

# DEATHWATCH™

## THE EMPEROR PROTECTS™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM  
DARKNESS OF THE 4<sup>1</sup><sup>ST</sup> MILLENNIUM

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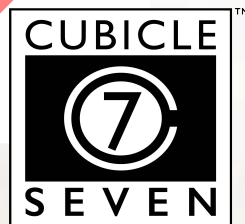
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# THE EMPEROR PROTECTS

*"I've never seen anything like Space Marines in action. Anyone who sees them knows in his soul they are the God-Emperor's creations. More than that, you know that through them He is still watching over us."*

—Corporal Drayle after a Kill-team rescue on Baraban

Welcome to **The Emperor Protects**, a three-part adventure supplement for the **DEATHWATCH** Roleplaying Game. These events take a Deathwatch Kill-Team on a desperate mission that will lead the Battle-Brothers throughout the Jericho Reach and pit them against the unspeakable forces of Chaos. The adventures herein take the Kill-Team across the Reach in an attempt to stop a Chaos Sorcerer from enacting his plans for total domination of the region; by destroying the warp gate used to supply the ongoing Achilus Crusade. In order for the Kill-Team to prevent this from coming to pass they will confront horrifying xenos, canny agents of Chaos, and even face their traitorous brethren from the Alpha Legion.

## GAME MASTER'S BRIEFING

**THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** takes the form of three adventures, each linked together by a common story arc. The adventures can be played through sequentially (the conclusion of one leading straight into the opening of the next), or the action can be broken up and rearranged in any manner desired.

The adventures are set in the Jericho Reach, a war-torn region of space on the Eastern Fringe of the galaxy.

**THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** also explores a range of subjects and play styles, from extreme action to diplomacy, and exploration to epic combat. As befits the Battle-Brothers' role and position as Space Marines of the Deathwatch, each of these challenges must be overcome if they are to survive and triumph in the face of adversity.

At the beginning of each of the three adventures, Game Masters will find advice on how to use each adventure on its own, and how they can integrate the events into their own campaign.

## BACKGROUND

The events of **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** begin with the Chaos Sorcerer Dahzak—a man who is consumed by ambition and has a lust for power. His quest for knowledge brought him to the Cellebos Warzone along with so many other splinters of the various Traitor Legions. Gleaning dark secrets in the ruins of the Charon Stars, he conceived a plan to twist the Jericho Reach's mysterious warp gate to his own ends.

Dahzak's plans begin with an arcane piece of technology called a thaumagramm diode. The diodes are devices that can be used to manipulate space-time to open a breach into the Immaterium. Dahzak came across the plans for these warp-altering devices in his unending quest for forbidden lore. As he came to understand what the diodes were capable of, he saw his opportunity. He also saw that he would never be capable of constructing and attuning the diodes on his own. To that end, he sought out allies skilled not just in technology, but used to integrating it with warp energies.

He found that ally in a group called the Vinculum Proselytes. This order of corrupt Magi on Samech has delved into the forbidden mysteries of tech-heresy for centuries, and the "improvements" Chaos can bring to it.

Within their Forge, Dahzak and the Vinculum Proselytes began to construct the thaumagramm diodes. It quickly became apparent that their understanding of special manipulation was insufficient for the task. They rectified this problem by seeking the aid of the Alpha Legion. With their subtle and well-planned tactics, they have helped the Irradial Forge acquire many important inputs to the diodes.

Dahzak and the Irradial Forge have another obstacle aside from the difficulty of constructing the diodes. Even if a ship could penetrate the Iron Collar and reach the warp gate in the Well of Night, it would still have a patrolling Adeptus Mechanicus cruiser to deal with. A scout ship, which would be ideal for sneaking past the blockade, would not be able to stand up to the punishment that can be meted out by one of these vessels.

Thus, the group must find some way to get a larger ship to the warp gate without being destroyed in the process of trying to penetrate the Iron Collar. To that end, Magos Vayze, leader of the Vinculum Proselytes, has hit upon the solution: Antisonate plating. This special and unique plating is typically used to cloak some of the best stealth craft in the Reach. However, in addition to being rare and costly, it is ineffective on large vessels. To allow the plating to maintain its stealth properties over a larger surface area, Vayze has combined the Antisonate with rare Decavane crystals. The Vinculum Proselytes have gone to great lengths to establish a secret mining operation on an out of the way planet, where they slowly accumulate the necessary quantities of Decavane. At the Irradial Forge, construction of their stealth warship, the *Ruin Bringer*, is nearly complete; and Vayze and Dahzak have almost perfected the thaumagramm diodes.

Dahzak however, has no army, as he operates with only his apprentice, Sethahar, to aid him. His plans for the warp gate are too grand a scheme to carry out without additional support and Dahzak knows that his sorcerous knowledge will not be enough. To bolster his numbers and execute the many infiltrations required, Dahzak has allied with a cell of Alpha Legion operating in the Jericho Reach, led by Lamdus Rize.

Combined with the corrupt techno-magi of the Proselytes, what terrible ambition could bring these three forces together? Dahzak has spun a vision of the gate transformed into an open breach to the warp, both cutting off further support for the Achilus Crusade and flooding the reach with the creatures of Chaos. Should they manage to succeed, the entire Jericho Reach may be turned over to the flood of Chaos.

## SYNOPSIS

**THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** is a multi-adventure supplement that is broken down into three distinct, and linked, adventures. As stated previously, these adventures can be run in the sequence they are presented in, or they can be run in whatever order the GM deems appropriate.

Below are brief synopses of each adventure within this supplement. The beginning of each adventure provides information on how to run it, and additional information the GM needs should he wish to adjust each adventure to fit into his group's play styles and campaign events.

### Adventure One: The Price of Hubris

The Price of Hubris begins with a Rogue Trader by the name of Diaz Lan bringing the Crusade's request for aid with the world of Aurum, to the Deathwatch's attention. Assigned to assist the Crusade with helping to bring the world into the fold of the Imperium, the Rogue Trader transports the Kill-Team on his ship, the *Horizon's Pride*.

Once they arrive at Aurum, the Battle-Brothers must determine if the world not only harbours the taint of the xenos, but also win over the fierce natives. However, in the course of their duties, the Kill-Team discovers that Aurum harbours a most deadly secret that the natives have been trying to keep: Genestealers.

### Adventure Two: A Stony Sleep

In the adventure, A Stony Sleep, the Kill-Team is sent to the world of Karlack in order to discover what happened to an Ordo Xenos Inquisitor by the name of Vincent. Contacted by his colleague, Inquisitor Quist, the Battle-Brothers soon find themselves within the grips of a trap devised by the Traitor Legion of Space Marines called the Alpha Legion.

Masquerading as Space Marines from the Black Templars Chapter, the Alpha Legion managed to gather up the secrets of the planet's long-dead xenos inhabitants from the missing Inquisitor. As the Battle-Brothers follow their own investigation, they encounter members of a xenos-cult called the Reborn. The trail eventually leads them to the city of Kar'thir where they discover a terrible threat looming within the xenos ruins sunken beneath the oceans.

Tracking their foes to an island chain, the Kill-Team discovers that the Chaos Space Marines they have been following have initiated a series of events that could lead to the rise of an alien war host within the very heart of the Crusade's conquered territory. If the valiant Deathwatch cannot find a way to stop the Alpha Legion's efforts, then Karlack will find itself overwhelmed under a tide of alien ruin.

### Adventure Three: Sword of Vigilance

When the adventure Sword of Vigilance begins, the Deathwatch has deciphered the meanings of their findings on Karlack and Aurum, and realises that there is an unholy alliance on Samech. It appears they mean to target the Warp Gate. The Battle-Brothers bring this threat before the Chamber of Vigilance.

There, the Kill-Team is charged with entering the corrupt mechanical heart of Samech, and halting the heretics' scheme before it launches.

Arriving on Samech, the Battle-Brothers encounter the triumvirate's ultimate triumph, the stealth-warship *Ruin Bringer*. Soliciting the aid of several potential allies, the Kill-Team fights a desperate battle to destroy the monstrosity created by corrupted minds, and from there are able to penetrate the Irradial Forge. From here, the Kill-Team discovers the thaumagramm diodes and will finally meet their arch-enemies that have plagued them across the whole of the Jericho Reach.

## RUNNING THE EMPEROR PROTECTS

**THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** reflects the culmination of a plot measured in decades. The GM is welcome to run additional Missions between the adventures provided herein. As the plots are put together in the third adventure, the order of the first two Missions is interchangeable—although the escalation plays out better if run in order.

In the order presented, the Kill-Team first determines the fate of a planet, then a Salient, and then the entire Crusade. This book also builds the story by accumulating information over multiple Missions. The effectiveness of this technique can be enhanced by ensuring good notes are taken by the GM and/or the players. The Missions also offer options for a less player-driven approach to initiation if this is a problem for your group. However, letting the players move the story forward is a more engaging experience for them. The GM can help with retention by re-iterating the key plot points discovered so far at the beginning of every game session.

The enemy profiles and numbers in the Missions assume a Kill-Team of 5 Battle-Brothers between Ranks 1 through 4. The difficulty can easily be scaled by changing the number of adversaries in any encounter. In a few instances other facets must be scaled, and those are noted in the individual Missions. Additionally, the adventures within **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** are not recommended for beginning Battle-Brothers. At a minimum, members of the Kill-Team should have at least an additional 1,000 experience points (XPs) on top of the amount already given to them during character creation. Thus, all Battle-Brothers participating in **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** should have at least 14,000 XPs. The Game Master is welcome to adjust this amount as he sees fit.

## MISSION CONSEQUENCES

Space Marines make important decisions; their presence can tip the scales of power. Sometimes they may not even realise the profound effect they have on the events around them until later. As the Kill-Team progresses through the first two adventures, many choices come before them. Several of these have ramifications in **THE SWORD OF VIGILANCE**, which is the climax Mission. **THE SWORD OF VIGILANCE** opens with a summary of what those choices and consequences are. It's strongly recommended that the GM track what the Kill-Team decides for each choice throughout **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS**.

## OPTIONAL AND CONDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Every group has their own preferences for pacing and the percentage of time spent in combat. Some of the encounters in **THE EMPEROR PROTECTS** are labelled as Optional. The narrative is cohesive with or without these incidents, and the GM can choose which ones he wants to include to set the appropriate pace for his group. The third Mission also uses Conditional encounters. These are simply extensions of the Mission Consequences. Each conditional encounter opens with the circumstances that trigger its occurrence. As always, both the Conditions and the entire Consequences concept are suggestions, not mandates. You can opt to include or exclude whatever fits best in your campaign and play style.

## ENCOUNTER CIRCUMSTANCES

A number of the encounters in this book have special circumstances governing the relevant challenge. Quick reference handouts are provided in the Appendix to make these encounters easier for the GM to run and the players to play. The handouts deliberately place the statistical effect as the last column. This allows the GM to decide whether he wants the players to know the exact rules governing the situation, or to cut off the last column and convey things only in narrative terms.

If the GM is a beginner, he may want to ignore all the situational modifiers until he is more comfortable with the overall rules. The GM should also consider the experience level of his players when introducing this supplement to his group.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Below are the central antagonists of the overall plot. Their profiles can be found in the Missions where they are first encountered.

### Dahzak

Dahzak is a powerful sorcerer, and especially gifted in seeing the future. This ability has served him well in his quest to improve his knowledge and power. In Dahzak's many years he has commanded armies, and he has roamed dead stars alone. Recently, until needing the Vinculum Proselytes, he had but a single apprentice. Dahzak's charisma comes from his certainty. His claims that he knows every possibility are quite compelling. They are also quite false. Dahzak is certainly an exceptional diviner, but that art is fickle even for the best master. He overplays his confidence in predictions (and sometimes fabricates them entirely) when it serves his purpose.

### Lamdus Rize

Lamdus has been the head of his Alpha Legion cell for decades. Like many such cells, the bonds of loyalty between the Traitor Space Marines within it are strong. The same can hardly be said for how they view their allies. Lamdus is well aware that he and his men are simply tools of convenience to Dahzak and the Irradial Forge. However, his best opportunity to sabotage the warp gate is to play along, for now.

### Magos Vayze

Magos Vayze is the senior tech-priest of the Vinculum Proselytes. While the thaumagramm diodes are fascinating and cutting off the Crusade can only be positive for Samech, these apostate Mechanicus do nothing without a price. In Dahzak's case, the Proselytes demanded the sorcerer free them from the constraints of the flesh so that they could be truly one with the machine. The results were not exactly as expected, leaving all of the Magi dependent upon sorcery to sustain them. Still, it was satisfactory to buy the services of the Irradial Forge. Vayze is not eager to see Dahzak's plans enacted, as it leaves the Proselytes without a counterbalance to their dependence on the sorcerer's powers.

### Sethahar

Sethahar is Dahzak's apprentice. While his master favours divination, Sethahar excels in destructive magic. He is quiet and brooding individual, whose temper can lash out unexpectedly and with all the destructive force of his sorcery. Dahzak entrusts him with many important tasks, secure that they both know if his apprentice was to scheme against him, the diviner would see it coming.

## TREACHERY BEGETS TREACHERY

The tenuous alliance of these wretched powers only stands to prove why such unions are seldom successful. In reality, all three forces have their own designs for the warp gate. Dahzak believes the gate can be used to breach the Eldar webways, and grant him the elusive goal of entrance to the Black Library. While the diodes can enslave and defile a machine spirit, directing their purpose still requires the talents of a psyker. Herein lays Dahzak's opportunity to take control. The Alpha Legion desires to cut off the Crusade's supply of troops and resources, an opportunity that appeals to them greatly. These Chaos Space Marines secretly plan to sabotage the tech sorcery and destroy the warp gate instead of corrupting it. Meanwhile, the Vinculum Proselytes support the stated plan, to twist and corrupt the Warp Gate to create a breach into the empyrean and flood the region with the energies of the warp.