

BLACK CRUSADE™

HAND OF CORRUPTION™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM DARKNESS
OF THE 4TH MILLENIUM

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GAME MASTER'S BRIEFING

HAND OF CORRUPTION is an epic adventure for **BLACK CRUSADE** presented in three Chapters in a single volume. It takes the Heretics from the swirling depths of the Screaming Vortex to the far reaches of the Calixis Sector to a parched and windswept Imperial penal world called Saint Annard's Penance. This adventure offers ample opportunities for both savvy roleplaying and gruelling combat, and the scenarios contained herein are designed to appeal to a wide variety of group types and play styles. Chapter I and Chapter II are geared toward the more academic or diplomatic types of Heretics like Apostates and Hereteks, and require the Heretics to think their way through their challenges. However, there are opportunities for combat-oriented characters to do their bloody work. Chapter III pits the Heretics against an unstoppable and implacable foe and is largely combat-oriented, allowing Heretics like Renegades, Champions, and Sorcerers to really shine. Even then, though, the foe's defeat may ultimately lie in quick and creative thinking on the part of the Heretics.

CHAPTER I: TOWARDS PENANCE

Chapter I begins on Kurse, one of the Gloaming Worlds of the Screaming Vortex, and is relatively free-form. It is here that the Heretics attain a mysterious book called *De Orbis Mysteriis* and the services of a slave in a game of chance from an ancient and cunning Heretic. The book tells of an Imperial penal world called Saint Annard's Penance that was once part of the Screaming Vortex, a world that can be returned to the roiling bosom of that great Warp storm with the black ritual outlined in its pages.

Through their new slave, a hardened woman born and raised on Saint Annard's Penance, and some research already done by their mysterious benefactor, the Heretics learn that Saint Annard's Penance is not a simple penal world, it is also an important industrial world full of countless manufactorums and a ready workforce already trained in their operation. The Heretics realise that enacting the ritual and drawing Saint Annard's Penance back into the Screaming Vortex would give them a solid foundation upon which to base their own Black Crusade, and plans are put into motion to achieve that goal.

As mentioned earlier, quick wits and a silver tongue are of more use to the Heretics in Chapter I than force of arms. They need to secure transit from the Vortex to Imperial space, infiltrate Port Wander, and secure passage yet again to the isolated and heavily-guarded penal world. All of which is easier accomplished with an open hand than with a closed fist.

CHAPTER II: REVOLT AND RUIN

Chapter II finds the Heretics on Saint Annard's Penance after successfully infiltrating the huge prison complex and establishing a base of operations. The prison is as big as a

medium-sized Imperial city and home to nearly 15 million souls, many of whom are ripe for corruption. The Heretics must gain control of the prison and enact their ritual, both monumental feats.

To kill two birds with one stone, the Heretics hit on the idea of fomenting insurrection within the prison population. If all goes well, this eliminates the Imperial jailers and administration and also covers their blasphemous activities as they prepare the ritual. While certainly powerful and favoured by the ruinous powers, successfully completing a task such as this requires allies, and the Heretics must seek out local leaders and recruit them to the Heretics' cause. Chapter II is fairly linear, its three acts dealing with the gathering of the Heretics' allies, leading the prison population in an uprising, and enacting the ritual. Like Chapter I, Chapter II calls more for guile and stealth than out and out violence. Saint Annard's Penance is a dangerous place, however, and the Heretics are dealing not only with zealous agents of the Imperium but also with violent, hardened criminals. As such, the potential for violent struggle is strong, and there are sections of the Chapter where those Heretics who live by the bolter and chainsword can find much to do.

At the close of Chapter II, the Heretics stand victorious as the Imperial administration is overrun and the planet is pulled into the Screaming Vortex. Their work has just begun, however, as once the world fully transits into the chaotic roil of the Vortex, it reveals a new and terrible secret as Chapter III begins.

CHAPTER III: THE UNDYING LEGIONS

In Chapter III, the Heretics learn the terrible truth about the world they set out to capture. Saint Annard's Penance is an ancient Necron Tomb World, host to many millions of the mechanical xenos waiting for their signal to awaken and retake their world. As the energies of the Warp again caress the planet, antediluvian systems come online, reacting to the danger posed by the Warp. Rank upon rank of the Tombworld's ancient defenders are reactivated and sent forth from their long rest to discover the nature of the threat and eliminate it.

Now the Heretics, dealing with allies betrayed and a penal colony still reeling from both the insurrection and the transit to the Screaming Vortex, face a threat unlike anything they've ever seen. They must now deal not only with the fallout from the successful execution of the ritual that drew Saint Annard's Penance into the Vortex, but also with the innumerable Necrons boiling from the ground. Chapter III focuses on combat and leadership as the Heretics muster what forces they can to contain the Necron threat long enough for them to form a plan to eliminate it entirely. They must fight their way through millions of implacable Necron Warriors and make their way to the very heart of the ancient Necron control apparatus where they do battle with a fabled C'tan Shard, a being no less than the mortal remains of a god.

GAZETTEER: SAINT ANNARD'S PENANCE

"He could have bothered to actually look. There is amazing wealth on this planet and if he'd taken the time to do his job correctly, this system would bear his name instead of mine."

—Rogue Trader Alvis Limoges remarking on his predecessor.

Far out in the rimward wastes of the Malfian Sub-Sector lies the small and desolate Limoges system. Bathed in the wan, guttering light of the Halo Stars, and nearly a standard year from its nearest inhabited neighbour, it was charted early on in the Angevin Crusade by a long forgotten Rogue Trader. The system is composed of six planets in eccentric orbit around an ancient, pale, blue giant star. Of these six worlds; three were blasted, uninhabitable rocks too close to the star to be of any worth; two were brooding, bloated, dusky-hued gas giants far from what little warmth their star could provide; and one, the fourth planet, was recorded in that ancient chart as "marginally habitable." The forgotten Rogue Trader spent little time in the system and recorded precious little information besides its location and a placeholder name — XB-70A. He left, having done the bare minimum to fulfil his orders, and his report was almost immediately forgotten in the centuries of strife that followed.

Once the bloody work of the Angevin Crusade was done and the Calyx Expanse was brought under the heel of the Administratum, the bureaucrats of the newly formed Calixis Sector began their work. On Scintilla, the functionaries of the Imperial Census set about the monumental task of collating the myriad of reports from the Rogue Traders and Explorer vessels that were employed in charting the worlds of the Calyx Expanse in the preceding centuries. An enterprising and eager Rogue Trader named Alvis Limoges purchased the rights to explore and exploit System XB-70A, as well as several others. With the ink on his Warrant barely dry, Limoges set out with a flotilla of voidships to do the work of the God-Emperor among the heathens and make his fortune.

Upon arrival in XB-70A, Limoges set about performing a proper and thorough survey of the lonely system. After six standard months of assiduous augury and cataloguing, Limoges and his team had amassed an impressive and exhaustive survey that, unfortunately, improved little on the previous terse, offhand survey. The system, which Limoges graciously named after himself, was largely barren. Half of its worlds were completely useless, its gas giants contained only the basest, most common gases, and its one habitable planet, now referred to as Limoges IV, was an arid, rocky wasteland with a corrosive atmosphere and precious little water. What the report expanded on, however, was the relative riches just beneath the surface of the fourth planet.

Numerous veins of rare and precious elements were found beneath Limoges IV's blasted surface, along with deep, vast deposits of promethium. Limoges dutifully catalogued the world's vast mineral wealth in his report, never once believing

SAINT ANNARD

Born Annard Nobelac, Saint Annard was canonised by the Calixian Synod nearly four centuries after his death during the Angevin Crusade. A high-ranking official of the Adeptus Arbitres and a legal scholar, he was sent to the Calyx Expanse to oversee the formation of the first penal worlds therein. Both politically savvy and highly devout, Judge Nobelac felt that the combination of hard labour and intense, often brutal penance were the keys to salvation. His penal colonies were models of Imperial legal ideals, combining toil in mines and manufactorums with daily prayer, flagellation, and fasting, and he was lauded throughout the Imperium for his numerous writings on imprisonment, penance, and Imperial law. He was killed in a prisoner uprising near the end of the Angevin crusade on a long-lost penal world somewhere in the Josian Reach and his body was never recovered. Upon his canonisation, he was made the patron saint of penitents, prisoners, and slaves, and his teachings on law, penance, and imprisonment are still used today.

that the Calixian Administratum would spend the time or Thrones to send men and materiel out to this God-Emperor forsaken corner of space for one planet's worth of ore. He was mistaken, and within a year of his reports reaching Scintilla, the first of the massive factory ships and mass conveyors arrived to begin the laborious process of stripping Limoges IV of its natural riches.

Now, centuries later, Limoges IV, renamed Saint Annard's Penance, is home to a massive, sprawling penal complex with hundreds of manufactorums, thousands of kilometres of mines, and millions of prisoners.

A LONESOME ROCK

As desolate and God-Emperor forsaken a world as can be found in the rimward regions of the Calixis Sector, Saint Annard's Penance is both an important penal world and industrial hub. The fourth world of the Limoges system, and the only of its six planets remotely inhabitable, is a small, arid, incredibly hot world that shows no sign of pre-Imperial habitation. The topography is a mix of heavily eroded mountain ranges, impossibly deep canyons, eerie ragged badlands, alkali flats, and cracked, dusty plains. The atmosphere is mildly toxic, with a higher than normal concentration of caustic gases and constantly present dust that burn the lungs and sting the eyes of those caught outside without a survival suit or, at the very least, a respirator. There is no water on the surface of the planet, and what water the world possesses lies deep beneath the surface in large, acrid, brackish aquifers that are constantly renewed by the powerful storms that lash the world with torrents of acid rain and howling gales in the winter months. Everything from the bitter, thorny plants that hide in mountain crevasses, to the land, to the very sky itself, is a tawny golden colour; even among the dangerous reptilian fauna there is little colour variation.

There is little in the way of flora on Saint Annard's Penance. What little plant life ekes out an existence among the dust and

stones tends to be poisonous and thorny, and well adapted to the seasonal cycles of flood and drought. The world is, however, home to an abundance of insects and arachnids, the majority both shy and extremely venomous, and a few species of massive, dangerous reptilian creatures that prey on each other and the humans of the penal facility when they can manage it. Everything seems uniquely created to be as hostile to human life, or any life for that matter, as possible, and if it weren't for the great wealth of natural resources just beneath its dusty surface, the world would have been written off as a death world long ago.

The Imperial presence in the Limoges system at large exists solely to support the massive penal colony and its plethora of industry. A major producer of fuel, composites, and war materiel, Saint Annard's Penance is administered by the Adeptus Arbites and guarded without and within by elements of the Imperial Guard and Imperial Navy. There is a large Ecclesiarchy presence as well, with both priests and members of the Sisters Hospitaller in residence to tend to the spiritual and physical well-being of both the prison and civilian populations.

ORBITAL FACILITIES

Surrounding the dusty world of Saint Annard's Penance is a dense network of satellites, stations, and orbital fortifications maintained by the Imperial Navy. Maintained to keep interlopers out, as opposed to the suppression of any mass insurrection or escape on the part of the inmates. The system

IMPERIAL NAVY ASSETS

The following are Imperial Navy assets in the system.

CASIMIR STATION

Ten kilometres across, Casimir Station is an Imperial Caer class orbital defence station. Home to 50,000 souls, the station serves as the Imperial Navy headquarters and the command centre for the system defence apparatus. It is also here that prisoners get their first taste of prison life in the pre-processing centre where they are disembarked from their ships, catalogued, and herded into shuttlecraft for the trip to the surface. Known colloquially as the Final Destination, the station is the last stop for the prisoners, and for a number of naval careers as well.

SHIPS

Commodore Roland Gilliam commands the squadron of Imperial Navy voidships and assorted intra-system gun-cutters that makes up the backbone of the system's defence. His flagship the *Ardent*, a Dauntless class light cruiser, is in semi-permanent dry dock alongside the station. Other ships in the squadron include *Pious Spear*, a Sword class frigate commanded by Captain Jotham Lentillus, the Falchion class frigate *Samsbir* under the command of Captain Galen Fortesque, *Vigilant*, a Viper class scout sloop commanded by the young Commander Aubray Malcolm, and roughly a dozen heavily armed gun-cutters of assorted class and weaponry.



is heavily patrolled by the Imperial Navy and all inbound and outgoing traffic is heavily monitored. Only a few sanctioned ships, the mass conveyors that bring raw materials and take away finished products and the incoming penal transports, are permitted in system. Any non-sanctioned ship that arrives is given one warning to leave and, if the ship does not immediately comply, the system defence craft immediately set upon the intruder.

PLANETSIDE PRISON FACILITIES

The Imperial penal colony of Saint Annard's Penance on Limoges IV lies in the middle of a vast valley close to the planet's equator, surrounded on all sides by dusty foothills that rise up into towering mountains. Since the first years of Saint Drusus' reign as Sector Lord, prisoners from all across the Calixis Sector have toiled to their deaths in the mines and manufactorums here, producing fuel and materiel for the Imperial military machine and the burgeoning civilian markets in the rimward regions of the Sector. The penal colony itself is massive, covering an area nearly one thousand square kilometres in size and surrounded by near impenetrable walls. It is home to roughly fifteen million souls, the majority of whom are condemned prisoners from all corners of the Sector.

WALL DEFENCES

The walls of the penal colony at Saint Annard's Penance are capped with hundreds of guard towers and heavy weapon emplacements to keep both prisoners and savage creatures native to the planet away from the walls. There are also countless pict-recorders equipped with dark-sight and preysense monitoring the area of the complex immediately around the walls.

The heavy weapon emplacements are placed every five hundred metres and consist of a small rockcrete bunker big enough for a weapon team (16 AP for purposes of cover) and are reached via a ladder and locked hatch from within the wall. These weapon emplacements have a 180-degree field of fire into the compound and will contain either a belt fed heavy stubber loaded with dum dum bullets (100m; -/-/10; 1d10+7 I; Pen 1; Clip 240; Rld 2 Full; Unreliable) or a belt fed heavy bolter (150m; -/-/8; 1d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip 240; Rld Full; Tearing, Unreliable).

Every kilometre along the top of the wall is a heavily reinforced guard tower that rises an additional ten metres above the wall itself. Staffed with full squads of ten Arbites Enforcers, these guard towers mount extremely heavy weapons similar to those mounted on fighting vehicles to ward off the dangerous mega-fauna that range at large on the plains outside the prison walls. Each tower is reached via a ladder and locked hatch from within the wall like the smaller heavy weapon emplacements. Similar to the smaller structures, the guard towers are composed largely of reinforced rockcrete (16 AP for purposes of cover). The top level of each tower is the observation and weapons platform. Each platform has a 270-degree field of fire facing outward from the wall and is shielded on all four sides by thick armour-glass (8 AP for purposes of cover). The guard towers mount either an M41 multilaser (150m; -/-/5; 2d10+10 E; Pen 2; Clip 100; Rld 2 Full; Reliable) or an M34 autocannon (300m; S/3/-; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Clip 20; Rld 2 Full; Reliable).

The towers and heavy weapon emplacements are all linked via secure, hard-wired vox, are connected to a larger security network administered from within the wall, mount powerful floodlights, and can be environmentally sealed in the case of an emergency.

BASIC PRISON LAYOUT

Saint Annard's Penance can be divided into three sections. The Central District is where the first prison facilities were constructed when the Imperium first founded the prison. Now it has grown to house the vast hab blocks that hold the teeming masses of the prisoner population. The Adeptus Arbites prefers to keep them in this central location so they are easier to control.

Like spokes on a pinwheel, eight major manufactorium and mining compounds surround the Central District. These bear unimaginative names such as Manufactoria District 1 or Minehead 3. Here the prisoners work during the day, shuttled to and from their work by a mag-train network.

The final section of the prison is the vast network of tunnels that form the mines. The ground beneath Saint Annard's Penance is honeycombed by mining tunnels, some of which stretch more than a thousand kilometres away from their access points. The prevailing thought of this design was that keeping a limited number of access points was a better way to control the prison population—even if some escaped into the mines, they could not reach the world's surface. However, it also means that below-ground is often a maddening maze, and sizable populations of prisoners have made their homes beneath the earth.

THE CENTRAL DISTRICT

The Central District contains most of the notable facilities in Saint Annard's Penance.

COMPOUND WALLS

The entire perimeter of the penal colony at Saint Annard's Penance is enclosed by massive, reinforced rockcrete walls built to keep the prisoners in and to keep the planet's deadly marauding mega-fauna from destroying industrial infrastructure and devouring prisoners. Fifteen metres high and half again as thick, the walls are honeycombed with corridors, maintenance

tunnels, Adeptus Arbites precinct sub-stations, armouries, and defence control centres and topped with guard towers, walkways, and heavy weapon emplacements. The broad base of the walls contain a two-line industrial mag-train of the type typically used to move ore and heavy machinery around manufactorums. The mag-train line within the walls allows the Arbitrators to move quickly between areas of the prison to more easily respond to any disturbances within the massive complex. There are dozens of stops on the mag-train line, and at each one is a guard station manned by 1d5 Arbitrators (see page 128) and one cyber mastiff.

Save for the heavily fortified bastions that allow the maglev trains to pass into and out of the facilities, very few gates pierce the penal colony's walls, as there is little need to leave the complex and travel at large on the planet's surface. All travel to and from the colony goes through the spaceport, there are no other cities or settlements elsewhere on the planet, and what little exploration of the planet that takes place, typically by members of the Adeptus Mechanicus making mineral surveys or taking samples of the native flora and fauna, is done via flyers and skimmers. There are, however, numerous small, man-sized hatches that lead from the maintenance tunnels to the plains outside the walls and the hundreds of maintenance platforms and catwalks that festoon the outer surface of the walls.

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT ANNARD

Made from a tawny native stone shot through with sparkling veins of crystal, the massive cathedral is a testament to the dominating vision of Ecclesiarchal architecture, with tall spires roofed with crimson slate tiles, powerful flying buttresses, and ornate stained glass windows portraying scenes of prisoners, penitents, and the life of Saint Annard. In contrast to the cathedral's exterior, with its architectural flourishes and intricate carvings, the interior of the sanctuary is quite austere

indeed. While it has a mostly traditional layout with narthex, nave, aisles, crossing, transepts, and the like, as well as numerous secluded alcoves and confessionals, the cathedral possesses no apse or altar, and not a single seat or pew is to be found anywhere in the public spaces. Instead, the nave is packed day and night with thousands of prisoners standing facing icons of Saint Annard, Saint Drusus, and the God-Emperor, and performing their compulsory devotions, their raised voices mingling with the constant clamour of industrial machinery and the howling of the wind off the plains.

It is from within these walls that Cardinal Falconer, a severe, one-eyed priest from Scintilla, and his subordinates tend to the spiritual needs of both the prison administration and the prisoners. Aside from the constant praying and singing of hymns in the nave, Cardinal Falconer holds regular masses for the Warden, his household, and all other Imperial officials and adepts in the smaller, and more opulent, chapel beneath the nave.

SPACEPORT AND PROCESSING CENTRE

Like the manufactoria districts that feed it, the spaceport is a bustling hive of activity day and night. The sole point of transit to and from the planet, Saint Annard's spaceport is a sprawling complex of landing pads, fuelling stations, industrial machinery, and massive warehouses that lies just east of Fort Saint Annard. It is here that all incoming prisoners are processed, herded from their shuttles through dozens of imposing buildings staffed with Arbitrators and medicae personnel before being sent to their habs and work assignments. The fruit of the prisoners' labour is also stored here, the riches of Saint Annard's Penance and the sweat of the prisoners' brow made real in the thousands of tonnes of finished goods, refined fuels, and raw materials stored in the great warehouses and shipped from the planet every few standard months. There is also a highly secure area of the spaceport where the Imperial Navy keeps a number of shuttles, trans-atmospheric gunboats, Valkyrie transports, and Vulture attack ships, along with their associated crew and support personnel.

ADEPTUS ARBITES PRECINCT HOUSES

The penal colony at Saint Annard's Penance is broken up by the Adeptus Arbites into hundreds of small administrative districts called precincts. At the heart of each precinct is a precinct house—a massive, blocky structure that resembles an Imperial Guard bunker commanded by a Senior Arbitrator and staffed by dozens, or even hundreds in the case of larger precincts, of Arbitrators, Chasteners, Verispex Operators, and various and sundry functionaries. These Arbitrators are trained within the Fortress Precinct of Scintilla before being dispatched to Saint Annard's Penance. Each precinct house is largely self-sufficient and heavily fortified, with thick walls, armoured windows and doors with retractable shutters, and enough stores of food and ammunition to survive a determined siege lasting weeks.

All precinct houses on Saint Annard's Penance share the same general layout. The ground floor consists of a reception and booking area, holding cells, and interrogation rooms. The second and third floors are work areas where the Arbitrators and Enforcers labour when not patrolling or actively pursuing criminal cases. The fourth floor is given over to living quarters

for those stationed at the precinct house. There are subterranean levels as well that house garage and maintenance spaces for the precinct's patrol vehicles and Rhino armoured personnel carriers, heavily armoured and guarded armouries, shielded communications rooms, and training facilities where Arbitrators can hone their martial prowess.

PRISONER'S HAB BLOCKS

Clustered in the central district, the prisoner's habs are home to the prisoners who call Saint Annard's Penance home. Tall, blocky, aggressively ugly structures of featureless rockcrete and armour-glas, each cruciform tower houses thousands of prisoners packed into cramped cells. Prisoners are segregated by gender and, further, by the manufactorium or mine in which they work. Each floor consists of four wings of cells surrounding a central elevator shaft, communal washroom and shower facility, and dining hall where the prisoners are fed their meagre rations. The cells themselves house six to ten prisoners each and contain a hard bunk for each inmate, a sink, and a commode. Security is, by necessity, quite tight in the prisoners' habs. Each one houses an Adeptus Arbites substation in the ground floor where Arbitrators maintain strict discipline and monitor the comings and goings of prisoners. Hundreds more Arbitrators patrol the corridors of each hab, keeping an eye on the prisoners and enforcing order. Each cell is sealed behind a thick, reinforced door like a ship's hatchway. These lock from the outside and have a small armour-glas window set into them so that the Arbitrators may observe the prisoners within.

There are no entertainment or recreational facilities, and the inmates are allowed only the barest of essentials. Each is issued a coverall or jump suit, hygiene supplies, a copy of the Imperial Creed, and an abridged copy of the writings of Saint Annard concerning prisoners and penance. The underground levels of the hab blocks contain numerous mechanical spaces, as well as laundry facilities and commissaries where the prisoners' gruel is prepared.

The Mines and the Prison Tunnels

Unbeknownst to the Arbitrators and Imperial Guardsmen stationed on Saint Annard's Penance, many of the prisoners' hab blocks are connected to the played out mine workings below the central district by means of secret passageways and tunnels. These allow certain prisoners to congregate, and have helped give rise to underground communities of prisoners and even rough and brutal societies.

WARDEN'S MANOR AND ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

The manor and administration centre is a sprawling, walled estate within walking distance of the Cathedral of Saint Annard. While the mighty manufactoria district is the beating, fiery heart of the penal colony, this district is most assuredly its brain. Within the ornately carved native stone walls stand a number of important official buildings, living quarters for the numerous Administratum functionaries responsible for the day to day operation of the prison, an Adeptus Arbites substation, the manors of the senior officials, and the Warden's manor itself.



MANUACTORIA DISTRICT THREE

MANUACTORIA DISTRICT FOUR

MINEHEAD THREE

MINEHEAD TWO

CATHEDRAL OF SAINT ANNARD

MANUACTORIA DISTRICT TWO

FORT SAINT ANNARD

PRISONER HAB BLOCKS

PRISONER HAB BLOCKS

HALL OF JUSTICE

MINEHEAD ONE

WARDEN'S MANOR AND ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

SPACEPORT AND PROCESSING CENTRE

MINEHEAD FOUR

MANUACTORIA DISTRICT ONE