECT: Steal Identity allows a Heretic to take on the likeness and personality of anyone he kills. The victim ends up as an unidentifiable blob of vague humanoid flesh whilst the Heretic's body takes on the features of the victim. This process takes two minutes per level of difficulty. If the Heretic is interrupted, then only a part of the victim will be assimilated; consequently, the effect will only last for a number of weeks equivalent to the number of minutes spent absorbing the victim's particulars.

The Heretic also learns something of the victim's more fundamental knowledge and idiosyncrasies, but not too much. The Heretic might pass as that person, but not for an extended period among people who know the victim well. For example, the Heretic might know where the person lives and recognise his wife and car, but is less likely to remember his wife's cousin's dog's name or a technical detail about his occupation.

The effect lasts for a couple of months at most. As it gets to the end of this period then the appearance and personality gained will begin to unravel. The Heretic will lose more of its victim's memories and his features will become increasingly vague and bland. The longer this goes on, the more pronounced the deterioration will be. Use of this power at difficulty D1 will increase the Repercussion range by five for any test (normally Persuade) made to masquerade as the victim. Increasing the difficulty of the power to D2 will consequently reduce the Repercussion of tests to four; D3 will reduce the Repercussion to three, D4 to two, and D5 to one. This is also affected, however, by the length of time that the Heretic has been wearing the victim's identity. Following the first two weeks, the Repercussion range of impersonation tests will increase by one per two weeks, to a maximum of five. Rolling a Complication on any such test means that this use of Steal Identity has ended with immediate effect, and the Heretic may no longer masquerade as that victim.

The Heretic will be faced with a gradually overwhelming desire to find a new victim and drain his identity. For each week that passes, the Heretic must succeed at a Willpower test with a difficulty equivalent to the current Repercussion range of impersonation tests. Failure means that the Heretic is driven to assume a new identity. The new victim will be carefully chosen and stalked, so as to minimise risk of discovery, but must be killed within the current week. Once seven days have passed, the Heretic will suffer one Mental Wound for each day that he ignores the impulse to steal a new identity.

The Heretic himself has very little of his original identity remaining. He is a vague and confused amalgam of all the identities he has ever consumed. A recently consumed victim dominates his personality, but bits and pieces of all the previous ones are likely to crop up at any moment, especially when an identity is nearing the end of its dominant stage. Rolling a Complication on any test outside of that specified above will inflict the Perplexed status on the Heretic for one d3 rounds, as he struggles with the other personalities that reside within him.

Hargrove will gloss over any specific questions about the sapphire or general questions about Venusian history as skilfully as he can manage. He is well aware that that is his weakest spot in regard to this ruse. He has only patchy and unreliable recall of the original Hargrove's vast knowledge in the area. He can describe the item in detail but if asked anything much more specific will return to his mantra that this is an evil and dangerous thing, which needs to be taken out of the reach of dark forces as soon as possible.

There could be some discussion as to whether Hargrove takes part in the robbery or not. If the players insist on him being there, he will reluctantly agree. It is not that he is particularly worried about any consequences; he just does not want the players to get the impression that he is keen to commit crimes, or perceive that he wishes to keep an eye on them. He wants to give the impression of a mild-mannered academic.

If the players would rather he was not present, then he is happy to go along with that too. He will suggest meeting them in some shadowy alleyway a couple of blocks from the museum where they can hand the disc over to him. But really he is prepared to let the players dictate the arrangements for the handover if they insist, as he does not want them to become suspicious of him.

The one thing he is particularly careful of, however, is that they must hand over the disc before they get wind of the double crossing. Therefore it needs to be done very soon after the robbery. Hargrove is anxious that the players will not have a chance of watching TV or getting tracked down by the police before he gets his hand on the disc.

Hargrove will give them a number to ring if they need to contact him, but emphasises that this should only be for emergencies and he will contact them when they need to know something. The number is from a stolen phone in his possession that cannot be traced to him. He never answers this phone but will listen to any messages.

THE HEIST

The players will probably want to plan the entirety of the robbery of the museum themselves. The Tempted can help them out with some ideas, but repeatedly contacting him asking for advice is not good for security, and not good for the game, so the players should be encouraged to research and implement the plan on their own as much as possible. In any case, David Hargrove is there if the players require some expert advice.

Even if he is not involved with the minutiae of their plans, Hargrove will check on them occasionally, just for brief updates on how things are going. He also requires to be informed of the precise timing of the heist in order to set the players up for their fall.

If the players play things close to their chests, then Hargrove will insist they keep him informed, and also try to find out what they are planning. He could always have the players watched. It is vital to his plans that he knows when the sapphire is grabbed because he wants to get hold of it as soon as possible. If he thinks that the players are keeping him out of the loop he will report back to the Tempted, who will try to sort it out.



THE SAPPHIRE

The sapphire is an ancient relic from a time before man. It was created as part of a necklace for Demnogonis by a star-crossed (and frankly, deluded) suitor. Each stone of the necklace contained one of the great pestilences of the universe. The other stones have been lost, or used, over the aeons and this sapphire is the only one known to still exist.

The sapphire cannot be broken while it is housed in the stone disc, and only with the right ritual, incantations, and a worthy sacrifice can the stone be released from the disc. Then it will become fragile and easy to shatter. When the sapphire shatters, a deadly plague will be released upon the world.

The sapphire was captured by the ancient foes of the Dark Soul, those same ancient foes who imprisoned the Dark Temptor within the black pyramid. The stone disc around the sapphire is a warning and also a ward. The runes are a warning that the sapphire contains a deadly plague and also an explanation of how the sapphire can be released. However, they are now untranslatable to humans without the help of the Dark Soul.

The stone disc is a physical and also a magical protection for the sapphire. The sapphire must be released from the disc before it can be broken, and in order to do this someone pure of heart must oversee the ritual when the ancient incantations described on the disc are invoked. This was designed as a safeguard to keep the sapphire from falling into evil hands.

However, this purpose has been corrupted and the elements of the ritual have become known to the Dark Soul. Even the ritual is no longer one of purity and safety. In the manner of obscure ancient prophesies and the unfathomable universal mythologies, 'pure of heart' in this instance simply means a virgin, and 'oversee the ritual' means be sacrificed and have their blood fall upon the disc.

THE VENUSIAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

The Museum is located in a central part of Heimburg in a neighbourhood known for its public buildings and leisure activities. The players will have easy access to much of the building as the museum is open to the public. The place has a reasonably high level of security. Although nothing thought to be dangerous would be put on display, many of the exhibits are extremely valuable. In addition, some of the items considered potentially dangerous are kept in secure vaults in the depths of the building.

The museum's most famous exhibit is the Spear of Heimburg. This is supposedly an artefact that was used to destroy some nameless evil at the founding of the city of Heimburg. The story goes that the first settlers in this area found the spear in what is now the centre of the city. They were attacked by strange, dark creatures and the only thing that could kill them was the spear.

The spear takes pride of place in the museum's early history section, and is shown being wielded by a pioneer against fanciful creatures. It is on most of the museum's literature and posters, too. While the spear is strongly rumoured to possess strange powers, it is actually entirely mundane.

THE LIBRARY

The top floor is given over to a reference library, which is an impressive collection of all manner of documents relating to the history of Heimburg and Venus generally. The players might even have come here earlier on in the adventure to do research for their expedition into the jungle. This area is restricted, and special permission is required to access the collection. Only a few academics have continual access while students and other academics can be granted access for specific documents occasionally.

It might be possible for the players to get a temporary pass to this section of the museum, but they would have to know their stuff and also have a good and well-known contact in academia to vouch for them. Of course, leveraging their position on the Venusian Archaeological Survey should be enough to get them access, but this would also make their presence there rather conspicuous.

PUBLIC AREAS

The first (ground) floor and the second floor are devoted to the public access areas of the museum. The building is very clean and white and dotted tastefully with exhibits. The museum gives the impression more of a modern art gallery than a stuffy historical museum.

The players will be able to get as familiar as they like with these areas, as well the doors leading to the restricted access areas. The public areas are thoroughly walked-through by the security guards at the end of each day to check for lurkers, and similarly walked-through each morning.

THE BASEMENT

The basement area is used as storage for many exhibits and also as a research area for the curation team. There is a secure area where the most valuable exhibits are stored. The curators are aware of the potentially sensitive nature of their exhibits, and the danger of the influence of the Dark Soul, but really only on an academic level. All the exhibits need to be scrutinised by the Brotherhood before they can be displayed here, and the curators generally trust that nothing that arrives here can be of any danger at all. Even so, precautions are taken with the security and the storage. Many of the exhibits are extremely valuable.

STORAGE VAULT

The plague disc is stored in the vault among a number of other valuable items that are not currently displayed. Ostensibly, the plague disc is waiting for a proper examination by the curator, but this is not on any to-do list. It will more than likely be kept in here indefinitely, unless it is liberated.

The one genuinely impressive bit of security hardware in the entire museum is the door to the Storage Vault. It would take a **Dire (D4) Thievery test** to open it. The amount of explosives required to shift it would make the buildings tremble for several blocks around, and have every police officer within a mile come running. The only handy staff member with the combination to the vault is Gertrude Hausmann.

SECURITY

The museum is an old building and has very little in the way of security. It makes up for this by having a number of security guards always present. The windows on the ground floor are protected by alloy security bars, which are difficult to even blast through. However the upper floors are not.

There is a closed circuit television monitoring system. This should be obvious to anyone who walks around the public sections of the museum. This system is linked to the Security Room in the basement, which is also where the security guards are based. All the video from the CCTV is kept for ten days and then wiped.

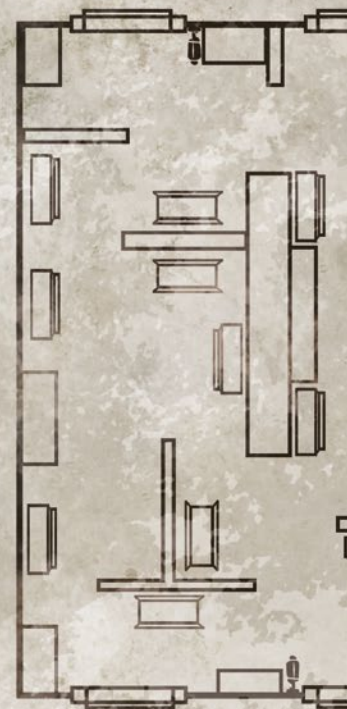
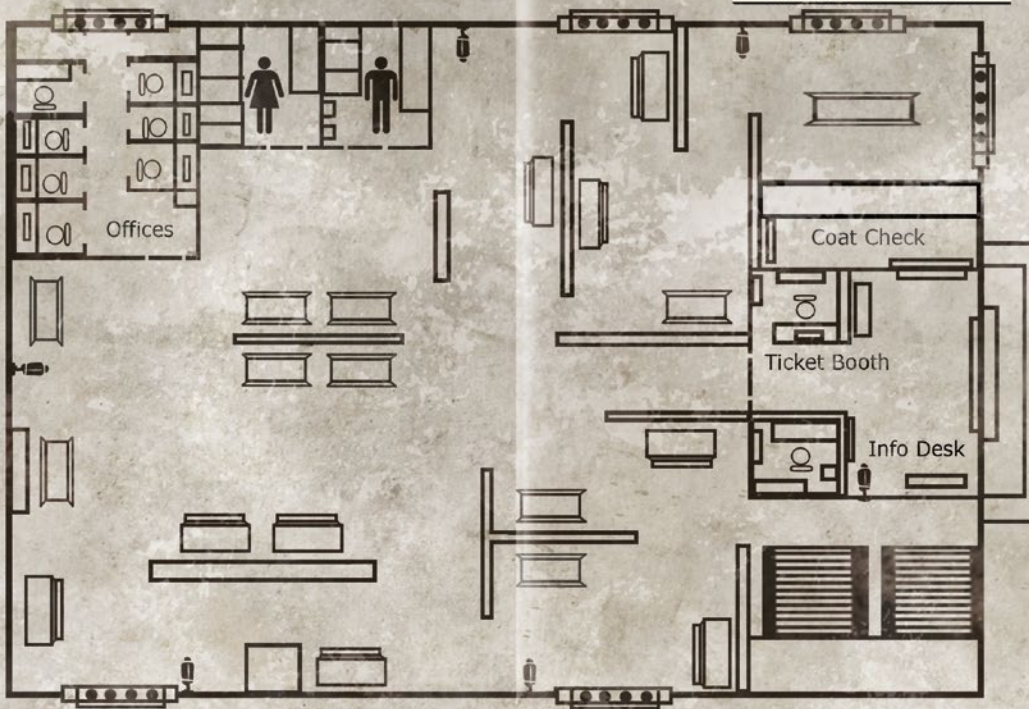
All the access points are wired into an alarm system. This is old and not sophisticated. It only requires a **Challenging (D2) Mechanics test** to bypass.

SECURITY GUARDS

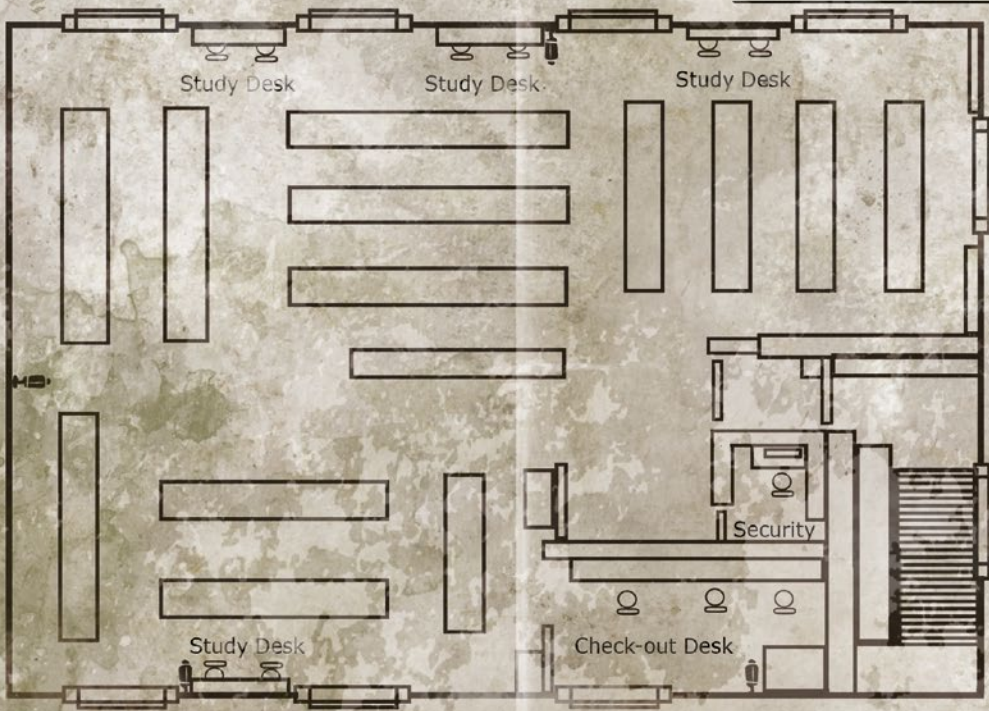
The museum has a number of guards. During the day there are usually only four on duty. Although they do make the odd patrol through the bowels of the building and around its perimeter, they mostly stay in the public area making the valuable exhibits look even more valuable. During the day the place is busy enough that anyone going through the restricted areas is likely to be spotted by other members of staff.

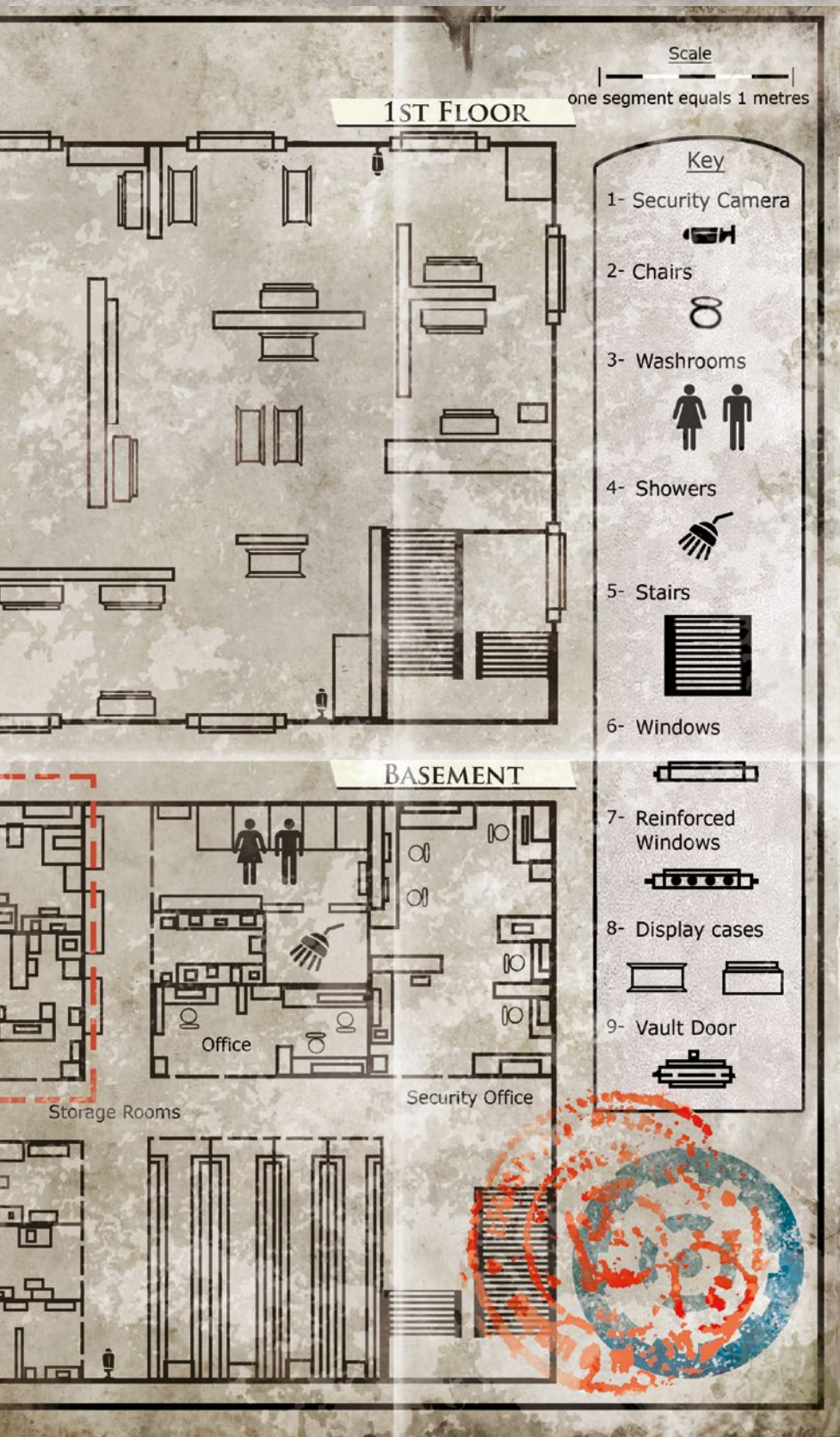
VENUSIAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

MAIN FLOOR



2ND FLOOR





During the night the museum is often empty except for the security guards. There are usually six on duty for the night shift. Their duties are to continually monitor and tour every part of the building looking for intruders or anything else unusual. However, the ethos among the guards has become relatively slack. They often congregate in the security room or the main foyer to chat or even play games. They do make occasional tours of the building, if only out of boredom. There is no discernible pattern to their beats simply because they are so slack.

STEPHAN GROSS

If the players need to interact with a member of the museum's security staff as part of their plan, Stephan Gross is detailed here.

Stephan is an ex-army grunt who left the Bauhaus Hussars about a year ago. He had plans to go into private security but things have not gone as well as he had hoped. He did a couple of mercenary jobs for some shady business interests attached to Bauhaus, but most of the personnel of those operations ended up getting arrested or dying mysteriously. Since then he has tried to keep his head down.

Stephan has a wife and two kids. He needs to keep this job or he will really be in trouble. Therefore he wants as little trouble as possible and will be careful to do things by the book as far as he can. Having said that, if there is enough money on the table to make it worth his while, and a good chance that he will not get caught, then Stephan is quite prepared to betray his position and his authority.

Stephan's job is simply a means to an end and he is much more concerned with getting by and looking after his family than loyalty to his employers. If the players should threaten his family then Stephan will weigh up their chances in regard to telling the authorities. If there is too much risk then he is much more likely to go with the players' demands than risk his family getting hurt.

Stephan lives in a poorer district some miles from the museum and buses in for each shift. Like all the security guards, he works odd shifts. One week he might be required to take the night shift for five days straight. Another week he might do a couple of days followed by a couple of nights. It all depends, and is not very predictable. However, it is possible to pull in a favour and get a specific shift if he really needs to.

The museum security is often short staffed and so if one security guard cannot make it in for whatever reason, the management usually ask around to see if anyone is prepared to take his shift at short notice. This will often involve pulling a double shift.

STEPHAN GROSS ★

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

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Security Fatigues: (Arms 1, Torso 2, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

◀ **HG-25 'Equaliser' (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 5, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Close Quarter, Knockdown

◀ **Baton (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◀ **From Soldier to Security:** Stephan has found it easy to transfer the skills he learned during his stint with the Hussars into his current job. When making a Ranged Weapons attack, he may re-roll up to two damage dice, but must accept the new results. Additionally, he reduces the penalty for firing at a range other than the weapon's optimal range by one, to a minimum of zero. Finally, he may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.

◀ **Think of Your Family:** Stephan's family is foremost in his thoughts. Any Persuade test made against him that implicitly involves a threat or boon to his family generates one additional Momentum if successful.

◀ **Down on His Luck:** Despite trouble apparently following Stephan wherever he steps, he seems to have some luck in avoiding it. He suffers from two permanent Dread. Complications, however, will randomly affect anyone within Close range of Stephan.

OTHER STAFF

The curation team comprises the curator, Gertrude Hausmann, and her researchers. There are usually five or six of those around the place during the day. The public museum itself requires a staff of receptionists, bureaucrats, and cleaners, like any public building, but these stick to the upper floors. Only the curation team and the security guards come down to the basement.

Occasionally researchers will come to the museum from other institutions to examine or research specific items. These are cleared at a high level among the various academic institutions and Hausmann herself. The players would need to be genuine eminent academics or at least know someone who can vouch for them if they are to get into this part of the museum on their academic credentials.

It is not unusual for researchers to work late, but doing an all-nighter is uncommon. After midnight it is unlikely that anyone other than the security guards will be present. The curators are a close-knit team. Nobody walks around in the basement unaccompanied or unknown to the researchers, so the players will not be able to simply walk in posing as professor so-and-so and demand obedience.

ROBBING THE MUSEUM

A simple plan might be for the players to break through one of the second-storey windows in the dead of night, make their way down to the basement, and then break into the Storage Vault before making their way back the way they came. The main difficulty with this plan is avoiding the security guards. It would be very difficult not to come across at least one security patrol doing this, and therefore the players would need some sort of contingency to deal with this.

Hargrove will be anxious that the disc is delivered to him as soon as possible. To this end he will either accompany the players on their break-in or be waiting within a few blocks of the museum. If this idea does not suit the players then Hargrove will insist, saying that the players do not understand just how dangerous the disc is. If this is not convincing, then he will call in the Tempted to make this absolutely clear. The Tempted might even imply that the disc has pervasive powers that could turn a man's mind and therefore the players might not be up to the task of keeping hold of it for long without falling to the power of the Dark Soul. The truth is, of course, the Tempted wants the disc out of their possession before the players realise they have been double crossed.

However the players go about their heist, it is vital to the subsequent parts of the adventure that they succeed. Should they fail then the adventure might end, or the GM can play it by ear to get things back on track.

If the players all end up in jail for robbery with the disc still safe in the museum, then the Tempted will take other steps to get hold of it, but it would be difficult to see how the adventure could continue.

You would have to wonder why the Tempted would wait until the players got out of jail again before continuing his plan. Perhaps once the disc is really stolen, someone clever in a position of authority might realise the claims of the players (whatever these might be) were true after all and set them free with a mission to track down the genuine perpetrators.

If the players fail to get the disc but manage to escape, then the adventure can carry on in the same vein. Perhaps someone in the Brotherhood decides the disc needs to be taken into the protection of the Cathedral of Heimburg. In this case the players can attempt a similar sort of mission, but this time stealing the disc from a security van as it travels across Heimburg.

PART FOUR: ON THE RUN

THE DOUBLE CROSS

The Tempted has recruited a team of conspirators to do his bidding. Hargrove/Fletcher is the first of these and a loyal Heretic. Hargrove is the lead player in this conspiracy while the Tempted will prefer to take a back seat, directing matters from a distance when required. Hargrove has recruited three criminals on the Tempted's behalf. These are desperate thieves and murderers who will do virtually anything for money. Hargrove is in the process of turning their minds towards the Dark Soul but they are not entirely convinced as yet.



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THE FOUR RIDERS

The first stage in Hargrove's mad plan to unleash the plague upon Heimburg was to procure the sapphire. The second stage is to frame the players for atrocious, ritual murders and stealing the Spear of Heimburg, thus deflecting attention from the theft of the disc. This will give him the freedom from scrutiny and the space to set up the ritual to release the plague while the police search for the Spear of Heimburg.

However the players manage the theft of the disc, the conspirators' plan is to enter the museum shortly after the players leave. They will take the Spear of Heimburg and kill any of the guards who the players have spared. They will arrange the bodies in a circle, carving them up in a semblance of some sort of dark ritual and daubing the walls with the blood, making nonsensical shapes that might pass as ancient runes of a secret dark language.

The Heretics have recorded the players entering the museum and will send this to the local TV station. They will also send all the information they have about the players' identifies and addresses as an anonymous tip off. If the players were not careful enough to do so, the Heretics have also made sure that any CCTV records of the players' time in the museum are destroyed.



Hargrove's Dupes: Tyson, Carlson, and Ingersol. Scumbag Heretics.

In addition, if this is at all possible, the conspirators have planted the odd piece of evidence at the players' residences. They have planted a map of the museum with the location of the Spear of Heimburg circled in one of the players' apartments. They have planted several photographs of the exterior of the museum with prospective break-in points marked in another, a book and some photographs of the Spear of Heimburg planted in a third, etc. None of this evidence is too damning on its own but when put together as part of a coherent case against the players will undoubtedly be overwhelming.

Even if the players do not manage to get the disc and flee the museum, there is a chance that the conspirators manage to manipulate the situation to their advantage. They could kill the security guards and get the disc themselves, but still frame the players in a similar manner to that described above.

If the players bungle things and alert the police to their presence in the museum, then the conspirators will need to play things by ear. They have the option of firing several incendiary bombs into the building. This will kill a lot of people and destroy a lot of evidence and much of the building. It is not as neat as Plan A but it is a contingency they are prepared to use. In any case, their main evidence against the players will be them captured on video entering the museum.

THE CONSPIRATORS

Hargrove has recruited the following conspirators to frame the players and help with bringing the plague to Heimburg. The three were a gang of small time crooks fresh out of prison. Hargrove's ruse was to hire them for a straightforward robbery with menaces. However, he has begun to turn their minds towards the Dark Soul and give them utter belief in the righteousness of his plans.

Hargrove's coercion has not worked its full course, yet. Although the process of

turning them towards the Dark Soul is incomplete, Hargrove (and the Tempted) decided the time was right to begin their operation. They felt the conspirators could be controlled well enough for the plan to work. The three conspirators are impressed and frightened by him. They are convinced, to a certain extent, of what he says to them, even though it does not make complete sense all the time.

The conspirators, especially Carlson, still have nagging doubts and they sometimes furtively discuss these amongst themselves. Then when Hargrove visits them, he manages to dispel these fears. This is usually enough to keep the conspirators compliant for a week or so. Carlson still gets episodes where he suddenly realises what he is doing is entirely wrong and inhuman, but these soon pass. Every time Hargrove visits them and talks to them, these doubts recede a little more, and it is only a matter of time before the three of them become totally convinced of the way of the Dark Soul and lost to its influence forever.

GUNNER TYSON

Gunner Tyson is a native Heimburger and career criminal. He knows his way around the Heimburg underworld like few others. He was born into the criminal fraternity and has never seen the need to leave it, despite some lengthy spells in jail.

Tyson is the natural leader of these three conspirators, though he submits readily enough to Hargrove. The man has a ruthless streak and is easily offended. He is an instinctive killer and his gun or knife is usually his first recourse in any disagreement.

Tyson is tall and gaunt, and looks older than his forty-something years. He has a head of thinning, straggly white hair that needs cutting.

GUNNER TYSON ★

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

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

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **RWD HG-12 (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 3, Semi-Automatic, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ▶ **Switchblade (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Unrepentant Career Criminal:** There is little that Tyson has not experienced during his life in the underworld or time in prison. He has Thievery Expertise 3 and Thievery Focus 3. Further, he may immediately roll an additional d20 on any Thievery test that generates at least one success. Additionally, he may re-roll one d20 when making a Thievery test, but must accept the new result. Finally, when preparing to commit a crime, he reduces the difficulty rating for all Education, Observation, and Persuade tests by two, to a minimum of one.
- ▶ **Toughened by Time Served:** In and out of jail from an early age, Tyson has had no choice but to toughen himself both physically and mentally. He may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Resistance test, and may re-roll one d20 when making a Willpower test, but must accept the new results. Further, the difficulty of the test is decreased by one when an effect is triggered that would require a Resistance test to avoid a status condition, which may eliminate the need for a test. Finally, his life experiences have numbed his mind to mental and, to a degree, physical trauma. He has one more wound than normal for his profile (already included above).

STUART CARLSON

Stuart Carlson finds it hard to resist an angle. He was running for a big gang on Luna but found it impossible to resist the 15,000 crowns he was supposed to be using to pay off a bent police officer. He took the money and jumped on a flight to Mars.

After that, he went from one con to the next, always just one step ahead of the law and his victims. There were few places left in the solar system that he could show his face when he ended up in Heimburg. And then his luck ran out and he was sentenced to several years in prison. He met Tyson and Ingersol in Heimburg Penitentiary and found they had similar anti-social habits.

Carlson is a bear of a man with thick red hair and a bushy beard. He gives the impression of being extremely strong. He is charming and likable with a good line in jokes and banter. Most people who meet him get on well with him. This does not mean, however, he is averse to mindless violence or cruelty. Recently, his strange doubts about Hargrove's influence have been putting him on edge. He has already argued with Tyson about their current job and employer.

Carlson's lucky knack of skipping town just at the right moment need not desert him here. He is ready to leave, or even betray his fellows if the opportunity arises.



STUART CARLSON ★

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

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

WOUNDS: 5

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

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Piranha (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◀ **Brass Knuckles (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 5, 1H, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Monster Behind the Charm:** Full of blarney, yet equally as brutal, Carlson can be as quick to use his fists as he can his wit, should things not go his way. Each successful Persuade test made by Carlson yields one additional Momentum. Further, he gains one additional d20 to his Command or Persuade tests. Finally, he may re-roll up to two damage dice when making a Close Combat attack, but must accept the new results.
- ◀ **Time to Skip Town:** Carlson has a knack for knowing just the right moment to skip town before his enemies close in. He may re-roll one d20 when making an Insight test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, the GM may make a Challenging D2 Insight test for Carlson whenever his enemies, including the players, are making a move to apprehend him. If successful, Carlson has skipped town and is nowhere to be found, although his trail may still be warm.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Swindler Extraordinaire:** Carlson has swindled more Crowns from his victims than the Magistrate of Heimbürg has had hot dinners. When attempting to fast-talk an opponent, he may spend Dark Symmetry points to gain additional d20 on Persuade tests exactly as a player character might. Additionally, each Dark Symmetry point thus spent nets two bonus d20 instead of one.

MAURICE 'THE NAIL' INGERSOL

Maurice Ingersol is little more than a bully. He grew up in Volksbürg largely hopeless about the future and survived by robbery and mugging. He soon attracted a gang of like-minded bullies who survived through petty crime.

When his gang got big enough to attract the attention of rival gangs, Ingersol was happy enough to deal with them his way. Most of his rivals were discovered nailed to some place or other and disembowelled. The twenty centimetre nails he used soon became his trademark weapon and calling card, and it is where he got his nickname.

Ingersol's lust for cruelty and death soon outgrew his petty criminal lifestyle and he embarked upon a serial killing campaign. After killing fifteen victims he fled to Heimbürg. In Heimbürg, he continued his criminal ways but was soon caught. Fortunately for him, he was caught for simple breaking and entering and his murderous past remained undiscovered.

Ingersol met up with Tyson and Carlson in jail and developed some sort of rapport. Tyson immediately saw the potential in having the Nail as an ally and cynically manipulated him into this. Ingersol is far more violent and sadistic than either of his colleagues but usually follows what Tyson tells him. He does not have the imagination or patience for long-term, complex plans, but is extremely loyal to Tyson.

Ingersol is stocky and powerfully built. He shaves his head and wears glasses. Most of his body is covered with poorly drawn tattoos and he spends much of his time obsessively working out and developing his intimidating and exceptionally strong physique.

MAURICE INGERSOL ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	10	8	7
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	6	8	7

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

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **.45AP Ronin (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
- ◀ **Nine Inch Nail (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 5, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Disconcerting Intensity:** A violent sociopath, Ingersol has an unsettling aura that intimidates most people that he meets.

Increase the Repercussion range of his Persuade tests by one when dealing with anyone not of the criminal underworld.

- ◆ **Psychotic Serial Killer:** Ingersol's time stalking, eviscerating, and 'nailing' his victims has taught him a few things about anatomy; specifically, how to hit where it hurts. He may re-roll up to two damage dice when making a Close Combat attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, when spending Momentum on the Called Shot benefit for an attack made with the Close Combat skill, each point of Momentum may be spent to shift the hit location by up to two points. Finally, his cruel and sadistic blows provide the Vicious 1 quality to attacks made with a Nine Inch Nail.
- ◆ **Pumped and Powerful:** Ingersol spends any free time he might have lifting weights and swigging protein. He may immediately roll two additional d20 on any Athletics test that generates at least one success. Additionally, he is immune to Disarm actions taken against him.

ON THE NEWS

The players should find out about the slaughter at the museum in a way that should give them a chance to take precautions. Having fifty police turn up at their house in the dead of night might not give them much of a chance. Perhaps they go to a bar to celebrate their successful robbery only to see their faces in a news story on an unwatched TV in the corner.

The first pictures of the players breaking into the museum appear on VeNews-7. The channel was sent the pictures anonymously and first broadcast selected shots literally seconds after informing the police. This fulfils its obligation to inform the authorities of any footage it has of illegal activity while still giving it the scoop.

Soon all the news stations are covering this sensational story. Many of their reports are exaggerated or largely untrue, although the essence of the story will be accurate. After a few hours some of the channels will begin speculating that the Spear of Heimborg was the target of the robbery and that it has indeed been stolen. A few hours after that the police will be able to confirm that the Spear of Heimborg is missing. They will announce that they believe a hitherto unknown group of Heretics stole the spear for as yet undetermined purposes, but they will assure the public that they are working on a number of leads and are confident they will get to the bottom of the case in time.

It should be clear to the players that they are steadily becoming Heimborg's most wanted. The breaking stories on the news take a while to capture the imagination. Law and order in Heimborg is at such a low ebb that there are any number of breaking stories waiting to take the place of the museum robbery. In early stories it is not clear exactly what the story is about; is it a robbery gone wrong, or some mindless violence?

However, by the next day it becomes clear that the murders are the premeditated work of a Heretic cult that might somehow be linked to the recent fiasco in the jungle. Some evil has clearly been unleashed at the heart of the city, and the unknowable nature of the ritual deaths strikes a chord with the people of Heimborg. There is a reason to fear right at the heart of the city. Everyone agrees the perpetrators need to be caught, or preferably killed, as soon as possible.

Another reason that this is such a juicy media story is that the pictures of the gang breaking into the museum are of very high quality. Some of the frames of the faces of the players as they go about this crime are crystal clear, not the usual grainy pictures that could be anyone. These make instant media stars of the players.

If the players watch the news a few hours later, they will be lucky enough to see some live coverage of one of their own residences being raided by dozens of police. The heavily armed officers will smash down the door and pile in, plainly meaning business. There are even a few over-enthusiastic gunshots. When the dust settles, the head of police operations will announce live on TV that the perpetrator was not a home at the time, but there was evidence that the place was recently occupied. If a player has a prized possession, then this should be smashed or otherwise broken in the police raid and displayed on camera.

There is even a feature on one of the more frivolous news channels: 'Which one do you fancy?' The GM could play this one up and designate, on behalf of TrueNewsVenus4 channel, each of the players as the serious one, the cute one, the all-action one, and the one you would take home to meet your mum. There are even proposals of marriage, and the players have an open invitation to appear on TrueNewsVenus4's Mystery Date show.

By the second or third day after the robbery, the players will need to take some thorough precautions to avoid getting recognised in the street.

POSSIBILITIES

This adventure assumes that the players managed to steal the plague disc and hand it off to David Hargrove. If this did not occur then the situation will be significantly different. The various plot lines described below can still apply but the details and the overall motivations of the main players will change.

If the players stole the disc but for one reason or another did not pass it on to Hargrove, then as well as having all the law enforcement agencies of Heimborg after them they also have the Tempted and all the forces he can muster on their tails. If the players still trust the Tempted, then it should be easy enough to organise handing the disc over. Then it will be up to the Tempted whether to allow the

players to live or not. It might be satisfactory to kill them there and then, but this has its risks, and having the players running around as Heimbürg's most wanted is part of the plan to distract the authorities. Essentially, if this happens, then the situation can return to the one assumed below rather painlessly.

If the players have the disc and refuse to hand it over to Hargrove or the Tempted, then the GM will need to play things by ear. The Tempted will need to bring what forces he can to bear. There can also be a second Tempted from among the members of the survey team he can call on. If this is done cleverly, then the players might be persuaded to hand the artefact over to the second Tempted, or at least trust him enough to let him into their circle.

The Tempted holds all the cards because his Tempt ability means that almost anyone can be presented to the players as a legitimate character who they should be able to trust, only for that character to have been tempted to the Dark Soul very recently. The GM should try to avoid using that tactic too much however, as the players could soon feel that it does not matter what they do, whoever they meet will have mysteriously become a Heretic for no reason they can discern. There is a fine line between presenting a world of conspiracy and mistrust, and presenting one of hopelessness and lack of agency.

THE PLAYERS INVESTIGATE

The players should have their work cut out. Not only are they Heimbürg's most wanted and recognised by three quarters of the city's population, they will not know exactly what has happened or who is behind it all. Above all of this is a plot to destroy the city, which gets closer to realisation with every passing hour.

These are a lot of things to sort out. The players might be content simply to hide out until the fuss blows over, or they might simply want to leave town, because for them anywhere will be safer than Heimbürg. For the adventure to work, the players should wish to find out what has happened, or at least try to track down those that have double crossed them. The GM may be required to leak some information to them to get them started on this road.

No doubt the players will have their own ideas about what has happened and how to go about uncovering the truth. This part of the game will need to be open-ended, and the GM will need to react to the ideas and actions of the players. Should they draw a blank, or be investigating too many dead ends, the GM should introduce Carlson's Gambit. This is a way to get the players back on track and to give them some solid leads towards the conspirators.

TALKING TO THE UNDERWORLD

It might be possible to track down the conspirators through underworld contacts, but only if the players are extremely well-connected among the criminals of Heimbürg. The conspirators are

all virtually unknown petty criminals who have made little mark on the Heimbürg underworld.

It would take a lot of digging among dangerous people to get to the conspirators this way. The players would also need to pay a heavy price. The criminals who can help would not just want a financial reward, but would need guarantees that the players will remain at their beck and call long after this situation is resolved.

One disadvantage of hanging out with this sort of people is that some of them are very likely to be inclined to take advantage of the players' most wanted status and sell them out to the authorities.

TALKING TO THE MEDIA

The players might decide to check out VeNews-7, the station that broke the news of the museum job so swiftly. The station is not likely to be able to help too much. It was sent the video it aired edited pretty much as it was broadcast. The station has no idea who sent it and has handed everything over to the police.

If the players were to come sniffing around, then the chances are they would be recognised. The station would inform the police, making sure it got the players and their arrest on film, of course.

TALKING TO THE AUTHORITIES

The police are, of course, desperate to trace those responsible for the museum massacre. Unfortunately for the players, they are the only suspects. It would be a very brave move for them to give themselves up and try to reason their way through due process. They would need some rather compelling evidence and probably some sympathetic contacts, too.

The police have very little evidence other than that which has already been broadcast across the city. They do not know where the video came from, and have not put many resources into that part of the investigation, preferring to concentrate on capturing the suspects rather than trying to find the good Samaritans who have helped them.

TALKING TO THE TEMPTED

The chances are that sooner or later the players will contact the Tempted, wondering what went wrong. Hopefully for the GM, the Tempted still has the players' trust. If so, the Tempted can insist everything is going to be alright and the players just need to get to the bottom of things. The Tempted will tell the players to sit tight, keep him up to date on their location and activities, but essentially do nothing. The Tempted will do his very best to reassure the players while keeping them convinced of his loyalty to them.

The less the players do, the better it will be for the Tempted. He can see Hargrove's plans getting closer to completion, while the players do not have the information to interfere. Every time the players

contact the Tempted he will tell them to sit tight and make up an excuse as to why things will eventually blow over and the players will be in the clear. Sooner or later the players will find this unsatisfactory and will begin to lose faith in the Tempted and take matters into their own hands. If the players look like they are beginning to piece things together, then the Tempted will be forced to act.

The Tempted may find it expedient to have the police track down the players. This would be especially useful as a distraction if the authorities are getting close to Hargrove, or if Hargrove's ritual is ready to go ahead. The Tempted will, of course, need to know exactly where the players are so he can set them up. The GM should consider: if the Tempted is the only one who knows where the players are, how did the police find out?

THE DARK HUNTSMAN

If the players get even closer to piecing things together, and the Tempted finds out about this, then he will dispatch the Dark Huntsman to kill them. Or, if the players absolutely insist on meeting up with the Tempted, he will send the Dark Huntsman in his stead.



Carlos Sobel: Sewer workman.... and Dark Huntsman.

The Dark Huntsman is an agent of Algoerth who has been living in Heimburg for many years. He is essentially a sleeper agent of the Dark Legion ready to step into action on behalf of his dark masters at a moment's notice. The Dark Huntsman lives undercover, posing as a normal member of society, all the while honing his skills and learning every inch of his designated killing ground.

This Dark Huntsman poses as a municipal maintenance worker called Carlos Sobel. Sobel's work often brings him into contact with the city's sewer system and other underground networks, and so Sobel will often use this in his pursuit of enemies of the Dark Soul. The Dark Huntsman is an excellent and meticulous hunter who will stalk the players patiently, biding his time, waiting for the right moment to strike. He will be in contact with the Tempted, so any information the players feed back to him can be used to inform the Dark Huntsman.

DARK HUNTSMAN ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
14	17 (+!)	14	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
14	11	14	14

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

WOUNDS: 10

SOAK: Corporate Combat Armour: (Head 3, Arms 2, Torso 3, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Light Flamer (ranged):** Range C, 1+T6, Munition, 2H, Incendiary 2, Torrent
- ◀ **HG-14 (ranged):** Range C, 1+T8, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Knockdown, Spread 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Deceptive:** Dark Huntsmen still clearly resemble the people they once were, and their corruption is hidden beneath the surface. If a Dark Huntsman has not acted, been injured, or otherwise revealed to be a servant of Algoerth, then it takes a Dire (D4) Observation test or Daunting (D3) Insight test in order to identify him as something other than he seems.
- ◀ **Fast Healing (3)**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Slave to Symmetry (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Physique (1)**
- ◀ **Unliving**

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

◀ **Creature of Symmetry:** A few Dark Huntsman have been blessed with the powers of Algeroth's Pattern. Sobel knows the following Dark Gifts: Dark Curse, Dark Symmetry Burst, Vile Cloud, and Painless.

CARLSON'S GAMBIT

Having odd feelings about David Hargrove and the museum job, Stuart Carlson has decided to skip town. He knows he is going to make powerful enemies but Hargrove terrifies him, more than any potential enemy. He will need a lot of cash to do this safely, and he is going to get the money from the players.

Carlson is plainly taking a big risk with this; if he survives his encounter with the players, the chances are he will not survive double crossing the followers of the Dark Soul. However, if the players are stuck, this will be a good way to bring them back on track.

Carlson will contact the players anonymously and ask to meet them. Even if the players are hiding out, and covering their tracks well, Carlson should manage to contact them. The conspirators were keeping tabs on the players in the run up to the museum job, and so should know many of the places they are likely to go. If the Tempted or Hargrove knows where they are, then Carlson could find out. Or he could simply get hold of Hargrove's phone to find their number.

Carlson chooses the Mars Bar for the meeting. It is a moderately busy, anonymous place in a nondescript district. When the players arrive, Carlson will tell them that he knows someone who can help them shed some light on what has happened to them. He has not really thought things through thoroughly from there. He just demands 50,000 crowns in order to introduce the players to this person. Given the circumstances the players are in, the GM might need to adjust this figure to one that the players could manage to come up with, or at least one they could negotiate down from.

Carlson is just as desperate as the players to get some sort of a deal worked out, but he will try to appear laid back. Astute characters can oppose Carlson's Persuade with a Willpower test to realise he is not quite the disinterested party he makes out.

Carlson will wish the exchange to take place at a disused swimming pool called the Heimburg Community Aquatic Recreation Centre. He tells one of the players to turn up alone and unarmed, making it clear that if there is more than one of them there, then the deal will be off, and they will not see him again.

THE EXCHANGE

The pool is near the centre of a run-down municipal park. Several small gangs of youths and drug dealers prowl the park but they will keep out of the way of a large armed gang of players. A lone,

unarmed investigator carrying 50,000 crowns, on the other hand, would be a different matter.

Carlson is running on empty, at the moment. He already fears that Tyson suspects something and is worried Tyson and Ingersol have been following him (they have not). Carlson is edgy and not thinking clearly; he is suffering from the Rattled (2) status effect. He has not taken too many precautions other than getting here very early and searching the building. His options are limited because he is working alone. He has hidden a slim leather case with the required evidence in a locker in the changing area, and has put the key to that locker in another case that he carries with him. He intends to hand this case over in exchange for the money. He feels it should be obvious to the investigator what the locker key means. It is numbered 314, for the record.

The pool is filthy and much of the building is dilapidated. A high tier of seats surrounds the pool on three sides and Carlson is waiting up on the seating area overlooking one end of the pool. As soon as he gets the money Carlson will attempt to leave. He is prepared to shout 'Locker room!' to any confused player wondering what the key is for, as he leaves. He has a vehicle parked near the park and has places booked on four shuttles leaving Heimburg over the next couple of hours; he will leave it to the last moment to decide which one to take.

If the players manage to capture Carlson, then he will play with a straight bat. As far as he is concerned he has kept his side of the bargain and honoured his agreement with the players. He can go into detail on some of the evidence in his case, but he does not want to hang around as he has a flight leaving soon.

If the players lean on him a bit harder, then he will spill more beans. He will seek assurances, however, that he will be released promptly once he has told them everything. As long as Carlson gets out alive with the money, he will be fairly content. He knows he has already crossed a line by betraying his co-conspirators and so must now make the best of things. If Carlson does not get the money, then he will skulk around for the rest of the adventure searching for an opportunity to get it, or at the very least, get his revenge on the players.

THE VIDEO RECORDING

Carlson's case contains a video tape recording that has Tyson's address scrawled across its label.

It is the original, uncut version of the recording of the players that was sent to VeNews-7. Whereas VeNews-7 received carefully edited footage that only concentrated on identifying the players and making it clear what building they were entering, the full recording, shot by Carlson, has any number of bits of incriminating evidence. By watching the video carefully, the players should be able to pick up most of the following, depending on their Momentum when making an **Average (D1) Observation test**.

Of course, the following footage description is just a guide and will depend on what the players actually did and what actually happened during the robbery of the museum. The footage begins with the conspirators hiding out in an empty office room a few storeys up, across from the museum. Tyson is telling them to get ready. Ingersol is flashing a long knife around. As the players come into view, it is mostly shots of them. Carlson makes an effort to catch decent close ups on everyone's faces. This is mostly the footage that turns up on the news.

After the players disappear, there are sounds of activity as the conspirators get their equipment up together and head for the door. The camera follows Tyson and Ingersol halfway down a flight of stairs before Carlson remembers to turn it off. Just before he does so Tyson can be heard saying, "Don't forget the spear!"

The video begins again on ground level, sweeping the building for a sign of the players. After a cut, the players emerge from the building and make their getaway. As they disappear Tyson says, "Right, let's go," and Ingersol says, "Show Time!" Then the video stops as the conspirators begin to cross the road.

SUCCESS: The various characters regularly call themselves Gunner, Nails, and Stu throughout the recording.

Several times the camera drifts to catch a glimpse of the side of someone's head or part of their face. It might not be enough to recognise them, however.

ONE MOMENTUM: It is possible to come up with decent impressions of Tyson's and Ingersol's faces from the brief glimpses offered in the video.

There is a green van in the background of one shot. It is actually Tyson's and is an Armoured Security Van (page 191 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook). If they notice it now, the players may notice it if they see it later.

TWO MOMENTUM: It is possible to match the names with the faces. Stu is working the camera by process of elimination.

There is a very quick shot of someone's (Tyson's) wrist watch as the conspirators are moving towards the museum. If the players know the precise timing of their robbery, they can work out this is occurring just moments after they left the building.

TYSON'S PLACE

Tyson lives on the second floor of a run-down apartment block in some poverty stricken, uninteresting corner of Heimburg. The place is dingy and quiet enough for his needs. The place can be staked out easily enough. There are plenty of inconspicuous places to view the entrance. There is another entrance round the back, which is easy

to watch, too, but Tyson never bothers to use this unless he has a specific reason to think he is being watched.

He will be going in and out occasionally. He was well paid for the robbery and frame-up and so is lying low during the day and spending his cash at night. Ingersol comes round occasionally but the pair usually meet up at one of a number of bars along the nearby strip. If the players notice Tyson's green van security van in the uncut video footage of the museum robbery, then they can also notice it parked near to his apartment.

Tyson goes in and out to collect supplies, but at the moment his life is going through a pattern of partying most of the night and sleeping most of the day. Tyson is careful about opening his door and those that come round have a specific knock. Otherwise he will be alert. His door is well-reinforced and hard to get through, and he has enough firepower in his apartment to hold out for a good while: long enough for the police to turn up and wonder why there is a war going on there.

If the players manage to capture Tyson, then he can tell them about Carlson, Ingersol, and Hargrove. He will tell everything he knows about Carlson and Ingersol and about the job they did together. He will recognise the players and will be rather philosophical about his past activities catching up with him. He gets on well enough in prison and so will be resigned to a return.

He would, of course, be frightened if he feels the players want to kill him, although he will try not to let on this fear. He will reason with them that taking him alive will help them clear their names in the eyes of the law, and will offer them whatever information they need.

CARLSON'S PLACE

Carlson's place is largely uninteresting. If the players manage to get there before Carlson decides to leave town, then there will be a nice antique gun collection there, a stash of cash, and a spare copy of the video he made of the players, together with some scribbled notes about them (brief descriptions of the players he got from Tyson in order to plan their job).

If Carlson has already decided to leave town, then he has sold most of his guns and anything else that could be valuable. He has left a couple of books and brochures about Hinko because this is one place he is sure he will not be fleeing to and he wishes to throw Tyson and Ingersol off the scent.

INGERSOL'S PLACE

Ingersol's place is altogether more disconcerting. He lives in a basement apartment in one of the area's worst tenements. The place is dark and stinks of death. Here he proudly displays his collection of twenty or so ears, all nailed to the wall by long nails in neat lines.

In the basement is the desiccated corpse of a middle-aged woman. The place is set out as some sort of perverse shrine. The woman has been adorned in jewels and artefacts that Ingersol swiped from the museum, and a number of other treasures he has picked up through his criminal activities. Beneath the body, which is propped up on wires, a number of candles have been lit as if in offering. Beside the candles, neatly arranged, are pictures of each of the players.

THE END OF THE WORLD

The three conspirators do not know too much about Hargrove. They do not know his true identity but if they need to bargain for their lives they will be able to come up with some information. They can tell the players that Hargrove gives them all their orders. They meet him at a bar called Konstantine's. He might be unhinged. He might be influenced by heresy. The most important thing the conspirators will need to convey is their thoughts about how dangerous Hargrove might be and their fears about his plan for Heimburg.

This is important to get across to the players, as it brings a much larger jeopardy to the game; suddenly they should be fighting for the city and not simply for self-preservation. It also brings an element of urgency; until now they had been hiding out waiting for time to pass and things to blow over but now they might feel that they need to get things done as quickly as possible.

One or more of the conspirators can tell the players that Hargrove was distant and cold during their planning of the museum job. He was always aloof and although sometimes charming, could never be described as friendly. However, the day after the museum job, the four of them were celebrating their success. They had all had a lot to drink, and perhaps some narcotics, as well. They were discussing what they would do with their payments when Hargrove became agitated and increasingly manic.

He told them that there would be little time to spend their cash. Any planning for the future would be pointless, because something was going to happen, something wonderful, and terrible, and all-consuming. Soon the streets would be filled with pestilence, and



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death would be at every corner. Then famine would consume the people, and without the means to defend themselves, war would come right into the centre of Heimburg and they would be powerless to stop it. And this would be all because of the pestilence he was going to have the privilege to unleash upon the world in the name of some strange name, he said. This might sound like the drug-addled ravings of a man mad, but there was something about the way he said it, something about his utter conviction that made it terrifying and believable.

How the news is delivered should depend on who is imparting it. Carlson is genuinely concerned for the city; he is a criminal but he is not sociopathic. He will give the players whatever information might be helpful, short of actually putting himself in more danger. Tyson is more matter-of-fact about the situation. He is cynical enough to take the destruction of the city in his stride, provided he is not personally affected. Ingersol would be more gloating. He is excited by the prospect of the massive destruction and suffering, and will taunt the players that they can do nothing about it.

HARGROVE'S PLAN

Once Hargrove has got the disc with the sapphire, he is on his way to fulfilling his plans for the Dark Soul. Once the sapphire is broken it will release an airborne virus that will cause a plague that could infect most of Heimburg, and potentially travel further afield.

The sapphire was set into the disc by the same unknown ancient warriors, who imprisoned the Dark Temptor in the black pyramid. This was to protect it and stop it being broken. Once the sapphire is released from the disc, it will be simple to break it and set the virus free.

The sapphire can only be released by an 'innocent'. Unfortunately, as ancient rituals tend to become perverted over time, this also includes spilling the blood of a virgin over the disc. The ritual incantations described around the disc in ancient runes also need to be invoked.

Hargrove has been working on the exact nature of the ritual using the expertise of the Hargrove personality he has inhabited and some hints and inspiration from the Dark Soul itself. He will soon know all of the incantation. He has sought out a suitable venue for his ritual, and has found an abandoned factory deep within the old industrial centre of the city. He has just about cracked the runes that describe the ritual, and has prepared the factory accordingly.

He is also working on the virgin part of the ritual. He has found a waitress, Melissa Gratz, at his local bar who fits the bill. He has manipulated and charmed her, and now she believes she is in love with him. About a week ago he lured her to his apartment and then kept her prisoner there, plying her with drugs to keep her confused and compliant. Shortly before the players turn up, he will have

transported her to the factory in order to begin the ritual.

It is probably best not to give Hargrove's progress a formal time frame. Let that depend on the progress of the players. If the players do well and make their way to Hargrove in good time, then they should be given a bit of time advantage over Hargrove when they finally meet up. If they do not make good progress and are slow following leads, then they should only arrive in the nick of time, giving Hargrove the advantage.

KONSTANTINE'S

Konstantine's is a bar mostly frequented by students. It is several miles away from the Red Duke; Hargrove has been careful to keep out of his co-conspirators way. Hargrove has hung out here for a good while, as this is also where his Hargrove personality used to come sometimes (albeit much less often). The Fletcher influence on the Hargrove personality is much more into going out and drinking. All the regulars at Konstantine's have noticed this sudden change in him.

No one seems to know where Hargrove lives. He has recently moved house and only Melissa knows where this new place is. Everyone knows that he used to spend a lot of time at Maureen's and now he spends as much time at Melissa's. He never invites anyone to his own place.

If anyone asks about Hargrove here, someone is bound to know 'he goes out with one of the waitresses, or something'. Those detailed below might be able to shed more light on him.

MAUREEN PENN

Maureen Penn is a server at Konstantine's. Like the other servers, she is a student and works here to help pay for her education. She used to go out with David Hargrove before he was killed and his body assimilated by the Fletcher creature. She still works at the place, and often sees Hargrove with his new girlfriend, Melissa.

Maureen is angry with Hargrove. It will not take much to get her talking about her ex-boyfriend. She is incensed that when they see each other he seems to look straight through her. She thinks it is weird and does not understand it. "It's almost like he's someone else, now," she will say.

JELKA VAN WIJK

Another server at Konstantine's, Jelka is a friend of Maureen and Melissa and has tried to avoid taking sides, but she will back up Maureen's side of the story, because it is essentially true. She did not know Hargrove that well, but she also has noticed a change in him. She puts it down to him feeling guilty about dumping Maureen.

Jelka is very pretty and tired of all the attention she gets from desperate students. She is much more interested in the dangerous action types than boring students, so it is quite possible that the players can impress her.

MELISSA GRATZ

The third server at Konstantine's is Melissa. She is quiet and shy, and not what a lot of people might consider attractive. It was a surprise to many at Konstantine's when Hargrove turned his attention to her. Melissa is besotted and flattered by this. She is sorry that he had to dump her erstwhile friend, Maureen, but Melissa considers that she does not become the centre of attention very often and deserves this chance at having a desirable boyfriend.

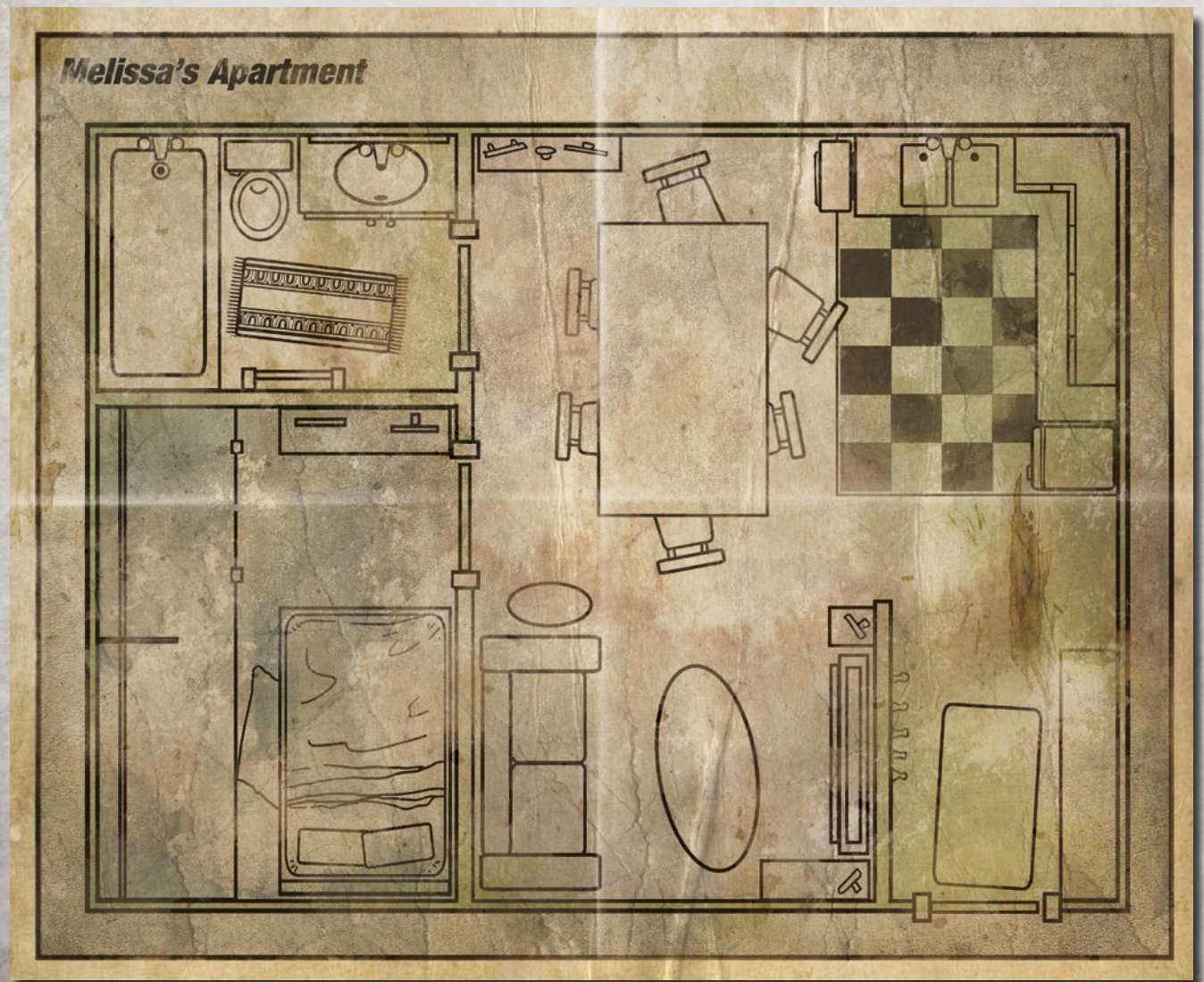
Melissa is a good student and very conscientious. In fact she fits the stereotype of the nerdy, not interested in boys, shy, hair-up, glasses-wearing, frumpy-clothing, student perfectly.

About a week before the players arrive on the scene, Melissa called in to work sick and has not come in since. This is because Hargrove is making sure that nothing can happen to his prize in the last few days before the ritual. He has lured her to his apartment and is keeping her there against her will. No one at Konstantine's is aware of that, however.

SEAN MENDENHALL

Like most bartenders Mendenhall prefers to shut up and listen than talk himself, but if the players are friendly and charming enough he might tell them what he knows. He is surprisingly erudite for a bartender in a dive, having doctorates in history and philosophy. He has known Hargrove for a while.

He noticed the great change in him about a month ago. He used to be a lot quieter, and only came in occasionally to see Maureen. Since about a month ago, he has become a bit of a drinker, putting it away



like there is no tomorrow. He has no idea what caused the change in Hargrove but thinks it is linked with his break-up with Maureen. He would say that the change came before the break-up.

Mendenhall might confide that one night after a particularly long session, Hargrove got to ranting about the state of the planet. He said that the whole city should be destroyed and replaced with something better. Mendenhall laughed it off, but Hargrove told him not to find it funny, and that it might just happen, and sooner than he might think. This shocked him as much for the content as for the earnestness that Hargrove displayed.

MELISSA'S APARTMENT

Melissa's apartment is on the tenth floor of a student accommodation block. It is monitored by a concierge. The concierge, an old woman who never went to school, eyes anyone above the age of twenty four with deep suspicion. She has a panic button under her desk and if she presses it the campus police will arrive in three or four minutes. Jenka van Wijk is on Melissa's guest list and could gain the players entry, but she would have to be very convinced this was in Melissa's best interests.

The door is locked but would only require a **Challenging (D2) Thievery test** to open. Inside, the room is an unholy mess. It looks like the place has been ransacked by burglars in a hurry. If asked about this, Jelka will simply shrug and say it is always like this.

The bedroom has a number of pictures of Melissa and Hargrove in sappy poses hanging on the wall and standing in frames, or just tossed about the apartment. Some are taken in various recognisable locations around Heimburg. One was taken at Konstantine's. There are several that were taken at the same restaurant. It is possible to go through the pictures and work out from the signage that the restaurant is called J. Gustav's Cookery. If Jelka is with the players, she will recognise the restaurant and explain that it was Hargrove's favourite.

The bathroom seems to have been cleared of many cosmetics and toiletries. This would require a **Daunting (D3) Observation test** to notice, but again, if she is there, Jelka would know easily. She would also notice that some of Melissa's bags and many of her favourite clothes are missing.

There is a box of keepsakes on the bed with even more pictures of Melissa and Hargrove in. There are also a number of private letters and some of these are from Hargrove. These will need to be gone through carefully if the players are to get the clue that Hargrove is living in the apartment above J. Gustav's Cookery.

One of the letters, the most recent, reads as follows:

Dear Mel,

I can't tell you how excited I am about the next few days. Can't wait to see you.

Make your excuses at work and come to my apartment above the restaurant. We should be gone for about a week. It's gonna be killer.

Love Dave

XXX

HARGROVE'S APARTMENT BUILDING

No one at Konstantine's knows where Hargrove lives except for Melissa. Since he was assimilated by Fletcher, he has been careful not to let anyone find out. He moved out of his old place and moved into an apartment above the J. Gustav's Cookery, and only let Melissa in on this secret when he decided to move her there in preparation for his ritual.

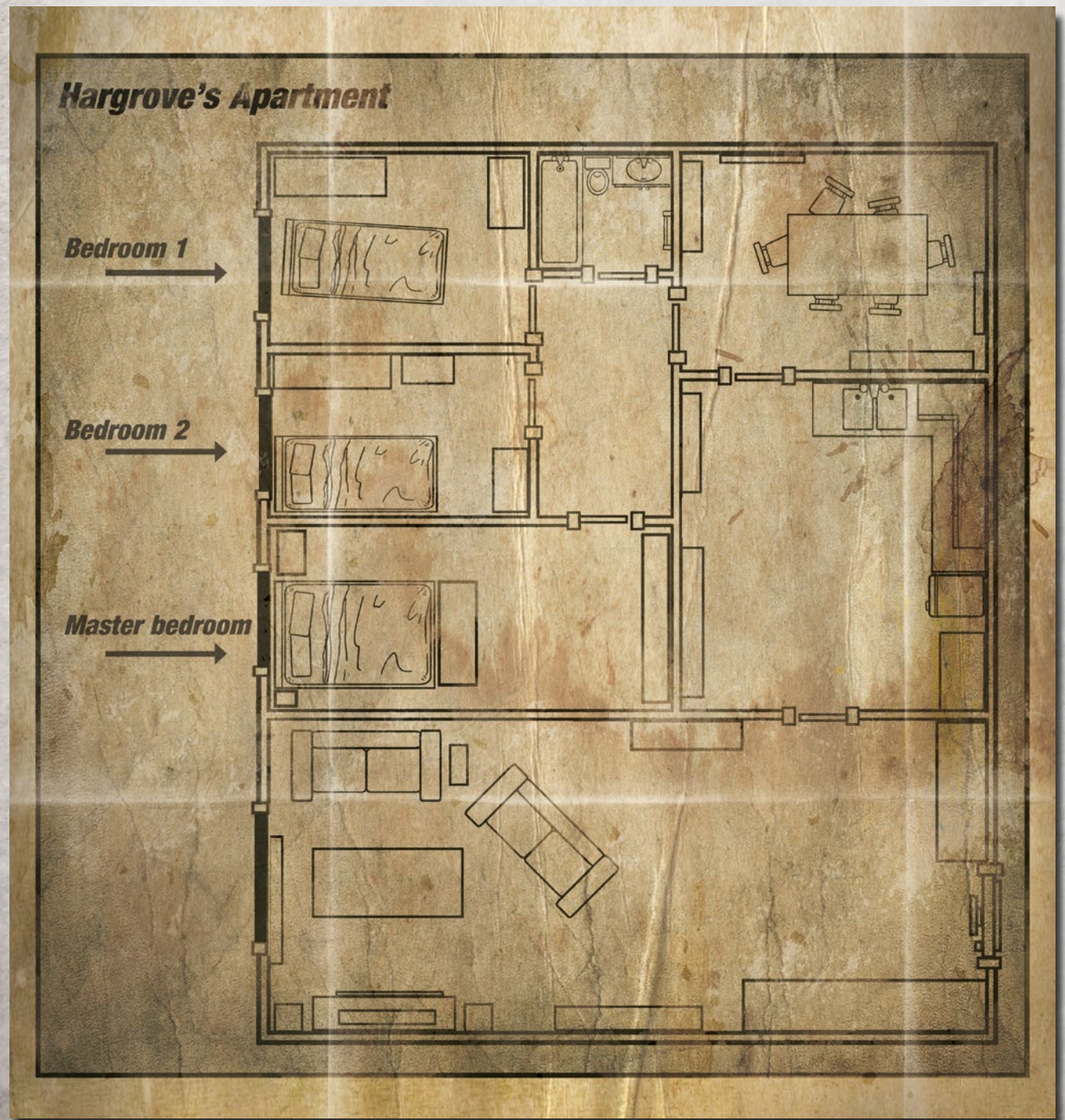
J. Gustav's is only about a mile up from Konstantine's on the same road. It is a seedy little place with poor service. It is very hard to know why this is Hargrove's favourite restaurant. The staff are discreet however and will claim not to know Hargrove or recognise his picture, but they will grudgingly reveal that he lives above the restaurant if they are bullied into it.

However, the apartment complex above the restaurant is about twenty floors with eight apartments on each floor. The players can ask around the building trying to find Hargrove's apartment, especially if they have a photograph of him, and they will eventually get lucky. Anyone who recognises Hargrove will describe him as a polite young man who keeps himself to himself. No one here has seen him in the past week.

The concierge, Karl, is a hopeless drug addict and will be stoned if the players visit his basement office/apartment. He will pretend not to know anything at all, unless the players threaten him or offer him money, and then he will be keen to tell them what they need to know. For a little bit more persuasion he will even lend them the spare key to Hargrove's apartment.

HARGROVE'S APARTMENT

The door to Hargrove's apartment is reinforced, like all the other doors in the apartment block, and is also protected by several extra locks. These are all standard hardware store ones, however. It takes a **Daunting (D3) Thievery test** to get the door open, but the players would need to be careful not to be seen as the corridor is used regularly by dozens of neighbours.



Hargrove's apartment is entirely dark. None of the lights in the apartment work at all; Hargrove does not need light. Though they will be able to catch an idea of the interior near the door from the lighting in the corridor, the players will need their own light sources to explore the place further. The windows have blinds covering them, but have also been painted in thick black paint.

The main room is squalid. There is a sickly stench about the place, and a number of flies are buzzing around. The floor is littered by old takeaway boxes and other rubbish. A number of papers are spread out upon a table in the middle of the room. These include a number of maps and diagrams of the Venusian Heritage Museum and street plans of the area around it. There are maps of other areas of the city, particularly some of an old industrial zone near the centre of the city. There are a number of photos of abandoned-looking factories in this area. On one map, five abandoned factories have been circled in a bold, red pen by Hargrove.

There is hardly any food in the kitchen: a couple of half-full bottles of alcohol, some condiments, and a few packs of processed food.

All the bedroom doors are locked, but the front door key will open them. The first bedroom is the source of the flies and most of the stench. There is a large dead dog in there. It has been dead for a couple of weeks. A closer inspection will require a **Challenging (D2) Willpower test** and will reveal that the animal is missing most of its internal organs.

The second bedroom was used to keep Melissa prisoner. Hargrove used drugs, Dark Gifts, and coercion to confuse her and imprison her in this room. There is a rough bed made of an old mattress and some old sheets, and a smelly bucket that Melissa used as a toilet. Her bags are still here, together with most of the clothes and possessions she brought with her on her supposed romantic trip. There are also a couple of ropes that were used to secure her, when Hargrove decided this was necessary.

The master bedroom door is booby trapped. Unless the players use the key or pick the lock with a **Daunting (D3) Thievery test**, opening the door will cause a flash grenade to go off. This will disorient anyone for a couple of rounds, especially if the rooms are still in darkness.



Hargrove leaves much to be desired

Inside this room there is a bed and some drawers for clothing. Many books and papers are stacked on the drawers and around the bed. These are books on ancient Venusian history and many of the articles that David Hargrove wrote. Hargrove was reading up on all this in order to help him pass in his new identity, as well as to research the plague disc.

Hargrove has made a number of notes about his new identity and kept a fairly neat record of his expenses. As well as receipts for the more mundane expenses that Hargrove might have been expected to incur, he has a receipt for a year's rental of a factory unit. This is one of the factories that Hargrove has ringed on the map in the living area.

On a **Daunting (D3) Observation test** a player might notice that the floor is marked with a number of scrape marks that show that the bed is often moved across to the other side of the room. If the bed is moved, it will reveal strange symbols and runes marked on the floor in now-dried blood.

PART FIVE: THE RITUAL

However speedily they did their investigation, the players got to Hargrove's apartment only a few hours after he vacated it and made his way to the factory. On the pretext of a date, Hargrove has abducted and drugged a young woman named Melissa. He has brought Melissa with him and intends to sacrifice her at the climax of an ancient ritual in order to remove the protective stone from the sapphire of the plague disc. Melissa's dream date is turning into a nightmare. She has been drugged but is vaguely aware of what is happening. Only the drugs are stopping her from panicking.

Hargrove has spent a lot of time preparing for this. He has painstakingly laid out ritual markings (and trenches) on the factory floor and he believes he has finally decoded the runes that dictate the ritual invocation. In addition, a Curator and his Blessed Legionnaires have appeared, sent by the Dark Soul to honour the ritual and protect Hargrove. There should be enough Legionnaires to protect Hargrove from the players for several rounds, giving him enough time to enact the ritual if the players are not effective.

THE ROUTE

The players can find enough clues in Hargrove's apartment to lead them to the site of the ritual. Hargrove has chosen an old factory site deep below one of the most industrialised parts of Heimborg, not far from the centre of town. The factory lies in the shadow of much greater buildings, largely forgotten among the city's slums and derelict shells of long-forgotten buildings

Even with maps the place is difficult to find and hard to access. There are a number of steep drops from the well-maintained and well-used areas of the district. The players will soon find themselves off the

beaten track and at the heart of an area most people would know was too dangerous to visit except when well armed.

While not strictly underground, the factory has so many roads suspended above it and so many storeys of overhanging and dominant buildings rising far above it, that almost no natural light reaches the area.

SCAVENGERS

A number of homeless bands forage nearby. These might give the players a hard time, if they are desperate enough. An attack by a band of homeless scavengers might be a good way to deplete the players of resources as they near the culmination of the adventure. However, the scavengers will be frightened off by any sustained defence. They are desperate for the players' stuff, but will not sacrifice themselves pointlessly.

This belligerent scavenger band has a well-practised ambush plan that it uses for rival groups unfortunate enough to blunder across it. A small group will begin a loud and distracting attempt to provoke their victims and lure them into an area with lots of access ways with good cover. This gives the rest of the band an opportunity to get into place, unseen. Then when the victims are lured to the middle of the killing ground the entire band converges on them at once.

The Scavengers use the stats for a Ganger on page 274 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core rulebook.

THE FACTORY


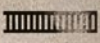


The heart of the factory is a large vaulted area about a hundred metres square, dotted with the rusting hulks of abandoned machinery, and crisscrossed with conveyors and rails. Hargrove has dug a circular trench about twenty metres in diameter at the centre of the room to focus the energies of the ritual. The trench is about a metre wide and filled with oil and whatever other flammable materials lay to hand.

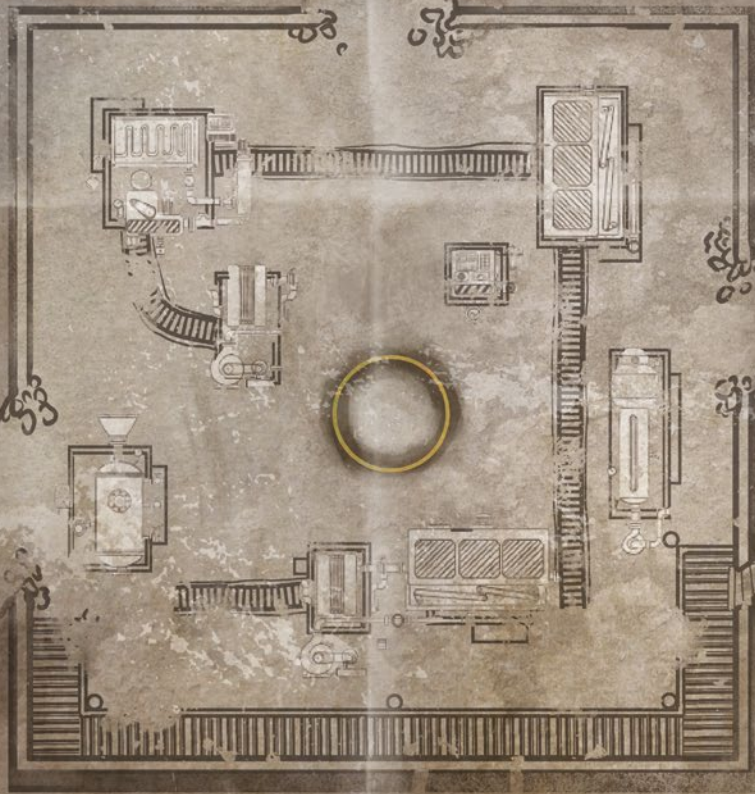
When the players arrive, this pit should be burning ferociously, surrounding the ritual in a wall of flame, and filling the factory with a dense, acrid, black smoke. If the players are not using breathing apparatus they must pass a **Challenging (D2) Resistance test** or suffer 1+**↑**3 damage that ignores Soak and possesses the Vile quality if they wish to get near the circle. If a character succumbs to damage, a second Resistance test must also be rolled with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. Failure results in the Blind status effect for a number of rounds equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons rolled. The wall of flames is also difficult to see through, so the players will probably have to cross the pit to find out what is happening inside.

FACTORY FLOOR

Scale
one segment equals five metres

Key

- Gantry 
- Conveyor 
- Fire Trench 
- Machinery 



THE RED DEATH

The plague is a virus that infects humans and some other higher mammals. In the far-distant past in a long-dead language it has been called the Red Death. It can transmit itself through the air and survive outside of a host's body for up to thirty hours, which means it can spread extremely quickly.

The virus causes large red pustules to appear on the body, and causes fever and breathing difficulties. The victim often becomes manic and belligerent for the first couple of days of infection, and then becomes listless. He usually dies in a mad, agonising coughing fit after four to five days. The pustules will burst and all liquids released from the dying body will contain the virus. The disease infects about ninety eight percent of all humans it contacts and has about a ninety five percent fatality rate.

If it is released at the factory, the disease will soon infect a small number of people in the lower levels of Heimburg. After a matter of days it will spread to infect people all over the city, taking the authorities by surprise and swamping the emergency services. The authorities will need to cut off the entire city to stop it spreading, and they will soon come to the conclusion that the city needs to be razed to the ground to save the rest of humanity. Even then, there is a chance that the disease may spread beyond the confines of Heimburg.

The Red Death is a disease with the following qualities:

- ◄ **VECTOR:** Contact or Airborne
- ◄ **VIRULENCE:** 4
- ◄ **INCUBATION PERIOD:** One hour
- ◄ **SYMPTOMS:** Patient is Dazed and Perplexed for the period of the Interval. Patient suffers one Serious Wound.
- ◄ **INTERVAL:** Twelve hours (Acute 6). It will take the medical experts of Venus months to design an effective treatment, which is, of course, no consolation to the populace of Heimburg; until that time, the only course of action available is to ease a victim's suffering, at the risk of becoming infected yourself.

When the players arrive, Hargrove is immersed in his ritual. He is going methodically through the various invocations that he believes will release the sapphire from the plague disc. He will be vaguely aware of the players but will leave them to the Curator and the Legionnaires. Melissa is slumped nearby, bound and confused. She will not be able to act for herself.

The Curator and the Blessed Legionnaires will defend Hargrove with all their might. They realise they are of no consequence when compared to the importance of the success of Hargrove's plan. If Hargrove falls, then the Curator is able to continue for Hargrove, finishing off the ritual and killing Melissa at its climax. The Legionnaires do not have the wherewithal to do this. When the players arrive, the Curator will be inside the flaming circle aiding Hargrove. The Legionnaires will be dotted around the factory, on guard.

The GM should consider how close to the end of the ritual Hargrove is when the players arrive. If the players have been slow following clues or generally cautious, then there might be a matter of only a couple of rounds before it is complete. If they have been active and speedy in their investigation then the GM should reward them by giving them more time to thwart Hargrove.

One Horde consisting of a Curator (see page 316 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook) and Ten Blessed Legionnaires (page 319 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook).

STOPPING THE RITUAL

If the players manage to kill Hargrove and the Curator before they can complete the ritual, or otherwise stop them from achieving this, then the sapphire will stay within the plague disc protected from breaking, saving Heimburg from a devastating plague.

Another way to stop the ritual is to remove Melissa from the picture. Her sacrifice is required at the climax of the ritual and her blood needs to be spilled upon the disc to break its spell. If she is out of the way then the ritual cannot succeed until another suitable sacrifice can be found. Simply killing Melissa will not work, however, as the ritual is close enough to the end that her still warm blood will work even if she does die a few rounds before Hargrove was planning on killing her.

If Hargrove dies and Melissa lives, the GM could consider pulling this sharp trick if he is able. Hargrove may have seen his imminent demise and he could perhaps have used his Steal Identity talent to gain Melissa's identity, leaving him looking remarkably like her, and leaving her body a shapeless mess on the floor. In this way Hargrove/Fletcher can return, as Melissa, to continue his work for the Dark Soul, and to try to get his revenge upon the players.

CAPTURING HARGROVE

If the players manage to capture Fletcher/Hargrove alive, then they have a valuable asset. He has been under stress and his use of the Hargrove identity is wearing thin. The exertion of the ritual and fighting the players would have taken its toll also.

All in all, Hargrove will be a shell of his former self and confused even as to his own identity. But with careful questioning the players should be able to learn much about him. The questioning will need to be painstaking, but a successful interrogation will reveal everything the tired and confused Hargrove can tell the players about his plans. He will also be able to reveal that he has been acting under orders from the Tempted. This should be a vital clue that will help the players get to the bottom of things.

Gradually, over the next few days, Hargrove will become increasingly confused and less lucid. He will remember fewer details and have less to tell the players the longer his questioning goes on. If he does not kill to replenish his identity over the next couple of weeks, his mind will unravel and his body will melt into formlessness.

THE RITUAL SUCCEEDS

If the players are not able to stop the ritual reaching its climax and Melissa's blood being spilled over the disc, then the disc will release the sapphire. This sapphire only requires one point of damage for it to break. If it does break then it will release its terrible contents and a deadly plague will be loosed upon the city of Heimburg.

DISCOVERING THE TEMPTED

If the players discover the Tempted over the course of the adventure, then they will have the problem of dealing with him. They may get the inkling that their supposed ally is not all that he seems but they may not understand exactly what fate has befallen him. Or they may, in the light of what they experienced in the black pyramid, come to some accurate conclusions about the nature of their colleague.

If the players are ahead of the game, then they can deal with the Tempted however they wish. They will have the advantage of suspecting the Tempted before the Tempted can realise he is being suspected. This should bring a final showdown on the players' own terms, where their ingenuity and preparation should be rewarded. If, on the other hand, the Tempted realises his cover is blown, or he begins to suspect this might be the case before the players act decisively, then the Tempted will be able to orchestrate the showdown.

The Tempted will agree, or ask, to meet the players in some quiet, out of the way corner of Heimburg. If the players wonder why this needs to be so surreptitious, the Tempted will promise to explain

during the meeting. The Tempted will let the players decide the exact location because he has a contingency that will fit most locations.

The Tempted has a pack of Ilian's Shadow Hounds at his disposal. They will mill around close to the site of the meeting like the packs of feral dogs that are common enough on the lower streets of Heimburg. The Tempted will turn up to the meeting and treat the players like old friends, but the moment they confront him about his heresies he will let loose the Shadow Hounds while he tries to make his escape.

There should be enough Shadow Hounds in the encounter to make the players' job very difficult, and to give the Tempted a reasonable chance of escape.

SHADOW HOUND AND ALPHA SHADOW HOUND



ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
13 (+1)	13	11	13 (+1)
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	7	11	9

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

WOUNDS: 6 (Trooper) or 9 (Elite)

SOAK: Iron-Hard Flesh: (All 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Slavering Jaws (melee):** 2+  5, Gruesome, Vile
- ◀ **Rending Claws (melee):** 2+  5, Armour Piercing 2, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Fear (1)**
- ◀ **Glamour:** Shadow Hounds can switch between their natural form and the form of an ordinary breed of dog. It takes a Free Action to make this change, which does not alter the Shadow Hound's powers in any way, except that it loses the Fear (1) ability while disguised. Shadow Hound Alphas are able to transform into smaller breeds.
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Soul Tracker:** A Shadow Hound can track by sensing the soul of a creature, and is able to follow that soul across dimensions. Once a Shadow Hound has observed a creature, it can forever more attempt a Challenging D2 Observation test in order to determine where that creature is.

◀ **Prowl Across Dimensions:** Shadow Hounds can travel freely between Ilian's realms and the material universe, and are able to cross the boundaries of dimensions at will. It takes a Standard Action to cross these boundaries. When a Shadow Hound crosses into a dimension, it may appear anywhere except locations that are warded against Darkness (such as Cathedrals).

The GM should consider that if the Tempted is captured, it is the creature's very nature, as defined by its Hidden Talent, which makes it difficult to detect his heresy. This might bring difficulties for the players trying to convince the authorities of the Tempted's transgressions, especially if the players are still wanted or heavily distrusted by those authorities. Even with mounting evidence against him, the Tempted may still be able to weasel his way out of trouble. If he manages that, then revenge on the players will be top of his list.

BEYOND THE PALE

The Tempted plays a leading role in the third part of this campaign, Beyond the Pale. Fortunately, if the players get rid of him now, there can be a second Tempted from the survey team waiting in the wings, ready to pick up where the first one has left things.



Those aren't stray dogs...

WRAPPING THINGS UP

Assuming the plague is not released, the players should be able to count the adventure a success. However, they might still be in trouble with all sorts of factions. They should take these complex relationships into the next part of this campaign. They should make an effort to clear their name with the authorities because this will make all their activities that much easier going forward.

If the players return the disc to the Brotherhood, then they will be immensely grateful. Provided the rest of their conduct has been acceptable, the players will have gained allies and reputation in Heimburg, within the Brotherhood and in other organisations that have been taking an interest. The Cartel, for one, is still keenly watching the fallout from the ill-fated expedition to the black pyramid and is grateful to anyone who is helping to clear up some of that mess.

The Tempted might consider taking a more active role in the fallout to this part of the campaign. If he is unwittingly defeated by the players he will hate them, but he will show up and be as pleasant as he can be towards them in preparation for the next part of the campaign. The players will have done so well as to earn the Tempted's grudging respect, as well as his utter loathing, during this adventure. This will leave him wishing desperately to manipulate them further and use them in an even more audacious plan in the third part of this campaign: Beyond the Pale.

If the players discovered and defeated the Tempted during this part of the campaign, then it will suit the next part for the new Tempted to come in and help smooth the way for them with any antagonistic factions. This should help win their trust and set things up nicely for Beyond the Pale.



BEYOND THE PALE

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

This is the third part of the Venusian Apocalypse campaign. The first part, *The Second Seal of Repulsion*, saw the players journey to a mysterious black pyramid in the heart of the Venusian jungle where their expedition inadvertently released a powerful, malevolent force from its prison. Some of their expedition would have been corrupted by this force and become the Tempted.

The second part of the campaign, *The Four Riders*, detailed a plot by the Tempted to bring a devastating plague down upon the city of Heimbürg. The players were manipulated into stealing the plague disk from a Heimbürg museum, but if they did well they would have managed to stop the ritual that releases the plague.

In *Beyond the Pale*, the Tempted tries to manipulate the players into blowing up the Cathedral of Heimbürg. Whether this is partly successful or not, he then launches a massive attack upon the city in order to destroy the cathedral once and for all. Using the attack as a

diversion, the Tempted goes underground and plants explosives in the sewers beneath the cathedral.

The players at first are the Tempted's unwitting dupes, but by the end of this adventure they should be the only ones in the entire city with the knowledge and opportunity to thwart his abominable scheme.

HEIMBURG

The breaking of the Second Seal has caused the malevolence of the Dark Soul to spread across Venus. This has affected the mood and belligerence of the citizens of Heimbürg. As discussed in *The Four Riders*, the length of time the Second Seal was broken should determine how severe this effect is. The GM should bear in mind that this adventure takes place soon after the previous part of the campaign and the mood will be similar. He should try to keep the same atmosphere of fear and distrust on the streets as in the previous adventure.



“Welcome to Heimbürg!”

This mood will also affect how the people of Heimborg react to the presence of the Dark Legion later on in this adventure. If the Second Seal was broken for a long time, then the average disgruntled citizen is far more likely to join Heretic bands and support the Dark Legion when they arrive or simply to mistrust or refuse to help the players in the course of their investigations.

PART ONE: SUSPECT DEVICES

OVERVIEW

This part of the adventure details the Tempted's attempt to trick the players into blowing up the Cathedral of Heimborg. He will be playing a sharp mind-game on them, lulling them into a narrative where they become vigilantes striking a blow against the Dark Soul.

They will believe themselves to be working for a semi-secret organisation of the Brotherhood, dispatching suspected Heretics. This will be largely true, except the organisation is under the control of the Tempted and he will be using it to kill key figures in the defence of Heimborg, instead.

Once the players are carrying out the orders of this organisation without question, they will then be told to take some equipment to the Cathedral of Heimborg. This equipment will actually be enough explosives to seriously damage the cathedral. Hopefully the players will be on their toes enough to prevent this from happening.

WHO IS THE TEMPTED?

The previous part of this campaign, The Four Riders, is heavily influenced by 'the Tempted', an agent of the Dark Soul. He manipulated the players to quite a degree. It is up to the GM to gauge how the players view the Tempted now and how much they will trust him. The more they trust him, the greater the chance that his plan to blow up the Cathedral of Heimborg will work. If the GM feels the players have their doubts about him and feel manipulated, then he can always bring in a second Tempted.

The Tempted was created from the survey team in the first part of this campaign, The Second Seal, when they came across the Dark Temptor. The identity of the Tempted was left for the GM to decide, depending on the events of that adventure.

It is easy enough to rule that the Dark Temptor created two Tempteds. The first interacted with the players in the previous part of this campaign. The GM can easily bring in the second one for this part. It may be that the players have already discovered that the Tempted is a Heretic and have dealt with him. If so, then the second Tempted will be required for this section.

THE SHADOW SENTINELS

The Tempted has been busy preparing for the destruction of Heimborg. One of his plans has been to get rid of key, loyal Heimborgers by implicating them as Heretics and traitors. To this end he has created the Shadow Sentinels, under the approval and supervision of the Brotherhood.

The Shadow Sentinels are a secret order devoted to uncovering and punishing heresy. They dispense with the normal processes of law and justice; they act as judge, jury, and executioner, assassinating their victims on the spot if they consider them to be traitors to humanity. The members of the Brotherhood who are aware of the Shadow Sentinels' MO reluctantly agree that desperate times do call for these sorts of desperate measures.

The Tempted has a second use for the Shadow Sentinels, too. When they have outlived their usefulness, he intends to lure them into the sewers beneath the city and sacrifice them to the Dark Symmetry. This will open portals to citadels across the solar system and bring the Dark Legion to the city.

All the members of the Shadow Sentinels are loyal to humanity, dedicated to rooting out Heretics and traitors, except the Tempted. The Tempted has created the entire organisation from scratch to unwittingly do his bidding. The Sentinels have been recruited from special forces and other elite organisations from across Heimborg. Unfortunately, they are entirely under the control of the Tempted and he is manipulating them to do more harm than good.

Sometimes the Tempted sacrifices genuine Heretics to enhance the Sentinels' credibility. Sometimes they find (planted) evidence of an innocent target's guilt, but increasingly, so dedicated and fanatical have the Sentinels become, they are executing targets on sight simply on the Tempted's word. The Tempted is careful to control the information passing upwards to the controlling interests in the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood is delighted with the Sentinels' progress and convinced of their effectiveness and righteousness.

As part of the Tempted's plan to bring total war to the streets of Heimborg, he needs trusted dupes to smuggle bombs into the Cathedral of Heimborg. Therefore the Tempted is going to recruit the players to the Shadow Sentinels.

CONTACTING THE PLAYERS

The Tempted will contact the players and invite them to a meeting at the cathedral. One of his powers, given by the Dark Temptor, means that he can hide his taint from all but the most rigorous scrutiny of the Brotherhood. He has set up an office within the cathedral that the Shadow Sentinels use as a headquarters. His presence in the cathedral, and the official backing of the Brotherhood, should

enhance his credibility, and help lessen any doubts the players might have about him.

If the GM is using the Tempted from the Four Riders, then this meeting will be fairly routine. They have met before and discussed missions; the players presumably still trust the Tempted and will be happy to take another job from him.

If the GM is using a second Tempted (see below) then he will have to work harder to ingratiate himself with the players. Some reminiscing about the events in the black pyramid and some lamenting of fallen colleagues will probably be in order. A second Tempted's plan will be similar to the one outlined below, and the differences are discussed separately later.

CHRISTINE SWANN

The Tempted will bring Christine Swann to his meetings with the players. She is one of the best agents in the Shadow Sentinels and one of the most fanatical and vengeful. She is therefore one of the easiest for the Tempted to manipulate.

Swann looks every inch the all-action agent, with her closely cropped hair and tight cat-suit lined with any number of combat pockets containing gadgets and weapons. She is a Capitol agent, having served well in Alpha Force for several years before moving into intelligence within DEPICOR. She is brave and intelligent, but in regard to the Shadow Sentinels she has been entirely duped by the Tempted. So convinced is she of the intelligence that the Tempted supplies, that she rarely bothers to check it out, or search for more evidence. She now acts more like the Tempted's personal assassin than an intelligence officer.

Despite her fanaticism, Swann is collected and professional. She is a good and careful field agent; she works well with others, and trusts the other members of the Shadow Sentinels as much as they trust her. Her fanaticism only runs to her capacity to assassinate suspected Heretics and traitors in cold blood, rather than manifesting as any sort of recklessness or weakness.

Swann is entirely convinced by the Tempted's cover story and the mission of the Shadow Sentinels. She will back him to the hilt, even if that means executing the players. It would require emphatic evidence to convince her that the whole organisation is the mendacious scheme of a mad Heretic, and she would react very badly to the revelation.



CHRISTINE SWANN ★

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
4	2	2	1	4	3	3	1	2	2	2	2

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Body Suit, Medium Military Shoulder

Pads: (Head 1, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Twin Piranha Handguns (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◀ **Sword (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 6, 1H, Parry 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Deadliest DEPICOR Agent:** Christine is one of the best field agents to have ever worked for DEPICOR. She may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation, Stealth, or Thievery test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, she may substitute Stealth for Thievery when attempting to bypass physical security measures, and may add three d20s to her Stealth pool when attempting to remain unseen or unnoticed. Further, during combat she may use a Restricted Action to make an Average D1 Observation test. If this test is passed she may either choose to know how many Light Wounds remain on the hit location of her choice, at the cost of one Momentum per hit location, or she may choose to follow the test with a Ranged or Close Combat action, in which case she may immediately apply three additional damage dice to the attack (Momentum carries forward as normal in the latter case). Finally, any time she attempts to pick a lock or overcome a security system—regardless of whether it is mechanical or electronic—she may re-roll up to two d20s, but must accept the new results.
- ◀ **Paired Mayhem:** Christine employs her twin handguns with deadly precision, which is only further enhanced by the underslung laser sights that they both sport. She may re-roll up to four damage dice when making an attack with a ranged weapon, but must accept the new results. Additionally, as a Response Action, she may respond to an attack with an attack of her own with any weapon she can wield in one hand. This attack has a base difficulty of Daunting D3, and is resolved before the enemy attack. If this reaction kills or otherwise incapacitates the attacker, then his attack is prevented. Further, if she succeeds at

a Ranged Weapon attack and spends Momentum to perform a Swift Strike, there is no increase in difficulty rating for the attack taken with Swift Strike (though this effect can only be used once per turn), whilst the Secondary Target Momentum effect costs only one Momentum for Christine. Finally, having laser sights fitted allows her to adjust the hit location by two for each Momentum spent on Called Shot, rather than the normal one.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

◀ **Pawn of the Tainted:** The Tainted may spend Dark Symmetry points to order Christine into action without the need to roll a Command or Persuade test. A routine and believable order, such as eliminating somebody that could conceivably be a Heretic, costs one Dark Symmetry point, whilst more outlandish requests will correspondingly require a larger expenditure. Ordering her to assassinate the Magistrate of Heimburg, for instance, would require several Dark Symmetry points. Irrefutable proof that the Tainted is himself a creature of the Dark Legion will end this control mechanism.



Christine Swann: dedicated, deadly, and duped.

INITIATION

The cathedral is usually well defended, but since the black pyramid was opened and the Second Seal broken security around the place has been stepped up considerably. This is because the Brotherhood fears not only attack from the Dark Legion massed in the jungles of southern Venus, but also the possibility of an insurgency or serious, violent protests by the disgruntled people of Heimburg.

For several blocks on the approach to the cathedral there are many patrols on the streets eyeing the populace suspiciously. The players might be stopped and questioned at any time. Gun emplacements and anti-aircraft batteries have been set up on and around the surrounding buildings as if the Brotherhood is expecting an attack at any moment. The players might also spot the multitude of defence turrets that are incorporated into the gothic designs of the cathedral's façade and a number of military craft taking off and landing from the highest points of the building.

The Tempted will arrange to meet the players in a manicured quad close to the main entrance of the cathedral. He will be accompanied by Christine Swann. He will greet them and make the formal introductions there and will invite the players into the cathedral where they can get down to business. No unauthorised weapons are allowed inside the cathedral and the players will be thoroughly searched. There is a facility to stow weapons and armour by the entrance gates should the players require it.

The Cathedral is a huge structure that stretches far beyond the well-known worship areas. It is the headquarters for the Venusian Brotherhood and the cathedral building itself accommodates all the bureaucratic and logistical support workers that such a massive organisation requires. The Tempted will lead the players through the nave and then down hundreds of metres of corridors until they reach the offices of the Shadow Sentinels.

The offices are little more than a couple of rooms among countless rooms used to accommodate the inordinate bureaucracy of the Brotherhood. There is a meeting room, which has a large table with a dozen chairs around it, and beyond the meeting room there is the Tempted's office. He will go in there during the meeting to grab some paperwork, but the players will not be invited in. The knowledge that the office is there, though, may come in handy if the players try to track down the Tempted later in the adventure.

Once there, the Tempted will explain to the players that the Brotherhood has made him head of a new branch of its Inquisition. It is called the Shadow Sentinels and it is dedicated to rooting out all the deep cover and sleeping agents of the Dark Soul, the sort of agents no one would ever otherwise suspect: some that have not even acted against humanity yet.

This may take a little bit of work for the GM. The reasons for the Tempted's appointment will depend on his identity and his role before and since the black pyramid incident, but the players also might wonder why he was head of such an organisation at the same time as he was trying to convince the players to steal dangerous objects from Heimbürg museums.

The Tempted could even offer the excuse that the stealing of the plague disk was a test for the players as well as for David Hargrove, and that the whole operation was a success in that it exposed Hargrove's role as well as showing the players to be exactly the sort of people he needs in the Shadow Sentinels.

Of course, if the GM is going with a second Tempted then his appointment will be a lot more straight-forward to explain as his activities since the events in the Second Seal could have all been dedicated to setting up the Shadow Sentinels.

EXECUTING MAJOR ISSACS

The Tempted will explain that the Sentinels have begun to suspect a Major in the Bauhaus military of spying for the Dark Legion. The man is a Major Robert Issacs; he is currently seconded to the BLEU. The Tempted requires the players to break into his flat and search for any evidence of heresy. If they do find anything, then they are to execute Issacs on the spot. Christine Swann will accompany them on the mission, to assess their performance but also to act as an advisor should they require it.

The Tempted will pull out a manila folder with Issacs' details. He lives in an upmarket apartment in a nice area, which will have decent security. He lives on his own and has no partner. He is fond of a drink and is a womaniser. The Tempted will offer that he suspects he has turned to espionage as a way of funding that sort of lifestyle.

Issacs is suspected of photographing whatever important documents pass through the offices of the BLEU and then selling them on to agents of the Dark Legion. The Tempted will insist that it is not their job to track down those contacts or follow those leads; they simply do not have the resources for that. In this emergency situation, the best they can do is to swiftly execute such perpetrators and prevent them from ever repeating their crimes.

The Tempted will recommend that the players act as quickly as possible so that there is less chance of Issacs getting a hint that he is being watched or suspected. They should break into his apartment when they know he is out and look for evidence. If they find nothing, then all well and good, they should leave the place as they found it. If they find something, then they should await his return and deal with him there and then.

They are asked to turn up dressed in nondescript dark colours with no ID on their person at all. If they are captured by the authorities, then they should keep their mouths shut and give no information at all as they go through their arrest and remand. The Tempted will assure them that even if it takes a few days, due process will be bypassed on their behalf and they will be released.

MAJOR ISSACS ★

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

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Dragoon Uniform: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

◀ **HG-12 (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Dragoon Officer Training:** Major Issacs is a career officer in the Dragoons, which has involved extensive training in command and management. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Command test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Flawlessly Average:** Issacs has made a career of being persistently average, and never goes above and beyond on any task. Unable to remove him for underperformance, the Dragoons have achieved the best outcome they could by seconding him to the BLEUs. Issacs will never generate Momentum when making a skill test, regardless of how many successes he actually achieves.



ISSACS' APARTMENT

Issacs will leave his apartment in the mid-evening of the day that the players decide to search his apartment. He will be out all evening, drinking and having a good time, and will not be back until the small hours. If the players decide to tail him to make sure they are not surprised by his return, then the tail should make a **Challenging (D2) Stealth test** every hour or so of the tail, opposed by Issacs' Observation. Issacs will not get up to anything that looks at all suspicious.

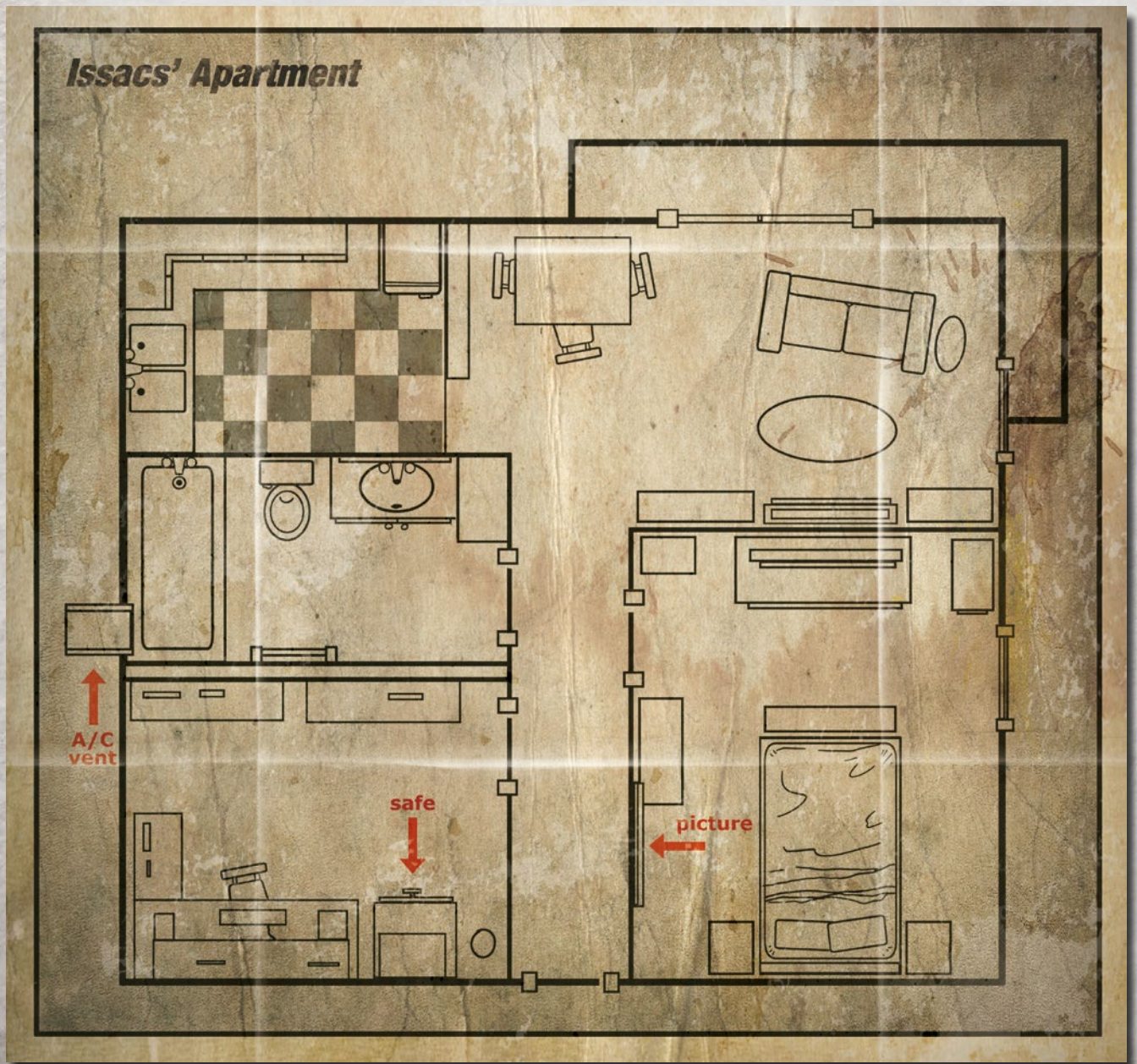
Issacs lives on the fifth floor of a building that is very popular among military and law enforcement types. There are six other apartments on the same floor so the players should make an effort not to attract

the attention of neighbours; the chances are they will be armed and ready to intervene.

There is a concierge on the ground floor who also acts as security guard and is armed. There is sporadic CCTV covering the entire apartment block so the players should take that into account, also. The only operator of the CCTV is the concierge. He cannot be monitoring all the cameras at once.

FINDING THE EVIDENCE

The flat is not large. It has two bedrooms, one of which Issacs is using as an office. There is not a lot to search through. Issacs seems



to use his flat as a place to sleep and little else. There is a safe in the office which requires a key. It would need a **Daunting (D3) Thievery test** to open the safe, but Issacs keeps a spare key hidden behind a picture hanging on the wall of his bedroom. If no one can get the safe open or finds the key, then Swann can find it.

In the safe is 235,000 crowns, some photos of important documents relating to the Heimburg strategic defence plan, and forged identity papers presenting Issacs as a Capitol businessman. The photos show recent troop strengths, reserves, and supplies. This is clearly important stuff, and Swann can confirm that there is no way these documents should be in the man's home. Swann will take the money, 'for the cause' if anyone asks. She genuinely intends to give it all to the Tempted to go towards the Sentinels' operations budget.

The most damning evidence is hidden in the air conditioning vent in the bathroom. There is a Dark Legion designed long-range radio and a book of Dark Legion codes. It will take a **Daunting (D3) Observation test** to spot this unless a player specifically chooses to search there. If the players do not find this, and the GM wishes, he can have Swann discover this.

If either of these caches are discovered it will be enough in Swann's eyes to condemn Major Issacs to death. If the players do not like it, she will explain that this is what the Shadow Sentinels do. She can even make an impassioned speech about how innocent humans are being slaughtered every day because of people like Issacs, and the Brotherhood does not have the resources to deal with it. Why should traitors and murderers get due process when children are being murdered in their beds by the Dark Legion, and do they think the Dark Legion would really give such consideration to rights and laws if the positions were reversed?

DOING THE DEED

Presumably, the players and Swann will be waiting for Issacs when he returns from his evening out. Swann will be content to leave the *coup de grace* to one of the players. She has certainly killed enough herself and is not squeamish, but will consider the act a rite of passage into the Shadow Sentinels. The player who volunteers to pull the trigger will earn her respect.

If none of the players wish to execute Issacs (assuming they have found evidence against him), then Swann will show her disappointment. She will suggest that she is there as an observer, mostly, to assess whether they have what it takes to join the Sentinels. The implication will be clear, that if they are not prepared to go through with this execution then they will not be considered for more work. This is not true, of course, but this is what Swann believes. As a last resort, Swann will act as executioner but make her disappointment in the players very clear.

Issacs will return alone from his night out in good spirits and completely unsuspecting. If he gets the chance he will insist desperately on his innocence. He will cry that he is being set up, although he has no idea why, and he will beg for mercy. If he were a Heretic, then his pleas of innocence could be considered very convincing indeed, but then, Heretics are sociopaths and psychopaths with little grasp of reality.

A SECOND TEMPTED

Everyone present in the black pyramid when the Second Seal was broken would have witnessed the Dark Temptor. It would have tried to tempt all of them. The players who survived that mission would have been able to resist the Dark Temptor, but any of the others could have failed and become the Tempted. For this reason there need not just be a single Tempted. There may be two, or there may be even more. Essentially, the GM has the convenience of using as many of the non-player members of the Venusian Archaeological Expedition as Tempted as he requires.

If the players suspect the first Tempted and the GM has decided to bring in a second Tempted, then a good way to win the players' trust will be to sacrifice the first Tempted. The second Tempted can explain that he has suspected the first Tempted of being a Heretic for some time. He can produce a few pieces of evidence to back up his suspicions. Perhaps the second Tempted could have a few pictures of the first Tempted chatting to David Hargrove, and/or Carlos Sobel from The Four Riders. He could also produce some financial records showing the intricate but dubious movement of funds in his name.

The second Tempted will then explain that he is in charge of a secret organisation that works on behalf of the Brotherhood, which is charged with tracking down such secret Heretics and bringing them to immediate justice. The second Tempted will explain the role of the Shadow Sentinels to the players in a way similar to that detailed above, and he will request that the players help him to trap the first Tempted as they are ideally placed to get close to him.

The second Tempted will encourage the players to come up with ideas for luring the first Tempted and leave it up to them exactly how they prosecute their mission. Although, similar to the plan above, the Tempted will want Christine Swann involved in the planning and execution of the mission to make sure things go well and to have an experienced Sentinel involved.

EXECUTING THE FIRST TEMPTED

Whatever ruse the players come up with to lure the first Tempted into their company will work like a charm because he is in on it. The Dark Soul owns his mind to such a degree that he will sacrifice himself for the success of the plan. His execution at the hands of the players will be his final victory over them.

The first Tempted will put up a decent show of denying everything at the beginning, and will also appear to fight desperately to the death to save himself, but this is a charade. The players will manage to do away with him.

Preferably, the first Tempted will get an opportunity to gloat and explain all his plans before the players finally off him. If he can, then he will do this with relish. He can explain everything the players might have been wondering about, as well as giving them some insight into things they may not have even guessed at. If the Tempted is very clear about his conversion in the dark pyramid, then that will help the players realise how close they themselves came to a similar fate.

The Tempted can explain how important the black pyramid is and how it will be the key to the utter destruction of Heimbürg. He has nothing to lose in giving this information away as he believes the players will be powerless to stop it, and in any case the more fear and dread that he is able to spread, even with his dying breath, the better.

He can even portentously announce that the Dark Soul will launch an attack upon the city very soon, and that the players will be utterly powerless to stop it. Besides, having the exact aim of the Dark Soul explained to the players and having them realise the absolute importance of the events they are part of does not harm the campaign.

The whole point of the Shadow Sentinels is to get rid of Heretics and traitors without the delay or risk caused by going through the proper channels. They are an execution squad. The GM should try to keep the first Tempted alive partly so he can do his final gloating speech, but partly because the players should learn what the Shadow Sentinels are all about. One of the players will therefore need to execute the Tempted in cold blood if they are to prove themselves fit to join the organisation. If they fail, then Christine Swann will do the deed.

Of course, the next part of the adventure depends on the players being members of the Shadow Sentinels. If they failed their initiation test, then the second Tempted can give them one last chance and send them on the mission below to prove that they really do have what it takes.

EXECUTING JANA WEISS

It may be necessary to give the players another mission on behalf of the Shadow Sentinels. If they botched the first one, or were not ruthless enough, or if Swann is not convinced by them, then the Tempted will have little choice but to give them another chance to prove themselves. This is to avoid Swann's and the players' suspicions, not to satisfy any particular interest the Tempted has

in their performance. If the players are admitted into the Sentinels despite their failure, they may suspect that the Tempted has other motives.

Christine Swann will contact the players and ask to meet them inside the cathedral, in the Shadow Sentinels' office. This time they can make their own way there, but they will still be subject to the same stringent security measures at the cathedral.

Swann will explain that Weiss is a prominent defence analyst at the Office of Secrets. The Sentinels suspect she has been leaking information for a number of years, but she has been too clever to leave any evidence of this. She lives in a country house in a secluded, jungle, gated condominium outside the city. It will be the players' job to go there and execute her for the good of Heimbürg. Unfortunately, Swann will not be able to accompany them on this mission, and she wishes them luck, while handing over the Sentinels' dossier on Weiss.

Weiss is fifty six and has been working for Bauhaus city bureaucracies all her life. She has worked for the Office of Secrets for seventeen years and gradually risen up the hierarchy at a good but not remarkable speed. She has been an intelligence analyst for seven years and was promoted to the position of Senior Analyst for City Defence (Heimbürg) about eighteen months ago. It is a very uninteresting record.

Of course, Weiss is innocent and there will be no evidence of her heresy. The Tempted has set this job up simply to get rid of another useful defender of Heimbürg, while enticing the players further into his trap.

Weiss lives with her husband on a genteel estate in the Venusian jungle about twenty kilometres from Heimbürg. The players will have to organise their own travel, but they can borrow a van from the Shadow Sentinels if they require it. The 'jungle estate' is not really jungle but more like planned gardens with a jungle theme. The only way into the estate by road is through a manned check point. The two guards there know that it is more than their job's worth to let unauthorised visitors through. Getting to the house on foot is only a ten minute hike through the jungle from the road. The Weiss house is conveniently sited on the edge of the estate.

The Weiss house is a neat and tidy middle-class home with no secrets whatsoever. There are no weapons in the property, save for a handgun kept in a drawer of the bedside table. The Weisses own a small but very loud dog, but do not bother with any other security measures. The estate is generally considered safe and secure by its residents.

The success of this mission is irrelevant to the Tempted and the players will be able to join the Shadow Sentinels whatever happens.

Weiss House

Jungle



The better they present their success, however, the more credible their new role will be. No one is there to witness what happens, and so the players will essentially be free to report things however they wish.

JANA WEISS ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
6	7	7	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	11	10	9

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

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **HG-25 'Equaliser' (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 4, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown
- ◀ **Kitchen Knife (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Data and Intelligence Analyst:** Janice is capable and competent in her role, despite an unremarkable career. She may immediately roll an additional d20 on any Education test that generates at least one success. Additionally, she reduces the difficulty by one for any Education test that deals with a familiarity of events within the past twenty years.
- ◀ **Danger to Oneself:** The Weisses are not naive. They are very much aware that the suburbs make a tempting target for burglars and other undesirables. Janice will attempt to reach for either the handgun in the drawer of the bedside table or a kitchen knife, dependant on her location when encountered. Fear is a big factor for her however, to the extent that the Repercussion for her melee and ranged attacks are increased by two.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Data Does Not Lie:** Janice is able to study and interpret a set of data, then provide accurate intelligence from the results. She may spend one Dark Symmetry point and make an Average D1 Education test when analysing data. If successful, she is able to uncover the short term goals of one particular opponent that the data relates to.



MORE SHADOW SENTINEL MISSIONS

If the players enjoy their work for the Shadow Sentinels, then the GM should consider giving them more missions. Provided the GM (or the Tempted) is in no rush to get on with the destruction of Heimburg, the episodic nature of the Shadow Sentinel executions work well enough in the structure of the campaign. In addition, this is all work unwittingly on behalf of the Dark Soul, which the Tempted should revel in, and which will motivate the players once they find out the truth.

It should be trivial enough for the GM to come up with a few other characters influential in the defence of Heimburg that the Tempted can single out for execution. If the players are recklessly keen to murder these people with no evidence but the Tempted's say-so, then all well and good. If they are meticulous about collecting conclusive evidence on each of their victims, however, the Tempted will consider further missions too risky and go straight to 'The Bombing' discussed below.

THE BOMBING

The Tempted's ultimate aim is to free the Dark Temptor from the black pyramid. The first step towards achieving this, he has decided, is to disrupt the support for the Brotherhood's forces defending the pyramid. Having failed to bring a plague down upon Heimburg, the Tempted has now decided that destroying the Cathedral of Heimburg is his best bet. Without the power of the Brotherhood, the forces defending the pyramid will be much weaker. As the players foiled his previous plan, he feels it will be deliciously ironic if they were the ones to blow up the cathedral for him.

To that end the Tempted has constructed a ruse that should convince the players to deliver supplies to Christine Swann at the cathedral. Actually they will be delivering bombs powerful enough to damage much of the massive cathedral building.

SAFE HOUSE ALPHA

The Tempted will contact the players sounding breathless and anxious. He will tell them to meet him as soon as they can. He will briefly explain that his Sentinel war party was just ambushed and in addition a number of weapons caches have been raided by the Dark Legion. He gives them the address of a street corner that lies in the heart of one of the city's worst industrial slums and warns them to make sure they are not followed, and to come heavily armed.

A shotgun-wielding Tempted will meet the players shortly after they arrive. He has clearly been in a fight: his armour is damaged, and his head bandaged. There is a cut running down the side of his face and he has a slight limp. After checking the players are sure they were not followed, he will lead them quickly into a subterranean section of abandoned factory units and then further down into old sewer sections. It is quite impressive, how well the Tempted seems to know this intricate network of sewers and tunnels.

As they go, the Tempted will further explain that there must be a mole somewhere in the organisation and that as the players have not been with the Sentinels long, and they could not know about the weapons caches, then none of them can be the mole.

After negotiating a number of twisting turns through the foul sewers they will come to a network of ancient rooms dimly lit by flickering lights. There are a couple of Sentinels guarding the way who will nod conspiratorially to the Tempted and the players as they let them past.

This area is a number of linked rooms that seem to have been some sort of factory workshop, perhaps hundreds of years ago. The Tempted will explain that this is Safe House Alpha. It is used as a base for underground operations and as a supply depot and weapons cache for the Shadow Sentinels. He will tell them that the Sentinels launch a number of their raids from here, and that he is developing the underground network as a way of travelling the city undetected and a means of striking back at the Dark Legion. Staying in the dark and moving in the shadows is like playing the Dark Legion at their own game. The Tempted waxes lyrical on this for a while. He is clearly enthused by the possibilities of this underground theatre of war.

The safe house has a number of dorms for soldiers. Although many are recently used, these are all empty now. There are also a couple of corridors lined with supplies; all the things one might need to fight an underground war have been stockpiled here. There is a particularly huge dump of high explosives.

The medical bay is busy. There are a couple of bodies of Sentinels and a seriously injured soldier is being tended by a couple of others. A second Sentinel is lying on a trolley covered in blood and groaning occasionally, but if the players offer to help with him, the medics will just shake their heads gravely. Five or six other Sentinels are milling around, clearly shocked at the defeat they have just been handed.

The Tempted will say that this was going to be a simple enough raid on a Mishima business that they suspected of supplying the Dark Legion. When they got to the warehouse it was empty save the Necromutants and Undead Legionnaires lying in wait. Most of the Sentinels were killed in the first moments of the battle, and the rest of them fled into the sewers and back to the safe house. These are the only survivors.

The raided supply caches made him suspect that they might have a mole, but this ambush, the Tempted will reveal, proves it beyond all doubt. Now he needs the players because he knows they can be trusted and because the chances are they are unknown to the mole.

The truth, of course, is that the Tempted organised the ambush in order to manipulate the players. From now on, he hopes to keep them on their toes and give them little time to think. The immediacy of the situation will mean that the players should act quickly and carry out the Tempted's orders without question.

The Tempted tells the players that he has managed to salvage some supplies from one of the compromised depots. He needs them to take them to Swann who is at the cathedral. He shows them a pile of large crates, measuring around 80cm by 50cm by 50cm, scattered around the room. There should be as many crates as players.

The Tempted will open one of the crates briefly and show them various sealed medical packs and other bits of medical equipment. Each individual pack is sealed, and each of the other crates are sealed with a genuine Bauhaus seal. He will tell the players they need to move quickly as he fears the Dark Legion is closing in. He and the rest of his Sentinels here are resolved to fighting a rear-guard action to the death. Do not make this brave sacrifice vain.

The medical supplies are cleverly disguised bombs of massive destructive power. The disguise will fool a cursory look or scan, but a detailed rummage by someone who knows what they are doing only requires a **Challenging (D2) Observation test** to realise that something is not right.

The Tempted will lead the players through the sewers about half the way to the ground level and describe the rest of the route (it is not that complicated). The players should find manoeuvring through the narrow tunnels with the bulky, heavy packages awkward and slow.

AMBUSH

To keep the players on their toes the GM can ambush them as soon as they reach the ground level. This ambush is set up by the Tempted and so the Dark Legion should not be strong enough to really stand a chance of wiping out the players. This event is there to bring urgency and stop the players thinking too much about what they have been ordered to do.

As far as the players are concerned, a small group of advance Legionnaire scouts from the force that just ambushed the Sentinels have somehow found their way through the sewers and are determined to stop the players from escaping that way. They will open fire as soon as the first player emerges from the tunnel and try to keep them pinned underground. There is plenty of cover for the scouts in the ancient factory complex, but that works both ways as it also provides plenty of cover for the players to emerge from the sewers and find their own firing positions, or to slip behind the scouts.

None of the Dark Legion will be able to reveal the Tempted's plan as they are just as much unwitting pawns in the Tempted's game as the players.

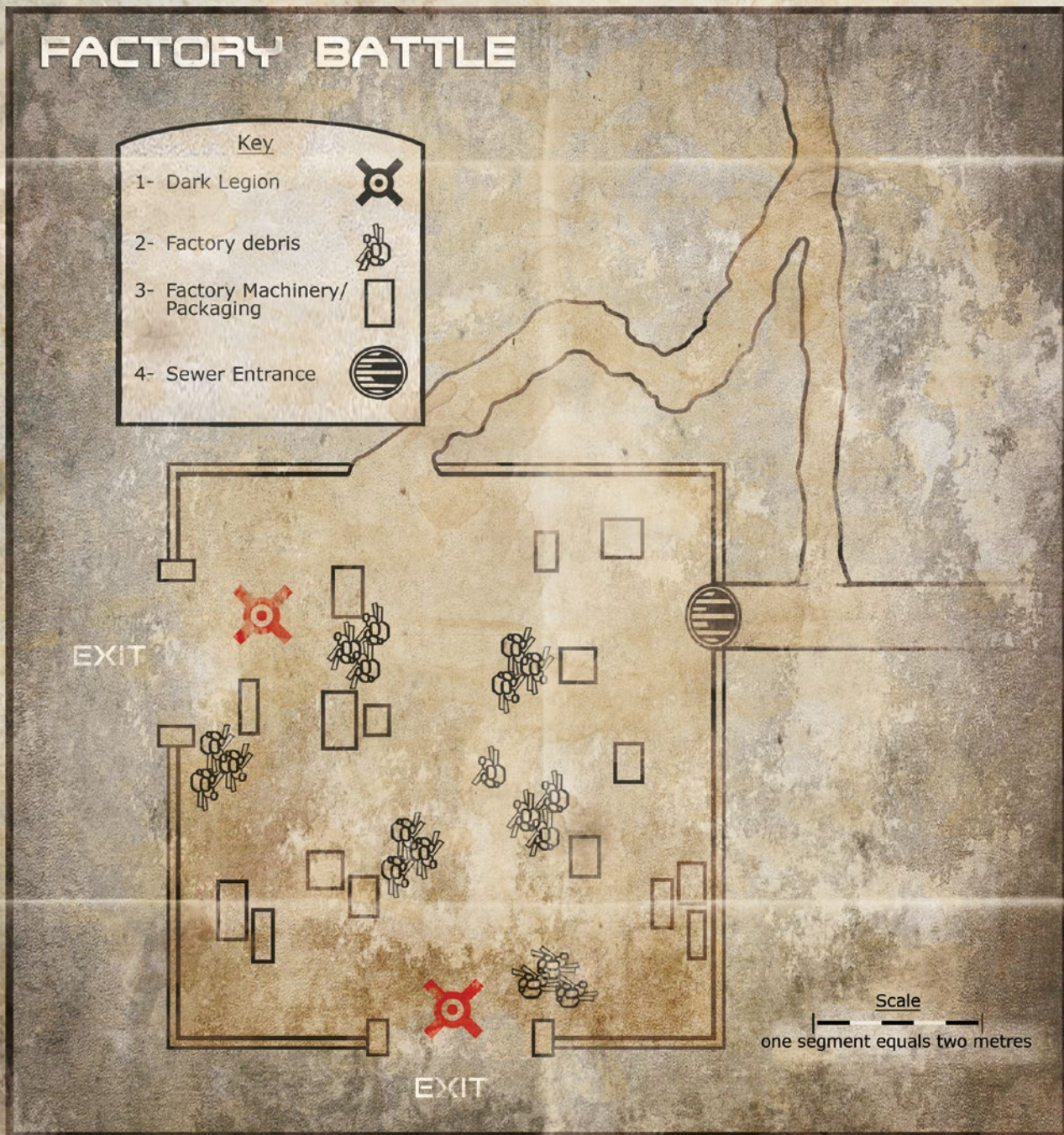
Two Hordes, each consisting of five Undead Legionnaires (see page 303 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core rulebook). One horde is in possession of a Valchek Machine Gun, whilst the other makes use of a Plagudealer Flamer.

ENTERING THE CATHEDRAL

Entering the cathedral should be routine for the players by now and they are even recognised by some of the guards on the main entrance. Even so, they are still searched. They will be asked to remove their weapons and heavy armour, even if they do look like they have just been laying their lives on the line, defending the Brotherhood.

The supplies the players are carrying have been specifically designed to bypass the cathedral's sensors. The crates will be put through a scanning device but nothing unusual will show up, and the cathedral guards will not bother opening the packages. If the players do nothing to attract attention to their items, they will be allowed through without a hitch.

FACTORY BATTLE



If the bombs are somehow discovered at this stage, then a senior Mystic (Brother Michael) and a bomb disposal team will be called. With the help of Brother Michael's Art the bomb disposal team will be able to make all the devices safe. It will still be tense, though, not knowing whether the cathedral is about to be blown to bits any moment. The areas all around will be evacuated except for Brotherhood guards, and the players. And then the players will have a lot of explaining to do.

BROTHER MICHAEL, SENIOR MYSTIC ★

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

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Armoured Vestments, Medium Military Shoulder Pads, Combat Helmet: (Head 2, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **P60 'Punisher' (ranged):** Range C, 1+**T**6, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown
- ▶ **Punisher Short Sword (melee):** 1+**T**4, 1H, Parry 1, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Senior Mystic:** Brother Michael is a powerful and experienced Keeper of the Art. He has Mysticism Expertise 4 and Mysticism Focus 4, and knows the spells Blessing, Contempt, and Succour. Further, Michael is skilled at foretelling in addition to being an expert Mentalist. He knows all of the spells from the Aspect of Mentalism, plus the spells Gaze, Object Reading, and Omen from the Aspect of Premonition (all three of which are described below). Finally, whenever Michael succeeds at a test but does not manage to generate Momentum, he may immediately add one Momentum to the group Momentum pool.
- ▶ **It Has Been Foreseen:** Michael has trained his precognitive powers to almost supernatural levels. He may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation or Insight test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he may spend one Momentum from an Observation or Insight test to instantly recognise the reason the test was made. If this occurred prior to combat, he may add one d20 to any skill test made during the first turn, without paying any Dark Symmetry points. Finally, whenever he is in the presence of a person or object that was affected by supernatural

abilities within the last five hours, he may attempt an Insight test with a difficulty equal to number of hours since the effect took place. On success, he can recognise the taint of powers, whilst spending two Momentum points allows him to identify the specific power used.



Brother Michael, Senior Mystic

THE ASPECT OF PREMONITION

The Aspect of Premonition is described fully on page 31 of the *Brotherhood* sourcebook, but is summarised here for clarity, as are the three spells that Michael has access to:

The idea that Mystics are able to predict the future is nothing new to the general public but, as this Aspect's effects are far from obvious, few people actually realise the extent of the truth. To those that utilise this Aspect, Premonition allows them to gaze into both the past and future, which makes it a vital tool for the Brotherhood's strategic planning; both for today and for centuries from now.

GAZE

TIER: Venetum Minoris

DIFFICULTY: D1

TARGET: Self

DURATION: One Minute

BASE EFFECT: When using this spell, the Mystic can gaze through solid materials. This mystical sight is blocked by lead or similarly dense materials, or by organic matter like bone or wood. This vision allows the character to see through solid objects within Reach, but the perception is vague and indistinct, increasing the difficulty of tests to identify details or objects perceived by this spell by one.

MOMENTUM: When casting this spell, Momentum gained may be used for the following additional effects:

- ◆ For one Momentum, the Mystic can see through solid objects within Close range.
- ◆ For one Momentum, the Mystic also gains perfect night vision, allowing him to ignore all penalties imposed by darkness.
- ◆ For one Momentum, the spell allows clearer vision through solid objects, removing the difficulty increase for identifying details—the character can perceive fine details and colours, and even read fine text through walls.

OBJECT READING

TIER: Venetum Mediatoris

DIFFICULTY: D1

TARGET: One object, touched

DURATION: Instant

BASE EFFECT: This spell allows the Mystic to peer into the azure aura that suffuses all objects. This aura retains an echo of past events, and its fluctuations forecast the future. When touching the object, the Mystic is able to visualise important events in which the object has played, or will play, a part. If this spell is successfully cast, the Mystic may ask a single question about the object's past or future. The GM must answer this question truthfully, but the answer may be vague if the question is broad. Specific questions will naturally result in specific answers, but knowing what questions to ask is a challenge in itself.

MOMENTUM: When casting this spell, Momentum gained may be used for the following additional effects:

- ◆ For one Momentum, increase the range to one object within Close range.
- ◆ For each Momentum spent, ask the GM one additional question. You may choose what each question is one at a time, after hearing the answer to the previous question.

OMEN

TIER: Venetum Mediatoris

DIFFICULTY: D1

TARGET: Self

DURATION: Instant

BASE EFFECT: When using this spell, the Mystic can instinctively choose the better way when presented with a choice. It can be used

to find out which way is the safest, most advantageous, or simply the most correct. To find the right way, the Mystic must phrase a question in his mind—the answer is a gut feeling, possibly backed up by minor sensory or environmental effects in his vicinity, as to which choice is the better one. If successfully used, the GM must answer the question, but the answer must consist of only one word.

MOMENTUM: When casting this spell, Momentum gained may be used for the following additional effect:

- ◆ For each Momentum spent, the GM's answer consists of an additional word.

HANDOVER

The Tempted has a device that can detonate the bombs remotely, even from his location below the city. He does not realise, however, that the cathedral's shielding includes defences against this signal, so he will not be able to detonate the explosives shortly after the players arrive in the cathedral, as he had planned.

However, the bombs are also on a timer and are due to go off several hours after the players are expected to reach the cathedral. This means that if the players do their job well, drop off the supplies with Swann, and then leave in good time, the cathedral will blow up after they have left, and they will be safe.

Once the players get to Swann they will have finished their mission and can do what they like. They might even decide to go back to the sewers and help the Tempted defend against the Dark Legion with the rest of the Sentinels. If they do, it will be a waste of time. All the Sentinels will be dead by now and the Tempted will have joined the Dark Legion while waiting for news that the cathedral is destroyed.

Swann will presumably be glad to see the players, but will wonder what precisely they are doing there. She has been told briefly by the Tempted to wait there but she does not know why. It was the Tempted's whim that she should be puzzling on this when he detonates the bombs remotely. As the remote signal does not penetrate the cathedral, he must now wait approximately two and a half more hours before the timer kicks in.

Swann will shrug and expect that the reason for the supplies will be revealed to her shortly, or she will listen to the players' account of recent events and draw some conclusions for that. Either way, she is likely to simply have the crates stacked up in the Sentinels' meeting room and then go about her business in the cathedral.

It will be up to the players to smell a rat and to want to take things further. If they do not, then in a few hours the cathedral will blow up. If the players wish to go through the crates and wonder exactly what they contain, then it will only require a **Challenging (D2) Mechanics** or **Daunting (D3) Education test** for them to realise they have a load of big bombs on their hands.

They will be able to tell they are on a timer but they have no way of knowing what the timer is set for, without opening up the timing circuits. It is up to the players whether they try to deal with things themselves or call for expert help. The experts will be able to deal with the situation well enough.

If the players try to disarm the bombs themselves, then it will require some expert knowledge and a steady hand. First a **Daunting (D3) Mechanics test** will be required to identify the main components and function of the devices. Momentum generated on this test may be used to reduce the difficulty of the Mechanics test required to disable the bomb, with two points of Momentum reducing the difficulty by one, to a Minimum of one. The actual act of disarming them without specialist tools is very fiddly. One player will need to hold open the traction router guide nodes (a **Challenging (D2) Athletics test**) while another cuts the link line retaining rods (a **Daunting (D3) Mechanics test**).

Once the first bomb is disarmed, the next one will require a test one level easier than the previous one, until they only have **Average (D1) Mechanics tests** remaining. They will still need to go through every device and disarm them all; even though it gets easier, it can still go wrong.

DAMAGE

If the bombs do go off in the cathedral, the building will be significantly damaged. The structure is huge and will not be entirely destroyed, but the bombs are powerful enough to take out a good section of the complex. A quarter of the building is levelled and another quarter made unsafe. This is enough to strike a massive blow against the Brotherhood and against the morale of all Heimbουργers. It damages the city's defences, which rely on the cathedral for coordination and a last-resort defence system, and more than that, it throws the coordination and cooperation of the Brotherhood and all humanity's factions in the city into disarray.

If the players are anywhere near the bombs when they go off, then they will surely die. If they are in another section of the cathedral then they should make **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics test** to avoid taking 2+**↑6** damage with the Knockdown, Spread 1, and Stun qualities from the shockwave and resultant debris. They can also be exposed to the sort of carnage that their laxity has brought about as they see the suffering of the people in the cathedral. The players might feel the obligation to stick around giving medical aid or searching through the rubble for survivors.

If they are elsewhere in the city when the bombs go off, then they will probably hear the explosions and see smoke rising in the distance. The whole city will be in shock at this blow directly against their spiritual home and the shining light in their fight against the Dark Legion.

If the bombs go off outside the cathedral, then that will of course do a lot of damage, but that damage will not contribute to the disorganisation of the Brotherhood. The bombs are powerful enough to destroy several city blocks each and kill everyone nearby. If they go off in a heavily populated place then this will still be a massive disaster for the city. But still, nothing compared to what Heimbουργ is about to suffer.

PART TWO: STREETS OF FIRE

OVERVIEW

In this part of the campaign, the Tempted leads his Dark Legionnaires and Heretics to war through the streets of Heimbουργ itself. The entire city will become a raging battleground and chaos will reign, at least for one night. Although this is merely a diversionary tactic to the more important activity going on underground, the players will have to make their way through the streets and battle with the forces of the Dark Legion.

Down in the sewers, the Tempted has created a number of portals linked to citadels across the solar system through which he will bring his troops. The portals will only last for twenty four hours, and so the battle cannot last and it cannot be won, but during one night the Tempted plans to bring mayhem to the streets of Heimbουργ.

Whatever state the cathedral is in, the Brotherhood is able to coordinate its forces and make a decent defence of Heimbουργ. If the cathedral is already heavily damaged, then this simply means that the Tempted will be able to do more damage. His Dark Legions will gain the upper hand for longer and cause more confusion and destruction. The Brotherhood's defence of its city will be diminished and the resolve of its people lessened, but they will still triumph and the Dark Legion will still be defeated. And fittingly, this failure of the players will make their work going forward that much more difficult.

It is likely that the Tempted has now been exposed as an agent of the Dark Soul. Whatever the outcome of the attempt to blow up the cathedral, it is unlikely that the players will still trust him. Even if they do, he is not willing to risk interacting with them and has placed himself firmly with the Dark Legion. The time for subterfuge is over; it is time to wage total war through the streets of Heimbουργ.

EXPECT THE INQUISITION

No matter how the players acted during the earlier part of this adventure, the chances are they have come to the attention of the Inquisition of Heimbουργ. Even if they refused to kill anyone on behalf of the Shadow Sentinels, and they refused to bring the bombs into the cathedral and disposed of them themselves, the Inquisition

is still likely to want to know about the players' relationship with the Tempted and get other information about him. All the other surviving Sentinels including Christine Swann (if she did survive) will be questioned too.

If they can be apprehended by the Brotherhood, they will be brought to the cathedral and locked in small iron cages far away from each other. They will be left to reflect for a few hours and then interrogated. The guiltier they look on the face of it, the more painful and intense their interrogation. They will be asked for their version of events repeatedly, by several different Inquisitors, and every time they sense a lie the players will be given an electric shock or pain will be delivered in some other manner.

The pain the players suffer, the Inquisitors' Art to sense the truth, and the efficacy of their questioning should end up benefitting them; sooner rather than later the Inquisitors should realise that the players are guilty only of falling for the Tempted's ruse.

Once the Brotherhood is sure that the players are not Heretics, they will want to take advantage of their familiarity with the Tempted in order to track him down. Inquisitor Stark, or another of the Brotherhood, will explain that they have a number of their best agents working on it at this very moment, but the Tempted seems to be elusive and cunning and has not left much of a trail. He will request that they use their knowledge of this activities and personality in order to attempt to track him down and put an end to his plans.

With the city in uproar, the streets in flames, the people cowering, and the Brotherhood stretched, the players will have little option but to concede this is a vital mission. And it will get the players out of any trouble they might be in with the Brotherhood. If they do refuse, then the Brotherhood can play tough. It will cobble together a litany of damning (and no doubt essentially true) charges against the players and threaten to put them away for a very long time unless they agree to this mission.

NO INQUISITION

It could be that the players are far from the cathedral when it blows up and manage to avoid contact with the Brotherhood. If so, then although they will be wanted by the Inquisition of Heimburg, they will not be easy to find and the Brotherhood should soon have much better things to do than look for them. If this is the case then the players will need to focus on the matter in hand themselves. It will be up to them how they act and what to do next.

Hopefully either the players are civic-minded enough to want to track the Tempted down, or the tempted has annoyed them so much that the players will be desperate for revenge. While the line of the plot from here concentrates on the players working for the Brotherhood, the players should come across similar problems and

encounters if they are acting on their own initiative. The chances are (if she is still alive) they will contact or be contacted by Christine Swann, in any case.

As a last resort the Brotherhood could even offer a 500,000 crown reward for the Tempted's capture, if the players do not have any better motivation.

STATE OF THE CITY

The state of the city, and especially the Brotherhood's ability to deal with the impending emergency, will depend on several factors. As discussed in *The Four Riders*, the mood of the people of Heimburg has been affected by the opening of the Second Seal and how long it was opened. If the Tempted managed to blow up part of the Cathedral of Heimburg, then that will drastically affect the Brotherhood's capabilities and the mood of the people. The GM should consider these factors and how they affect the state of Heimburg.

Of course, all this is largely down to how the players have performed during this campaign. Even if the Brotherhood has just suffered the disaster of the damage to its cathedral it will still manage to function. The fact that it is in the midst of such a dangerous emergency will bring out the best in most of the Brotherhood. They will no longer just be doing their job (however worthy) but suddenly they will be fighting for the survival of everything they value.

Some of the Brotherhood's functions will continue almost unaffected, some functions will cease, but mostly it will struggle along trying to make the most of the difficult situation. The effective purview of the Brotherhood will be sporadic and largely arbitrary. Fortunately, if required, its access to the players and its inclination to use them in the war against the Tempted will not be affected.

CHAOS ON THE STREETS

Whatever the result of the bombing of the cathedral, the Tempted will continue with his plans. If the cathedral is heavily damaged, all well and good, but the Tempted will see how the Brotherhood continues to function and will wish to destroy the place utterly. If it is not damaged at all then the Tempted has a second plan to blow it up. This plan is more about brute force than the clever ruse the Tempted tried before, and involves a massive attack upon Heimburg.

The attack is a diversionary tactic but it must still be as destructive as possible, as once the cathedral falls, the entire city might fall. More than that, without its defenders from the Brotherhood, the way to the black pyramid will be open.

The Tempted has been using the sewers and other long-forgotten subterranean ways to position his Dark Legion forces around the city. He has also turned many previously loyal citizens to the Dark Soul



Heimburg in flames.

and they are awaiting his orders. The opening of the Second Seal has increased the number of Heretics in the city. In addition, many other malcontents and criminals are spoiling for a fight. The city is a powder keg just waiting to go off.

Shortly after nightfall the Tempted will send his forces into battle. Centurion-led squads of Undead Legionnaires will herald the insurrection by making a number of coordinated surgical strikes against vital utilities across the city. They hit all the major power stations and communication hubs sending the city into darkness. They also attack the reservoirs, contaminating the water supplies with psychoactive drugs. In a matter of hours city will descend into confusion and chaos. Then gangs of criminals and activists led by Heretics and opportunists will hit the streets, rioting and looting, spreading mayhem.

At the same time, the Dark Legion will launch a massive attack in the southern jungle, attempting to seize the black pyramid. Though unlikely to succeed on its own, this battle will rage for days, dragging manpower and resources away from Heimburg and spreading its defences even thinner.

Once the attacks in Heimburg begin, most citizens flee the streets, finding shelter where they can. BLEU patrols do their best to keep order before realising it is futile and awaiting help from Bauhaus soldiers and Brotherhood forces. Dark Legion snipers posted on every vantage point pick off their victims almost at will.

Bauhaus and Brotherhood troops fight door to door and floor to floor, clearing buildings of the Dark Legion only to have the enemy spring up in the next block. The Dark Legion destroys everything it can as it makes its way through the city. Heretic organisations loot and burn what they can before melting away into the darkness and emerging elsewhere without warning.

There is no chance the Dark Legion and its Heretic allies can win this war; there are far too few of them. But they can make the city a scene of utter Chaos for several days, and this is much longer than the Tempted requires to put his plan into action.

DIVERSION

During the carnage, several Heretics who consider themselves close to the Tempted and know his plans, are captured. These Heretics have been involved in planning a massive attack on a major Brotherhood air base and supply depot on the outskirts of the city called Daniel Base. The plan involves a Nephrite of Algeroth leading a large force of Ezoghoul, Razides and Undead Legionnaires. The force might even be powerful enough to take the city.

Under heavy interrogation they will reluctantly reveal what they know. This is entirely to the Tempted's plan, however. This attack is largely in the Tempted's imagination. The Heretics are unwitting victims of another of the Tempted's ruses. The Tempted knows that when they are interrogated and reveal the attack on Daniel Base they will be

convincing enough for the Brotherhood to concentrate all its spare forces remaining in the city on defending the base. This will give him the opportunity he needs to move the explosives into the tunnels beneath the cathedral.

FINDING THE TUNNELS

This section works on the assumption that the players will wish to track down the Tempted as soon as possible. This could be because they have been ordered to by the Brotherhood or simply because they are working on their own initiative out of a sense of civic duty or because they want revenge.

No one seems to know where the Tempted is. The only useful leads that the players have is the Shadow Sentinels' office (if it is still standing) and the safe house they recently went to in the sewers. This is actually where they need to go if they are to find the Tempted and have a chance of thwarting him.

If they speak to Christine Swann (or another Shadow Sentinel) then she can remark that the Tempted was spending a lot of time in the sewers and was making an effort to map them. He was effectively living in Safe House Alpha and using it as a base for a number of missions. If Swann is still alive, then she will be very keen to track down the Tempted and kill him, or at least help to thwart his plans. So she will offer, if not beg, the players to allow her to help them with any plans they have.

If the players are really clueless about tracking down the Tempted and have not thought to go to the Shadow Sentinels' office in the cathedral, then Swann can contact them with her fears about him. She can even tell them that she suspects that he might be in the sewers colluding with the Dark Legion or offer to meet the players in the Shadow Sentinels' office to discuss it.

THE SHADOW SENTINELS OFFICE

If the players think to search the Tempted's office inside the Shadow Sentinels' meeting area, they will discover that it is locked and only the Tempted has the key. If they try to break in, they need to be careful. While the Shadow Sentinels' meeting area offers some privacy from the activity of the rest of the cathedral, the players should avoid breaking down the office door or doing anything that might attract the attention of Brotherhood agents passing by in the corridor outside. The lock can be picked on a successful **Daunting (D3) Thievery test**.

In the office they will find a number of maps of the sewer system beneath the city. Many of the maps are not good, and have been sketched by Shadow Sentinels on recess. But the Tempted has been using all these various maps to draw up increasingly accurate master-maps of the sewers.

He has taken the best, later ones with him, but there are so many earlier versions of variable quality that, provided the players can make sense of the various versions, they will be as good as having one of the master maps described. Some of the maps have the area below the cathedral on them (marked with a big red cross) and also the other significant locations. Safe House Alpha is about the most common location on the maps. As this was the base for all the underground exploration, nearly all the maps use that as a reference point.

Among the maps the Tempted has also left a heavy, important looking, iron key. This is the Tempted's spare key for the padlocks mentioned in area J: Dark Spawn Pen.

ON THE STREETS

If the players head for the safe house then they will more than likely need to take to the streets. The Brotherhood is certainly too busy to lay on convenient transport for them, although this is just as well as air travel through the warzone that Heimborg has become is extremely hazardous.

The insurrection and the attacks from the Dark Legion have brought chaos to every corner of Heimborg. Just travelling the few miles to the sewer entrance will be an adventure in itself. The streets are dark, lit only by fires from burning buildings or sporadic flares and explosions. All transport has been disrupted. Mobs of looters hover. Black Legion snipers are found everywhere, and the danger from friendly fire is almost as great. An atmosphere of horror and panic pervades the streets. In a matter of hours it is as if hell itself has been brought to the previously civilised streets of Heimborg.

Below are a number of encounters that the players can face on their way.

RAZIDE

As the players pass a store, they hear a scream followed and vicious growling, then the shop window beside them smashes across the street. A Razide comes crashing through the window dragging a woman behind him. He wields a Nazgaroth Machine Gun. The Razide is occupied with the woman and so this allows the players the opportunity to re-roll up two d20 on their Stealth test if they choose to ambush it, though they must accept the new results. If the GM requires it, there can be another Razide coming shortly behind the first.

If they save the woman she is extremely grateful and able to show them a relatively sheltered shortcut through her neighbourhood.

See page 305 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core rulebook for Razide statistics.



GANG WAR

The players stumble into the middle of a gang war. Two groups of street gangs are shooting at each other across a ruined city block. One of the gangs gets the drop on the players and opens fire on them, suspecting they are with the rival gang. The players will need to retreat to the safety of the other gang and/or open fire on the first gang.

Unknown, however, to the players, the second gang, although looking much like any other street gang in the area is actually made up of Heretics. The Heretic gang feign an alliance with the players while waiting for the players and the rival gang to damage each other as much as possible before opportunistically picking on the survivors.

HERETIC GANGER



ATTRIBUTES							
STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
9		10		8		8	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
9		7		7		6	

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

WOUNDS: 4

SOAK: Gang Leathers: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Crude SMG (ranged):** Range C, 1+3, Burst, Unbalanced
- ▶ **Slicer (melee):** 1+4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ▶ **Heretic:** These gangers have fully embraced a life of heresy, and they have been blessed with the Dark Curse and Symmetry Burst Dark Gifts.

Ganger (see page 274 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook).

INCOMING

The players find themselves targeted by mortar shells from a Bauhaus position a few blocks away. The mortars are firing knock-out gas, which is a non-lethal version of the poison gas described on page 26. Unless the players are carrying appropriate equipment, they will need to find cover as soon as possible.

As it happens, the only standing structure nearby is part of a school complex that has already been partly flattened in the fighting. When

the players arrive there, they find it is already a refuge to dozens of local residents cowering from the battle. The residents, many of them school children, are terrified and believe it is only a matter of time before they will be killed.

They will see the players as their only hope in this terrible situation. They will beg the players to protect them and will become increasingly insistent until many of them become hysterical. They will clamber towards the players, grabbing them and clawing at them, so desperate are they that the players stay to protect them. This should soon become claustrophobic for the players as the locals gather round. Some people are trampled underfoot, a small kid grabs one of the players' weapons, a girl is crying as she buries her face in one of the players' jacket, an old man is screaming at them to help.

The situation could get out of hand and the players will need to handle it carefully. If they are successful, then some of the locals might even offer to guide them through the area and help them towards their destination.

THE DOWNED FIGHTER

A Bauhaus Raven air superiority fighter has crash landed nearby. The players will need to travel close to the crash site to get where they are heading, and if they bother to check the site out they will notice the pilot is still alive but trapped in his cockpit. Dark Legion forces have seen the crash and are closing in on it, too.

If the players closely inspect the pilot they will realise he can be freed, but it will take some time, and so the Dark Legion will need to be delayed. They will also realise that even if the pilot is freed, he will be badly injured and in need of expert care. He can only slow the players down further, and it would seem to be madness to drag him through the sewers.

The players have a number of options open to them, none of the choices will be easy to make. The pilot also does not make it easy for them; he begs them to help him get free and get back to his wife and children.

UP FROM THE SEWERS

As the players are making their way through narrow alleyways they surprise a couple of Heretics. The Heretics are in the act of helping their colleagues up from the sewers. Who knows how many are in the Heretic band below ground? But it should be easy enough, from their position of advantage, for the players to kill those on the surface and stop the Heretics temporarily.

The players do not have time to keep the exit covered for a long period or to go down there and root out the Heretics. But they will have been given a clue that the dark forces are using the sewer system to get around the city.



A Grizzly tank runs amok. It won't need roads where it's going.

ROGUE TANK

Going through a relatively peaceful section of the city the players are surprised by a GBT-49 Grizzly tank crashing through a concrete wall very close to them. They will require **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics** or **Daunting D3 Athletics tests** to avoid getting hit by the tank, which causes impact damage, or the flying masonry, which inflicts 2+ \uparrow 4 damage with the Knockdown and Stun qualities. The tank is actually too wide for the street it is now on and is moving erratically. It manages to cause all sorts of damage as it goes on its way. It is also heading for a residential block which is likely to be populated.

The crew of the tank is all dead except the driver, who is mad. Either he has been overcome by the Dark Symmetry or, faced with the horrors of war, his mind has suddenly snapped. Either way, he is a great danger. If the players do manage to get into the tank while it is going along, and subdue the driver then, assuming they have the know-how, they will be able to take control of the tank and use it.



BROTHERHOOD PATROL

The Players run into a heavily armed Doomtroopers squad. The Doomtroopers may even open fire on the players if they are not very clear about what they are doing and where their allegiances lie. Either way, the Doomtroopers will attempt to take the players prisoner and interrogate them.

The players do not have time for this, but the Doomtroopers are oblivious to the importance of their mission, and to cap it all, their commanding officer is the type to do everything by the book. The players will need to come up with some convincing reason why they are where they are. If they tell the truth and have some documentation to back their story up, then their cause will be much easier. If they are extremely convincing, then the commander may even dispatch some of his squad to escort the players as far as the sewers.

If the players mess this encounter up and end up looking like getting incarcerated, then fortunately for them, a powerful force of Dark Legionnaires can attack the Doomtroopers without warning, giving the players the chance to slip away quietly during the mayhem.

GBT-49 GRIZZLY

RESTRICTION: 4 **COST: 75**
MAINTENANCE: 8 **RELIABILITY: 4**

The Grizzly Groschanzer—or giant tank—epitomises the doctrine of Lothar Fieldhausen, who believed that in armoured warfare, bigger is always better. The Grizzly is less a tank and more a mobile fortress. It is larger even than Capitol's Leviathan and Montana MBTs. Indeed, it is so huge that it can plough through the densest jungle, knocking down trees unfortunate enough to be in its path.

The Grizzly is the largest battle tank produced by Bauhaus, or by any corporation, and it is bristling with weapons. The main turret mounts a 230mm mortar, a 180mm anti-tank cannon, a 60mm autocannon, and a light machine gun. Beneath this main turret, there is a pair of smaller turrets, one fitted with a pair of light machine guns, the other fitted with a small anti-personnel mortar and a flamethrower. It also has four side turrets loaded with light machine guns, a pair of anti-aircraft turrets, and a 60mm autocannon and light machine gun mounted in the rear. Finally, the commander's turret mounts another pair of light machine guns.

The command turret is heavily protected in the centre of the vehicle and boasts a large periscope, with which the commander can survey the battlefield. The Grizzly is powered by twin 7,800 horsepower turbo engines, which consume a hundred and forty litres of diesel per kilometre.



QUALITIES	Enclosed, Ponderous, Rugged, Tracked			
CRUISING SPEED	40 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		0
CREW	1 Commander, 1 Pilot, 10 Gunners		CARRYING CAPACITY	35 enc
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	12	18	15	12
MOTIVE SYSTEM	10	9	6	4
WEAPON	9	8	6	4
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+↑4			
ARMAMENTS	<p>Each of the turrets below is operated by a single gunner, barring the Commander Turret, which is operated by the Commander.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Turret, containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 230mm Mortar: Range L, 2+↑7, Munition, Blast (Close), Dreadful, Knockdown, Vicious 2 • K-180 Cannon: Range L, 3+↑7, Munition, Armour Piercing 2, Unforgiving 2 • K-60 Autocannon: Range L, 2+↑8, Semi-Automatic, Armour Piercing 2, Vicious 1 • Bergdahl Stonecleaver LMG: Range M, 1+↑6, Automatic, Dependable, Spread 2 • Front-Right Turret, with twin Bergdahl Stonecleavers (as above, but Spread 3) • Front-Left Turret, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flamethrower: Range C, 1+↑6, Munition, Incendiary 3, Torrent • 30mm Mortar: Range L, 2+↑5, Munition, Blast (Close), Dreadful • 4x Side Turrets, with Bergdahl Stonecleavers • 2x AA Turrets, with Triple Bergdahl Stonecleavers (as above, but Spread 4) • Rear Compartment, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-60 Autocannon • Bergdahl Stonecleaver LMG • Commander Turret, with twin Bergdahl Stonecleavers (as above, but Spread 3) 			
NOTES	<p>230mm Mortar has twenty Reloads. K-180 Cannon has 30 Reloads. Each K-60 Autocannon has eighteen Reloads. Each Bergdahl Stonecleaver has twenty one Reloads. Flamethrower has ten Reloads. 30mm Mortar has ten Reloads</p> <p>No more than three turrets may attack a single target. The Rear Compartment may not attack the same targets as either of the Front Turrets.</p>			

PART THREE: GOING UNDERGROUND

OVERVIEW

The Tempted has brought chaos to the streets of Heimburg and set up a powerful diversionary attack that will entice most of the Brotherhood's forces from the cathedral. The Tempted will use this as an opportunity to access some ancient sewers below the cathedral. He will fill them with explosives to blow the cathedral to pieces.

Though the Brotherhood will usually use the Art to sense these sort of encroachments, the Tempted is planning on focusing the mayhem on the streets of Heimburg in areas some way from the cathedral. He is also going to give the Brotherhood a very good reason to suspect there will be a massive attack on the Brotherhood's Daniel Base in the north of the city. With the movement of forces to the north, he is betting that there will not be enough of the Brotherhood highly skilled in the Art to sense the attack beneath their very noses.

The Tempted believes that once the cathedral is destroyed, the Brotherhood will not be able to focus its Art upon the defence of the black pyramid. Then the way will be open for him to seize it and break the Second Seal once more.

INTO THE SEWERS

The players should be able to find their way back to Safe House Alpha. A **Challenging (D2) Survival test** is required to get there speedily, with no hitches, if they do not have a map. If this test is failed, the players will end up going round in circles in the maze of sewers and tunnels for ten minutes until they can make another test. They will run the risk of a random encounter like the ones described below.

Challenging (D2) Survival tests are required for any sort of navigation under the surface without a map or similar aid. The GM should consider the maps the players are using as well as lighting and landmarks. Usually the sewers are narrow but occasionally they open out into large vaulted spaces, especially where many channels meet. The lack of room generally means it is difficult to transport bulky loads, and it might be hard to change weapons or bring larger weapons to bear in good time. In the very tight spaces it might be difficult to make hand-to-hand attacks effectively.

The lack of light in the sewers means that the players need to bring their own light sources with them. This makes them very clear targets to those lying in wait, so they should be careful how they carry their light sources. Once these are hidden or extinguished, however, it is very difficult to spot targets. The only thing to aim for, in a firefight, is usually the enemy muzzle flashes. Lighting penalties are summarised on pages 82 and 256 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook.

Sound travels unpredictably down there. Sometimes the walls and water muffle the sounds so a player might not hear an enemy until they are almost upon him. Sometimes sound travels great distances echoing through the chambers. Sometimes parties sound very close, even though they might be a long way off. And often, when the way branches and twists, it is difficult to tell precisely which direction the sound is coming from.

The players will not be able to contact the surface through their radios while they are underground. The Dark Legion is using jamming equipment for all radio waves as part of its strategy to sow confusion on the surface and to prevent the Brotherhood's coordinated response. It is also attempting to block detection equipment so it can move around underground undetected and especially so it can move high explosives beneath the cathedral.

ENCOUNTERS

HAZARDS: There are any number of hazards to avoid down in the sewers. Sometimes, thanks to land slips, the depth of water in a tunnel might suddenly change. A player walking through ankle-deep effluent might suddenly find himself up to his neck in it, or even worse.

Pockets of poisonous or flammable gas often collect in high points of the sewer system. A pocket of flammable gas will ignite if exposed to a flame or a spark—including the strike of a firing pin hitting a bullet's percussion cap, or the blast from a weapon's muzzle. Avoiding the combustion requires a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Daunting D3 Athletics test**, with failure resulting in 2+ \uparrow 5 damage with the Incendiary 2 and Torrent qualities to anyone caught in the blast. Avoiding walking headlong into poisonous gas requires a **Challenging (D2) Survival test**. Anyone entering the gas is exposed to a poison, which requires a Resistance test for each round that he is exposed to it. The gas has the following qualities:

- ◆ **VECTOR:** Airborne
- ◆ **VIRULENCE:** 2 – Victim is rendered unconscious if this test is failed
- ◆ **INCUBATION PERIOD:** One minute
- ◆ **SYMPTOMS:** Victim remains unconscious and suffers 1+ \uparrow 2 damage with the Vile quality that ignores Soak. Successfully passing the Resistance test allows the casualty to awaken, though he suffers the Dazed and Staggered status effects, which both persist for as long as they remain within the cloud, and for one minute once clear of its area of effect.
- ◆ **INTERVAL:** One minute, with a rating of Acute 2 once a victim has been removed from the gas.

The victim will need to be dragged out of the pocket by his colleagues as soon as possible, or risk death.

The Dark Legion leaves a number of traps around the system if it suspects areas are being regularly used by its enemies, or wishes to stop any pursuit or be warned of approaching enemies. The Dark Legion uses tripwires attached to flash bombs, or anti-personnel mines, and might even disguise treacherous drops or water courses.

Flash floods caused by the ravages of the battle above may occur. The destruction of cisterns or the diverting of water courses by powerful explosions could send water rushing unpredictably through the sewers. A player would require a **Challenging (D2) Athletics** or **Daunting (D3) Acrobatics test** to keep his footing or suffer 2+[↑]5 damage with the Dreadful and Knockdown qualities if he were caught in the middle of a flash flood. If the initial test is failed, a second **Challenging D2 Athletics test** must be taken to avoid being swept away with the current. Momentum from this test may be used to reduce the difficulty rating for others—to a minimum of one—which represents calling out suitable leverage, or grabbing hold of an arm as someone is swept past. The exact location that the character is deposited in is left to GM discretion, but may lead to some fun encounters as the players begin a search for each other.

REFUGEES: The players might stumble across a band of refugees. These will probably be frightened and even lost. They could number only a handful or dozens. It is likely they have stuck to the larger tunnels or found a decent sized vault to hide in.

They are likely to be peaceful, simply looking for sanctuary from the battles raging overhead. They might require food or medical supplies from the players, or beg for weapons to keep them safe from whatever is lurking in the tunnels. They are not likely to be able to offer much help to the players, except perhaps as guides to some of the tunnels nearby.

If the players stumble across refugees, however, in the midst of a battle with the Dark Legion, then that might give them a problem. The players will know that unless they comprehensively defeat the enemy nearby, or bring the refugees with them as they withdraw, then there is no chance that the refugees will survive their encounter with the Dark Legion.

DARK CREEPERS: Created and let loose upon the sewers especially for this attack by Algeroth's Tekrons, packs of Dark Creepers swarm through the tunnels in their thousands. These small rat-sized creatures scurry through the sewer system constantly searching for food. They have sharp metallic teeth and glinting claws. If they come across anything that they can eat, they swarm all over it, stabbing and gnawing it incessantly.

Dark Creepers can sense the creatures of the Dark Legion and instinctively leave them alone. But if they get a taste of flesh or blood they will pursue their victims remorselessly. They usually hunt in packs of twenty or so, but some packs might comprise up to a hundred of the creatures. They are susceptible to fire and fear naked flames.

DARK CREEPERS ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9 (+1)	15 (+1)	9	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	4	4	6

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

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: **Steely Flesh:** (All 1)

ATTACKS:

◀ **Teeth and Claws (melee):** 2+[↑]4, Armour Piercing 1, Dreadful, Gruesome, Spread 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◀ **Swarming Horde:** The statistics provided represent a typical swarm of twenty Dark Creepers. Increase the Supernatural Physique and Supernatural Strength ratings of the swarm by one for every twenty Dark Creepers present in the swarm beyond this number, to a maximum rating of five in both and one hundred Creepers. Also increase the swarm's Wound total respectively. The swarm will seek to envelop a single opponent within Close Range; roll two d20 to attack, plus one d20 for each additional twenty Dark Creepers in the swarm, to a maximum of six d20 at one hundred Creepers. A Dark Creeper swarm rolls one d20 for all other tests, reflective of its Trooper status and swarm mentality; if one Dark Creeper fails, they are all likely to fail. Melee attacks, ranged attacks, and effects that attack a single target (such as some spells) deal only their fixed value in damage (ignore the +[↑] in the damage rating), plus one point for each dice of relevant bonus damage the character possesses, as picking off one or two Dark Creepers will have little overall effect to the swarm. A swarm is immune to the Called Shot, Devastating Blow, Disarm, and Knockout Combat Momentum options. The Secondary Target Combat Momentum option inflicts half the attack's damage to the swarm's Wound total for a second time. The Bonus Damage option is unaffected. Torrent weapons however, or a similar effect that targets an area,

deal their full normal damage to a swarm. Reduce the swarm's Supernatural Strength, Supernatural Physique, and d20 attack pool by one for every three points of damage dealt to it, but do not adjust the Wound total because of this—only automatic successes and damage rating are affected. A Dark Creeper swarm may not take Response Actions.

- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Infectious Vermin:** Dark Creepers are host bodies for numerous infectious diseases. If one or more Dark Symmetry Icons are generated for damage, the creature wounded by the swarm suffers Infected Wounds.
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Slave to Symmetry (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Physique (1)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Strength (1)**
- ◀ **Susceptible to Fire:** Double the damage dealt to a Dark Creeper swarm from attacks with the Incendiary quality.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Chittering Horror:** The raucous squealing of an approaching Dark Creeper swarm can unhinge even the most stalwart of minds. For two Dark Symmetry points, any creature not of the Dark Legion within Medium range must succeed at a Challenging D2 Willpower test or suffer a mental assault.
- ◀ **Endless in Number:** Dark Creepers seem to continually appear from the walls, floor, ceilings, and any nook or cranny that will accommodate them. For three Dark Symmetry points, the swarm gains the Fast Healing (2) ability. This will restore one point of Supernatural Physique and Supernatural Strength lost due to damage for every three Wounds regained. An attack by a weapon with the Incendiary quality will end the use of this ability.

HERETICS: Many bands of Heretics live in the sewers of Heimburg. The Tempted often wandered the tunnels while making his plans, keeping an eye out for Heretic bands he could recruit. Those he has



Time to call in the exterminators.

met and converted to the cause have now joined the fighting in the city, but any number of bands still lurk beneath the surface, oblivious to the Tempted's plans.

If the players come across any of these they can still be dangerous. They will know the lay of the land intimately and be experts at fighting in the cramped conditions. They will also have become aware of the uprising happening on the surface, and will be keen to do their bit now.

THE DARK LEGION: The Dark Legion is using the sewers to get about the city and join the battle. By the time the players begin to travel through the system most of the Dark Legion forces will have already deployed. That said there are any number of reasons why some of the forces could still be using the sewers.

Reinforcements or squads redeploying or attempting to outmanoeuvre their enemy on the surface will be using the sewers. Small squads running errands or carrying specific supplies might use them. Some forces have been sent below specifically to seek out refugees and slaughter them. There could be almost any sort of Dark Legion troop down there, although the most powerful and important will have already committed to the fray.

CHILDREN OF ILIAN: The players might come across some Children of Ilian (page 292 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook). The Children have been briefed to poison any water sources they come across with their necrotechnology. They have already been effective elsewhere, and are searching for a cistern that they believe is nearby.

The players could simply hide, to let them by, or attempt to kill them. Although the Children are ineffective in combat, given their number and the twisting confines of the sewers they could be a serious menace to the players should they allow themselves to be outmanoeuvred.

Capturing any of the Children is likely to be useless. They cannot be interrogated, even if the players could understand their gibbering language, and they have no maps; their understanding of the sewer system has been embedded in their collective consciousness.

SEWER TRIKES: The Dark Legion is employing trikes to get around through the vast sewer system. These three wheeled vehicles are well suited to travelling through the wider tunnels of the system. They are too big for many of the narrow routes, however. The wide-wheeled vehicles are perfect for travelling over the uneven stonework of the tunnels and driving through the filthy water quickly. They are usually used to move troops and especially supplies around the city quickly and safely.

If the players encounter a squad of the Dark Legion on these trikes then the Dark Legion will be able to outpace them and hunt them down. If the players wish to escape then they will need to find

vertical shafts or tunnels narrow enough that the trikes will not be able to fit down them. If they do defeat their mounted opponents, however, then the players will be able to use any captured trikes themselves.

THE LOST BATTALION: The Lost battalion is described in detail later where they appear *en masse*. But there are any number of individuals, or small bands of these disenfranchised ex-soldiers who live in the lower levels of the city and the sewers. They might be a fierce adversary for the players if such an encounter is not handled carefully, but they can be a useful ally

The Lost battalion is made up of down and out mercenaries or ex-soldiers who, disturbed by their battle experiences, have sought sanctuary underground. They could be from virtually any corporation or regiment that has served on Venus in the last twenty years or so.

The Lost Battalion fight tenaciously, as if they have nothing to lose. They are tough veterans who know their terrain intimately and know every trick in the book when it comes to tunnel fighting. They are often mentally unbalanced, but essentially good, honest fighting men.

SEWER TRIKE

QUALITIES	Bike, Rugged, Wheeled			
CRUISING SPEED	75 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	2	
CREW	1 Pilot, 1 Gunner	CARRYING CAPACITY	20 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	4	6	4	2
MOTIVE SYSTEM	3	4	3	2
WEAPON	2	3	2	1
IMPACT DAMAGE	1+ [↑] 5			
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gimbal-mounted Nazgaroth (Gunner-operated): Range L, 2+[↑]6, Automatic, Ammo (Armour Piercing 3), Spread 1 			
NOTES	<p>Six Reloads for the Nazgaroth <i>All-Terrain Vehicle:</i> The trike's wide wheels and stable platform allow it to move at speed across most obstacles. It may re-roll a single d20 on all Pilot tests made to cross difficult terrain. <i>Three Wheeled Monstrosity:</i> A trike is heavier and less manoeuvrable than a bike. Trikes use the bike hit location table, but do not benefit from the ability to re-roll Pilot tests when attempting to negotiate an obstacle or avoid an attack.</p>			

LOCATIONS

A) SAFE HOUSE ALPHA: Safe House Alpha was not so safe. The Shadow Sentinels the players met earlier have all been sacrificed to the Dark Soul. The Tempted shot most of them in the back, before letting his Dark Legion forces into the area. These, mostly Undead Legionnaires and Centurions, have now transported the explosives that the Tempted stockpiled here towards the cathedral. The Tempted left the area in darkness and booby trapped it.

There is a trip wire along the entrance corridor linked to a box of high explosives. If the players fail to notice this (on a **Challenging (D2) Observation test** in good light, or if they are specifically looking out for that sort of thing) the explosives will detonate, causing damage equivalent to a Black Grenade to everyone in the corridor.

MAPS

Mapping the underground network of sewers, tunnels and long forgotten structures preoccupied much of the Tempted's time in the weeks leading up to the denouement of his great plan. Part of the reason he used the sewers for the Shadow Sentinels' missions so often was so that he could take the opportunity to explore and also get the Sentinels to help map the area.

Because of this, there are dozens of different maps covering various areas. The Tempted has had master maps drawn up taking details of many of the local maps and trying to make sense of them. The master map below is really for the GM's benefit, but the Tempted has managed to come up with a final map that is very close to accurate.

The rough maps can give a good idea of relative positions and directions, but often they are missing details and the scale will vary wildly. They are not good enough to help work out what surface areas the underground locations correspond to. They are only useful for this if those features are specifically named on the maps.

Many of the other maps will be of only relatively small sections of the underground network, and even the ones seemingly of the entire network will be inaccurate in places or have bits and pieces missing. The GM can draw up as many rough maps as he wishes, based on the master map, in order to present to his players the sort of variety of maps that they might get hold of during the adventure.

The Shadow Sentinels have been left where they were killed. A bit of investigation will reveal that most of them have been shotgunned in the back, and the players might recall that the Tempted, unlike most of the Sentinels, was carrying a shotgun.

The players might also notice that many of the supplies that lined some of the corridors earlier have now been removed. Unless they asked specifically about these, it will require a **Challenging (D2) Mechanics test** for them to recall that these were mostly high explosives.

Many of the dead Sentinels in Safe House Alpha are carrying maps on them. There are even a couple of maps lying upon tables in the area. The players will need to use these maps (or maps they have found elsewhere) if they are to be able to track down the Tempted. Some of the leaders of the Heretics and Dark Legion troops working for the Tempted will also be carrying maps.

Apart from going back the way they came, there are two main exits leading from Safe House Alpha. Both of these routes are guarded by a couple of Heretics, lying in wait a couple of hundred metres from the safe house. They are there specifically to stop any Shadow Sentinels who may have survived from following the Tempted deeper into the sewers.

THE FOUR PORTALS

In the hours before the attack, the Tempted created four portals in the sewers of Heimburg. These are one-way portals leading from some of the major Dark Symmetry citadels across the solar system. They will only last twenty four hours, but that is long enough to transport the Tempted's entire army. In fact, the vast majority of the Tempted's army came through the portal within about an hour of them being created, and most of that force has already reached the surface.

The Tempted created the portals by using ancient rituals given to him by the Dark Soul and human sacrifice. He recruited hundreds of people to the Shadow Sentinels over the past few months and then sent most of them into the sewer system over the last couple of days to their appointed locations. Then he murdered them and dedicated their life force to the Dark Symmetry.

Although only three of the Apostles are represented by the portals, the Tempted has minions of every Apostle in his army. These come from a variety of sources, including some who have crept into the city at the Tempted's behest since the Second Seal was broken, and those who have been skulking below Heimburg for many years.

The portals have largely done all the work they need to do, and will disappear twenty four hours after they were created. But, if the players wish to destroy them they will need to seek a Brother that is able to utilise either the Distortion spell from the Aspect of Kinetics, or the Exorcise Dark Influence spell from the Aspect of

Exorcism. Attempting to close a portal with either spell involves a single successful casting at a difficulty two higher than normal. If successful, however, the resultant psychic backlash from the two polar forces will require a **Daunting D3 Willpower test** from those within Close range of the portal in order to avoid a mental assault.

B) THE PORTAL OF DEMNOGONIS: This portal was not actually created by the Tempted. It was created many hundreds of years ago when the first Seal was broken and the first of the Dark Legion came to Venus. It was closed by the Brotherhood in the early days of the war with the Dark Legion here. However, it was not properly closed.

When Demnogonis first came forth, he sensed the portal was still active and has utilised it ever since to leak his diseases and microbes into the world. It has been the source of most of Heimbürg's ailments and diseases ever since.

The Tempted actually stumbled across the leaking portal and nurtured it. It was this discovery that inspired his plan to use portals to take Heimbürg from below. The portal was not much to look at, simply a narrow crack in a wall. Now the tempted has opened it fully it appears as a hole in mid-air, a stark blackness that seems to spring from nowhere and have no contact with anything around it.

The Tempted has created a chamber around the hole. The chamber is a large underground vault about forty metres cubed. The hole takes up most of this space, being about thirty metres in diameter. The hole has no colour, it is best described as an absence of anything. As the portal is one-way, it cannot be used to travel from Venus. If anyone attempts this they are stopped as if there is an impenetrable invisible wall blocking their way.

Four Heretics keep guard around the portal but they are not paying much attention. They are bored and resentful that they will not take part in the great battle raging above them.

The chamber is littered with the bodies of the dozens of Shadow Sentinels the Tempted sacrificed to open the portal. They are all pock-marked, scarred, and covered in the rashes, blemishes, and swellings of a dozen diseases. If one of the bodies is closely examined by someone not taking basic medical precautions then the GM may pay one Dark Symmetry point to expose the character to Influenza, or two Dark Symmetry points to expose them to Venusian Fever.

This is the first portal that was opened and it has all but done its job. There is little chance of any more troops entering through the portal save for the odd straggler or messenger.

C) THE FIRST PORTAL OF ALGEROTH: The first of two portals linked to citadels of Algoerth, this portal is located in a long underground chamber that used to be part of the Heimbürg underground railway system. The large, arched tunnel is about

one hundred metres long and about fifteen wide. The portal lies at one end.

The Tempted chose the location for this portal well. There are many current and abandoned railway tunnels leading from here, allowing the Dark Legion to deploy quickly throughout the city. The chamber itself is directly below one of Heimbürg's major power plants, which was one of the first victims of the battle and now lies in ruins.

The first wave of troops also cut a wide helical ramp straight to the surface from here, giving it speedy access to the surface. The combats launched from this portal were generally so effective that there are few Algoerth forces left in the area, as they have moved on to follow the battle lines.

The portal is made of two altars, about ten metres apart, which have an arc of electric-like energy flickering between them. The bodies of more than twenty people litter the feet of the bloody altars. Their deaths powered the ritual that created the portal. These victims are subterranean wanderers who the Tempted had the Shadow Sentinels round up for the purpose.

Five Undead Legionnaires (page 303 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook) armed with Kratachs stand guard over the altars. They will open fire on anyone entering the chamber. Their vantage point and the clean lines of the chamber give them one hundred metres of uninterrupted killing ground.

D) THE PORTAL OF SEMAI

The influence of Semai can be seen in all the Tempted's underhand plans and convoluted schemes. He was keen to bring the forces of that Apostle to the attack on Heimbürg. The first forces through this portal were Callistonian Intruders. They quickly set about sowing confusion and terror, targeting the city's communication infrastructure with their explosive charges. They then began to coordinate the hundreds of Heimbürger Heretics that the Tempted had been nurturing with his lies.

The portal is located in the bricked, vaulted chamber of a long forgotten storage cellar. The cellar is about thirty metres by ten, and only about three metres high at its apex. There are three tunnels leading in to the chamber.

This chamber is situated beneath one of the city's largest hospitals. This hospital was one of the first places attacked by the Callistonian Intruders and is now in utter chaos. They made sure to keep most of the most helpless patients alive in order to sow even more panic and confusion.

The portal is a slimy black circle surrounded by standing stones. The stones are soaked in the blood of over thirty dispossessed citizens

who the Shadow Sentinels found wandering the subterranean tunnels, and also the Sentinels who imprisoned them here.

The portal chamber is booby trapped; the Dark Legion has no more use for it and wishes to trap any Brotherhood forces who find the portal. There is a pressure switch beneath a paving stone where each of the tunnels meet the chamber. If any of these are activated this will blow the charges in all three of the tunnels, imprisoning anyone in the chamber behind tons of rubble. It requires a **Challenging (D2) Observation test** to notice the slightly skewed paving slabs or the charges set in the tunnel walls, whilst a further **Challenging D2 Mechanics test** is required to disarm each one. Each charge detonates with a force equivalent to a Black Grenade.

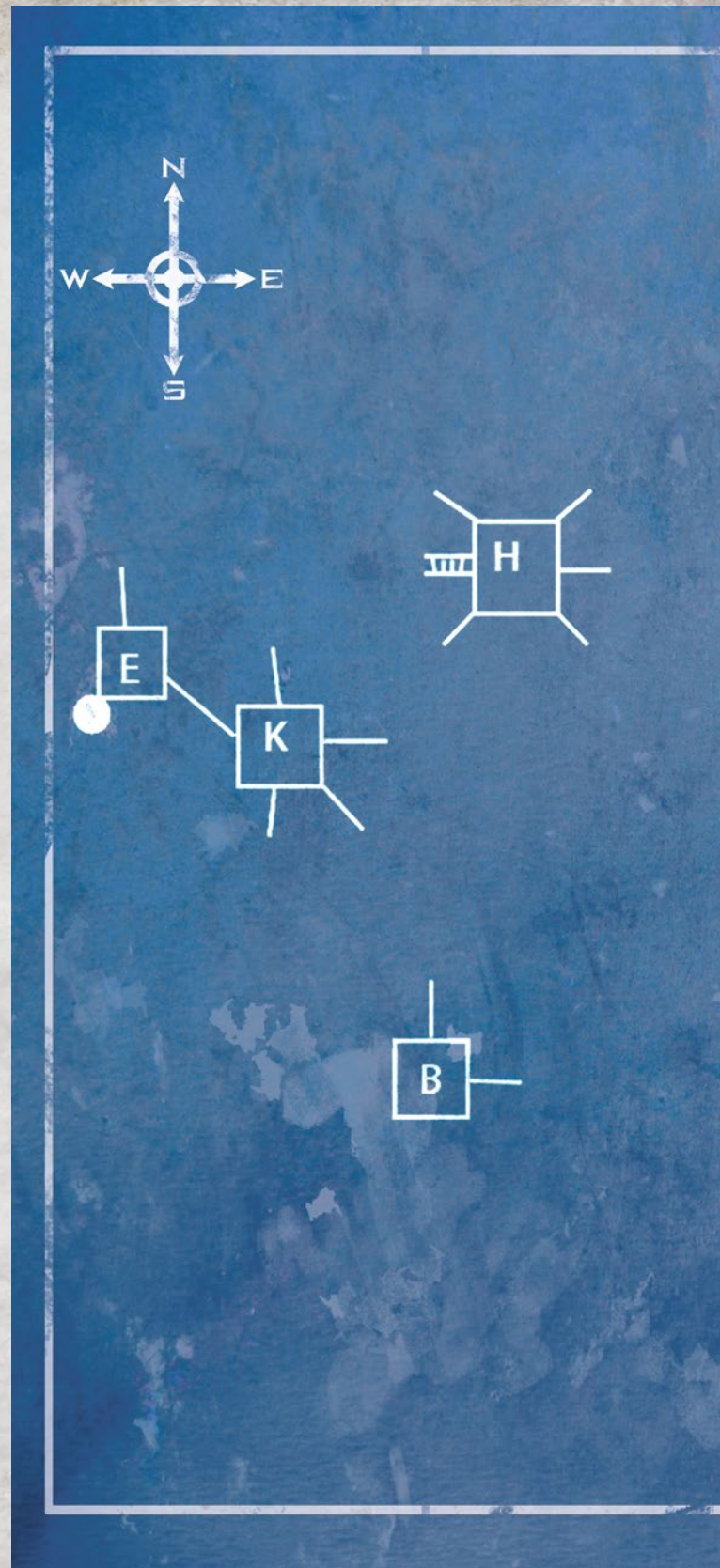
E) THE SECOND PORTAL OF ALGEROTH: This is the final portal that the Tempted created and it is still being used. Algeroth's forces are still streaming through the portal ready to join the battle. The portal is located in the basement of one of the earliest of Venus' skyscrapers. That building is long-forgotten, but the Tempted decided the infrastructure would be an excellent launch pad for one of his attacks.

The basement room is fifty by twenty five metres, and ten metres high. There are two tunnels leading from the room, carrying the Dark Legion to other parts of the city, and they have created another helical ramp that leads directly to the surface. This portal is on the other side of the city to the other Algeroth one, making a two-pronged attack on the city.


The structure of the portal is created from the very corpses of the human sacrifices that powered its opening. All the Shadow Sentinels that the Tempted could spare are arranged in a circle, lying on the concrete floor of this basement. The space the bodies, blood, and entrails describe on the floor is now a shimmering electric blue pool of whirling energy.

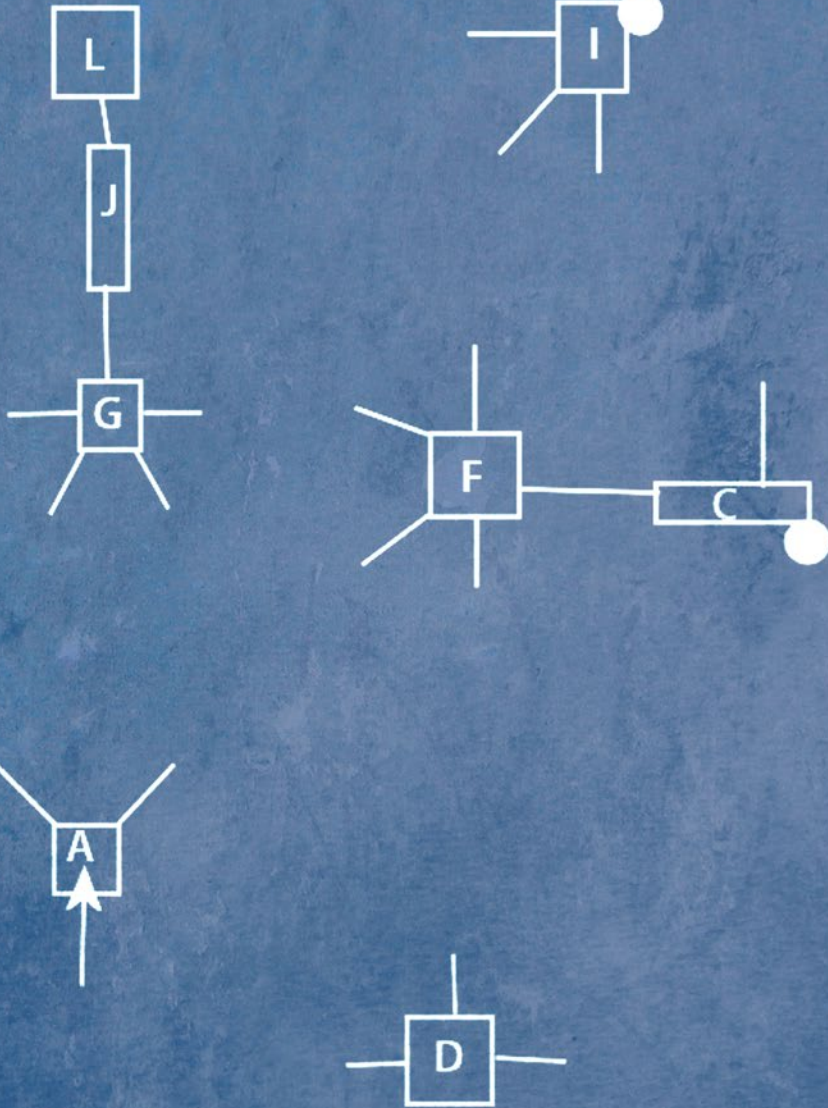
The portal is in regular use and the basement is a hive of chattering activity. Every few minutes a squad of Legionnaires emerges from the portal into the chamber heading for the tunnels or the helical shaft. A Nephrite of Algeroth (page 301 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core rulebook) is present, overseeing the advent of the troops and assigning them to their stations.

In the tunnels approaching the basement there are a number of alcoves or piles of rubble to hide behind. As the players approach this area, the sights and sounds of the busy landing area should be apparent, and the movement of troops past them will make it clear that the place is heavily defended. It should be quite plain to any observing players that this area is crawling with far too many of the Dark Legion to be safe for them.



MASTER MAP

-  Tunnel
-  Location
-  Helical Shaft
-  Stairs



- A- Safe House Alpha
- B- Portal of Demnogonis
- C- First Portal of Algeroth
- D- Portal of Semai
- E- Second Portal of Algeroth
- F- Staging Area
- G- Supply Depot
- H- Communications Centre
- I- Jamming Equipment
- J- Dark Spawn Pen
- K- The Lost Battalion
- L- Below the Cathedral

OTHER LOCATIONS

F) STAGING AREA: The staging area is a veritable warren of tunnels and underground chambers which, hundreds of years ago, used to be a jungle themed retail development and leisure park. Artificial trees and concrete statues of Looter Monkeys and Devilcats abound. It is now approximately beneath the central business district of the city.

The network affords good connections with nearly all the fronts of the battle and plenty of room for the Dark Legion. Most of the forces have already been dispatched but there is still a good number remaining. Most of these are Undead Legionnaires.

The network is such a warren, and the activity so chaotic, that it is possible for a disguised or suitably sneaky group to pass through here undiscovered. They might even be able to waylay some of the enemy troopers without being detected, if they are careful.

The command post in the middle of this area features a map of all the current troop movements and the planned attack strategies. This could prove invaluable to the defence of Heimbург if it could somehow be liberated or copied. It also marks the movement of the excessive amounts of high explosives to the area beneath the cathedral as a priority strategy.

This map shows clearly where each of the underground areas correspond to on the surface, information that the players are probably not able to guess at given the poor quality of the maps they are likely to have found so far. Therefore, if they get to study this master map, it will be very clear to them that massive amounts of high explosives are being moved beneath the cathedral.

G) SUPPLY DEPOT: This is the main supply depot that the Tempted has been stocking for weeks with Bauhaus and Brotherhood supplies intended for the Shadow Sentinels, including some of the explosives that the Tempted plans to blow up the cathedral with. It is also used for supplies from Algoth's citadels that have been brought in since the portals were opened, before becoming forgotten.

The area is a vast, underground, reinforced vault. It has been used as a cistern and also a supply depot amongst many other things over the years. The floor is quite uneven and it holds water well, so the actual usable floor space of the chamber is split into dozens of small islands, all surrounded by shallow pools, up to about a metre deep. All the supplies were stacked on the islands. Five tunnels lead into the depot.

The vast majority of the supplies that were here have been taken. The ones that remain are probably just forgotten about or not required. The players, if they get the run of the chamber, will be able to stock up with pretty much whatever hardware they fancy.

There is a Horde of five Undead Legionnaires guarding the place, but they have been brought off the front line because they are heavily injured and so essentially are just recuperating here and not expecting intruders—see page 303 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook for their stats, but reduce them to two Wounds each.

If the players root around in here, a **Challenging (D2) Observation test** will let them find a discarded map that some of the Legionnaires in charge of carrying the explosives to the cathedral area managed to lose. This will bring anyone following it straight from the supply depot to the cathedral area.

H) COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE: The communications centre is located in an abandoned cistern about thirty metres square and ten metres deep. There are six ways in, which, apart from stairs leading to an inspection area, are all clean, level aqueducts. These are of course independent of the sewer system. Sound seems to carry forever down these long, straight tunnels and echo around interminably.

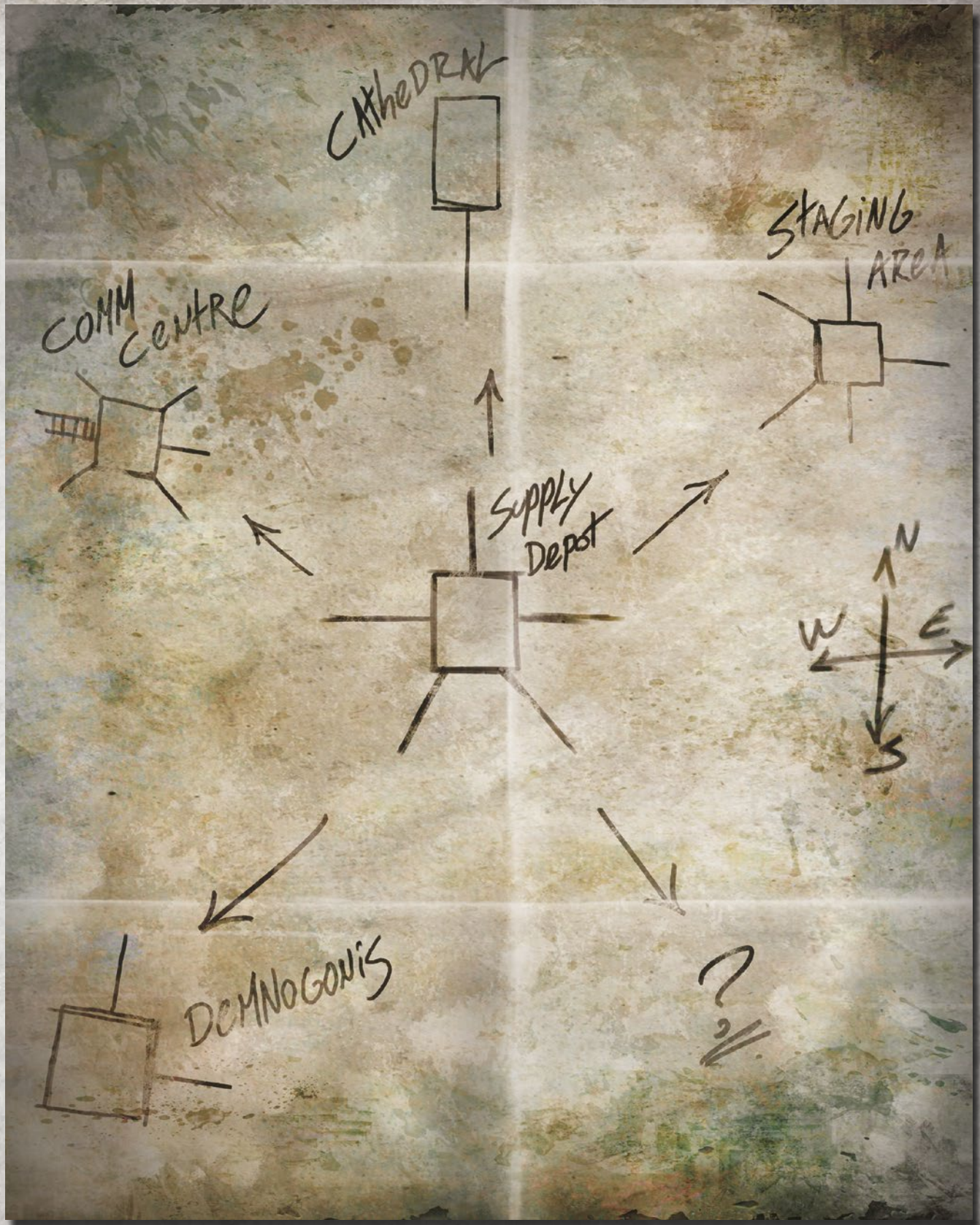
The chamber is full of communications equipment, much of it supplied to the Shadow Sentinels, some of it scavenged from other Heimbург sources, and the rest: necrotechnology. It is manned by Legionnaires, Children of Ilian and some human Heretics. The place is commanded by a Nepharite of Algoth and his single Centurion guard. The chamber is crowded and busy but well lit, and it would be very difficult to infiltrate. The best the players might do is watch from a distance from the relative safety of one of the high aqueducts.

From here, the Dark Legion is coordinating its troops throughout the city. It is using a special necrotechnological system that communicates directly through the Dark Symmetry and which cannot be detected or blocked by the Brotherhood's equipment.

In the centre of the chamber is a table on which is a massive scale map of the entire city of Heimburg, remarkable in its detail. Superimposed upon it is also a plan of the sewer system. The map is littered with tokens and arrows representing the various friendly and enemy forces. They are using it to coordinate all the Dark Legion forces above and below ground.

If the players could get a representation of this map, it would be a massive help to the Brotherhood forces and also to their own efforts navigating the sewer system. Simply by looking at the map and making a **Daunting (D3) Observation test** a player will realise there is a lot of interest in and priority given to an explosives equipped unit that is heading directly for the cathedral.

Although the room is so busy that the players would seem to have little hope of taking it, if they were to somehow work out a way of sabotaging the communications equipment or disrupting the strategic planning, then that would certainly strike a handy blow against the Dark Legion.



I) JAMMING EQUIPMENT: This chamber is located directly underneath Heimbürg's largest and most powerful transmitter. It is quite close to the surface, only about twenty meters beneath the tower's maintenance room. The structure, which measures about ten by fifteen metres, used to be a cellar of a villa that was torn down to make way for the tower, and then forgotten. Apart from the shaft to the surface, there are three entrances into the chamber.

The room is full to the brim of necrotechnological equipment and cables. The cables run up into the centre of the ceiling and through a narrow shaft that leads to the surface. The shaft has a metal helical staircase running up its entire length. The cables continue on to the tower, running their way up practically to the top of it. These cables act as an aerial for a powerful jamming signal that is designed to cut out all of the Heimbürgers' communications.

This was one of the first elements constructed when the battle began, and is considered vital to the Tempted's plan. The Dark Legion has set up a number of field defences and anti-aircraft batteries around the site. The tower is one of the few of the Dark Legion's defended positions on the surface; most of its tactics involve mobility and scorched earth.

The Undead Legionnaires defending the tower are currently in a pitched battle with Bauhaus Hussars. The Hussars' victory is inevitable but the Legionnaires are playing for time, sacrificing themselves doggedly so that the tower stays functional for as long as possible.

While the surface defences are well manned, the chamber itself holds only a Tekron and half a dozen Legionnaire technicians that will act independently. They are busying themselves with their equipment checks and are unlikely to spot careful players. Although it is obvious that this equipment is important, it would require a **Daunting (D3) Intelligence test** for a player to work out its exact nature simply by observation.

Should the jamming equipment be put out of commission, then that would greatly help the Brotherhood and Bauhaus forces to coordinate the defence of the city and bring the insurrection to a halt much sooner than they might otherwise. The equipment is quite fragile and an intense firefight in the confined space is likely to damage it greatly. Simply cutting all the cables would be enough to stop the jamming signal and this would take some time to repair. While the Tekron survives, however, any required repairs would be made much more efficiently.



TEKRON ☉

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
12		11		14		14 (+2)	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
14		14 (+2)		17		10	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	-	5	5

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 4
- ◀ Arms 5
- ◀ Serious Wounds 7
- ◀ Mental Wounds 17
- ▶ Torso 9
- ▶ Legs 7
- ▶ Critical Wounds 4

SOAK: Necrotechnological Armour: (Head 4, Torso 6, Arms 5, Legs 5)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Necrobionic Claw (melee):** 2+ \uparrow 7, 1H, Armour Piercing 2, Backlash 1, Vicious 2
- ◀ **Necrotendril (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 6, Spread 1, Toxic 3

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Dark Presence**
- ◀ **Fast Healing (2)**
- ◀ **Fear (1)**
- ◀ **Inured to Cold**
- ◀ **Inured to Disease**
- ◀ **Inured to Pain**
- ◀ **Inured to Poison**
- ◀ **Inured to Vacuum**
- ◀ **Master of Dark Technology:** A Tekron can understand the function and operation of any machine simply by handling it and inspecting it for a minute, and attempting a Daunting D3 Sciences test. The GM may increase the difficulty of this test for particularly complex devices.
- ◀ **Necrotechnological Implants:** Tekrons are subjects of their own experiments, and they are filled with a variety of implants and necrobionics of their own creation. All Tekrons have the Eternal Life implants and Neural Conduit necrobionic. All the other implants are reflected by the Tekron's attributes and special abilities.
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Personal Dark Symmetry (5)**
- ◀ **Slave to Symmetry (1)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Awareness (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Intelligence (2)**

- ◆ **Weakness of Flesh:** The Tekron is a mixture of corrupted flesh and necrotechnology, and while the technology is resistant to most forms of damage, the flesh is not. Any creature that makes an attack against a Tekron may spend two Momentum to count its Armour Soak as half (rounding down) the listed value.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Creature of Symmetry:** Tekrons are powerful servants of Algeroth, gifted with great power to serve their dark master better. A Tekron knows the following Dark Gifts: Corrupt Device, Sense Weaves of Power, Black Fire, Distorted Armour, Vile Cloud, Aura of Absorption, Flow of Death, and Invincible Army
- ◆ **Necrotendril Onslaught:** When a Tekron makes a close combat attack, it may spend one, two, or three Dark Symmetry points in order to make one, two, or three Necrotendril attacks in addition to its normal attack.
- ◆ **Necrotic Conversion:** Whenever a creature is slain by a Tekron's Necrotendril attack (including the attack's Toxic 3 quality), it may spend a Dark Symmetry point to cause that creature to rise as an Undead Legionnaire.

J) DARK SPAWN PEN: The pen is simply a four metre wide section of sewer tunnel cut off at both ends by metal bars and padlocked gates. It requires a **Daunting (D3) Thievery test** to open the lock. The Tempted has the key. The pen is entirely unlit, and within it lurks a creature of such darkness and malevolence that even the Dark Legion is loathe to employ these beasts in its armies.

The Dark Spawn is a creature of no substance except darkness. It can change its shape to almost any form, but usually appears as a mass of flailing tentacles. It also likes to mimic the human form. It usually has the rough size of an average human, though it can spread itself much thinner. The metal bars are not to keep the Dark Spawn in, but rather to stop the humans whom the Tempted regularly feeds it from running away. The creature will not leave the pen, however, unless instructed by the Tempted.

The Tempted summoned the creature from the Great Darkness to serve him. It exists simply to destroy all beings of the Light, especially humans. The creature is even dangerous to the Dark Legion as it is so hungry for human flesh that anything remotely humanoid is often a target for its voracious appetite. However, one of the secrets the Tempted inherited from the Dark Temptor was a rite for binding and controlling the creature.

Summoning the creature was one of the first acts of the Tempted when he arrived in Heimburg. Since then he has been feeding it humans and experimenting with it. He has enhanced the creature using various necrotechnological techniques, and now it possesses a rudimentary intelligence. The Tempted had no real plan of what to do with the creature and treats it more like a toy or pet, but it is handily located in a position to guard the way to the cathedral.

In the middle of the pen is a black coffin-shaped trough, which has an array of pipes and tubes and other apparatus around it that seems to be delivering a blue fluid to the trough. The trough, however, has been licked clean. When there are no human victims to feed the Dark Spawn then this device delivers a substance that keeps it alive.

The pen is littered with the bones and clothing of those the Tempted has sacrificed to the Dark Spawn. There are the remains of over one hundred victims.

DARK SPAWN ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
13	17 (+1)	10	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	3	12	9

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

WOUNDS: 10

SOAK: Special: (see below)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Lashing Tentacles (melee):** 2+[↑]6, Armour Piercing 2, Dreadful

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Creature of Darkness and Shadow:** The Dark Spawn is a beast of inhuman malevolence whose only apparent function is to devour creatures of the Light. Formed purely from the energies that roil through the Great Darkness, it is completely impervious to mundane weaponry. Damage from any attacks that do not have the Pious, Incendiary, or Torrent quality is reduced to zero. Attacks that possess the Pious or Incendiary quality inflict damage equal to the Pious or Incendiary rating for each Dark Symmetry Icon generated—all other damage from the strike is reduced to zero. Attacks that possess the Torrent quality deal damage normally. The creature cannot gain the Burning status effect, however. Spells of the Art that cause damage are unaffected by the Dark Spawn's ability. A high-intensity light source (100W/1600 lumens or more) or UV light can be used as a ranged attack within Close range against the Dark Spawn and will deal a minimum of 1+[↑]4 damage with the Spread 1 quality, possibly more dependent upon the strength of the light source. Stun grenades are considered to be anti-personnel grenades when used against this creature. A Dark Spawn receives two additional d20 to Stealth tests made within areas of darkness or shadow, both of which are placed on the '1' face (which nets

the creature four successes in total before dice are rolled). The Secondary Target Combat Momentum spend costs the Dark Spawn one Momentum to employ, instead of two.

- ◀ **Dark Presence**
- ◀ **Fear (2)**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Inured to Cold**
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Slave to Symmetry (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Physique (1)**
- ◀ **Unliving**

K) THE LOST BATTALION: This area is another staging area, similar to the one described in (F) above. It was intended to be used as a launch pad for the Dark Legion to attack the nearby areas of the city. However this one is devoid of Dark Legion troops. They have all been destroyed by the Lost Battalion.

The area is a maze of many sewers and tunnels suitable for holding the required number of troopers, but the network is littered with the bodies of hundreds of the Lost Battalion and about half that number in Undead Legionnaires and other Dark Legion troops.

As they approach the area, the players will encounter the Lost Battalion, which is securing its perimeter against any counter attack by the Dark Legion. In the confusion of the half-light and the narrow, twisting tunnels, it is quite likely the players could mistake the Lost Battalion for the Dark Legion, or the Lost Battalion could similarly mistake the players. If the players are disguised as Dark Legion, then this will be almost certain.

The Lost Battalion is a force of down-and-outs: homeless ex-soldiers who live on the streets or in the underground sections of the city. Many of them are mentally unstable and still disturbed by old conflicts. They are not any conventional military unit, but more a network of old soldiers who try to help each other out when they can.

The Lost Battalion was the first to realise something was amiss. When the Dark Legion began its march through the sewers, the Battalion came together as a ragtag army to fight the Darkness using old weapons, makeshift implements, and captured guns. Its lack of equipment is made up for by its members' ruthlessness, experience, and desperation. They have killed all the Dark Legion, including a Nephrite, who were still in the staging area and are now securing the perimeter, especially the tunnels that lead up to the surface where the Black legion are not far away. More than half their number died in the fighting, but they are still prepared to fight on.

If the players do realise that the troops here are on their side then they should be able to calm the situation down and sort out some sort of parley. The Lost Battalion's leader is called William McKinney. He was a Capitol soldier who got shot in the hand many years

ago and was tried for cowardice. He lived rough in the sewers of Heimburg for a number of years. If the players manage to gain his trust then he can be a useful ally.

McKinney noticed the Tempted surveying the tunnels on a number of occasions. He was intrigued by his strange behaviour and suspected something was wrong. He made a point of tracking the Tempted through the sewers whenever he could, and so knows a lot about the sewers and the areas that particularly interested the Tempted. It was thanks to his suspicions of the Tempted and the early warning this gave him, that McKinney was able to coordinate the actions of the Lost Battalion so promptly and it was able to act so effectively.

If the players mention the Tempted, then McKinney will be prepared to share what he knows. McKinney can tell the players about his 'dark guard' that he keeps in the tunnels and feeds humans, and also that he seems to have spent most of his time excavating tunnels that lead towards the cathedral. He will say that if the players really want to get hold of the Tempted then his hunch is that he will be somewhere around there.

The Lost Battalion needs to secure its defences against what he feels is an inevitable Dark Legion counter attack, so McKinney has no need to go to the cathedral and does not want to lend the players any of his men. He might be persuaded to spare a single guide if the players are desperate, however, on a **Challenging (D2) Persuade test**. If the players have not got hold of a decent map yet, then McKinney has retrieved one from the Nephrite the Lost Battalion killed. The players will be allowed to copy down any information they need from this.

Whatever help the players and the Lost battalion can give each other, the meeting should be short and to the point because they are all in the midst of a pitched battle and there is no time for idle chat.

WILLIAM MCKINNEY ★

ATTRIBUTES

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Scavenged Combat Armour: (Head 1, Arms 2, Torso 2, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Light Flamer (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 6, Munition, 2H, Incendiary 2, Torrent
- ▶ **M50 Assault Rifle (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 6, Burst, 2H
- ▶ **M509 Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Range M, Munition, As Grenade
- ▶ **Dagger (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Down, But Definitely Not Out:** Service in the military, subsequently followed by several years living under the streets of Heimburg, have toughened William considerably. He may re-roll up to two damage dice following a ranged attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, he reduces the range penalty for firing at a range other than the weapon's optimal range by one step, to a minimum of zero. Further, he may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new result.

Finally, when someone triggers an effect that would require a Resistance test to avoid a status condition, the difficulty of the Resistance test to resist the negative effects is reduced by one step. This may reduce the difficulty to zero, removing the need for a test.

- ▶ **More Than One Side to Heimburg:** William has made the sewers his home; he knows how to survive and thrive amongst other people's detritus. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Stealth or Survival test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he may reduce the Restriction value when attempting to acquire an item by up to two, to a minimum of one.
- ▶ **Tough Nut to Crack:** McKinney's dismissal from the AFFC and frequent bouts of solitude have left him untrusting of his fellow man. Increase the Repercussion of all Command or Persuade tests made against him by two. This ability ends once the GM has deemed that his trust has been earned.



McKinney and the Lost Battalion: taking back the sewers one tunnel at a time.

LOST BATTALION TROOPER ▲

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

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

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: **Mismatched Armour Pieces:** (All 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **CAR-24 Close Assault Rifle (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑5, Burst, 2H
- ◀ **GL-240 Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Range M, Munition, As Grenade
- ◀ **Dagger (melee):** 1+↑3, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Grizzled and Discarded Veterans:** The Lost Battalion is formed entirely of ex-military personnel who have dropped off the grid and made the sewers their home. They may re-roll one damage dice following a ranged attack, but must accept the new result. Additionally, they may re-roll one d20 when making a Survival test, but must accept the new result. Finally, any time they are transiting through the sewers, they may make an Average D1 Survival test. On success, they are able to avoid all implicit dangers—possibly avoiding dangerous encounters. Each point of Momentum may be spent to protect one of their allies from these same risks.
- ◀ **Tunnel Fighters:** Despite their ill-disciplined appearance, the Lost Battalion's members have spent years honing their ability to protect their home. They ignore all effects for moving through difficult terrain within the sewer environs, though this does not include hazardous terrain. Further, they gain one additional d20 to their Stealth test when attempting to ambush an enemy within the sewers.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Scarred by War:** All of the vets bear some form of scar, either physical, mental, or both. At the start of each round of combat, the GM should make an Average D1 Willpower test for the members of the Lost Battalion. If successful, they may act normally. On a failure, the memories of the horrors of war have resurfaced; the GM should roll one d6 and consult the Mental Trauma table (see page ref needed) to determine how this has

affected the Lost Battalion. This status effect will continue each round until the Average D1 Willpower test has again been passed. The characters may end this effect themselves by paying one Dark Symmetry point and succeeding at an Average D1 Command test. Each point of Momentum generated on this test may be used to prevent the need for a Willpower test for one round.

L) BELOW THE CATHEDRAL: The area being used under the cathedral is just a few ancient sewers. These need to be packed with explosives if the Tempted is to destroy the cathedral. The area covers about one hundred by fifty metres, and these are the sewers that were largely forgotten when most of the ground works were filled in during the construction of the cathedral. The Tempted found them on ancient blueprints and maps. He explored them alone, unable to excavate any decent-sized way into the area, or bring anyone with him for fear the Brotherhood might detect them.

Because of the power of the Art being used in the cathedral to detect incursions upon its sanctity, the Tempted was not able to do any excavating until the diversionary attack upon Daniel Airbase began. This meant the Tempted had to drill an access shaft into the remaining tunnels under the cathedral and fill them with explosives all during this short window of less than twelve hours. The location of this access shaft is marked on most of the better Dark Legion maps.

Because of the limited size of the tunnels under the cathedral they have to be virtually filled with explosives if the cathedral is to be totally destroyed. This means a lot of urgent work for the Tempted's Legionnaire demolition teams. The cramped work area also means very few Legionnaires are able to work on the excavation and demolition preparation at any one time. The operation has been a well-planned and meticulously executed one: impressive enough in its own perverse way.

The Legionnaires work incessantly to transport all the explosives, and they should be approaching the end of their labours as the players reach the area. If the players have done well, followed clues quickly, and made clever deductions, then they can be rewarded by arriving at the site before all the explosives are in place and before the detonation system is ready. Conversely, if they have been slow and dull, then they might arrive when all is ready and the button just needs to be pressed. This will make things a lot more difficult for them.

If the players are still wandering around a completely different part of the sewers, or having coffee in a diner in central Heimburg when dawn breaks, then the cathedral will be blown to pieces and utterly destroyed. On the bright side, it will be difficult for the Brotherhood to work out that this is effectively all the players' fault.

Assuming the players arrive in good time, a number of Legionnaires are still carrying the packs of explosives towards the demolition

site. Many others are fiddling around with the necrotechnological detonation system. Each of the explosive packs has to be wired into the network and timed specifically to its location. An explosion starting around the edges of the area and momentarily delayed as the centre of the area is approached will focus the blast upwards towards the cathedral and do more damage.

It will still be a few minutes before they are ready to activate the detonator. The Legionnaires will radio the Tempted to tell him when they are done. They believe they will be given twenty minutes to clear the area once their task is complete, but the Tempted is not going to risk wasting that much time. As soon as the job is done and the detonator is ready, the Tempted is going to detonate immediately, killing them all instantly. The detonation is detected and sequenced through a receiver located near the centre of the site. As soon as it is activated and receives the signal, that will be that. The players will need to destroy the detonator before it is activated to stop the explosion.

It is easy enough to spot the detonator and work out its function. It is a bright red box about fifty centimetres cubed on the floor of the largest chamber at the centre of the demolition site. There is a wire running from the box to each of the hundreds of explosives packs. There are two large levers on the top of the box. Both these levers need to be thrown simultaneously in order to activate the detonator. If the detonation signal is received by the activated detonator, then all the explosives will be detonated. If the levers are thrown back, simultaneously, before the detonation signal is detected, then that will stop any detonation. If the box is destroyed before it is activated, that will stop a detonation. If it is destroyed after it is activated, then that will cause a detonation.

There are only fifteen Legionnaires here now, operating in three separate Hordes. They only carry Voriche hand guns, as they were not expecting trouble and space is at a premium. If the players have not encountered the Dark Spawn yet, then that can be here, too, told by the Tempted to protect the Legionnaires.

The Legionnaires are in radio contact with the Tempted and will tell him if the players turn up. This means that there will be a few radios lying around once the combat is over. The players will be able to talk to the Tempted on the radio, if they wish. The Tempted will attempt to convince the players to activate the detonator. He has the ability to turn weak minds in such a manner, but he has no real power over the players (after all, they have already resisted the Dark Temptor).

It might make an interesting conversation to have Tempted going over all the plot details and nuances that the players did not understand and clear up any queries they have, while being utterly livid at their continual interference. The Tempted will be using this conversation to keep the players occupied while he rushes to the demolition site in order to exact his revenge upon them once and for all.

The Tempted will make it clear that he is coming to the cathedral area and that when he gets there he will destroy each and every one of the players, and then blow up the cathedral with his own bare hands.

THE RETURN OF THE TEMPTED

The Tempted is about ten minutes away from the cathedral tunnels by trike. He was planning to detonate the explosives and then head to a small airfield on the edge of the city to make his escape to the jungle, where he was to join the Dark Legion assault upon the black pyramid. This plan could still go ahead, but it is more likely now they he will die under Heimburg.

The Tempted will rush to the cathedral area to see if he can work out a way to detonate the explosives. He is so desperate now that he would be prepared to detonate them by hand, killing himself in the explosion, if it means the destruction of the cathedral.

Therefore, the players will need to make sure there is no way to do this. Either they need to keep the demolition area under their control against an onslaught by the Tempted and whatever troops he can muster, or they need to make the explosives completely safe. They should probably attempt to do both.

It requires a **Challenging (D2) Mechanics test** and five minutes to put the Detonator out of action permanently (or two minutes to put beyond immediate repair) without leaving any outward sign on the equipment. Or, if the players want to do this less subtly, they can shoot it or blow it up with whatever weapons they have to hand. Unfortunately for them, a reasonably big explosion in the area will be enough to set off all the other explosives in a chaotic chain. This will not be as effective as using the detonator that is designed to cause an explosion that will affect the cathedral specifically, but it will be enough to damage the cathedral a great deal.

The best way to ensure there will be no explosion is to remove the explosives from the area, but that will take dozens of man-hours and the Tempted is turning up in about ten minutes. The only way to reasonably ensure that there will be no explosion is to neutralise the detonator and then stop the Tempted's attack.

REINFORCEMENTS

The players might decide they need reinforcements to help them against the return of the Tempted. If they have destroyed the jamming equipment in the jamming room then they will be able to radio for help. There are not too many forces available, as there is a battle raging above their heads, but if they are convincing and talk to the right people then they might be able to get a Doomtrooper reserve squad to their aid, from the cathedral.



Sunrise on a devastated Heimburg.

VENUSIAN APOCALYPSE PART 03

Or they may have time to seek out the Lost Battalion and insist it comes to their aid. If they manage to find him and explain exactly what is happening, then McKinney will agree to this and bring every spare trooper to the aid of the players.

THE TEMPTED'S FORCE

The destruction of the cathedral was always going to be one of the later actions in the battle for Heimbürg. The Tempted timed his attacks to distract the Brotherhood as much as possible and he considered his entire force to be expendable. Therefore by this stage, even if things went well for it, the Dark Legion is all but destroyed. Survivors are retreating back to the sewers or making their last stands in various pockets throughout the city.

The GM can decide what sort of force the Tempted has been able to cobble together to go back into the sewers. He should consider that the Tempted was intending to blow up the cathedral and then flee to the jungle in a small aircraft and had no need for any troops except a small bodyguard. Therefore, whatever troops he does bring to the sewers under the cathedral are simply what he managed to find during his rush to get there. The GM should select a force that he feels should test the players.

The Tempted's force is likely to include mostly Undead Legionnaires, which are the most common troop type in the battle. They may be commanded by a Nephariote of Algeroth. If the Tempted hopes to repair the detonator and stick to the plan of remotely detonating the explosives, then he would be wise to bring a Tekron with him. To add killing power, these can be bolstered by Ezoghoul or Razides. With the Tempted's great knowledge of the sewers, a good tactic might be to employ a small force of Callistonian Intruders to sneak into the area from one direction while the rest of the force tries a more direct attack from another.

The players should be aware that this is their last stand. If they can resist this last throw of the dice by the Tempted then they will be the clear victors. Their relationship with the Tempted should be personal, as they have interacted throughout this campaign and have a lot of history. There should be fear and loathing on both sides. The GM should ensure that this finale is a fitting climax to this part of the adventure, and that the Tempted shows what a worthy adversary he has been throughout the campaign.

AFTERMATH

The city could be in a number of states once the dust has settled on this battle. Without a doubt, Heimbürg will be ravaged and severely damaged. Tens of thousands will have died. Very few districts will have been left untouched by the battle; many will have been

damaged beyond recognition.

Many of the Dark Legion attacks were targeted at infrastructure, especially power and water, and these will not be fully restored for many weeks. Tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands will end up homeless. This could bring trouble for the authorities in the coming weeks unless they deal with the problem effectively.

The military has fared well enough. It managed to beat back the attacks but the fighting was desperate and it will have taken heavy losses. Troops were pulled from the jungles around the black pyramid to reinforce the Heimbürg defences. This will have significant implications over the coming days.

The state of the cathedral will depend on how the players fared. If they did well, then it could be virtually untouched; the Dark Legion deliberately avoided attacking the cathedral as part of the plan to draw the Brotherhood's defences away. If the players failed at the first part of this adventure, then the cathedral will be seriously damaged. If they failed at the finale, then it will be completely destroyed.

One consolation for the Brotherhood will be that having faced the Dark Legion close-up on its own streets, its terrible nature will be made clear to the people. This will result in a turn towards the Brotherhood. Almost immediately the people will become much more devout and their faith in the Brotherhood will rise. The Brotherhood will be inundated with recruits and volunteers who see it as the only possible answer in the face of such an appalling enemy.

THE NAME OF THE BEAST

Even as this part of the campaign ends, moves are afoot that will bring an even greater danger to the people of Venus. The attack upon Heimbürg dragged troops away from the jungle and the defence of the black pyramid. As the Brotherhood look to Heimbürg, it does not see the massive forces building in the jungle and the sudden attack to seize the black pyramid.

It will soon become clear that the black pyramid's fall into the Dark Legion's hands is inevitable. There is no way that the pyramid can be destroyed. The Dark Temptor, trapped within the pyramid must be faced and destroyed before the Dark Legion can set it free. The problem is, the Dark Temptor's powers means that no one can be trusted to face the Dark Temptor and not fall to the Dark Soul.

No one can enter the black pyramid and be sure to stay loyal to the Brotherhood: no one, that is, except those who may have faced the Dark Temptor before and kept their minds. And no one has actually done that, except the players. This will all come to pass in part four of the Venusian Apocalypse campaign, **The Name of the Beast**.



THE NAME OF THE BEAST

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

This is the fourth part of the Venusian Apocalypse campaign. The first part, The Second Seal of Repulsion, saw the players journey to a mysterious black pyramid in the heart of the Venusian jungle where their expedition inadvertently released a powerful, malevolent force from its prison. Some of their expedition would have been corrupted by this force and become the Tempted.

The second part of the campaign, The Four Riders, detailed a plot by the Tempted to bring a devastating plague down upon the city of Heimburg. The players were manipulated into stealing the plague disc from a Heimburg museum. But if they did well they would have managed to stop the ritual that releases the plague.

In the third part, Beyond the Pale, the Tempted unleashed the Dark Legion upon Heimburg in an attempt to destroy the Cathedral of Heimburg. Whether he succeeded or not, the city was left in a state of terror and chaos.



Heimburg cathedral is now swathed in smoke from the fires.

In The Name of the Beast the players are required to go back to the black pyramid and finish what they started. They need to defeat the Dark Temptor once and for all before the Dark Legion can release him from the pyramid. As they have already faced the Dark Temptor and kept their minds, they are the only choice for this mission.

THE MORNING AFTER

This adventure will assume that both attacks on the Cathedral of Heimburg in Beyond the Pale failed. If they did not, then the adventure will run similarly, but Heimburg will be in an even worse state, and so will the Brotherhood. Everything will be worse for humanity, and better for the Dark Legion. Everything will be more difficult for the players. The people will be more desperate and more fearful, and the Brotherhood more stretched, yet more determined. But even if the cathedral is still standing, things will be bad enough. The GM should show the repercussions of the destruction or damage to the cathedral by making everything that little bit harder. And it will have been the players' own fault.

After the Tempted's attack on Heimburg, the city will be devastated. Almost every area will have been affected. Some districts are almost entirely destroyed, having been the focus of desperate fighting by two sides oblivious to the collateral damage.

The people in general will be grateful to the brotherhood, the Bauhaus army, and whatever other factions helped with the defence of Heimburg. Whatever damage they failed to prevent, however much they left their city undefended, and no matter how much collateral damage they caused, the people will know that their fate would have been unspeakably worse with a Dark Legion victory.

The events, too, will throw people closer to the Brotherhood. The Dark Legion is no longer a distant enemy from news reports and stories. They will have witnessed up close the very visceral threat of the Dark Symmetry and they will now understand much more deeply how important the Brotherhood is. No one can now underestimate how close they actually are to damnation and how vital the Brotherhood is to their salvation. That is not to say some individuals will not harbour resentment and ill feeling towards the authorities. While most flock to the Brotherhood, the disaster that has befallen Heimbürg will push some towards heresy.

DEFEAT IN THE JUNGLE

The chaos in Heimbürg corresponded to a massive attack on the black pyramid in the southern jungles of Venus. With the Brotherhood looking the other way, concentrating on its own cathedral, the attack by the Dark Legion was remarkably successful and its capture of the black pyramid is looking increasingly likely. As the next couple of days pass, this prospect should become a desperate inevitability.

The GM should pitch this conflict in the context of the players' success in the battle for Heimbürg. If the cathedral was damaged, then that is why the Dark Legion has been successful in the jungle and it must be the players' fault. If the cathedral was destroyed, then that is obviously why the Dark Legion was able to get the ascendancy in the jungle, and the players must be at least partially to blame.

If the cathedral was undamaged and the Dark Legion repulsed effectively, and there is no plague ravaging Heimbürg, then all that is to the players' credit. But that is because the Dark Legion was merely using the attacks on Heimbürg as a diversion while its main aim was to win the war in the jungle. And now the capture of the black pyramid is only a matter of days away.

WHAT BECAME OF THE TEMPTED?

It is likely that the Tempted perished at the players' hands during the climax to *Beyond the Pale*. If he somehow survived, then the GM can keep him to use again outside of the campaign described here. Or he can insert him into this adventure. Perhaps he leads the force that tries to assassinate the players at Chateau Renauld, or perhaps he finds his way back to the black pyramid and he can have his destined showdown with the players there.

It is likely, however, that the Tempted's cover is blown and there is no way he will be able to continue his machinations inside the Brotherhood, or in Heimbürg. If there is a Tempted who remains undiscovered, and whom the players might still trust, then he will be perfect to entice the players into the ambush in the next part of this adventure.

PART ONE: OUR ONLY HOPE

OVERVIEW

In this part, the Brotherhood contacts the players and proposes that they travel to the jungle and enter the black pyramid once more. It will explain that faced with the insidious influence of the Dark Temptor, the players are really the Brotherhood's only hope.

The players are also contacted by Jean-Louis Renauld, who will try to convince them to come to Chateau Renauld, despite him having tried to kill them in the past. Renauld knows more about the situation than the Brotherhood, and if he deems the players trustworthy he will give them vital help.

Aware that the players are the Brotherhood's new champions, the Dark Soul wishes to put an end to their threat as soon as possible. A makeshift assassination squad is assembled in Heimbürg, and if that fails, a Dark Legion assassination squad is dispatched to Chateau Renauld to kill the players there and put an end to their mission before it can even begin.

AMBUSH

The players are appearing ever increasingly on the Dark Soul's radar. Through its spies it knows that the Brotherhood is settling on the notion that one of the players is the prophesied hero who will slay the Dark Temptor. It knows that the Brotherhood is preparing to bring them to the pyramid, and it wishes to put an end to this plan immediately.

As the battle for Heimbürg began to turn against the Dark Soul, some of the Heretics and other sympathisers were ordered, through the tortuous system of influence and command the Dark Soul has established in the city, to retreat from battle. The Heretics returned to their lairs beneath the city and their other hideouts, while other sympathisers returned to their normal lives. They were prepared to rise up again at some point in the future, but the Dark Soul is calling on them to do its bidding straight away.

THE SET UP

The GM should organise some sort of meeting with the players. This should preferably be called by someone in authority whom the players already know. This does not need to be someone in thrall to the Dark Soul, it can be someone taking orders from someone taking orders from someone else, etc. The point is, the Dark Soul will use its influence to get the players into a location where they might be vulnerable.

If there is someone left on the Dark Soul's side that the players are still unaware of, like a Tempted, another past member of the Venusian Archaeological Survey team, or another ally they might

THE NAME OF THE BEAST

think they have made within the Brotherhood, then that will be a perfect person to set up the meeting. If not, the GM should come up with someone plausible, even if it means retroactively turning a character towards the Dark Soul.

Of course, by this stage the players are likely to be suspicious of any attempt to organise a meeting with them, whoever it might be. The GM will just have to use his charm to make them think this is a legitimate meeting. If the players call the shots and name the location, etc, then this should not be a problem. The Dark Soul will be able to arrange for its minions to turn up at almost any public location in Heimbürg.

Whoever calls the meeting will say that they have some vital information about a follower of the Dark Soul, someone who is in a very powerful position in an influential organisation, someone who could easily have him killed if he realised he knew his true allegiances, and someone who played a key role in the recent battle for Heimbürg.

Whoever calls the meeting and whoever is ultimately doing the bidding of the Dark Soul, the players are unlikely to have time to investigate these strands as they are soon called into action, genuinely this time, by the Brotherhood.

THE LOCATION

The meeting can take place almost anywhere that is busy and public. This should suit the players, in any case. We will assume it is in a restaurant called The Rocket and they have agreed to meet at around two in the afternoon.

The Dark Soul has managed to arrange things so that the majority of people in and around the restaurant are sympathisers. Those four young people sitting by the door, looking trendy and fun-loving: they are Dark Soul sympathisers and are ready to attack the players with their concealed handguns. That couple on the next table to the players looking obviously and lovingly into each other's eyes: they are Dark Soul sympathisers and it is not each other they are fondling under the table, but their weapons. The mixed group at the back who look like they are some sort of sports club having a team building get-together: they are Dark Soul sympathisers. Those hipsters sitting at the back, they are Dark Soul sympathisers and they are just itching to shoot the place up. And so on.

Also, the group in the street outside who look like they might be window shopping, or deciding which restaurant to eat in: they are Dark Soul sympathisers, too, there to prevent the players escaping out the front. And the back of the restaurant backs on to a derelict lot. This lot is infested with well-armed Heretics ensuring that there will be no easy way out that way.

The GM should give the players the opportunity to realise something does not feel quite right. With so many people essentially faking it, all of them concentrating on the actions of the players while

pretending to be having a normal day, all of them waiting for the moment to attack, it would not be surprising if a player were to get a funny feeling about this. The players should be allowed an opposed **Insight** or **Observation test** against the sympathiser's Persuade roll. On a single success they are aware that the atmosphere is awkward and contrived, whilst further Momentum may be spent to gather additional clues.

THE AMBUSH

The waiter who is waiting on the players is a last minute replacement from the local temp agency because the regular waiter met with a nasty accident this very morning. At a signal from her, everyone in the restaurant who is in on the deal will spring into action, attacking all the players with no thought to their own safety or the safety of their colleagues or innocent bystanders.

The players will suddenly find themselves, probably entirely unexpectedly, in the middle of a raging firefight, when they were more likely expecting burgers and rocket salad. This should probably be played up for the surreal effect of having a seemingly relaxing and ordinary event turn into a massive combat for no apparent reason.

Soon, the police will turn up and try to sort things out. It should look a lot like the players are the actual instigators in the conflict, and they will have to be very careful how they come across to the law enforcement officers in the aftermath.

Although these events should demand investigation, the players will soon feel like they have much more important things on their plate. But as they are about to learn how special they are, they could put two and two together and realise that, unfortunately, the Dark Soul knows how special they are, too.

DARK SOUL SYMPATHISER ▲

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

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

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◆ **Baseball Bat (melee):** 1+↑3, Unbalanced, Stun

- ◆ **Knife (melee):** 1+T3, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1
- ◆ **Holdout Pistol (ranged):** Range C, 1T3, Semi-Automatic, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Average Joe:** The Dark Soul sympathisers are far from trained killers. Increase the Repercussion of all tests by one.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Play It Cool:** The Dark Symmetry can take a hand to fuel the sympathisers into providing award-winning performances for their bluff. The GM may spend two Dark Symmetry points to increase the difficulty of the characters opposed Insight or Observation test by one step.

THE BROTHERHOOD CALLS

The Brotherhood should be quite familiar with the players by now, and has probably had them in its cells at least a couple of times over the last few weeks. It should have got the full story of what happened at the black pyramid. It will have delved into its most ancient and arcane tomes in order to identify the nature of the pyramid and its occupant, and having researched it, will now have a clear idea of what happened.

It will now be aware that the entity within the pyramid is called the Dark Temptor and that it was imprisoned there in the distant past by mysterious ancients who did battle with the Dark Legion. It will know something of the Dark Temptor's methods, that he uses guile and deceit to have his victims accept the Dark Symmetry into their souls and thereby become agents of the Dark Soul.

It is also aware that these agents are granted special powers that are particularly difficult for the Brotherhood to detect. Depending on recent events, it is likely that it is aware that the Tempted (or even several of them) was an agent of the Dark Temptor converted directly by him. And most importantly, it will realise that those who have managed to resist the Dark Temptor may never be tempted by him again. This is where the players come in.

The battle for the black pyramid is going badly. It is virtually inevitable that the Dark Legion will seize it within the next two or three days. The pyramid's defenders have lost nearly all contact with the rest of humanity's forces and an ever dwindling pocket of troops is holding out against increasingly penetrating onslaughts by the Dark Legion.

The Brotherhood believes that one of the players is fated to destroy the Dark Temptor. It has found an ancient prophesy that seems to describe one of the players, though it cannot know which. Even if this prophesy is not true, or relevant, then it makes sense to send the players in any case. Having faced the Dark Temptor before and

not succumbed to his temptation, this makes them best qualified for entering the pyramid. If it sends anyone else, it cannot be sure that they will not fall for the Dark Temptor's lies and become another Tempted.

From an ancient Brotherhood text

...a pure and unsullied standard bearer of righteousness and good, one who has confronted the Dark Temptor before and seen through his lies. One who has entered the black pyramid and escaped untainted. One who has been offered all that he might wish for and still stayed true to himself, will come.

At the time of reckoning when the Dark Temptor is closest to redemption, this chosen one must enter once more into the black pyramid and confront the Dark Temptor and destroy him there. And thereby will humanity be saved.

MAKING CONTACT

It should be straight forward enough for the Brotherhood to find the players unless they are actively hiding from it. If they are, then the Brotherhood trying to find and capture the players will be a fun adventure all in itself, but one the GM will have to sort out for himself.

If the Brotherhood feel the need, if there are some things it does not yet understand or some actions that the players have done that it feels is dubious and have not been resolved, it can incarcerate the players yet again.

The players are probably familiar with the dark cells in the cathedral, the repetitive questions of the inquisitors, and the interminable waits between interrogations. In this case, however, because of the urgency of the situation, the players questioning will be quick and to the point, and not as adversarial as the players might be expecting, and then they will be put before the Brotherhood War Council.

THE WAR COUNCIL

The Brotherhood of Heimburg has formed a temporary war council to administer its part in the defence of the black pyramid and it is this council that is responsible for the new expedition to the black pyramid. It will include Inquisitor Stark and Brother Michael, especial if the players have met them before. There will be another three high ranking members of the Brotherhood on the council who will not even bother to introduce themselves. Inquisitor Stark will do all the talking while the other four sit behind him in ominous silence.

If the GM wishes to bring in other characters from The Second Seal who survived their encounter with the Dark Temptor, then he should feel free to do so. After all, one of them may be the champion fated to destroy the Dark Temptor. It might also play on the players' fears that there may be another Tempted. Or it could simply contribute to the adventure to open old wounds, or renew old friendships, from The Second Seal.

The players are brought before the war council who stare at them in silence for some moments, long enough to make them feel uneasy. Inquisitor Stark will explain briefly the situation in the jungle, that the black pyramid is close to being captured. He will then suggest that the Dark Temptor needs to be destroyed before the Dark Legions can free him.



Inquisitor Stark has a plan, and is unlikely to take no for an answer.

VENUSIAN APOCALYPSE PART 04

And then, only looking slightly embarrassed at what he is demanding, he will tell the players that they must go to the pyramid once more, break the seal and enter the darkness beyond it. He will say this in a way that makes it clear that the players have little choice in the matter. And really they do not. If they refuse they will be locked in the cathedral for a very long time. Stark will not use this as a threat unless he has to, but it should be clear he means business, and with every one of the players' refusals, his insistence will get implicitly more threatening.

The players will be escorted to a secure area of the cathedral where they can relax, and prepare for their ordeal. They can ask for any reasonable piece of equipment they require for the mission and the Brotherhood will do its best to get it for them. They will be told that they will be flown out to the pyramid in a matter of hours.

They will be put in a private apartment, which will be guarded by Doomtroopers. If the players are extremely reticent to go on this mission then Stark will explain that this is partly to stop them running for it. But more importantly, he will also say that this is for their own protection. With the powers of the Tempted being very difficult for the Brotherhood to sense, it is worried that it might have been infiltrated, and that an assassin might get to the players before their mission even starts.

A DIVERSION

The players are given the run of the apartment while they wait to go to the jungle. The rooms are usually given over to only the most important visitors from outside the Brotherhood and are ancient, ornate, and comfortable. The players should really feel honoured, but are probably more concerned with their impending endangerment.

Half an hour or so after the players arrive in the apartment, a couple of hooded figures will enter. They look like Brotherhood Mystics but will pull back their cowls to reveal more military dress. The pair are Sandrine Tate and Pol Gustav. They are two of the best soldiers of the House Renauld Guard, in charge of Jean Louis' personal safety. An **Average (D1) Education test** should remind the players of the uniform of the House Renauld Guard and it should be quite clear to the players that this pair should not be here.

If the players make any offensive move against the pair, then they will put their hands up in a gesture of peace. If the players are worried about assassination and this does not convince them, then Tate and Gustav will tolerate a shot being fired at them, before making their retreat.

If they are able to, the pair will explain themselves. Gustav will explain that they have been sent by Jean-Louis Renauld, and he will remind them that it was Renauld who tried to kill them by poisoning their wine, and blowing up the Glory of Heimbürg, a risky

conversational gambit that he hopes will get the players' attention. He will explain that Jean-Louis wishes to speak to them as a matter of urgency.

The GM should try to convince the players that they really do need to see Jean-Louis. Gustav does all the talking (Tate was not brought along for her charm) and he has a number of points he can use to make his case. They would not be there if it were not important. What do they have to gain by breaking into the cathedral unless it really is a matter of great importance? If they wanted to kill the players they would be dead by now, and if it were a plot to kill the players why would they bother asking nicely? No one knows as much about the black pyramid as Jean-Louis. The reason Jean-Louis tried to assassinate the Venusian Archaeological Expedition was because he knew that no good would come of breaking the Seal, and that has definitely proved to be the case. What have you got to lose?

As well as being in Jean-Louis' personal guard, Gustav is also involved with the historical research at Chateau Renauld, so if necessary he will be able to impart some of the information below about the historical expedition to the black pyramid. He will do this if he thinks the players will become intrigued, but really this is dangerous information and he would prefer it if Jean-Louis gave it personally at Chateau Renauld.

If they agree to meet Jean-Louis then Gustav will give them coordinates, a flight pattern, and security codes for Chateau Renauld, a fortress about one hundred kilometres from Heimbürg, which is one of the Renaulds' ancestral homes. He will tell them to use whatever means they can to get their transport to detour there on the way to the jungle.

FORCING THEIR HAND

If the players do not agree to meet Jean-Louis then really they will be going on an impossible mission. The GM may need to be heavy handed in getting them to Chateau Renauld. Therefore, if the players board the Albatross with no intention of going to meet Jean-Louis, then Tate and Gustav have managed to infiltrate the Albatross crew.

They will be the pilot and co-pilot, having disposed of the genuine pilots and stolen their uniforms. They will be wearing flight masks to obscure their features, although it is unlikely the players will want to check out the cockpit, in any case.

Soon after the flight to the jungle begins, Tate and Gustav will pump their fellow crew members' air supply full of soporifics, which will send them harmlessly to sleep. Then they will reveal themselves to the players. Gustav will charmingly apologise once more for such a heavy handed tactic but will explain politely that he really must insist they go to meet Jean-Louis.

SANDRINE TATE

Tate is a major in the House Renault Guard having served with distinction and loyalty for many years. She is an elite fighter and expert at infiltration and survival. She is severe, the strong silent type, who leads by example and expects her troops to follow such a lead. If she must give orders, then they are short and to the point.

She does exude an air of confidence, and knows exactly what she is doing in the field. Simply infiltrating the cathedral with Gustav must give her credibility, and the players are likely to be impressed with that.

For more satisfying continuity of characters, if Claudia Renault met the players in The Four Riders and survived, then the GM should consider replacing Sandrine Tate with Claudia Renault.

SANDRINE TATE, MAJOR, HOUSE RENAULD GUARD ★

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

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Hussar Mk V: (Head 3, Torso 4, Arms 2, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Combat Knife (melee):** 1+**↑**3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1
- ◀ **HG-12 (ranged):** Range C, 1+**↑**5, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Evasion and Infiltration:** Sandrine is well-versed in covert ops and currently holds the position of Escape and Evasion Instructor for the Renault Household Guard. She may re-roll one d20 when attempting a Stealth test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, she may add three d20 to her Stealth pool when attempting to remain unnoticed. Further, an Average D1 Stealth test may be made when she suspects or fears that she is being followed, with success increasing the difficulty by one for any of tests made by the pursuer to follow her, plus an extra step per Momentum spent. Finally, when attempting to find food, water, or shelter, each point of Momentum earned on her Survival test can be spent to provide necessities for two additional allies, or for two additional days if on her own.

- ◀ **Planes Are Merely Flying Guns:** Sandrine is as lethal with an aircraft as she is with a rifle. She may re-roll one d20 when making a Pilot test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, she may substitute her Pilot skill for Gunnery when firing weapons mounted on an airborne vehicle that she is also piloting. Further, she may re-roll up to two **↑** when using a Ranged Weapon, but must accept the new results. Finally, when using a ranged weapon and spending Momentum on the Called Shot Momentum spend, each point of Momentum may shift the hit location roll by up to two points.

POL GUSTAV

A young and charming intelligence officer in the House Renault Guard, Gustav is competent enough in the field, but has been brought along for his knowledge of the Renault family history and for the likelihood that he is able to ingratiate himself with the players and convince them that their trip to House Renault is vital.

POL GUSTAV, LIEUTENANT, HOUSE RENAULD GUARD ★

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

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Hussar Mk V: (Head 3, Torso 4, Arms 2, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Combat Knife (melee):** 1+**↑**3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1
- ◀ **HG-12 (ranged):** Range C, 1+**↑**4, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Famous Gustav Charm and Intellect:** The Gustav family have served the Renaults faithfully for a number of years, usually within the intelligence gathering arm. He may re-roll one d20 when attempting an Education test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, when interacting with an opponent, he may attempt an Average D1 Education test as a Restricted Action, with success allowing him to recognise an element of common ground that opens discussion with his opponent. Momentum from this Education test may immediately be added to a Persuade or Command test taken as a Standard Action. Finally, each successful Persuade test yields two

additional points of Momentum.

- ▶ **Renauld Household Training:** Pol is an officer in the Renauld Household guard and has received some of the best training available amongst the Great Houses. He may re-roll one **↑** when making a Close Combat or Ranged Weapons attack, or one d20 when attempting a Pilot or Stealth test, but must accept the new results.

ON THE WAY

In another hour or so the players will be driven to a local airbase, where they will be put on board an Albatross ground-support aircraft. It should be getting on for dusk. The rest of this part of the adventure takes place at night. It should be dark when they arrive over the jungle near the black pyramid.

They have been assigned a Brotherhood liaison, Brother Ezekiel. Ezekiel's job is simply to escort the players to the drop zone, and act as the Brotherhood's authority while he is with them. He has been assigned this job because he is pleasant and gets on well with people.

Ezekiel spends more time making small talk and checking the players have everything they need and that they are feeling good about themselves than anything else. He is certainly not strong enough to make the players do what he wants, and seems to carry none of the implicit threat that many of the Brotherhood do. His attitude, in fact, borders on the obsequious and unprofessional.

The Albatross is crewed by Bauhaus personnel seconded to the Brotherhood. They are simply doing their jobs. They have to fly to the black pyramid, circle it until the players have all jumped out and then fly home. They are unaware of the importance of their mission and the special status of their passengers.

The players will have to work out how best they might get to Chateau Renauld, especially as the aircrew are supposed to be



Tate and Gustav are among House Renauld's finest.

their allies and also responsible for keeping the Albatross in the air. The Bauhaus aircrew are professional soldiers and will not take kindly to being threatened with weapons and are liable to act against anyone trying such a thing. They are in the middle of a desperate war and if the players threaten them their most obvious guess will be that the players are Heretics or traitors and deserve to die.

As it happens, the crew are under orders to obey the Brotherhood representative in all things during the mission. Brother Ezekiel is effectively commander of the Albatross and the players will find ordering Ezekiel about a lot easier than trying to subjugate the aircrew.

It is up to the players how they might go about convincing Ezekiel to visit Chateau Renault. He is pleasant and unthreatening but not a complete pushover. The players could try reasoning with him, but he has got his orders and would not wish to go against them. Having said that, he knows how important the players are and so if they are to insist on a certain course of action then it would put him in a very difficult position.

If the players threaten Ezekiel then he will have no choice but to go along with their demands, but the players should be careful because if the aircrew get wind that Ezekiel is acting under duress, then they might consider themselves hijacked and may resist violently.

BROTHER EZEKIEL, BROTHERHOOD CHAPERONE

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

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

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: Armoured Vestments: (Torso 1, Arms 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

◀ Nil

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◀ **Obsequious and Mildly Incompetent:** Ezekiel normally ingratiates himself with people due to his slightly fawning nature, though can also serve to irritate. Each successful Persuade test will net an additional point of Momentum. Additionally, the Repercussion of all his Persuade tests is increased by one.

ALBATROSS AIRCREW

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

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

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Aircrew Fatigues and Flight Helmet: (Head 2, Torso 1, Arms 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

◀ **HG-12 Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◀ **Bauhaus Flight School:** The crew of the Albatross that transports the characters to the Chateau Renault are all experienced members of the Bauhaus air force. They may re-roll one d20 when making a Willpower test, or any dice that did not generate a success when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, crew members may re-roll one ↑ when making a Close Combat or Ranged Weapons test, but must accept the new result.

◀ **Simulated Flight Training:** All members of the crew are trained with a minimal amount of flight simulation time in order to cater for emergencies. They may re-roll one d20 when making a Pilot test in relation to flying the Albatross, but must accept the new result.



CHATEAU RENAULD

Chateau Renauld is the oldest of the Renauld estates, and was the centre of the family's dynasty when it helped pioneer the conquest of Venus. Built on a spectacular ridge above the verdant jungle is a squat fortress of prefabricated grey concrete, with angular defences and sheer walls. Above that are generations of later, more genteel buildings, brightly coloured terraces rising into the sky that give the place a fairy-tale castle quality. It has now grown large enough to be more of a working town than simply a fortress.

The players should have the security codes to get them safely through the chateau's defences. In any case, the Renauld authorities have been warned about their hoped-for arrival and will facilitate it. The chateau is poorly lit and can barely be seen at night, save for its spectacular airstrip, which is brightly illuminated for the players' benefit.

The players will be met on Chateau Renauld's airstrip with an honour guard. The twelve soldiers that await them are dressed for parade and not for fighting. They are not there to appear threatening but are clearly there to honour the players. Also awaiting them will be Tate and Gustav, if they survived their escape from the cathedral. If they did not, then replace Gustav with a similar character.

Gustav will welcome them like old friends and thank them warmly for trusting him enough to detour their important mission. They will be escorted into the fortress, but instead of going up towards the more impressive structures near the top of the chateau, they will be led down into the dim, obviously little-used, labyrinth of the ancient defences. Brother Ezekiel will not be welcome there, and will be asked to remain with the Albatross crew. After travelling for what feel like a little bit too long, and a little bit too far down, they will reach some impressive

metal doors. The guards on these doors will swing them open as the players approach.

THE LIBRARY

The library is not really a library at all, but that is how it is known at Chateau Renauld. It used to be the main ammunition dump of the fortress, and thus is located in the furthest depths of the complex. The room is massive, about 80 metres across, but only the very centre has any activity at all. The chamber is now brilliantly lit, but even the lighting cannot shed the air of concrete gloom.

In the middle of the room is a large desk with several chairs placed around it. It is strewn with papers and documents. Sitting at the desk is Jean-Louis, poring over some ancient text. Arranged around the desk are several items of furniture. There are a couple of large bookshelves, crammed with old tomes, manila files, folders, loose papers, and rolled maps. There is a large metal vault, about three metres cubed.

Jean-Louis will look up from his paper to greet the players. He will give them a welcoming smile and thank them for coming. He will then apologise for all the times he has tried to kill them recently. He says this pleasantly enough, but his eyes will then darken and he will say that his attempted assassinations were entirely justified and, "it would have been better for everyone, even perhaps yourselves, had you perished in the burning wreck of the Glory of Heimburg."

MOTIVES

The players are likely to be very unsure of Renauld, but Renauld is still unsure of them. He will question them about recent events, pleasantly and politely, but he will be probing to try to discover whether any of the players might be under the influence of the Dark Temptor. He will make sure to spend time on each of them and will ask seemingly odd questions. He knows what he is doing, however, and it will be difficult for a Tempted to deceive him.



Jean-Louis examines the Spear of Heimburg.

THE NAME OF THE BEAST



There is gathering storm around Chateau Renauld.

Of course, the players might be reluctant to divulge what they know without Renauld doing so first, and so this part of their meeting can be very cagey with each party only giving up selective snippets in order to glean more information from the other.

If Jean-Louis is satisfied with the players' purity of motive, then he will be happy to explain his actions more fully. He will tell the players how Theresa Renauld, then the head of House Renauld, had been attempting to lift the ailing fortunes of the house, and how she considered that selling the southern estates was a seemingly painless way to gain much needed capital. The entire family knew that the house legend said the land could never be sold because of a curse, or some other vague threat from way back in the early days of the Venusian settlement. Despite this, the house did decide on the sale and Jean-Louis' side of the family was the only dissenting voice.

Jean-Louis was always interested in the history of the house, and that is why he took Martin Renauld's proscription so seriously. But to back up his case, he began to research that particular episode much more thoroughly. What he found convinced him that an expedition to the black pyramid might even put humanity's very future on Venus in jeopardy. That is why he tried to kill the players and the entire expedition before they could even reach the pyramid.

Jean-Louis' fears proved to be well-founded. The expedition did unleash a terrible power that brought a terrible destruction upon Heimburg. But humanity was lucky, Jean-Louis believes it could have

been so much worse. He understands that the Seal was broken but then sealed again, and look at the evil that has stemmed from that. If the seal were to be open permanently, then humanity could surely not survive on Venus, and perhaps the force that lies imprisoned within the pyramid would spread across the entire solar system and destroy all of mankind. If the Dark Legion were to seize the pyramid, then that really would be the consequence.

Jean-Louis will let the implications sink in for a moment, and then continue. After the debacle at the pyramid, Theresa's position as head of House Renauld became untenable, and Jean-Louis was the natural successor. With the greater resources at his disposal he was able to research even deeper into the matter and he believes no one who still has a mind independent of the Dark Soul could know more about the matter than him.

Jean-Louis will explain that it is prophesied that someone will enter the pyramid and slay the Dark Temptor within. The players might reveal that they know that already, of course. But Jean-Louis will continue, he has reason to believe that one of the players is the prophesied hero and therefore he will give them whatever aid they might need.

He will cast his arm about the table, full of papers and tomes, and explain that he has discovered secrets that even the Brotherhood does not know. He believes that this information vital to their mission and he will offer to share it with them.

THE WEAPONS OF THE HEROES

If the players possess all the Weapons of the Heroes found in the sarcophaguses when they first entered the pyramid, then they will find the coming adventure much more manageable than it would otherwise be. They do not need all the weapons to succeed, but they need at least one to have a chance.

For this reason, it might be a good idea to have Renauld supply them with any of the weapons they are missing. If the players did not take the weapons, then it is easy to say that a man of Renauld's means and dedication was able to acquire them. If the players did take them but subsequently lost them, then it will depend on the circumstances whether it is credible that Renauld would have been able to acquire them. The GM should do his best to work out some way of getting the players to this stage with as many of the weapons as possible.

If he needs to give them these items, then Renauld will grandly open a hidden vault adjoining the room where whichever of the weapons he possesses is stored. He will not touch them but he will beckon the players to take them. He will explain that he believes that these weapons are part of the key to unravelling the problem and that they should guard them with their lives. When the time is right they will know what has to be done.

Of course, if the players have managed to keep all three weapons throughout the campaign, Renauld will be impressed and still give them that little speech, just in case they do not realise what powerful and important items they have.

RENAULD'S RESEARCH

The following scraps can be found among Renauld's papers. He can offer some or all of them to the players, and they should come in extremely useful. Renauld has spent his whole life working on this collection and tracking down anything that might add to this mythology. The papers detailed below are the ones he feels are the most relevant to the players' mission or, as Renauld sees it, 'a mythological quest that has been foretold by ancient gods'.

The sources of these snippets are impossible to find, now. These are copies of copies of copies, some of them in strange, scribbled handwriting, some of them copied down by Renauld himself, presumably from sources he could only observe and not bring back to the chateau. The accounts have their sources many thousands of years in the past, and the trail of their provenance is so tortuous and unverifiable that they almost may as well be fairy tales. But, of course, they do hold a core truth that is relevant to the resolution of this campaign.

If the players are more in to violent action than scholarly research, then the GM can have Renauld summarise the information below, instead.

On the Legend of the Four

...This is a theme that recurs often in the Ancients' mythology, even having a place in the stories of their demise, as if their own legends have outlived them, or even caused their ultimate destruction.

The original events are of course lost to the mists of time, and it is difficult to even approach the truth of what occurred without considerable reliance on supposition and guesswork. For this I beg your indulgence, and your understanding that what sources I did have access to were gained with considerable work, and not a little risk.

The most common element of the myths is the four heroes and their many years of cooperation in defeating the nameless evil, and then their betrayal by one of the four, who was seduced by their enemy.

It seems that all four of them have their separate myths, in which they conquer the minions of this evil force, with their signature weapon. The fourth hero does not have a weapon except his wits, and he seems to use his intelligence more effectively than any weapon.

The stories of these defeats of the evil minions are many and varied and fill the bulk of the mythology. But the most interesting stories are those about the fall of the heroes. The fourth hero seems to have been jealous of the others, somehow. It is not clear whether this was always a character flaw, or whether he was coerced by the evil.

Nevertheless, he uses his intelligence to drive a wedge between the other three heroes and play them off against each other. He captures two of them and it seems his victory is inevitable. However, the young female heroine, who I transcribe elsewhere as Calis, (this is a largely arbitrary pronunciation) although the most under-rated, proves to be the greatest of the heroes

Other interpretations seem to have the heroes as metaphors for distinct civilisations, perhaps rival nations, or even races from different planets. But, I am leaning towards the notion that in fact there is no metaphor in this regard, that the heroes were indeed heroes and that their weapons, were not aspects of civilisations, or certain technologies, but were in fact, quite literally a hammer, a sword and a spear, as bizarre as that may seem, now.

Likewise, one may interpret the presence of the fallen hero not as the forces of an enemy state or alien race, but merely as a single being of some power who was seduced by forces not only beyond his understanding, but far beyond even our imaginations....

On The Pyramid

...Far from being a temple, I am convinced that the pyramid is actually a prison. Not an artefact of the Dark Soul, it was in fact constructed to keep one of the great agents of that power dormant. Therefore, it is plain that we should be extremely careful in everything we do in regard to the pyramid. Any knowledge we glean could, instead of aiding us, actually help our enemies. Undoubtedly, the more we know and the closer we come to the truth, so too do we come closer to revealing the truth to our enemies, and perhaps even letting its occupant free.

Therefore, we should only open the structure when we are absolutely sure we can contain, or preferably destroy, whatever lies within. So I am reluctant to even discuss this aspect of the incarceration, for if my suppositions are correct, and this myth relates to a greater truth, then surely this knowledge can only bring danger.

But, having said that, it seems that there is an order that these guardians must be defeated. Whether the guardians are somehow the actual immortals who appear in the stories, or some sort of paranormal avatar, or even a technological phenomenon, is open to debate, and largely irrelevant.

The guardian you call Arto, the hammer bearer, must be the first. Then should come Beruth the swordswoman. And finally the spear maiden, Calis. Again, I have no inkling of how this guardianship manifests or what the nature of their defeat or destruction could be. The solution seems to be intrinsic to their chosen weapons, however...

On the Weapons of the Heroes

...These weapons seem to be physical and spiritual all at once. Do they represent aspects of human (or indeed alien) physicality? Does the hammer represent strength, and the sword, skill at arms? Is the spear some sort of superior aspect of conflict? Could it be a metaphor for faith in oneself, or perhaps purity of purpose?

While they are all powerful in their own right, and possess a sort of metaphysical quality, it is also possible that together they might be greater than the sum of their parts. Perhaps if all three elements are brought to bear at once, then that will be enough to nullify their nemesis. At least that is what the legends seem to tell us...

JEAN-LOUIS RENAULD

Jean-Louis is thin, scholarly and grey haired. He is about seventy years old, but still surprisingly quick-witted and sprightly. He has the casually superior air of the most aristocratic families, and yet seems to speak with warmth and the common touch. He is not afraid of the most difficult decisions and can be utterly ruthless if the situation calls. He has protected House Renauld with this ruthlessness, and now he has been called upon to protect the whole of humanity.

Renauld has come to believe that the purpose of his very existence is to get to the bottom of events at the black pyramid, that he has born into the Renauld family just so he would have access to the relevant records and the authority to act upon them. He is utterly obsessed with this, and yet has not let his aristocratic veneer crack at all.

On the Ancients

...It is impossible to tell what the precise level, and even nature, of their civilisation was, but it is almost certain, in my mind, that they inhabited the solar system, and perhaps beyond, when the ancestors of mankind were still tree dwellers.

There is no doubt that they fought the Dark Soul as we fight it today and that they succeeded, and so that should give us great hope. I believe they considered that they defeated the Dark Soul utterly, banishing it from the universe, but they were of course mistaken. But their relative success should only show that we may do the same.

I believe they also laid contingencies across the solar system so that should the Dark Soul rise once more, we should discover artefacts and knowledge of the Ancients and bring that to bear in our struggle...

On The Key

Eight disciples were chosen to lock the enemy within the oubliette and this lock was sealed with their blood. As it takes eight to lock the door, so too must it take eight to unlock it. They must unlock it as one....

Not really sure what this bit means, to be honest. Bit strange!

The players arrival at Chateau Renauld is the final piece of the puzzle. The convoluted circumstances of their arrival only serves to underline that Jean-Louis has been on the right track and soon he will be vindicated. For this reason, as soon as he sees the players off, he will realise that he can help them no more. He has done all he can. He will feel that his life's work is fulfilled. He will be content to meet death in the certainty that the events he has foreseen will play out to the benefit of mankind.

JEAN-LOUIS RENAULD ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	6	7	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	11	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	1	-	-	3	3	4	3	2	2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Renauld Uniform: (Torso 1, Arms 1, Legs 1)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Gentleman's Charm:** Jean-Louis has successfully navigated the Bauhaus nobility's political quagmire for many years. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Lifestyle test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he reduces the difficulty by two steps for any Education test that deals with a familiarity of events within the past twenty years. Further, he may substitute his Lifestyle skill for Persuade when attempting to bribe, coerce, or deceive an NPC. Finally, he reduces the difficulty by one for Willpower tests that are a consequence of traumatic events, which may eliminate the need for a test.
- ◆ **Noble and Determined Scholar:** Although he has never shunned combat, Jean-Louis has acknowledged that those years are behind him and has instead armed and armoured himself intellectually. He may re-roll one d20 when attempting an Education, Insight, Mysticism, or Willpower test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he reduces the difficulty of any Mysticism test to identify a creature or power of Darkness by two, which may eliminate the need for a test.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **The Heart of the Matter:** Jean-Louis has an uncanny knack for discerning motives. Once several minutes of conversation have passed, he may spend two Dark Symmetry points to gain an understanding of his target's motivations. Use of this ability consumes an entire scenes worth of social interaction.

JEAN-LOUIS IN EARLIER ADVENTURES

Having tried to kill the players several times in the first part of this campaign, it is quite possible that the players will have made an effort to meet Jean-Louis before now. If this is the case then that is easily handled.

Jean-Louis is well-known and so is Chateau Renauld. It would not take much to work out that he lives here. Getting to meet him might seem to be much more difficult. The chateau is an imposing fortress and would take some skill and planning to break into. However, a polite request would be sufficient to get an invitation to see Jean-Louis. Jean-Louis is an old school gent and would consider it rude if he did not agree to meet his erstwhile assassination targets for a civilised discussion about the incident.

If the meeting does take place earlier on in the adventure, then Jean-Louis' research would not have progressed as far, and he might be reticent to discuss everything he knows. Therefore he would be prepared to tell the players his reasons for trying to get them assassinated but the sort of insight he gives them during the visit discussed above, would not be forthcoming.

As the players have gone to the trouble of tracking down and meeting their supposed enemy, then the GM should try to help the players out. He should try to have Jean-Louis give them as much information as he can about their current situation, without spoiling this section of the campaign, and without destroying the plot of the earlier adventures.

For example, he could tell them that he believes the Dark Temptor is able to convert people towards the Dark Soul with a mere suggestion. But telling them that he is able to create the Tempted in the way that he has, could undermine the adventures that rely on the Tempted being able deceive the players.

If the players do develop a good relationship with Jean-Louis over the course of the campaign then it will be much easier to get them to Chateau Renauld at this stage of the adventure. In addition, they might turn to him for advice during other parts of the campaign. The GM should reward them by making this relationship helpful, but again be wary that too much knowledge, too soon, might affect the players' actions adversely.

TRAITORS

Unknown to Jean-Louis and the players deep within the complex, this is the moment that the Dark Legion launches an offensive against Chateau Renault. Its agents within the chateau have been sending reports for some time about Jean-Louis' research. The Dark Soul did not consider it worth dealing with, however, until the arrival of the players. The Dark Soul fears that this alliance could somehow threaten its grip on the black pyramid and has decided to put an end to it before it begins.

A massive bombardment of the chateau occurs by Vampire heavy bombers, shortly followed by Revenant fighter aircraft and then a rapid air drop of Dark Legion troops from Nightgaunt helicopters. These were originally on standby for the final push on the black pyramid, but they have now been diverted to attack the chateau.

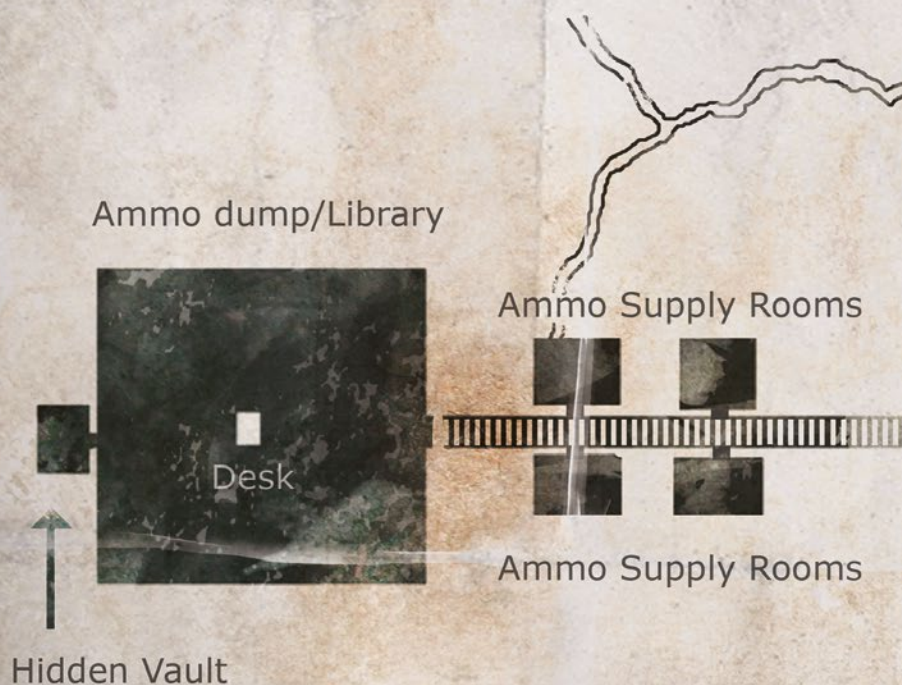
The Undead Legionnaires, supported by Centurions and Templars, are led by a Nephrite of Algeroth. The attack takes the chateau defences largely by surprise and there is little they can do to withstand the onslaught. For all its show of ancient fortifications and ceremonial uniforms, the chateau is a museum to Renault's past rather than a working cog in Bauhaus' war machine.

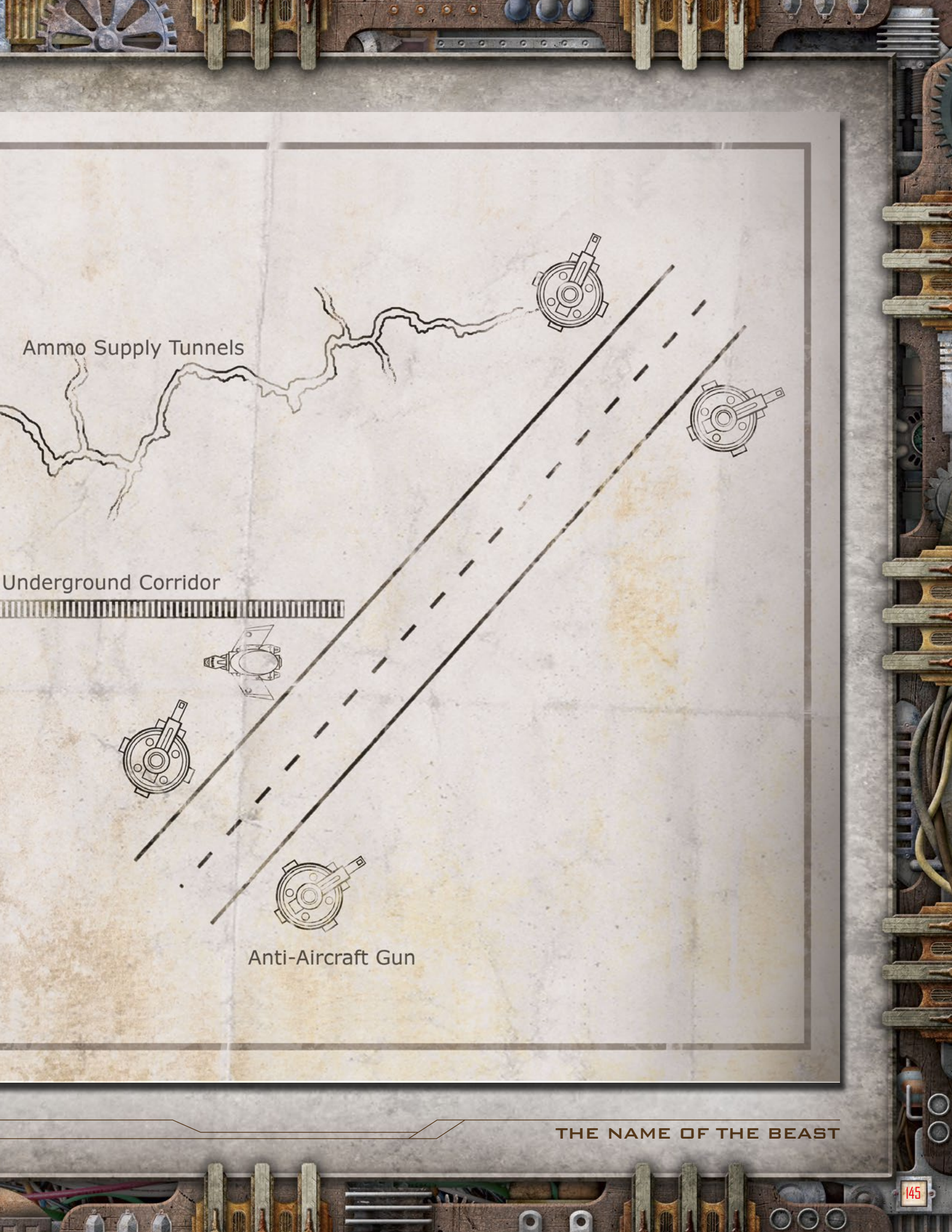
Once the Dark Legion establishes a foothold on the chateau's landing strip, the Nephrite leads his forces into the chateau and down towards the library, where he knows the players will be.

ESCAPE

At a crucial point in the players' meeting with Jean-Louis, one of the House Guard will interrupt with the vital news that the chateau is under attack. The sound of explosions and fighting from the open door confirms this. The GM should time this interruption so that the players have already been told more or less everything they need to know, but it should still feel like they are being rushed and Jean-Louis may not have had enough time to tell them everything he wanted to.

CHATEAU RENAULD





Ammo Supply Tunnels

Underground Corridor

Anti-Aircraft Gun

Jean-Louis will quickly deduce that they must have a traitor in the camp and, if the players have not cottoned on to this yet, will make it clear to them that the Dark Legion must be coming specifically for them. He will tell them that this more or less confirms his thoughts that one of them must be the object of the prophecy, and will look faintly triumphant that everything he has studied and theorised seems to be coming to pass.

If the players' instinct is to get back to their Albatross as soon as possible, they will soon be told that it is almost impossible to head back the way they came. The albatross has already been captured and there are countless Dark Legionnaires making their way directly towards the library.

After some moments thought, Jean-Louis will mention that there is an ancient tunnel system that was constructed to distribute ammunition throughout the stronghold safely if it were under attack. The entrance to the tunnel system is in the corridor just outside the library and easily accessible. Jean-Louis tells Gustav and Tate to lead the players back to their aircraft that way.

If asked by the players whether he will join them, instead of staying behind and facing certain death, Jean-Louis will decline and explain that he was hoping to read to the end of a very interesting treatise he was just getting into. And he will sit back on his chair, adjust his glasses, and stoically continue reading.

Meanwhile, Tate will refuse to escort the players and will leave through the main door of the library, preparing to defend the head of her house, to the death. Jean-Louis will accept this final gesture of loyalty. Gustav, however, will be ordered to lead the players back to the Albatross.

The tunnels are dark, but clean and wide with gradual gradients, perfect for transporting heavy ammunition by wheeled transport. Other tunnels branch off from the main one periodically, but Gustav seems to have a good grasp of where he is heading.

After several minutes, the players will notice the sounds of pursuit coming from the tunnel in their wake. It seems that the Dark Legion has found the way in, and is hot on their heels. Gustav will lead the players round the last bend, and they will find themselves in a gun emplacement situated at the side of the airstrip.

THE AIRSTRIP

All around will be the sights and sounds of a ferocious battle, but it is clear that Renauld has lost this one. Dark Legionnaires dominate the field, searching for survivors, and mopping up the final bits of resistance. The players will be able to see that their Albatross sits on the end of the airstrip awaiting take-off. And behind them, in the tunnels, the Dark Legionnaires are closing in.



Revenant flyers pursue the Albatross.

The players will need to act quickly. They will need to make their way to the Albatross despite the enemy forces around the airstrip, and before their pursuers can catch up with them. Once they get to the craft they should be relatively safe, as the small arms that the Legionnaires can bring to bear should not be able to do too much damage. The Albatross was already standing ready for the players, and so, although the crew have all been killed, it is ready to fly.

The players should have the advantage of surprise, and a window of opportunity before the Dark Legionnaires will be able to reorganise and target the albatross. They will need to get to the flyer quickly, however, and avoid getting bogged down in a protracted firefight.

Hopefully, when they reach the aircraft, someone will still be alive who can fly the thing. Gustav is there for that purpose, but if he gets killed then the GM could rule that there is an injured pilot hiding out in the craft who, if given some help and some first aid, will be only too happy to get the albatross airborne.

UP IN THE AIR

Once they are in the air the players are relatively safe, for now. The Dark Legion will fire as much anti-aircraft fire as it can from the chateau, but the Albatross will soon be out of range. All the strike aircraft of the Dark Legion have already made their attacks and headed for home, so the skies will be empty save for the odd supply aircraft. However, the Dark Legion will know the players have escaped, and where they are heading. It has the ability to call for more strike aircraft, and desperately wants the players dead. This puts the players in a very precarious position.

If the players make a straight flight towards the black pyramid, then the chances are they will be intercepted by some of the Revenant aircraft. If they take precaution to throw off any pursuit then, if they do this

well, the chances are they might be able to avoid the Dark Legion until they get close to the black pyramid.

If the players land somewhere and lie low for a while, then that might be enough to throw their pursuers off. The Dark Legion will soon assume that the Albatross has got closer to the black pyramid and adjust its search patterns to suit. If they fly particularly low then that might help their case, too.

If the players come up with any decent plan to avoid the attentions of the Dark Legion at this stage, then they should probably be rewarded with a relatively trouble free flight towards the southern jungles. The fact that they are flying through the night should help them, too.

FLIGHT TO THE JUNGLE

The journey from Heimburg or the chateau to the black pyramid should only take a couple of hours in an Albatross. During that time, however, the Dark Legion has launched its final attack upon the black pyramid. Despite their heroic defence, in a few hours, the forces of humanity will not be able to stop the Dark Legion capturing the pyramid and breaking the Second Seal. The players will be flying right into the heart of the battle.

The aerial dogfight will be raging over the jungle just as fiercely as the ground fighting beneath the canopy. Attacks by Dark Legion aircraft are concentrated on the main defensive ring around the pyramid. But they are also targeting other troops further from the centre. This means the players will need to run the gauntlet of enemy craft for some minutes before they can get to the pyramid.

Bauhaus has built a landing strip a few hundred metres from the pyramid. That was the intended target for the Albatross, but now the landing strip is over-run and in the hands of the Dark Legion, and the battle for the pyramid is continuing all around it. If the players had time to study the battle as they fly over it, they would see that the Dark Legion is inching towards the pyramid, and humanity's defeat is only a matter of time.

The players will need to think of a plan pretty quickly. They should know that abandoning their mission is out of the question; the very future of humanity is at stake. But having to get to the pyramid when it is in the hands of the Dark Legion would complicate things considerably.

Before the players even realise that the airstrip is taken, however, they will be attacked by a couple of Revenant fighters. If they survive the first attack, then another wave of Revenants will join the dogfight. Sooner or later the Albatross will be hit and begin to fall towards the jungle. There is no chance of surviving such a crash.

If the players can come up with a plan to avoid getting shot down then they should be rewarded for that. Even so they will still be faced with having nowhere to land and needing to get close to the pyramid.

REVENANT

The revenant is the most common of the Dark Legion aircraft. They are built using the burnt out and shattered fuselage of any medium-sized fighter aircraft. They are burned until soot-black in giant symmetric furnaces, repaired with necrotechnology, and tossed back out in the fray. Among human forces, they are known as corpse flyers. This is due to the fact that they are riddled with old bullet holes, and that their wings are so torn and bent that they should not be able to fly. They are, however, agile and deadly dogfighters.

QUALITIES	Agile, Aircraft, Enclosed			
CRUISING SPEED	1210 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	2	
CREW	1 commander		CARRYING CAPACITY	0
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	5	6	4	3
MOTIVE SYSTEM	4	5	3	2
WEAPON	3	4	2	1
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+ [↑] 5			
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quad Nazgaroths: Range L, 2+[↑]6, Automatic, Ammo (Armour Piercing 3), Spread 3. • Weapon Pylons: Stats as weapon. 			
NOTES	<p>Twelve Reloads for Nazgaroths. Two Reloads for Weapon Pylons. <i>Deathhowl Engines: The Revenant has the Fear (1) special ability.</i></p>			

If the players waste time looking for a decent landing spot away from the fighting, they will just find themselves circling further and further away from the pyramid, and attracting Dark Legion fighters as they go. They might decide to land on the airstrip and this could work, but it will put them in the thick of the fighting.

Whether the albatross is heavily damaged or not, the players' best chance will be to use their escape suits to land as near to the pyramid as possible. These are described in **Part 01: The Second Seal of Repulsion**, and the players are likely to be familiar with them.

If the GM wishes Pol Gustav to stay with the players in the jungle, then he can bail out with them in an escape suit, too. If he is still alive, but the GM feels the players do not need him, then he can now have a heroic death scene. He can insist on staying behind, piloting the albatross towards the pyramid and keeping it flying straight enough and level enough to give the players time to bail out safely.

PART TWO: BLAZING A TRAIL

OVERVIEW

In this part, the players find themselves in the jungle, probably having just bailed out of a burning airplane. They might be spread out and may need to work to find each other, and depending on where they land they will more than likely need to cross enemy territory to get to the pyramid. If the players found another way of getting to the jungle floor then the GM can play that by ear, but the adventure should go in a similar direction.

The Dark Legion is only minutes away from taking the black pyramid. The defenders' efforts have finally collapsed and Dark Legionnaires are breaking through the defences all around the pyramid. Seeing their goal in sight they are not bothering at this stage to mop up surviving enclaves of defenders but, urged on by Nepharites, simply pressing on through the chaos towards their final goal. The surviving Brotherhood reserves, directed by a few desperate Inquisitors, have thrown up one last ditch cordon around the pyramid and are praying for a miracle.

BACK IN THE JUNGLE

As soon as the players land in the jungle they will be greeted by that familiar stultifying heat and dripping humidity, almost as if they never went away. At least on this visit they should be familiar with many of the dangers of the jungle, and more prepared to meet the challenges of the terrain. The GM should remind the players of the inhospitable conditions but should probably avoid testing for jungle fever or giving them too many negative modifiers. After all, the players are now proven veterans in this kind of environment.

The players will have come down around ten kilometres from the pyramid. If they did poorly in the aerial battle then they will be further away. If they did well, or came up with a clever plan, then they can be rewarded with landing closer. They will be fortunate not to land too close, however, as many battles are still raging in the jungle. Many pockets of resistance still survive; the night sky and much of the jungle is lit up by flares, gunfire, and explosions.

The GM should feel free to use any of the jungle hazards described in *The Second Seal*, but the players are in a hurry and the adventure is moving on, so he should beware of slowing the game down at this stage. There are a number of additional encounters that might occur, described below.

The adventure assumes that the players are continuing with their plan to enter the pyramid. They might not feel they have much hope of getting there, but with seemingly no alternative, all they can do is keep on going. Navigation should not be a problem for them. They were supplied with the latest maps of the area and various

navigation aids, and the battle centres on the pyramid, so it is easy to tell, during the night, the general direction they need to go, even deep beneath the canopy.

The following are all encounters and events that the GM should insert into the journey towards the pyramid as he sees fit. Some of them are optional. The Highlanders should probably be used to give the players some sort of aid in getting into the pyramid, especially for a diversionary attack. This encounter should, however, probably be used later rather than sooner in order to give the players a chance to be alone in the jungle in the middle of a warzone for a while.

DARK LEGION TROOPERS

The area around the black pyramid is swarming with the Dark Legion. As the players have landed on the wrong side of the battle lines, they will be forced to run the gauntlet of the Dark Legion's front line. The Dark Legion has brought to bear any number and type of trooper for this most vital combat. However, they are a war machine on the move, preoccupied with the logistics of battle and the known dispositions of the enemy. They will not be on the lookout for a few individuals sneaking through the jungle.

Therefore, at this stage, the GM should play the Dark Legion war machine as some huge, lumbering behemoth and the players merely pests, too small and seemingly insignificant to matter. The players should only really encounter it in the abstract and be able to avoid contacting the massed ranks of Legionnaires unless they are very careless or stupid. They may still, of course, come across the odd smaller unit, especially individualistic type troops and stragglers, rather than large units concentrating on the battle.

DOOMTROOPER SMITH

This Doomtrooper is the only survivor of his unit, which was ambushed by Templars and Legionnaires and fought, literally, to the last man. A close combat expert, Smith was wounded and knocked unconscious. When he came round, the battleground had moved on.

Smith knows as much about the battle as the average grunt. He knows how it has been going against the Brotherhood. He knows they have been hanging on for a prophesied hero to come and save the world, but supposes that is just a bit of nonsense that the officers are spouting to get the men to hold on for as long as possible.

Smith can be used by the GM to give the players a sense of the mood around the battle, to guide them towards the pyramid, and to remind them of how important their mission is and how much is being sacrificed on their behalf. If the players are getting short of manpower or firepower, then Smith can also come in handy in that regard, as he has collected a range of weaponry from his dead colleagues. If the players need some other specialist knowledge, at this stage, like medical or outdoor survival skills then Smith can be given these.

**CORPORAL VINCENT SMITH,
CAPITOLIAN DOOMTROOPER** ★

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
4	3	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: HFMP5-101 **Doomtrooper armour:** (Head 4, Torso 5, Arms 4, Legs 4)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Pair of Talons of Fury (melee):** 1+♣5, 1H, Incendiary 2, Vicious 3
- ▶ **Breachfinder (ranged):** Range L, As Grenade, Munition, 2H, Rapid-Fire 1
- ▶ **Rapid-Fire:** When firing a Breachfinder, you may spend one Reload in order to gain a d20 to the attack roll and one bonus ♣ of damage. This is in addition to the Reload that must be spent to fire the weapon.
- ▶ **M13 Bolter (ranged):** Range C, 1+♣5, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Some Would Say I'm Lucky:** A glass half empty kind of guy, Smith believes that he has been cursed with an uncanny luck that has burdened his entire life. In reality, his tough cranium and unrelenting Willpower have kept him alive when others have succumbed. He may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success when making a Resistance test, or one d20 when attempting a Willpower test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, the difficulty rating is reduced by one step when attempting to recover from a status effect, to a minimum of one. Further, he may attempt a Shake It Off action as normal, may recover two Wounds if successful. Finally, he may reduce the difficulty of the Willpower test by one when resisting exposure to a traumatic event, which may eliminate the need for a test.
- ▶ **Veteran Doomtrooper:** Smith is a seasoned Doomtrooper who has specialized as a close combat expert to complement the typical pairing that occurs. He generates two additional successes on any Athletics test that produces at least one success. Further, he may re-roll up to two ♣ when making a Close Combat or Unarmed Combat attack. Additionally, all of successful Unarmed Combat attacks gain the Knockdown



and Stun qualities. Finally, he can attempt to parry using his Unarmed Combat skill, even when he does not have a close combat weapon drawn.

BATTLEFIELD

The players will come across this recent battlefield. The darkness will be punctuated by fires still flickering in the derelict hulks of tanks and other hardware. Swathes of jungle will have been displaced by machinery and explosions. Bodies and other detritus of war will litter the flattened jungle. The front now is quite a long way off, and the fighting seems to be gradually subsiding.

This is clearly the recent aftermath of an action between Doomtroopers and Undead Legionnaires. In case they were in any doubt as to the savagery of the conflict, hundreds of Doomtrooper bodies are strewn around the jungle, and many of the Dark Legion, though it is quite plain which side was winning. From this mess, it is possible to construct a vague narrative of the battle, even in this darkness. It involves the Doomtroopers suffering massive losses and then falling back towards the pyramid.

If the players left the Albatross in a big hurry and didn't bring much with them then they will be able to find most of what they need here. As well as specialist weapons, food, and medical supplies, they will be able to find maps of the area and navigation equipment that will tell them exactly where they are in relation to the pyramid.

If they wish, the players can speak to dying casualties from either side to get a feel for how the battle is going, or to work out their plans. It should not really be too surprising for them to learn that the Doomtroopers were ordered to defend their sector to the last man, to buy time for the salvation of the pyramid and the Dark Legion has been ordered to take it as soon as possible, whatever the cost.

PRAETORIAN STALKERS

A Praetorian Stalker hunting party spots the players. The Stalkers have been assigned to scour the battle zone looking for opportunities to disrupt Brotherhood communications and supply lines. They have had a bloody and successful night's hunt but after coming across the players they still have the enthusiasm to cause even more disruption and death.

The Stalkers will literally stalk the players for several minutes as a way of gathering intelligence and ascertaining what role the players are supposed to be performing. Once they work out that the players have no real battlefield function and deduce they are merely stragglers, they will move in for the kill.

See page 306 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core rulebook details of Praetorian Stalkers.

ILIAN'S SHADOW HOUNDS

A pack of four Shadow hounds led by an Alpha has been running wild among the Dark Legion, scouting out the enemy and hunting down strays. At this stage in the battle they have little left to do but revel in the mayhem. They can pick up the players' scent and stalk them for as long as it takes. This encounter might serve to bring a sense of urgency and to keep the players moving along. Refer to page 89 in **Part 2: The Four Riders** for their templates.

THE HIGHLANDERS

The players come across a company of Imperial Highlanders. They have been attacked by the Dark Legion, and although they managed to hang on to their position and beat back the attack, they lost contact with the rest of their regiment. Seeing all his support break under the force of the onslaught, their leader, Major James Campbell, has decided to fall back towards the black pyramid. He hopes to find other remnants of the Brotherhood's alliance and link up with them to establish some sort of defensive position. He does not realise, however, how desperate the alliance's position is, and is unaware that the black pyramid is about to fall.

The Highlanders are on high alert in the middle of a battle zone; this will influence how they meet the players. They will be on the lookout for any enemy troops and are ready to attack fiercely should they meet any. The players will need to be very careful how they approach these troops. It might even be better for the players to get ambushed and overwhelmed. At least in that way the Highlanders will be in control of the situation and have time to work out that the players might not be the enemy. If the two groups meet in the middle of the battlefield on equal terms, then it could easily turn into a firefight.

Assuming the players eventually get accepted by Campbell as loyal to the cause, then he will be frank with them about the situation. Campbell will describe how the Dark Legion attacked in overwhelming numbers, how his Highlanders stood firm, but others fell back or were destroyed. He will tell them that their communications equipment is being jammed, or there is no one out there to communicate with.

Campbell will wonder what the state of the other fronts are and if they still hold the black pyramid, and will be grateful for any information on the subject. He will privately confide that he fears the worst; if the attacks on the other fronts were anywhere near as bad as they were against his, then he does not see how the defensive cordon can be maintained.

Campbell is aware that the pyramid was being held for some top secret reason. He knew that their defence was doomed to fail sooner rather than later but that the Brotherhood Inquisitors were talking of a redeemer who could soon arrive. Because of this, if the players are open and honest with him, then Campbell will readily believe that they are the key to this entire mission.

He will see their mission as a perfect opportunity to redeem the Highlanders and win the battle after all. Campbell will be prepared to put his troops at the players' disposal and sacrifice his entire force if it means the chance of defeating the Dark Legion.

The Highlanders will offer a great opportunity for the players to bring to bear some major firepower to help their cause. As their mission is to get into the pyramid, they might wish to try an all-out assault with the Highlanders. It would seem to be a suicide mission, but if all the players require is to get inside the pyramid, then the Highlanders would be prepared to sacrifice themselves in the attempt.

Another option might be to use the Highlanders as a diversionary attack, drawing the Dark Legion's defences while the players sneak in to the pyramid from the other direction. This would seem to be a better plan, and Campbell himself might even suggest it, if the players do not. Essentially, the Highlanders are there to be used however the players wish.



Campbell and his Highlanders hold the line.

THE NAME OF THE BEAST

MAJOR JAMES CAMPBELL

A handsome and heroic figure, Major James Campbell almost seems too good to be true. He is a very competent leader, and is loved by his men. He has the common touch but is comfortable with the weight of command on his broad shoulders. As it happens, at this stage of the campaign, he is exactly the sort of person the players might need.

Campbell has resigned himself to the fact that he is going to be killed by the Dark Legion in the jungles of Venus, so now it is just a matter of him doing this as well as he can. He knows the importance of the players' mission and he is determined to help them as much as he can.

If the players are not up to it, Campbell is perfectly able to come up with the best possible plan to get them across no man's land and into the black pyramid before the Dark Legion. If the players do come up with a plan, he can help them improve it, or follow it to the letter, if required.

Campbell is perfectly willing to sacrifice himself and all his men provided he believes he is doing exactly the right thing, and he should believe that. All the players need to do is be competent enough not to disabuse the man of that assumption.

MAJOR JAMES CAMPBELL, HIGHLANDER OFFICER ★

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	4	4	3	1

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: Mk. II Medium Combat Armour: (Head 3, Torso 4, Arms 3, Legs 3)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Punisher Short Sword (melee):** 1+♣4, 1H, Parry 1, Vicious 1
- ▶ **Mk XIV Aggressor (ranged):** Range C, 1+♣6, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Highlander Officer Training:** Major Campbell is a well-respected officer who has the full and undying loyalty of his troops. He may re-roll one d20 when making a Command or Willpower test, but must accept the new result. Additionally, he reduces the difficulty of Command tests by two steps, which may eliminate the need

for a test. Finally, reduce the difficulty by one step whenever the Major or the forces under his direct command must make a Willpower test, which may eliminate the need for a test.

- ▶ **Master Tactician, Superlative Achiever:** The powerful persona and mere presence of Major Campbell can lead to great achievements for not only himself, but also those around him. Any skill test that he makes, or that is taken by an ally within Medium range of Major Campbell, generates one additional point of Momentum.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ▶ **Loyal unto Death:** Any time the character comes under attack and has a character under his command within three metres, he may pay one Dark Symmetry point. In return, a character under his command immediately succeeds at a Defend Other Response Action, becoming the new target of the attack.

HIGHLANDER SOLDIER ▲

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

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
4	3	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 4

SOAK: Mk. II Medium Combat Armour: (Head 3, Torso 4, Arms 3, Legs 3)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Chainsword (melee):** 1+♣5, Unbalanced, Vicious 2, Parry 1
- ▶ **Invader Battle Rifle (ranged):** Range M, 1+♣6, Burst, 2H, None
- ▶ **GL 300 Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Range M, As Grenade, 2H

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Dogged Determination:** The Highlanders are renowned for their tenacity and willpower. A Highlander Soldier may re-roll one d20 when making a Willpower test, but must accept the new result.
- ▶ **Highlander Grounding:** The Highlander regiments are well trained combat troops with a well-earned reputation for professionalism. A Highlander Soldier may re-roll up to two damage dice following a successful Ranged Weapons attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, if Momentum is spent to perform a Swift Strike following a successful Ranged Weapons attack, there is no increase to the difficulty rating for the attack taken using Swift Strike. This ability, however, may only be used once per turn.

DEF ZONE ONE

The scene around the pyramid is strikingly different to when the players last saw it. If it were not for the pyramid standing black and inscrutable in the middle of the site, they would have no reason to even think it might be the same place.

Soon after the pyramid was discovered, the Brotherhood set up a prefabricated research camp around the site to support its study. This got to be quite sizeable. The Brotherhood levelled much of the surrounding forest to make room for its station and also built a long runway to keep up a steady stream of manpower and supplies.

Then when it realised the Dark Legion was coming, it built a system of defensive walls and towers around the whole area, levelling much more of the forest to give improved lines of sight. It also extended the runway to accommodate larger military aircraft. All this was done in a matter of weeks, and it shows.

Then over the last few days the whole place has become the centre of a raging battle. The forest is scarred with the detritus of battle and explosions, any number of localised forest fires, and aircraft crashes, as well as areas cleared by both sides for strategic reasons. Much of the concrete fortress is destroyed and many of the towers have been blown up or fallen. Barely any of the research huts remain intact. Coupled with the stifling heat and the appalling conditions anyway, this really could be hell on Venus.

Of course, if the players are viewing this at night, the sight will be even stranger, lit by raging fires and intermittent gunfire and ordnance. The pyramid itself will only be discernible through an absence of light.

NO MAN'S LAND

The entire site is surrounded by the Dark Legion and if they are to reach the pyramid, the players will need to get through its lines and then through the no man's land of the battle. In the darkness, they will have to solve the problem of being mistaken for Dark Legion forces by their own side.

When the players catch their first sight of the place, the battle should still be raging. There is a makeshift force of survivors still desperately holding on to their positions amid the wreckage and rubble, and the Dark Legion has taken so many casualties that it is not able to make that final push through quite yet.

The chaos of the battle, and the forces being stretched, will give the players a chance to get some way to the pyramid, but crossing the Dark Legion front line is bound to be difficult. They could try subterfuge and subtlety, and will likely be better off doing this by themselves. Or they could try brute force where they and the Highlanders push through as one. Or a mix of the two could be

the best bet, and will be suggested by Major Campbell. If the Highlanders were to launch a rear attack on a section of the Dark Legion line, the players would benefit, and possibly be able to creep through no man's land under that diversion.

The GM should play this by ear, but if the players get spotted by a Dark Legion commander, or some Dark Legion in a position to report the sighting, then it will launch a massive strike against them, and it will be very difficult for the players indeed. If the players do sneak through successfully, then the GM should have a stray section of the Dark Legion spot them and attack them as they make their way over the final part of their route in order to bring some urgency and tension to the final leg.

In any case, as they are scrutinising the Brotherhood positions, the Dark Legion is bound to spot the players as they enter the camp and this will be the cue for it to hurriedly launch a final, massive attack on the Brotherhood positions.

THE BROTHERHOOD FORCES

The Brotherhood forces have obviously taken a huge battering. The survivors come from virtually every regiment that made up the coalition of forces dedicated to protecting the pyramid. Most of them are now resigned to their inevitable deaths. There are a higher percentage of higher ranking troops and Brotherhood officials as the command centre was based at the pyramid.

The arrival of the players gives everybody new hope that their deaths might not be in vain, or even that they might actually survive. Many of them will look at the players in awe, some with a dignified respect, and some obviously nonplussed that such a bunch of rabble could really be the planet's only hope.

The players should have no trouble convincing the Brotherhood leadership, or indeed the rank and file, of their legitimacy. They have been praying for a miracle and as soon as they identify the players they will immediately know their prayers have been answered.

Of course, reaching the Brotherhood position does not bring any respite. They can have a quick chat with Inquisitor Voss if they need to, but it will not be long before one of the soldiers brings their attention to the Dark Legion positions.

Voss, and any other member of the Brotherhood, will be adamant that nobody should be allowed to enter the black pyramid and break the seal again, except the players. It is well known by now that only the players can withstand the corrupting influence of the Darkness that lurks within.



**INQUISITOR VOSS, BROTHERHOOD
COALITION COMMANDER** ☹

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
11	10	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	10	15	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

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

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 4** ▶▶ **Torso 8**
- ◀▶ **Arms 5** ▶▶ **Legs 6**
- ◀▶ **Serious 7** ▶▶ **Critical 4**
- ◀▶ **Mental Wounds 16**

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

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Deliverer Power Sword (melee):** 1+♣8, Armour Piercing 1, Duelling, Parry 1, Pious 2, Vicious 2
- ◀▶ **MP-21 Nemesis Machine Pistol (ranged):** Range C, 1+♣5, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1, Pious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Brotherhood War Leader:** Voss is a seasoned Inquisitor and battlefield commander, having led many front-line campaigns against the forces of the Dark Legion. He may re-roll up to three damage dice when making a Close Combat attack, or one d20 when making a Command test, but must accept the new results. Further, when wielding Unbalanced melee weapons, each point of Momentum used for Bonus Damage following a successful attack adds two points of damage, instead of one. Additionally, any time the forces under his direct command must make a Willpower test, they reduce the difficulty by two steps, which may eliminate the need for a test. Finally, he may substitute his Command skill for Observation or Insight tests when dealing with combat dynamics and tactical decisions.
- ◀▶ **Shining Spirit:** Voss is a shining example of the pinnacle of perfection that can be reached in the Art. He has Mysticism Expertise 4 and Mysticism Focus 4, and has mastered the spells Blessing, Contempt, Succour, Inner Gaze, Paragon, Regeneration, Perfection, Swiftness, Avatar, and Void. Further, he gains an additional Momentum spend on all spells with a duration of concentration that, for one Momentum, allows him to change the duration to five minutes.





Key

1- Fortifications



2- Factory debris



Scale

one segment equals twelve metres

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

◀ **Integrated Corporate Combined Arms Tactics:** Voss has coordinated and led a number of multi-faction actions, which has given him an appreciation of how to best use the different troops under his command. When involved in a combat that Voss is directly involved with, each player may pay up to two Dark Symmetry points following a successful Close Combat, Ranged Weapons, or Unarmed Combat attack to gain up to two additional Momentum. Alternatively, each player may pay two Dark Symmetry points to take a Sprint movement action as a Free Action. The payment represents Voss barking orders to subordinates and maneuvering his pieces; either option may only be employed once per turn, and both options cannot be used during the same player turn.

ENTERING THE PYRAMID

The final attack is bound to succeed, so the Dark Legion will only be a few minutes behind the players as they enter the pyramid. The players should work this out, or at least hear the sounds of the final battle behind them and realise that they will need to hurry through the pyramid if they are to get to the Dark Temptor before the Dark Legion does.

The first unit of the Dark Legion that reaches the pyramid will be the survivors of a troop of Undead Legionnaires who have been in the thick of the battle, so their pursuit of the players will be chaotic and confused. However, soon a unit of Ilian's Templars led by a Nephrite will get there and be more dedicated to the pursuit. This joint force will enter the pyramid aware of the Dark Temptor's presence and knowing that it is imperative that they stop the players reaching him.

Soon, more and more of the Dark Legion will break through and so the players will soon be entirely inundated if they try to defend their position. Their only hope is to attempt to reach the Dark Temptor and destroy him. And even then, there is not much to indicate that this will not lead to their deaths in any case.

Meanwhile, the main defence of the pyramid will fail completely. Only a few scattered Brotherhood units remain around the camp. They will soon flee into the jungle in desperation or get mopped up by the overwhelming forces of the Dark Legion. Perhaps they held on long enough for the miracle they were promised.



PART THREE: DESCENT INTO TEMPTATION

Once the players get into the pyramid they will be surrounded by that strange coldness, the lightlessness, and the hollow feeling of dread. These familiar feelings might even come as a kind of relief, or at least respite, after their travails in the febrile jungle.

The signs of humanity's invasion of the pyramid will be all around. There are a number of work stations set up that seem to be attempting various experiments on the material of the pyramid. Tents and tables have been placed around the various vaults as every field of science imaginable seems to want to make a stake in analysing the place. There is scientific equipment all over the place, as well as some military hardware, and all the ancillary support that might be expected.

THE TOMB AGAIN

Access into the depths of the pyramid is much easier now, with scaffolding, ladders, and walkways having been erected. There is lighting set up throughout the pyramid, too, but although it is apparent the lighting should be powerful, it still seems to dissipate preternaturally.

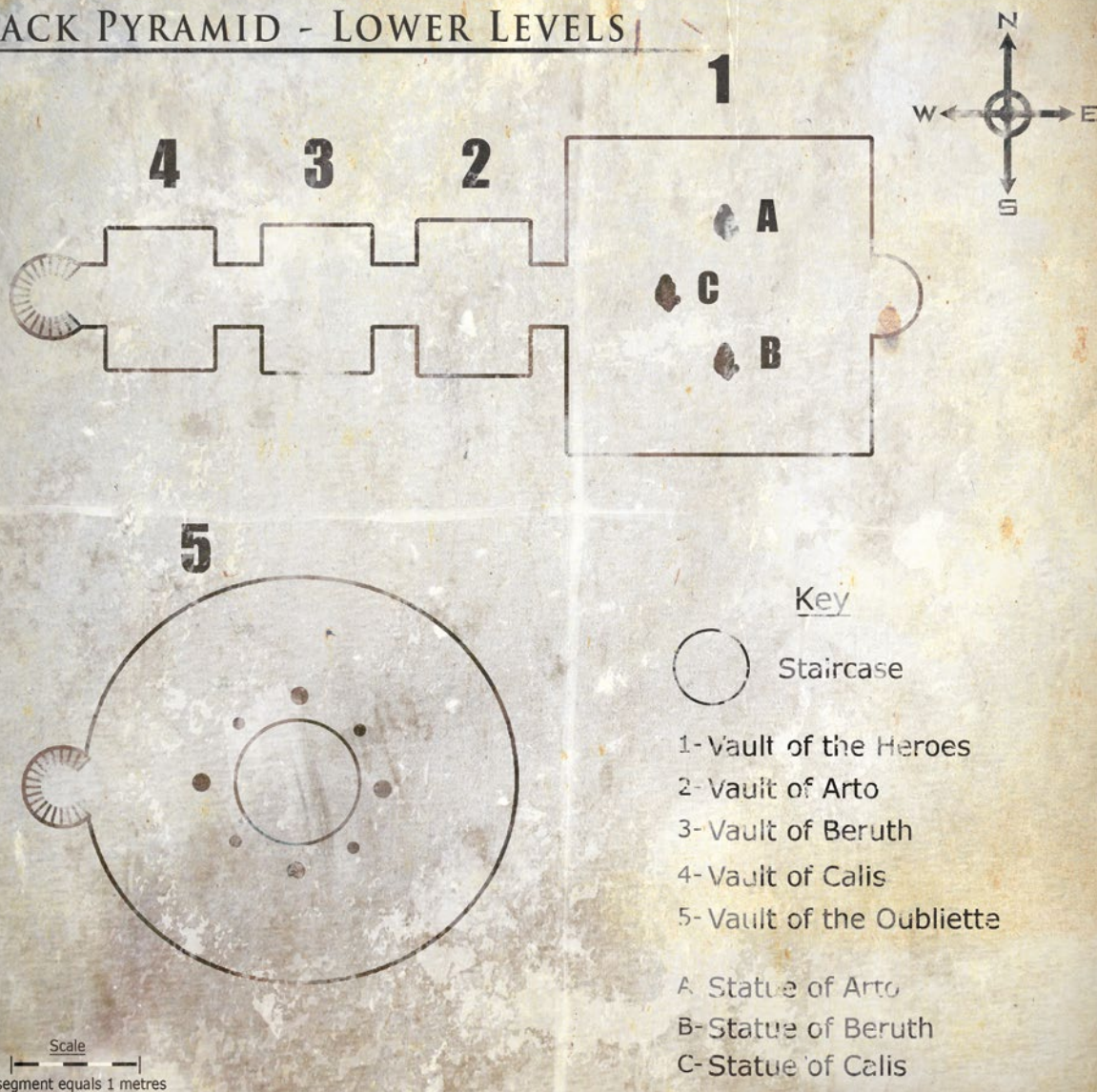
In the tomb, the sarcophaguses lie open and denuded of all their treasures. The area around the east sarcophagus, within which the players should remember lies the seal and the doorway to further exploration of the pyramid, has been taped off and a hand written sign says 'Do Not Disturb'. This seems a remarkably perfunctory and even pathetic way to guard one of the most dangerous places in existence.

If the players cobbled together some sort of re-seal before they left the pyramid the last time, then that seal remains intact, remarkably. If they did not, then the Brotherhood have managed to construct something that looks a little bit more effective. However, if the players are to confront and defeat the Dark Temptor, then they will need to break that seal.

Once it is broken, there is no dramatic rush of wind and darkness, this time. There is no sign at all that anything portentous has occurred. The gap left by the seal reveals two handles in the convex metal door, which can be easily pulled up and opened.

Beyond the doorway is a spiral stairway leading down into seeming interminable darkness. There is absolutely no light beyond this point, so the players will need to bring their own light sources. Fortunately for them, there are any number of portable lighting rods strewn around the tomb in an almost futile attempt to brighten the place up a bit. The way is narrow and must be followed in single file.

BLACK PYRAMID - LOWER LEVELS



THE VAULT OF THE HEROES

After four revolutions and about thirty meters of descent, the way opens out into the east wall of a new chamber. The room is about twenty metres square and five high. The players must pass through an ornate, pillared gateway to enter it. There is a similar gateway in the west wall of the vault.

The gateways and all the walls of the chamber are decorated with scenes reminiscent of those on the sarcophagus above. But whereas those on the sarcophagus seemed to depict some sort of specific narrative, the ones down here are such a chaotic jumble of images and figures that it is almost impossible to tell if there is any story behind them.

Across the middle of the room, taking up the same cardinal points that their sarcophagus did above, are three three-metre tall statues. Towards the west of the room is the young woman wearing a flowing dress and wielding a spear. She is flanked to the north by the man in ornate robes who wields a hammer, and to the south by the woman in a tunic wielding a sword.

If the players have been to see Jean-Louis Renauld then this will probably ring some bells. They may believe they have to cut down the statues in a specific order. However, what they have heard is not actually relevant to this part of the complex. But, knowing that they have come to destroy him, the Dark Temptor is going to use their

misapprehension in order to try to trick them into an imaginary world of his construction. And then he is going to eat their minds.

The way to the west is closed off by an impeccable and impenetrable slab of the black material. The players are likely to believe that they have to destroy the statues in order to open the gate, starting with Arto to the north, then Beruth to the south, and finally Calis to the west. This will open the door (although destroying the statues in any order will do that).

The statues will be easy enough to break if the players use the weapons acquired from the sarcophaguses. But once they have opened the door, the Dark Temptor will seize all the players' minds and transport them to an imaginary world. It does not really matter what the players believe, here, or what they do. As soon as the gate is opened the Dark Temptor will act.

TEMPTOR'S GAMBIT

Now the campaign should take a strange turn. The idea is that the Dark Temptor creates an entirely imaginary reality for the players. If this reality can be convincing, then he will be able to eat the players' minds while they live out a meretricious existence. Although in the players' minds this could take a matter of days or even months, in game time it will pass in the blink of an eye. If the players are convinced of this reality then, eventually, they will die. But the reality is flawed, and the GM should give the players hints about this, so that sooner or later they will see through the deceit. Of course, this might be a difficult trick for the GM to pull off, because the nature of roleplaying games is that they are imaginary realities themselves.

Whichever order the players decide to break the statues, the same events will occur. There is no right or wrong answer here. This is a trick of the Dark Temptor in order to take the players' minds. Once they break the statues, the players will be effectively trapped in an imaginary world without realising it. They will continue to seemingly progress through the game, but all the while they will be trapped in the Vault of the Heroes while the Dark Temptor burrows into their minds.

Many of the details of the world will be taken from the players' memories, some from other knowledge the Dark Temptor has, and some will be invented. But the Dark Temptor is not as effective at this as he imagines, and so the world will have enough discrepancies and anomalies in it that the players should eventually realise that things are not right.

As well as being a trick in the game, this will also be a sort of trick of the GM on the players. The GM should be careful that this will work for them, and that they will not feel cheated. As soon as the players themselves realise that all is not what it seems, and that their characters might still be stuck in the black pyramid, this will also be

the moment that the players also realise this, and the Dark Temptor's trick will be spoiled. The GM should try to play it so that he gets a good deal of play from the trick, but the players' discovery of the trick is intended if the campaign is to progress. So the GM should do his best to give the players cues and clues as to the nature of things. His deceit should not be as adversarial as that of the Dark Temptor.

Once the statues are broken, the GM should skip to the Aftermath section (page 168) of the campaign, as if the Dark Temptor has been defeated. He should describe the destruction of the pyramid, and the players' flight as if this is really happening in the game, because as far as the players are concerned, it is.

The GM should play through the end of the campaign exactly as if it were really happening, and at this stage, not give too many hints that things are not as they seem. The only slight clue he should give is that things go well and everyone seems slightly more content than they should be. Everything is just a bit brighter than it has been. Of course, as they have just defeated the Dark Temptor, this might only be expected.

The GM will need to give the players something to do, now, even if there was no intention to play past the destruction of the Dark Temptor. Explain to the players that there is still some mopping up required and some loose ends to be tied. The following encounter, Back to the Chateau, is designed for that purpose.

However, while playing Back to the Chateau the GM should bring in a number of clues that should eventually lead the players to the conclusion that they are still in the dark pyramid. As soon as they all collectively agree that this is the case, the spell will be broken and they will all regain consciousness where they left off in the Vault of the Heroes. Or if one of the players feels strongly that this is the case, even if his fellow players might not agree, the GM can rule that that player wakes up, and so he will be able to wake the others. But the GM should be careful not to do this too soon. Timing will be key to the effectiveness of this trick. It should not go on too long, but it should not end too soon.

TELLS

As well as the overall feel and tenor of the adventure, and the attitude of the people therein, these more blatant flaws should be brought into the game during Back to the Chateau. A variety of things should happen that will feel strange. These might be subtle and unremarkable at first, but the number and increasing weirdness of it all should be a good clue to the players that something is seriously wrong.

ANOMALOUS CALLER

Among the mundane details of everyday life, one of the players will receive a phone call from his mother, or other deceased relative. This will work better if the player and GM both know the mother has been dead for a good while.

She will phone and say how happy she is that the player is such a hero. She will point out that she always knew he was going to be a success, and that she could not be more proud of him. After the congratulations, talk will turn to every day details of the lives of the player's friends and relatives, most of which can be generally accurate.

If the player plays along the conversation will just go on as normal and eventually his mother will reiterate her pride and happiness and bid him goodbye. If, however, the player questions his mother about why she might be phoning him from beyond the grave, she will attempt to cover this incompetently, in a homely sort of way.

"Well, I was feeling a little poorly over the last few weeks, but I'm right as rain, now. Did I mention your uncle bought that new car he had his eye on?"

"No, son, I'm not dead, although aunt Gertrude did die last year, maybe you're thinking of her. You know they always said we looked alike."

A SLIGHT GLITCH

While playing a fairly innocuous scene the GM should suddenly halt things and ask to go back a few minutes and run through it again. He should ask the players to play it as closely to the first attempt as possible, and tell them that he will explain why in a bit later.

After they have gone over this old ground, the GM can ask everyone to do it one more time. Then after this third time the game can continue on as if this repetition never happened. If asked why, the GM should merely say it was a technical glitch, or something similarly meaningless.

Later on in the game, if the players are still in their imaginary side-track, the GM can play this same trick again. This time, with the players more used to the phenomenon, it can take place in the middle of a more intense and vital scene.

This is of course just there to show the players that they might be in the middle of something imaginary, and can be easily rationalised as the Dark Temptor losing concentration for a moment, or something similar going wrong with his constructed world.

SENSATIONS FROM THE PAST

Sometimes during the game, without warning, instead of the sensations that the players might expect to feel given their surroundings, they will feel what their real bodies are feeling in the black pyramid. Instead of whatever warmth there might be, they will feel the cold of the pyramid. Instead of the sights and sounds of their surroundings, they will see just the strange darkness of the pyramid, and the uneasy silence there. And they might feel like they are touching the weirdly flat, featureless, stone-like material of the pyramid.

As a handy hint for the players, the GM should do his best to describe these phenomena in the same sort of language he described the interior of the pyramid.

HAPPY DAY

Throughout the adventure everything will just be that much more pleasant and easier, and everyone the players meet will be that much more affable. This may or may not be off-putting. The players may believe they have earned a bit of respite from all that doom and gloom by defeating the Dark Temptor.

To drive this effect home, everyone in the adventure, instead of saying hello or goodbye or any other greeting, says 'Happy Day'. It seems that the Dark Temptor is so full of malevolence that the idea of a mundane and simple greeting is beyond him, and he just cannot get this right.

QUICK CUTS

The Dark Temptor has got better things to do than painstakingly recreate monotonous journeys and empty evenings. Therefore, time will fly when not much of interest is happening. Sometimes this will also cause the players to miss the chance to do things they might wish to do.

This should bring a sense of the preternatural and add the feeling of heightened reality. This will also serve to move the game along nicely, too. Of course, this might be exactly how the GM usually runs things.

INVISIBLE BARRIERS

The players might come to a seemingly normal place but somehow be unable to move in a certain direction. It will be as if a huge swathe of the world is cut off by an invisible barrier. The barrier cannot be felt or sensed at all. It is just as if the world beyond it is missing physical presence, although it can be seen in normal detail.

In a matter of seconds, the barrier will cease to be and the players will be able to move through it as if nothing had ever been in the way. There will be no trace at all that the barrier ever existed.

AN ALLY ON THE INSIDE

Unknown to them in this reality, the players are fighting against the Dark Temptor's control and deception from within their collective subconscious. This fight will manifest as a character in the setting who will attempt to warn the players what is actually happening. However, the Dark Temptor will fight back and attempt to kill this ally.

The ally should be someone the players have met before, and preferably someone they trust. It should also be someone who is conceivably still alive. If the players did not witness for definite the death of Sandrine Tate or Pol Gustav, then either of those will be perfect for this role. If the players suspect that they may be dead, however, this will also help with the air of unreality. For now, we shall assume this role is being taken by Tate.

When the players get to Chateau Renauld, Tate should approach them furtively. She will quickly explain that she has something important to tell them, vital to their very future, but she is being watched. She will tell them that she will contact them as soon as it is safe. And then she will leave, quickly disappearing into the crowd.

A while later one of the players will spot a message. It may be scrawled on the back of a napkin that comes with the *vol-au-vents*, finger painted onto a bathroom mirror, or written in the margin of one of the players' books. It will read something like 'Meet me in Renauld Square at midnight'.

Renauld Square is a quad in the middle of Jean-Louis' palace. When the players get there, they will see what looks like Tate on the other side of the square. As they approach her, a shot will ring out and she will crumple to the ground.

There will be no sign of her assassin, but as the players reach her Tate will still be alive. Before she expires she will just have time to say something like, 'Wake up. None of this is real. You're still...'

THE TEMPTING

The players were sent back to the black pyramid especially because they had been there before and resisted the Dark Temptor's temptations. However, by now many of the players in the party might be different to the group that started the campaign. Now would be a good time for the Dark Temptor to try to coerce any of the players who could still be susceptible to him.

The mechanics and ideas for tempting the players can be found in the Dark Temptor section of **Part 01: The Second Seal** (page 49). Of course, the imaginary landscape they are now operating in is perfect for constructing the sort of enticing traps that the Dark Temptor specialises in. If one or more of the players does end up being tempted, then the GM should play his cards close to his chest.

It is likely to be much too late in the campaign for the relevant players to make brand new characters, so they should probably be left to run their tempted characters obliviously until the Dark Temptor decides that it is the right moment to demand control of them and surprise the rest of the players. This will be tough on those players, but this is close to the climax of the campaign and the players need to earn their victory.

RETURN TO THE CHATEAU

This short scenario should be played as soon as possible once the players imagine they are back in Heimburg. This part of the adventure probably will not work so well if they just want to laze around basking in their recent success. If the players have a strong

idea of what to do next then they should be allowed to do it. The GM should use the Tells above during those events instead. If they have nothing particular to do then the GM should get them straight into Return to the Chateau.

A CALL TO ALMS

Brother Pleasance, a smiling Inquisitor, sends a message politely inviting the players to a meeting. When they get there, he does not keep them waiting and invites them in to his office personally. After spending a few minutes telling the players just how wonderful they are, he will explain that a few issues need clearing up at Chateau Renauld. As the players were the last people to see the place before it was destroyed by the Dark Legion, he humbly suggests that they might want to lead the expedition there.

He says that their job will be to investigate 'strange goings on' at the chateau, but he cannot really say much more about it. He will explain that an aid airlift is leaving very soon and that it would be lovely and fitting if the players could take their place on the flight.

THE CHATEAU

If the players agree to the mission, it will not be long before they can see the chateau below them as the aircraft circles the place before landing. The players should be expecting to see signs of the devastating attack that they recently witnessed. Even in their hurried escape from the complex they would have caught sight of massive explosions and structures collapsing.

There will, however, be little evidence of the attack of the Dark Legion. A contented-looking ancillary worker might be sweeping up a bit of broken glass, and another might be putting a shiny new coat of paint on a blast wall. If they ask about this, the players will be told that House Renauld has always been very efficient at cleaning up after its problems.

The players will be invited to see Jean-Louis Renauld once more. This time he will be in his apartment, which is at the top of one of the tallest and most spectacular towers. The players will be given an honour guard through the bright, gaily painted streets, where the happy townsfolk will line the streets and cheer them on.

THE QUESTS

The players will be shown into Renauld's offices. He will be sitting behind a desk in a well-worn leather chair, studying historical documents. It is possible that the players saw him die earlier in the campaign, or they saw that his death was inevitable. Either way, he will be plainly alive and well. He can shrug this off, telling them that he made a lucky escape by hiding under the desk, or other unlikely story.

He will thank them for coming and explain he is delighted that they did because he believes that they are probably the only ones who

can help him in this matter. He will say that he has discovered a danger to humanity that might be just as grave, if not considerably graver, than the matter they have just dealt with.

Renauld will further explain that he does not have all the information at hand, and so he cannot be sure exactly as to the nature of the beast, and he would like the players help to find the final pieces of the jigsaw. He needs several items that will serve to confirm his suspicions.

He will then go through the items and the work required to get them, and he will also specify which player will need to pursue which element. These orders will be based on each player's strengths and interests. This might appear corny and contrived to the player, but that is the nature of this part of the campaign. If it feels right and completely natural then the GM is doing it wrong.

If a player is a gun specialist, he might be asked to hunt down a rare eagle-like bird that lives upon the cliffs not too far from the Chateau. He will need to shoot the bird and bring back its body.

If the player is a wilderness survival specialist, then he will be asked to travel to a particularly inhospitable region, a few days from the chateau, and track down some elusive animal.

If the player is a knowledge specialist, he will be given a particular quote and the run of the chateau's library and asked to find out who said it.

If the player is a melee specialist, he will be asked to go to the nearby forest and defeat some bear-like wrestling creature.

If it is easier the GM can pair off or make small groups of the players for these little quests. If the players wonder aloud what all these strange objects could have to do with researching the Dark Symmetry, then Renauld will simply give them a knowing look and tap his nose.

Renauld will invite the players to spend the night in luxury at the Chateau before embarking on the quests first thing in the morning. This should give the GM time to play a Tell or two, and also an opportunity to conclude the An Ally on the Inside subplot.

The point is to keep the players busy doing nonsensical tasks while feeding them little clues that the reality around them is not what they think it is. Every moment they waste doing this brings them closer to defeat.

FINDING OUT

The GM should play the rest of this by ear. He should use the Tells above and other ideas discussed here to layer on the anomalies and ludicrousness of the situation, and hopefully at some point the

players will all agree that something is not right, and they might all just be still stuck in the black pyramid. At that point they will become awake and free to continue the rest of the adventure.

If this does not happen, sooner or later the GM will have to break it to players that they have spent the last few gaming sessions trapped in five seconds of the Dark Temptor's imagination and he has just eaten their minds.

A mechanic for dealing with this is deliberately omitted from this stage. The players should be free once they have realised things for themselves. It will not work to allow them to work it out abstractly through an Intelligence test, or something like that. Likewise, if they do work it out, they should be rewarded for definite, and not left to the mercy of the roll of the dice that might confirm their suspicions.

THE VAULTS OF THE GUARDIANS

The players will suddenly regain consciousness in the Vault of the Heroes amidst the shattered statues. The door to the western gateway will have gone. They can pass through it and find themselves in a narrow connecting corridor. If they follow it, after about ten metres they will find themselves in a smaller, five metre square chamber. This is the first of the Vaults of the Guardians.

These vaults were designed to keep intruders from freeing the Dark Temptor. The architects had in mind Heretics who might come to free him to join their cause. If the Dark Legion were to get to this section first, then that would no doubt be the sort of job they would be doing.

It might be worth mentioning to the players that their characters are treading a treacherous path, because as they go they will be destroying the defences that keep the Dark Temptor captive. If they manage to destroy the Dark Temptor then they will have done good, but until that moment they are effectively contributing to the cause of the Dark Symmetry. Perhaps even now they have even been brainwashed or they are being controlled by the Dark Temptor to do his bidding.

THE VAULT OF ARTO

This chamber is decorated with scenes from the life of Arto similar to those depicted on his sarcophagus. As soon as the players enter the vault of Arto an image of the hero will appear before them as if magically from the air. This apparition is very real, however, and can affect the world as if it were entirely solid.

This apparition is of a younger Arto in power armour, his helmet removed and his bearded face clearly visible. The apparition will attack whoever is in sight until they retreat. However, one hit from the Hammer of the Heroes will destroy the manifestation of Arto.

APPARITION OF ARTO ☠

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
13 (+2)	13 (+2)	12 (+2)	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	9	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-	-	-	-

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 9
- ◀ Arms 10
- ◀ Serious 12
- ◀ Mental Wounds 11
- ◀ Torso 14
- ◀ Legs 12
- ◀ Critical 9

SOAK: 6: (Incorporeal)



Arto is not ready to leave t his world.

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Manifestation of the Hammer (melee):** 4+ \uparrow 7, 2H, Knockdown, Mind Breaker, Pious 2, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Fast Healing (2)**
- ◀ **Fear 2**
- ◀ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◀ **Incorporeal (6)**
- ◀ **Inured to Pain**
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Supernatural Agility (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Physique (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Strength (2)**
- ◀ **Unliving**
- ◀ **Arto's Vulnerability:** One touch from his former weapon is all that is required to send this apparition to rest. A successful melee attack made against Arto with the Hammer of Heroes bypasses his Incorporeal Soak and will irrevocably destroy the spectre, regardless as to whether any damage is actually dealt. The blow must be dealt to his body; Arto parrying the Hammer of Heroes with his own weapon will not invoke this effect. Attacks made with either the Spear or Sword of Heroes will bypass his Incorporeal Soak and deal damage as normal (he is not instantly destroyed).
- ◀ **Unearthly Apparition:** Although bound to the physical realm, the Apparition of Arto is not wholly governed by its laws; he is immune to the Knockdown and Toxic weapon qualities.
- ◀ **Warrior of Legend:** The apparition fights with all of the skill and gusto that had been attributed to Arto during his life. He may re-roll up to four damage dice when making a Close Combat attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, he need not spend a Dark Symmetry point in order to take his first Dodge or Parry Response Action in a combat turn (although further Response Actions will still require Dark Symmetry point expenditure), and may substitute his Close Combat skill for Acrobatics any time he attempts a Dodge Response Action. Further, after successfully executing a Parry Response Action, he may immediately spend a Dark Symmetry point to make a standard melee attack against the parried foe, with the additional benefit that Momentum remaining from the Parry action is carried over to this melee attack. Finally, when wielding Two-Handed weapons, each point of Momentum used for the Bonus Damage Momentum spend yields three points of damage instead of one.

THE VAULT OF BERUTH

Like the vault of Arto, the vault of Beruth is decorated with scenes similar to those on her sarcophagus. Again, as soon as the players enter she will appear and attack them. She appears as a skilful figure, with short hair and masculine clothes. Once again, should she be hit with her own weapon, the Sword of the Heroes, she will disappear immediately.

APPARITION OF BERUTH ☹

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
12 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+3)	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	9	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-	-	-	-

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 7 ▶ Torso 12
- ◀ Arms 9 ▶ Legs 10
- ◀ Serious 11 ▶ Critical 8
- ◀ Mental Wounds 11

SOAK: 6: (Incorporeal)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Manifestation of the Sword (melee):** 4+^T6, Unbalanced, Mind Breaker, Parry 1, Pious 1, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Fast Healing (2)**
- ◀ **Fear 2**
- ◀ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◀ **Incorporeal (6)**
- ◀ **Inured to Pain**
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Supernatural Agility (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Physique (2)**
- ◀ **Supernatural Strength (2)**
- ◀ **Unliving**
- ◀ **Beruth's Vulnerability:** One touch from her former weapon is all that is required to send this apparition to rest. A successful melee attack made against Beruth with the Sword of Heroes bypasses her Incorporeal Soak and will irrevocably destroy the spectre, regardless as to whether any damage is actually dealt. The blow must be dealt to her body; Beruth parrying the Sword of Heroes with her own weapon will not invoke this effect. Attacks made with either the Hammer or Spear of Heroes will bypass her Incorporeal Soak and deal damage as normal (she is not instantly destroyed).
- ◀ **Unearthly Apparition:** Although bound to the physical realm, the Apparition of Beruth is not wholly governed by its laws; she is immune to the Knockdown and Toxic weapon qualities.
- ◀ **Unparalleled Blademistress:** Within her hands, Beruth's sword is a whirling vortex of death and slaughter. She may re-roll up to four damage dice when making a Close Combat attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, she need not spend

a Dark Symmetry point in order to take her first Dodge or Parry Response Action in a combat turn (although further Response Actions will still require Dark Symmetry point expenditure), and may substitute her Close Combat skill for Acrobatics any time she attempts a Dodge Response Action. Further, after successfully executing a Parry Response Action, she may immediately spend a Dark Symmetry point to make a standard melee attack against the parried foe, with the additional benefit that Momentum remaining from the Parry action is carried over to this melee attack. Finally, Beruth may immediately roll two d20 on any Close Combat attack made with the Manifestation of the Sword that generates at least one success.

THE VAULT OF CALIS

Similar to the first two vaults, this is the vault of Calis, who appears as a beautiful young woman in a flowing dress. Her apparition wields what looks like the Spear of the Heroes, which is the greatest of the three weapons. If she is hit by the genuine article then her apparition will disappear.

APPARITION OF CALIS ☹

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
12 (+2)	12 (+1)	13 (+3)	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	9	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-	-	-	-

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 7 ▶ Torso 12
- ◀ Arms 9 ▶ Legs 10
- ◀ Serious 11 ▶ Critical 8
- ◀ Mental Wounds 11

SOAK: 6: (Incorporeal)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Manifestation of the Spear (melee):** 4+^T6, 1H, Armour Piercing 2, Mind Breaker, Pious 1, Reach

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Fast Healing (2)**
- ◀ **Fear 2**
- ◀ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◀ **Incorporeal (6)**
- ◀ **Inured to Pain**
- ◀ **Night Vision**

THE NAME OF THE BEAST

- ◄ Supernatural Agility (2)
- ◄ Supernatural Physique (2)
- ◄ Supernatural Strength (2)
- ◄ Unliving
- ◄ **Calith's Vulnerability:** One touch from her former weapon is all that is required to send this apparition to rest. A successful melee attack made against Calith with the Spear of Heroes bypasses her Incorporeal Soak and will irrevocably destroy the spectre, regardless as to whether any damage is actually dealt. The blow must be dealt to her body; Calith parrying the Spear of Heroes with her own weapon will not invoke this effect. Attacks made with either the Hammer or Sword of Heroes will bypass her Incorporeal Soak and deal damage as normal (she is not instantly destroyed).
- ◄ **Pre-Eminent Spearmaiden:** Calith wields her spear as a perfect extension of her body, never missing a beat between parry or attack. She may re-roll up to four damage dice when making a Close Combat attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, she need not spend a Dark Symmetry point in order to take her first Dodge or Parry Response Action in a combat turn (although further Response Actions will still require Dark Symmetry point expenditure), and may substitute her Close Combat skill for Acrobatics any time she attempts a Dodge Response Action. Finally, after successfully executing a Parry Response Action, she may immediately spend a Dark Symmetry point to make a standard melee attack against the parried foe, with the additional benefit that Momentum remaining from the Parry action is carried over to this melee attack.
- ◄ **Unearthly Apparition:** Although bound to the physical realm, the Apparition of Calith is not wholly governed by its laws and is immune to the Knockdown and Toxic weapon qualities.

DARK SYMMETRY SPENDS

- ◄ **A Thousand Punctures:** Calith wields her spear with deft skill and precision that can leave an opponent bleeding from a multitude of puncture wounds, although she can just as easily bury her weapon deep and all too often strike a vital organ or graze bone when doing so. As a Restricted Action, she may spend two Dark Symmetry points to add either the Gruesome or Vile quality to the next melee attack she makes within the same combat turn.

If the players are spending a lot of time dealing with the Heroes then they should soon feel the need to hurry, as they will sense the Dark Legionnaires gaining on them as they make their own way into the pyramid. If they deal with things quickly, then they should be rewarded by getting a bit more time at the climax of the adventure.

Once the apparitions are 'killed' in combat or touched by their own hero-weapon they will be destroyed, never to return. Beyond the Vault of Calis is another spiral staircase leading downwards. This goes down for another four revolutions and then opens out into the Vault of the Oubliette.

THE VAULT OF THE OUBLIETTE

This is a large circular chamber about twenty metres across. It has a high domed ceiling, and is actually a semi-sphere. At the centre of the room is a dark metal plate set into the floor. This plate is about four metres across, and it is decorated with similar scenes to those elsewhere in the pyramid. There is no sign of a join across the plate or any indication that the thing moves. In fact, it is a trap door, the last barrier between the players and the Dark Temptor.

Around the plate are eight primitive looking clay jars, at the cardinal and inter-cardinal points. These jars are set upon black stone plinths at about waist height. The way to open the trap door is to break every jar simultaneously. If this is not done simultaneously, the jars will not break or even move. If it is done simultaneously, then the jars are no less fragile than your average flower pot.

The idea is that there should be eight people present and they should coordinate their breaking of the jars. In the event that there are fewer than eight people now present, the players will need to think of a way to break them simultaneously. This should not be too difficult as players are generally resourceful. Of course, they are up against the clock and will need to think quickly. Depending on how urgent they have been in their way down to this level they might only be a matter of seconds ahead of their pursuers.

THE DARK TEMPTOR RISES

If the jars are broken, they crumble to dust. The metal plate in the floor begins to move. It slides and rotates in a conspicuously complex pattern, before disappearing into the sides of the floor to reveal an impenetrably dead-black hole going straight down.

The ground will feel like it is shaking, a rush of air seems to get sucked into the hole. The players will feel like bracing themselves so that they are not sucked down with it. It will feel like the world is imploding, and the players are standing at the very centre of the world. Then, in a few moments, the Dark Temptor will emerge.

The creature is dark and glistening, snarling and spitting angrily as it nimbly clambers up through the hole from its long incarceration far below. Though essentially a four meter high humanoid, it has six sinuous limbs all ending in large, clawed, blue-black hands. Its head is set with uncountable eyes, some mammalian, some insectoid, some unknown. It is crowned with horned armour, and its three mouths are gaping maws lined with razor sharp teeth. It has a long serpentine tail that lashes like a whip.

It is terrible and beautiful to behold. The creature is one of cunning and whispering fears, but those defences are no longer required. Now it is all about physical struggle, and the creature, imprisoned for aeons, is very angry indeed. The creature will lash out at any in



The Dark Temptor's prison awaits.

the chamber, using its many limbs and tail to swipe and claw at its enemies and its huge mouths to bite them.

It is actually impossible to damage the creature except with the Weapons of the Heroes. This is why it was so vital that the players bring at least one of those weapons with them. Even so, merely having one will make the fight a struggle. It should be a difficult enough fight if they have all three.

Any spare players who are not armed with a Weapon of the Heroes, can be rewarded for fighting anyway, running distractions and getting in the way, even though they should quickly realise that their weapons are not having any effect.

If the fight goes on for any length of time it is likely that the Dark Legionnaires will also turn up. They will recognise their master when

they see it, and they can join in to help it. In contrast, the Dark Temptor is not interested in differentiating between friend and foe at this stage. It just wants to kill and destroy.

DARK TEMPTOR ☠

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	13
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
11	12	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	3	4	3	2	2	3	3	4	4	2	2

WOUNDS:

- ◄ Head 9
- ◄ Arms 11
- ◄ Serious Wounds 13
- ◄ Mental Wounds 17
- ◄ Torso 14
- ◄ Legs 12
- ◄ Critical Wounds 19

SOAK: Dark, Otherworldly Blessings: (All 5)

ATTACKS:

- ◄ **Brutal Slam (melee):** 3+**T**6, 1H, Knockdown, Reach, Spread 1, Stun
- ◄ **Vicious Gaping Maws (melee):** 3+**T**6, 1H, Armour Piercing 2, Dreadful, Gruesome, Reach, Spread 1, Vicious 2
- ◄ **Wicked Talons (melee):** 3+**T**5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Corrupted 3, Parry 2, Reach

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◄ **Fast Healing (3)**
- ◄ **Fear (4)**
- ◄ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◄ **Grasping**
- ◄ **Inured to Cold**
- ◄ **Inured to Disease**
- ◄ **Inured to Heat**
- ◄ **Inured to Pain**
- ◄ **Inured to Poison**
- ◄ **Inured to Vacuum**
- ◄ **Monstrous Creature**
- ◄ **Night Vision**
- ◄ **Slave to Symmetry (1)**
- ◄ **Supernatural Agility (1)**
- ◄ **Supernatural Mental Strength (2)**
- ◄ **Supernatural Personality (2)**
- ◄ **Supernatural Physique (2)**
- ◄ **Supernatural Strength (2)**
- ◄ **Avatar of Temptation:** The Dark Temptor is akin in power to the five Apostles, though perhaps more deadly due to the high undetectable nature of its manifested power. When the Dark Temptor enters a scene, the GM adds five points to the Dark Symmetry pool. Further, the Dark Temptor has a personal pool of Dark Symmetry points—which are not drawn from the GM's pool—of five points, which refreshes at the start of every round. The Dark Temptor only draws from the main Dark Symmetry pool if it would spend more than five points in a single round.
- ◄ **Multi-limbed:** The multiple limbs of the Dark Temptor lend it a distinct advantage in combat. The Dark Temptor gains two bonus Momentum on every successful attack with its Wicked Talons. Further, the Secondary Target and Swift Strike Momentum spends cost one Momentum instead of two when attacking with its Wicked Talons.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◄ **Master of Ensnarement:** The Dark Temptor is the inner voice that whispers your darkest desires. It is the irrefutable logic that leads to corruption, and the imperceptible Darkness within. It is capable of using all of the basic Dark Gifts and all gifts of Semai, plus Dark Ward, True Corruption, Waking Nightmare, and Dream Transfer.
- ◄ **Sibilant Whispers:** The almost continual whispering that issues forth from the Dark Temptor's three vicious maws cause a constant buzzing distraction. Unless they succeed at a Challenging D2 Willpower test, characters within Close range of the Dark Temptor increase their Repercussion range by one. Success on the Willpower test renders the character immune to this effect for the remainder of the scene. The creature may spend two Dark Symmetry points for the horrific murmuring to invoke a Challenging (D2) mental assault and inflict one point of Dread.
- ◄ **Through Temptation Are We Free:** The Dark Temptor is the herald of a new breed of Heretic amongst humanity, one that is able to walk virtually undetected by the powers of Light. The Dark Temptor may spend five Dark Symmetry points and use a Standard Action to infuse a willing and submissive target with a hidden well of Darkness. The Tempted gains the Hidden Talent (see page 59) and access to the Snare the Unwilling Mind and Waking Nightmare Dark Gifts.

VICTORY AND DEFEAT

Should the players fail and the Dark Temptor become free, then that is bad news for Venus, although the players are likely to be dead in any case. The Dark Temptor will lead the Dark Legion out of the jungle and cut a murderous swathe across Venus. Once it has calmed down a bit, it will also use its powers of persuasion and mind control to take control of some of the more high ranking humans on Venus and send them off across the solar system to do its bidding.

In a matter of months, most of Venus will be under its control and the Dark Legion will be making significant in-roads elsewhere as the influence of the Dark Temptor's many Tempted minions begins to take hold. The nature of the struggle against the Dark Soul will be changed irredeemably and forever. It could be the basis of another campaign to land a band of heroes on Venus, find the black pyramid and the strange, ancient weapons still lying within, and then attempt to kill the Dark Temptor itself.

Should the Dark Temptor fall in battle, then it will be destroyed. It should fall back into its oubliette never to be seen again. And it turns out that whoever dealt the killing blow was after all the one who had been prophesied to kill the Dark Temptor all along, proving just how much easier it is to interpret prophesy after the fact, than before it.

Then the ground will begin to shake, and the implosion that was felt earlier will begin in earnest. It should be pretty obvious that the



The Dark Temptor rises from imprisonment.

THE NAME OF THE BEAST

pyramid might soon begin to collapse. If the players do not take the hint, then chunks of the erstwhile unbreakable black rock will begin to fall from the domed ceiling.

Having seen their champion fall, the Dark Legionnaires will become oblivious to the players. While some will be equally oblivious to the collapsing pyramid, some will attempt to flee. They might serve to get in the players' way as they try to get out.

As the players struggle against the intruding air, the GM can ask for a couple of checks against losing their balance and falling masonry if he desires, but it would be a shame to die trying to exit the building after bringing the campaign to such a heroic ending.

AFTERMATH

As the players make it out into the jungle, the sun should just be rising above the distant treetops. The pyramid is visibly shaking and the top levels are beginning to collapse. It should be fairly obvious that if they are to be safe, the players will need to get completely off the structure and even further away than that.

Fortunately for them, the Dark Legion has taken the hint and is fleeing into the jungle in chaos. As the players look behind them, the pyramid collapses so that it is virtually flat, but then continues to sink, creating a crater. The crater expands downwards and outwards, eating up the entire Brotherhood camp and fortifications, and goes on expanding as far as the jungle, pulling everything into it.

In a matter of minutes all that is left of the entire site is a deep crater in the jungle, with almost no sign that any humans or any Dark Legion were ever there.

Any Tempted or other characters under the direct influence of the Dark Temptor will find this influence suddenly removed, and they will be able to continue with their lives as if nothing had happened to them.

Optionally, if this is to be the definite end of the entire campaign and the GM likes an emphatic finale, then the collapsing pyramid and crater can capture the players and drag them down with it to their certain deaths. This is also a suitably heroic ending, and some players enjoy that sort of thing, but others will prefer not to have their characters die in such an arbitrary manner.

BACK TO HEIMBURG

Over the next few hours the players are likely to bump into the odd survivor, perhaps even characters they have met before, to tie up some loose ends and bring some more satisfaction to the ending. But there will be no Dark Legion to be found, anywhere. Soon

Brotherhood flyers will be doing flyovers, trying to work out what has happened and looking for survivors. The players will be taken back to (what remains of) the cathedral in Heimburg. Of course, now that they are *bona fide* heroes, they could probably order the flyer's crew to take them wherever they feel like going.

Once they get back to the cathedral, the players will notice how differently they are being treated by the Brotherhood. They have probably been captured, imprisoned, interrogated, and ordered around more times than they can recall over the course of the campaign, and they have probably grown to dislike the Brotherhood in general, or certainly some of the individuals within it. Now they are being treated with respect and even deference. More petty players would certainly take advantage of that and try to even up some of the scores.

The Brotherhood will request that the players deposit their Weapons of the Heroes, and any other papers and artefacts they have acquired, with the Venusian Heritage Museum. But just for once, if the players refuse, no one in the Brotherhood is going to be brave enough to insist.

This should all be a satisfactory ending to the campaign, but it can continue on from here. The players will be held in high regard by anyone in the know and will be in a position to call the shots. If they wish to continue on how they have always done things, as violent, jobbing troubleshooters, then this will be possible. But the people that employ them will be that much higher ranked and the sorts of jobs they get asked to do will be that much more difficult.

Or, if they wish, they will be given the backing to do what they feel is best. They can have a department within the Brotherhood to orchestrate their own fight against the Dark Soul, given resources, manpower, and equipment, even their own private army. Other institutions and corporations, for example Bauhaus or House Renauld, will be keen to get the players on side, and will offer to back them with whatever they require.

The players will be in a good position to shape the campaign around their whims and shape the fight against the Dark Soul the way they wish to conduct it. This will bring in schemes and events of a whole different scale to what they are used to, but they will have earned the respect to pull it off. Until they mess up, then every corporation and organisation that has taken an interest will come gunning for them.

DEJA VU

If the GM really wants to mess with his players' heads, he can now run through Temptor's Gambit and the Return to the Chateau adventure again.

PREGENS

DIRK ANDERSON ACADEMIC RESEARCHER

Dirk Anderson is a San Dorado born Capitolian. Born with his treasured gilded holy icon in his mouth, Dirk grew up amongst the wealth and affluence of the Mars elite, and his family were known in the most prestigious of circles, until his uncle ruined it all; rumours of gratuitous debauchery became fact and interplanetary scandal overnight, which led to an identity change and relocation to Venus.

His family strictly adhered to the Brotherhood's teachings, so Dirk chose to join its education program in an effort to escape the debacle. He flourished under the Brotherhood's tutelage, but gained a lifelong enemy when he caused the expulsion of a fellow student for being indifferent at best to its doctrines. With his potential in the Art failing to manifest, he chose to move on.

Dirk then thrust himself into the ravenous maw of the Venusian corporate world. Clever, charismatic, and intelligent enough to make a success of himself, he took to insider trading to foster his career. His boss became aware of his actions and threatened to take it to the Board. Not enjoying the fact that he was beholden to someone, he opted for a career change.

Searching for a quieter life, he decided to utilise his skills and became a religious academic researcher, where he quickly proved his value by finding a mysteriously empty Heretic hideout, and an item of great value. He fears it is only a matter of time before its previous owner comes to reclaim it.

TRATIS: Capitol, Elite, Heritage World (San Dorado), Brotherhood Educated, Corporate (Executive Management), Academic Researcher

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
5	7	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	12	12	12

SKILLS:

- ◀ **Close Combat** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Command*** Expertise 1, Focus 1

- ◀ **Education*** Expertise 3, Focus 1
- ◀ **Insight** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Lifestyle** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Linguistics** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Mysticism** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Observation** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Persuade*** Expertise 3, Focus 2
- ◀ **Ranged Weapons** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Resistance** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Science** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Unarmed Combat** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Willpower** Expertise 2

DAMAGE BONUSES: Ranged (+↑1), Influence (+↑3)

WOUNDS:

- ◀ **Head 2**
- ◀ **Arms 3**
- ◀ **Serious 5**
- ◀ **Mental 12**
- ◀ **Torso 6**
- ◀ **Legs 4**
- ◀ **Critical 3**

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

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1

TALENTS

- ◀ **Citizen/Shareholder of Capitol**
- ◀ **Charismatic:** The character's Influence rating is increased by ↑1.
- ◀ **Disciplined Student:** If the character generates at least one success when attempting an Education test, he may immediately roll an additional 1d20 and add the result to the skill test.
- ◀ **Naturally Charming (1):** The character has a warm personality and a winning smile. A successful Persuade test yields one additional point of Momentum.
- ◀ **Spot Context:** The character has a broad education that includes an understanding of history and culture from a variety of different perspectives. When interacting with an opponent, the character may attempt an Average D1 Education test as a Restricted Action. On success, he recognises an element of common ground for discussion in his opponent. Any Momentum from the Education test may be immediately added to a Persuade or Command test taken as a Standard Action.

CHARACTER TRAIT

◀ Paranoia

EQUIPMENT (EARNINGS 5)

Set of corporate quality clothing, small symbol of the Brotherhood, a lavish apartment in the most exclusive complex in the most exclusive part of the city, an extensive wardrobe bespoke-tailored, ultra-fashionable clothing, fashionable quality corporate suit, personal library, Piranha Handgun (two Reloads), twelve assets, antique and enigmatic sceptre (worth five assets).

ALLAN STRAUSS MILITARY EXPLOSIVES EXPERT



Allan hails from a hard working family unit that lived by the rules and were happy with their lot. Allan idolised his mechanic father, who maintained the fleet of vehicles at the Kruger's personal asteroid holiday spot, and enjoyed every oily welcome upon his return from work. When not working overtime, he would go with his father to the scrap cavern and make small incendiary devices with everyday chemicals and salvaged parts.

Disaster struck during his apprenticeship at his father's workplace when an industrial incident resulted in the death of his father. The company investigation found the employee at fault. Despite taking the decision to remove the Strauss family from the asteroid, the estate manager of the Kruger's holiday home was insistent that he owed the family a favour.

Travel from the Asteroid Belt to Venus involved a brief stint on a military transport. Regaled with tales of heroism and adrenaline, he made the decision to enrol with the Dragoons as soon as they made planetfall. He quickly settled into the military and was encouraged to pursue his mechanical and incendiary aptitude. Unfortunately, the death of her husband, and assumed loss of her only son, saw his mother die of a broken heart. Allan inherited the small stipend they had put aside.

Shortly after joining the military, he became unwittingly involved in a supply chain that was providing military grade explosives to civilian revolutionary factions. The BLEUs dragged him in for questioning during an R&R break; they let him go, but assured him that they would be seeking a return for the favour in the future. Allan requested an Honourable Discharge shortly after returning to base.

He's a simple guy who likes the paradox of fixing things or blowing them up.

TRAITS: Bauhaus, Working Lower, Sequestered, Technical Pre-Career, Military (Basic) ×2

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
11	10	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
11	11	12	6

SKILLS:

- ◀ **Acrobatics** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Athletics** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Close Combat** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Education** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Lifestyle** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Mechanics*** Expertise 4, Focus 1
- ◀ **Observation** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Pilot*** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Ranged Weapons*** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Resistance** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Survival** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Treatment** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Willpower** Expertise 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Melee (+↑2), Ranged (+↑1)

WOUNDS:

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

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Military Uniform, Medium Military Shoulder Pads: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **AG-17 Panzerknacker (ranged):** Range M, 1+↑6, Burst, 2H, Ammo (Armour Piercing 1, Spread 1)
- ◀ **GW-170 Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Range M, Munition, 2H
- ◀ **Dad's Old Wrench (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H, Stun

TALENTS

- ◀ **Citizen/Subject of Bauhaus**
- ◀ **Natural Engineer:** The character may re-roll a single d20 on the initial roll of a Mechanics test., but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Snap Diagnosis:** The character is able to identify the problem with any broken device—or to recognise a vulnerability that could be used to break a device. The character reduces the difficulty of any Mechanics test by one. This may reduce the difficulty to zero, removing the need for a test. When an exploit

APPENDIX 01

weakness action is taken, Snap Diagnosis also grants the Armour Piercing weapon quality to the character's subsequent attack for a value equal to their Mechanics Focus.

- ◆ **Sniper:** When making an attack with a ranged weapon, a character may re-roll a number of damage dice equal to the number of Ranged Weapons talents he has acquired. The new results must be accepted.
- ◆ **Gun In Hand:** The character is always prepared for a gunfight. As a Response Action the character may respond to an attack with an attack of his own with any weapon he can wield in one hand. This attack has a base difficulty of Daunting D3, and is resolved before the enemy attack. If this reaction kills or otherwise incapacitates the attacker, then his attack is prevented.

CHARACTER TRAIT

- ◆ **Pragmatic**
- ◆ **Favour:** A contact in Bauhaus owes you a favour.

EQUIPMENT (EARNINGS 3)

Basic well-worn clothing, some of which is new, dad's old wrench, a small suburban apartment in a quiet part of town, basic toolkit, AG-17 Assault Rifle (two Reloads), six assets.

ANZHELIKA ZHIDORKOVA

SURVIVAL EXPERT



Anzhelika grew up in the confines of a Luna monitoring station. Her parents hated each other, fought tooth and nail, and barely acknowledged her presence. So, at an early age, she left home and decided to fend for herself.

Skipping to Luna itself, she lived on the streets and would work in sweatshops for money. Eking an existence made her hardy and tough, but a particularly nasty chemical exposure left her immune system struggling to cope with allergens. She decided to seek her fate amongst the stars and caught a transport to Venus, where she planned to use her self-taught skills to build a career as a respected frontierswoman. The transport broke down *en route*, with the loss of most of the crew and passengers to space dementia or starvation over the following months. Anzhelika kept company with the ship's animal compliment to maintain her sanity and physical safety, and shunned human contact until rescued.

Scarred by the trauma of her space escapade, she threw herself into the jungle in an attempt to again distance herself from 'civilized' people. When she finally emerged, she put her animal husbandry and survival skills to use keeping clients alive on corporate pleasure trips. It was here that Anzhelika began a torrid affair with Helman

Dante, nephew to the Chief Executive of the Dante household. She ended the relationship when he asked her to move to Heimbürg, having offered to buy her a lavish apartment; her barriers had immediately risen at the thought of becoming somebody's pet. Helman did not take the news well, and used his financial clout to close down her employer's outfit.

She has taken up the Renauds' offer of employment to provide survival advice and animal expertise on the trip, and is also hoping to distance herself from the long reach of the Dante empire.

She likes a challenge, the harder the better because she can prove everyone wrong and win.

TRAITS: Whitestar, Working Lower, Luna Monitoring Station, Grew Up on the Streets, Frontierswoman ×2

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	11	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	10	8

SKILLS:

- ◆ **Animal Handling*** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◆ **Athletics** Expertise 2
- ◆ **Close Combat** Expertise 1
- ◆ **Observation** Expertise 2
- ◆ **Resistance*** Expertise 3, Focus 1
- ◆ **Stealth** Expertise 1
- ◆ **Survival*** Expertise 3, Focus 2
- ◆ **Thievery** Expertise 1
- ◆ **Unarmed Combat** Expertise 1
- ◆ **Willpower** Expertise 3, Focus 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Melee (+↑2), Ranged (+↑1)

WOUNDS:

- ◆ **Head 4**
- ◆ **Arms 5**
- ◆ **Serious 7**
- ◆ **Mental 10**
- ◆ **Torso 8**
- ◆ **Legs 6**
- ◆ **Critical 4**

SOAK: Threadbare Ballistic Nylon Fatigues: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Iron Hand Autopistol (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑5, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Close Quarters

TALENTS

- ◀ **Citizen/Comrade of Whitestar**
- ◀ **Self Sufficient:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making a Survival test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Scrounger:** Useful items and resources are often discarded or abandoned. A resourceful individual can often recover these for his own purposes. The character may reduce the Restriction value when attempting to acquire an item equal to his ranks of Scrounger, to a minimum of one.
- ◀ **Provider:** The character is particularly capable of finding the necessities of life. When attempting to find food, water, or shelter, each point of Momentum earned on the Survival test can be spent to provide necessities for two additional allies, or for two additional days if on her own.
- ◀ **Hardy:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new result.

CHARACTER TRAIT

- ◀ **Space Sickness**
- ◀ **Industrial Hayfever.** All Resistance tests for artificial substances are increased by one level of difficulty. Coagulants provide no bonuses.
- ◀ **Wealthy ex-lover.** It will be very difficult to make up to them, but may be a side plot

EQUIPMENT (EARNINGS 2)

Basic well-worn clothing, some of which is new, a cabin class ticket to Luna—fifty percent paid, a small suburban apartment in a quiet part of town, vacuum suit, colonists regional survival kit, eight assets.

MARCUS AUTONOMOUS COVERT OPERATIONS



Hailing from an Ark Vault that is carved deep into the caverns below the central Pyrenees, Marcus spent his childhood trying to steal from anyone above him in station (which was pretty much everyone) in an attempt to better his family's lot. It was not long before his family disowned him and abandoned him to his criminal urges.

He became a master burglar, whilst his arrogance and boredom grew to the point that his raids became increasingly more daring, until finally he chose a target that would ultimately and unknowingly provide him with a purpose in life. Marcus' theory was to gain further notoriety by stealing from the best. His target, however, was not only the head of the local black market, but also a Cybertronic agent planted deep within Whitestar society in a bid to recover ancient technology.

Marcus' plan met with both success and failure. The break in was successful, but he was shocked at the cybernetic black market operation that he discovered. Worse yet, it appeared that his mark had been expecting him. Marcus was offered a simple choice: put his talents to use for a new family that could provide a purpose in life, or die without anyone knowing or caring that he had passed.

Shipped to Luna without incident, Marcus took to his new identity, program, and purpose with ease, but his life just keeps being bitter sweet; his first corporate assignment again provided a contradictory outcome. Having busted a Heretic ring, recovered a stolen shipment of cybernetic enhancements, and forged a friendship with the LPD officer who assisted him, he brought himself to the attention of the cult and their vicious leader.

Tracing the cult to Venus has since seen him arrested by the BLEUs on trumped up charges of suspected corporate espionage, although he has gained a District Commander in Heimburg as a local contact in the wake of the apologies that followed once the case collapsed. Marcus has been diverted to the Renault expedition since his release, as Cybertronic would like him to dig up what is really occurring.

He isn't a bad person, but he isn't Robin Hood either, it's just a matter of perspective.

TRAITS: Cybertronic, Unemployed Underclass, Recruited from Earth—Central Europe, Grew Up on the Streets, Criminal, SWI Cyber-Infiltrator

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	10	11	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	7	7

SKILLS:

- ◀ **Athletics** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Close Combat*** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Education** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Linguistics** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Observation** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Persuade** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Ranged Weapons** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Resistance** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Science** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Stealth*** Expertise 4, Focus 1
- ◀ **Survival** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Thievery*** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Willpower** Expertise 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: **Melee** (+ \uparrow 2), **Ranged** (+ \uparrow 2)

WOUNDS:

- ◀ **Head 4** ▶ **Torso 8**
- ◀ **Arms 5** ▶ **Legs 6**
- ◀ **Serious 7** ▶ **Critical 4**
- ◀ **Mental 7**

SOAK: Subdermal Armour: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **P1000 Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+ \uparrow 5, Burst, 1H, Close Quarters
- ◀ **Slicer (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

TALENTS

- ◀ **Citizen/Agent of Cybertronic**
- ◀ **Scout:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making a Stealth test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀ **Living Shadow:** The character has become adept at using terrain effects and social cues to remain unnoticed by observers. When attempting to remain unseen or unnoticed, the character may add a number of d20s to his Stealth pool equal to the total number of Stealth talent ranks he has purchased.
- ◀ **Camouflage:** The character recognises that often it is not important for him to just remain unseen, but also his allies and any equipment they may be using. When attempting to conceal

anything vehicle sized or larger, the character may add two d20s per Dark Symmetry point spent on the Stealth test instead of one.

- ◀ **Insertion:** The character has learned a variety of techniques necessary to bypass security measures when infiltrating a target facility. The character may substitute Stealth for Thievery when attempting to bypass physical security measures.
- ◀ **Life of Crime:** After years of dealing with the criminal underworld, the character has a basic familiarity of how to interact with this segment of the population. When the character generates at least one success on a Persuade or Education test to relate to or interact with the criminal element, he may immediately roll one additional d20 and add the result to the skill test.

CHARACTER TRAIT

- ◀ **Diametric**
- ◀ **Connections:** Purchasing augmentation is one difficulty rank less than normal, due to corporate mentor black market connections.
- ◀ **Contact in the LPD.** If you ever gain a criminal record, you may reduce your earnings rating by one to remove it. Social tests with this contact are one difficulty lower.

EQUIPMENT (EARNINGS 4)

Basic well-worn clothing, battered pack of cards, B&E Kit, P1000 (two Reloads), cell link, EYE-tronic system, VIP card from a flashy club, a large wardrobe of stylish clothing, a large apartment in an exclusive tenement in the centre of the city, twelve assets.

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