



THE HIDDEN WAR

"Great actions have shaped our society, the greatest of which, intellectually, has been our casting off of that heavy mantle called religion. Religion damned our species for thousands of years, from the lowest superstition to the highest conclaves of spiritual faith. It drove us to madness, to war, to murder; it hung upon us like a disease. Faith, belief in demons, spirits and an afterlife were simple tools for simple minds to which the vastness of the cosmos was beyond comprehension. It is all ignorance and lies. We have since realised that there are no gods, and no need for gods. We have witnessed the cosmos now, my friends, we have learned and understand the fabric of reality."

Iterator Prime Kyril Sindermann, on the Imperial Truth

In every human civilisation, in every lost and found corner of the galaxy, there are demons. Some of these are the demons that Mankind has manufactured for itself, others still the perfidious and misunderstood influence of the xenos, the Outsider, and yet some still, though the Emperor felt it right to deny our knowledge of such, are truly Other. Daemons are real and unreal. This is what we have learned from the tragic events of the Age of Darkness, if no other lessons are to be remembered. It is vital that we share this knowledge, preserve it and learn from it, that we may gird ourselves against the threats of the galaxy and attempt to dispel the evils of the future. To dwell in ignorance now, when the golden light of the Emperor which shielded us from the outer darkness is so diminished, would doom not only the body of Mankind, but its very soul.

THE IMPERIAL TRUTH

The Imperial Truth was the rational, atheist philosophy that guided the Emperor's conquest of Old Earth, and the formation of the Imperium through the Great Crusade. At its heart, the Imperial Truth held that the universe was rational, that knowledge defeated fear and brought freedom from the terrors of the Age of Strife. With this assertion went the denial of the irrational and the superstitious, as well as the abandoning of faith in powers and principles beyond the knowable. In the unified Terra and Imperium of Mankind, there could be no mysteries of the soul, no sorcery, no gods. Those who clung to their ignorance were cast down, their lies silenced in the pyre's roar. The terrors of the past had grown in the shadow of superstition and false belief. If Mankind was to survive its rebirth, it could not tolerate the delusions of the past. That there were other dimensions, alien races and mutants who wielded psychic powers was not denied, only that they were supernatural. That some might call these phenomena 'sorcery', or attribute them to gods, were simply the symptoms of incomplete understanding. With a foundation built upon the tenets of the Imperial Truth, Mankind achieved greatness, and though it was not destined to last, for two centuries the Great Crusade was beyond reproach in its methods and in its glorious elevation of Mankind to the dominant species of the galaxy.

Of course, there was a degree to which the Imperium and the Emperor touched upon the irrational and ethereal. The new Imperium had grown from the past, and secular though it might be, much of its

power and nature expressed itself in ways that had echoes of the spiritual. In practises such as the taking of Oaths of Moment, the names of the divisions of Imperial power and the symbols of that power, the Imperium wrapped itself in the clothes of authority woven from dreams that were as old as the gods it denied. And Mankind continued to have faith, faith in the omniscience and benevolence of the Emperor and His designs, faith through reason, in the Imperial Truth. Perhaps this was an intended spiritual crutch; that the Emperor in His wisdom saw the failings in the primitive hindbrain of every man and woman in His service, and recognised that He could only cast down the demagogue and the pontifex in this way – that He could only destroy the spiritual by using the language of religion, by preaching the faith of the empirical and the rational.

The Great Lie

From the seemingly endless cycle of tragedy and death Horus unleashed, it has become clear to all that at the heart of the Imperial Truth was a lie. This Great Lie, promulgated by the Emperor who now sits eternal upon His throne, is that of a calculated and hidden ignorance within the doctrine of enlightenment. Those amongst us who had truly seen behind the stars knew that the Lie resided there all along, clearest in the darkness, though we feared to think of it and dared not speak of it: the Warp is alive with malignant sentience, the very essence of which is supernatural. These unquiet spirits, which reside in the Warp, sate themselves upon the souls of mortals. Those of us that remain must examine the consequences of our silence and the toll the Great Lie has taken.

The first of these consequences may appear to us now to be the most terrible; that of Horus' rebellion. By turning his face from the light of his Father, Horus not only brought ruin to the Imperium but also empowered the beings of the Warp to cross from their empyreal realm into ours. It is claimed that Horus was closest to his father among the Primarchs, and that the Emperor shared with him all of His accumulated wisdom. This can only be a falsehood, for Horus must have learned of the power of the immaterial from some other source – the Emperor would otherwise surely have warned off His son from the dangers of the forces he came to enter into a compact with.

The White Scars Legion Primarch, Jaghatai Khan, mused upon returning to Terra that, "It was the knowledge that the Emperor had concealed His true purpose from His favoured son that led to Horus' downfall. In Horus' mind, the suspicion took root that he may not have been his father's favourite; after all, my brother Magnus knew more of the Warp and Corax more of the darkness within Mankind. This must be what broke Horus' will". Captain Loken, a survivor of Isstvan III, is heard to have countered bitterly, "It was simply the realisation that the Emperor was not infallible, as all sons learn of their fathers, which set Horus' heart to fester". It is impossible to say now, for Horus too is dead and his ashes reveal nought.

There have been other costs incurred by the Great Lie which have undermined the Emperor's dream of Imperium. Many billions of lives were lost in the purges required to maintain it. Ancient civilisations, directly descended from Old Earth, who carried with them across the cosmos the torch of religions deemed anathema in this enlightened age were simply murdered for their beliefs. Tens of thousands of cities were burned, cultures were put to the sword and worlds were annihilated in the name of the Truth. Ignorance was promoted hand-in-hand with enlightenment across the stars. The stability and safety of ignorance was used as a tool, an opiate to the blissful masses, through which they would remain unquestioning. With ignorance and death as the tools used to promote wisdom we have made vulnerable the very foundations of our Imperium. Who can say now which among the inheritors of His kingdom will be the first to use the ignorance of blind faith as a weapon?

There is a final and more dire consequence, one which will reveal itself in the due course of time. While we have ostensibly suffered the treachery of civil war, a greater war has begun which will yet blight the future of Mankind. Now that son has turned upon father, brother upon brother, and the Imperium's greatest defenders have been brought to their knees, we may never attain the greatness of galactic dominance that the Emperor intended for us. Therein lies the problem, for in his reckless ambition, Horus has mortally wounded the Imperium. The Outsider, the alien threat which we spent two glorious centuries casting from our borders has been given reprieve. Moreover,

the very fabric of reality has been altered and terrors previously unknown have turned their eyes upon us. The xenos and the Daemon can never allow us to recover our might; they will always seek to harm us, for in our vulnerability they find strength. In our weakened state, these antagonists approach now, encircling their bleeding prey like the ichthyan predators of Old Earth.

The Necessity of the Lie

Though the learned now question the complex and delicate balance of philosophies the Imperial Truth put into motion, for all that came to pass the Emperor was no fool. He was without doubt aware of the hypocrisies fundamental to the tenets of the Imperial Truth. That the beings within the Emphyrean pose a danger to the Imperium is without question, but to suppress their nature rather than to educate His subjects, to deny enlightenment in the Age of Enlightenment, cannot have been a path lightly trod. It can only be concluded that the Emperor was aware of the risks and enacted a calculated strategy to protect His greater purpose.

The need for the Great Lie is a matter of some speculation. Some have argued that the Emperor's goal was to defeat death itself by excising the soul and that knowledge of the existence of a soul would be our downfall. Others that He sought to enter the mind of every human being in the galaxy and alternatively impart His phenomenal knowledge or His psychic gifts, creating an ultimate, ascended race of Mankind. Yet

others have quietly suspected that He wished nothing less than dominion over all of reality and unreality, and hid the supernatural nature of unreality such that no being would dare challenge His claim upon it. Darker rumours, those which were whispered during the days of the Emperor's seclusion on Terra, surmise that He sought to reach the apotheosis of godhood for Himself, leaving Mankind behind with the cold revelation that the Imperial Truth was a lie and the gods real.

Whatever the case, it was clear to the Imperium from His retreat to Terra at the pinnacle of the Great Crusade, the disappearance of his golden legions, as well as the endless parade of men and machines descending into the Imperial Dungeon, that some vast and intensive artifice was underway, which served only to fuel further speculation. It may even have been that the entirety of the Great Crusade served only to acquire the mysteries and materiel required to meet another objective, and that the Imperial Truth was simply a means to an end – never intended to withstand a test such as that which the Traitors brought against it. The truth to these rumours and the Emperor's Great Work are matters too weighty to discuss at this juncture and must instead be revealed at a later time.

Knowledge could have been Mankind's greatest weapon. The sword of knowledge racing across the stars with the Great Crusade could have empowered Mankind to know the Daemon and to combat its insidious presence. The shield of ignorance with which the Emperor hoped to protect us could only ever stymie the flood of darkness, never halt its onslaught. It frayed and buckled as any shield is wont to with the hammering of the enemy upon it. His gamble with the fate of humanity was a failure, and His denial of the true nature of the Warp a mistake. The Emperor could have stopped all of this, Horus' rebellion, the ascendance of the Warp and the ruination of the Imperium, if only He had told His sons and His subjects the truth.

Though the Emperor's plan may have failed, surely no one, alive or dead, could have known more of the consequences of His decisions? Had we but known what the Emperor did, could any of us have made a wiser choice in His place? Regardless, none can be sure of the ultimate solution He foresaw, only that the threat must be countered. The duty now falls to those few of us who remain with the knowledge required to protect the Imperium; we must illuminate Mankind as to the nature and threat of the Daemon and the Outsider.



SELECTED ENCOUNTERS OF ESOTERIC PHENOMENA

992.M39

The Ninth Battle of Xozer: In the Nordafrik Conclaves of Old Earth inexplicable ephemeral phenomenon are encountered during the battle where Kalagann, the techno-barbarian warlord of Ursh is slain. The kingdom of Ursh is brought to heel by the Emperor's forces.

798.M30

The First Action of the Great Crusade: During the First Pacification of Luna, the XVIth Legion encounters evidence of occultism amongst the Selenar gene-wrights. The Selenar methodology is sequestered into the Imperial Dungeon.

799.M30

The Vhnori Resurgence: The Crimson Walkers emerge to challenge the Unity of the Panpacific Enclaves. They make use of their unrestrained psychic might to dominate the minds of the populace and animate golems stitched of dead flesh, but are brutally wiped out by the VIIIth Legion in a campaign which pitches terror against the terrors.

803.M30

The Liberation of Sol: During the Sedna Campaign, eight full Legions are deployed to undertake the destruction of the xenos nemesis world, whereupon they expunge an alien faction bound to war by unknown psychic means. In the aftermath, the false world of Sedna falls into silence and is lost to Imperial auspices.

848.M30

The Suppression of Sarosh: After an assassination attempt on the newly found Dark Angels Primarch Lion El'Jonson, it is discovered that the Saroshi bureaucracy system is a cover for a cult supposedly communing with xenos entities from an alternate dimension. The Dark Angels and forces from the 4th Expeditionary Fleet eliminate all traces of the cult.

858.M30

The Purging of Arachiana: The Word Bearers, newly reunited with their Primarch, are tasked with the destruction of the Cult of the Iconoclast on Arachiana; a religion worshipping the '*One True God*', a being described in the same terms as, but darkly distinct from the Emperor. The tenets of this religion would be incorporated into an early version of the *Book of Lorgar*.

866.M30

The Grael Library: The crowning achievement of Riohbia, the self-proclaimed warlocks guarding the proscribed works of the Grael Library refuse to yield its contents to the Imperium. The XIXth Legion, prosecuting the campaign of Compliance in the system, are tasked with quashing the psychic threat and destroying the library. En-route, however, they receive a communiqué stating that a passing fleet of the Thousand Sons Legion has intervened and dealt with the threat already.

881.M30

The Majind Torc Transgression: During the devastation of the second Rangdan Xenocide, a Basemekanik Barq breaks the cordon of the galactic north-east to make impact at Majind. The Death Guard Legion in pursuit are decimated as the Macrobeest within is activated by unknown means. Only the quick thinking intervention of the VIth Legion prevents disaster.

903.M30

The Defence of Tranquillity: The Emperor's Children Legion defend a series of ancient crystalline gates claimed by the Imperium in the Dalinite Nebula against an unknown xenos fleet, which emerges from these gates, making rapid Warp translations between them. The IIIrd Legion eventually overpowers the xenos and drives them back whence they came.

921.M30

The Emergence of Koorqosan: The lost world of Koorqosan, brought to Compliance a hundred years previously and then enveloped by the Warp, reappears upon the immaterial waves of the Messier 16 Nebula. The world appears to have experienced the accelerated passage of time in reverse, providing a glimpse at the secrets of Mankind's earliest exploration of the stars.

939.M30

The Mystery of Novo Andruss: A force identifying as the '*Ghost Legion*' appears unheralded on the rebellious world of Novo Andruss. Uncharted psychic phenomenon are unleashed and then quelled in a brief but bloody conflict which brings the world back into Compliance, though superstition is heightened amongst the populace as a result.

943.M30

The Melkeji Salvation: The Imperium encounters a civilisation subjugated by a parasitic alien race which feasts on human sentience. Breaking the strongholds of the parasite hosts, recorded as the Ascended, the Word Bearers Legion bring Melkeji to Compliance.

954.M30

The Screaming World: The Ultramarines are drawn to the world of Volturn, thought to be Compliant, by the petitioning of their Librarians, who claim to hear inhuman screaming emanating from its location. Upon investigation, the world is found to be infested by ill-definable xenos creatures. Volturn is quarantined and abandoned after all members of the landing party suffer spontaneous and fatal cerebral aneurysms within minutes of setting foot upon the damned, screaming world.

962.M30

The Defence of Helioret: The insane Witch-Idol of the Eldar Craftworld of Magc'Sithraal leads a brutal campaign of raids against Helioret, perpetrating etheric outrages across the sector. The combined forces of the Blood Angels and the Ordo Sinister bring down the Witch-Idol and cast the Craftworld into the local star.

963.M30

The Razing of Monarchia: The perfect city of Monarchia on Khur, nurtured by the Word Bearers Legion, openly promotes the worship of the Emperor as a god. The Ultramarines are dispatched to destroy the city and humble the Word Bearers for promulgating doctrines contrary to the Imperial Truth.

977.M30

The Compliance of Dwell: Brought into Compliance peacefully by the Ultramarines, the world of Dwell is found to harbour an esoteric network of technologies of potentially xenos origin which predate the Age of Strife. This network is found to preserve and combine the memories and knowledge of Dwell's people upon death through ill-understood means.

987.M30

The Compliance of Indra-sûl: On Indra-sûl, the Raven Guard infiltrate the home of the monstrous xenos Khrave and wage a guerrilla campaign to defeat the gluttonous, warped creatures within, in their efforts to liberate the human population the Khrave dominate. The Khrave and their edifice are cast down, freeing Indra-sûl.

988.M30

The Mariposa Campaign: A pocket of space comprising 12 subsectors is released from a warp storm which had raged from the time of the Age of Strife. For three years, the Blood Angels, Imperial Fists, Imperial Army and Sisters of Silence battle against hordes of Warp-twisted cults of the mutant and the psyker, bringing 34 worlds into Compliance.

000.M31

According to the *Unbalanced Scales*, this marks the beginning of the Alpha Legion's compact with a faction of the Outsider.

001.M31

The Council of Nikaea: The Emperor decrees the use of psykers within the Space Marine Legions prohibited. Viewing the gathering at Nikaea as his personal trial, Magnus the Red retreats to Prospero admonished.

The Whisperhead Mountains: At the town of Katheri on Sixty-Three Nineteen, local superstition speaks of a recurring entity or holy phenomenon known as Samus. The Luna Wolves destroy all traces of religion in the region and bring the world to Compliance.

003.M31

The First War of Xenobia: During the Imperium's feud with the Interex, a highly advanced human society allied with several xenos species, the full panoply of Warp-based technologies available to their alien vassals among the Kinebrach are unleashed, creating localised warp storms, diseases capable of felling Space Marines in minutes and other inexplicable esoterica.

004.M31

The Serpent Lodge: When Horus falls, wounded on the moon of Davin, his Legion receives aid from an order of Davinite healers and priests. Fearing the influence of the occult on their master, the newly named Sons of Horus fall into schism over the morality of this course of action. It is now rumoured that this is the event which led to the XVIth Legion being riven and that the Primarch which entered the Serpent Lodge was not the same as the one to leave it.

The Burning of Prospero: Following crimes against the Edict of Nikaea, Leman Russ is sent at the head of a great censure host to bring Magnus the Red back to Terra in chains. The Thousand Sons refuse to surrender, and their world and works are brought to ruin in a cataclysmic battle which rents the very stuff of space and time.

005.M31 [UNCORROBORATED]

The Battle of Signus Prime: The Blood Angels are entrapped in the Signus system whereupon they encounter Horus' ruinous allies of the Warp. Reality bends and the fabric of the universe is torn open by the powers unleashed by the Warmaster. The IXth Legion pays a heavy price to free itself of Horus' noose.

006.M31

The Battle for the Choral City: On Istvan III, the ancient magicks of the Sirenhold are unleashed against the forces of the Sons of Horus, Emperor's Children, Death Guard and World Eaters. The battle is won in vain as the Warmaster reveals his treachery by unleashing the life-eater virus against his own sons and allies in the ultimate act of betrayal.

007.M31

The Birth of the Ruinstorm: During the Battle of Calth, the Word Bearers Legion enact a ritual which brings death to the Jewel of Ultramar and its local star. The Ruinstorm is unleashed, a truly vast warp storm which inhibits space travel and communication across the floundering Imperium, paving the way for Horus' advance.

The Chondax Engagement: The Alpha Legion, supposedly driven by the commands of both the Warmaster and the Outsider, openly engage the White Scars in the Chondax system after years of shadowed ambushes. Their exact purpose is unclear, it would seem, according to the *Unbalanced Scales*, even to the XXth Legion itself.

008.M31

The Torture of Nuceria: At the climax of the Battle of Nuceria during the conclusion of the Shadow Crusade, whilst in combat with Roboute Guilliman Angron reaches a nadir of pain, bitterness and rage which forms a conduit between him and the Warp. Guilliman is forced to withdraw as his brother is ravaged by Empyrean energies.

009.M31

The Final Death of Idyris: On the Eldar Crone World of Idyris, in the heart of the Eye of Terror, Fulgrim betrays his brother Perturabo, leaving both Primarchs changed forever. The manner of this betrayal is unclear but the act releases vast amounts of energy, forming a black hole singularity.

Battle of Perditus: The Death Guard, led by First Captain Typhon, are engaged by Iron Hands survivors of Istvan V. They battle to a standstill over 38 days on the Mechanicum station of Perditus. The matter is eventually resolved by the arrival of an overwhelming Dark Angels fleet led by Lion El'Jonson, who takes Perditus under his own protection and demands the retreat of both the Iron Tenth and the XIVth Legion.

The Beacon of Sotha: An aetheric light thought to be created by unidentified psyarkana bursts across the skies above the world of Sotha. This beacon serves to illuminate the realm of Ultramar, providing a point of navigation for vessels trapped beyond the Ruinstorm.

010.M31

The Drussen Atrocity: Rumours of the presence of a forbidden Empyrean engine draws the attention of splinter elements of both Traitor and Loyalist forces, leading to a brief war which ravages the isolated world of Drussen, the apocalyptic conflict halving the world's population in a single night.

011.M31

The Marches of Madness: The World Eaters make seemingly senseless raids on population centres across the Ultima Segmentum. Their brutal attacks are aimed at causing maximum human casualties, ignoring both infrastructure and military targets, and are accompanied by unseasonal violent storms and unnatural crimson cloud bursts.

A Denial of the Supernatural

The following is an excerpt of the essay 'Truth in all His Works', the Magnum Opus of the rationalist Terran philosopher, Alastair Gundi. As one of the first scholars of the Imperial Truth, Gundi was an early contributor to its ideals.

'As an aside from this work on the merits of a single creed of Truth, I wish to discredit a popular theory as the foolishness it is. You see, I scoff at the primitive notion of demons! I attribute the stories of beings of darkness and purest, blackest evil to little more than the overblown fear mongering creations of the tyrants of Old Earth, dreamed up to keep the basest chattel of Mankind suppressed in servitude. The preaching of false prophets, the soothsaying of viziers and the curses of old hags are but the comical and dramatic methods for the feeble to appear strong and for the worthless to garner undeserved respect. The trinkets and charms peddled to keep such spirits at bay are little more than the mercantile exploitations of salesmen of serpents' oils. All of this, an economy of nonsense, is an exercise in obtaining and maintaining control over the weak-minded.

What of the tales of the gods, and their miracles and retributions? At best, these are simply coincidence attributed to divinity, unexpected hope or despair laid at the feet of certain menacing yet unextraordinary events. At worst, they are the herd behaviours of group hysteria and mass hallucination, or the spreading symptoms of mental infirmities caused by the radiological legacy of Terra. The words and deeds of such so-called gods as 'Magrese', 'Abundance', 'Dagriel', 'Khurnatan' and the 'Contagious King' are patent works of fiction, imagined from the minds of madmen. Nor can they be made to appear from thin air with babbling incantation, or the scribbled daubing of childlike symbols. Their names hold no power over us, for we are to be a galactic empire of Mankind unified by our enlightenment!

Claims that these illogical beings mean us grave harm and reside in the turmoil of the Warp too are falsehoods. The Empyrean is a necessary conduit for space travel and is simply another dimension yet to be fully charted, as like any other area of space. This galaxy is Mankind's birthright. The Warp falls within our domain and we shall master it also. Just as the seafarers of Old Earth once balked at the depths and the gas divers of Jupiter avoided the hot jets of the Jovian zones, Mankind has, and will again, overcome its irrational, Immaterial fears.

We learn more of the xenos forms of the Empyrean with every voyage. They may appear to be drawn towards us, but are simply like shoals of harmless oceanic creatures, attracted by the blinking lights along the keels of our vessels. As in any ecosystem, there too are predators to be wary of, but these are simple star-spawn hunting the shoals, and harbour no malicious intent towards us.

I understand that sailors can be a superstitious lot, and so I must re-iterate: there are no demons in the Warp! This is one of the many reasons why the Imperial Truth is so critical to breaking the fear human minds experience when faced with the vastness of the Cosmos. Without it, we could never leave the light of Sol.'

DAEMONOLOGY

Stories which explore the supernatural nature of the Warp cannot be interpreted literally, for no rational mind could contain the true and eternally-changing knowledge of unreality. When discussing such tales, we must consider them to be allegorical, filled with the metaphors of simpler understanding which reveal the greater truth. Such was explained by the poet Dominicus the Mad, whose work was considered to be entirely a fantasy of the insane until recent events revealed it to hold a kernel of truth. Herein follows an exploration of the adapted ideas of Dominicus and other scholars, poets and preachers who have been ridiculed and persecuted over the long millennia, whose unreal works on the ethereal have been vindicated by reality.

Within every man, woman and child resides a soul. Such a statement is a heresy against the Imperial Truth, but is known to be true. The nature of the soul has been the debate of scholars for millennia. It is believed that from this soul our thoughts, feelings and inspirations come; that the soul is the very root of sentience. The souls of Mankind are flickering beacons in the Immaterium, and like moths to a flame they draw the attentions of the aethertropic organisms which exist in the Warp. These harmless shades are pulled to us by the echoes of human emotions in the void. The brightest souls, those of psykers, accumulate around them swarms of these flitting creatures and, drawn by those fluttering swarms of shadows, the bat-winged predators of darkest night come to feast.

The oldest bargains of Mankind involved the trading of souls. The exchange, often in the form of a sacrifice, was intended to earn the favourable intervention of the gods. Tribal peoples of Old Earth sacrificed animals to deities, believing that their lives, too, imparted some measure of the essence which their deities desired. This may be true, though it is now believed that it is the act of worship inherent to such a gesture that aligns a soul to the sentience within the Warp. Those in more dire need, or who greedily desired greater power, sacrificed their fellow men, hoping to attain richer boons from the gods, and though they knew it not, their prayers were directed to the supernatural entities of the Warp. These creatures are capricious, however, and only serve the purposes of Mankind for their own gain, the worshipping of believers often going unrewarded, to the amusement of dark powers. The vile kingdoms of the foulest

hungering powers within the Warp, those sometimes called the gods of Chaos, are built upon the ethereal strength of the souls they hold sway over. In the Empyrean, the soul is the only unit of value, constituting both power and sustenance. For this reason, the Warp can also be known as the Sea of Souls.

Through our ancestors' successful sacrifices and the prayers of early religions, some creatures of the Warp, those with the most predatory intelligence, aligned themselves to the fates of Mankind and the other sentient species of the galaxy. The sacrifices of the religious, be it through ritual, warfare or murder came to nourish these entities and transfer a measure of sentience to them, teaching them to draw ever closer to the bright flicker of the souls of Mankind. So attuned, the ripples of our every strong emotion in the Warp, be it fear, fury, lust or grief, became a morsel for these entities. So too have our emotions and desires – be they light or dark – that we as a species have projected into the aether for millennia, shaped the aspect and demeanour of these entities. And as they drew close, we came to know them, and we attributed them a name common to the fears of many of Mankind's ancient faiths: Daemon.

The Theology of the Damned

Those amongst the learned know that there is little clear distinction between the real and unreal – they are a continuum with but a thin veil drawn between them. Those keen enough to realise this truth have, throughout Mankind's history, been labelled deranged and been cloistered in asylums. One such person was Empyrean scholar Alana Sellius. Found among her papers is conjecture gathered from her research into the tales of voyagers of the Warp. These papers, which are assumed responsible for Sellius' insanity, attribute every emotion a certain flavour, and state that Daemons come to prefer some tastes over others. The more extreme the emotion, the more pressing the hunger of the Daemon: rage more piquant than mere anger, and unbridled lust a more tender morsel than simple desire. Though at the time of her writing these were dismissed as the delusions of a broken mind, she goes on to explain that as Daemons align around these common emotions, they take on the characteristics of their favoured palate. As they gather and amalgamate, their shared essence and combined power is what we might consider the realms and gods within the Warp. This analogy is useful when considering, through the lens of various cultures, why the notion that the power of gods and their realms

are shifting and in constant struggle and competition with one another over the souls of Mankind.

Her writings go on to expound that the so-called gods, or ruinous powers, are actually amoral in their truest form; they are acts of nature, likened as to the storms of inclement weather which gather in Terra's troposphere. These sentient storms harbour no malignant intent, but travel freely upon invisible currents of psychic force. Occasionally, these pressure waves collide, manifesting a Daemon as if from a bolt of lightning, and although such a creature is highly dangerous, its actions are random and are not in themselves motivated by malice. Sellius claims that Daemons do not harbour ill-intent, but can be directed to do harm in the same manner as lightning can be caged and then called forth from a weapon to destroy.

Her radical theology argues that, because these similarities are shared throughout so many cults and religions which were encountered during the Great Crusade, it lends them credence. The concept of an afterlife too is a galactic constant, though, as per Sellius' notes, a soul simply drifts in the Warp after death until a passing Daemon takes a liking to its essence and devours it. It would appear that all of these practices of worship point to the evocation of the same deities, and of a unified spiritual understanding common to all of humanity. With religion, we may have been able to reconcile the horrific occurrences experienced in Warp travel because of the soothing teachings of faith. Therefore, she argues, religion itself may have played a pivotal role in the development of Mankind as a species capable of braving the cosmos, providing us with a common goal: to unite and collaborate in a journey (or even a 'pilgrimage', the apocryphal term favoured by Sellius), to meet the gods in their domain among the stars. She further posits that religion may have had the benefit of simplifying matters, of giving humanity a balm with which to soothe the madness of the knowledge that Daemons exist. If such holds true then the conclusion to be drawn from such theology is that we are as a species more vulnerable to the predations of Daemons due to the atheism of our Truth.

Manifestations and Incursions

Daemons take many forms, as we know from the accounts of travellers of the Warp, and the survivors of the Age of Darkness. In the immaterial realm they are amorphous and ever-changing. When they manifest

in corporeal reality, Daemons absorb material around them to display shapes which invariably cause revulsion and fear in those who behold them. These forms are categorised as their '*Daemonic Emanations*', and are not limited to what the human mind can imagine. Indeed, the human eye may be an inadequately crude instrument with which to behold such abominable creatures, and survivors of minor Daemonic incursions have spoken less of the visual appearance of the Daemon than of their pervasive, putrid, rotting-meat stench and the feeling of cold dread they inspire. Much like their aspect, their motion too is unnatural and does not scan by the laws of physical movement we would naturally expect a living creature to uphold; jerking between flickering bursts of speed and glacial sloth.

For indeterminate reasons, the Emanations commonly take the form of bestial limbs and crude ancient human weaponry, or else mimic the immediate horrors of the environment into which they are born, fusing their nascent corpus with both inanimate matter and flesh in hideous ways. It seems also that Daemons appear to swell in size with the glut of energy they contain as they leave the Warp, able to appear as vast, hab-sized behemoths of twisted flesh or brutish hulks of writhing ectoplasm that can smash aside a Predator tank, though it is impossible to ascertain if their size implies any form of hierarchy or is simply a coincidence of the conditions of their manifestation. It is believed also by the insane that Daemons take on altering aspects depending on their place in some vast pantheon or some tiered dominion within the Warp, though this is beyond the knowing of any sane human mind. Those practiced in the arcane, however, do suggest that it may be possible to influence or manipulate the form in which a Daemon may manifest, through rituals of an entirely esoteric nature.

There have been psykers since humanity's earliest days, and as the incidence of the psychic mutation has grown over the millennia, so too has grown the incidences of Daemonic incursions. There are many ways in which Daemons can breach the borders of reality to become tangible, manifest horrors. Indeed, Mankind's first material contact with Daemons may have been entirely accidental. The use of psychic power pulls energy from the Warp and can draw a Daemon with it unintentionally. The more unrestrained the psyker, as we often see in the untrained psykers hunted by the Sisters of Silence, the

greater the pull on the other side. Daemons are drawn towards the flaring brightness of a soul in the Empyrean, and in their hunger they clamour to push through into our world and devour that soul and all others.

Daemons can also be manifested by those desirous of their power through an arcane rite of summoning. Mankind has, through morbid curiosity, been drawn to the substance of the Warp and the allure of its power since time immemorial. Over the ages, Mankind's sorcerers learned and refined their knowledge until, in hubris, they thought to control the powers of the Warp, unleashing the horrors of Old Night. The stories from this time, preserved by the Sigillite's historical arcanists, speak of the many methods of summoning and subjugating Daemons as slaves of darkness to undertake the bidding of their arcane masters. Invariably, these tales end in disaster. What we can glean from them however is that summoned Daemons are inherently weaker than their kin in the Warp, for their power is derived from the quality and quantity of sacrifices made in trade for their manifestation. These summoned Daemons are then subdued, either through etheric rites or a focussing relic such as an arcane cornerstone. They may also be implanted into a person, pushing out the soul (or offering it to be consumed) to be replaced by the Daemon, in a form of summoning known as possession. This is considered to be relatively safer, as the destruction of the vessel would banish the Daemon within. Additional sacrifices and rituals of binding are required to stop the Daemon from rebelling and escaping back into the Warp, and these too weaken it.

It was once believed that a Daemon must be summoned through ritual and incantation, even accidental incursions being caused by an untrained psyker stumbling upon some spell, and that the Daemon has no agency of its own; the very act of summoning causing its creation, allowing it to exist only for a short time before withering into the ether. In Ultramar, the Word Bearers performed the ritual of the Ruinstorm which dispelled that belief. This ritual gathered exceptional power through the sacrifice of millions of souls and the promise of billions more over the course of the Horus Heresy, and indeed in some symbolic fashion the sacrifice of the unrealised potential of the ambitions of Ultramar. With it, the Diabolists of the XVIIth Legion sought, by creating a great warp storm, to confound Loyalist reprisals.

Whether by accident or design, they also eroded the border of reality until it was gossamer thin. Able to push through this thinned veil of their own accord, Daemons in all of their unadulterated horror were able to manifest en-masse. These ‘Ruinstorm’ Daemons were not constrained by the bindings of sorcery, ritual or sacrificial power. They were not at all safe, controllable or predictable. These were the untamed malice of the Warp unleashed on an unprepared galaxy.

Appearing from tears in realspace, drawn of their own volition by the promise of souls on which to feast, the Daemons of the Ruinstorm brought untold ruin upon the worlds of the Imperium. These mass manifestations, or incursions as they became known, appeared with little warning, although sometimes were heralded by a surge in the tides of the Warp, sensed only by psykers, who are a mistrusted breed at the best of times. No two recorded incursions are alike, though many share common expressions of esoteric phenomenon; such as the darkening of midday skies, the barking of hounds, and fires burning more fiercely and in flames of unnatural colours. Incursions could be accompanied by howling winds carrying screaming voices, anguished faces appearing in clouds of dust, raging floods and sudden, catastrophic tectonic activity. Daemons could appear as if from thin air, fall from space in their hundreds or march out from the maddening glow of portals to the unfiltered Warp.

The Daemons of the Ruinstorm are beings of unrestrained predacity, which recall our ancestral memories of the caves on Old Earth where we helplessly cowered in fear from antediluvian megafauna. It is believed that for every moment they are removed from the Warp, these Daemons weaken, though they may sustain themselves by absorbing into their matter the souls of those whom they kill. Daemons appearing from the Ruinstorm were witnessed to fall upon the citizens of the Imperium with wild ferocity, tearing open their bodies and feasting on their essence, causing terror and inflicting destruction until such a time as they could no longer remain cohesive in our reality; fading back into the Warp. The Daemons of the Ruinstorm are the very horrors of unplumbed space, they are the avatars of the Primordial Annihilator, and to speak openly and frequently of them courts madness.

They have always been with us. From the First Birth to the First Murder They are the phantasmagorical essence of our forefathers returned and unrestful. They are us, ourselves returned in afterlife, from a land in which all time and space stands still and is one, and all that will be has come to pass. The apparitions have always been close to the veil. They are the dark mirror. They are found in the faces glimpsed in linens crumpled over a chair, the man half-seen at the window and the shadow shifting upon the bedchamber ceiling when sleep is no ally. The swine aspect is the only true manifestation, rictus with evil. Beware him!

They Laugh Beyond The Curtain

In Evocation with the appropriate rites a person may call upon the form of any of their ancestors, even though their body be rotted or cremated. The insubstantial form which returns is that of the undevoured soul, torn from beyond, reformed, inchoate of the dust of creation. Heed them.

In Invocation we seek control. The wraiths take no pleasure from coming into our world; it is painful to them. The horrors they wreak are simply their coping with the torment of flesh-birth. They are vulnerable for a moment, predatory wolves in the wool of domiciled lambs. Bind them or suffer.

In Confluence they arrive with rituals so adroit they can only crudely be called of the Artes. Invite them from the other-side by consuming the fleisch of man. This is the wild and true essence. These spectres contain the savageness of Mankind, though they are Solifugae and flee from the Sun. Free them and Fear them.

Follow the Rites – do not replicate them frivolously. A dozen souls must be given and a piece of the scribe is lost, such is the cost. All begin with the sacrificial offering of

They Thirst Beyond The Curtain.

Do not speak the names of the Gods. To do so draws peril. To write the names enwraps the soul with their oily tendrils of smoke. There is only one flame, that of the inferno of hell. We are all logs failing to burn; some few will become embers, but most are the inconsequence of sodden wood, made meat. All of the soul's delights are their feast. The Master will consume us all. Verzehre das fleisch, trinke das fleisch werde zum fleisch. The galaxy is full of sparks that will never catch. The Godhead with no soul will drain the brightest of them to burn fiercest.

When the godless soul rises, life will boil as the oceans did. The ground will quake and worlds will become molten. The dead will tear from the void to the ecstatic shiver of the galaxy. The Earth will be of brimstone and rivers will be forged from flame. There will be disaster of cosmic proportion. We herald the years of darkness. The Gods will be found in the centre of the galaxy. They are the Sentient Storms. They ride on the Winds of Fear.

They Sing Beyond The Curtain.

YOU MUST NOT SPEAK THE ENGLISH! It is writ thusly in The Necronomicon that they are part of the war! **MAY DIA** realm et data est illi potestas **MY CURE**. tis gis **CURIA**

A Study of Diabolical Texts

Herein is a curious rambling excerpt from the *Peregrinatio In Haemataugy Sanctae*, a proscribed incunabula of ancient provenance and a work of great interest to the Sigillite's historical arcanists. This rare edition, which was recovered from the libraries of the half-mad genius Nartan Dume, incorporates the lost work *The Daemonologies*.

THE GALACTIC OCCULT

Occultism was rife in the galaxy at the onset of the Great Crusade. Caused by the long darkness of the Age of Strife and millennia of isolation, human progress stagnated, leading to the regression of its peoples to ancient practices. Many cults lurked just under the civilised veneer of functioning societies, while others, particularly those religions driven by charismatic figures, rose to prominence; their dogma filling the minds of their subjects and drawing closer the warp storms of that Age. The Great Crusade brought illumination to the darkest corners of the galaxy, where

the Expeditionary fleets encountered and eradicated many cults. As enlightenment was brought to the reunited worlds of the Imperium, the Imperial Truth was employed to wrest the far flung cultures of Mankind – some more cryptic and steeped in the arcane than others – from the control of the occult.

However, with thousands of worlds brought into the light of the Imperial Truth in a matter of two short centuries, it was impossible to utterly eradicate the activities of the spiritual and the occult from every world. On many worlds, the sudden removal of paradigms of belief which had

stood for millennia left populations devoid of purpose rather than empowered by the Truth, and vulnerable to the charisma of demagogues or to the insinuations of xenos breeds. On many others, long-held beliefs were simply suppressed, relegated to hidden corners where they would become more extreme, re-emerging a generation later. Moreover, even as the Great Crusade excised the beliefs of spirits and gods, it brought with it its own traditions and those of the hundreds of cultures whose peoples it had subsumed into its armed forces, sometimes resulting in replacing one faith with another, and the unintended mixing of occult practices that were contrary in nature to the Imperial Truth.

Many thousands of such religions and cults were met, combatted and extinguished by the tide of the Great Crusade. Though their practices of worship and the beliefs of their faiths took myriad forms, they ultimately served the purpose of either the Daemon or the Outsider. Contained herein is a selection of examples of cult activity as encountered by the forces of the Imperial Army, to better demonstrate the diversity and peculiarity of the occult.

SEEKERS OF THE FORBIDDEN

During the Great Crusade, it was primarily the warriors of the Thousand Sons and the Word Bearers Legions who were chosen to quell the threats of the occult and the arcane. Looking at the pattern dictated by history, it appears they were frequently found to be adjacent to areas of such need. Knowing what we now know, it is suspiciously fortuitous that they should have made themselves available for so many similarly aligned actions of Compliance, a trend which was only exacerbated by their reuniting with their Primarchs, although of course this was part of the Emperor's template for these two Legions. Certainly, there were inherent dangers in prolonged exposure to the darkest aspects of humanity among the stars and in allowing these two Legions to accumulate occult knowledge, the taint of which may have contributed to their eventual downfall.

The Thousand Sons in particular seem to have experienced combat against a disproportionate number of suspected 'sorcerous' threats and almost without exception made haste to undertake conquests of worlds known to contain libraries, crypts and other repositories of arcane tomes. Though part of their role was, nominally, to safely dispose of such grimoires, it was an open secret that they cloistered these

relics of humanity's forgotten knowledge within their own libraries in Tizca. Some among the Primarchs are also said to have grown resentful of Magnus' pursuits in the realms of proscribed knowledge, and of his Legion's propensity to disrupt the course of conquests in their desire to attain it. This became a recurring source of friction, notably so when Magnus reportedly almost came to blows with his brother Russ in the Ark Reach Cluster and again when Corax chastised the Thousand Sons Legion for interfering in the Riohbia Campaign.

History shows us that the lore and esoterica which Magnus the Red and Lorgar Aurelian claimed during the Great Crusade would grow to be their most potent weapon. In retrospect it seems obvious that to these two Primarchs the Great Crusade came to be more a wondrous expedition into the accumulated religions, occultism and arcana of Mankind than a war for conquest.

Given what we know now, it appears unwise that our primary response to threatening phenomena which we scarcely understood was to employ the Word Bearers and Thousand Sons Legions to contain it, for though they may have destroyed the cultures responsible for arcane evils, they also took the knowledge of those people by looting the ruins of their cities, ransacking their libraries, picking clean their sacred shrines and exhuming the secrets of their burial sites. The Crimson King and the Aurelian were seeking forbidden knowledge from the very beginning. Though it is assumed that at least originally their intent was not malicious, the blame lies at our own door for not intervening; for not expounding to them the supernatural nature of that which they would come to consort with, and for not warning them of the damnation which would surely follow.

Had we but seen the signs that these noble Legions were acting with ulterior agendas at the end, we may have been able to influence the directions they took. And when He had the chance, could not the Emperor have acted more compassionately to correct the transgressions of His wayward sons than to incite the bitter humiliations of Monarchia and Nikaea? Perhaps had it been so, these Legions, which were so learned in the arcane and charged with the passion for a greater calling, could have raised the Imperium up with the power of their wisdom. Tragically, the seeds laid by the Primarchs of the XVth and XVIIth Legions would instead come to terrible fruition.

Carven of Cethlen

On the inner edge of the region known as the Halo Stars, the world of Cethlen was discovered by the Imperium. A temperate world whose topography was that of grass plains dotted with lakes and towering structures of free standing mesa landforms, Cethlen was ideal for supporting human life. Sparsely populated by a nomadic civilisation with a reverence of nature, its tribes equivalent in technological development to the Bronze Age societies of Ancient Terra, their sect was one of ancestor veneration, raising cairns and standing stone circles to their gods, and was dismissed by Imperial authorities as harmless, and a matter for the Iterators to deal with in time. As a result, Cethlen was quickly and peaceably brought into the Imperium in 801.M30. The tribes of Cethlen appeared simple and struggled to communicate with the Imperial delegation throughout the transition, appearing to care little for the promise of enlightenment and Imperial technology. Scattered as they were, the tribes could make little protest and were largely ignored as the Imperium claimed Cethlen and the priesthood of Mars began the instalment of infrastructure and industry on their world.

Two decades after Compliance, an Imperial flotilla of the Administratum, consisting of bureaucrats and Imperial historians tasked with recording the progress of Compliant worlds, was escorted to Cethlen by the 88th Company of the War Hounds. Upon arriving at Cethlen they observed from orbit the works and technologies of the Imperium littered across the landscape, now little more than scattered ruins. The War Hounds deployed on Cethlen to investigate the Imperial losses and found the bones of Imperial personnel stacked against grassland cairns and standing stones. Assuming perfidy on the part of the tribesmen, the War Hounds hunted down several nomadic groups through the grasslands in formations of Land's Proteus Speeders and Scimitar jetbikes, putting them to the sword though they offered no resistance and appeared to be no threat. Several such groups were found within the bounds of great stone circles, chanting and worshipping at the bases of the towering mesas of rock. Though they were being slaughtered, the Cethlenese only began to show fear and started to flee for their lives when the War Hounds began to topple the standing stone blocks. No sooner had the first block hit the ground, it is reported that through unseen means the giant, eroded mesas shifted from the earth, extending to rise on thick roots, as of trees. Like leviathans from the earth, these towering entities of rock summoned spars of stone from the ground, smashing the attacking Legionaries to pulp.

Across Cethlen, the colossal beings, which came to be known as Carven, rose up as the nomadic tribes which tended to them died. Supposedly, as per Celthenese myth, the Carven could be placated by worship; a fact the early settlers of Cethlen had learned at great cost, forcing them to become a nomadic society of earthquake chasers. They were also kept dormant due to the raising of their young by the Cethlenese tribes – blocks of sandstone-like alien flesh which would grow and harden as they were ritually tended to. Carven, which had existed on Cethlen long before Mankind had settled there, seemed to display a simple, subtle intelligence, acting peacefully to the kinship of nature displayed by the tribes' people while responding with violence to Imperium industry and technology.

The XIIth Legion, uncaring of the history of the Celthenese, set about breaking every stone on the planet after discovering the presence of the Carven, from the smallest pebble to the largest mountain. Their skimmers scouted ahead to locate boulder fields and standing circles, Land Raider tanks following in their wake to crush potential creatures under their treads. Against the more mature, gigantic Carven they deployed their complement of field artillery, Rapier teams and Basilisks to shatter rock from afar. When felled, Legionaries on foot chopped at the roots of these living mountains with axes and crumbled rock under the hammering, explosive displacer field impacts of power mauls until only dust and dark mud remained. Even so, the very bedrock of Celthen was deemed untrustworthy, being potentially seeded by the Carven. The planet was interdicted therefore by the War Hounds, who continued to observe it for suspicious tectonic activity until permission was granted by Imperium High Command in 824.M30 for the XIIth Legion to destroy the entire world with cyclonic missiles.

Coven of the Resurrectionists

On the distant eastern edge of the Ghoul Stars, an esoteric faith with practices previously unheard of was encountered by the pathfinders of the Imperium. Dubbed the Resurrectionists, the cult had taken root on Damire, and from there it had spread among the small human sub-light empire which had colonised the six worlds of the same system. The Resurrectionists' faith was overseen by a clan of grinning leaders who were known as the Coven, grey-bearded and black-cloaked men whose spryness belied their apparent years. The Coven of the Resurrectionists held sway over the ruling classes of the Damirite Empire and were widely held to be a positive force by its people, though a subtle sense of cultural stagnation appeared to have come into being under the influence of the cult, as was observed by the second and third Imperial delegations which arrived in the sub-sector.

Three times in the space of as many decades, the Imperium had come to the Damirite Empire with the news of Terra and the Emperor. Three times the world of Damire had accepted them, responding enthusiastically to the promise of new knowledge and technology, taking to the introduction of STC infrastructure with fervant interest. On each occasion the denizens of Damire rose up shortly thereafter and, led by their grinning Coven, overthrown the Imperium's representatives. Retribution came to Damire, and three times their empire had been razed and its people slaughtered. As had happened three times before, Imperial scouts once again intercepted short range communications within the neighbouring Thramas sector, and once again they returned to Damire to find a pristine empire, enjoying its isolation and unblemished by Imperium influence.

A platoon of the Thousand Sons Legion joined the fourth Imperial delegation to reach Damire. There, once again, the denizens of Damire seemed genuinely surprised to meet the new arrivals, as if having never seen people from the stars before. Thinking they had fallen off-course and encountered an undiscovered similar world, the representatives of the Imperium were ready to mark its position for future Compliance and move on, if not for the intervention of Centurion Edrokar Lisk of the Thousand Sons who, identifying the presence of the occult behind the riddle of Damire, insisted that the Damirite Empire be abolished immediately and permanently.

After the fourth instance of Damire being razed, Lisk and his command remained on the once again ruined world. Within weeks, vast crescent shaped slashes in reality appeared across Damire, apparently cut open from some other realm. From these tears in realspace emerged the empire of Damire once more, just as it had been, millions of souls, cities, forests and lakes and more appearing on their world anew. With them came the still grinning members of the Coven, carrying their curved ceremonial blades. With these weapons, the Coven sliced more wounds in reality from which the world of Damire was restored, before retreating through the final cut together. As the tear in reality began to close, the Thousand Sons Legionaries followed the Coven through the breach in space and time.

Within the realspace tear, Lisk and his unit found themselves in a dense and beautiful forest filled with life. As they followed the Coven, day turned to night and the seasons changed with every step

until all blurred together; being always both day and night, summer and winter. They reportedly witnessed birth, death and decay at an accelerated rate, though all life seemed unworried by mortality and unblemished by decay, appearing refreshed again, though subtly altered by the cycle. Lisk would later reflect that he was filled with an unfettered sense of joy to have found an elusive realm in which there was no despair, no war, and all life was eternal and perpetual. He would name this realm the Vadanglow, though through study of Imperial records from the first Damire encounter it can be inferred that the Resurrectionists referred to it as the Grin. Emerging from the Grin through another half-moon slash in reality, the Legionaries found themselves to be in a city of one of the other worlds of the Damirite Empire, already in an advanced state of repair.

Here the Thousand Sons, suddenly bereft of the joy they had felt, and embittered that even their highly regulated emotions were so easily manipulated by the influence of the other realm, attempted to break the perpetuating cycle of resurrection. They hunted the Coven of the Resurrectionists through the streets, mercilessly gunning them down. Many escaped into the Grin, or tumbled dying into it only to rise again, closing the portals behind them. Taking up the blades of fallen cultists, the Thousand Sons cut their own passages into the ethereal forest beyond. Within, they cut down the last grinning madmen, but at the moment of their death they burst into life anew and continued to flee; cutting paths to other worlds in order to escape, though this left them vulnerable to a mortal death at the hands of the Space Marines in pursuit.

While the Thousand Sons were attempting to bodily subdue the Coven and capture its weapons, several of the Coven lashed out with their subtle blades, cutting the Space Marines in many dimensions, extinguishing their lives with a shocking finality which the Grin could not restore. In a rage of retaliation, some few of the Thousand Sons warriors dipped into their psychic power, destroying fleeing Resurrectionists with etheric lightning. This was a mistake, however, for the force of the Warp was hidden behind the glamour of the Grin, and poured directly into the Space Marines. They began to mutate without control, dying to a curse of changing flesh. These same mutated brothers then rose again unharmed, only to suffer the agony of the change over and over again in a repeating cycle against which nothing could be done. With the Coven pursued until its threat was extinguished, the remaining Thousand Sons cut a portal back to Damire, where they found a world much alike that they had recently destroyed, but obviously in decline; its air rancid and its buildings ruined.

Back in reality, and furnished with the knowledge that the Vadanglow was a lie of the Great Ocean, Lisk and the handful of his surviving brothers were forced to collapse the final route into the Grin with their aetheric might, leaving their forsaken brothers within with the strange blades which had opened the way. As the Thousand Sons did so, they witnessed the once hale people of Damire wither to dried leather corpses, and their structures finally fall into clouds of ash. The forces of the Imperium fleet which recovered the Thousand Sons would report to Lisk that the other worlds of Damire had simply vanished. Damire itself was placed under a cordon, over which the Thousand Sons would maintain vigilance for a century against the possibility of the system once again being reborn from the ether.

Cult of the Undying Emperor

The following account is based upon information gathered during the interrogation of the disgraced captain of the 8th Expeditionary Fleet vessel *Lex Principium*.

Among the men and women of the great Imperial war effort, the majesty of the Emperor and the grandeur of His galactic vision was often a topic of discussion. Invariably, such talk also veered into the realms of the Emperor's longevity. In the early years of the Great Crusade, the Emperor had existed as a presence in the galaxy long enough to become legend, with records surviving for many families of their distant ancestors having met or fought alongside Him in mythical times on Ancient Terra. Many speculated as to His age, for had an Emperor-like being not fought on Terra a thousand years before even the Great Crusade had begun? To a few, regardless of what He may have claimed to the contrary, the Emperor was an immortal being who could never die; He had conquered death itself and would live to conquer the very cosmos. This was the idea upon which the Cult of the Undying Emperor was shaped.

Deifying the Emperor was not entirely uncommon, with discipline officers and iterators tasked with suppressing it; however, this early cult of Emperor-worship gained traction quickly. It is thought to have originated almost from the declaration of Terran Unity, and spread quickly among the Expeditionary fleets before vast distances were between them. Beginning with an idea that was agreeable, it was adopted as a belief by large swathes of Imperial personnel, even if it was not openly spoken of, and required no organised ritual. This idea only became harmful when within the 8th Expeditionary Fleet unscrupulous individuals exploited it, peddling supposedly holy trinkets and pendants of the Imperial Aquila in exchange for supplementary ration tokens. An industry of relics formed, through misinformation and myth, soon trading in the misbegotten teeth and bodily fluids of 'martyrs' who had died for the Emperor, stolen from post-Compliance medicae encampments and war graves.

ADDENDUM: EMPEROR WORSHIP

It has been many years since this account was first conceived in secret. I know now that I will not live to see what becomes of our Imperium, and so may therefore write without regret or the apprehension felt by those who, like me, remember walking by the Emperor's side during the Great Crusade. I refer to the new Imperial cult which openly worships Him, the existence of which is contrary to His will.

In the long decades since Ullanor, when the Emperor ceased to command His armies across the stars, His frightened subjects have clutched ever more desperately for solace in what they have perceived to be His words and works. Their desire for His presence in their lives has led to the creation of a new belief, variously called the Imperial Faith or the Faith of the Emperor Our Saviour; which is rooted in the text of the *Lectitio Divinatatus*, spawned from the

This macabre trade soon came to support other unsavoury activists, who found a ready source of human viscera required for their own rituals. Under the guise of the Cult of the Undying Emperor, practitioners of warcraft came to support this trade and gather the materials required to summon their gods of hell into reality. To cover their activities, they spoke of the Daemonic in terms of the sanctic, and of their gods as angels and saints, perverting the language of the Imperial Truth, adapting it to become in itself a religious credo – for it stood to reason that with the use of the blood and bones of martyrs who died serving Him, they could open the gates to an illuminated heaven of the Emperor's creation. This operation became well known among believers, and with the help of a sympathetic captain they formed an area of openly unholy consecration within the bulk freighter *Lex Principium*, whereupon they called all of their followers to gather for the rituals to begin. When they opened the Empyrean within the bowels of the ship however, their lies unravelled. The cultists knew not what powers they invoked, nor how to contain them. The ship's captain was alerted by the screams of his Astropath and Navigator, neither of whom would survive the night. Unable to reach his security detail, he locked down the bridge and signalled distress to the fleet.

A Sokar pattern Stormbird was immediately dispatched, containing a small contingent of the Iconoclasts of the XVIIth Legion and the Corpse Grinders of the IVth Legion. Together, the two dour strike teams went about the grim work of purging the ship, finding it to be filled with lunatic cultists and grotesque xenos spawn, whom they dispatched with equal effect. The immediate threat neutralised, the XVIIth Legion, having already earned a reputation in the early years of the Great Crusade for the unrelenting destruction of religious cults, undertook a short campaign of cleansing, their reputation alone prompting Imperial citizens to identify the guilty relic traders and give up any known remaining cultists. Ironically, when reuniting with his Legion, Lorgar would study the same report, and it is understood by Imperial scholars that some of the ritual terms first used by the Cult of the Undying Emperor to beguile their members as to their true intentions were included in the *Lectitio Divinitatus*.

ravings of thrice-damned Lorgar Aurelian. These foolish souls worship the Emperor as a god and it can only be imagined what bitter amusement the Golden Primarch, should he yet live, derives to see that the very matter over which the Emperor chastised him is become the foundation of His kingdom.

Such worship of the Emperor is a step towards the use of faith as a tool with which to pervert His designs. The new lords of Terra do not act to halt its spread, but rather use it as a means to meet their own mortal ends. It is now more imperative than ever to remember the ascendance of the empirical, secular Imperium He created. Knowledge of the Great Lie does not diminish the value of the Truth; the threat of the Daemon can be understood and countered rationally using the artifices of technology. His sons are marvels of science, not the demi-gods of myth and, could He speak, the Emperor would be the first to deny His own divinity.



PIERCING THE VEIL

"We have seen the stars from behind, and found they have no clockwork mechanisms, no golden chariots carrying them abroad."

From the works of Iterator Prime Kyril Sindermann

While the very nature of the Warp is unreal, the threat posed by the Daemon and the Outsider extends beyond the metaphysical to tear at the very foundations of reality. Many would choose to deny that this threat was real, and for them the armour of ignorance would be shattered alongside their fragile sanities during the Horus Heresy. For those who sought to hold the darkness at bay – the organisations established through the years of the Great Crusade – the threat which they girded themselves against was a very practical concern. These dauntless protectors would struggle to endure in the tumult of unreality unleashed by Horus and his allies, though they would clad themselves in the armour of knowledge, and wield powerful weapons in the forms of archaeotech and psyarkana. These weapons of esoteric provenance were both as real and as unreal as the sinister denizens of the Warp, and were used to turn the arcane against the Empyrean. However, such potent weapons hold edges which cut both ways, and the Imperium would suffer under the attentions of its own protectors.

KEEPING THE DARKNESS AT BAY

During the terrible period of history known as Old Night, evil rose to its zenith in the galaxy. For thousands of years, unabated horrors assailed the isolated worlds of humanity, bringing our species to the very brink of annihilation and reducing Mankind to a pitiable race, a shadow of the glories of its past. This era of horrors, perpetuated by vivisector-warlords and techno-barbarian tyrants, was marked by plagues of insanity, the scourge of famine and the tragedy of unending war. Worst of all of the terrors faced by our species was the incursion of the Warp, brought about by the emergence of ever more psykers and the machinations of sorcerer-kings. Human worlds were swallowed whole by the Warp or else subjugated to become the slaves of Daemons.

On such worlds, the human body became inconstant, rife mutation twisting the shape of men and women beyond recognition into something entirely alien. Cruelty, brutality and suffering were the only constants of this age – this is the galactic anarchy which the Emperor opposed and the horror of the darkness which the Imperial Truth was employed to hold at bay.

If upholding the Imperial Truth was a necessary evil of the galactic dominion the Emperor sought to achieve, it also served many purposes in the growth of the Imperium, from the breaking up of communities which shared common beliefs that might oppose Him, to creating an equality of opportunity such that any citizen of merit might rise to prominence of their own accord. Furthermore, by breaking the tribalism and in-fighting different cultural groups had held for millennia through the creation of a single Imperial cultural doctrine, and by freeing the Imperial populace of the cosmic dread which mortals feel when contemplating the vastness of the galaxy, He enabled all of Mankind to set their focus towards the single goal of the Imperial dream. These are all noble and rational causes, though they are shadowed in significance by what appears to have been the greater advantage, as observed by those who were aware of the Great Lie. Every religion, ancient and esoteric, encountered by the Great Crusade in two centuries shared one common factor: that worship draws the attention of Ruinous Powers within the Warp. Organised religions, cults of personality, the worship of god-kings and of xenos, all of these, through some ethereal means, empower beings madmen describe as the 'True Gods'.

It would not be beyond reason to posit that one of the secret motivations of the Emperor in promulgating the Imperial Truth was to weaken the threads which bind humanity to the foul sentiences in the Empyrean, and break the grasp of the Ruinous Powers. Given the vital importance that the Imperial Truth became a universal galactic doctrine, the means taken by the Emperor and His Sigillite to ensure that it was enforced were many, and in some cases, extreme. However, their consistent purpose points to some justified ends being served which may be unfathomable to lesser, human intellects. This purpose was to suppress at all cost wider knowledge of the supernatural nature of the Warp. To this end, specific and covert bodies were created, and for the duration of the Great Crusade they largely succeeded.

THE ACTORS OF ILLUMINATION

Foremost and most well-known of these bodies acting in support of the Imperial Truth were the tools of the vast Imperium propaganda machine. The iterators, an Order of rhetoricians, philosophers and educators, were primed with the express purpose of propagating the message of the Imperial Truth throughout the Great Crusade. They would ply their trade on every Compliant world newly entering the Imperium, as well as reinforce the secularity and rationality of the tenets of the Imperial Truth on worlds decades or centuries part of the Imperium. The iterators were recruited from the most erudite, sharp-witted and silver-tongued teachers of Terra, men and women trained at the direction of Malcador the Sigillite to have such a firm belief in the Imperial Truth and keen grasp of rhetoric, debate and diplomacy that when making their orations they could smother any arguments, however sensible, to the contrary of their specific dogma.

Of Myths and Monsters

Malcador the Sigillite's historical arcanists have identified certain similarities in aspect between the creatures described in the myriad mythologies of Ancient Terra and common manifestations of Warp entities. Among the many examples of shared attributes Daemons have with the monsters of Mankind's earliest days are the thirsting for life-essence of vampires, the wanton cruelty of tygers and the rancid stench of trolls. It is unclear which among these mythological creations were simple fabrication, and which can be genuinely attributed to the Daemonic.

While considered an overwhelming success from the perspective of the great and good of the Great Crusade, on many worlds the speech of iterators was seen as bombast and magniloquent, for deep-seated strictures and beliefs cannot be easily changed with the introduction of new and often inflammatory concepts. The master of Jungmagr is recorded to have said of the army of iterators which spread among his populace after that bloody Compliance, *"Better fangs chew'd us through, than left these serpents' honeyed tongues to turn us, for snake is root of our evils and woes befall us now forth"*. Though many Compliances may have seemed peaceful thanks to the work of the iterators, more often than not it was the threat of the bolters of the Legioness Astartes standing at the iterators' sides which cowed worlds into Compliance, rather than eloquence and logic. As the pre-Imperium adage goes, *'a mind changed against its will is of the same opinion still'* and as such should have been more closely heeded, for in the haste to move on to greater

conquests, the Great Crusade left behind a string of worlds ready to reject the iterators' platitudes, ripe for the influence of the Outsider and the Demagogue to fester and ferment rebellion.

His Talons

The primary armed enforcers of the Imperial Truth were thought to be the Emperor's Talons, and at the Sigillite's behest, the callous, grey-clad secret police force known as the Elucidators. Being at the Emperor's side throughout the wars of Unification and the Great Crusade, it was only natural that His Legio Custodes were His weapon of choice when He intervened personally in esoteric matters, no command given by the Master of Mankind being beyond the ability of the Custodians to carry out. Beyond reproach, the Legio Custodes were given a lighter hand than any other Imperial force when it came to the handling of the forbidden and dangerous artefacts of the occult. It was their duty to apprehend and interrogate persons with knowledge of

arcane sciences and access to forbidden archaeotech, learning all they could and capturing any relics of significance worthy of future study or use to the Emperor and His technicians. While most such individuals were summarily executed after their secrets were extracted, some few were of value and thusly offered a choice to serve the Master of Mankind rather than be put to death.

The Sisters of Silence were known to be witchseekers, and though they served their quiet purpose to hunt out valuable human psykers for the choirs of the Astra Telepathica, it was also at their discretion to further investigate the activities of a rogue psyker. Such investigations were wont to reveal the usage of a developing psyker with ill intent by a cult or through the abuse of local dominie of ancient and forbidden practices. Whether such occurrences were accidental or intentional, to have touched the other side taints a psyker and any persons with which they were in contact, resulting in the wrath of the Sisters of Silence being unleashed upon a locality in the form of Pursuer cadres, Erinyes jetbike squadrons and the dreaded Divider stealth-craft. When death was the only solution available, the Officio Assassinorum could also be employed, but in those rare instances of extremis where such death was required as to end an entire world for the perfidy of making foul compacts with the entities of the Warp, the Titans of the Ordo Sinister could be unshackled, bringing ruination wherever they trod.

Elucidatum

Many mysteries were unravelled in the aftermath of the Horus Heresy through investigation into the archives of the Sigillite. In the sealed underground archivum of Azure-Locus-Cl-γδ, the preserved records of the activities of Malcador's secret police –the so-called Officers of Elucidation– were found; corroborating hearsay long dismissed as simple fearmongering.

The Order Elucidatum, colloquially known as the Elucidators or Tallymen, acted in two functions; openly as apparent contributors to the bureaucracy of the Great Crusade and covertly as iconoclasts, censors and murderers. In their open capacity, the Elucidators travelled freely among the Expeditionary fleets of the Great Crusade, operating as supporting data scribes to the offices of iterators, future planetary governors and census takers as a function of the Administratum. The work of the Elucidatum was vital in sifting and analysing the data gathered from newly Compliant civilisations; categorising, scrutinising and providing useful demographic information to those now in command, or gently guiding the rhetoric required of iterators to bring about more efficient transitions into Imperial authority.

The unfettered access the Order had in regards to the databanks of combined knowledge of the Great Crusade was instrumental to their ulterior purpose for being abroad in the galaxy. By analysing census data and being privy to the information provided by the ambassadors of newly found human worlds, the Elucidators could determine the risk posed by nascent or suppressed religious cults post-Compliance. This information facilitated the pursuit of their true objectives: the assassination of demagogues, the destruction of proscribed texts and the suppression of any persons with knowledge of or contact with the manifestations of the Warp. The mandate possessed by the Order Elucidatum was underwritten with the seal of the Sigillite himself, allowing the Tallymen, who were themselves expert and highly specialised warriors, to take immediate possession of any military command or asset they required, other than the Legiones Astartes, to complete their mission.

These missions were chosen and undertaken independently, for the Sigillite had recruited highly intelligent warriors from the finest military orders in the Sol System for his secret police, as part of the earliest of his initiatives to find men and women of inquisitive nature who might seek out traitors, spiritualists, witches and those tainted by them. The Elucidators held no trials, trusting to the logic of their Truth and the insight of the information they compiled in selecting their targets for 'elucidation'.

Though few truly knew of the exploits of the Elucidators, they earned a dark reputation. They were a faction responsible for the burning of fanes with all of their worshippers still huddled within, and the pogroms of religious castes in the rural wilds of countless worlds. Their name quickly became synonymous with genocide. Malcador's secret police were sanctioned to make use of seratoxin, a nerve agent dispersed to ensure that the minds of all witnesses of any kind of immaterial incursion event: man, woman or child, were utterly expunged and placed beyond any hope of recollection. A cruel fate, the so called 'Brain Destroyer' leaves its victims as withered husks, unable to respond to more than autonomic instinct and phototropic cues.

Their atrocities were not limited only to the murder of entire lines of Imperial households, for as the Great Crusade advanced into the farthest reaches of space, it was the Elucidators who took it upon themselves to wipe out the many early cults of Emperor worship within the Expeditionary fleets. The Tallymen became a Bogeyman or Chowkidar to be feared in the minds of common folk residing in the bellies of the vast warships of the Great Crusade, with elders admonishing misbehaving children by invoking their name.

Had Mankind been trusted to know of the outer dark and reject it of its own volition, the Order Elucidatum would not have been needed. Thousands upon thousands of deaths and the massacres of innocents simply accused of association or belief in warpcraft without due process could have been avoided. Their tally of murders is a direct contribution to the cost of the Great Lie.

The Zealous Legions

The Imperial Fists Legion is thought to have also been subtly employed by the Emperor to combat Daemonology. The nature of the Imperial Fists is one of stoic adherence to duty, a zealous loyalty engineered into the core of their genetic code, steeling them against corruption. Though they are known to be His consummate defenders, their purpose may have been to defend more than His walls, but also the soul of the Imperium. For much of the Great Crusade, the Emperor kept the VIIth Legion and their Primarch, Rogal Dorn, close to His side. Unlike his brother Magnus, Dorn could not be easily swayed to seek knowledge for its own sake, instead he was trusted to exercise restraint and caution in his studies. For this reason, it is rumoured that the Emperor, over a period of decades, shared secrets with Rogal Dorn which but a few individuals were privy to; allowing the Praetorian to better understand the need for the Imperial Truth and the urgency with which the true enemy must be combatted.

During the Great Crusade, the Imperial Fists came to uphold the Imperial Truth with a passionate zeal. As they encountered sorcerers and preachers of the profane, they understood and were able to identify their enemy's weaknesses, pioneering the use of an arsenal of psyarkana devices capable of combatting the influence of the Warp. Throughout the course of the Great Crusade, Rogal Dorn accumulated one of the Imperium's greatest repositories of the arcane within the vast vaults of *Phalanx*, a valuable resource kept hidden from his brothers which, though he was reticent to employ it, was of great use during the Siege of Terra.

The Death Guard too played a role in enforcing the Imperial Truth. Mortarion, in his hatred of the Outsider and its sorcery, actively sought out worlds tainted by what he perceived to be the foul influence of the Warp. On these worlds he acted not as the Liberator of Barbarus, but as a Reaper, the Death Lord come at the head of a host of the XIVth Legion's Destroyers to harvest the souls of those he saw as diseased. Mortarion's warriors were among the first to make widespread use of the bale flamer and so called psyk-out or psi-reactive munitions. The taint of warp magick was to Mortarion the most terminal and incurable of contagions, and was a sickening blight, relentlessly in need of eradication.

Independent Preparations

Other powers also directly or inadvertently upheld the Imperial Truth. The technophages of the Malagra, the Mechanicum's internal function of cleansing, for a time acted to maliciously hinder the works of any magos tinkering with the dangerously cryptic. Within the Mechanicum, the adherents of the Malagra doctrines sought to maintain the purity of the inner workings of the cults of the Ommissiah. They were the hunters of Heretek magi, and were known to declare dormant whole forges if any spoor of the highest forbidden heretechical orders of damnation were found within, such as the curse of artificial sentience, the melding of xenos technology with the blessed machine, or the drawing of energy from the Warp direct.

Among the Chartist Captains and Rogue Traders too, certain precautions were taken against the threat of the Other. Operating at the distant borders of the galaxy and frequently traversing the Immaterium, these captains encountered arcane phenomenon beyond description; sights and sensations which drove men mad with but a fleeting glance. Often, they would operate independently, away from Imperial scrutiny, where they could take their own measures to ensure the safety and security of their vessels. When threatened by the Outsider or the Daemon, such captains, many scarcely more than buccaneers, would have had the means prepared with which to respond with force and resourcefulness in kind, though they might never dare to declare such within the bounds of the Imperium.

THE WINDS OF FEAR

During the dark days of the Horus Heresy the power of the Warp reached ascendance, the ruinous entities within drawn closer to the narrow divide between the Empyrean and realspace than had been experienced at any time since the Age of Strife. Knowledge of the existence and madness of that which lay beyond the veil reached its height among the worlds of the Imperium. Whether through first-hand experience, reliable eyewitness accounts, dark rumour or the frantic babbled hearsay carried by uncounted refugees in flight, the citizens of the Imperium at a stroke learned that the Daemons which they had so long denied were in fact real. With this realisation, panic and dread spread to become a galactic hysteria. The threat of the approach of the Warmaster only fanned the flames of

agitation; on many worlds the fever pitch of terror ground to a halt any hope of resistance as the Traitor Legions arrived, the gatekeepers of these worlds paralysed with terror or already fleeing. The Warmaster understood the power of fear and used it widely as part of his strategy of conquest. Sending his emissaries ahead of his fleets, Horus spread word of the Emperor's Great Lie and threatened to unleash the powers he now commanded to cow populations into submission.

Worlds lost to the Warmaster were said to have become '*dark*'. This sentiment was both figurative and literal. These worlds would immediately cease all trade and communication with their neighbours, their space ports would be blockaded and their astropathic choirs silenced. The flood of refugees escaping the onrush of the Warmaster's armies would dry up, with only a rare few ships allowed to escape, carrying fear as a weapon to break other worlds. Among the refugees were the Warmaster's agents, insinuating themselves into positions to destabilise neighbouring star systems. To many observers, it appeared as if the darkness of space drew close to these lost worlds; isolated they would regress to a state pre-dating Imperial enlightenment. Fortress worlds of the Imperium slipped into darkness and simply disappeared, never to be seen again. Many worlds were stripped barren by the Warmaster's engineers of war, their people and resources pressed into service in the Warmaster's fleets and armies. Industrial and Forge Worlds were captured and their denizens enslaved to continue production in Dark Compliances. Other worlds found less useful or more resistant were scoured of life by dread atomic fire or the life-eater virus. Still others were sacrificed wholesale to maintain the power of the Ruinstorm, perhaps the darkest fate of all.

As worlds cascaded into darkness, conditions became ideal for all of the evils of space to emerge. Freighters full of refugees would carry within them a melting pot of worshippers of ancient religions, and for surely the first time, many different such cults would mix, each carrying a piece of a larger and more complex black ritual. The sequence of worlds becoming dark would lead to tidal waves of fearful emotions, which would in turn be reflected in the Warp, leading to indiscriminate, large scale Daemonic incursions on dozens of worlds. Rebels and cultists across the galaxy threw off the pretence of Compliance to

challenge their Imperial Governors, and such distractions to loyal defenders only paved Horus' advance. Other forces took advantage of the Imperium's weakness. The Unspeakable King would re-emerge, as would the psychopathy of Du'Maash. Xenos threats banished to the fringes of the galaxy would rear their heads to eke out a corner of the Imperium as their own, and those within cordons of quarantine would look to their skies to see the battleships of their Imperial gaolers no longer hanging above them. In many instances, the fearful tales of the Daemon abroad within the Imperium ravaging loyal systems may even have been misattributed to the influx of rampaging xenos breeds taking advantage of the Imperium's tumult, but given the paucity of surviving records, it is impossible to say what fates befell such worlds.

An Imperium Abandoned

Many questioned at this time if more could have been done to stem the rising panic. The Legiones Astartes, the symbol of Imperial strength and unity, were sundered after the bitter blows of Isstvan, Calth, Signus and many more. Shattered Legion forces scattered across the vastness of the galaxy waged their guerrilla campaigns to harry the onrush of the darkness, but could do little to significantly slow it. The vast martial might of the Imperial Army was split in twain, responding to a million cries for aid or consuming itself with in-fighting. Planetary garrison forces could scarcely keep up with the deluge of refugees and quickly became wary of their neighbours, mistrust winning over compassion thanks to the artifices of the Warmaster. With Imperial defenders in disarray, voices were raised to ask questions of the whereabouts of the Emperor and His agents of illumination, those most trusted and most required to keep the darkness at bay in the Imperium's time of need.

The Emperor had returned to His seat on Terra after the Triumph at Ullanor, trusting to His chosen son, Horus, to complete the Great Crusade, while unbeknownst to His Imperium He was embroiled in His Great Work. It may have appeared to the masses that, throughout the years of the Horus Heresy, He was either unaware or uncaring of the plight of the trillions of souls looking to Him for deliverance, and with the weight of that perception came despair. The truth though is far more frightening, as the secrets behind the Eternity Gate were of the utmost importance, holding the full attention of the indomitable mind of the Master of Mankind, allowing Him no respite in which

Ancient Weapons

Ancient Weapons

Combat reports of early encounters between the Legiones Astartes and the entities of the Warp reveal a peculiar facet of the nature of the Daemon. It has been noted that for some ill-known reason, Daemons appear to be all but immune to advanced projectile and energy based weaponry in their freshly manifested state. Attacks of a more primitive nature on the other hand, such as the hacking of a blade or the setting of flame to such a creature, have been reported to have an exaggerated effect.

It has been posited by radical rhetoricians that those weapons wielded by ancient men are held most in dread by the Daemon itself, for as beings of scavenged sentience and emotion, they are not wounded on the physical plane but on an ideological level, by the primordial expectation of pain. Furthermore, the Daemons' vulnerability in this regard might have informed the very weapons with which we continue to wage war, for why else would the Emperor have commanded His Legions to wield swords as readily as their bolters in our current age?

He could turn His gaze to the stars. With Him, His Talons retreated to Terra, playing little significant part in the wars of the Horus Heresy, instead seeing to the body of the Emperor and enacting His secret will. So too did the Imperial Fists Legion and their Primarch return to Terra, tasked with the fortification of the Throneworld. Beyond the light of Sol, the Imperial Fists were instrumental in the defence of the heartlands of the Imperium within the Segmentum Solar, here at least they monitored the flow of rumour and brought reassurance to isolated planetary governors that they were not forgotten. These efforts were often undermined in the early stages of what would become known as the Solar War, a campaign of calculated misdirection and manipulation whose objective was to weaken the seat of power of Terra prior to the Warmaster's arrival.

The Forge Worlds of the Mechanicum, ever jealous of their domains, became isolationist and reclusive, beyond the reach of Mars and Terra both. The fate of the fanatical Malagra Order is tied to the revelation of the Dark Mechanicum, and as with many masters of the Forge Worlds, they had little interest in the plight of the wider Imperium, being as they were otherwise occupied with the division of the Mechanicum and the secession of Mars. Of the Chartist Captains and Rogue Traders in the galaxy, they made themselves known in many small ways, arriving unheralded to aid the Imperium or, in their disbelief and shock, let loose their anger at the idea of civil war; punishing both the Emperor's and Warmaster's forces in equal measure. Such was observed when the Golden Fleet appeared to burn the skies above Tallarn, and when the Admiralty of Joss crippled the moon of Drussen IV.

Multiple Rogue Traders are thought also to have contributed on both sides to the Sea of Fire, the devastating void warfare engagement across the Beta-Garmon region. On the whole, their forces were too far from the core worlds in need of their aid, too scattered to make any concerted impact on the wider war and too few to turn the tide.

As to the Order Elucidatum, Horus knew of their presence within the Great Crusade. Being a skilled general, he had observed early on certain regiments of the Imperial Army peeling off from their ordered advances to pursue hitherto unknown objectives and had traced these back to the offices of the Sigillite. When he came to purge his ships of iterators, Remembrancers and Imperial bureaucrats he did not underestimate the Elucidators, tasking his equerry Maloghurst with their extermination.

Outside of the Traitors' fleets, the Elucidators found their work outstripping them as the birth of the Ruinstorm gave rise to innumerable new targets, far beyond the ability of their Order to cope with alone, particularly when those among the Imperial Army whom they had come to rely on were entrenched in warfare on multiple fronts. The individual Elucidators became fragmented as the Age of Darkness proceeded, their fates unknown and unsought after. From the *Unbalanced Scales*, we can deduce that perhaps dozens of Elucidators spread throughout the Expeditionary fleets were in fact covert double agents of the Alpha Legion and, at the onset of the Horus Heresy, these were recalled to other, unknowable posts. In 012.M31, the Order Elucidatum was formally dissolved by the Sigillite without fanfare, and records pointing towards its existence

expunged. Those few Tallymen who survived to return to their master on Terra were not lauded as either heroes or villains but quietly inducted into different secretive agencies, for Malcador was still in need of proven men and women with their particular skills.

ARCANA OF THE LEGIONES ASTARTES

At the height of the Horus Heresy, the Legiones Astartes were exposed almost without exception to the esoteric, whether they chose to pursue it or not. Dozens of battles turned on the ability of the Legions to draw upon or combat the ethereal. Many battles revolved around the acquisition or destruction of artefacts and relics which would previously have been rejected as too dangerous or too costly to use by any Legion. Other battles were incited or decided by the walls of realspace being torn asunder to admit Daemons into a war zone.

Conflicts such as the Battle of Perditus in 009.M31 began when the 98th Clan Company of the Iron Hands intercepted a taskforce of the Death Guard's 1st Company pillaging an interdicted Mechanicum research facility. As recorded by the Iron Father leading the Xth Legion force, the Death Guard sought an object held by the Mechanicum of Perditus, which was supposed to have been able to becalm the tides of the Ruinstorm that had burst into the skies of the Ultima Segmentum fewer than two years previously. The Iron Hands and Death Guard fought each other to a standstill, denying one another the prize of Perditus' technoarcana, until after over a month of conflict, the battle was eventually broken by the intervention of the Lion. Ordered to leave or be destroyed by the Primarch of the 1st Legion, the Iron Hands and Death Guard both retreated. It is believed by the 98th Clan Company's leadership that the Lion took possession of the artefact on Perditus, an item of great value to the Dark Angels in navigating the tumult of the Warp for the waxing duration of the Ruinstorm.

First Captain Ahriman of the Thousand Sons Legion breached the defences of the psykana gaol of Kamiti Sona in 010.M31, intent on finding within the deep space void station an inmate of worth known only to his Corvidae Occult. The ensuing deaths of several prominent Sisters of Silence gaolers broke the null-aure which enshrouded the void station. The substance of reality, already punctured by the machinations of the Thousand Sons, burst under the pressure wave of hundreds of deafened psykers regaining their etheric senses, allowing

unbound entities of the Warp to spill into the facility drawn by the prisoners' anguish. Only the intervention of a contingent of Space Wolves – a force known to react with overwhelming brutality to the incursions of Daemons – and a Librarian of the Knights Errant, both apparently hunting Ahriman himself could contain the threat. Regardless of these efforts, with their revelation to the galaxy, the fates of Kamiti Sona and its inmates were sealed.

Whatever the outcome of such battles, it has become clear that each and every encounter of the arcane during the Age of Darkness served to lend strength to the Warmaster's campaign. Repeated Daemonic incursions and the use of technoarcana which activated simultaneously in both realspace and the Warp weakened the gates at the threshold of hell. Increasingly as these ancient borders creaked, new portals appeared; gratuitously dispersed amongst the width and breadth of the galaxy. This served to allow the Ruinstorm Daemon to manifest of its own volition, strengthening its hold over our material realm.

Aetheric Ambitions

Among the Primarchs of the Traitor Legions, attitudes to their allies within the Ruinstorm appear to have been conflicting and wide-ranging. Perturabo looked upon the beings of the Warp with indifference, while Mortarion

and Angron spurned them with spiteful disdain. Fulgrim, it is thought, came to embrace the powers of the Warp, finding in them something beatific, rapturous and all-consuming. It is Lorgar Aurelian's relationship with the Warp and the force which he describes as the Primordial Truth however, which is most pertinent to any account of the role of the Daemon within Horus' rebellion.

Inferred from letters exchanged with his mentor Kor Phaeron and his seminal written work, the *Book of Lorgar*, some decades prior to the events on Isstvan, Lorgar Aurelian undertook a pilgrimage which led him to the distant and dark corners of the galaxy. His Father the Emperor, whom Lorgar venerated, had denied His own godhood, and in doing so humbled Lorgar and his Legion. From that day on Monarchia, it became the Primarch of the XVIIth Legion's singular, bitter ambition to redeem his belief that the deities he learned of during his upbringing on Colchis truly existed, and in doing so to demonstrate the Emperor as being a hypocrite. To prove the Emperor's Imperial Truth as a falsehood, Lorgar sought to discover beings which exhibited true divinity. Lorgar was indeed proven right in this journey, and though he may not have been the first of the Primarchs to learn of the Great Lie of his own volition during this decades-long quest, his discovery can be considered the most formative.

The Death Lord's Hypocrisy

The Death Lord's Hypocrisy

Given Mortarion's vehement hatred of psykers, sorcerers and the arcane, it would appear to be contrary to his own interests to have joined Horus and the forces of the Ruinstorm in bringing disorder to the Imperium, let alone make use of such powers to further his own ends. Little can be known of Mortarion's personal feelings about this perceived hypocrisy during the Age of Darkness, though voices have been raised in speculation and condemnation both. His estranged sons however, denying Mortarion could have fallen so far so fast, continued to display a weary loyalty.

Later accounts by Captain Garro, formerly of the Death Guard, suggests there surely must have been some internal struggle at the Death Lord's core, for by throwing in his lot with the Warmaster he had allied himself with all that he despised. It is possible, claimed Garro, that Mortarion could have had a hand in undermining the dark powers of the Ruinstorm while in his position as the Warmaster's closest and most faithful ally. Perhaps Mortarion continued to act in the Imperium's favour, dulling the edge of the Warp-borne blade which Horus sought to wield.

Captain Morturg, a reliable voice in matters of his Primarch, suggested hopefully that Mortarion would have experienced remorse in siding with Horus, wishing instead for the purer and heady days of the Great Crusade where he fought alongside his vaunted brother Ferrus Manus. However, if the string of travesties committed by the Death Guard in these past dark years is to be the evidence they are judged by, Mortarion's Legion were a dangerous enough foe to the Imperium without the added menace of the Daemon.

Given what we now know of Lorgar's corruption and insanity, it can be assumed that the day he discovered the Truth he so fervently sought, as the result of some psychically induced trauma, his mind cracked. After this fateful encounter, revisions to the *Book of Lorgar* – often identified by a change from the use of ink to blood in examples recovered from XVIIth Legion casualties – are openly written in insane ritualistic verse. The tone of Kor Phaeron's letters also was much changed after this time, referring openly to the spiritual in the language of worship. From them we learn that Lorgar, far from resting on the laurels of vindication of his discovery of gods within the Warp, turned from the Emperor and became a vile prophet of the new, dark powers he found. His ambitions grew with his Legion from the humble to the grandiose and, in the final years of the Great Crusade, from the merely instructive to the paradigm altering. Lorgar, by the time of the Horus Heresy, desired nothing less than to achieve harmony between Mankind and the Primordial Annihilator, creating a symbiotic ascendance for both resulting in a galactic consonance. He saw to this calling with serious-minded thoughtfulness, seeking to build a grand vision of dimensional unity with considered and prudent steps, first by spreading the religion of Colchis, that of the True Gods, and then through selective compacts with those powers within the Warp most amiable to his purpose.

Horus learned of these deeper mysteries of the Warp from his conferences with his brother Lorgar. To Horus, the blandishments of worship and the spreading of the Primordial Truth were at best irrelevances and at worst a repetition of the failings of the Great Crusade and the spreading of the Imperial Truth. Horus had no desire to re-tread this bellicose past, but looked instead to a glorious future in which he would crown himself master of the galaxy. To Horus, the Warp and the benighted sentiences within were little more than additional pawns he could add to his regicide board; an additional resource with which to confound and disrupt the Emperor's plans. Horus saw only the cold and logical calculations involved in drawing forth aid from beyond: men were exchanged for Daemons; worlds and words were exchanged for power and all balances ultimately fell in his favour. He was blind to the true risks and sacrifices undertaken in the name of attaining conquest, and the toll such would take on his soul. Any means to victory were justifiable in his eyes, for he believed that when he obtained galactic

Warrior Lodges

Uncovered during the tumult of the Horus Heresy, many of the Legions, both Traitor and Loyalist, contained within them secret Orders. These Orders, or lodges, are believed to have been propagated by the Word Bearers during the Great Crusade, and shared many of the characteristics and rituals associated with the activities of the occult. Though they claimed to have been simple warrior fraternities to engender the bonds of brotherhood between Legionaries regardless of rank, the lodges were used by the Warmaster to target Space Marines across the Legions whom he could manipulate into pledging fealty to him above all others, be it their gene-sire or ultimately the Emperor. As the Horus Heresy progressed, the warriors within these lodges were the first among the Traitor Legions inducted into the mysteries of the Warp by the Word Bearers, and the first among their brethren to know of and commune with Horus' allies within the Ruinstorm.

domination, he would command the right to renegotiate the terms of any obligation. Obtaining immediate power to ensure victory was Warmaster Horus' only concern.

In the bargain, Horus relinquished his very humanity and more. Lorgar is known from letters to Kor Phaeron to have admonished Horus for drawing too quickly and too greedily from the well of power he had introduced his brother to within the Warp, for it risked the ruin of the Aurelian's own designs. Horus' hubris was accelerating to the brink of peril Lorgar's grand vision, what the *Book of Lorgar* describes as '*the melodic cadence of a song of worship writ large across the stars*'. For Horus' part, he ignored the mewling pleas from his brother to slow down, eventually casting off his counsel entire, seeing in him not wisdom but only the weaknesses of zealotry and demagoguery. Uncaring of the Warp's prevailing role in Mankind's future, The Warmaster's divergence of philosophy would foster rivalry between the two, straining one of the few lasting bonds of respect and friendship Horus held with his brother Primarchs.

The Confessions of the Hydra

The *Unbalanced Scales* tells us of the compact made between the Alpha Legion and the Outsider, in the form of a cabal of psychic alien races supposedly serving the best interests of the galaxy, and by extension, Mankind. However, less was known of the Alpha Legion's relationship with the Other until, unbidden, an Alpha Legionnaire turned himself over to the VIIth Legion weeks after the Siege of Terra. He would offer no information when interrogated, other than his name, which he gave as Alpharius, and his purpose; to relate a number of anecdotes to the Imperium, some of which alluded to the Alpha Legion's relationship with the occult. Offering no further value, the Space Marine,

given the designation of prisoner 'LXX', was executed for the crime of treason; a testament to this new vengeful and unforgiving era. There is no way to substantiate this warrior's tales. It is suspected that everything he spoke of was a lie.

LXX said of his Legion that even at the very moment the Judgement of Nikaea was spoken they had contradicted it, and continued to do so without remorse, their intention never having been to acquiesce to it. The Alpha Legion saw themselves as being above such directives, believing that they possessed the commensurate knowledge and mastery to preclude themselves from any restriction placed upon them. They had used psykers throughout the Great Crusade and would continue to do so, both of their Librarius, and in the form of their agents, among which were self-proclaimed wizards, warlocks and sorcerers. By sharing to a limited degree the Legion's knowledge and resources with such individuals, the Legion had co-opted them into divulging their secrets of the arcane. Thus, the relevant cells of the Alpha Legion were well enough informed that they could usually mitigate the risk of being overwhelmed through accidental contact with the beings in the Warp.

That paradigm held true even when Lorgar Aurelian made his Pilgrimage into the Warp. Interspersed among the Word Bearers through undisclosed means were a number of Alpha Legionnaires within the Chapter of the Serrated Sun, close to the Golden Primarch's side. When these Space Marines entered the Warp unshielded, they died, but beyond the explanations of Imperial science, two Alpha Legionnaires lived on beyond their own deaths by attaining a form of Daemonic symbiosis. According to LXX, through unknown augury they were

detected and hunted by unnatural entities which were only loosely to be considered Word Bearers Legionaries. Only one Alpha Legionnaire escaped, returning to his Legion to share the knowledge of his new power, submitting himself to interrogation and vivisection.

Another anecdote shared by the prisoner recounts the tale of a number of warriors of the XXth Legion who had independently witnessed and recorded early forms of summoning, binding and possession rituals of a Daemonic nature within the warrior lodges of the Legiones Astartes. Though the Alpha Legion had no need for lodges of their own, they infiltrated several of those amongst other Traitor Legions. Under the tutelage of the so-called Diabolists of the Word Bearers Legion and the lodge masters of the Sons of Horus, they learned the uses of human sacrifice, the necessity of summoning circles, the carving of runes, blood magicks and the drawing out of a soul from the body of a Legionary to allow a new spirit to fill its vessel. These infiltrators would continue to gather knowledge and practice the rites they had learned until, with the completion of their mission or upon some other signal of command, they would return to reunite with the larger Alpha Legion and share their findings with their Primarch.

For the Alpha Legion, the use of psykers remained but a means to an end, the Warp looked upon in rational terms as a source of energy for which the toll for its use was equal and opposite. The practices of witchcraft and Daemonology were simply tools within their arsenal of the Empyrean. Even after learning of the deeper enigmas of the Warp, and of the malignant gods, the majority of the Alpha Legion continued to wield its arcane secrets with rationality and not reverence, accepting

the risks as part of the grim equation of sacrifice and enervation. Many Legionaries were volunteered to become possessed as part of experiments to improve the Legion's knowledge and, indeed, for combat deployment, but vitally LXX impressed upon his interrogators that these Legionaries were never given the status of Other, rather simply becoming a new functional link of the Legion's unbroken chain.

The Ultima Taskforce

In distant Ultramar, Roboute Guilliman first looked to his own borders, blinded as he was behind the veil of the Ruinstorm. He was shocked by the rapidity with which Calth was lost, a phenomenal achievement for the Word Bearers in military terms. Had it purely been a war of Legion against Legion, the battle could have dragged on for many more months, even given the total surprise with which Lorgar's forces had struck. The factor which tipped the scales in the battle was not of the *Principia Bellicosa*, whose strategies Guilliman was privately adapting and refining with his Legion, but of a nature previously unknown to him.

With Calth lost for all time, and the threat of ruin hanging over his legacy in Ultramar thanks to the ravages of the Shadow Crusade, the master of Macragge long dwelt upon the theoretical merits of the methods used by the XVIIth Legion. The weaponised use of Warp-based entities became of particular interest to Guilliman who, having overturned the Edict

of Nikaea perforce on Calth, was coldly ready to adapt any practical method of defence against the esoteric threats he faced.

In secret, Guilliman gathered thirteen senior Librarians of his Legion to his side in the secure Asteria Wing of the Fortress of Macragge and with them formed the Ultima Taskforce, a group of warriors capable of going to war with weapons of an arcane nature to counter the potential use of the same by the enemy. There he set them to researching the creatures unleashed by the Word Bearers on Calth. With their combined understanding of the Warp and arcana derived from the forced confessions of XVIIth Legion prisoners, this new taskforce set about their task with determination, developing a methodology of empirical experimentation.

After a spate of esoteric phenomenon caused widespread disorder within the Magna Macragge Civitas, the Ultima Taskforce was moved to a hidden laboratory on the world of Prandium and given greater resources to pursue their logical goal of weaponising summoned warp entities. The ultimate fate of the taskforce would later be suppressed, and is held in another account.



The Vaults of Mimir

The Iron Hands are of note when considering the use of arcana among the Legiones Astartes. Though they were broken on Isstvan V and the Gorgon was slain, the majority of the Legion was yet preparing to deploy from orbit as the massacre was set in motion, a significant proportion of which managed to escape the pursuit of Traitor forces in ships swollen with Legionaries. Making up the larger part of the forces known as the Shattered Legions, the Iron Hands became a thorn in the Warmaster's side, harrying his supply lines. Though much of this force would eventually fall under the command of the patrician Captain Meduson, who waged his concerted campaign by conventional means, many of the Iron Hands' splintered forces resorted to less than noble methods; including the use of forbidden relics stolen from the Vaults of Mimir.

Ferrus Manus was known to have been thorough in containing knowledge and relics of the arcane as he encountered them in his far-ranging conquests during the Great Crusade. Of most interest to him were the technoarcana of far-flung civilisations: unnaturally efficient energy generators; advanced cogitation systems verging on sentience; remarkable terraforming devices and weapons both mundane, such as lethal chemical agents, and of the esoteric that dealt death by unknowable means. He impounded these finds in sealed stasis constructs known only as the Mimir Vaults, which were armed with complex and ingenious defences and counter-measures, so that none but he could access them. The first Mimir Vault was founded on Medusa, though as it filled and the Great Crusade drew the Gorgon ever farther afield, he created more such vaults on worlds and moons so far flung as Glendann, Jericho and Iquonqir. These would continue to act as repositories of recovered technology, inexplicable relics, and even some inventions of his own making.

With Ferrus' death, his Legion suffered a crisis of ideology. Many of the remaining Iron Fathers would see the loss of their Primarch as a mark of his own failing and reject his teachings, markedly his prohibition of the use of certain technologies. Raids were made on the hidden Mimir Vaults by Ferrus' own wilful sons, for the Iron Fathers alone knew where they resided. Mostly these raids met with overwhelming disaster; the countermeasures in place to deter invasion proving too extreme to withstand. The vaults could incinerate whole detachments of Legionaries in moments or else claw starships from orbit through aetheric means, dragging them into an embrace of mutual doom, destroying both the raiders and the vault itself. A paltry few raids met with success, and what could be plundered of the Gorgon's treasures were, with many more evils and boons to be rediscovered and used over the full course of the Horus Heresy.

The use of rites of ressurective cybermancy, sometimes referred to as '*turning the Keys of Hel*' was observed in combat on Gamma-Incunabular against the Emperor's Children, the power of an engine of animachina being abused to bring about the unnatural resurrection and animation of the dead; the hatred of the Iron Hands warriors keeping them from falling still, even when horribly dismembered. With each death, the power of the dreaded reanimus device increased until its energies began to spread inexplicably and undirected, dragging up the decomposing dead of previous battles on the planet. It even raised from the dirt the tattered, scavenged remains of a Basemekanik Beast killed there a century and a half previous; until that tormented creature destroyed the device and the Iron Father manipulating it with the flailing of one mighty fist.

When wielded in combat, such proscribed technologies appeared to friend and foe alike to be the work of the Outsider or the Daemonic Other, and indeed some were of etheric provenance. One such technology, thought to be an arsenal of triboelectric blades, was in fact a set of divining rods for the facilitation of Daemonic possession known as the *Swarga Loke*. When drawn from their sheathes in unison against the advancing ranks of the Sons of Horus on Defence Platform XCVX-VII, the unknowing Iron Hands each beckoned into unreality and their bodies were quickly overcome by new ravenous hosts, which then laid waste to the nearby Sons of Horus and all other life upon the Defence Platform, as was observed by the station's pict-captors. On another occasion, the ritual of neuromantic celerity was invoked when engaged against the Death Guard on Jahmun VI, stripping the metal from the hulls of nearby tanks to reclad battlefield corpses in steel, reforming with their molecular matter into ghoulish automatons of war. The Iron Hands' Space Wolves allies turned upon them immediately upon witnessing this act with savage howls of "*Maleficarum!*", cutting down both the automatons and the Iron Hands before loping away from the battlefield, leaving the Death Guard to watch on in grim appreciation.

The use of the Relics of Mimir became wide-spread. Some were seized by the Iron Hands' enemies as the spoils of war and more yet lay buried in the scattered strongholds and outposts that the Iron Hands frequented for resupply. Others still were traded to the Mechanicum for assistance when in dire need. Each vault contained hundreds of sealed chambers, brimming with techno-arcana, of which only the most immediately accessible were opened and their technologies taken for the arsenals of the Iron Fathers; doubtless many more vaults lie undisturbed and forgotten still. The bounty of the Vaults of Mimir would continue to see use throughout the Horus Heresy, and became rightly regarded as potent psyarkana, for the knowledge required in their use was esoteric, and the results produced by them recondite indeed.

THE DEATH OF HOPE

With all that came to pass, the very foundations of the Imperium were shaken. Uncertainty was the only truth left in the crippled Imperium, even after the Traitors had fled into the far reaches of the galaxy and the Emperor's loyal sons had looked to one another with eyes devoid of light and parted ways. So many questions must go unanswered. The Traitor, the Daemon and the Outsider have all left their indelible imprint on the soul of the Imperium, their malevolent intent abundant. Though these cankers may have been excised from Terra during the Great Siege, their influence has metastasised throughout the Imperium and will forever spread and grow.

We can only ruminate on what could have been. At the very onset of the Age of Darkness, the fate of Mankind hinged on turning points which we were too blind to see and if we had seen them, were too inured to disbelief to take appropriate action. Had Mankind not failed to take advantage of these momentous events, things may have been very different indeed. If only Guilliman had learned of Isstvan before the muster on Calth. If only the Angel and his Legion had flown from Signus before becoming embroiled in the cataclysm of that world. If only Magnus had not warred with such concupiscence as to break the Edict of Nikaea. If only the Khan had been granted a greater place in his Father's kingdom. If only Alpharius and his inscrutable Legion had forged their own path, independent of the orders of the Warmaster and the Outsider, to save the Imperium with the knowledge they possessed. If only Horus had won his war, and Mankind's perpetuated suffering been avoided. These are the speculations of the bereaved and the guilt of survivors.

In the immediate aftermath of the great Siege, Terra was bereft of its post-human guardians, most of whom left the light of Sol perhaps never to return, chasing the Traitors to the very ends of the galaxy. Of those that remained, Rogal Dorn brooded, contemplating the fate of Mankind, the only one left to believe in the dream of Imperium. He dwelt in a fragile sorrow, quick to turn to rage in his attempts to rebuild the Imperium, though he struggled to find one stone large enough to place upon another in the rubble. In the banquet halls of the great, Roboute Guilliman displayed his strength, his Legion unbloodied on Terran soil. He yet courts the nobility and future leaders of the Imperium, shaping the propaganda of the next age. Each of them showed the weakness of their nature and they were rightly distrusted. Terra is a world which echoes with the weeping of a populace left forever in fear of its protectors. It rues the day the Emperor put His trust in His sons, although in desperation it looks to them even now, rather than in the men and women who saw much and sacrificed more, and could yet save them.

Left to cower for years in the ruins of the Imperial Palace, the survivors condemn the Emperor for His lies and for trying to stem the inevitability of the future. With the wisdom of hindsight, we see that the Emperor created that which He sought to destroy; the conditions perfect for perfidious and ruinous powers to stand triumphant over His galaxy. We condemn Horus for the hubris and ambition which opened a door to our enemies that cannot ever be closed. His death will be inconsequential, for an eternity of war and mistrust awaits. We fear now that the future lords of Terra will seek to silence the bitter truth, and deny the Imperium the wisdom which could save it. We despair too, that even given the knowledge we possess, it cannot free us from damnation.

We lament the future to come.

