

BLACK CRUSADE™

THE TOME OF EXCESS™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM DARKNESS
OF THE 41ST MILLENIUM

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INTRODUCTION

"You believe there are limits to existence. My god shows me otherwise, and in his service I have known realms where indescribable pleasure and pain become as one. Come, let me show you..."

—Lascivoux the Devourer,
Sensati Extremis of the Barbed League

All beings require sensation to know their surroundings, but the truly aware realise that life without sensation is worse than death. For those who exist for sensation, the normal limits of life become meaningless in the pursuit of greater and greater stimuli. The caress of silk becomes an obsession with touch, such that the slightest whisper of dust motes is a ganglionic symphony. Appreciation of fine amasec leads from one savoury morsel to another, and on to quests for unspeakable gastronomic appetites requiring entire populations to provide the rendered ingredients. Slowly an ear for a well-tuned violone is no longer enough, and as devotion to auditory experiences grows then only harmonics that shatter reality can suffice. As excesses are breached, nothing can sate these heavier appetites for long, however, and soon nothing exists except the quest for further sensation. Lives such as these are bound, either knowingly or unknowingly, in the service of the Chaos God Slaanesh.

Slaanesh is the personification of excess. In his name, hosts degrade entire worlds with unspeakable rites and warlords seduce systems with honeyed promises of unimaginable essences. His own appearance is beyond limits, existing as both male and female, always the epitome of impossible beauty and desire no matter who gazes upon his form. His followers exist only to seek out new perfections of sensation, and to make themselves perfect to better achieve such sensations. The more perfect the artist, the better he can fully admire unnatural colours that cause eyes to boil and shrivel. Only the finest of assassins can appreciate the tortured gasps of a betrayed noble as the knife slowly twists. None but a devoted master of the blade knows the bliss as flesh slices apart under his exquisite riposte. All these and more are mere steps along a path that requires more and more with each sensory attainment. To know ultimates is to realise there are no ultimates, only increasing tiers of perception and the search of perfection to fully appreciate them. Their frantic journeys can have no end except for that which lays waiting them within the Warp: Slaanesh.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

THE TOME OF EXCESS is the third of four books delving into the darkest secrets of the four Chaos powers and their role in the BLACK CRUSADE roleplaying game. It is devoted to Slaanesh, the Dark Prince. Brought into life through the fall of the decadent and prideful xenos race known as the Eldar, he is the Lord of Excess, and the pursuit of perfection and sensory gratifications in all things. For his debauched followers across the Screaming Vortex there are no boundaries in experience, and their eagerness to draw others into his worship is equally

limitless. In the pages that follow, Heretics can discover new methods to seduce foes into their service and sway masses into ecstatic slavery, along with new devices and implements to aid them in their journeys beyond sensation.

CHAPTER I: SLAANESH

This chapter covers the Prince of Pleasure and Pain, youngest of the Chaos Gods who came into existence as the Eldar fell to their own excesses. Slaanesh now acts as that dying race's eternal nemesis, ready to devour their souls with endless torment. From his layered realm within the Warp, each domain a trap for travellers without the will and strength to withstand the unique temptations it offers, he entices mortals across the stars with pleasure unendurable and pain unquenchable. Few can resist his call.

CHAPTER II: SLAVES TO SENSATION

Heretics are offered four new Player Archetypes in this chapter: Noise Marine, Dark Apostle, Pirate Prince of the Ragged Helix, and Flesh Shaper of Melancholia. It also includes new armoury items to offer delights and depravations for both the Heretic and his foes, expanded rules for seducing and controlling even more powerful minions, and new Rites and Rituals for beseeching the Dark Prince for succour, including extended modifiers to aid in such endeavours.

CHAPTER III: PRINCES OF PAIN

Here players gain new rules for social encounters and expanded Interaction guidelines, so that they can achieve their aims before their enemies know open war has begun. It also includes new rules for utilising, earning, and losing Infamy in their ascent to Daemonhood. This chapter features new destinations within the Screaming Vortex related to Slaanesh and his followers, such as blasphemous Mammon, the Daemon World of Contrition, Malignia's death-jungles, and the Forbidden Portal and its deadly guardians.

CHAPTER IV: AT THE EDGE

As the Heretics gain in power and infamy, they turn their attentions to gaining the support of the pirate clans of the Ragged Helix to further their quest of escape from the Vortex. This adventure takes them to the pleasure palaces and depraved lords of this asteroid chain, where the players seek out necessary aid to prepare their own Black Crusade against the hated Imperium. Such aid cannot be won with sword and blood, however, and requires enticement and persuasion of a more subtle but no less dangerous approach. Should the players attain the aid of the pirate lord, their goals become one step closer; should they fail, they might remain as slaves in his sensory-dens forever.



SLAANESH

THE BIRTH OF
SUBLIME TORMENT

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THE PATH OF
TEMPTATION

•
SERVANTS OF
SENSATION

•
MYRIAD EXCESSES

•
SLAANESH AND
THE LONG WAR

CHAPTER I: SLAANESH

"Find pleasure in every moment, indulge in every whim. Let lesser races feel the burden of their crude lives. We are beyond such concerns or worries. Every power is ours to use, every sensation ours to experience. We are truly masters of the galaxy, and all others exist only to satisfy our curiosities. We have earned our position of power. Let us forever taste the fruits of such achievement. Time itself is ours to command. We are eternal."

—Translated Eldar glyphs found amidst the ruins of the Shrine of Celestial Grandeur

Existence for most beings across the galaxy is harsh and merciless. Each hopeless day is dominated by others seeking power, conquest, or mere survival. There is another world, though, beyond the grasp of most mortals. It is the Realm of Chaos, and the foul gods who rule it have plans for the mortals upon whom they cast their acquisitive gazes. Such inhuman plans far outreach those of the small-minded warlords and emperors of the mortal world. For Slaanesh, those plans are filled with temptation, obsession, and delight—all in glorious excess.

THE BIRTH OF SUBLIME TORMENT

It is said that a civilisation creates its gods in the image of its people. Often these gods are nothing more than inventions of the mind, mere placeholders for ideas than actual beings of power and influence. This cannot be said of the Dark Gods of Chaos. As horrifying as they are powerful, the Ruinous Powers are real, a truth made apparent thousands of times each day as their actions manifest in the material world.

These monstrous gods reside in an ever-changing realm of pure Warp energy, where time, distance, and scale have no meaning. It is a place where the whims of gods along with the dreams and nightmares of mortals run together and bring form to the formless. From raw Chaos, creations otherwise unimaginable are routinely given substance. Entire worlds coalesce in an instant. Formless desires that once inhabited only the subconscious of a shattered mind spring into being and consume the body and soul of the broken mortal whose tormented visions gave them life. Then, just as quickly, these worlds and beings dissolve back into the swirling energies from which they came. For most manifested creations, this is the usual nature of existence in the Realm of Chaos.

If the legends are to be believed, there was one being born into the Warp from the depravity and corruption of an entire race. Over thousands and thousands of years, the ancient Eldar, a race with souls of limitless passion and nearly limitless

psychic capabilities, allowed themselves to be consumed with decadence. Because of their powers, passions, and unique connections to the Warp, the disturbances their depravity touched off were singularly dangerous. Even just this vague bit of knowledge is little more than rumour to most inhabitants of the galaxy. Still fewer are privy to the secrets hidden within the shrouded and nearly inaccessible vaults of the Black Library, the ancient repository of Eldar knowledge located deep within the webway. Within these sombre chambers, ancient manuscripts point to an unspeakable event that changed the galaxy forever. From the perverse thoughts, actions, and deeds of the Eldar a new god was born, a very real god that was indeed a reflection of the race that unwittingly gave him life. His violent birth signalled the eventual death of the race.

The tomes of the Black Library say that Slaanesh was born from the uncontrolled and excessive need for sensation that had come to preoccupy every moment of every day for nearly every Eldar. Through the incredibly advanced technology and psychic mastery that the race had developed over the millennia, they passed the days living in unimaginable luxury. They had no need to concern themselves with matters such as daily survival, manual labour, or warding off external threats. Nor did they feel bound by social constraints. They had no need to think of how their actions would affect others, not even within their own families, since there would never be a time when they needed anything from them. Everything was at all times theirs. The passions that burned deeply within their souls were unbound and freely explored to depths that other races could not fathom. A mind freed from all concerns of reciprocation or fear of reprisal is able to turn fully inward and wander into unknown places, seeking previously unconsidered diversions and sensations. When an entire race unshackled its minds in this way, unusually powerful energy was cast into the Warp, and the unnatural essences that reside in the Warp responded.

The darkest moment of Eldar history—the Fall—is chronicled as a cautionary tale, one that the keepers of the Black Library, known as the Black Council, study continually. Their hope is that some path toward a return to ascendance, or at least a way to avoid their ever-looming doom, can be found. The tale says that the vast majority of the members of the ancient Eldar race, unprepared as they were for the god their unbridled passion and perversion had birthed, were consumed in an instant. Their minds, and worse their souls, were connected to Chaos in a way they could not have foreseen. They had become slaves to darkness, and when their new-born master hungered, the souls of a race were forfeit as his sustenance.

THE ALLURE OF SLAANESH

For most of the remaining Eldar, the birth of Slaanesh and the fall of their civilisation marked a profound change in the course they would take, not only through history, but also as a people. Retreating to their craftworlds, they forged a new way of life, defined by discipline and a determination to fight back against their doom and survive. This resolve was bolstered by fear, which brought the overwhelming majority of those who resisted change in line. Slaanesh was not content with the souls he had harvested in the moment of his birth. He continued to seek out the remaining Eldar, savouring the succulent taste of



each soul he claimed. For a member of a race once so proud and seemingly eternal, the thought of being snuffed out forever to nourish a twisted god was terrifying. That it was a deity of their own creation only served to magnify the horror.

Yet some refused to change. Whether from pride, a sense of defiance, or the simple inability to change, some Eldar continued down a path of excess and sensual indulgence and do so to this day. They live each moment knowing it could be their last, not only in mortal life, but in eternal existence. This heightened feeling of risk, of spending each moment on the edge of a knife, fuels them to indulge in even greater acts of depravity and to push the limits of sensation. They are not, however, the only ones who damn themselves this way.

The powers of Chaos hold sway over so many not because they represent some esoteric concept with rare appeal; no, they are so insidious because they are precisely the opposite. With Khorne, it is the inherent nature of conflict and struggle. For Nurgle, it is the inevitability of death and decay, and to these certainties unto the end. For Tzeentch, it is the ever-changing nature of the universe and the need to feel some measure of control. These are all base instincts, primal parts of the lives of every living thing. Slaanesh is no different. His appeal is grounded in such seemingly innocent ideals—every being's pursuit of happiness and the desire to improve. Very little, if anything, holds more sway over the heart of any mortal, no matter the race, than desire in all its forms. It is universal. All beings want more than they have. They are never content. Where an Imperial Guardsman seeks glory, he finds Slaanesh. Where a Rogue Trader seeks wealth, he finds Slaanesh. Wherever there are desires, at the end of the quest to satiate those desires lies Slaanesh, and utter damnation.

SENSATION WITHOUT LIMITATIONS

"Well of course my people love me. Only the insane would consider otherwise! Accelerate work on the Grand Hall of Statuary, so all may adore me even when I am not with them."

—Walash Prixetti, Governor of Prixetti VII

Slaanesh can see his hand at work across the galaxy in countless ways. The joy a parent feels when a child is born, the pride a commodore feels when his fleet executes a cunning battle plan, the stirring of a lover's heart when in the embrace of a paramour, the heady rush of relief that reminds a soldier how good it feels to be alive after an unexpected skirmish—all of these sensations, on some small level, are pleasing to the Master of Delights. They are not enough. Though the decimation of the Eldar and his pursuit of the remaining few of their race is a source of great joy to Slaanesh, he has much, much grander desires to fulfil.

Every breath is an opportunity to take in a new scent. Each glass raised is a chance to savour a new flavour. On every battlefield, each chainsword blow can elicit a never before heard pain-filled scream. From his glittering palace, the Lord of Excess revels in each new sensation discovered. He guides and directs the inhabitants of the galaxy to push ever onwards



towards new heights of sensation. A god experiences existence on a level far beyond that of which a mortal can ever dare to dream, but that does not mean Slaanesh is content to leave the galaxy to its own devices. He sees the stars, the planets, and indeed the very fabric of reality itself as his plaything, to be poked, prodded, ripped, and tightly bound to his will in order to squeeze out every last sensation there is to enjoy.

Those who choose to serve him emulate him as best as they can, limited as they are by mortal form and mortal imagination. In every corner of the galaxy, worshippers of Slaanesh spend their time inventing new delights and challenging themselves to craft experiences for themselves that no one has ever had before. This can be something as base as eliciting a new reaction to a carnal entwining, or as high minded as creating a master work of art so profound that it brings tears to all who behold it. The truly inspired, though, have much larger stages to play upon. There are so few that have had the pleasure of seeing entire squads of Space Marines evaporate under the fire of a Subjugator Titan. Fewer still are those who have heard a million voices cry out in fear and then nothing but dripping stillness as nucleic-acid bombs dissolved away flesh. Most lack the vision to create scenarios where these delights can be experienced. It is likely not even possible for the greatest excesses to be achieved in the mortal realm. In the Realm of Chaos, however, all things are possible.

THE PATH OF TEMPTATION

"I prepared to enter his realm, expecting to encounter guardians who would seek to tear into me with talons and fangs. At the least I assumed I would find bastions to bar my progress. I found none. The land before me was open and pristine. Its fields shimmered like gold and its forests bore fruits of sapphires and emeralds. I took a step into this place and instantly knew I was lost just as surely as if I had been impaled on a debtor's spike."

—From the heretical tome *The Confessions of Cardinal Wogalta*

The Ruinous Powers each have their own domains within the Realm of Chaos, wherein they plot the downfall of the mortal world and their rise to power over their brothers. Vast armies protect most of these empires from invasion, for not only do the gods constantly try to gain an upper hand on each other, but sometimes mortals are insane enough to attempt intrusion as well.

Slaanesh is unique among his brother-gods. He does not try to keep others out. He invites them in. Through a series of tests, he defends his gleaming palace against assault. Tales such as that of the Heretic Cardinal describe this Palace of Pleasure as sitting at the centre of the Pain Master's empire, surrounded by six other domains arranged in concentric rings. Each ring holds different temptations for those who wander through it, imploring them to succumb to the pleasures it offers.

Temptation is a weapon just as powerful as a chainsword or boltgun. Traps can be sprung to eliminate the weak and dim. The bodies of those who succumb to the myriad temptations of the Dark Prince's realm are consumed by the land itself, or turned into statues that beautify the view for others. The souls of these lost and damned unfortunates feed Slaanesh's insatiable hunger. He invites them in so that they might sustain him and his realm. Those who pass early tests may catch Slaanesh's eye, giving him some amusement for a time as he watches them resist, only to inevitably lose themselves to one seduction or another. Those rare few who make it to the outer walls of the Palace of Pleasure may be graced by a visit from the Lord of Excess himself. None have ever made it into the Palace itself unless Slaanesh wished it, for all who have looked upon his perfection have fallen to their knees and given themselves over, mind, body, and soul, to his Dark Majesty.

AN EXCESS OF RICHES

The Ecclesiarchy use stories of wayward souls like the Heretic Cardinal to try to warn their servants of the dangers of temptation, drawing from the crazed descriptions of the Dark Prince's domains and minions that are related in such tales. It matters not if these accounts have any basis in real experience or if they are purely mad ravings brought on by fever or drugs. Real or imagined, they are powerful tales for protecting the simpleminded from, among other things, dreams of wealth and the pleasures it can buy.

BEAUTY IN DARKNESS

It is said that should a mortal catch even a fleeting glimpse of the bodily form of Slaanesh, he would lose all sense of self. All virtue and purity an individual may have once clung to would be cast aside in an instant, replaced by wicked desires for dark and depraved wanton abandon. A mortal thus enthralled would become a willing participant in every act of debauchery the Lord of Pleasure whispered into his ear.

Few would blame a soul so ensnared, for all accounts of Slaanesh describe him as perfection incarnate. Neither male nor female, yet both, the Dark Prince can assume the form most pleasing to his audience, ensuring desire and obedience in an effort to serve Slaanesh.

Most often Slaanesh is portrayed as a youthful male, full of life and with an irresistible allure. This outer beauty masks cruelty and manipulative intent, for Slaanesh is not interested in simple compliments or words of devotion. Worshipers of Slaanesh use promises, guile, beauty, and charm as weapons to get others to do their bidding. They seek to conquer the wills of others in order to further their own goals of exploring sensation, pushing the limits of excess and attaining perfection. These are all ideals of their seductive god, and gods have the power to reach far beyond what a mortal can hope to achieve. Slaanesh is perfect and beautiful, but perfection and beauty are nothing more than tools he employs to bring his darkest, most twisted desires and plans to fruition.

Scholars of the Ruinous Powers collate tales of the impossible realms of Pleasure and Pain, and often describe the first of Slaanesh's treacherous domains as confronting visitors with a spectacle of riches beyond the wildest dreams of even the most avaricious merchants. They tell of trees, grass, and other plants made from living gold. Gentle breezes cause the grass to shimmer like the waters of an ocean under a noon sun. As the wind passes over the blades of grass and through the branches and leaves of the trees, it takes on a voice that beckons all to take as much as they want and more. The mountains that rise up on the horizon reflect a glorious warm light, letting all who see them know that they too are formed from gold. Pathways through the fields are paved with cobblestones not of granite or shale, but of ruby and emerald. At the edges of the paths, loose gemstones and gold nuggets sit, waiting for anyone to pick them up and slip them in a pouch. There is always room for one more glittering stone, one more pebble of gold. Wandering souls ensnared by this domain would do well to recall the legends that say that if those who lined their pockets with these treasures were able to take their eyes off the objects of their desire, they would note that not all they see was shining. Dull bits of bone and other remains are plentiful here as well. These are all that is left of those who filled their pockets, pouches, sleeves, and boots with so much gold that they collapsed under the weight of it. Unwilling or unable to let the riches go, they died where they fell, smiles on their faces despite their impending ends.

When day turns to night and the golden hues are replaced by soft blue, the sky shimmers ceaselessly. The heavens are filled with diamonds that seem as if they could be plucked from their place in the sky if one could but reach just a little further. Indeed, many try to do just that, forgetting themselves as they do, not paying attention to their surroundings. Higher and higher they reach, climbing trees made of pure gold, even leaping from the boughs, only to plummet back to the ground, fracturing skulls and rupturing organs when they crash. The end comes to them then, but it is a joyous one, for in their minds they see only handfuls of glittering jewels. It is a temporary joy, however. In exchange for a fleeting moment of false elation, they forfeit their immortal souls.

AN EXCESS OF SUSTENANCE

Mad ravings from those who claim to have seen into the beyond say that if an intruder is able to pass through the golden fields without succumbing to greed, he is next confronted with a lake so vast, its shorelines fades to nothing in the distance. The only other land to be seen is a smattering of pale islands, connected to each other by a network of bridges. The finest wine serves as water in this lake but no cups wait to be filled. The bouquet of the wine is strong, pleasant, and enticing. Words from fiery sermons begin to fade in the face of such serenity. Most visitors take very little time before they give up on the idea of cups and fall to their knees to drink directly from the lake. Heads swimming with delightful intoxication, many continue to drink until they slip into the waters and sink below the surface, never to be seen again.

Those who are able to lift their heads from the wine cast their gaze more closely on the islands and see them for what they are—hunched giants holding aloft great tables heaped with extravagant feasts. Exotic fruits, rich breads, and meats of every kind are present. Swimming to these islands is perilous, and many whose senses have become wine-addled sink beneath the waves, joining the countless others who have slipped beneath the carmine liquid. For the ones that make it, the reward is astonishing. Each bite is better than the finest meal they have ever experienced. Each morsel is a decadent delight for the tongue. Faster and faster the wayward consume the food. The voracious eater forces handful after handful down his throat. In his blind need to consume, he does not notice that some of the meat comes from carcasses with an all-too-familiar form. Even if he were to somehow stop forcing food into his own stomach long enough to recognise the fate that awaits him, he could not stop. Given completely over to gluttonous indulgence, the mortal only stops eating when his body fails and he finally collapses into the feast, awaiting the next hungry diner.

*Slaanesh, give me power
To make my blade red
And I will make my enemies
Come to me, against their will.
Look at me
Slaanesh!
Let me please you!*