

DARK HERESY

DISCIPLES OF THE DARK GODS



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM
DARKNESS OF THE 4^IST MILLENNIUM

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The poison was bitter in his mouth but filled his nose with sweet scent as he swallowed it down. Now I am truly amongst the dead, he thought and replaced the drained chalice on the dais before the iron crone.

"Thank you Inquisitor Herrod," the crone said and raised a calliper-braced arm to show an electoo glowing with a pale blue light on her withered palm. Herrod raised his hand and his own palm glowed with the fresh electoo of the star haloed chalice of the Tyrantine Cabal.

He had been permitted to pass far below the upper chambers and courts of the Bastion Serpentina, past the great seal of the Emperor's triumph over the wyrm where none save a bearer of the seal might enter, and far below into the catacombs of the outer archive where the lesser secrets were kept. Even in those outer levels, his steps were followed by gun-muzzles and the tread of sentinel servitors, their witch-tuned sensors and execution protocols forever vigilant. Such measures were not uncommon within a fortress of the Holy Ordos and he was not perturbed by their presence. Yet as he had approached the torch framed doors to this deepest oubliette and saw the alcove of the crone who watched over it, he had felt an unaccustomed dread rise in his well-trained mind: What awaits me beyond, and what then, after such knowledge?

"You have the time until the sand runs out," said the crone, up-turning two iron-bound hourglasses. The crone handed one to Herrod, placing the other on the dais next to the emptied poison chalice. "You must return and drink my second draught if you do not wish to remain amongst the dead," the crone explained with some relish, the crystals of the timer reflecting the cold blue of her eyes. She smiled, no mere servitor this one, something far older, far worse.

Herrod nodded and the door to the inner archive opened like a bronze flower. The darkness was complete and he did not realise that the curator was there until, with a hiss of gas, it ignited a burning torch. Herrod looked up to the elongated mechanical form looming above him. Its face was dead, waxy skin stretched over brass.

"What do you seek?" it said in a voice as dead and dry as its face.

"It concerns this," he said and he held up the artefact. Many had died for it to be in his possession and he owed a great debt to Marr for its retrieval from the House of Dust and Ash. He only hoped it was worth the blood paid for it. The curator was still for a second and then its frame folded with a clicking of clockwork, until its dead face was level with the object.

"There are several connections, many possible references and significances. I can only show you where, you must search for yourself." Suddenly, extending to its full, unnatural height, the curator turned and moved away into the dark. Herrod followed its soundless, slow flight to a waiting elevator cage.

They descended through chambers surrounded by the openings of dark ended corridors. It was like descending down the barrel of a clockwork gun, or the stilled mechanism of an ancient lock. All around were secrets stacked on secrets, overlaid with lies and conjecture—heresies and terrible truths all imprisoned here in darkness.

At last the cage shuddered to a halt in a pool of wan light. At the edge of sight Herrod could see pale surfaces, hints of form and structure that slowly came into focus as his eyes adjusted to the gloom. Cold feminine features cast in moon-white stone gazed down at him, robed arms crossed in the sign of the Aquila over the soft carved edges of her robes. Gazing back into the still face, vast and magnificent, he realised who she was, whose tomb he looked at—Cassilda Cognos, a dead legend, standing guard over the oldest and most dangerous section of the Tyrantine archive, serving in death the Cabal she had helped to found in life. He looked down at the object in his hand. It had brought him further than he had dared dream.

The cage door hinged open and the curator motioned Herrod towards the darkness beyond, passing a gas-torch into his hand. "Go. I cannot pass here," said its dead lips, and then after a pause, "I will return before the sand ends. You will be here waiting or join the dead."

Herrod stepped out and the cage ascended into the darkness above. Alone now, he could feel it around him, the weight of doom, of fragments of future written and atrocities past, all waiting to be reassembled in some dark configuration. But where to begin? Less than an hour's time bought for so many lives, I dare not waste it! With each beat of his heart he was closer to death and here simple fascination or curiosity itself could kill. The Cabal had seen to that. As he stepped into the darkness, his torch aloft, he heard a voice, strange and mocking. It echoed as if from a great distance above, yet at the same time, sounded like a whisper at his ear. The curator, the crone or something else?

"You will find what you seek, Herrod! You are here. You have always been here."

INTRODUCTION

The threat of conspiracy, dark dealings, and hidden power pervades the setting of Dark Heresy. Information is often incoherent, random, and conflicting, and those seeking the truth often risk not only their lives, but also their very souls. Yet to search out such hidden horror is the task of the Inquisition, for who else would save mankind from these insidious threats?

Disciples of the Dark Gods is your guide to the foul, horrific and bizarre cults who hide, often in plain sight, amidst the citizens and organisations of the Imperium. Whether it be the lure of false truths, the adoration of the alien, or the quest for power beyond reason, those who would subvert, control and damn humanity are detailed within these pages. The threats presented herein provide Game Masters with a plethora of antagonists and villains to confront agents of the Golden Throne.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

This sourcebook is divided into distinct chapters, each focusing on a variety of cults, organisations, and factions that fall within the remit of the major Holy Ordos—Hereticus, Xenos, and Malleus. Each section provides key insights into particular cults, their ideology, history, organisation, and purpose. Where relevant, Game Masters are presented with a range of suggestions on the use of certain cults and alternative origins as well as possible scenario ideas, tips, and hooks.

CHAPTER I: THE HERETICUS TENEBRAE

This chapter contains disparate accounts, forbidden lore, and fragmentary whispers providing tantalising insights into the nature and dark purpose of the Tyrant Star. How much truth can be distilled from the ranting of madmen and the confusion of official reports rests upon the wisdom of the Game Master and the ingenuity of the Player Characters.

CHAPTER II: HERETICUS

Mutants, Heretics, and Psykers threaten the Imperium from amongst its people. This chapter describes these internal foes in more detail and outlines specific groups that use treachery & apostasy alongside those warped in body and mind to further their own ends.

CHAPTER III: XENOS

The alien is the enemy lurking amongst the cold, bleak expanses of space where mankind is either slaves, pawns, or prey. This chapter exposes some of the remorseless inhuman antagonists who lurk within the Calixis Sector and plot the downfall of the Imperium of Man.

CHAPTER IV: MALLEUS

No more malicious and persistent opponent of the Emperor's will exists than the powers of the Warp. Herein you will find some of the daemons and warp-spawned abominations who corrupt and consume the human soul. Many residents of the Calixis Sector are tempted by the dark forces of sorcery or join the madness of Chaos cults detailed within this chapter.

CHAPTER V: THE ENEMY WITHIN

This chapter focuses on what some consider to be the greatest threat to the continued survival of the Emperor's domain; the internal strife, misunderstanding, and outright hostility within the very structures built to maintain the Imperium.

CHAPTER VI: THE HUNTED: WANTED HERETICS OF THE CALIXIS SECTOR

Dark disciples, crime lords and infamous villains can be found in this chapter. Eight of the most notorious and dangerous heretics at large are detailed.

CHAPTER VII: THE HOUSE OF DUST AND ASH

The final chapter presents an adventure scenario where Inquisitorial Acolytes are thrust into a deadly whirlpool of intrigue and alien malice as dark forces move to claim the legacy of an infamous Rogue Trader. Intended for advanced Acolytes, this chapter is not for the faint hearted!

