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ROLEPLAY

IMPERIUM MALEDICTUM

ROKARTH: A GUIDE TO THE HIVE

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WELCOME TO HIVE ROKARTH

Hive Rokarth is a towering edifice of plasteel, rockcrete, and unbridled misery. It rises from the acrid surface of Voll, a crumbling spire of Human defiance, persisting despite the inevitability of caustic annihilation by its own hostile planet.

The fickle records of the **Adeptus Administratum** (page 6) proclaim that Rokarth is composed of some 1,000 levels. Hive cities of the Imperium are often monuments to wrecked arcology, each self-contained metropolis consisting of industrial cities stacked one on top of another. Rokarth is no different. Miles high and wide, its bleak spires are a stain visible on the horizon from hundreds of miles away. Below, its monolithic bulk sprawls across a blighted landscape.

Rokarth was founded six centuries ago, a relatively short time in the venerable Imperium. The city has grown rapaciously, even as it is corroded from within by crime, corruption, and caustic industrial waste. From without, the tempestuous acid storms of Voll claw at anything exposed to the odious air while the corrosive mud of the surface scours Rokarth's foundations. As a result, hive-quakes are common. Infrequent but disastrous collapses of whole sections of Rokarth have claimed the lives of millions.

The hive is in a constant state of repair and expansion, with construction efforts marshalled by the **Adeptus Mechanicus** (page 6) and their ancient knowledge. Today, this titanic mega-conurbation is supported by innumerate spider-like flying buttresses that shift slowly to account for the ever-churning surface of Voll. Rokarth has not experienced a substantial collapse in decades, with most fatalities over the last few years resulting from industrial accidents and ganger violence. Still, some proclaim that this relatively quiet period means a more significant collapse is due any day now. The Macharian Vigilites who patrol Rokarth treat such fear-mongering as sedition.

PLOT HOOKS

Locations in later chapters of this book are accompanied by Plot Hooks. These are related plot points the GM can use to lead characters down new avenues of adventure or conjure as rumours to draw characters in.

LIFE IN ROKARTH

Life inside the hive is never safe or comfortable. Each inner level is a sprawling, minacious city devoid of natural light, its recycled air tainted by the fumes of ceaseless industry. Each level's ceiling glimmers with stark stab-lights, their light visible through acid rain clouds, the titanic chambers large enough to produce their own virulent weather. The unfortunates that call Rokarth home have little to compare these horrors to — for most, every day consists of repetitious toil in a manufactory, followed by mandated veneration of the God-Emperor in an **Adeptus Ministorum** (page 6) cathedrum, and then ends with insufficient rest in a cramped hab. These habs are coffin-like homes stacked in their thousands, a miserable microcosm of Rokarth itself.

Rokarth houses at least thirty billion Imperial citizens, all toiling to serve the bottomless industrial requirements of the Macharian Sector. Their suffering pools like acrid effluent at the bottom of Rokarth. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the sweltering confines of its manufacturums. Long shifts and hazardous conditions see many perish at their workstations, their bodies pulled from the line, and the momentarily vacant position quickly filled by a successor compelled to serve. Knowing that every drop of sweat they shed is in service to the Emperor of Mankind is all that sustains these wretched souls.

This toil lends itself to the chief purpose of Rokarth, the principal hive city of Voll — to produce whatever is needed for the ravenous war machine of the Imperium and satisfy its ever-growing tithes. Natural occurring complex chemical compounds are refined into medicae supplies, batteries for lighting or use in Lasguns, and millions more obscure necessities the hivers will never benefit from. Even its vast populace is a resource, regularly press-ganged into service. Some are drafted into the **Astra Militarum** (page 6), trained and armed to the minimally acceptable standard, and ferried to unknown worlds to perish fighting nightmarish foes. Others are bonded to a voidship of the **Imperial Fleet** (page 6), trading crushing toil in a manufactorum for service in the dark between worlds, risking their very souls in braving the horrors of the Immaterium. All are told to see these onerous obligations as a blessing, a way to honour the God-Emperor and his servant, the vaunted Saint Solar Macharius.

FAITH AND INDUSTRY

Faith in the Emperor is strong on Rokarth, as it must be to combat the crushing realities of life within its bland ceramite walls. Most temples of the Cult Imperialis encourage worship through work, preaching that prayers to the Emperor go unheard unless accompanied by labour in His name. Faith in the Emperor is one way to keep peace in Hive Rokarth. Another is violent retribution. Despite the many forces that aim to control the populace, corruption and crime are rife — be it minor misdemeanours to ensure a production quota is met, the underfed and overworked turning to crime to survive, or outright heresy to find freedom from an unbearable existence.

Industrial workers compose the vast majority of the population. They are at the bottom of this callous hierarchy, allowed what meagre supplies they need to survive and serve their masters. Below the masses of labourer-serfs are those the Imperium has cast out or disregarded — criminal **Infractionists** (page 7), mutants, and those simply forgotten by a galaxy-spanning bureaucracy.

GANGERS AND GUILDERS

Those who live amongst the crumbling foundations of Rokarth, exposed to flesh-eating acids and toxic effluent falling from the industrial hive above, take by force what they need to survive and care little about who they take it from. Abandoned by the Imperium, infractionist influence rises upwards from the depths of the hive like vomitous bile. In the hive above, the threat of violence remains ever-present but largely unspoken. Here it is entirely explicit. Gangs with weapons and the will to use them control the Bowels, warring incessantly for control of the meagre territory they have access to, dreaming of assailing the hive above.

Far above the riotous gangs and wearied workers are those whom the Imperium allows some measure of personal power — so long as they use it in service to the Imperium and to feed the endless hunger of the Imperial Tithe. Miserly guilds control the flow of scarce clean water, palatable produce, and raw chemicals for use in the many industries of Rokarth. Hereditary nobles lay claim to vast swathes of each level of the hive, descendants of the Rogue Trader Dynasty that was bequeathed Voll in return for loyal service during the Macharian Crusade.

The rulers of Rokarth profit from the work of bonded billions, allowed to take almost any measures necessary to ensure they meet their quotas. They live in relative luxury compared to the labouring serfs below — some even see the sickly sunlight of Voll from their residences atop the hive spires. With power comes a responsibility to the tithe, and most think little of inflicting misery on others so long as it satisfies their obligations and ensures their position.

ROKARTH'S PLACE IN THE IMPERIUM

Beyond these feudal power structures are the organisations of the wider Imperium (see the **Factions and Influence** Reference Sheet). Even the hierarchs of Rokarth's hereditary noble houses are beholden to the Administratum's whims and the strictures of the Lex Imperialis. The technology that powers the hive, from its churning manufactorums to creaking maglev trains, is managed by the Adeptus Mechanicus alone. On every habway corner, an Adeptus Ministorum priest stands, castigating the weak and screeching veneration to the God-Emperor.

Rokarth is diverse in its dangers and populace, especially given the off-world trade that flows through the docks of the Imperial Navy. But none of these sanctioned and illicit organisations is a monolith — every individual and group has vulnerabilities.

Despite being plagued by pernicious problems, from the unusually caustic environment to the typical tribulations of a hellish hive city, Rokarth is considered a success. It provides much for the Macharian Sector. Voll's proximity to other vital worlds, such as the shrine world of Macharia and the Sector capital Persepolis, ensures its rulers are kept in relative comfort, even as their underlings die in droves. As such, Rokarth is a tempting target for those who would go against the Imperium. Crime is rampant, vile xenos plot from the shadows, and treacherous heretics tempt the desperate with the insidious promises of the Ruinous Powers. The hive teeters on the edge of damnation. Only by the subtle nudging of skilled agents and ambitious powers is Rokarth held back from absolute ruin.

FACTIONS & POWERS

None who stand alone survive for long in Rokarth. Most citizens are bonded labourers, serving large organisations, hereditary nobles, or purposeful conglomerates that may or may not abide by the laws of the Imperium.

Outwardly, Rokarth might seem a titanic monolith, united for the sole purpose of serving the Imperium. In truth, it is composed of many layers, each a distinct, teeming metropolis housing billions, working in thousands of different ways to provide resources for the Macharian Sector. Many groups hold power, each with agendas that frequently clash, despite supposedly being united in service to the Emperor. The most pertinent of these groups are presented here.

WHAT IS A FACTION?

Imperium Maledictum uses the term Faction to refer to various organisations within the Imperium. This section of the setting guide focuses on how these Factions operate on Voll and within Hive Rokarth.

For an extended primer on each Faction from an Imperium-spanning point of view, see the **Factions and Influence** Reference Sheet, or explore even more facets in the *Imperium Maledictum Core Book*.

THE ADEPTUS TERRA

The Adeptus Terra is the vast web of bureaucracies and organisations that rule the Imperium in the Emperor's name. Each complex and expansive organisation is based on Holy Terra, but their reach extends across the vastness of the Emperor's bellicose realm. A faction is devoted to a specific purpose, and though they are all supposedly united in furthering the survival of Humanity, their goals are often opposed within Rokarth. Whether this is an unfortunate outcome of the intricate complexity of governing the Imperium or if it serves some greater design intended to encourage excellence through competition is a question without an obvious answer.

In **Imperium Maledictum**, every player's Character and the group's Patron will have ties to one or more of these factions. While these organisations are far more potent than any hereditary nobility or local guild when dealing with their specific area of responsibility, most work with such local institutions of power to achieve their goals. They are often intertwined in complex (and potentially corrupt) ways.



ADEPTUS ADMINISTRATUM

Operating as an extension of the authority of the Adeptus Terra, the Administratum attempts to organise the sprawling bulk of Rokarth as they do millions of other cities on tens of thousands of other worlds, and their scribes and overseers are found throughout almost every level of Rokarth.

ADEPTUS ASTRA TELEPATHICA

The Adeptus Astra Telepathica have little presence on Rokarth, with relatively few Sanctioned Psykers serving other factions and noble houses as bonded Astropaths to facilitate communication. Their headquarters are the Crystalline Reflectory (page 28), from where most warp-borne communicae are received and transmitted and where psyker collections are planned.

PSYKERS

For more information on psykers, the accursed reality-warping powers they can manifest, and the nightmarish realm of the warp which fuels these phenomena, see the **Psykers and the Warp** Reference Sheet.

ADEPTUS MECHANICUS

As elsewhere in the Imperium, the Adeptus Mechanicus typically cloister themselves away from the masses in Rokarth. To most, the art of the Tech-Priests is akin to sorcery, their robed priesthood keepers of arcane secrets to be respected and feared in equal measure. The majority of the Tech-Priests on Rokarth are either Artisans or Biologis. The Artisans focus on maintaining crucial industries, such as the Generatorium that powers the hive or the maglev transportation network that runs like arteries throughout Rokarth. The Biologis work with the strange natural chemicals of Voll. Their headquarters is the **Forge Fane Incalcos-6** (page 27).

ADEPTUS MINISTORUM

In Rokarth, the Ecclesiarchy is tasked with uniting disparate, desperate billions through faith — a monumental, if not impossible, task. It is a testament to the zealous dedication of generations of priests that faith is strong throughout Voll, perhaps due to an abject fear of the undeniable power of the Adeptus Ministorum. Many Cathedraums throughout Rokarth combine labour and worship to ensure the masses revere the Emperor with their entire being — and so the Ecclesiarchy can keep solid connections with all factions and guilds so they may maintain and extend the reach of their power.

THE ORDER OF SEARING PURITY

A minor conclave of the Adepta Sororitas, the Order of Searing Purity serves the Adeptus Ministorum as zealous warriors and medicae practitioners. Rokarth produces myriad chemicals useful for medicae, and the toxic environment and ever-present industrial accidents provide ample patients for their Sisters Hospitaller to train upon. Some Novitiates venture into the hive's lowest reaches, spreading the God-Emperor's light and occasionally finding opportunities to experiment with battlefield medicae. Though the Order of Searing Purity are ostensibly non-militant physicians, every individual is a fully-fledged Battle Sister, a zealous warrior capable of waging ruthless holy crusades to obliterate the enemies of the Emperor. Tales of the Order of Searing Purity in battle lionise their prodigious might and vehement purgation of heretics as often as their medicae support.

ASTRA MILITARUM

The Administratum demand a heavy tithe of Voll, partially due to its Rogue Trader rulership. This contribution includes throngs of Astra Militarum recruits to feed into the nightmarish maw of the Imperial war machine. As Rokarth is ideally placed to supply any tithe through its colossal size and convenient connections to the Imperial Navy, most of its Astra Militarum troopers are trained and housed in the Adamantine Arch before being deployed in deadly engagements across the Macharian Sector and beyond. Additionally, the dangerous nature of life within the walls of Rokarth breeds strong potential soldiers, with gangers regularly pressed into service in Voll's numerous penal legions.

THE IMPERIAL FLEET

Though Voll is an essential world to all branches of the Imperial Fleet, there is some resentment towards the Rogue Trader Dynasty who rules it, as by centuries-old agreement, the Dynasty's ships receive prioritised rights to any port on Voll — including those run by the Navis Imperialis.

As the capital city of a populous hive world, Rokarth is frequented by the Imperial Navy, who control the **Void Buttress** (page 31), a ground port twinned with an orbital voidport high above. Millions of tonnes of produce, raw materials, and manufactured goods travel to and from Rokarth on the vessels of the Imperial Navy every hour. Beyond these crucial tithe levies, the world is often used as a staging area for travel to mighty Persepolis.

INFRACTIONISTS

Much of Rokarth's gloomy lower reaches are controlled by ruthless, opportunistic gangs collectively known as Infractionists. While illegal, exploiting these gangs to further their respective agendas is almost a sport among the noble houses. More compliant Infractionists are also valuable sources of intelligence, and many have been bribed or intimidated into acting as informants for noble houses, the Macharian Vigilites, and others.



SCARRED HANDS

Labouring in the production and use of industrial acids is profoundly hazardous work, entailing exposure to toxic and corrosive fumes and dangerously caustic liquids. Accidents are common and often fatal. Even those not killed or permanently debilitated by the work are left with painful scarring. It is common to lose otherwise distinctive features such as fingerprints. This makes such labourers perfect — often eager — criminals. The Scarred Hands are a gang composed almost entirely of such individuals, particularly prized for jobs requiring untraceable anonymity. It is whispered that the gang harbours some mutants among their scarred fraternity, their corrupt forms hidden almost in plain sight.



CUTTERS

The Cutters are a gang fascinated by all things technological, especially industrial machinery and its arcane products. The philosophically-minded among the gang — and despite all outward appearances, there are some — view machinery as a means of reaching beyond Human limitations. They prefer weapons and tools to giving themselves augmetics, however, as the latter is seen as a replacement to the Human form rather than a means of stretching beyond its limits. To the average Cutter, little could symbolise this apotheosis better than wielding a sharp blade or powerful firearm in the conduct of a crime and then escaping in an agile vehicle.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Adeptus Mechanic Tech-priests of Rokarth are particularly interested in the Cutters. Most find this apparent perversion of the creed of the Cult Mechanicus to be appalling. However, a few quietly admire the gangers for realising what to them is obvious — that the flesh is weak and that this weakness must be overcome through the gifts of the Omnissiah. As a result, they often favour the gangers for use in the production of servitors.





VYLATHI KNIVES

The gang known as the Vylathi Knives seek to style themselves after the Vylathi noble house, whose alleged connections to smuggling, the information trade, and illicit chems make them icons worthy of emulation. To the Knives, the Vylathi are living proof that one can remain a loyal servant of the Imperium while growing rich through corruption. Many on Voll believe that the Knives are just an extension of House Vylathi itself, a rather transparent attempt to put some distance between the house and its less savoury actions. This has never been proven, though many Patrons would relish evidence of such a connection. Some would immediately expose the Vylathi, but most would likely use any evidence of wrongdoing as leverage over the noble house.



BLOCK 24-96

A gang whose origins go back five centuries, this Infractionist group emerged through the bloody and brutal work of a trio of brothers from the eponymous Block 24-96. Getting its start through simple extortion and black marketeering, Block 24-96, often referred to simply as 'the Block', spreads throughout Rokarth inexorably. It exists for one purpose — the accumulation of power. On Voll, money is power.

Block membership is gained after a period of apparent loyalty, where aspirants are expected to prove their devotion through service — before being solemnised by having the digits 24-96 burned across their shoulder blades with corrosive acid. Their activities include embezzlement and protection rackets, trafficking, arms running, gambling dens, theft, bribery, and more.

The cruellest part of their operation: their enemies often don't end up dead, but rather 'disappear'. Rumours whispered in fearful tones in dive bars and gambling dens are that they end up as industrial servitors. The truth is horrific — for just a few solars, the adepts responsible for creating new servitors will free a hardened Block criminal sentenced to be lobotomised and replace them with the gang's chosen victim.

INQUISITION

Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor Aegidius Halikarn, the Characters' Patron, has taken a particular interest in Voll. Halikarn employs several agents on Voll, who may or may not be known to one another. One at least provides a safe house for them in the Thaler Hostelry (page 45) in the Lower Hive.

ROGUE TRADER DYNASTIES

Several Rogue Traders pledged themselves to the Macharian Crusade, some out of a genuine sense of honourable devotion to the Emperor, others desperately pursuing profit and glory. Halion Castyx was amongst them, the flexibility of his private warfleet proving instrumental in conquering several worlds, including the seemingly worthless toxic rock designated 'Voll'. The planet was bequeathed to House Castyx, though none can tell whether this was a reward or punishment. In the centuries since, Voll has been ruled by Planetary Governors of the Castyx line while other members of the Dynasty strike out into the void.

NOBLE HOUSES

The hereditary nobility of Rokarth are born into power, inheriting dominion over billions of sworn souls and a terrifying responsibility to the Tithe. During the Macharian Crusade, competent officers were awarded nobility and governorship of worlds as they were conquered, tasked with custodianship to defend a planet, bring its populace in line, and ensure that the Emperor was paid His due.

Most of the noble houses of Voll descend from the Rogue Trader Halion Castyx or a member of his retinue. The oldest and most powerful houses of Voll each control a Hive, all of which are subservient to Rokarth, the capital and seat of Castyx's direct descendants.

Noble houses typically have great power and influence on a single planet but very little authority beyond their world. Though the many arms of the Adeptus Terra should technically outrank any planet-bound noble house, it is almost always easier to work with the local authorities than to outright oppose them. Only in the worst cases will a family be stripped of their power, as to do so risks rancour or even outright rebellion — a costly affair sure to cost lives and resources the Imperium can ill afford to spend on internal politicking.



CASTYX

When Lord Solar Macharius bequeathed the title of Planetary Governor of Voll to Rogue Trader Halion Castyx, the ruling lineage of the world was born. A Castyx scion has always ruled Voll from Rokarth, even as other members of the Dynasty venture beyond the borders of the Imperium. Some privately believe this to be a conflict of interest, but House Castyx have ensured Voll has met its tithe for centuries and even profited from the infrequent dealings with the wider Rogue Trader Dynasty.

Halion Castyx held that the best opportunities are discovered through social connections, so his descendants have firmly retained the founder's principles, infamously affable while holding dangerous leverage on all they deal with, as genial as they are morally flexible. It is said that the smile of a scion of House Castyx is a blade unsheathed, and one would be wise to consider where the blow might land.

House Castyx views Rokarth as an engine of information and profit. Planetary Governor Lord Jaspar Castyx pays attention to production quotas from the hive's manufactorums but otherwise leaves

the day-to-day administration of Rokarth to others, most notably his son Ithamar, who some suspect would prefer the perilous freedoms afforded to other scions of the Dynasty that strike out into the void.

House Castyx makes a good show of declaring every arm of the Adeptus Terra welcome on Voll and strives to fulfil the Emperor's will as they see fit. Despite this, Lord Castyx reputedly ignores many illicit ventures to avoid drawing attention to the problem of rampant criminality and to gild his family's fortunes. It is whispered that House Castyx uses its vast web of spies to 'encourage' competition between factions of the Adeptus Terra and ensure that their Dynasty is essential to unravelling any disputes that might arise.



NETHECARÉ

Founded by the brilliant Ravia Nethecaré, Halion Castyx's Biologis Savant, House Nethecaré has an extensive interest in biochemistry and hydroponics. The Nethecaré engineered new forms of algae crucial to Voll's food supply. They regularly research Voll's unusual chemical properties and study acynadi, the term for the unusual and varied lifeforms of Voll's original biosphere. Their research is conducted with an unusual degree of independence from the Adeptus Mechanicus. It is largely confined to Hive Dalal, the rulership of which was granted to House Nethecaré centuries ago. This arrangement rankles the Ommissiah's faithful. Still, Lord Castyx allows their parallel research to proceed on the condition that they share all their findings and limit their studies to the biological. Whether this decree is adhered to and how strictly it is has become debated. Their interests in Hive Rokarth frequently involve sparring with the Mercator Lenimen or studying the creatures of the Unsea.



Taj

The ruling house of Hive Vishavar enjoys a rare commodity in the Imperium — genuine and affectionate popularity. The nobles of Taj have, for centuries, worked hard to secure the safety and security of Voll, with long-standing connections to the Astra Militarum and the Imperial Fleet. Much of their efforts have been devoted to protecting the citizens of Vishavar from hazardous strains of acynadi; however, every time Voll, or any of its hives, have been seriously threatened, the doughty members of House Taj have been at the forefront of battle. Unsurprisingly, House Taj deals in weaponry, munitions, and armour. Their resource connections to Hive Rokarth are comparatively minor, along with regular armament shipments, but they take a keen interest in any factional infighting that could harm Voll at large.



Vylathi

The enigmatic masters of Hive Sanksorak are known for breeding large tardigrades for consumption and a wide variety of serpentine creatures native to Voll and beyond. What they truly deal in, though, is secrets and covert influence. Cimbria Vylathi was Halion Castyx's Seneschal, a mistress of whispers without peer, and it is an open secret that House Vylathi still acts as such for the Castyx. The Vylathi's official businesses in Hive Rokarth all involve livestock breeding and related pursuits, such as leather production. In reality, anything in Hive Rokarth may draw the Vylathi's interest if it could conceivably concern House Castyx in any way.

MINOR HOUSES

What Voll's lesser noble houses lack in power, they frequently make up for in ambition. Commonly founded as offshoots of a greater house by an exemplary — or troublesome — member, the Highborn of the minor houses are infamous for constantly seeking opportunities to improve their houses' standing and influence. Minor houses typically have control over only a single commodity or service.

HALVOR-MOTT

Nobles of this house maintain that Enoch Halvor was one of the finest warriors House Taj ever produced, responsible for saving the life of Zofelia Castyx several centuries ago. Hive legend suggests Enoch was an exceedingly accomplished assassin. Regardless, Enoch's exploits were impressive enough that they were granted nobility. Halvor soon expanded their militaristic noble house by marrying into the small but wealthy House Mott, a noble family from the world of Leonova.

House Halvor-Mott specialises in training combatants: from bodyguards and professional mercenaries to exceptionally deadly Chrono-Gladiators, if the rumours are to be believed. In Rokarth, many of the most competent guild-bonded soldiers bear the hard-earned marks of Halvor-Mott sanctioning. Most are well armed, their Las weapons equipped with the finest focusing arrays imported from the mines of Leonova. House Castyx have long maintained strong ties to Halvor-Mott, as a reliable supply of capable warriors has proven invaluable for the Rogue Trader Dynasties' endeavours in conquering worlds beyond Voll.

KALVEO

Once the masters of Hive Amlyr, House Kalveo's tale is tragic and cautionary. Founded by the wickedly clever Finial Kalveo, Halion Castyx's trusted 'prospects attaché', the Kalveo once specialised in manufacturing rare medical compounds and effective chems. Hive Amlyr produces some of the most potent stimms and 'combat enhancements' on Voll, and rumour has it that the family slowly became dependent on their products. Whatever the truth, the Kalveo ultimately faltered and fell from favour. Amlyr is presently run by a rotating council led by a Castyx regent. The Kalveo now dabble in various industries and shadowy ventures, but they are suspected of smuggling chems off-world through Rokarth. Darker rumours suggested they may even be involved in the Silent Trade, the proscribed practice of smuggling xenos artefacts throughout the Imperium.

PARNAM

House Nethecaré is known for producing brilliant, if obsessive, minds. Taura Nethecaré was one such prodigy whose thoughts were entirely dedicated to her research of Voll's flora. She may have passed through history unnoticed and certainly would not have been granted her own house if she had not gifted a stunning gown woven from iridescent parnam fibres to Lillian Castyx, Voll's third Planetary Governor. On a whim, Lady Castyx enfranchised a new noble house, and Taura Nethecaré was granted a boon others would gladly kill for. Some suspect this was a ploy to rob House Nethecaré of one of its brighter scions, but the new house succeeded magnificently. House Parnam now deals in textiles and clothing, ranging from simple recycled garments to uniforms and armour for the Astra Militarum to magnificent and sumptuous robes coveted by nobles across the system. Their most celebrated hard-wearing overcoats, heavily favoured in Rokarth, are acid-resistant and repel muck and dirt with their slick surfaces.

SUMALAK

Kali Sumalak was granted noble status due to the unusual combination of being a supremely competent victualler and politically adroit. Brought to the Castyx Dynasty's attention by the Vylathi for several of her recipes that made algae palatable and even enticing, her charming nature greatly endeared her to the Imperial House and led to their patronage. House Sumalak specialises in the preparation, packaging, and distribution of a wide variety of consumables: flavoured algae portions for hive labourers, Astra Militarum field rations, even high-end tardigrade steaks and rare delicacies for Highborn, wealthy merchants, and Rogue Traders. In Rokarth, House Sumalak runs commissaries throughout the hive and various businesses that assist in sustenance production. Kali Sumalak, though well into her third century, is still recognised as the cunning head of her house, though she has not been seen in public for decades.



GUILDS

These chartered merchant guilds are authorised by House Castyx to control the flow of particular materials vital to life in the hives of Voll. Each merchant guild holds an effective monopoly on whatever goods or services are their purview, and they all ruthlessly enforce their 'rights' to the commodity in question.



MERCATOR DILAQUO

Liquid is common on Voll, but naturally occurring potable water untainted by one caustic or acidic compound or another is non-existent. Even as Halion Castyx claimed Voll, he knew that conquering the planet's toxic nature was a vital first step to properly profitable exploitation. The Mercator Dilaquo was founded to research the large volatile compounds of Voll to apply these substances properly and manage their maintenance, filtering, and other industrial processes to provide water. The Reclamation Guild is also, effectively, the Water Guild.

Within Rokarth, the Reclamation Guild collects, transports, and produces raw chemical materials, from separating acids to creating potable water to extracting various alkalis from sluiced mud. The Mercator Dilaquo maintains and implements the schedule for acid-washing various hive levels. Beyond the tithes to other facilities and factions that need the materials they can provide, the Mercator Dilaquo sell a spectrum of liquids to the populace, supplementing their meagre water rations amongst more sinister supplies. The Reclamation Guild has few enemies — those that oppose them typically find that their water starts to taste sharp or might dissolve their tongue entirely, and rivals to their monopoly vanish into the multi-tonne vats of toxic effluvium that fill their guild houses.



MERCATOR CARNEM

From their founding days, Voll's hives have been afflicted with invasive indigenous insects similar to brightly coloured beetles. Called *Shinies* by the locals, the insects typically vary in size from a thumbnail to an Ogryn's clenched fist. These protein-rich insects have iridescent carapaces lined with multiple eyes to detect threats, are capable of swift flight, and are all but immune to poison. Their would-be exterminators soon learned they could wear shimmering colours to approach their prey unseen, at which point a simple net was all that was needed to catch them in droves. This quickly led to them being used as food. Soon after, they petitioned the Castyx to create the Mercator Carnem — the Meat Guild of Voll.

Far from its humble beginnings as a loose collection of exterminators, the Mercator Carnem now controls the rendering and supplying of all meat from stock produced on Voll. As the guild grew, House Castyx conferred exclusive contracts to farm and slaughter the various species of gigantic nutritious tardigrades native to Voll, supplying House Sumalak production facilities. This deal proved so profitable that these strange creatures have graced the Mercator Carnem sigil of arms for centuries. The Meat Guild is rumoured to have a secret arrangement with the Nethecaré involving meat derived from acynadi.

Members of the Mercator Carnem are easily identified by their scaled jackets, still gleaming with dirty opalescence despite acid stains, claw marks, and the odd bullet pockmark. They are involved in many businesses in Hive Rokarth, but wider affairs only interest them if they might hamper meat production or cause folk to seek other sustenance.



MERCATOR LENIMEN

The Mercator Lenimen, commonly called the Chem Guild, was formed early in Halion Castyx's reign. The cunning Rogue Trader knew he would need the Adeptus Mechanicus to exploit the organically rich soil of Voll properly. However, he was loath to cede them power by simply inviting them in. Instead, he approached the Tech-Priests with an offer of a profitable joint venture between House Castyx and the Mechanicus Macharian, which eventually blossomed into the Mercator Lenimen.

From its foundation the Chem Guild has been a success, gaining prominence by discovering many compounds with powerful medicae properties and other unusual properties. The Mercator Lenimen has remained an unusually hybrid organisation since its foundation. It is directed by a series of guilder families long allied to the Castyx, with Genetor devotees of the Omnissiah controlling most of its research and experimentation. Its agents, bonded or informal, produce nearly every chem manufactured on Voll, from prized medicae anaesthetics to dubious tranquillising compounds. By the Chem Guild's reckoning, the only truly illegal drugs on Voll are those made without their sanction, official or otherwise. The Mercator Lenimen do not hesitate to enforce their will with violence as necessary, and as an extension of House Castyx, the Macharian Vigilites of Rokarth often look the other way.

The Mercator Lenimen's official headquarters occupy the entirety of a crumbling sub-spire of Hive Rokarth, along with its connected buttresses, stretching down to the hive's foundations. Non-guilders are not welcome within the lower sections of the Chem Guild's HQ, as unusual and secretive experiments utilising acynadi are rumoured to occur there routinely.

COMMERCE & CULTURE

Commerce is Rokarth's purpose, and every aspect of the hive is devoted to production. The hive scrapes away Voll's meagre resources, turning its wracked landscapes' natural acids and sickly fauna into chems, fuel, rations, and whatever else the Imperium's voracious appetite demands. Few on Rokarth will ever see the benefits of what they create — House Castyx have bent the world's production to feeding the ravenous Imperial Tithe above all else.

The tithe is everything. While each noble house and guild skims whatever profits they can, they know their power relies upon ensuring the tithe is fulfilled. The slightest drop in production, the most negligible delay in their contribution to the colossal machine of the Imperium, or any precious moment of industrial manufacture wasted — all could result in dire consequences. Rokarth's elites are forever balanced upon a knife's edge, one they turn to hold against their citizens' throats. Vicious overseers monitor Rokarth's manufactorums, driving labourers on to ensure their ever-growing productivity quota is fulfilled.

In the Spire, Rogue Traders and Naval Officers meet with Administratum adepts, sending Rokarth's prized batteries and chems off-world with the shake of a hand and the stamp of the Aquila. In return, they bring in wood, grain, meat, fabrics, and other raw materials, which Rokarth's manufactorums swallow up and spit out as finished products, most of which are then sent off-world again. Meanwhile, in the hive's hab-sprawls, labourers return exhausted from their shifts and set to crafting basic hab-made items to sell in the street stalls. Occasionally, rare luxury goods, such as a third-hand garment or tinned clone meat, will somehow appear in these makeshift markets, a sure promise of ravaging riots and brutal Vigilite suppression as gangers and desperate citizens scramble to violently separate such treasures from their owners.

Beneath all this lies the unspoken trade few acknowledge, but which is as vital to Rokarth as promethium fuel. The list of things banned to the Imperium's citizenry is long and ever-growing, though sporadically enforced. These are the things in which Rokarth's Silent Trade deals. Smugglers and fences present a legitimate face within the open markets, hiding goods in the ever-flowing sea of humanity. Often, they report back to the gangs, Rokarth's home-grown Infracrionists who chew at the edges of the hive's industry. Products stolen from manufactorums form the bulk of this underground trade, and those caught dealing in such items are taken to become servitors, the price for their crime a lifetime of lobotomised service. However, more volatile goods — such as heretical texts and xenos technology — merit immediate execution.

No matter whether trades occur in hurried exchanges behind an overseer's back or over a glass of fine imported Harjun spirits, commerce keeps Rokarth alive. The manufactorums cannot stop. The flow of goods can never end. Were it to falter, the hive would become surplus to the Imperium's requirements.

REFERENCE SHEETS

Refer to the **Commerce & Culture** Reference Sheet in the Starter Set box for information on buying and selling gear in *Imperium Maledictum*. This sheet also includes details of items for sale in the Open Markets and Silent Trade and the options for **Sustenance** and **Shelter** described later in this section (Accommodation, Provisions and **Medicae**).



MANUFACTORUMS

Blocky plasteel and rockcrete structures with acid-washed and frequently crumbling façades, over a thousand manufactorums barnacle Rokarth's Generatorium, leeching power to ensure the hive's productivity. Labourers shuffle through the clawing miasma of fumes, bio-waste, growling machines, and misery to take their place in Rokarth's industrial heart.

Pitiless overseers constantly scrutinise labourers, yet manufactorums are often bleak melting pots of hivers from varying hab-sprawls. When insurrection spreads, it can often be traced back to a single manufactorum, but with every hint of rebellion, the noble houses and guilds tighten their chokehold on the populace. Failure to meet the tithe would spell doom for the rulers of Rokarth, if not the entirety of Voll, so those in power must carefully balance the challenge of keeping their workers alive and the violence of subjugation. Fear of the existential consequences of failing to meet a nebulous tithe prompts those in power to terrorise their underlings to meet unrealistic goals, who then force intolerable toil on those beneath them. Terror trickles down from the tip of the highest Spire of Rokarth to its lowliest labourer, ensuring adequate production through absolute fear.

What follows is a selection of the significant types of manufactorum that make up the industry of Hive Rokarth. These environments are toxic, dangerous, and filled with heavy machinery. Whenever you run combat in a manufactorum, consider both the massive scale of such locations and the following Environmental Traits, as described in the **Conditions and Environmental Hazards** Reference Sheet:

- ☛ **Cover:** An almost universal trait across all manufactorums due to the masses of titanic, little-understood machinery.
- ☛ **Dark and Poorly Lit:** Such as the gloomy interior of all **Cibureum Manufactorums**.
- ☛ **Features:** Anything from promethium barrels in a **Promethium Refinery** that could cause an explosion (creating a *Major Hazard*) to loading servitors in a **Battery Manufactorum** that could be programmed to attack a target.
- ☛ **Hazards:** For example, the toxic gases present in the air of a **De-rust Manufactorum**.
- ☛ **Obscured:** Perhaps by clouds of toxic gases in the air of a **De-rust Manufactorum** — in addition to being *Hazards*!

AUGMETICS MANUFACTORUMS

Hiver augmetics range from prosthetic limb replacements for machinery accidents to vox-boxes for vocal cords eroded by acidic gas, representing the cheapest possible way to return injured labourers to a productive state. These are mass-produced within Augmetics manufactorums. Labourers provide the Imperium's Officio Medicae with the parts, watched over by Tech-Priests vigilant for deviation from standardised augmetic templates.

BATTERY & LUMEN MANUFACTORUMS

Battery and Lumen manufactorums are among Hive Rokarth's most common facilities, utilising Voll's plentiful natural acids. The lethality of such substances doesn't negate their quality, and Rokarth-made batteries are highly prized. Some produce lumens, but far more create Las weapon power cells. Across the Macharian Sector, Astra Militarum troopers give prayers of thanks as they snap Rokarthian cells into their Lasguns, faithful in the knowledge that their munitions are reputedly reliable. Security is tight, with guards loyal to a manufactorum's overseer. Despite this, stolen power cells regularly find their way into Rokarth's underground.

CIBUREUM MANUFACTORUMS

Many fungi harvested from Convexum Fungi (page 53) are shuttled to Cibureum manufactorums. Labourers render them into biofuel, a complex process involving dark spaces maintained at unbearable temperatures. The resulting product is rarely used off-world, where mineral fuels are preferred, but most machines on Voll use them. Working in these manufactorums leaves its mark: Cibureum labourers are recognisable by their burnt, pallid skin and lack of hair. They are often mistaken for mutants and are susceptible to recruitment by the Scarred Hands (page 7).

DE-RUST MANUFACTORUMS

Anyone in a de-rust facility not wearing a rebreather will taste blood within ten minutes. Inside these towering manufactorums, walkways cobweb the fume-choked air above enormous chemical vats, where Voll's acids undergo archaic chemical processes to convert them into substances to prevent rust. Such products are invaluable for the Imperium and form much of Voll's tithe. All De-Rust manufactorums are overseen by the Mercator Dilaquo, but the Adeptus Mechanicus wishes to usurp control, ensuring their requirements receive priority. They cannot move openly, but productivity across these manufactorums has seen an alarming drop recently, and voices supporting an Adeptus Mechanicus take-over are growing louder.

FERTILISER MANUFACTORUMS

Voll's acids have many uses. Labourers combine decaying offal from the hive's slaughterhouses with acidic compounds to create artificial fertilisers in reeking combinations filled with mouldering waste. These are shipped to agri worlds such as Crultus and Prosperity to combat soil alkalinity.

Hivers doomed to labour in these manufactorums are shunned as the stench clings to them, yet many enjoy their work. Some refuse to leave, preferring the decaying heat of the waste mounds to their cold habs, hiding amongst the colossal machinery. The most devoted of these souls have taken to celebrating this putrescent warmth as a blessing from the Emperor.

LUCERNE MANUFACTORUMS

By House Castyx decree, all dead go to a Lucerne manufactorum. In the Spire, mourners bring the deceased inside in a final act of farewell. Elsewhere, the dead are piled outside for Adeptus Ministorum-employed Corpse Haulers. However they arrive, the destination is the same.

Bodies are loaded onto enormous conveyor belts, the creaking gears and wails of the not-quite-dead drowned out by vox-hailer liturgies, sanctifying the remains for further use. After a period of mourning, these bodies are rendered down into base materials suitable for enriching soil.

The remains are transported in grisly, close-topped containers to a fertiliser manufactorum for further processing. Many lucerne manufactorums are operated by cathedrums in the Lower Hive (pages 41–42).

PLASTEEL & CERAMITE MANUFACTORUMS

Building the Imperium's foundations, plasteel foundries and ceramite manufactorums are common among Rokarth's lower levels. The growling rock grinders and roaring furnaces have forced those living nearby to develop a crude sign language. Known as Steel-Sign, these hand gestures relating to industrial processes have been adopted by Rokarth's criminals, leaving the labourers damned by association.



PROMETHIUM REFINERIES

Though the fungi-derived fuels provided by Rokarth's Cibureum manufactorums feed many local machines, the Imperium proper runs on faith, blood, and *promethium*. Promethium is drawn to Rokarth from far beyond the confines of the hive, drilled for in its raw state from gaping quarries gouged in the landscape and channelled through gargantuan pipes to the ever-rumbling refineries. Here, the fuel that powers most standardised Imperial technology is purified.

Much of this highly combustible product is delivered directly to the Void Butress, fuelling the various ships and shuttles controlled by the Imperial Fleet. A few plants specialise in producing promethium for military use, fuelling Vigilite vehicles, off-world Astra Militarum forces, and providing ammunition for their Flamers, a much sought-after commodity among Rokarth's gangs. Given their importance, House Castyx keeps tight control over the refineries, granting oversight of them to favoured house agents. This makes the refineries and their trade more or less untouchable, much to the chagrin of those overseeing Rokarth's Cibureum manufactorums, who vie to develop biofuel from Rokarth's fungi to compete with promethium.

RECYC-SANCTUM PRIME

While not a manufactorum, Recyc-Sanctum Prime functions similarly: labourers sort through the endless flow of hive waste, sieving out whatever can be re-used and purifying the rest.

The facility is split into three components. The Cloaca Station is filled with a roaring torrent of runoff and human waste. Archaic filtration systems purify this sewage before pouring it into a reservoir. Under sickly UV lighting, hivers fish out anything valuable from among the muck.

The Redivivus Station sorts inorganic waste. Scrap metal and acid-damaged rockcrete are formed into colossal heaps, which labourers crawl over like ants. The Cutters are constantly prowling around its perimeter and soliciting choice salvage.

The Anima Station ensures Rokarth's air remains breathable. A tall structure with pipes stretching throughout the hive, it draws in air and passes it through algae scrubbers. Clean air is sent upwards while waste chemicals rain upon Rokarth's lower levels.

REZIN STIMM LABS & NEYMARNAY DISTILLERY

Mosi Neymarnay is a rarity: an Imperial citizen who rose above their station. She started as an apprentice to her hab-sprawl's medicae, little more than a butcher, before designing her Rezin Stimm kits. These contain rezin-wraps for bleeding, stim shots for recovery, and atrocious but welcome home-brewed alcohol for pain.

Neymarnay Distillery and its associated Rezin Stimm Labs, located across the Lower Hive (page 37), provide cheap medicae and even cheaper alcohol to the masses. Normally, such an endeavour wouldn't be tolerated, but a missive from Planetary Governor Lord Jaspar Castyx stayed the Vigilites. What prompted this is a subject of speculation, but Neymarnay's medicae kits and caustic rotgut do seem invaluable in keeping the hivers placated. Neymarnay is aware she walks a fine line. Every month, three-quarters of her profits go to the guilds, the Administratum, and racketeering gangsters. Meanwhile, she guards her compound with whoever she can find to hold a weapon.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE CARNUM X-III

Slaughterhouse Carnum X-III houses hanging racks of precious meat within its ice-encrusted walls. Inside, the only sounds are the splintering thunk of cleavers and the clanking tread of Mercator Carnem adepts.

A rare non-tardigrade-derived meat processing facility, Carnum X-III's supplies come from a vat-cultivated plant in the Lower Hive (page 37). Each day, the gates open to admit trundling armoured and refrigerated meat wagons, Mercator Carnem guards marching by their side. Actual meat is rare, and the hive's appetite is voracious. Anyone approaching a meat wagon is shot — the meat guild will not risk the loss of their valuable cargo or let anyone hear its inhuman wailing. Some suspect they transport more than expensive victuals, but none are foolhardy enough to check.

UNGUENTARIUM ROKARTH-XIV

To work in the Unguentarium is to grease the gears of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Lucerne and promethium manufacturums send lipids and minerals, which its labourers press, render, and strain to make medicae supplies and sacred oils for Mechanicus rituals. Tech-Priests oversee every stage of the process, their binary litanies purifying them for application. To them, a factory line is sacred, and they instil this purity in their labourers. If any person falters, the Tech-Priest's augmented eye falls upon them, judging whether a component needs removing for the machine's good.

OPEN MARKETS

Rokarth runs on the twin lifebloods of trade and industry, yet hivers rarely feature in this as anything more than another resource. While in the Spire, adepts meet with diplomats, securing lucrative arrangements in service to Rokarth's tithe contributions; below, labourers hurry through ramshackle market stalls, snatching purchases in the brief periods between shifts.

For most hivers, being an informal merchant is a necessary second vocation, forgoing sleep to scrape a few extra solars in places like Three Knock Alley (page 46). Families stitch together clothing, distil rotgut, craft makeshift weapons, and anything else they might sell. Of course, resources are always scarce, as the industry of the manufacturum consumes anything even remotely usable, so they must make do with scraps. Even a wayward corpse has a thousand uses before it must be sent to the lucerne manufacturums. Coats made from tanned hide and scrimshaw shivs are common alongside finger bone necklaces, and self-proclaimed medicae offer fresh grafts to replace acid-burned skin or hawk teeth in many a habway.

A few merchants are contracted by noble houses, selling products too low quality to trade beyond Rokarth's confines. Often, they hold a monopoly on operating around manufacturums or hab-sprawls owned by their patrons, ensuring a house extracts the greatest possible profit from their labourers.



Hive markets are most common in the Upper Levels, where labourers have more solars to spend. Here, everything from vital food and alcohol to meagre luxuries can be bought. The upper hivers are eager for any products that mark them above those below, whom they imagine as little more than scarcely-seen degenerates suited only for lives of labour. Acid-resistant clothes are always in demand, being both practical and a prominent status symbol, though wooden furniture rescued from Spire recyc-stations are also highly sought after. Lower hive markets rarely boast much choice. What trade there is tends to be on the level of hab-made products, whittled and stitched from whatever was at hand.

Few ever venture into the gloom and choking fumes of the Bowels. However, things here cannot be found anywhere else in Rokarth, so the floating markets of Ditchhaven (page 53) see customers clandestinely descend from on high. Here, hivers pick over scavenged scraps, chemicals, and crude firearms sold by furtive figures in rotting tardigrade leather.

Weapons are the one constant here. Technically, firearms are forbidden to Rokarth's citizenry, but most Vigilites look the other way, as they consider the trade an effective means for stifling violent elements of the population. All hivers carry at least a knife, while basic projectile weapons (usually gang-made) can be purchased in open markets. A buyer must look to Rokarth's Silent Trade for anything more unusual.

SCARCITY IN ROKARTH

When searching Rokarth's markets for specific items, characters should make a **Difficult (-10) Rapport (Inquiry)** Test to see if they can find a vendor for what they need.

Since chem-derived products are more plentiful on Rokarth, such as Tox Rounds, Choke Grenades, Webbers, and Chirurgeon's Kits, this Test is made at Challenging (+0) Difficulty instead.

If characters trade for an item outside of a noble house, guild, or Imperium organisation, the GM should consider the chance that the item in question could be stolen.

BLACK MARKETS

'Sanctioned trade in Rokarth floats atop a sea of illicit goods. Every market contains merchants who exist upon its edges — know the right signs, mention the right names, and they may lead you to hidden storerooms. Follow them at your own risk, as the Vigilites show no mercy to any transgression, and worse, the gangs now know your face. They know your name. And they know what you want.'

— Craverus Kides, Dockhand

Most black-market goods are stolen from Rokarth's manufactorys, with many labourers tempted by the promise of a few extra solars. While Rokarth pays no heed to much illegal activity, anything threatening a production quota, and therefore the tithe, cannot be abided. It is impossible to search every one of the thousand labourers. Therefore, the Vigilites carry out spot checks, hauling luckless hivers out from the crowd and administering brutal beatings. If the guards find so much as a hoarded half-ration, the hiver is sentenced to purgatorial service and bound to their workstation.

Far more dangerous are those who deal in reclaimed augmetics. Augmetics are one of the few provisions manufactorys grant their labourers, ensuring their continued productivity and taking the cost from their meagre stipend. Infractionists, existing outside Rokarth's industrial chain, have no such luck. Instead, gangs of body snatchers — particularly members of the Cutters — roam Rokarth's hab-sprawls, watching for any desirable augmentations. These bloody scraps wind up in the hands of rogue medicae, often referred to by gangers as 'stitchers' or 'bone-saws', offering installation as soon as the viscera has been scraped off.

The Cutters control the sale of modified tech. Working outside Imperial law grants the freedom to experiment, take things apart, and perhaps even innovate. The Cutters buy up any tech they find, sending it down to Cutter Parts in the Sump (page 52), where their dedicated gunsmiths tinker away, free from the augmented gaze of the Adeptus Mechanicus. These items can be deadly to both users and their targets, and should the Tech-Priests of the Upper Hive hear of such tech-heresy, the Omnissiah wills that the most fitting punishment is to cleanse their souls by converting them into servitors.

Fences are essential. They take in the hive's illicit products, hiding them behind a legitimate façade. Most work as house-contracted traders or even Vigilites. Their familiarity with Rokarth's underworld provides the perfect means to buy stolen goods and sell them where they are less likely to attract attention. Such figures stand between Rokarth's ostensibly law-abiding populace and the gangs and are the centre of a widespread information network. When you learn of a fence, they already know all about you.

Trust is hard to come by, and before a fence is willing to work with a new buyer, they must prove themselves. Usually, this involves carrying out a theft or getting a gang to vouch for them — the details don't matter. What matters is the buyer is now complicit and risks condemning themselves. The more you rely on a fence, the more you tie yourself to them. However, this has benefits, as only someone thoroughly invested will ever hear about the greatest treasure of Rokarth's black market: the Silent Trade.

THE SILENT TRADE

Xenos artefacts are among the most sought-after (and dangerous) items smuggled across the Macharius Sector. Known as the Silent Trade, only the richest can afford to indulge in their purchase, and only the most heretical would dare to do so. Representatives from the Trackless Chain (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 259) appear in Rokarth once or twice a year to hold secretive auctions and secure gang services, often with gifts of xenos technology. Discovery of such trade brings swift and public retribution. The Infractionist's bodies are hung from the Spire, left to dissolve in Voll's acid rain, a visible promise to any who think themselves beyond House Castyx's grasp.

SUSTENANCE

Food is essential to Rokarth's productivity and, in the eyes of its masters, a regrettably necessary drain on resources. Labourers hoard their single algae slop ration provided by the manufactorums each day. At the same time, in the Spire, adepts endure the flavourless, watery texture of tardigrade meat seasoned with off-world spices. Thanks to its algae farms, Rokarth doesn't rely on imports or even the dubious use of Grey Rations to the extent of other hive cities. However, poisoning and malnutrition are rampant. Some are so used to the constant food poisoning that they associate sickness with sustenance, giving thanks for that which ravages their bodies.

What little food exists outside a widely distributed nutrient gruel depends on one's station. Hivers of Rokarth's Upper and Lower levels rarely get to taste anything outside algae-based products. A few solars can get a steaming hot bowl of the greenish gloop. It's tasteless but at least warms the body as it coats the tongue like thick glue before curdling in the stomach.

Alcohol and recaf are the hive's favoured drinks. Few trust the water, which carries the smell and taste of its journeys through recyc-stations and hivers. Those who can afford it shuffle into taverns, handing over solars for the promise of oblivion. Most taverns ferment their own drinks from fungi that proliferate in Rokarth's acid-washed vents. The resulting rotgut, known as Ghol, tastes like licking a rusted power pack, though only after the first sip — after that, the taste buds are burnt to a comfortable numbness, making both the drink and any foul rations available more palatable.

The Adeptus Ministorum are, at least officially, quick to condemn exorbitant flavouring. Eating to excess is against the Imperial Creed. It weakens the soul, putting focus on one's desires over those of their Emperor. Abundant flavouring can only tempt one down this path of indulgence. This does not stop those with the means from searching for anything to relieve the monotony of their diet. Gangers hunt and steal anything edible, their bosses holding elaborate feasts for favoured cronies, using these shows of gluttony to entice recruits. Meanwhile, noble scions receive discrete coded invitations to private gatherings, where the privileged allow their appetites to run free, savouring diaphanous slivers of off-world fruit or gorging on piles of 'misaid' spiced Grox meat.

Despite the Ministorum's protests, House Sumalak have been working towards making Rokarthian produce more palatable. Such meals are vaunted by Administratum propagandists, showing the hive's rulers eating algae in solidarity with regular hivers. The unfortunate consequence of this rise in algae demand is that what once would have been given to the labourers now goes to the Spire. Furthermore, the flavour powders developed by Sumalak for mass production can be dangerously corrosive.

This has not stopped Sumalak from disseminating them, presenting their new algal rations as the food of the Imperium's finest. Those who find their intestines eaten away obviously lack the Emperor's favour, causing the suffering to be shunned by fellow hivers, forced to band together for what little support they can provide.

SHELTER

Thirty billion recorded souls are crushed together within Rokarth's walls. Its reliance upon the central Generatorium means hab units are clustered, making the most of the meagre power left after the manufactorums. Yet, there are many forms of residences, each hive region having unique characteristics.

Most in the Spire live within The Baronet's Web, their lofty position allowing them the luxury of two mid-sized rooms. Those belonging to an organisation or guild find shelter in their headquarters. All buildings, from the Resounding Cathedrum to Forge-Fane Incalcos-6 maintain habitations for high-ranking adepts and visiting dignitaries. The greatest domiciles belong to Voll's noble houses. Inside, Imperial gothic sculptures and wooden furnishings distract from the close confines, while elegant oil paintings present idealised views of the hive beyond (glass is too susceptible to acid marring).

Vigilant household guards patrol the halls and corridors. Ostensibly, they maintain order within their Spire regions, but in truth, they are the worst instigators of violence, Rokarth's byzantine territorial mandates causing overlapping patrol routes.

Hab-sprawls are the most common domicile type in the Upper and Lower Hive. In these rockcrete honeycombs, entire families live in the same cramped space for generations. The Upper Hive habs boast their own cooking spaces and more-or-less constant power. But in the Lower Hive habs, multiple families occupy a single unit, living there in rotating shifts. This is considered a prudent use of space by hive adepts. With sparse available power, lumens and cooking spaces are kept in communal courtyards, and inhabitants form long lines to use resources even those in the Upper Hive take for granted. The queues are operated by gangs who enact brutal reprisals for anyone skipping their place or fail to pay their 'hab maintenance tithe'.

In the Bowels, cobbled-together habs cluster around support buttresses, making the most of their relative stability. However, sump-dwellers have learned there is little point in building to last. Their ever-shifting, ever-consuming world laughs at permanence, and some preach this to be the true nature of reality, that the stability of the hab-sprawl is an illusion. Even Rokarth's foundations move and adapt, and many fall prey to forces that see such instability as a concept to be worshipped.

All levels maintain hostels for travellers. These long, dim spaces range from providing a bit of floor to shelved sleeping units and fill quickly with trade caravan workers from Voll's other hives. The stench of body odour and excrement hangs heavy in the air, and a wise traveller learns to sleep with one eye open. Alternatively, visitors can rent a hab from a hab-lord. These gangers tear denizens from their homes and then profit by offering the space to visitors. The best one can expect in the poverty-ridden Bowels is its infamous hangers, long sheds with ropes strung across for sleepers to hang their arms over — however, only the genuinely desperate resort to this. Many vanish, their augmetics and organs torn out to be sold in Rokarth's black markets.

All Vollen homes share some distinct characteristics, the most notable being the atrium. Here, visitors can exchange their acid-resistant coats for indoor jackets, preventing caustic substances from being brought into the domicile. Atriums are, therefore, a status symbol. Upper and Lower hive habs make do with small entryways, little more than a floor strip with a cupboard containing threadbare interior jackets. In the Spire, the atrium doubles as both shrine and security. Altars take up the entirety of one wall, emphasising the host's piety and wealth, and one would have to look quite closely to see the Webbers and Needle-Casters hidden in their designs.



ROKARTH ENCHIRIDION



It is impossible to map a hive city accurately. Beyond their colossal size and complexity, they are constantly in flux. Ancient habs collapse and are rebuilt bigger and stranger, unchecked by the beleaguered Administratum. Massive manufacturums spring up to fulfil some obscure military need before being disassembled, repurposed, or expanded when demands change. A clerical error might erase a mile-wide hab block, or an entire level may collapse due to hive quakes. Misery, toil, and Tithe are the only constants.

While the billions who toil in manufacturums find meagre rest in dilapidated, ever shifting hab-sprawls at the fringes of the hive, some key buildings of the factions and powers of Rokarth stand as bastions of semi-permanence when all else seems only to ever change for the worse. These points of interest cluster around the centre of the hive, closest to the **Generatorium**, guaranteeing access to ample power and crucial transportation.

This guide lays out the most important places in Rokarth, split into four distinct sections:

- ☛ **The Spire**, the highest levels of Rokarth, extending up into the caustic clouds of Voll. Here, the Highborn elites, noble houses, and most powerful representatives of factions perform their crucial work.
- ☛ **The Upper Hive**, separated from the Lower Hive by the Precint Fortress Majoris, houses the better-off citizens of Rokarth — though the lives of most are still marked by substantial struggle and misery.
- ☛ **The Lower Hive**, the true bulk of Rokarth, housing billions of bonded labourers toiling to provide for the tithe and the key locations that make such work possible.
- ☛ **The Bowels**, where the true dregs of Rokarth abide. A mixture of industrial run-off, darkness, and suffering.

Each of these sections comprises multiple levels of the hive — the Lower Hive section alone might span 700 or more stacked city levels — and focuses around a **Maglev Nexus**, a conglomeration of relatively proximate important locations. Most of your adventures will not stray far from a Nexus, as the sprawl beyond is given over entirely to industry and habitation, often fallen victim to the fluctuations of time and disaster. Should your investigations reach these zones, the Encounter Tables in each section provides a selection of encounters befitting that level of the hive.

GENERATORIUM

Rokarth is built around a central Generatorium, a venerable, colossal machine that acts as the main power source for every level of the hive city. The Generatorium is beyond gargantuan, an industrial organ miles high. Its arcane technologies are constantly maintained, repaired, and rebuilt by the Adeptus Mechanicus, who revere it as much as any temple. Indeed, some Tech-Adepts whisper that the titanic machine predates the Imperium itself.

As the hive has grown over the centuries, so too has the Generatorium, supposedly based on an ancient Standard Template Construct. Something akin to a geothermal heat sink that provides trillions of terawatts that barely meet Rokarth's rapacious appetite. It is at the axis of each hive level, with the most important infrastructure built around it, including key manufactorums, faction headquarters, and transportation systems — such as the maglev trains and maglifts, earning its colloquial name: the Maglev Nexus.

MAGLEV NEXUS

If a single level of Rokarth were viewed from above, the Generatorium would be a glowing point of incalculable power at its centre, flanked by maglifts and maglev train stations. The train lines spread from this central point, sprawling like an erratic spider web, connecting this important industrial centre to the crumbling hab blocks. Colossal maglifts facilitate the transportation of people and goods between levels of the hive.

LATERAL TRANSPORTATION

Many citizens of Rokarth will spend their entire lives on a single level of the hive, lacking clearance to travel anywhere else. The vast majority simply walk where they need to go, but some form of public transportation connects most major facilities. Maglev trains are the most common, running between major hab-blocks and the manufactorums. As there is always a shift starting or ending somewhere, maglev trains are constantly arriving or departing from any given station. Away from the stations, servitor-hoisted palanquins bear the hive's most influential people about their business. Those with some means might pay a rickshaw, hauled by silent servitors or desperate workers. Private autocarriages and servohaulers are an even rarer sight.

VERTICAL TRANSPORTATION

Travel between hive levels is strictly controlled and almost entirely isolated to the central maglifts. These are guarded by Macharian Vigilites, who frequently stop lifts bearing upwards of a thousand people for inspection. Some lifts are open to the public, or at least for those with the correct paperwork. Other lifts are more specialised, transporting goods or influential people between specific levels. Of course, there are ways to move between levels that fall outside the Vigilites purview. These are almost always controlled by Infractionist gangs, who charge a substantial toll for their use. Many gangs make a show of waiving this fee for any who protest, knowing that most who wander into the Warrenways guideless end up entombed in the walls of Rokarth.

LATERAL TRANSPORTATION

TRAVEL SYSTEM	COST	DETAILS
Autocarriage	20	A simple automated carriage borne on wheels, or more rarely, scuttling mechanical legs.
Maglev Train (Public)	3	Great trains that carry millions of souls around Rokarth each day. They are packed and squalid, and some are home to permanent inhabitants.
Maglev Train (Private)	10	Smaller, faster, and usually cleaner, private maglev trains are often commissioned for favoured servants of the Adeptus Terra. The price listed is for a private carriage, though entire maglev trains can be secured by the upper echelons of Rokarthian society.
Opulent Palanquin	50	A great platform, often covered and sometimes armed, that protects the delicate sensibilities of the upper hive from the squalor of Rokarth's ordinary citizens. Seats up to 5.
Rickshaw	3	A simple device, usually wheeled, pulled by a servitor or citizen. Seats up to 3.
Servohauler	6	A mechanical transport engine, usually automated, featuring a claw for loading goods onto a back platform. Seats 2, but more room on the back. (Often the target of Infractionists.)

VERTICAL TRANSPORTATION

TRAVEL SYSTEM	COST	DETAILS
Warrenways	20	Infractionist controlled tunnels, shafts, and conduits found throughout the hive.
Maglift (Goods)	8	A great lift capable of moving thousands of tons of goods.
Maglift (Public)	14	Carefully controlled lifts, usually overcrowded and sweltering.
Maglift (Private)	30	Smaller lifts reserved for important citizens or those with sufficient solars to waste.

THE SPIRE

Amidst the corrosive gloom of Voll, nestled atop the monumental mass of Hive Rokarth, is the Spire. This imposing edifice towers above the acrid landscape, bathed in the umber sunlight that struggles to pierce the ubiquitous caustic clouds. While acidic rain is usually the result of bustling industry on many worlds, these caustic deluges are an entirely natural occurrence on Voll. Hardly an issue for much of the hive, where a glimpse of the sky is an unheard-of privilege, but those in the Spire enjoy infrequent views of Voll's landscape beyond Rokarth's monolithic bulk, when the caustic clouds clear. Some nobles consider 'taking the rain', as they call it, to be a bracing activity and the resulting reddening of their skin to signify vibrant good health.

The Spire is a place of welcome consistency to those lucky enough to live there. The power supply is near-constant, and both food and clean water are plentiful. What luxuries make their way to Rokarth can be found almost solely in the Spire. Seen from a distance, the Spire is a lighthouse piercing the sullen dark, its pulsating lights painting the acid rain in luminescent streaks of colour.

The Spire boasts many open spaces, a rare commodity in any hive, and an escape from the claustrophobic confines found elsewhere. These vast expanses are far from peaceful, however. The constant din of squabbling nobles fills the air, echoing off the crumbling luxury of the surrounding buildings. While these disagreements rarely spill into violence, it is not unheard of. The occasional lethal duel, unfortunate 'accident,' or outright and undisguised assassination all serve as reminders of the stakes of these perilous games of power and deceit. Nobles, traders, powerful adepts, and countless schemers huddle in opulent halls, arguing and dealing beneath gilt-trimmed domes, their disputes as corrosive as Voll itself.

In the Spire, survival is a ruthless business. Between lethal politics and acid rain, even the arguably best living conditions on Voll carry the sour tang of peril. If characters become disoriented or simply meander through the Spire for a period you can use the **Hive Spire Encounters** Table (page 24) to determine what they might witness.

SPIRE SCENERY

Compared to the industrial cacophony of Rokarth's lower levels, the Spire is quiet. There is still the murmur of conversations, the calls of sellers, and the shifting of countless feet, but there is no thrum of machinery, no shrieking vox hailer, and no wails of misery. Sound uncaged does not echo. What few manufactorums exist here have noise suppressors to protect the delicate sensibilities of its people.

Buildings in the Spire aspire to be exemplars of Imperial architecture, replete with gothic steeples and grand statuary, but none are immune to the ravages of time nor the decaying nature of Voll's caustic environment. Occasionally, an edifice will stand out in its faded ostentatious finery — doubtless the domicile of a noble house. Shining cathedrums rise from foundations housing discrete manufactorums, supported by buttresses and surmounted by overbuilt terraces, stretching upwards into lofty pinnacles, pushing ever inward to brace the towering central Spire. The devastating hive quakes of the levels below are the merest passing trembles here.

The buildings comprising the core Spire, other towers, and the supporting buttresses are constructed from fortified materials, such as plasteel, with plascrete or rockcrete forming the rest. All who dwell in the Spire make ostentatious attempts to hide the ubiquitous decay of their homes, furnishing their habs with faux-wood furniture and covering cracked walls with mouldering tapestries.

The Spire's wide upper streets and habitations are frequently exposed to the open sky, though many are covered with awnings woven from acid-resistant polymer strips. There is so much space here it can be disconcerting for any used to the continual press of bodies that dominates much of the Lower Hive.

The streets are free of debris and well-maintained.

Most citizens walk without fear, whereas the wealthy travel via guarded palanquins.

Without filtration plugs, the air of Voll stings the nostrils and smells of fresh loam spiked through with a sharp, chlorine tang that will eventually cause a wracking cough if breathed unfiltered for too long, resulting in cycles of custom Rebreather fashions amongst the elite.





SPIRE INHABITANTS

Depending on who one asks, the Spire is home to either the finest citizens of Rokarth or the scum that rises to the top of any pool of chemical filth. It is in the lofty halls of the Spire that the nobility of Rokarth make their home — the descendants of those that once forged prosperity from the mud of Voll, rulers obsessed with an unattainable opulence and a glorious past that never was, commanding bonded serfs they have never seen to labour ever harder in the Emperor's name. Depending on their tastes, nobles walk the Spire in near anonymity or trailed by a veritable parade of servants and hangers-on.

The most lauded members of the Macharian Vigilites are posted in the Spire, wearing gleaming uniforms, proudly displaying their rank alongside their advanced equipment. Their presence is dominant and threatening to outsiders — they keep the peace simply by ensuring none enter without an invitation.

The work of Precinct Fortress Majoris ensures this is a triviality. Their expertise and weaponry are sorely missed in the unstable levels below, but the highborn of the Spire must be protected in body and ego, even if this renders the Vigilites ornamental.

Gaudily dressed in their faded finery, most Highborn conduct their undemanding duties from compounds of relative extravagance, managing the outputs of their legions of bonded serfs and ancestrally owned manufacturums. From within rockrete mansions filled with the rotting relics of a grandiose past, they determine how hard propaganda is pushed, which workforce receives extra hours or increased castigation, and how harshly nutrient-slime is rationed. Denizens of the Spire are almost universally callous to the lives of those toiling beneath them, united in the belief that the Highborn serve the Emperor by imposing His will on their lessers.

HIVE SPIRE ENCOUNTERS

1d100	SCENERY AND EVENTS
01-07	You notice the colossal buttresses nearby conglomerate with some of the holdings of House Taj in a tangled mess of gothic architecture that terminates in a private landing pad. An Aquila Lander pierces the rancid smog clouds and lands. The disembarking delegation from the Imperial Navy make the sign of the Aquila to the attendant Highborn of House Taj.
08-14	A procession honouring the Macharian Crusade fills the broad street between some of the holdings of House Halvor-Mott and a cathedrum. A relic of Saint Macharius — a single, stained glove apparently worn once by the Lord Solar — is held aloft by an Adeptus Ministorum preacher.
15-21	A gargantuan plasma conduit fills half of the broad Spire path before you, sparking slightly as two Tech-Priests work in perfect synchronisation to perform a strange ritual.
22-28	A Macharian Vigilite drags what appears to be a screaming Highborn through an open street, surrounded on all sides by the faded grandeur of the habs of minor nobles. This scenario offers plenty of options for duplicity and adventure — what if the characters rescue this Highborn? Are they truly Highborn, or merely an impostor? Conversely, what if the Macharian Vigilite is a fraud? Perhaps they are a ganger attempting to abduct and ransom a noble scion?
29-35	You pass beneath the grim gaze of a gargantuan statue of a skull-faced Rokarthian warrior, clearly ancient and weathered despite signs of consistent attempts at repairs. A small crowd forms around the statue as several pious young Highborn from the major noble houses attempt the 'Spire Summit', an untethered climb to repair the statue that is considered a mark of honour. If the characters do not intervene, only three scions die — far fewer than the year prior.
36-42	You emerge from a corridor of towering spires into the open courtyard of a colossal cathedrum. Representatives of noble houses sit beneath acid-resistant parasols as a group of Adeptus Ministorum preachers lead a penitent ceremony. Their attendants are sent to accept castigation by the priests in their stead.
43-49	As you navigate a complex tangle of buttress-bridges, you come across a palanquin borne by a pair of struggling servitors that seem intent on carrying their charge to the holdings of House Parnam. If inspected, the palanquin has a single occupant — a rotting carcass in noble attire who seems to have been dead for days.
50-56	As you traverse a grand rockrete staircase around a spire, a group of apparently intoxicated nobles practically fall into you, appearing out of the smog. They shout that they will pay a fortune to anyone willing to guide them into the lowest depths of the hive, but initially they will not state why.
57-63	You emerge from a maze of vertical pathways into a minor courtyard. A nervous crowd surrounds two elderly scions of Houses Kalveo and Vylathi as they square off and hurl insults at one another, preparing to duel. As Gamemaster, you might decide the Highborn scions are from different noble houses, whatever best suits your game. They might even ask the characters to fight on their behalf, earning them Influence with one noble house and the ire of the other. You can use the Ganger stat-block on page 39 of <i>The Blazing Seraph</i> adventure book to represent the Highborn duellists if needed.
64-70	As the characters make their way through a seemingly abandoned habway connected to one of the Spire's titanic buttresses, they must all make a Routine (+20) Reflexes (Dodge) Test or suffer 1 Wound — labour-serfs sworn to House Castyx are in the process of demolishing this area to make way for a 1,000-foot tall statue of Saint Macharius. Shortly afterwards, you encounter a Tech-Priest and an Adeptus Ministorum Preacher arguing with a scion of House Castyx about the project.
71-77	As you navigate through a labyrinthine conurbation of gothic Spire-habs, you encounter an individual who stares at you with absent eyes. You notice they are wearing the robes of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica — an Astropath — and turn away from you to speak to a minor scion of House Kalveo.
78-84	You exit a twisting system of pathways suspended from buttresses to find yourselves in a partially open-air cathedrum of breathtaking size. You hear the crack of Lasgun fire as a ceremony of remembrance is held by the Adeptus Ministorum. Representatives of Houses Taj and Halvor-Mott are in attendance. During the ceremony, preachers add a drop of gathered rainwater to a 100-foot-wide fountain, representing the loss of a single life. This fountain is full to the brim, almost overflowing.
85-91	Your group exits a sequence of tunnels constructed by the overhanging gothic architecture of Highborn sanctums to come upon an open market with overwhelmingly well-armed security intermingling with the wealthy patrons. You notice a team of Adeptus Administratum inspectors examining every market stall and attendee to ensure they have the proper papers.
92-98	As you make your way across a buttress-bridge between two Spire towers, several squads of strangely dressed voidsmen push you aside. You see a woman wearing ostentatious wargear stride quickly through the path cleared by her entourage, hurrying alongside a servitor bearing a chained metal box.
99-00	Your group are lost in the smog, turned around in a labyrinth of faded grandeur and skyscraping spires. You blunder into a walled garden filled with corkscrewing acid-resistant mushrooms in an oil-spill rainbow of colours. Amongst these fungi is Lepis of the Upper Hand (page 62), who offers the characters a few diaphanous pieces of extremely sour fungi and an invite to gamble at his establishment in the Steeple District.

Though noble Highborn make up the majority of the Spire's populace, elite members of the major factions of the Imperium also make this centre of power their home. Their towering buildings and uniform robes loom large over the nobility, an ever-present reminder that though they hold sway here, they all ultimately serve the Emperor, and His institutions have power beyond their understanding. A great deal more purposeful work is accomplished in the Upper Hive, but power attracts power, and those who would bend the ear of the governor are all but compelled to maintain a presence here.

SPIRE NEXUS

The Spire Nexus is smaller than similar installations in the other levels of Rokarth. Horizontally limited and lacking a habsprawl, the majority of transport from the Spire's Maglev Nexus is to and from the Upper Hive, as those on the levels beneath Precinct Fortress Majoris have no business in these lofty heights, nor vice versa. Private transportation is common, replacing the need for maglev train lines, as any Highborn worthy of the Emperor's favour and a position in the Spire can afford such luxury. Whispers abound of noble houses hiding private elevators or other methods of vertical transportation to engage in secret activities away from the gaze of Spire-bound Vigilites.

The Spire Nexus serves another purpose, evident whenever visitors arrive. It showcases the wealth, power, and ultimate authority of the nobility of Rokarth over all those who are, figuratively and literally, beneath them. Great golden statues of Lord Solar Macharius, Rogue Trader Halion Castyx, the first Governor of Voll, the Emperor, and a dozen other important figures surround the Nexus. Each is taller than a building, and indeed, some are buildings themselves, the interiors housing the offices of a powerful noble family or of some branch of the Adeptus Terra. This image of a dozen looming golden giants is the first thing those few permitted to enter the Spire from below see, and many are cowed in fear and wonder by the sight — which is precisely the intended response.

Much of this facade is just that — a gilded lie built to hide the bones of the truth. Though the Spire is wealthy, the tithe is onerous, and more wealth flows from Voll than from almost any other world in the sector, a disproportionate amount drawn from the coffers of those noble houses who have fallen from grace with House Castyx. Even the great statues hide a secret — the alloy that makes up their gleaming skin was brought from off-world and quickly dulls in Voll's caustic atmosphere. A thousand specially designed servitors toil to polish them each night, then retreat to a claustrophobic nourishment chamber during the day to preserve the illusion of gilded perfection.

CASTYX PALACE

House Castyx is the Imperial House of Voll, the hereditary rulers responsible for ensuring the tithe is paid, and Hive Rokarth is the seat of Imperial power on the planet. Though still technically a part of the Castyx Rogue Trader Dynasty, the voidborne pioneers of the family rarely make contact with Rokarth. Lord Governor Jaspas Castyx rules Voll, but his older sister Yasmeen Castyx is the head of the Castyx Dynasty.

Their heavily fortified palace is wrapped within the folds of the Spire Nexus. Its interior is a maze, filled with wide antechambers, hidden rooms, secret passages, and once sumptuous halls now neglected and festering. Crumbling statues denoting Imperial virtues stand amidst faded paintings, in galleries filled with ornate mosaics and highly questionable artefacts that Castyx's detractors claim are of xenos origin.

Castyx Palace bustles with Administratum officials, Highborn dignitaries, Astra Militarum officers, bonded merchant guilders, Adepta Sororitas Hospitallers, and petitioners who seek the attention of House Castyx. Many wear decorative masks of various materials to disguise their identities, with the simplest wooden masks denoting the greatest wealth and power. The Castyx prefer to mix business with pleasure. Parties occur throughout the day, with attendees gathering beneath the so-called Great Arch to undertake more serious negotiations.

NO GOOD DEED

One of Lord Castyx's many children, Valeria, has gone missing, last seen at a dubious tavern called the Ornerly Grox in the Lower Hive. The group's Patron may ask them to look into the disappearance, either out of duty or to gain the Governor's favour. In the course of the investigations, several other scions of the Castyx line also petition the characters, some offering a bounty to find the wily Valeria, others to make sure she stays 'lost'. Rokarth's political scene is a whirlpool of roiling uncertainty and opaque power structures. Any investigations and choices the characters make are sure to have lasting consequences, particularly as other groups join the hunt. As GM, you may choose what happened to Valeria. She might be being ransomed by a gang or have been inducted into a vile cult as part of an ongoing plot, or perhaps she is simply enjoying the freedom of her wealth without the strictures of her position.

THE BRASS HIVE

Explorator Ravia Nethecaré originally joined the crew of Rogue Trader Halion Castyx because she wished for a life of scientific inquiry, free of the tight strictures of the Adeptus Mechanicus. While borderline heretical, Captain Halion found her investigations and insights valuable and never had any qualms about allowing her to pursue her research interests. The Nethecaré still emulate their founder, and their ongoing studies go far beyond their 'official' remit. To ensure their safety, they often allow the Mercator Lenimen to take credit for their various discoveries while ensuring that House Castyx knows where the solars are truly flowing from.

More importantly, they secretly engage in ongoing research for an Inquisitor of the Ordo Xenos, turning their minds to the many puzzles presented by xenos technology that flows through the Hive's Silent Trade, and, occasionally, xenos biology.

In Rokarth's Spire, the Nethecaré maintain the Brass Hive, their breathtaking palace modelled after the constructions of indigenous Voll insects. While the Nethecaré are pleased to display some of their work at the Brass Hive, they are generally wise enough to do their research elsewhere.

DISCRETE RECLAMATION

Infracionists have ransacked one of the Nethecaré's secret laboratories within Rokarth. Most of what they stole was of little worth, save the xenos artefacts and weapons being studied for an impatient Inquisitor. The Nethecaré request tact from the character's Patron, offering valuable favours for information on how their lab was discovered and the swift recovery of the deadly cache it held.

As Gamemaster, you are free to decide who infiltrated the lab and how, though the Cutters gang (page 7) or the Mireclaw (page 64) make for sensible antagonists. Whoever you choose as the perpetrator, you can represent these advanced weapons with an Unstable Plasma Gun (see *The Blazing Seraph*, page 42).

THE FIELD HOUSE

Voll's arms-dealing noble house was founded by Atellus Taj, Halion Castyx's Arch-Militant, a Master-of-Arms with few peers. Lord Alaric Taj, the present head of the house, holds his family as still bound by the oaths Atellus swore to the Castyx. For generations, the Taj have protected Voll from martial threats. They have a sterling reputation for rough honour and pragmatic judgement, forged in no small part from tragedy. It was Hive Vishavar, their fiefdom on Voll, that suffered the infamous Spire Fall of 862.M41 — a total collapse of one of their hive's main spires due to Voll's shifting unstable surface, which the Adeptus Mechanicus had not properly accounted for. The collapsed spire destroyed a quarter of Vishavar at the time and killed countless billions, forever changing the architecture of Voll's hives. Though none can say for certain, many believe the Spire Fall was what called up the particularly large strains of acynadi that afflict Vishavar, massive beasts that the nobles of House Taj fight in enormous, barely functional battlesuits of mysterious provenance that some claim are crudely similar to Adepta Sororitas Paragon Warsuits.

House Taj's citadel within Rokarth is formed from one of the foundational Great-Spire buttresses of the Spire Nexus. In typically understated Taj humour, it is referred to as the Field House, despite it being a formidable fortress. Astra Militarum officers and representatives of House Halvor-Mott are invariably present at the Field House. More impressive by far are the Imperial Knights of House Vandensarg, which occasionally visit the Taj due to a several centuries-old alliance of honour.

UNDER HOUNDS

An armoured autocarriage transporting a special delivery for House Taj from House Halvor-Mott has crashed, releasing the shipment, a particularly skilled Chrono-Gladiator called the Scar Viper, into the Lower Hive. The group's Patron believes the Scar Viper has allied itself with a gang, as there is thus far no evidence of an aimless murderous rampage. There is a real opportunity here for currying favour with House Taj, gaining an unusual asset, or suffering a particularly brutal demise.

THE VYLATHI ESTATE

Cimbria Vylathi was Halion Castyx's prized seneschal; a collector of secrets and wielder of covert influence for her captain, a position the Vylathi have supposedly never relinquished, despite the House's public face as tailored livestock breeders closely linked to the Guilds of Rokarth. Many Highborn travel with venomous flesh-crafted serpents, ranging in appearance from scintillating scaled accessories to sinewy protectors the size of a rickshaw.

The Vylathi's palace within the Spire of Hive Rokarth is a relatively simple manse, with many attributing its utilitarian sparseness to the fact that they already infested each rival house with their spies. The rumours about the Vylathi are countless, but the only one both true and utterly deadly to know is that Cimbria Vylathi was a scion of the Venenum Temple of the Officio Assassinorum, and the Castyx are not the only masters the Vylathi serve.

The Vylathi have made discretion into an art form and are famously as inscrutable as their pets in public social dealings. Many suspect the Vylathi must have an expansive array of spies and informants as they are never caught unaware, and the numerous shadowed passages into and out of House Vylathi are busy at all hours. Certainly, Lord Omrose Vylathi seems to know of the plans and schemes of most other factions before they are even fully formed.

MUCK-FAKING

A popular Adeptus Ministorum Preacher, Karpath Valis, has been preaching against eating the 'unnatural' creatures the Vylathi breed. It is an open secret that House Castyx allow such preachers to voice such opinions as a favour to the Adeptus Ministorum, but many are wondering why Karpath Valis isn't addressing the rumours about the noble house's involvement with the Vylathi Knives. Magdala Vylathi, a minor scion of the noble house, discreetly asks the group's Patron to remove the preacher without using violence — exposing a believable scandal, real or manufactured, should be enough.

FORGE-FANE INCALCOS-6

Though the Highborn of Rokarth attempt to keep their pollutive industries to the lower levels of the hive, the priesthood of Mars can no more be commanded to refrain from their technological machinations than a preacher of the Adeptus Ministorum can from worshipping the Emperor. Forge-Fane Incalcos-6 is a towering testament to the craft of the Cult Mechanicus and a colossal monument to the Omnissiah.

Its exterior is a grand edifice of adamantine and gold, studded with ancient sigils and invocations to the Omnissiah. Though its apparent opulence is in harmony with the rest of the Spire, it is no ostentatious showpiece — the Forge-Fane is enrobed with gilded pipes of myriad purposes, transmitting sacred lubricants to vital areas and expelling steam and pollutants from the sacred interior.

Internally, the Sanctum Mechanicum is a vast, seething crucible of industry. Amid the clatter of cogitators, the whirring of servos, and the grinding of gears, the highest-ranking Tech-Priests in Rokarth pursue their agendas and interests. A river of molten metal courses through the Forge-Fane, pumped through its great furnaces in a ceaseless cycle. It is said that this river, the Fluvia Ferrus, consists entirely of ore brought at incredible expense from holy Mars. The river is never allowed to cool, and only on rare occasions is a fraction of its flow siphoned off to be cast into blessed ingots used only in building truly ambitious devices.

A BRIGHTER FLAME

Magos Illuminar of the Sixth Vector specialises in cogitators in all forms, from the smallest implanted devices to the cathedrum-sized arrays that tabulate the resource allocations of entire hive levels. His greatest achievement is the Calculus Gloria, an expansive installation taking up a whole wing of the Forge-Fane. The Machine Spirit of the Calculus awoke precisely one standard year ago and at first performed admirably, making useful predictions about resource needs and population trends. Of late, it has become far more specific, accurately predicting the deaths of three high-ranking Tech-Priests. His colleagues wish to destroy the Calculus, claiming it is showing signs of being an Abominable Intelligence, but Illuminar suspects this is nothing more than jealousy and requires assistance to prove it.

THE CRYSTALLINE REFLECTORY

A beacon of light amongst the smog-ridden, timeworn grandeur of the Spire, the Reflectory is designed to channel the Immaterium itself. It uses forgotten geometries and psychically active crystalline lattices built throughout the walls — enabling greater Astropathic precision when receiving and sending psychic messages from the wider Macharian Sector.

The choirs of the upper levels are aided by interpreters below, their meditation chambers adorned with mirrors made from the same crystalline material. The mirrors are said to aid the Astropaths in glimpsing deeper meanings, but others see twisted reflections and the Immaterium's maddening truths.

The lowest levels are labyrinthine, a constant test of maze-like corridors and alluring mirrors. Those who master those dangers ascend amongst the ranks of the Crystalline Reflectory. Those who fail join the many Astropaths that 'burn out' in their excruciating service, ossified in the lower halls of the Reflectory until their lifeless husks are deemed worthy of revivification as servo-skulls.

MALIGN INTERFERENCE

A cadre of Astropaths, assailed daily by cryptic messages from the past, present, and future, have all begun to repeat the same obscure words — Malat Vers — at random intervals. The phrase has defied interpretation and could be anything: a warning, a name, or something else entirely. This has begun to disrupt their function, but none can explain it. Some records suggest the phenomenon has occurred for years but has only recently increased in frequency. The attention of the character's Patron is piqued when a 'prophet' bearing the name Malat Vers appears in the Lower Hive.



THE STEEPLE DISTRICT

The home of minor nobles, disgraced members of ancient families, wealthy traders, and several self-proclaimed dignitaries whose identities cannot be verified. The Houses of Halvor-Mott and Kalveo have large estates in the Steeple District from which they conduct business, though other houses often complain of their lack of discretion. Though among the least reputable locations in the Spire, this conurbation of interlinked habs is seen as having far more distinction than anywhere in the Upper Hive, leading to much cajoling and bribery between all manner of powerful individuals wishing to make it their home.

The streets are clean and orderly, with polished rockcrete cobbles and attractive lumen-orbs. The fashion is for stone gardens with gilded statuettes and windows painted to resemble those of the cathedrums. Private guards patrol outside their employers' homes, but the Steeple District remains an easier target for skulduggery than the high-security homes of great noble houses. Despite appearances, crime is rife, and many residents fall victim to unfortunate accidents such as choking at dinner or falling from high windows.

THE FALLEN NOBLE

The body of a well-dressed man was found in the street outside Lord Pladeau's villa, having suffered a fatal fall while trying to gain entry. No one, including Lord Pladeau, can identify the body. This was deemed a simple matter of a break-in gone wrong. However, Lord Pladeau cannot shake the feeling that he knows the thief, offering to reward anyone who identifies the man.

This proves to be a challenge — potential leads vanish, records show signs of adjustment, and even pict of the body come out poorly. Eventually, a microscopic tag on one augmetic identifies the body as one Lycon Pladeau, a cousin of Lord Pladeau. He genuinely has no memory of his cousin, but a search of the manor finds other clues that tie the two together, including a small note proposing a trip to a club known as The Upper Hand (page 62) a week earlier — one which Lord Pladeau recalls attending alone.

It is up to the characters if they believe Pladeau, but he is being truthful. At the club, Lycon lost a bet on which he wagered 'his name and reputation,' and the price was extracted literally...

THE RESOUNDING CATHEDRUM

This cathedrum is formed from an elegant buttress, its soaring arches ending in a statue of the Emperor flanked by his angels with bolters. At his feet, the grateful masses pass up ammunition to their saviours. No acid mars this visage, and the Ministorum claims it is because the Emperor personally watches over this cathedrum. Here lies the seat of Voll's cardinal, the only cathedrum in Rokarth where sounds of industry do not drown out hymns offered up to the Emperor.

Once in their lives, hivers are given dispensation to see the Resounding Cathedrum, though none are allowed inside. The Adeptus Ministorum insists upon this. The awe inspired by the facade does more than a thousand sermons to inspire reverence and provides an opportunity to monitor the populace.

However, the cathedrum serves another purpose, hiding a warren of private chapels above the grand nave. Here, Adeptus Ministorum officials meet with representatives from the houses, guilds, and even high-ranking Vigilites, listening to their prayers and negotiating cathedrum services.

'LORD' PLADEAU

At a glance, Pladeau's robes are an imposing mix of ostentatious and reverent, seemingly a collection of grim tapestries depicting petrifying past disasters, sewn together in a facsimile of last centuries' highest fashion. His villa appears nothing less than a rockrete jungle of statuary, with grotesque gargoyles frozen in the anguished moments they are slain by grim warriors. Outwardly, all appearances point to a severe individual with a deep reverence for the God-Emperor's warriors and a violent past working in His name.

PIOUS PROCUREMENTS

A Drukhari artefact has appeared in Rokarth's Silent Trade, triggering a bidding frenzy. The group's Patron has caught wind of this and wants the characters to investigate. The illicit merchant group known as the Trackless Chain has been paying pilgrims to the Resounding Cathedrum to smuggle artefacts to buyers — the characters will need to uncover this information and find the Infractionist pilgrim, then either recover the artefact or track it back to its heretical dealer, who may be Craverus Kides (page 47).

Closer inspection reveals that Pladeau's robe is threadbare and fraying, the rockrete of his manor crumbling to dust, and his attitude always peculiarly blithe. The elites of Rokarth's Highborn suspect he is no noble at all, as his tales about his past never match and often contradict, to say nothing of the rumours surrounding him. Was he kidnapped from a noble house at a young age, his parents unable to pay the ransom? Perhaps he is an illegitimate Highborn heir, given hush money to lose himself in worship? Is he simply escaping his responsibilities, or is he a retired infractionist subsisting on ill-gotten gains? Does Cassiopa Vylathi visit him frequently for his company or for information? Did Reginaldo Kalveo lend him solars, or was it the other way around? Some suspect Pladeau spreads these rumours himself, but whatever the case, he has contacts everywhere in Rokarth, from within great noble houses to gangs in the Bowels.

The younger generations of every noble house in Rokarth know that Pladeau is privately gregarious, holding lavish-seeming affairs serving Ghol (page 18) in cracked glasses and hosting strange performances that sound like nothing more than energetically pious worship sessions from beyond the boundaries of his strange abode.



UNDESIRABLE CONNECTIONS

Pladeau has a new secret he doesn't want anyone to know about — a neighbour is blackmailing him, the former Rogue Trader Larina Ferand. She has connections to someone in the Bowels who claims to know Pladeau's past. True or not, he wants them silenced. If the characters can assist Pladeau, one of the best-informed gossips in the Steeple District will owe them a future favour.

As the Gamemaster, the identity of the information broker is up to you. Fidget, the cunning hab-rat (page 57) would make an excellent choice.



UPPER HIVE

To many of the millions of Adepts that call it home, the Upper Hive is the mind of Rokarth. To them, the rest of the Hive is little more than a mass of straining muscles awaiting the word to execute their enlightened will. That the rest of the Hive functions through the labour of more than a billion souls, each striving to earn a bowl of nutrient paste and a moment's respite from endless duties, is viewed as a minor detail — if it is considered at all.

Esteemed agents of Voll's ruling class, the adepts and leaders of the Adeptus Terra, all scurry through the halls of the Upper Hive. Some undertake crucial duties here, balancing the demands of the nobility above and the Adeptus Terra beyond, translating these orders into necessary tasks, and commanding the unwashed masses to achieve these goals. Others have personal agendas, some noble, most self-serving, and arrogantly manipulate the sacred bureaucracy for their own ends.

A truly staggering amount of solars change hands in the Upper Hive. Life is cheap on any hive world, but most other things are ruinously expensive. Aside from Rogue Traders of the ruling Dynasty, or those favoured by them, most merchants who come to Rokarth must travel to the Upper Hive to secure the correct paperwork in order to be paid for their cargo and secure new contracts. Most factions of the Adeptus Terra and other major Imperial factions have some holdings on this level of the hive, and the presence of such powerful individuals is also a lure for wealth.

Though the Upper Hive may be a good deal safer than the levels below, it is no less strange, nor is it without its perils. If characters become disoriented or simply meander through the Spire for a period you can use the **Upper Hive Encounters** Table (page 32) to determine what they might occur.

UPPER HIVE SCENERY

The streets of the Upper Hive resound with the thrum of machinery, the clatter of tools, and conversations pitched to carry over the cacophony. Voices lifted in prayer, sometimes live, sometimes pre-recorded and emerging from unseen vox hailer, are commonplace.

Only the outermost layer of the Upper Hive is directly exposed to the sky, but the caustic rain still manages to wash down onto the covered streets. There is a great deal of ostensibly uplifting statuary in the Upper Hive dedicated to heroes of the Imperium. Still, most of their features are barely discernible within a year of unveiling, dissolved by the vicious downpour. The buildings here are rockcrete, though the outer roofing materials are usually plascrete sheeting to withstand the continuous caustic damage. Every bit of exposed rockcrete is routinely coated in thickly sprayed acid-resistant unguents. Those that aren't are pitted and corroded until their inevitable collapse.

The inner streets of the Upper Hive teem with citizens travelling to and from work in endless shifts, many walking, others riding swift maglev trams. The streets smell of acrid wet algae, spiced roasting tardigrade, oil, smoky incense, and most frequently, the harsh stench of cleaning acids. The lights flicker occasionally, but the power is mostly stable here.

The massive Void Buttrass, Voll's voidport, is considered a part of the Upper Hive, though entirely separate from Rokarth's central bulk. Its profile resembles an Imperial Aquila, very much by design. An endless stream of ships, ranging from minuscule landers to great Apocalypse-class battleships, come and go constantly.

The common dwellings are simple, with little ornamentation, though far richer homes are clustered in various areas behind secured entries, both subtle and overt. Sturdy manufacturums are common, as are medicae facilities marked with the red slash of the Sisters Hospitaller of the Order of Serenity.

UPPER HIVE INHABITANTS

The Upper Hive hosts a diverse array of people, all united in only one respect — they belong here. The dour Macharian Vigilites, whose hive-spanning Precinct Fortress Majoris securely partitions the Upper Hive from the Lower, allowing little traffic to pass between the two. As a result, the Upper Hive is generally less crowded than the rest of Rokarth. This is particularly true in the Spires that tower above the Upper Hive, populated only by the noble families, their servants, or those who have legitimate business with them. When these powerful individuals or their representatives venture out from the Spires and into the Upper Hive they are readily recognised by their opulent, flamboyant garb — not to mention the grim, watchful security detachments that are never far away.

Tech-Priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus and their assistants scurry in and out of the compounds beneath their stronghold, Forge Fane Incalcos-6, constantly performing the sacred work of the Omnissiah. Scowling functionaries of the Adeptus Administratum bustle past from one bureaucratic entanglement to the next. Deacons of the Adeptus Ministorum cast their fiery gaze around them as they stride about on presumably righteous tasks. One may even be blessed with seeing a menacing Sister of Battle near the Cathedrum of Saint Crassus, righteous servants of the Emperor, both inspiring and terrifying. Meanwhile, myriad lesser functionaries, couriers, messengers, and agents of countless offices and departments thread their way amongst them.

It is to the Upper Hive's portion of the Void Buttrass that important delegations to Rokarth will arrive. It may be possible to encounter nearly anyone here, from well-connected merchants or even, in extremely rare cases, Rogue Traders or Inquisitors, either on business or simply passing through.

THE VOID BUTTRASS

Voll's primary planetside voidport is almost as tall as Hive Rokarth. Voidcraft buzz constantly around the monolithic tower and its many docks, but the feverish movement of these colossal ships is a microcosm of the riotous activity within the Void Buttrass. Almost every import and export of the entire planet passes through there, under the watchful eyes of the Imperial Navy.

The Void Buttrass is one of the few facilities that connects to every level of Hive Rokarth to facilitate more effective movement of goods and people. Huge voidways span the vast distances between the buttrass and the Hive proper, each eternally filled with the choking fumes of promethium burning servo-haulers and the rank odour of tightly packed recruits being sent off-world to fulfil Voll's tithe to the Astra Militarum.

UPPER HIVE NEXUS

Built close to the Upper Hive Nexus is Habsprawl XI, a marginally cleaner, brighter and less crowded Habsprawl than those in the Lower Hive below. Here, the many millions of functionaries, bureaucrats, agents, and others comprising the bulk of the Upper Hive's workforce live.

Closer to the Nexus are those facilities which draw the most power from the Generatorium and those most commonly requiring quick access to the maglift system that will take them between levels. The Administratum, in particular, constantly moves people, documents, and sometimes entire archives between levels and has several maglifts allocated for their exclusive use. Likewise, several maglifts are reserved solely for the discreet and secure use of those who are worthy.

Access to the Nexus is, therefore, strictly regulated. Public maglift use requires passing through several layers of security. Access to restricted maglift systems to the above levels is even more exclusive, with the Upper Spires being the most restricted. There are also sets of ladders and stairs for emergency use, but these are carefully monitored and traversing them requires many hours of arduous climbing.

However, access to the lower portions of Rokarth, the Lower Hive, and the Bowels is more available. The Hive authorities care little if people wish to enter those damp, often dangerous places. Countless urban legends speak of minor bureaucrats who travel into the Lower Hive on some business and leave their credentials behind, causing them to become trapped with no way to return.

UPPER HIVE ENCOUNTERS

Id100	DESCRIPTION
01-07	The harsh sound of industrial grinding assails your ears as your path takes you alongside the titanic bulk of an Augmetics Manufactorum. A procession of Adeptus Mechanicus adepts and their servitor guards blocks your path as they carry the fruits of their pious labours — a collection of augmetic limbs arrayed neatly on a palanquin — to another facility.
08-14	You traverse a maze of habways choked with steam venting from nearby manufactorums, emerging into a small courtyard beneath a towering structural buttress. A winding queue fills the courtyard, waiting for aid from the Officio Medicae sanctum built into the buttress itself. Both the Administratum scribes keeping records and the ordinates giving medicae aid are clearly overworked, leaving critical information and supplies unattended.
15-21	Your group passes beneath a tangle of intersecting causeways between thrumming manufactorums, coming upon a plaza interspersed with tall statues and shrines to Macharian Saints. Adepts of Imperial factions mingle, purchasing various religious icons and making pious observances, as a scarred Adeptus Ministorum Preacher screams a sermon to be heard above the industrial noise and the clamour of the crowd.
22-28	Your travels through habway backstreets entangled with colossal pipes are slowed by a well-armed, cautiously proceeding caravan of Mercator Lenimen guilders. The guilders demand that everyone keep their distance from their cargo, wary of ambush as they deliver chemicals to an Adeptus Mechanicus Unguentarium.
29-35	As you pass between the colossal feet of a statue of a saint towering at least a mile high, you hear an argument; a Highborn scion is demanding a tithe of meat from a Mercator Carnem caravan apparently passing through the noble's territory. If anyone in the argument notices the characters, they will call them over and ask them to settle the debate, potentially representing one side in a duel.
36-42	Your group exits a miles-long fume-choked passageway into a sanctioned gathering place, a plaza in the loose shape of a gargantuan Aquila emblazoned on the plasteel floor. Though several reasonably well-made market stalls frame the plaza, most milling adepts have their eyes on a raised platform bearing the crest of the Mercator Dilaquo, bidding on containers of water purified to varying degrees.
43-49	As you navigate a juggle of gantries hanging a mile above the cathedrums on the ground level far below, you pass by a raised plaza outside of a Plasteel Manufactorum. You hear the sharp crack of a Laspistol as a pragmatic Departamento Munitorum inspector conducts an unorthodox test of the manufactorum's output.
50-56	The screeching of maglev trains assail your ears as you pass through an industrial district of the Upper Hive. Your path is blocked by a caravan of Imperial Fleet stevadores hauling gargantuan carts laden with goods, brought to a standstill by an Administratum inspection.
57-63	You find yourselves lost whilst navigating the titanic labyrinth of a habsprawl that spans multiple levels of the Upper Hive. Though the majority of the Upper Hive is relatively crime-free, this won't protect the characters from the ire of the Macharian Vigilites. A large squad of Macharian Vigilites accosts them, believing they travelled to the Upper Hive illegally, and attempt to escort them to Fortress Precinct Majoris for 'processing'.
64-70	Your path takes you through the guts of an enormous thrumming machine, easily taller than a cathedrum, that serves a seemingly indiscernible purpose. Two Tech-Priests examine it, employing arcane devices that by happenstance cause disruption to any technology of your own. Anything you carry that's more complicated than a Dataslate is rendered inoperable for one day unless you succeed on a Hard (–20) Tech Test.
71-77	Your travels take you through a district dominated by a colossal cathedrum whose spires pierce this level of the hive. As you pass beneath its ceiling-scraping arches and incense-choked open cloisters, you cross paths with a group of nervous priests gawking at a squad of Battle Sisters of the Order of Searing Purity. The well-armed Adepta Sororitas petition any who pass by them to join their righteous witch hunt in the Bowels.
78-84	Your group ascend seemingly endless ancient rockrete stairs through a supporting buttress on your way to your destination, but are stopped at a plaza where multiple spiraling staircases meet. The Administratum are holding a census at this intersection, gathering data on the thousands of varied people passing through at a glacial pace, while Macharian Vigilites intimidate anyone attempting to leave without being accounted for.
85-91	As you travel down a broad thoroughfare between two multi-mile long cathedrums, your group is enveloped by a procession of thousands of adepts holding a candlelit vigil, aiming to walk the entire breadth of Rokarth in honourable remembrance of the Macharian Crusade.
92-98	The group meanders deep through a mazelike district filled with Administratum Sanctums. A stressed scrivener petitions the group, asking them to investigate a location of your choice in the Bowels to take a population census and investigate any structural instabilities.
99-00	Choose one of the player characters. As the group traverse the tangled gantries of a bustling habway, you meet eyes with your doppelganger. Their eyes widen, and they throw a Smoke Grenade on the ground before sprinting away, firing an Autopistol into the crowd to clear a path. The group will have to deal with the aftermath of this confusion, and the character may have to prove it wasn't them that caused this commotion.



DATA THEFT

The Administratum is in a state of panic. An entire data tower has been stolen from the Censorium. The tower's contents are mostly unknown but rumoured to contain structural and architectural records of the Upper Hive and spires above. The group's Patron tasks the party with recovering this information to keep it from falling into the wrong hands or to ensure it falls into their own.

Various organisations and individuals may vie for control of the information, and the characters receive offers to hand over the information for various suspect rewards. As the Gamemaster, the exact nature of the information and why the group's Patron wants it are both up to you, though Rokarth is rife with potential secrets. 'Lord' Pladeau's true identity (page 29), House Kalveo's history of mutation (page 10), or the potential links between House Vylathi and the Vylathi Knives (page 8).

ADMINISTRATUM CENSORIUM

Entombed within thick rockcrete walls, the Administratum Censorium sits like a sarcophagus in the Upper Hive. A golden aquila perches above plascrete porticos emblazoned with the Low Gothic words *'Knowledge is Power. Power serves the Emperor'*. Within tomb-like, vaulted chambers lie the data towers of the Censorium, vast data spools and cogitator arrays that store vital Adeptus Administratum data for Rokarth and the entire planet, including vital information for the tithe. The air within hums, thick with the stench of incense, unguents, and hot metal.

The sheer number of data towers demands an elaborate series of vents and flues, drawing heat out through the roof of the Censorium. It creates an unbearable, humid haze, but any complaint about the atmosphere has already been lodged, stored, and forgotten within the Censorium itself, lost amongst the data towers.

APARTHOTEL ROKARTH MEDICAE FACILITY

Built with funds from House Castyx, this hostel-hab is for visitors who don't qualify for guest accommodation in the Spires, with guests lodging in cell-like rooms where they can sleep in relative safety. However, around the time of the Great Rift, a plague known as 'the Shivers' struck Rokarth, and this facility was commandeered as a temporary hospital. Though the plague burnt out years ago, residents continue to come to be treated for respiratory complaints, acid burns, and other common ailments.

While the Administratum is nominally in charge and runs the building with the blessing of House Castyx, several Sisters Hospitaller of the Order of Searing Purity have been treating patients here for years and consider this their domain. As a result, guest rooms are often commandeered for patients, even when occupied.

BASILICA ADMINISTRATUM

The headquarters of the Adeptus Administratum on Rokarth is a sprawling conglomerate of dusty offices, sprawling department blocks, endless meeting halls, courts, and scriptoriums. The Basilica was once impressive and forbidding, with a raised entrance and thick columns carved with edicts and rules for visitors to follow once they passed through. However, the original architect underestimated the sheer amount of files and resources the Administratum would need. Blocks and buildings have been added over the years wherever space could be cleared, and the Basilica has grown asymmetrically and haphazardly. The ravages of time have rendered the building plans unreliable, and the exact number of offices is unknown. There are plentiful tales of citizens entering the Basilica and never finding their way out again.

CATHEDRUM OF ENDURING PURPOSE

While the Resounding Cathedrum in the Spire is the seat of power for the Adeptus Ministorum in Rokarth, the Cathedrum of Enduring Purpose forms their administrative hub, linked to the Sanctum Imperialis. In its halls, worshippers turn House Parnam's fabrics into robes, and Sisters of Battle assemble for crusades to quell impious violence in the lower reaches of Rokarth and worlds beyond Voll. In its lower levels the reverberating sound of bellowed sermons gives way to the scratching of quills, thousands of Ministorum scribes work in isolated cells, recording cathedrum production quotas and more sensitive data unsuitable for the Administratum. Few can leave — this service is a purgatory saved for adepts who fall from favour.

CROSS-PURPOSES

Ordinate Matrende of the Officio Medicae has been sent to replace the Sisters Hospitaller with a small group of Administratum staff. Sister Celestia, the senior member of the Adeptus Sororitas here, refuses to leave. Matrende does not wish to use force against such a pious member of Rokarthian society but is privately willing to offer free medicae aid — and information on patients — to any group that can remove the Sister in a way that can't be linked back to her.

THE LOST SCRIBE

Scrivener Bartholemew Eizen has made a disturbing discovery; a Scribe named Karollon Maxelott has granted a multitude of trading licences to Rokarthian merchants, but they don't exist on any other records. Eizen is terrified of the potential punishments if he reports this inconsistency to his superiors without solving the issue and is now looking for a group of subtle individuals to find out who this 'Maxelott' is. Eizen could reward such clandestine problem solvers with all manner of Administratum data and access codes. Unfortunately, the most likely source of such information is the missing data tower from the Administratum Censorium (page 33).

FOLLOW THE THREAD

Haridus Parnam has contacted the group's Patron to ask a favour that could further the Emperor's will. Haridus believes that his distant relative, the reclusive Folsdatt Parnam-Kalveo, is a mutant and intends to gift him a robe from the Cathedrum of the Enduring Purpose. Haridus wants the group to deliver the robe, so that they might enter his hab and investigate the claims of mutation. In truth, Haridus only wants a traceless delivery of the robe — its lining is coated with poisoned chemicals, and by removing Folsdatt, Haridus will stand to inherit a tidy sum.

VIGILANCE EXTREMIS

Any discovered route through the Precinct Fortress Majoris would be an incredible boon to any Infractionist gang and a shameful blow to the Macharian Vigilites. Hidden maintenance tunnels, burrowed warrenways, or simple bribery of corrupt Vigilites could all compromise the security between the Lower and Upper hive. House Castyx and every gang in Rokarth would pay highly for information on such routes, either to block or utilise them.

A TROUBLED VOICE

Clerk Su Jeman, injured while defending her home during a break-in, has made it her mission to expose corruption in the habspawl. She is trying to convince people that the gangs work for House Castyx, her reasoning being that those targeted are never connected to the noble house. An anonymous individual promises the group 2,000 solars each and a favour of their choosing if they can persuade Jeman to speak a different truth, undermine her so that she is no longer credible, or find proof of the gangs' true motives.

MACHARIAN TOMES

An Adeptus Ministorum priest, Naveen Kohlstedt, is missing after recently discovering ancient tomes related to the deeds of Lord Solar Macharius. The characters are tasked to investigate, to either locate the missing priest or recover the valuable data, but find Kohlstedt murdered and the tomes missing. Further investigation reveals Kohlstedt found that the tomes had been redacted, and suggested an alternate history of the Macharian Crusade and subsequent heresy that praised General Cyrus. Kohlstedt's hab is in disarray, marred by marks made by cloven hooves and prints from nine-fingered hands, potential signs of mutant involvement.

PRECINCT FORTRESS MAJORIS

Precinct Fortress Majoris is no mere structure and instead dominates an entire hive level, a clean slice of order through the chaos, separating the Upper Hive from the dregs of the Lower Hive. No person, item, or vehicle passes but under the keen eyes of the Macharian Vigilites — or so they claim.

The vast area of the Precinct Fortress, colloquially known as 'the carapace rampant' by Rokarth locals, is a labyrinth of dark rockcrete, with checkpoints operated by Vigilites in gleaming black armour, long passages watched by multi-laser gun pods, and various kill zones and chokepoints waiting for any force foolish enough to test the Vigilites.

HABSPRAWL XI

The largest hab-block near the Upper Spire Nexus, Habsprawl XI is home to millions of adepts and specialists. House Castyx owns this expansive conurbation, allowing prominent and productive members of Imperial institutions to subsist here for minor contributions to the Castyx coffers. This ensures the elite are always on hand to aid in Rokarth's most vital endeavours, ostensibly easing any tensions between the Planetary Governor and the Emperor's mighty realm-spanning organisations. In truth, this is yet another play in the grand game of power — though those who live in Habsprawl XI may be loyal first and foremost to the Administratum, Ministorum, or another dominant institution, House Castyx knows where they live.

This habspawl is arranged like Rokarth in miniature, with the most lauded individuals at its peak and more ambitious newcomers at its base. Of the habspawl's 110 levels, the lowest 13 have been infiltrated by masked Infractionists who run protection rackets and occasionally force tenants out through intimidation. Why the Macharian Vigilites do not respond to this issue is an open question — some suspect they are inundated by more imminent threats on the lower levels of the hive, while others whisper that these gangers are in the employ of House Castyx.

SANCTUM IMPERIALIS & LIBRARIUM

A conjunction of bridges form cardinal routes into the Sanctum Imperialis in Rokarth, the bureaucratic hub of the Adeptus Ministorum. Flocks of cherubs float through the thoroughfares, trailing votive prayers and chattering liturgies. They alight atop flying buttresses of brass, supports that reach up like skeletal fingers to hold aloft the grand Sanctum. Home to the holy administration of the Adeptus Ministorum, the offices are adorned with frescoes. In contrast, the Librarium is dimly lit and sombre, towering shelves of dark wood bowing under the weight of Scriptorium tomes.

TRAJAAN UMBRA

Trajaan Umbra is a spider at the centre of a web of trade. They are publically known as a merchant of middling regard, believed to be at least partially sworn to the Mercator Lenimen (page 12), but rumours of their true loyalties abound, as they are known to meet representatives of the Administratum, the Adeptus Mechanicus, Noble Houses Castyx and Nethecaré, and several suspected Infractionists.

Umbra understands that the acids of Voll are its caustic lifeblood. It was through their trade deals between the Adeptus Mechanicus, House Nethecaré, and the Mercator Lenimen that Webber production was drastically increased. This ensured fewer deaths amongst the gangs of Rokarth, whom Umbra secretly trades with on behalf of House Castyx, managing a delicate détente that furnishes the infractionists with illicit chems provided they do not interrupt vital trade and tithe production. Though a dangerous game, Umbra manages the infractionists by playing each gang against each other, ensuring that all that is ever found of those that attempt to cross blades with the trader are any augmetics that won't melt in a vat of acid.

A CITIZEN OF MEANS

Umbra knows that they walk a knife edge and are keen to find any means of escaping their reputation on Rokarth to a more comfortable life, preferably with their fortune largely intact. They believe that by tracking down the locations of all the secret House Nethecaré labs and selling this information, they can secure travel off-world and are looking for a crew to aid them.

Additionally, Trajaan is outraged by reports of a new illicit chemical known as Gratis and is willing to exchange information, favours, or large sums of solars to anyone who can either find or destroy its source. Meeting Trajaan can be a great instigator for the adventure *Chemical Burn*, available at cubicle7games.com, or present a rival investigator within the adventure.

SISTER CELESTIA

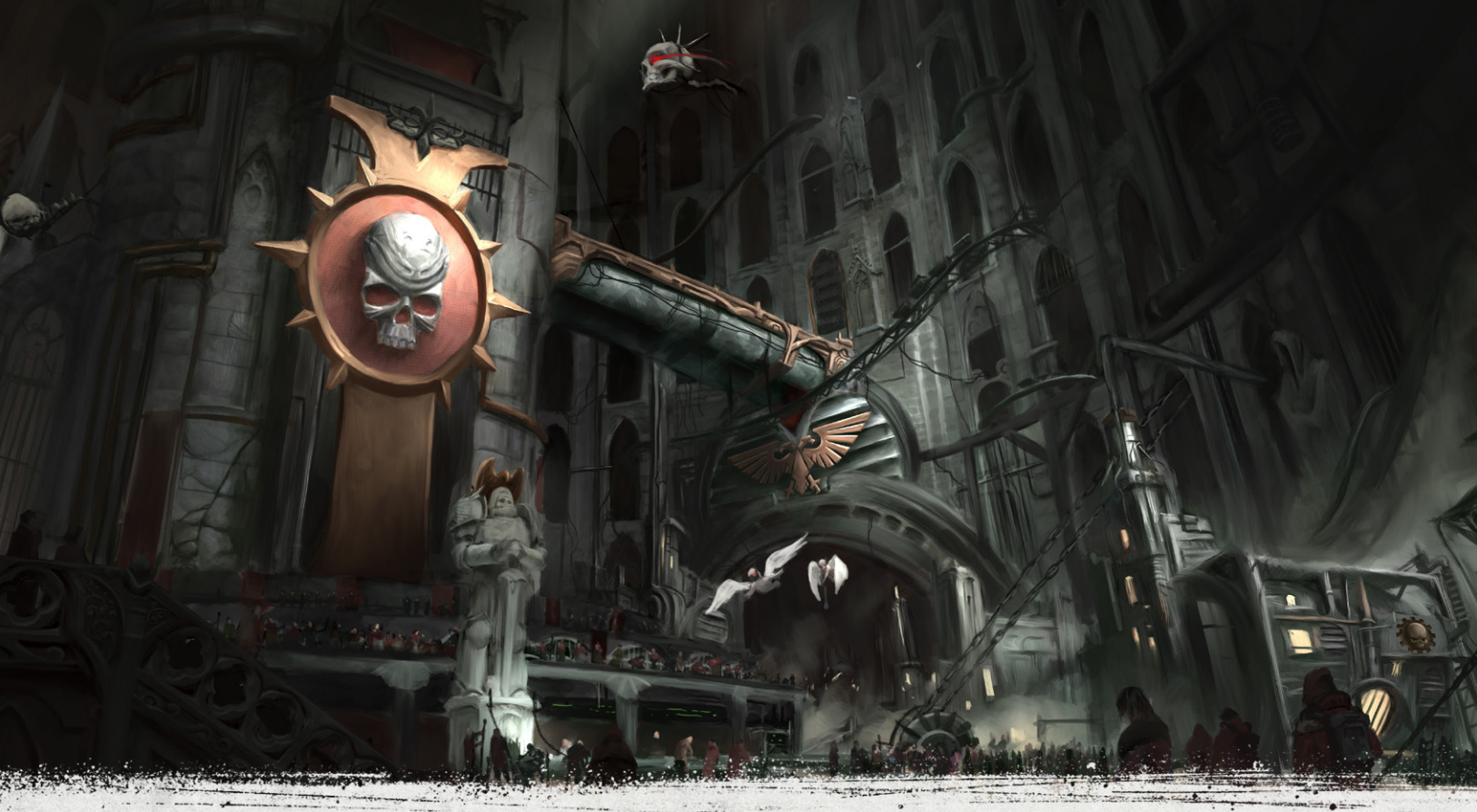
Sister Celestia of the Orders Hospitaller is determined to provide cures for citizens who need them. She spends most of her time in the Aparthotel Rokarth Medicae but also visits other facilities at odd hours, conducting surprise unofficial inspections. Among patients, she pays particular attention to hopeless cases and occasionally manages to cure the incurable. This has earned her a reputation as a living saint among the uneducated masses.

Sister Celestia believes the God-Emperor has allowed Humanity to heal every contagion if they only look hard enough. She is willing to try any treatment to obtain a result and even hopes to one day cure Psykers of their mutation. Knowing that many would consider her beliefs heretical, she experiments in secret.



THE SHIVERING PSYKER

Sister Celestia wants to move the body of the last victim of the Shivers, a plague that swept through Rokarth a few years ago. The body has been kept in an isolated room under lock and key at the Cathedrum of Enduring Purpose (page 34). Sister Celestia is convinced that the victim was a rogue psyker who was 'cured' of his affliction by the Shivers, though admittedly was also killed by the disease shortly after that. She's willing to give everything she has to transfer the body to a secure, private medicae facility where she can continue her research.



LOWER HIVE

The teeming confines of the Lower Hive house most of Rokarth's immense population. These are the ordinary throngs of lowly citizens that operate and maintain the hive's manufacturums, their ancillary industries, the energy-hungry heart of the Generatorium, and the myriad other systems that keep the hive functioning. While they do not live in wretched squalor like the furtive denizens of the Bowels, neither do the citizens of the Lower Hive enjoy any luxuries. Theirs is a life of dreary sameness, living, working, and raising their families in stark passages and cramped residential habs that sprawl outwards from the Lower Hive Nexus.

In the overcrowded hab-warrens, the desperate citizenry scramble to claim anything beyond the meagre necessities bequeathed by their Highborn masters. Rarely do they enjoy a brief respite from the grinding tedium, finding a few morsels of something not just blandly nourishing or a simple toy for their children to play with. They are otherwise a faceless mass, dressed plainly in drab, utilitarian clothing, neither seeking attention nor giving it if they can avoid it.

Janitorial serfs are foisted with the thankless and near-impossible task of preventing public areas from becoming infectiously filthy, but the Lower Hive could never be truly clean. Convulsed by occasional hive-quakes, the stark walls are streaked and stained, and splotches of rust dot the hard alloy floors.

The air is stale, tainted by the emissions of countless thousands of manufacturums and millions of people, by the stench of habway vendors cooking anything they can find to sell for a few solars, and occasionally of the acrid tang of the illicit chems that offer a brief escape. Despite the Generatorium at the core of each level, the denizens of the Lower Hive cannot rely on having power. Far higher priority is given to the needs of the voracious manufacturums. Many are, therefore, forced to ration the little electricity they can afford, using it only to cook and provide minimal lighting, and otherwise live their lives in the dim glow of their neighbours' faltering lumens or absolute darkness, dreaming of a sun they will never see.

Generally, the inhabitants of the Lower Hive live their lives, perform their mandated toil, worship the Emperor, and raise their families as best they can. They are particularly keen to avoid doing anything that might attract the dire scrutiny of Macharian Vigilites, who watch constantly for any suggestion of unrest or sedition. To this end, they maintain a profound but simple faith in the God-Emperor, focusing on getting through each day under His protection and worrying about tomorrow when it comes.

If characters spend some time wandering about the Lower Hive, inadvisable though that may be, you can use the **Lower Hive Encounters** Table (page 40) to generate some interesting incidents.



LOWER HIVE SCENERY

The Lower Hive is never still, a perpetual paroxysm of industrial activity and monotonous, mind-numbing noise. Calls to work, to trade, yelled propositions of every stripe, the background roar of mighty engines — all these sounds are thrown into sharp relief when the power fails, and in the blackouts, they are replaced by fervent prayers, screaming, and gunfire. Traders like those found in the markets at Three Knock Alley juncture operate through swiftly flashed hand signals, or simply by bellowing of their wares and prices for all to hear. Few of the many pathways that run through the Lower Hive could truly be called streets, save those closest to the Nexus and the Void Buttress. Instead, these hive levels are riddled with tunnels and habways, channels that pass between the many varied buildings in a haphazard fashion. The habways are invariably crowded, ranging from the claustrophobically populated to a blatantly dangerous crush of bodies as one descends.

The scent of acid lingers in the upper levels of the Lower Hive, though they smell much more strongly of fresh soil. Lower, the mud scent turns rancid, joined by sour sweat, the iron tang of blood and rust, the rot of decay, and far harsher caustic odours.

The Lower Hive is entirely enclosed, but the titanic halls and even large cathedrum-like spaces experience a form of rain due to condensation. Lit by flickering arc-globes that darken whenever the power cuts, the structures here are ugly and graceless, built for sturdy practicality in an attempt to put off the inevitability of decay. Almost every building is formed of rockcrete, though there are exceptions, such as the ceramite and plasteel armoured bulk of the Lomar's Detention Centre. Some of Rokarth's oldest buildings are even made of a strange pale stone, rumoured to be unique to Voll. The deepest levels consist of layers of engines performing uncertain functions and endless pipes sluicing away mud, effluents, water, and acids.

The Lower Hive is subject to massive hivequakes caused by the perpetual slow shift of Rokarth's vaguely mobile support buttresses across Voll's uncertain surface. The worst hivequakes can kill tens of thousands due to the collapse of buildings and habways, but most die after even the slightest quake due to the opportunistic violence and looting that immediately follows.

LOWER HIVE INHABITANTS

The most striking thing about the teeming masses dwelling in the Lower Hives is their bland sameness. The countless labourers and their families look much alike, dressed in a plain, drab sea of neutral greys and earth tones provided by the Cathedrum of Obligatory Modesty. At the start of their shift, they shuffle from their cramped habs in trudging lines to the grind of the manufactory or the myriad services and subsidiary industries crowded around the Nexus. At the end of their shift, they shuffle home or to one of the many cathedra, only to do it all again the next day.

The exceptions are, therefore, notable. Shift bosses, enjoying fractionally more freedom and wealth, lord it over their subordinates. Hard-faced agents of the Macharian Vigilites prowl about, seeking Infractionists and wrongdoers, particularly members of the hive's countless gangs. They take advantage of the teeming masses as a means of remaining anonymous, a pool from which they can recruit the disaffected into their ranks and targets for their sinister attentions — theft, assault, trade in illicit chems, or worse.

Other inhabitants of the Lower Hive include those employed in providing services to the restless millions. With several cathedra seeing to the spiritual well-being and compliance of the masses, preachers and confessors are a common sight, as are functionaries of the Administratum too unimportant or poorly connected to find work in the Upper Hive. Medicae practitioners strive to keep the populace healthy enough to work while remaining vigilant against rampant pestilence that may threaten the hive's productivity.

Several centuries of construction have left the lower hive a labyrinthine mess, punctuated by long-forgotten tunnels and dead zones claimed by settlers. Macharian Vigilites use some such worm-passages to transport prisoners when they would prefer not to intimidate the populace with their presence or when escorting particularly dangerous Infractionists to coffin-cells or the penal legions of the Astra Militarum.

LOWER HIVE NEXUS

The most voracious power consumers in Rokarth are the manufacturums, whose assembly lines, forges, furnaces, fractionators, refineries, and myriad other industrial structures vomit out the commodities that satisfy the Tithe. Since most of these power-hungry operations are located in the Lower Hive, they crowd around the Nexus on each level, ensuring their access to the Generatorium.

This also facilitates outflow of prodigious volumes of industrial effluent — massive pipes carrying liquid run-off spill into the Bowels (page 48), while intricate duct work allows volatile fumes and gases to be syphoned upwards and vented out of Rokarth, though notably still well below the Spires of the Noble Houses.

As in the Upper Hive, maglift access from the Lower Hive is strictly controlled. Since it is necessary to pass through the level of Precinct Fortress Majoris, only those with legitimate business are granted passage. Unlike the Upper Hive, there is much more freedom to move between the Lower Hive and the Bowels. The fact is that when it comes to travel between the lower reaches of Rokarth, the authorities simply don't care.

MEDICAE FACILITY ADJUMENTUM

This facility provides the lower hive with basic medical care, arranged by House Castyx, ostensibly for the benefit of the workers, but in truth, to ensure the injured return to their labours as efficiently as possible.

REMAIN CALM

The Hall of Anguish is typically reserved for the burned-out and 'brainsick' citizens who falter in their toil, treated by the Officio Medicae to restore them to working order and ensure there is no supernatural cause for their malady. However, the hall is currently full beyond capacity, and there are still patients in the main hall screaming about creatures watching them from the dark. Medicae staff don't know if there's some new plague of the mind at work or that some water source is contaminated, but unless something is done, a larger faction is sure to intervene — the Administratum may call for a purge to keep the numbers of the afflicted down, or the Adeptus Ministorum may designate these citizens possessed by some blasphemous force.

LOWER HIVE ENCOUNTERS

Id100	DESCRIPTION
01-07	Your path takes you across the roof of a titanic Battery Manufactorum. You see a ventilation shaft nearby crack open, and a ragged looking man wearing a red tardigrade leather jacket climbs out, carrying a makeshift sack filled to bursting with Lasgun batteries. (This man could be Raguel the Red, a member of the Vylathi Knives prominently featured in the adventure <i>Chemical Burn</i> available at cubicle7games.com)
08-14	Your group travel through a district given over entirely to a conurbation of Lumen Manufactorums, constantly oscillating between controlled darkness and stark, blinding stablights. As Gamemaster, you can use this <i>Dark</i> environment as the perfect opportunity for the group's enemies to launch an ambush!
15-21	You emerge from the labarynthine tangle of a habsprawl in front of a monolithic De-Rust Manufactorum emblazoned with the sigil of the Mercator Dilaquo. Steam gushes from hundreds of vents across the manufactorum's towering exterior. At the entrance, two Tech-Priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus are trying to gain access to inspect some machinery, but the guild guards are attempting to waylay them.
22-28	As you march beside the titanic form of a Fertiliser Manufactorum, you see one of the cathedrum-sized pipes that jut from its exterior buckle and break, leaking a gout of steaming sludge into an Administratum scriptorium. You hear howls of pain from the scriptorium, and a bedraggled scrivener petitions you for aid. If the group agrees to help, they will find the scriptorium partially flooded with acidic effluent. Several Administratum clerks are attempting to rescue critical documentation even as the caustic gunk scalds their flesh. Characters can attempt to rescue either a clerk or some documents with a Difficult (-10) Athletics Test , though they must make a Difficult (+10) Fortitude Test afterwards to avoid suffering 1 Wound from the acidic sludge. If the characters save any documents, several of the clerks will be grievously injured, but all of them will thank the group profusely and their Influence with the Administratum may increase by +1 at your discretion. If the characters save the clerks, they will be irate that the characters did not save the documents.
29-35	You notice a chain-gang of prisoners headed to Detention Centre Lomaris-77, escorted by a cadre of Macharian Vigilites who frequently elbow their criminal charges. Many of the labour-serfs bound to toil at Cibureum Manufactorums are part of the Scarred Hands, and may petition the characters to help rescue one of their 'falsely imprisoned' comrades from the chain gang. Even if the character refuses, you might have a cadre of Scarred Hands Gangers (page 7) throw a bundle of Smoke Grenades at the convoy and attempt to free their fellows in the confusion.
36-42	Your path is blocked by a procession of mourners following a team of slow moving Adeptus Ministorum Corpse Haulers. Their procession halts at a Lucerne Manufactorum adjoining a cathedrum festooned with enrobed, skull-faced statues. A throng of weeping mourners are listening to an Adeptus Ministorum preacher's sermon, amplified by laud-hailer, stating the duty of all Humans is to dedicate their lives to the Emperor.
43-49	You come across an Administratum overseer arguing with a Highborn of House Taj — their quotas have been insufficient recently, with the labourers complaining of a 'monster' stealing their supplies. If the characters look around and succeed on a Challenging (+0) Logic (Investigation) Test , they'll discover a ventilation shaft surrounded by clawmarks. This is an Infracionist controlled Warrenway used by the Mireclaw.
50-56	Your senses are assailed as you travel beside a titanic multi-level spanning but low security Recyc-Sanctum. It has been identified as an ideal place for serfs and gangers (particularly the labourer-aligned Scarred Hands) to engage in illicit gambling in off hours. Such recidivists might invite characters to join them, or even try to induct them into their gang, though games of chance often spill over into violence in the Lower Hive.
57-63	Your travels take you along the vast, reeking bulk of an enormous Mercator Carnem slaughterhouse. You cross paths with a convoy of Imperial Fleet stevedores dragging carts carrying nebulous goods towards the Void Buttress. They eye armoured vehicles leaving the slaughterhouse hungrily as their overseer urges them onwards.
64-70	After travelling past thousands of ascetic coffin-sized micro-homes, you find yourselves lost in the twisting tunnels of a labyrinthine habsprawl, unsure of which level of the Lower Hive you are even on. The group must make a Difficult (-10) Navigation Test to get back on track. If more than half of the characters fail, they are accosted by a group of eight Block 24-96 Gangers (page 8) who demand 'rent' for lingering in their turf.
71-77	The cacophony of industry fades, replaced by the clamour of a busy market. Ramshackle stalls fill unused spaces between ceiling-scraping statues. Labour-serfs crowd the stands of the Mercator Dilaquo and Carnem, desperate for clean water and slivers of shredded meat. An Adeptus Ministorum preacher castigates all of those gathered here for seeking any gifts beyond those naturally given by the God-Emperor and His mighty organisations. Gangers lurk nearby, ready to pilfer, coerce, or instigate a riot to serve their own ends.
78-84	The group passes a Mercator Carnem dispensary, emblazoned with their tardigrade crest, selling spiced meats at comparatively outrageous prices. If the characters tarry here for too long or openly buy any food, labourers may petition them for aid and alms — in all such circumstances, gangers will be watching to size the group up, and might ambush them later if they consider them to be particularly wealthy.
85-93	You hear a blaring klaxon heralding a shift change, and a thousands-strong deluge of workers pours from a nearby manufactorum into an adjacent cathedrum. You are caught up in the crowd, near to an Adeptus Ministorum preacher raised on a palanquin demanding that you perform your 'pious labours' in the cathedrum.
94-00	As you navigate through a tangled maze of habways, you come upon a labourer scraping mould and sludgy effluent from the age-worn walls, singing a strange prayer under their breath. If the characters observe this individual, they see that they are periodically eating the vile substance when they think nobody is looking, and leave the habway through a rotten-looking ventilation shaft. They are a cultist of Nurgle using the Infracionist Warrenways to spread the disease cultivating inside them.

The main hall serves as a dormitory echoing with patients' groans before they're sent to the east wing for Grievous Injury, the west wing for Contagions of the Flesh, or the northern hall for Spiritual Impurity. Patients might be lucky and receive treatment from junior Sisters Hospitaller, but more likely, they'll wait for hours or days to be a convenient body for Administratum apprentices to practise on.

BASILICANUM

Surrounded by meticulously crafted stone plazas shining in the harsh stablight of the Lower Hive, the Basilicanum looms over the surrounding districts. Inside, green-robed docents patrol the marble-floored public atriums while guards in carapace armour stand watch at every entryway. Clerks wait behind tall podiums of worked silver and copper, ready to attend to the needs of visitors and petitioners.

Beyond the grand atriums and foyers lie the marble-clad courtrooms, where adjudicators in gold-embroidered robes hear and settle disputes among the houses, both great and small. With immense power and authority, the Basilicanum serves as the arbiter of justice within Rokarth, its every decision carrying the weight of the law and shaping the fate of countless lives.

CATHEDRUM OF HIS CLEANSING LIGHT

Inside the Cathedrum of His Cleansing Light, candles coat every surface, the flames forming a miniature hellscape. Oily smoke coats every breath, the air clammy with feverish heat. The only sanctioned illumination is candlelight created by the parishioners, who stand around bubbling tallow vats provided by Lucerne Manufacturums (page 15). Here, worshippers revere the God-Emperor through their labours, creating soap and candles by rendering fat from Rokarth's plentiful supply of corpses.

While candles and soap are essential, the cathedrum's offerings are unlikely to garner attention, the practice seen as grubby by the more refined priests. This makes it the perfect clandestine base for the Ordo Hereticus. Though Deacon Richlew is ostensibly in charge, he answers to Overseer — or rather, Inquisitorial Acolyte — Pragmus Gelt. They have transformed the cathedrum's supply chain into an information network and keep a careful eye on Rokarth's Ecclesiarchy, watching for sedition.

CROSSING A LINE

Though Macharian Vigilites are oath-sworn to guard the Basilicanum, they are not strictly part of the Administratum and lack jurisdiction within the Basilicanum. Due to this bureaucratic conundrum, Yaralda Sourik, an Imperial Navy rating, is trapped in the neutral ground within. Yaralda interrupted a violent Vigilite 'inspection' of one of her crewmates to provide exonerating evidence, apparently a threefold crime: intruding in Vigilite business, falsifying evidence, and insubordination to House Castyx. Sourik managed to evade Vigilite capture (yet another capital crime) and bring her case before the Administratum within the sanctuary of the Basilicanum. Adepts believe she may be protected by Lex Imperialis, but have ordered her to remain in the building until this is confirmed and a final outcome determined.

LIGHT A CANDLE, CURSE THE DARK

A deacon of Rokarth's Lower Levels, Arta Beretrism, is a thorn in the side of the group's Patron, subtly stymying several of their plans through 'routine Adeptus Ministorum investigations' led by Galliach Krane. However, the Patron has heard rumours that a rarely-seen priest named Gelt could stop such intrusions — for a price. The Patron assigns the group to infiltrate the cathedrum undercover as faithful Adeptus Ministorum adepts to get close to Gelt. During this time, they will likely hear repeated rumours of Karpath Valis' advancement being privately funded by Valeria Castyx.



CATHEDRUM OF OBLIGATORY MODESTY

Workers too injured or infirm to work elsewhere sew clothing in this Cathedrum until they finally expire and their debt to the Emperor is paid. The work of the penitents is hard, the fabric cheap, and the needles deliberately blunted. Their whispered prayers for succour echo through the transepts kept out of sight for those pilgrims who come to beg for clothing.

The house that sponsors this Cathedrum is so modest their name is never mentioned. Their crest was once engraved above the entrance but has been chipped away. Locals say it is not modesty but shame that led to this secrecy. Something awful happened here once; cloth contaminated by a warp-borne plague was used as protective garments in one of the manufacturums, driving the workers into a feral rage.

CATHEDRUM OF RATIONED BENEFICENCE

A small, popular cathedrum, worshippers here distribute rations to those in need. These rations are habitually provided by House Sumalak, who donate basics like condensed nutrient-paste and water. Other houses, fearing the popularity that House Sumalak gains from their beneficence to the masses, occasionally send additional supplies, such as acynadi meat or even drams of amasec. Unfortunately, such donations lead to riots as people fight to get inside the cathedrum, leading to multiple murky Administratum reports of innocents being crushed to death on the cathedrum steps. This has led to animosity between the houses, and House Sumalak has accused Vylathi of deliberately starting riots to discourage their charity.

DATAMILL DISTRICT

A sprawling, utilitarian complex that looms tall through multiple levels of the bustling Lower Hive. A coffin-shaped structure of solid rockcrete, with a vaulted ceiling that seems to stretch on forever. Within are six towering data-looms, their humming machinery spinning ribbons of information from one to another.

The complex machinery is tended by a small army of Administratum serfs who constantly monitor and adjust the processing flow; their faces bathed in the flickering glow of countless screens. They stand like sentinels, watching for any fluctuations in the data stream — they are never lauded or praised, but without them, Voll would crumble.

FAMILY SECRETS

Lawrenca Parnam knows her family secretly donates to the Cathedrum of Obligatory Modesty, but cannot be sure it does so out of loyalty to the God-Emperor, or as penance for a shameful history. She's obsessed with uncovering the truth, even if only to be sure it remains buried. She has heard rumours of a scrap of fabric sealed away in the cathedrum's lowest tomb-vaults and offers to pay the group 2,000 solars each to retrieve this relic, unaware it could potentially spread Khorne's bloodlust to any that touch it.

THE RECTOR'S DILEMMA

The cathedrum's steeples each house a towering sustenance storage silo; some rations have spoiled before they could be distributed. While Rector Pherenze secretly hid the evidence, rumours have spread that the God-Emperor has withdrawn His favour from the cathedrum. Pherenze fears his station and his life if his superiors hear of this, becoming paranoid. At first, he blamed the feud between the donating noble houses, but before long, he began to wonder how anyone could know what happened unless they were either saboteurs or reading his thoughts. As more rot appears amongst the rations in the steeples and Pherenze hides the spoiled sustenance, he has started to think the rot itself is taunting him.

ABERRANT DATA

Investigating the outbreak of health concerns, brainsickness, and psychosis at the Hall of Anguish (page 39) may lead characters to the datamill district. A recently repaired data-loom appears to be spitting out aberrant data, either heavily encrypted or completely corrupt, each strange enough to induce sickness in those who investigate it. This information is being suppressed by the terrified loom-overseer Castus Jandall. The data-loom itself is not the cause — the aberrant data is being broadcast from somewhere in the Hive.

BLOOD IN THE HABWAYS

A brutal gang war rages between the Cutters and the Scarred Hands in Habsprawl IV, claiming the lives of multiple citizens caught in the crossfire. Given the disinterest of the hive authorities, local citizens are offering a bounty of 20,000 solars to anyone who can end the spiralling violence. Can the characters broker a truce without making an enemy of one or both gangs or is the only option to support one side and end the war with decisive violence? Have the citizens actually scraped together the significant sum of solars to pay the bounty, or will they come up short? Perhaps a mysterious benefactor is supplying them with the funds — but who?

FALSELY ACCUSED

Administratum overseer Pavouk Edderkop believes his son, Gratuos, has been falsely imprisoned through the machinations of an unknown rival attempting to ruin his reputation. He contacts the group, offering them 'the favour of the Administratum, and his personal Highborn connections' in exchange for facilitating the removal of Gratuos from Lomaris Detention Center. The characters might find all manner of solutions to this problem — perhaps a prison break or a series of bribes and blackmails — but there's a catch. Gratuos doesn't want to leave the Detention Center or his new kin, the Vylathi Knives, believing that he and his father are members of a lost Vylathi noble line.

NEEDLES IN THE DARK

Jiovanna Sumalak believes that someone in Habsprawl IV has somehow acquired a dangerous and powerful Plasma Gun. She privately tells visitors that seem honourable that the Slug Exchange is offering a bounty of 5,000 solars for its retrieval — partly to get it 'off the street' as infractionists no doubt want it. Of course, such a weapon may be worth a much higher price — and a favour at a later date — to the right buyer outside of the Lex Imperialis.

HABSPRAWL IV

Habsprawl IV is a cramped, gloomy warren of habways, inter-level access points, drab apartments, crowded markets and the myriad other services needed to keep it barely livable.

What differentiates it from the other, more parochial habsprawls, is that it is closest to the Nexus in the Lower Hive. Because of this convenience, only those citizens with a proven record of exceeding production quotas are allocated living space here.

However, this distinction has also attracted the attention of the various infractionist gangs of Rokarth, who covet access to the Nexus. The ordinary residents only enjoy their privileged access to the Nexus at the cost of incessant crime, intimidation, and violence.

LOMARIS DETENTION CENTRE

The main penitentiary in Rokarth, Detention Center Lomaris-77 is located close to the Lower Hive Nexus to facilitate the transfer of prisoners through the hive.

As its inmates also form a ready pool of 'recruits' for the penal legions of the Astra Militarum, it is also close to the Basilicanum. As the penal legions effectively form another part of the Tithe, even those convicted of minor crimes may find themselves shuttled off to fight for the Emperor to meet the quota.

Unsurprisingly, the Infractionist gangs are prominent in the Detention Center, both to support their own recruiting and ensure that none of their incarcerated recruits become overly cooperative with the authorities.

RECONSTITUTORY & SLUG EXCHANGE

Operated by House Sumalak, the Reconstitutory is essentially a food bank that provides nourishing (if not especially palatable) food-adjacent substances for the people of the Lower Hive, and this most basic sustenance comes at a minimal cost. The food, which consists of edible moulds and fungi, along with stale water made from recycled sweats, steams, and many other effluents pervasive throughout all of Rokarth.

The Slug Exchange, meanwhile, is an amnesty facility for weapons, ammunition, and other dangerous equipment and materials. The well-intentioned purpose of reducing violence by encouraging the exchange of arms for food has been thoroughly infiltrated by the Infractionists who use it to readily source weapons.

RUSTLESS BLADE

While there are many bars and taverns scattered throughout the Lower Hive, few have the reputation of The Rustless Blade, an establishment that enjoys the discreet patronage of House Taj. Located near the Nexus and not far from Detention Center Lomaris-77, the Blade receives a steady stream of customers. Its clientele consists mainly of infractionists, mercenaries, bounty hunters, thugs-for-hire, and similarly unsavoury sorts. This would seem to set the stage for endless brawling and bloodshed, but an unspoken truce exists in the Blade. Violence here is one of the few things likely to unite all patrons in swiftly stamping it out. After all, even the roughest of customers like to have a place to enjoy a quiet drink or two.

SCRIPTORIUM

This Scriptorium supplies copies of the Emperor's holy word, from religious liturgies and sacred texts to updated laws and histories. It's renowned for the accuracy and purity of the work it produces, and nobles from across Voll order illuminated texts to reaffirm their devotion to the God-Emperor.

Scribes and illuminators work under the watchful eye of invigilators, who spot inaccuracies in the work or slovenliness in its artists. Scribes and illuminators work in pairs, and both are punished if either errs or fails to meet their quota. Thus, quality is assured, and work is provided for citizens skilled enough to copy High Gothic but lack the education to understand it.

VIGILITE BASTIONS

Housing the officers of the Macharian Vigilites, the Bastions variously serve as police stations, jails, and fortified bases for keeping order in their assigned portion of the hive. Their effectiveness varies depending on where they're located and, above all, the extent to which that precinct impinges on the interests of Noble House Castyx. Some Bastions, therefore, are aggressively proactive in projecting power and influence into the surrounding hive, while others take a more lax approach — particularly when the interests of Infractionists and House Castyx align.

The Infractionist gangs sometimes cultivate uneasy relationships with corrupt staff of the Bastions, providing useful information in exchange for the Vigilites occasionally looking the other way.

HIDDEN AGENDA

As a neutral, non-violent zone, the Rustless Blade is the perfect place to recruit a team of troubleshooters like the characters. Craverus Kides (page 47) approaches the group with an offer from an undisclosed benefactor: they will be paid 5,000 solars for every comm-leeche they plant in the inner sanctum of a House Nethecaré holding. If pressed, Craverus will disclose that he thinks the benefactor is a member of the Mercator Lenimen, but they're sure that they'll be in for some deadly recompense if they take the comm-leeches and run.

BLASPHEMY

Supervisor Kan Muran wasn't concerned when two staff members went missing — not until the blasphemous pamphlets were brought to his attention. They were so beautiful that they could only be the work of a professional scribe and illuminator, and yet so foul that only a heinous heretic could conceive them. He can't allow these maddening works to be connected to the Scriptorium. He's appealed to the characters' Patron to find the missing staff.

STAINLESS HERESY

Frequent rumours of a Vigilite Bastion 'looking the other way' are circulating amongst Inquisitor Halikarn's tangled web of informants. Such trivialities are beneath his notice but not that of his lower-level agents (perhaps the characters). He suspects that the Bastion has been infiltrated by heretical elements (maybe the Murderline, page 60) and wants the characters to obtain evidence of whether this is true or that simple incompetence is to blame.

A MISSING OPERATIVE

One of Halikarn's Agents based in Thaler Hostelry, a trusted Sanctioned Psyker codenamed Serentias, has gone dark. They were previously working undercover with Craverus Kides (page 47), monitoring illicit trade whilst investigating the Ornithory (page 63). In truth, Kides sent Serentias to a Silent Trade market to sell a strangely twisted artefact to a mysterious (but very wealthy) buyer and hasn't heard from them since. The artefact in question seems to change shape ever so slightly whenever it's looked at.

HIDDEN TREASURE

Kalthas Nar-Klaskoloff, a Rogue Trader of some note within the Macharian Sector, has privately contacted Pladeau, Trajaan Umbra, and Craverus Kides (pages 29, 36, and 47, respectively) about the *Falchion*, asking them to locate a group of 'enterprising individuals' to perform a service for her. She wants a team to infiltrate the *Falchion* and search for a cache of valuable materials hidden aboard, including what may be either xenos artefacts or archeotech, undiscovered since the vessel crashed on Voll. Whether such a cache exists is up to the GM, but if the characters embark on this mission, the Mireclaw (or another cult of your choosing) are using hidden compartments in the *Falchion* as a base of operations.

EMPOWERING THE PORTS

Port Commander Grotsk quietly suspects several of the noble houses are consorting with infractionist gangs, and potentially corrupt members of the Imperial Fleet, to smuggle goods, potentially connected to the Silent Trade. Grotsk believes the answer is to divide and conquer — she will focus her entire attention on the Void Butress and petition the group's Patron to investigate the Mud Gate. She wants the group to make a bloody example of any infractionists they can find (or suspect), giving the characters carte blanche in the Mud Gate to manufacture fear.

THALER HOSTELRY

The Thaler Hostelry provides clean and secure, if somewhat austere, temporary accommodation to travellers visiting the Lower Hive Nexus, who can't afford or lack the reputation for more upmarket accommodations.

The staff are brusque and efficient, all seemingly ordinary hivefolk, but the Hostelry's true owner is Ordos Hereticus Inquisitor Aegidius Halikarn, who maintains it as a safe house for his agents in Rokarth. There are hidden safe rooms accessible only to the staff, and the Inquisitor's agents are provided with the necessary signs and passphrases that will see them treated as operatives in need of cover rather than simply clients seeking lodging.

THE FALCHION

When Voll was first colonised by the Castyx Rogue Trader Dynasty, a *Falchion*-class voidship was grounded on the site of what would become Rokarth.

The reasons for this are unclear — perhaps it was sacrificed to create an expedient settlement, or perhaps it was merely an accident that left it unable to fly. As Rokarth grew, permanent structures were built on and around the derelict ship until it was swallowed up by the Lower Hive.

Today, this portion of the Lower Hive is known as the *Falchion*, still distinguished by its peculiar architectural origin. It contains hab space, as well as a raucous bar of the same name. All of the Infractionist gangs have a presence here, constantly vying against their rivals.

THE MUD GATE

The Mud Gate functions as a shuttleport terminal, connecting the Lower Hive to the Void Butress. Passengers endlessly flow through its cavernous public concourses and teeming dockyards, while segregated secure facilities within it handle Imperial Navy and Astra Militarum traffic. A separate, null-shielded concourse facilitates the movement of unsanctioned psykers from the Null Oublette to the Black Ships that gather their kind. The Gate provides for the transfer of bulk commodities and manufactured goods to and from the hive's manufactorums, for shipment off-world as Imperial Tithes and other commercial uses.

The nearby Whisper Gate is a separate shuttleport, ostensibly for use by Rogue Traders as part of House Castyx' original grandiose plans. However, the infractionists have infiltrated the disused Whisper Gate, exploiting their discreet docks to smuggle illicit goods in and out of the hive.

THE NULL OUBLIETTE

Unsanctioned psykers pose a profound threat to Rokarth. When they are identified, they are swiftly imprisoned in the secure, null-shielded detention facility known as the Null Oubliette. Located close to The Mud Gate and its facilities for transferring imprisoned psykers to the Black Ships, the Null Oubliette is a dark and forbidding fortress within the Lower Hive. Anyone attempting to enter or leave it without the proper screening and authorisation is subject to immediate execution by the dour, psychically-shielded wardens of the Astra Telepathica.

The Oubliette extends down into the Bowels, ostensibly to ensure any lingering psychic energies dissipate into the detritus below, rather than the Lower Hive — whether this is effective, or if such psychic energies even exist, is unknown to those that rule the Null Oubliette. The effects of this psychic leakage are reputed to spill into the lower levels, leaving their unfortunate inhabitants to deal with all manner of warp-spawned phenomena.

Most Rogue Psykers either deliver themselves to the Null Oubliette, realising that it is their duty to serve the Emperor voluntarily, or else be 'collected' by suspicious neighbours or even a fervent witch hunt rallied by particularly zealous members of the Adeptus Ministorum. Rarely must the shadowy agents of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica be deployed, but in some cases, even they are not enough.



THREE KNOCK ALLEY

Three Knock Alley is exemplary of the market habways that have developed organically throughout Rokarth's Lower Hive. Quirks of now ancient architecture and ramshackle repairs to hivequakes have resulted in habways connecting across at least 30 hive levels, with gaping makeshift markets buzzing with trade at all hours. The open market offers all manner of routine goods while providing access to less savoury commodities beneath the table, including various illicit weapons and chems.

A seething warren of shops, stalls, kiosks, tents, and shady individuals selling strange items from a stained tardigrade-leather satchel, Three Knock Alley occupies the junction of multiple habways spanning thirty levels of the Lower Hive. Would-be buyers, willing to spend the time or money, will find many interesting and obscure items for sale, usually with no questions asked.

A RAT IN THE SPRAWL

Yerval Gost of the Null Oubliette calls upon the group's Patron to aid them in hunting an elusive Rogue Psyker, a mutant formerly known as Ratslow with an uncanny knowledge of the dank habways. The Adeptus Astra Telepathica have thus far failed to bring the subject in as they are apparently using their psychic powers to change their appearance and claim false identities, including using the name 'Malat Vers', identifiable through their peculiarly squeaky voice. Ratslow has reportedly been seen in Habsprawl IV (page 43) and the Lean-To (page 54) and may be utilising warren-ways or service passages between the two locations. Gost wants the Rogue Psyker alive, as he claims they will be 'a great contribution to the tithe'.

DANGEROUS COMMERCE

Two rival merchants have each begun assembling a cartel of Three Knock Alley vendors, both dedicated to driving the other out of business and seizing their share of the market. The group's Patron tasks them with investigating the persistent rumours that a subversive cult operates in the Alley. Agents of Calamus Vorne (page 63) are behind the unrest, seeking to distract the authorities while pursuing their master's belief that a handful of minor psykers hide themselves here. If found, they will be dragged back to the Ornitary to serve Vorne, or die.



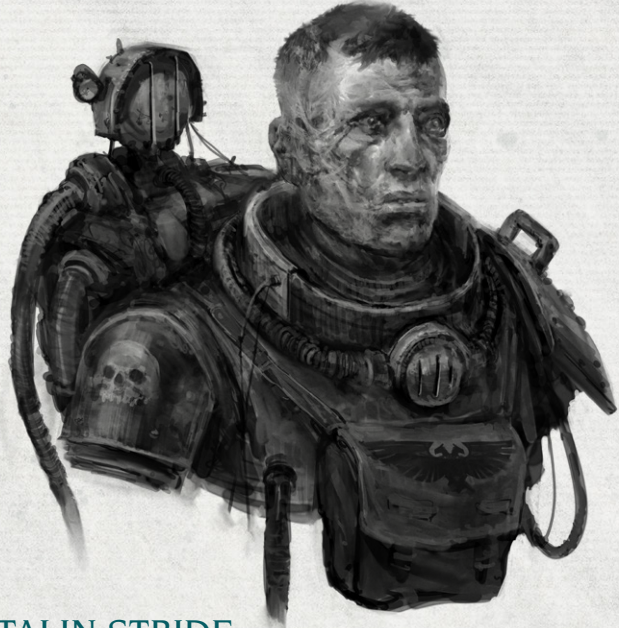
CRAVERUS KIDES, CUNNING TRADER

Officially, Kides is sworn to labour under Port Commander Valeria Grotsk as a dockhand and presents himself as a humble, pious servant of the Emperor's void-faring institution. However, Kides decided long ago that they could better serve the Imperium through toil of the mind than backbreaking labour of the body.

Kides is a true hustler, using their knowledge of the Mud Dock and the operations of the Imperial Navy to smuggle for Block 24-96 and their contacts in the Silent Trade. Kides concocted the plan to involve Mox Stahl of the Adeptus Ministorum and cajole pilgrims to the Resounding Cathedrum (page 29) into carrying illicit goods. Through a few sketchy habway deals, Kides made enough solars to pay off other dockhands to cover their shifts, enabling them to pursue their true purpose — hunting heretics.

Fiscally empowered and enmeshed in Rokarth's shadowy underworld, the zealously dedicated dockhand uses their wealth and knowledge to secretly eliminate rivals Kides suspects of heresy, leading unwitting gangers on unsanctioned witch hunts to slay Rogue Psykers and blasphemers to steal their businesses.

Kides has heard rumours that Manthas Keller, a trader of the Mercator Dilaquo, has been intimidating his competition by seemingly summoning swarms of vermin. Kides suspects Keller is a Rogue Psyker and is looking for a group of enterprising individuals to uncover the truth in the name of the Emperor — and so Kides can muscle in on Keller's markets.



TALIN STRIDE, BLACKMAILED WORKER

Typical of the Lower Hive's faceless throng of manufactory workers, Talin Stride is a plain and unassuming man. Growing up in the gloom of the hive, his pallor is almost the bland grey as his tattered but tough, acid-resistant clothing. He speaks furtively, with his gaze downcast, only making eye contact when caught up in some particularly emotional moment or speaking zealously of the Emperor's will. He has an oath-sworn partner and three children, all occupying a single spartan room in Habsprawl IV.

Like many amongst the downtrodden masses, Stride has been supplementing his income by sacrificing mandated sleep hours to moonlight at another position. The labourer has found a meagre source of solars at the Neymarnay Distillery, but believes that the Emperor has granted him two ways to improve his position and serve the people of the Imperium: stealing medicinal alcohols and selling them in Habsprawl IV to those in desperate need, and supplying the seemingly pious Scarred Hands gang with information they can use 'to prevent violence'. Unfortunately, his shift boss, Lew, discovered his thefts and is now blackmailing Stride, forcing him to deliver mysterious packages to a man with a strangely ridged forehead in the Bowels.

Stride is desperate to get out from under Lew's heel, but has realised that the Scarred Hands may be an even more dangerous master. If he meets the characters, he will appeal to their sense of righteousness to help him out of his precarious situation.



THE BOWELS & BEYOND

Beneath the Lower Hive is the oft-forgotten sprawling foundation of the hive, colloquially known to the habfolk as the Bowels. It is in these dank depths that the pollutants from the city above gather and pool. Garbage, foul effluent, toxic industrial runoff, and the dregs of Rokarthian society all accumulate here. There is no tomorrow for the people forced to eke out a miserable existence here. There is only this moment, and surviving it, hoping to make it to the next.

There is no planning, no reason to the structure of these murky depths beneath the hive city. Some parts of the Bowels are cramped warrens of dark, meandering tunnels, while others gape like wounds in the city's structure, gloomy cathedrum-sized caverns spanned by corroded gantries and blanketed with stinking vapours. Few portions of the Bowels are powered, making them pitch-black wastelands that the downtrodden natives navigate through candlelight, smell, and memory. Much of the Bowels has been pierced by the invasive roots of Voll's native stonethistle, a particularly pernicious weed that can provide a bitter, thorny source of sustenance to the desperate. Like the weed, the Bowels weren't so much built as grown, spawning from the twisted network of sewers infiltrating downwards.

There is only one rule here: the strong dominate the weak. Each day, a multitude of crimes and atrocities go unpunished, much less investigated. Even if the hive authorities were inclined to involve themselves in this place of violent anarchy, they simply lack the resources to investigate every offence, much less punish the perpetrators. The only sure way to be safe from the predators of the Bowels is to avoid them altogether.

Those who don't must be ready to fight and keep fighting, or else make such a display of naked power and menace that any would-be challenger is immediately cowed. The only alternative is to employ stealth and subterfuge, staying well away from the grimy denizens of the place. Fortunately, in these gloomy depths, it is easy to remain hidden. But it is also very easy to get lost, caught in a labyrinthine maze of twisting corridors punctuated by gaping holes or pits or leading to abrupt dead-ends. It is said that in the darkest corners of the Bowels, things lurk that are no longer human, or never were, watching with furtive hunger for those careless enough to come with their grasping reach. Wandering the Bowels is a useful pursuit for those with a death wish and is to be judiciously avoided by almost everyone else. You can use the **Bowels & Beyond Encounters** Table (page 51) to generate encounters and interesting situations for the characters.

HIVE BOWELS SCENERY

Light is rare within the dark bowels of Rokarth. Most of the Bowels is pitch black, save where a ramshackle community has managed to rig some illumination by siphoning power. Some regions have patches of softly glowing fungi, but this light seldom extends far. Some acynadi have natural bioluminescence, but most are lethal predators that use their light to lure prey. The lack of light matters little for those seeking inspirational sights, as there is little to be found but caverns filled with the discarded waste of the hive above.

The noise of Rokarth's industrial engines reverberate through the Bowels. The sounds of shifting, breaking stone, and the thrum of the central Generatorium echo throughout, but it is generally quieter than the hive above. Still, strange sounds echo persistently in the cavernous spaces and tangled jungles of detritus, mingling with the sinister noises made by the unidentified creatures that dwell here, and occasionally, a terrifying roar will rip out through the darkness.

The Bowels smell overwhelmingly of wet mud, stone dust, hints of rot, and caustic fumes — a toxic concoction that makes breathing difficult without a respirator. There are no streets within the Bowels, nor ordered habways to be found. Makeshift paths forged by the locals are changed regularly by hivequakes and deluges of waste chemicals from above, wiping them out, often taking the lives of the unwary with them. The Bowels' crudely armoured hovels and enclaves are mostly constructed of fallen rockcrete, or whatever other materials their denizens could scavenge. Any place comparatively well made is almost invariably neutral ground or financed for a specific purpose by one faction or another.

The vast Unsea stretches beyond what any light can show, its shores regularly shifting with its uncertain cadmium tides. Toxic sludge from the hive combines with unusual acids welling up from Voll's crust, meaning the foaming water is a death sentence to any who take the plunge.



HIVE BOWELS INHABITANTS

Although the inhabitants of the Bowels of Rokarth and their environs are more diverse than the largely faceless masses of the Lower Hive, they can readily be grouped into two broad categories — those with a reason to be in the gloomy Bowels and those with no reason to be anywhere else.

The first group are those whose duties or business require living within the Bowels. Dressed in grimy but serviceable clothing, these include those employed in the algae and tardigrade fields and Convenxums sprawling around the bottom of the hive, in servicing the lowermost portion of the Generatorium, or tasked to toil in the Nexus. Needless to say, these are deeply undesirable duties and are normally only given to those who cannot, for any number of reasons, be employed in the Lower Hive — or as punishment for those who catch the ire of a noble house.

Occasionally, teams of more skilled Lower Hive workers will be dispatched into the Bowels to carry out specific work, such as maintaining the hive's foundations. However, they are only temporary residents, fleeing back to the relative safety of the Lower Hive as soon as they can. Vigilite Bastions are few and far between, guarding crucial structural sites and the Generatorium, as House Castyx are unwilling to commit resources to reconquer the vast, unproductive darkness of the Bowels. Many Macharian Vigilites assigned to these dangerous depths are serving penance for minor slights, whilst others are so filled with zeal that they request these perilous postings to bring the Emperor's light to the darkest parts of Rokarth. Ultimately, the Vigilites are flickering candles in the all-consuming dark, and the Bowels are a law unto themselves — those with the strength, cunning, and ruthlessness to survive are the true rulers, with uniforms and titles meaning nothing in the lightless depths.

The second, much larger group are people who simply have no place in the upper parts of Rokarth. Infractionists evading detection or punishment (from the Vigilites or another party interested in taking their scalp) often flee to the ungoverned Bowels to lay low, fence ill-gotten gains, or resupply themselves with goods stolen by others. Undesirables and outcasts — free thinkers, or worse, mutants — leave the safety of the hive proper to find a home in the Bowels or perish.

The gangs have a large presence, using fortified hideouts in the Bowels as bases for their nefarious operations in the rest of the hive. They also include people too sick, injured, or old to work productive jobs in the Lower Hive, covering themselves in whatever scraps and rags they can scrounge. Some of these are made of stonethistle fibre, the fabric uncomfortable but serviceable and acid-resistant. Seditious conspiracies and heretical cults also gravitate here, gathering, scheming, blaspheming, and otherwise engaging in their vile practices.

HIVE BOWELS NEXUS

The lowermost portion of Rokarth's Nexus is a grimy, corroded tangle of structural buttresses supporting creaky maglift systems, skeins of dangling cables, and a forest of pipes and conduits dripping viscous effluent and polluted water. Rising through the midst of this grimy labyrinth is the base of the Generatorium that powers Rokarth. Unlike the upper portions of the hive, the Generatorium's shielding here is in poor repair, leaking heat and radiation into the surrounding levels. In some places, the shielding is gone altogether, stripped by scavengers. So, some parts of the Bowels Nexus are entirely uninhabitable due to radioactivity.

None of this has stopped denizens of the Bowels from daring to eke out an existence near the Nexus. The Generatorium is festooned with illegal power taps, energising myriad 'businesses' ranging from bars like the Thermal Warning to ramshackle laboratories producing illicit chems, providing constant battlegrounds between righteous crusading Macharian Vigilites and fearsome gangers.

Others lurk near the maglifts, seeking to extort 'tolls' from those using them to move between levels within the Bowels. They are generally more cautious regarding traffic coming from further up in the hive, as shaking them down risks attracting the ire of the Macharian Vigilites. Should the maglift users appear truly dangerous — groups of obviously armed Infractionist gangers, for instance — the would-be toll-takers will abruptly disappear. Pathetic beggars quickly take their place near the maglifts, bony arms reaching out from beneath ragged clothing, hoping desperately for a solar or a morsel of food. In return, they often provide information, making them potentially valuable first points of contact for those entering the Bowels.

BOWELS & BEYOND ENCOUNTERS

Id100	DESCRIPTION
01-07	You find yourselves in a cavernous open space, seemingly caused by acidic downpours. The sound of grinding mechanisms echo from high above, and a shower of acid rain falls, drawing crowds of ragged dregs who stare upwards, eyes wide open, for as long as they can bear. A woman in rotting grey robes is lauded for outlasting all others. One look reveals that her eyes are a mass of scabrous tissue.
08-14	Your path takes you through a shanty town built from the wreckage of several former manufacturums and cathedrums, arranged around a haphazard habway festooned with filthy maket stands where dregs peddle dubious scavenged foodstuffs. A fight breaks out between two different gangs. If the characters take sides and manage to win the fight, they gain +1 Influence with the gang they assisted, but -1 Influence with the other.
15-21	Suddenly, the earth below and the hive above quake asynchronously. Every character must make a Challenging (+0) Reflexes (Dodge) Test or fall <i>Prone</i> and suffer 1 Wound as they are hit by falling detritus. If any of the characters fail the Test, a group of 6 Vylathi Knives gangers ambush the recovering group, taking advantage of the disruption of the hive-quake. If all the characters succeed, the 6 Vylathi Knives fail and call out for help as they are trapped under dislodged architecture.
22-28	Your group find themselves walking alongside a shuffling queue of dregs waiting for medicae aid from a gang bonesaw. You overhear one unfortunate denizen of the Bowels mention that the gangers guarding the bonesaw inflicted the wounds they are here to get healed.
29-35	You find yourselves lost in a labaryinthe of rusted plasteel. Here, a wild-eyed man cries out to your group, claiming he is trapped in the Bowels owing to a bureaucratic mistake. He will prove it and reward the characters if they escort him to the Upper Hive. It's up to you as the Gamemaster if this man's story is true — for added drama, you might have him pursued through this maze of metal by a squad of gangers!
36-42	A community of dregs have turned a nearby ruin into their home. A blind beggar stumbles into the characters and immediately claims that the group must be the answer to their prayers, angels sent by the Emperor to provide aid. If the characters give the beggar any food or solars, they will spread word of this throughout the Bowels, perhaps improving their reputation or conversely marking them out as soft targets.
43-49	A former Administratum sanctum sits amongst the wreckage and swampy darkness, an oasis of brightness in the nightmare of the Bowels. The sanctum now houses a bustling market, selling weapons, ammunition, and chemicals of dubious provenance. The characters are able to buy all manner of wargear here, but of dubious quality. Several Macharian Vigilites are observing this market and using it as a sting operation. They may either track the characters down if they buy anything, or launch an ambush at any moment.
50-56	Whilst clambering through a collapsed habway, you find a furtive woman sitting at a campfire. If approached, she asks if any of the characters are 'Malat Vers', but regardless of their answer, she scurries off into the ruins, disappearing into crawlspaces seemingly too small for her.
57-63	After navigating through a jungle of ancient rusted mechanisms and collapsed foundations, your only path forwards is a muddy Unsea swamp. A woman with an ill-fitting augmetic eye is almost fully submerged in the muck, and calls out to you for aid. The woman is a member of the Cutters gang, and is attempting to lure unaware travellers into the mire so that her accomplices, four gangers, can ambush them.
64-70	Next to a weakly lit dreg-habway, you overhear a nearby ganger expressing expletive-ridden doubt that their acid-scarred accomplice really saw a Chrono Gladiator in the Pit. The accomplice responds by growling that the story is more believable than the rumour that Valeria Castyx was seen in Thermal Warning.
71-77	Your path takes you through a slightly bioluminescent field of reeking mushrooms. The characters must succeed on a Challenging (+0) Fortitude Test or be <i>Poisoned</i> for one hour as the choking fungal spores clog their lungs. This will trigger a coughing fit, attracting a grim contingent of Macharian Vigilites who seek someone called 'Malat Vers'. They are suspicious of why the characters would be in such a place.
78-84	As you traverse an intertwined mess of rusted industrial piping, you come across a colossal duct torn apart by a hivequake. Squatters have converted this disaster-site into a raucous makeshift bar called <i>'The Spill'</i> . Here, dregs distill foul moonshines, and gangers of Block 24-96 ambush the unwary.
85-91	As you navigate what appears to be a conglomeration of collapsed manufacturums, you come across a ramshackle encampment, barely illuminated by a sliver of light from high above. Central among the bivouacs is an acid-worn statue of an Imperial Saint that seems to have fallen into the Bowels, and is now being worshipped by the few armed dregs that make this their home.
92-98	As your path takes you through swampy terrain and inky darkness, you stumble across a wrecked stilt-ship on the shores of an abandoned tardigrade field. Several famished Imperial Citizens (<i>The Blazing Seraph</i> , page 44) are feasting on partially rotten tardigrades and living within the wreck.
99-00	As you journey down a long-forgotten path of hive-quake wracked former habways, you hear a group of voices raised in an ominous, guttural chant, emanating from the ancient ruin of what might have been an Imperial shrine centuries ago. The sounds of brutal violence punctuate the chanting. If the characters investigate, they find seven living Khorne-worshipping Cultists (<i>The Blazing Seraph</i> , page 43) occupying the profaned ruin, and an eighth lying dead on the shattered rockrete floor. Two of the cultists are fighting to the death in a pool of blood, whilst the others chant and observe. Regardless of what the characters do, they must make a Challenging (+0) Discipline Test to resist 1 Corruption.



ALGAE & TARDIGRADE FIELDS

Inside and beyond Rokarth's massive base, Voll's chemical swamps become expansive algae fields, hemmed in by low causeways and dome-roofed compounds. These are watched over by luckless agri-labourers, scraping up the thick slime needed for a hiver's daily ration. The fields contain the greatest abundance of non-Human life for miles. Lumpen forms paddle beneath the algae layers, enormous tardigrades that give Rokarth its most reliable source of real meat.

All noble houses, even the smallest, maintain a few fields. House Vylathi possesses the largest holdings, and many lesser houses are forced to pay to use their causeway networks. The only other major presence is the Mercator Carnem. All causeways eventually lead to a Carnem Processing Dome, where you can hear the squealing of tardigrades being loaded onto conveyor belts. Occasionally, Highborn houses hire mercenaries to 'reclaim' fields from rivals. To agri-labourers, these skirmishes are just another hazard of their labours, though the corpses are invaluable for ensuring a vibrant harvest.

WORM FOOD

An epidemic is spreading through Rokarth's Upper Levels. People are collapsing, with pallid, string-like worms wriggling from their eyes. Stomach pumps reveal they all ate tardigrade meat infested with parasites. While the farms all accuse each other, a single agri-labourer named Jureah Lons works diligently to spread the parasitic blessing of their foul deity, influenced as they are by the Pestilent Jest (page 61).

CUTTER PARTS

At Ditchhaven's edge, the relative peace is shattered by grinding metal, snapping sparks, and rapid gunfire. These are the sounds of Cutter Parts, a compound of workshops and test ranges where Cutter gunsmiths create low-tech armaments for the residents of the Bowels to murder each other.

The Cutters gangsters ensure that most scrap metal sold in Ditchhaven makes its way here. This monopoly grants them a lot of influence, with even other gangs bringing them offerings to either purchase weapons or ensure rivals go without. The Cutters will brook no challenge to their dominance, and those who try will find themselves used for target practice.

Gunsmith Arli Three-Hands is in charge. Wrapped in her acid-resistant poncho, Arli is a genius with scrap, gaining her nickname from some saying she works so fast she must have a third hand — at least, that's the story she tells.

THREE-HANDED HUSTLE

After playing through *The Blazing Seraph*, the Cutters are likely in disarray and desperate for leadership. Arli Three-Hands will pragmatically seize this opportunity and lead a schism of former Cutters to join new benefactors with a similar interest in stealing technology from Rokarth above: the Mireclaw.

CONVEXUM FUNGI & STAGNUM

Built by House Sumalak, the ecosystems of these gargantuan convexum are mechanised and sealed off completely from the toxic atmosphere of Voll. Constructed out of giant plasteel domes, they're reinforced by coiling adamantium strips, meaning they're easy to climb but difficult to damage.

The Convexum Fungi cultivates various mushrooms. Some are harvested to create acids for cleaning or manufacturing, while others provide food. The tip of the convexum on the exterior of the Bowels is glasscrete, as the delicate, valuable mushrooms here need sunlight to grow. This variety, suncaps, is considered a delicacy.

They taste acidic and bitter; enjoying their unusual taste is a sign of a refined palette. Convexum Stagnum are used to grow edible and medicinal moulds and those with chemical properties useful for Rokarth's industries. A popular street food known as polycakes are made from a colourful mixture of excess moulds each harvest. These cakes vary in composition; occasionally, vendors have inadvertently killed their customers when a toxic mould has accidentally made it into the mix.

A CULINARY EMBARRASSMENT

Jokaim Leszar, a member of the Vylathi Knives, has noticed a pattern amongst the convexum of the Bowels. One will appear to malfunction, its mechanised atmosphere gradually heating and leaking radiation, until it is shut down completely and repaired by the Adeptus Mechanicus, just as another begins to overheat. He has tracked this pattern, making the shape of three circles that form a triangle, as it benefits him immensely: when a convexum shuts down, it is vulnerable to robbery, and Leszar is now making a significant sum of solars selling ill-gotten polycakes.

Many have died consuming Leszar's stolen goods, especially amongst the Vylathi Knives, who will take any chance to appear 'nobler'. Leszar wants to sell off his secrets and escape this scam before his customers turn against him.

DITCHHAVEN

As the power-pumping heart of the hive, all structures around the Generatorium are constantly reinforced. Consequently, the areas nearby are often the least likely to suffer from falling rockrete, and one has proven safer than all others despite being surrounded by sheer slopes and masses of industrial wreckage. This is Ditchhaven, often referred to as the safest place under the hive — to the friends of inhabitants, at least.

Ditchhaven owes its stability to several support arches high above. This allows fungal life to thrive, which is then cultivated by hivers to sell, and they're never short of buyers. Ditchhaven's safety makes it a trading hub. Stilt-fleet swamp rakers and gangers of the Lean-To rub shoulders with Lower Hive smugglers, swapping supplies, stories, and alcohol. It is said in the levels above, that everything you've ever lost eventually turns up in a Ditchhaven barter tent.

The region is neutral ground, and even the most heretical recidivist knows anyone who breaks this peace risks the entirety of the Bowels turning against them. However, Voll's acynadi have no respect for such agreements. Some make their lairs on the borders of Ditchhaven, offering plentiful sport for hunters.

CHASING WHISPERS

Hivers are disappearing from Ditchhaven. Rumours abound of people falling into a panic, constantly talking about a whispering voice only they can hear that demands they follow it into the tangles of detritus beyond the settlement's borders. A few raving dregs claim to have survived encounters with this shadowy, taloned monstrosity. Some believe this 'monster' is some kind of psychic acynadi, and are as keen to take it as a prize as they are to protect Ditchhaven, but the group (or their Patron) may notice a connection to the Mireclaw (page 64).



THE LEAN-TO

A collection of hovels crawling up one of Rokarth's living buttresses, the Lean-To is an island of light amidst the gloom. Ropeways grant access around its levels while spark-spitting cables syphon power from the buttress itself. Despite hivequakes, the protection the Lean-To's location provides from rockcrete falls has seen it grow into the largest settlement in the Bowels.

The Lean-To is Rokarth's inverted image. Where the hive's upper levels are comparatively bearable, in the Lean-To, the higher up you go, the further you are from supplies. Mutants, defective servitors, and even xenos are said to haunt the upper reaches, rumours that the Macharian Vigilites scoff at though they refuse to investigate. Meanwhile, Rokarth's gangs battle for the lower levels. Scarred Hands, Cutters, Vylathi Knives, and seemingly unaligned groups (likely connected to the Mireclaw) all claim territory, demanding solars for protection and recruiting from the populace. The Lean-To is a proving ground: make your reputation here, and you may be trusted with operations in the hive proper. Fail, and your body will be found — or not — in a twisted heap at the bottom of the Lean-To.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

Though 'law' in the Lean-To is usually enforced by the quickest knife and the loudest gun, the recidivists here still revere the mysterious Adeptus Mechanicus, understanding superficially that the bizarre rituals the Tech-Priests perform literally prevent the sky from falling. Artisan Mithra-Hept is embarking on one such routine buttress maintenance procedure, but rumours are already spreading of strange machinery appearing at the higher levels of the Lean-To, and that some of the dregs are even aiding the machinations of the Adeptus Mechanicus. The group's Patron wants them to investigate, particularly as Forge-Fane Incalcos-6 has heard little communication from Mithra-Hept since the Calculus Gloria predicted their death (see page 27).

THE PIT

Run by the Scarouss family, who claim to be an offshoot of the Noble House Vylathi, this enormous fighting pit is the most popular in the hive. Gangers visit for the regular fights, participating themselves or betting on the outcome. Anyone who wants to prove their fighting prowess or recruit some muscle comes here. Scarouss Junior often acts as judge, watching with their augmented eyes over the pit from an overhanging balcony, while the Scarouss Matriarch oversees the whole operation from behind glasscrete screens, arranging safe visits for those who wish to observe the carnage discreetly.

Dedicated fighters live beneath the pit and battle regularly, but visiting challengers are common. Rumour has it that the Scarouss have purchased Chrono-Gladiators, held in reserve for when they must guarantee a win. For warriors who survive to earn a reputation, their fame can lead to employment in the lofty spires of the hive or even offworld. This is the fate of the lucky few, and for every successful fighter who rises, hundreds die in obscurity.

A DANGEROUS OBSESSION

Young Lucius Parnam is determined to see a Chrono-Gladiator in the flesh — or preferably two — engaged in a fight to the death. House Parnam have refused his request to leave the Spire, and, like many in the upper reaches of Rokarth, deny that the Pit even exists. However, Lucius has plenty of solars and connections throughout the hive, and is willing to share both with any group that can aid in achieving his morbid goal. The Scarouss Matriarch has also caught wind of Lucius' desires but is attempting to prevent the Highborn scion from attending the Pit, fearing that anyone hailing from the Spire may recognise the Chrono-Gladiators she has had stolen from House Halvor-Mott (page 10).

BURNED AT THE PIT

The Lean-To, the Pit, and Thermal Warning all feature in the adventure Chemical Burn, available at cubicle7games.com. Chemical Burn can be played as a prequel, sequel, or sidequel to the adventure in this Starter Set. The Vylathi Knives ganger Lethe is running the Pit on the Scarouss family's orders during the Chemical Burn event, as they are otherwise engaged in trying to find appropriate operators to escort Lucius Parnam (see A Dangerous Obsession, above).

STILTS AND SLAUGHTER

Two Stilt-Fleet gangs are at war after a hivequake spilled a Las battery shipment into the swamp. So far, the Stilt-shivs and Gyxis family are deadlocked, allowing outsiders to tip the balance.

The Stilt-shivs are rumoured to work for the Vylathi Knives, though they are often praised by the folk of Ditchhaven and other places in the Bowels for sharing the soiled spoils of their labours with the most desperate of local denizens. Aiding the Stilt-shivs would earn the group Influence with the Vylathi Knives, and the gang would gain significant sway and power in the Bowels, making them useful allies.

Conversely, the Gyxis family have a terrible reputation amongst the denizens of the Bowels for trading away everything they find to those in the hive above and hoarding their grimy gains. Secretly supported by both the Administratum and House Castyx, the Gyxis employ brutal violence to meet the demands of their lofty benefactors and are known for their savagery. Aiding the Gyxis family is sure to earn the clandestine praise of both the Administratum and the Planetary Governor, but the folk of the Bowels will suffer immeasurably — particularly if the Gyxis family's penchant for violence exposes them to the corruption of a cult of Khorne.

DIM HORIZON

The Khoriv family know that agents from the Upper Hive are sniffing around the Horizon. The Mercator Carnem (backed by House Nethecaré) and House Taj both vie for a cut of their acynadi meat supply. Time and again, those from the inner hive cheat the Stilt-Fleet families out of much-needed supplies; this is one of the few stockpiles they have, which is why the Khoriv would rather save it for themselves. They seek intermediaries of their own, those of higher authority or those who know the inner hive better, to remove these house's agents and broker a palatable, ironclad deal among them.

THE STILT-FLEET

Where the ground of the Bowels gives way to toxic swamps, the silence is disturbed by the Stilt-Fleet's sucking footsteps. Carried by juddering walkers, some plundered from algae farms, others one-time industrial servitors with their biological components hacked out to allow for a pilot, these scavengers search for anything to sell. Scrap, machine parts, potentially edible algae, the Stilt-Fleet take everything not yet fully dissolved by Voll's acids.

Families operate a single stilt-walker, maintaining them against the inevitable degradation of the swamps' acids. Stilt-gangs grow from these families, and skirmishes between them are common, walkers clashing amidst the sludge and fumes. The more successful a stilt-gang, the more likely they are to gain the support of powerful individuals from the hive above, particularly if they find items of note. Rumour says the Gyxis Family enjoy sponsorship from a noble house. That those illustrious bodies could be bothered with the Stilt-Fleet is ridiculous enough for most to discount this as a mere rumour. However, the Gyxis are searching for something specific they refuse to disclose, and their walkers venture out farther each day.

THE UPHRATI HORIZON

Some decades ago, *the Uprati Horizon*, a Tarask Class Merchantman voidship, crashed amid departure from Rokarth's Void Buttress into the acidic swamplands just beyond the hive's perimeter. Damage was so severe to the vessel that it was deemed beyond repair, partly due to the environment in which it crashed. Instead, its husk was stripped for parts, and the Fleet abandoned the rest to gradually dissolve in the wastes.

The skeleton that remains of the *Horizon* now acts as a harbour for stilt-walkers, the last port of call before entering the vast tracts of swampland and astringent wilds that separate Hive Rokarth from the next nearest settlement. The Khoriv family controls the port and oversees trade and dealmaking, taking a tithe with each protected transaction. Profiting quite well from this endeavour, the Khoriv have more ambitious goals, aiming to break the influence various gangs hold over the stilt-walkers in the region. This would, of course, expand the Khoriv's own influence considerably.

The *Horizon* has become home to bands of acynadi hunters competing for the largest of these beasts that roam in the surrounding swamplands. Far from the Bowels as it is, the *Horizon* has become well known for its ample supply of acynadi meat and acid-resistant leathers, which they trade exclusively among the Stilt-Fleet and their families.

THE UNSEA

Rokarth's run-off mixes with Voll's rains to form the Unsea, a subterranean swamp stretching from beyond the hive's borders endlessly into its dark underbelly. This morass shifts with its own currents, filling the air with a hissing, popping murmururation interrupted only by things moving in its depths. Strange acynadi crawl from its shores, most living short, brutal lives as food for predators and other denizens. Others thrive.

Despite the Unsea's dangers, there are people here. Most prominent are agents of House Nethecaré, who maintain a research station disguised as a ganger outpost. Here, they test their technological investments, far from prying eyes and with the Unsea a handy means of disposing of any evidence.

Several gangs operate makeshift fleets to smuggle goods into and around the hive without resorting to policed channels. To do this, they hire one of the Ferry folk, a mysterious cult of guides who have spent their lives exploring the Unsea for generations. These hunched figures shroud their deformed bodies in expansive rain slickers and transport anyone or anything for a price.

PAY THE FERRYMAN

The group's Patron has heard rumours of an unexplained explosion on the Unsea and wants the group to investigate. The explosion came from House Nethecaré's research station, but to learn this and reach the site, the characters will have to negotiate with the Ferryfolk, who are in the pay of the Noble House.

Investigating the Ferryfolk further reveals that they are all mutants, led by a former Adeptus Ministorum priest named Galatia Loath. Knowing that her life beyond the Bowels was over after suffering mutation herself, Galatia inspired other mutants with her pious preachings, claiming they were all on a path of penance to serve the Emperor. Following what she believed to be holy visions, Galatia led the Ferryfolk in explorations of the Unsea, purging heretics in their wake. The vigilante community continued to fight against the profane and impure in the Bowels, hoping to serve the Emperor's will. Still, many in Rokarth would see their existence as well-intentioned but ultimately intolerable.

THERMAL WARNING

Power surges, bar brawls, and a constant air of criminal malice define Thermal Warning, a tavern built around a long-forgotten sub-station of the Generatorium that provides electrical power to hive Rokarth above. Thermal Warning is named for the ancient, yards-high Low Gothic text emblazoned on the centuries-old power structure. It is a precaution completely disregarded by the tavern proprietors as they illegally leech inconsistent power from the technology they can't hope to comprehend.

Some of Thermal Warning's stolen power is diverted to The Pit, whilst the remainder powers sickly stolen lumens and damaged vox units that blare viciously distorted hymnal recordings. Such noise masks the grinding of the Generatorium's mechanisms, making Thermal Warning an awful place to talk openly but an excellent venue to quietly conduct clandestine, illicit 'business'. Beyond the criminal clientele, the tavern serves a variety of dirt-cheap algae-derived moonshines to desperate denizens of the Bowels searching for any substance that can aid them in finding oblivion.

AUGURY CONFLICT

Tech-Priest Rathiax-12 has held a deep communion with the machine spirit of the Generatorium and has detected the anomalous power drain of Thermal Warning, believing it to be a blasphemy against the Omnissiah that could potentially cause a dangerous radiation leak in the Bowels. However, their name has appeared in the *Calculus Gloria* (page 27), and Rathiax-12 is now terrified to journey to Thermal Warning themselves, fearing death at the hands of a member of the Vylathi Knives named Lethe, who they think runs the bar. For her part, Lethe has never met a member of the Adeptus Mechanicus. She is currently looking to find a wealthy buyer for the information she has gathered on 'Lord' Pladeau and apparent mutations in the Noble House Kalveo line. More information on Lethe can be found in *Chemical Burn* at cubicle7games.com.



FIDGET, CUNNING HAB-RAT

Fidget is a hab-rat, a man who has spent more years than he can count on his fingers in the inky darkness of the Bowels. Scrawny and dirty, Fidget is nonetheless quick and clever and almost supernaturally elusive, eking out a wretched existence on the fringes of what is already the fringe of Rokarth's society. He lives in the habways, alleys, and even the ductwork of the Bowels, knowing the twists and turns and secret places in and around the Lean-To as well as the back of his own filthy hand. He begs, borrows, or simply steals what he needs to survive.

Fidget recently did a job for one of the gangs — he thinks it was the Cutters — delivering a message to a smuggler in Thermal Warning, regarding the location of a cache of stolen goods in the Falchion. The smuggler, though, had been killed in a bar-brawl, meaning Fidget now has a golden opportunity. He is willing to lead someone to the cache, but only if they can get him permanently settled into his imagined 'paradise' of the Lower Hive. There is only one catch — the gangers' message said that the cache was 'protected in the usual way'. Fidget has no idea what this protection might be, but he is willing to risk it if it means trading his wretched life for a marginally less-wretched one.



AVANA TAWN, ROGUISH STILT-PILOT

Avana Tawn is a stilt-ship pilot who plies the reeking swamps of the tardigrade and algae farms. She cuts a dashing figure, obviously fancying herself a roguish daredevil despite operating a 'ship' that travels by mechanically plodding through endless mud. That said, she is charming, infectiously good-humoured, and smart. She carefully notes everything that goes on around the towering bulk of Rokarth, reasoning that the goings-on outside the hive could be of nearly as much interest as those inside it. Although she works a regular route through the swamps, she carries passengers on the side for a suitable fee, making her a reliable way to traverse the noisome, acidic mire.

Lately, Tawn has noticed activity around a convenxum recently sold by House Sumalak to House Vylathi. Right after the sale, a prohibited zone was declared around the convenxum. Since then, bulky stilt-walkers have been shuffling around the convenxum, loading or unloading something kept secret. The rumours speak of experimentation with off-world plants or fauna within the arcology, something Inquisitor Halikarn finds both interesting and unsettling. Secrecy, after all, is the fertile ground in which sedition and heresy take root. Tawn would probably be key in getting someone to the convenxum, but getting inside would be their problem.



VILLAINS ON VOLL

Making enemies on Voll is easier than breathing. Treachery and duplicity can lurk in the heart of any seemingly upstanding citizen, while the planet's caustic atmosphere causes unprotected lungs to quickly cough and splutter, and that is to say nothing of the noxious conditions found in most manufactorums.

As the capital of Voll, Rokarth magnifies its every aspect. The great and the powerful gather here, be they loyal servants of the Imperium or antagonistic agents bent on the subversion of the God-Emperor's grand vision. An intricate web of competing interests means that aiding one faction of the Adeptus Terra or a particular noble house is likely to earn the ire of another. As such, defining an individual or group as a 'villain' is a matter of perspective. Any Lower Hive serf-labourer caught in private and sufficiently plied with ghol will tell you tales of Macharian Vigilites brutalising the innocent for imagined slights. They might even expound on the campaign of terror masterminded by overseers of the Administratum to force impossible labours from the populace. But even the downtrodden would not consider their cruel masters as villains — to those that toil for the glory of the God-Emperor,

only traitors who seek to subvert the operations and continuation of His glorious Imperium are villains, and the only worthy recompense for those who betray Humanity is death.

Such traitors slink in the shadows of Rokarth, those who mark any servant of Imperial power as their enemy and whose means and very existence would be abhorrent to most citizens of the Imperium. Some operate secretly, wearing a public mask of honest servitude or hiding in the deep shadows in the hive's most neglected and piteous levels. Others work far more openly, rejecting the grace of a distant, dying Emperor and decrying the cruel tyranny of His servants on Voll. These latter kind have nothing but their wits and guile to keep themselves ahead of the Macharian Vigilites and any others who recognise the threat they pose.

The following is a selection of some of the most dangerous organised threats on Voll, each a worthy foe for PCs to pursue once you have played through the *The Blazing Seraph*. Note that there are additional useful stat-blocks available in the adventure book, such as the **Cultist**, **Ganger**, **Imperial Citizen**, and **Macharian Vigilite**.

CRIME ON ROKARTH

Crime is a way of life in Rokarth, as it is in hives across the Imperium. The cracks in Imperial authority run so wide in most hives that entire habspraws may fall through. In the cloying darkness of the lower levels, starved of resources, those with the strength and will to seize what they require are the only ones to prosper.

Rokarth's Macharian Vigilites deem all such people Infracionists, whether their crime is stealing a carton of grey rations bound for a battlefield, or murdering a half dozen citizens in a back alley brawl. The powers of the Imperium simply accept that a base level of criminal activity is unavoidable, and is tolerated within reason. Once Infracionist activity threatens the overall stability of a hive, and especially if it threatens the provision of the Imperial Tithe, then it is expected that local forces go to any lengths required to suppress it. This typically involves raids by teams of Macharian Vigilites, mass imprisonment, and frequent summary executions. The full purgation of an entire hab-sprawl has not been required for decades, not due to any sympathy on the part of Precinct Fortress Majoris, but rather a loathing for the endless Administratum paperwork that must be completed to sanction such a solution.

For their part, most long-term Infracionists form gangs for mutual protection, not least from other gangs. A great deal of crime in Rokarth is organised at some level, and it is rumoured that certain gangs, most notably the Vylathi Knives, have connections to Noble Houses and others in the Upper Hive. Most make their living through theft, extortion, and smuggling, but a few have loftier ambitions. The Cutters, for example, prize technology, and see all their activities as tests of their mastery of their tools. Others seek to establish illicit manufactorums, producing small amounts of valuable machinery, useful chemicals, or — most frequently — lethal weaponry.



HERESY IN THE HIVE

There is little heresy on Voll, and none at all in Rokarth — or so House Castyx would have you believe. They point to the world's relatively trouble free, if extremely tense, passage through the Noctis Aeterna as evidence of this. True, most corruption on Voll is of the mundane variety, tolerated or even exploited by the Imperium at large, but only a fool would believe that the Emperor's Light illuminates every dark corner, and Rokarth is no exception. Heresy festers here, from the tip of the Spire to the very depths of the hive. It is not so prevalent that one may openly question the tenants of the Imperial Creed or the authority of the Emperor's servants, but nonetheless, true heresy has sunk its claws in the people of Hive Rokarth.

As with so much harmful activity, this is most prevalent in the lower regions of the hive. Here, cults of the Ruinous Powers slowly grow, their malice and their influence waxing with each dark revelation granted to them by their terrible gods. Their followers are varied, with most simply the desperate and the disenfranchised, but some are true fanatics who have given themselves over entirely, body and soul, to the powers of the warp. Most of these groups know they are few in number, that their day has not yet come, and so they curtail their activities. Many are consumed with internal politicking or internecine violence. Others, however, are more organised, and more ambitious.

It is the latter sort that are found most commonly in the Upper Hive, and even the Spire itself. Here, subtle plots, secret loyalties, and heretical indulgences sway the workings of Rokarth from the very seat of power which should be guiding the hive towards the Emperor's light. Some barter for power with forbidden entities, while others toy with forbidden knowledge and horrific pleasures.

So far no Inquisitor of the Ordo Hereticus has given Rokarth the careful look it deserves. Should one do so, it is likely that the acid rains of Voll would fall on streets and habways splattered in the blood of loyal citizen and secret heretic alike.

CULTS OF KHORNE

In the depths of their hearts, in the darkest, raging corners of their souls, all Humans feel the influence of Khorne. He has been worshipped by countless civilisations under many names, but his depictions are all of a kind — a mighty warrior with a bestial face, his eyes alight with intense hatred, seated on a throne of brass atop a mountain of skulls. Khorne is a god of warfare, bloodshed, and boundless rage. He cares not from whom the blood is shed, only that it flows in an endless torrent. In an Imperium wracked by ceaseless war, awash in tides of blood, Khorne's might grows.

MURDERLINE

'Do not fear rage. Rage is the righteousness in your heart, begging that blood be spilt. Harness your hatred, and begin the hunt!'

Every citizen of the Imperium is taught to fear, hate, and abhor those that do not adhere to the strictures of the God-Emperor's hallowed realm. In the past, the Adeptus Ministorum of Rokarth have relied on such zealotry to serve their grand designs — in times of dire need, preachers have rallied the faithful into furious militia forces, unleashing them to hunt Rogue Psykers and decimate Infracionist gangs. Once their purpose is served, these groups are disbanded, and return to their pious, peaceful work, but some souls are forever stained by the bloodshed, and feel the call of Khorne forevermore. One such group is Murderline, a collection of Administratum adepts, Adeptus Ministorum preachers, warriors from the Astra Militarum, and workers of the Imperial Fleet. All were changed by the carnage they perpetrated in the God-Emperor's name, and seek to continue their bloody work whenever possible.

Mere days before the events of *The Blazing Seraph*, a group of Administratum clerks were goaded into fighting several gangers from Block 24-96 at a dive bar in Three Knock Alley, killing them before escaping. The rush of bloodletting left them craving more, and after acquiring weapons, they serendipitously found themselves joining a slaughter aboard a maglev train. They butchered their way down the length of a carriage beside veterans of the cult, before donning robes to conceal their gore-spattered bodies and escaping anonymously into the hive.

Members of Murderline believe they are members of a righteous Death Cult, unaware that Khorne's iron grip is wrought around their souls. They scream vile oaths and curses as they hack into the crowd; baying for blood, ragged meat and the skulls of their foes.

Finding Murderline will be hard. They are a relatively small group, well organised and with absolutely no wider criminal ties. Consider choosing a Rokarth NPC to be a survivor of a Murderline attack on a maglev train — perhaps, with the right persuasion, this survivor could be convinced to describe what they had seen.

SCIONS OF THE CHALICE

The Charnal Chalice is a pit fighting arena in the Lower Hive based in the ruins of a Chem Manufactorum VI7, ruined in a hive-quake a century ago. Its unique setup attracts fighters and spectators from across the hive — fights occur in huge open-topped vats that slowly fill with a highly corrosive acid. Here and there ladders, pillars, and other debris form islands of temporary respite, but as the acid rises each is swallowed up. The smart and lucky claim the high ground and hold it, while the unfortunate meet a horrible fate, choking on lungs filled with the toxic mess. The last fighter standing in the acid is the winner, awarded a prize of a thousand solars. The raucous crowds enjoy hearing the sizzle of flesh and blood splatter on the acid's surface.

Unbeknownst to most, a Captain Marmax of the Macharian Vigilites runs the Chalice. The scarred veteran has kept its existence a secret for two decades now, and ensured that Chem Manufactorum VI7 is never deemed safe for repair. He often sources fighters from among his Infracionist prisoners, offering freedom for their participation. If he spied a likely looking member of the group of Characters, he may well extend an invitation to them.

Marmax's heresy does not end there. Every eight lunar cycles of Voll's moon Elian, the Chalice is closed to all save a select inner circle. On these nights the same vats that provide the near endless supply of acid vomit forth rank blood instead. Every victor is inexplicably drawn to the Chalice to fight again, cheered on by the baying crowd. The last fighter left standing when the moon shifts out of position bears witness to the delivery of a dark gift; a bloody clawed hand raises out of the crimson pool, a blood-red blade is given to the champion, marking them as a Scion of the Chalice.



CULTS OF NURGLE

Entropy and decay come for all living things, and new life arises from putrescence and death. Some who come to understand this turn from the glory of the immortal Emperor and embrace Grandfather Nurgle and his gifts of disease and suffering, freed from the shackles of mortal concerns. Followers of Nurgle have no need to fear death, and eschew hope in favour of absolute acceptance of Nurgle's gifts. Through disease, sickness and agony they persevere undaunted, and those that follow the Lord of Pestilence joyously spread his gifts so others too may learn to endure as they do.

CADRE OF THE SEVEN SERUMS

The understaffed ranks of the Officio Medicae operating in Rokarth have a daunting duty, sworn to maintain the physical and mental health of the hive's billions-strong population. Workers must be healthy to meet the tithe, but dangers abound on all hive levels — backbreaking labour, industrial accidents, environmental hazards, and rampant plagues assail the underfed and overworked populace. Whilst on the front lines of this pyrrhic struggle, a thought entered the mind of the experienced Officio Medicae Operant Savonros Alille: what if the overwhelming diseases they fought could be made to aid Humanity? Whether this was an original, misguided idea, or a foul design implanted by the forces of Nurgle, Alille soon began secretive experiments with forbidden gene-alchemy and gathered others to their cause, forming the Cadre of the Seven Serums.

The Cadre of the Seven Serums seeks a panacea through grotesque unsanctioned medicae experiments. By manufacturing and selling bootleg rejuvenat to corrupt contacts across Rokarth, Alille gathered the funds and contacts necessary to procure vitae-womb technology. For decades the Cadre have cloned resilient subjects for testing. The hulking abhumans known as Ogyrns, with their enormous bulk makes them the ideal incubation units as they endeavoured to cultivate resilience to the myriad afflictions native to Voll.

These experiments could still have been explained as misguided attempts to combat the afflictions that run rampant through the population of Rokarth. However, Alille's insistence on releasing the burgeoning plagues cultivated within the Ogyrns for 'testing' is responsible for numerous medicae-

related catastrophes in Rokarth, from the dreaded Harrowplague to the proliferation of Hiver's Lung and potentially even the mutants within those of House Kalveo who have unwittingly sampled their bootleg rejuvenat. It is possible that the strange, often deadly plague known as the Shivers was born in the Cadre's malign laboratory.

THE PESTILENT JEST

The starving masses of the Lower Hive and the Bowels quickly learn to find their own sustenance to survive, as trading the few solars they have for food is unlikely to satiate their hunger for long and could be better spent on a means of self defence. This desperation drove many to eat whatever they find, be it the mould sprouting on a habsprawl ceiling or fungi flourishing in an industrial vent. Such scrounged sustenance invariably leads to the spread of sickness, and many die daily due to malnutrition. A rare few, however, are introduced to one of Grandfather Nurgle's most insidiously infectious jokes: what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

The Pestilent Jest are a cult of Nurgle obsessed with the 'benefits' of eating spoiled, infected, or otherwise virulent foodstuffs, viewing their vomitous ailments and pustular growths as 'gifts from Grandfather'. The cult began in Rokarth's Bowels as workers amongst the Algae, Tardigrade, Stagnum, and Convexum Fungi fields, collectively realised the absurdity that the fruits of their toil were all bound for the mouths of those above them.

Once, they merely cultivated rot amongst the foodstuffs they farmed, attempting to starve their 'betters' whilst ensuring they have a plentiful supply of putrescent sustenance. Now, their unwitting worship of Nurgle has warped their minds and given them a new goal — to spread the Pestilent Jest and their many food-borne maladies. They draw in new converts simply by petitioning the downtrodden of the Lower Hive and the Bowels to eat the readily available putrid 'foods' that surround them. Many such inductees expire due to

illness, but such widespread death is hardly uncommon. The cult attempt to infect any food supplies they can access, with the aim of corrupting all. They aim to conquer the Hydroponic Gardens to create an annex of Nurgle's own realm. To this end, they have targeted members of the Administratum and Imperial Fleet to increase the spread.



CULTS OF SLAANESH

Nameless desire. Unwavering obsession. Disgusting excess. These are the playtoys of Slaanesh, the Perfect Prince, lord of temptations and hideous vice. Worship of Slaanesh takes many forms, but much of it is born out of pride, envy, and greed. Slaanesh has been depicted in many forms, often reflecting the beholder's deepest desires, but is typically shown as an androgynous figure, alluring yet profane, innocent yet utterly lethal. To meet Slaanesh's gaze is to lose one's soul, and scream in unparalleled delight as it is ripped away. In Rokarth, as throughout much of the Imperium, deprivation and loss drive many into the open arms of Slaanesh, who promises everything save satisfaction.

THE SHIMMERING REACH

Rising from a toxic pit in the fringes of the Bowels is a ramshackle miniature imitation of Rokarth's Spire, a twisted structure of salvaged materials etched with acids towering precariously in the shadows. This is the namesake of the Shimmering Reach, a stained simulacrum of Rokarth's grandest heights cobbled together from crumbling infrastructure by the uncanny outcasts that form this cult. Nearby communities view these obsessives as harmless oddities, likely suffering from some mental malady as a result of exposure to toxic effluents. The truth is far more frightening.

The bizarre community of the Shimmering Reach toil to create a facsimile of the luxury of Rokarth's spire, foregoing any form of enjoyment or respite from their excessively strenuous labours. Months of gruelling drudgery end whenever the shadow of their false Spire aligns with Voll's moon Elian, heralding the dawn of a depraved ritual. The cult array themselves in the finest scraps they could gather, affecting titles of false nobility and gorging themselves on banquets of discarded scraps. They revel in distorted imitation of Rokarth's Highborn, feasting on their amassed luxuries, even engaging in depraved bloodsports as they welcome their guest of honour: Planetary Governor Castyx.

All on Voll know the name Jaspar Castyx, the current Planetary Governor. Though the billions of Rokarth's downtrodden know his stony glare from ubiquitous propaganda, few but the most vaunted representatives of Imperial institutions and noble houses on Voll will ever see Castyx in the flesh. Nevertheless, every cultist of the Shimmering Reach believe they have met him in person.

In truth, they are led by a daemon of Slaanesh who adopts the Planetary Governor's visage, feeding on the cult's indulgence in the excesses of extreme suffering and false luxury. This daemon encourages the cult to greater heights of debauchery, demanding that each subsequent ritualistic celebration be grander, with more attendees. Members of the Reach are always seeking to recruit others into their strange lifestyle, cycling between excesses of suffering and decadence. Desperate and depraved individuals from across Rokarth are drawn to the Shimmering Reach, as the daemon concocts vile plots to exploit their souls for the sake of the Perfect Prince.

THE UPPER HAND

Known only to those worthy of blackmail to ensure their confidentiality, this well-hidden club is a gambling den run by a pair of lesser nobles: Lepis Taj and their partner Gunde Castyx-Taj.

What began as a clandestine entertainment club for gambling and embracing other vices away from prying eyes has, over the years, grown stranger and more debauched. Rumours abound of wealthy scions and heads of Imperial offices losing fortunes to their obsession with high-stakes bets. Developing a reputation for opulent degeneracy, Lepis and Gunde use the profits of their secret venture to throw indulgent feasts, host ecstatically elegant performances, and line their walls with decadent artworks.

Hidden withing the chambers of the Upper Hand is an ancient artefact purloined from a House Castyx vault, a contorted sculpture of intertwined serpents rendered in shimmering metal, their fanged mouths opened wide as if preparing to consume their unfortunate prey. Lepis and Grunde have discovered the statue's warp-tainted secret: whenever two individuals place their hands in the gaping maws of the statue and make a wager, the terms are always fulfilled, no matter how esoteric.

Doubtful gamblers have scoffed at this claim, pledging abstract ideas like the memories of loved ones, their good looks, or even their concept of happiness against vast sums of solars. Whole aspects of oneself can vanish the moment a bet is lost. As if proving the ancient adage that the house always wins, Lepis and Gunde always seem to come out on top. Whether they know Slaanesh has claimed their souls or not, the two are fuelled by a clawing obsession to seek new excesses and higher stakes.



CULTS OF TZEENTCH

Change, sorcery, manipulation, and endlessly intricate schemes all fall within the realm of the Great Conspirator. The fate of every living citizen of the Imperium is woven together in schemes so labyrinthine and complex that to attempt to comprehend them is to invite madness. Tzeentch draws those that would seek insidious forbidden knowledge or profane power as a candle flame attracts insects. The rewards of worshipping Tzeentch are often paradoxical and complex, a true reflection of the ever-present change on which the Changer of Ways thrives.

CHILDREN OF THE FLUX

'Forget the power of technology and science, for so much has been forgotten, never to be re-learned.'

The mysteries of technology are akin to an arcane art in the Imperium. Even the Adeptus Mechanicus, who claim purview over all Imperial technological knowledge, rely on rote and ritualistic practices to tend to their venerable machines, putting their faith in the traditions of their creed, viewing innovation and change as blasphemous heresy. The Children of the Flux are anathema to these beliefs, Heretekes and technology-obsessed cultists that seek to corrupt the hive's machinery in the name of Tzeentch.

The core belief of the Children of the Flux is that change, instability, and inconsistency are natural and righteous. Seemingly rote and reliable technology must be re-moulded to embrace erratic discordance, enforcing the irresistible unpredictability of Tzeentch. The Children of the Flux spread malicious scrap-code to formerly stoic machine spirits, corrupting their ritualistic repetition and introducing aberrant anomalies in fuction.

The cult conspire to pervert the production of manufactorums, altering machinery to trigger calamitous accidents and spreading the chaos of pure, unrestrained change. The Children of the Flux may have stolen the data-tower from the Administratum Censorium (page 33) to spoil or warp its crucial records, and may be responsible for the info-curse affecting the anomalous data-loom in the Datamill District (page 42) — the cult may even be behind the strange projections of the Calculus Gloria in Forge-Fane Incalcos-6 (page 27).



THE ORNITHORY

Tendrils of undiscovered corruption born of the Macharian Heresy still slither throughout the Sector, striving to accomplish their twisted schemes centuries later. One such ancient cult, the Hands of the Just, puppeted the vile plot that led to the creation of the Ornithory. Their agents infiltrated a cadre of minor Highborn scions who sought to change the Imperium, and influenced them to pluck a young Rogue Psyker known as Calamus Vorne from obscurity and secret him away from the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. Calamus had a gift for prophecy and foresight, which the lesser Highborn used to guide their endeavours and raise their positions within their noble houses. Vorne was not satisfied with his life as a prisoner of these corrupt individuals, merely a tool in their schemes, and to his resentful ear came the whispers of Tzeentch.

Calamus' foresight shifted. He saw not only potential ways to manipulate the nobility, but also other Rogue Psykers emerging throughout Rokarth to be brought under his wing. He saw visions of a massive nine-eyed avian monstrosity sitting atop the Spire of Rokarth, feathers speckled in acid burns, encircled by flocks of birds — he believes it his destiny to become that creature. His warp-addled mind has expanded, tumefying his cranium as he sits in the Ornithory — what was once his prison is now the base of operations for his Tzeentchian cult.

The full depth of Calamus' powers is yet to be awakened, but he has put his twisted schemes into motion. The Highborn that once imprisoned him are now pawns in his plans, hypnotised by sorcery or blackmailed as Calamus plays the noble scions against one another. Slowly but surely, with each puppeted political manoeuvre, Calamus comes ever closer to striking down Jasper Castyx and installing one of his pawns as Planetary Governor.

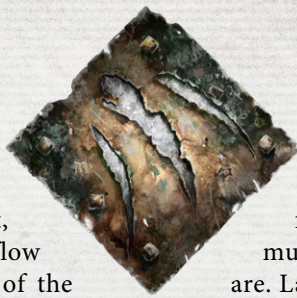
Simultaneously, Calamus calls to others of his kind through telepathic messages, aiding them in escaping the Adeptus Astra Telepathica and opening their minds to the unbidden power of Tzeentch to create a coven of committed sorcerers. He sends these devotees to wreak rampant havoc across Hive Rokarth seemingly at random, guided only by his visions and the occasional whispers of a mysterious visitor named Malat Vers.

THE MIRECLAW

The Ruinous Powers, though abhorrent, are not the only source of corruption to flow into Rokarth. Hidden deep in the roots of the hive is another threat, one wrought of a grotesque combination of Human flesh and xenos taint. Hidden away from the brutal authorities of Rokarth is an unseen and insidious scourge. The Mireclaw.

Their foul bloodline began with a lone emissary of an alien will. A single xenos creature, a Genestealer, hidden away in the cargo hold of a voidship hailing from far beyond the Sector, came to Rokarth generations ago. The vile creature made its way undetected into the Bowels of Rokarth, the only sign of its passage a few unfortunate corpses who caught a glimpse of chitinous hide or skittering claws. There it waited, spreading its curse among the populace, growing in power as well as in size. Several Human generations have since passed, and the creature is now a Genestealer Patriarch, but to its many children, it is regarded with heartfelt devotion and known simply as Father Mire.

The Mireclaw is a Genestealer Cult, a devoted brood of gene-cultists spawned to serve a single purpose: to turn their world into a ripe fruit, ready to be plucked and devoured by a Tyranid Hive Fleet. Of course, this is not how the faithful see things. They know only that theirs is the true faith, that their Star Gods are real and will one day answer their plaintive call. On that day of ascension, all their sacrifices will be repaid ten-fold.



The xenos taint that infects their blood is both subtle and complex. Early generations show clear signs of inhuman features. Though they may pass for a common mutant, some will recognise them for what they are. Later generations can pass as Human far more easily, infiltrating Imperial institutions and weakening them from within. After the fifth generation the cycle begins anew as Purestrain Genestealers are born, ready to bring other hives and worlds into xenos rapture.

The Mireclaw are well established on Rokarth, though they are not quite ready to strike at Voll at large. Still, their influence grows daily, and of late whole manufactorums have fallen under their sway. Their plots and schemes are numerous, but still vulnerable. Should circumstances conspire to bring it about, the right group of loyal citizens might yet uncover The Mireclaw and bring all their plans to ruin.

SICKNESS IN HEALTH

Voll is uniquely positioned as one of the foremost providers of medicae supplies in the entire Macharian Sector, shipping the curative fruits of billions of downtrodden labourers to thousands of worlds. Were something to taint these supplies, the affects would be Sector wide, impacting trillions of Humans.

The Mireclaw aim to perpetrate such mass contamination when the time is right. Broodkin have been inserted into crucial roles in medicae production throughout Rokarth over decades of careful clandestine contrivance. Some are overseers with Administratum-sanctioned clearances, others are supervisors or assistant thralls to Tech-Priests. All are subtle agents synchronised to achieve a single goal.



If any one site could be called the headquarters of this plot, it is the manufactorum Prospectus V in the Lower Hive. Fully half of the labourers sworn to toil here, refining Voll's native chemicals into ingredients for stimms, medicae kits, and rejuvenat, do so in a haunting silence — they communicate wordlessly through the Broodmind. They are led by an occasional visitor, Biophagus Ghaskin Thrace, a secretive biochemical scientist of the Mireclaw.

For the past year, Broodkin in Prospectus V have been adding additional, unsanctioned biochemicals into the mix. This insidious cocktail is a more subtle form of that employed in Gratis (see **Chemical Burn**), intended to make the victim more susceptible to the mental influence of the Genestealer Cult. So far, the results are unclear, but recently news has arrived that the noble Krez Vylathi experienced vivid 'hallucinations' of the God-Emperor reaching across the stars to shower Voll with gifts from the heavens. This has been seen as a success by the Biophagus, as such visions are a frequent gift of those touched by the will of the Star Gods. Plans are afoot to infiltrate more manufactorums, spreading these compounds into other medicae products.

SHRIVING THE WEAK

The will of Father Mire is not to be questioned, nor could most of his sizable brood even think to do so — every cultist is part of the gestalt psychic link, the Broodmind that focuses their will.

However, the cult does work with people who do not share neither their bloodline, nor who have experienced the 'gift' of the Genestealer's Kiss. This is typically done for reasons of circumspection. All such assets are kept at arms length from the truth of the Mireclaw, and thus present less of a risk should they be captured by hated Imperial authorities. Such pawns are often looked upon with pity by the cult's true members, but they nevertheless have their uses.

One such group is a gang of smugglers operating under the leadership of a former Navis Imperialis Armsman, Vedilik Kar. Kar was a useful tool for the Mireclaw, as his connections in the Void Buttrass allowed them to move agents, procure weapons, and smuggle supplies to distant Mireclaw operatives. However, Kar knows too much, and has begun to suspect his former largest customer is more than they seem to be. One by one Kar's smugglers have been dying brutal deaths, and Kar himself is likely soon to follow. He is pulling every trick he knows into escaping his fate, and will turn to almost anyone for help — even the PCs or their Patron.

DERAILED

When the day of ascension comes, every loyal follower of Father Mire's patient guidance knows that striking fast will be pivotal to annihilate the majority of Imperial resistance and claim Rokarth and Voll for the Star Gods. On that fateful day, the Mireclaw plan to stymie their foes by disrupting and controlling the maglifts and maglev train networks.

To this end, the Mireclaw have embarked on perhaps their most audacious plan. They have established numerous clandestine production sites, using equipment stolen from the manufactorums they have infiltrated, to create armoured trains that can be put into service to take control of the various stations throughout the hive. These have been secretly constructed on several levels of the hive, typically in condemned tunnels and subverted maintenance shafts.

In a rare lapse of security, a prototype train has been stolen in the lower hives by the Cutters (page 7), gangers with a penchant for technology. Though the railways open to them are relatively limited, Rokarth is truly massive, and the Cutters have been able to move the armoured train to a section of the hive under their control. The gang are currently looking for anyone with the technical expertise to help them upgrade and maintain the vehicle, while they plot using it on a big score. On the other claw, the Mireclaw are considering going to war to either retrieve or destroy it before the Cutter's activities draw too much attention.

BROODKIN

The application of the Genestealer's Kiss is the ultimate subversion of body and will. Those who suffer it pass the gene curse onto their spawn, and soon a whole brood of inhuman monsters is born. Many Broodkin can pass as human, especially those of the fourth generation, and thereby infiltrate Imperial society.

If you wish, you may modify the stat block of any Imperial NPC to represent an agent of a Genestealer Cult. They gain a bonus of +10 Will, as well as the Genestealer Mutation Trait (see the Neophyte Hybrid stat-block, page 66). Physically they typically appear hairless, and may possess subtle ridges somewhere on their head. Though spotting such signs is often difficult, even if one knows what to look for.

MORDECAI VREEL

Mordecai is a spawn of the fourth generation, those blessed — or, as Mordecai sees it, cursed — with sufficiently human physique to pass among the citizens of Hive Rokarth unremarked. Though Mordecai would never question his role in the great plan, he does sometimes look upon his cousins with something approximating envy. Still, he sates himself with the knowledge that, should he live to see it, the day of ascension shall surely see he and his kindred receive an equal portion of the Star Gods' blessings.

Mordecai works as an enforcer for an Administratum overseer, doling out punishments to tardy workers and ensuring the physical security of their manufactorum. His true labour has been facilitating the slow infiltration of the facility by other Mireclaw. Sacrifices have been called for, and Mordecai has found his heart troubled when he has been ordered by his overseer to lash his kin. But with a subtle nod from his victim, Mordecai has maintained his deception. The knowledge that his overseer has been marked for replacement by one of their own, just as soon as she has met with an unfortunate 'accident', brings Mordecai great satisfaction.

MORDECAI VREEL - NEOPHYTE HYBRID								
Medium Human (Genestealer Cultist), Troop								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
30	30	25	25	35	30	35	40	30
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
2			10			-		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
6			Normal			3		
Skills: Melee 40, Ranged 35, Stealth 45								
TRAITS								
Genestealer Mutation: Mordecai is connected to the Genestealer Broodmind, and gains Advantage on Discipline Tests when within Long Range of a Genestealer Psyker.								
ATTACKS								
Knife: Melee (One-handed) 40, 3 + SL difference Damage. <i>Subtle, Thrown (Short).</i>								
Cutting Torch: Melee (Two-handed) 40, 2 + SL difference Damage. <i>Inflict (Ablaze), Loud.</i>								
Auto Pistol: Ranged (Pistols) 35, 5 + SL Damage, Medium Range. <i>Close, Loud, Rapid Fire (3).</i>								
Possessions: 5d10 solars								

SKIR

Skir was spawned in the darkness of the Lower Hive, the offspring of parents even more inhuman than herself. Unlike her cousins of the fourth generation, only the least observant watchers could fail to mark Skir as something other than human. While she has, in times of crisis, moved through populated areas of the hive, she has always been wrapped in rags to disguise her form and has never stayed for long.

Still, Skir's human heritage shows itself in other ways. She understands a good deal about the technology of the Imperium, and lends her labour to her kin in their hidden holds throughout the hive. She has learned which machines best cut through bulkheads, and how large a breaching charge can be used without setting off automated sensors. Skir's true expertise is in kidnapping, however. She is a creature of endless patience and subtle movements, able to spend days lying in wait for her target before dragging them away to be brought before Father Mire. It is in these moments, as her struggling victim finally submits, that Skir truly feels the touch of the Star Gods upon her soul.

SKIR - ACOLYTE HYBRID								
Medium Monstrosity (Genestealer Cultist), Elite								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
40	30	50	50	60	30	40	60	20
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
2			21			1		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
10			Normal			3		
Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 65, Melee 60, Melee (Brawling) 70, Presence (Intimidation) 70, Ranged (Pistols) 45, Stealth 60, Stealth (Hide 75)								
TRAITS Genestealer Mutation: Skir is connected to the Genestealer Broodmind, and gains Advantage on Discipline Tests when within Long Range of a Genestealer Psyker. Helping Hand: This creature has an additional limb. They may use it to wield an additional one-handed weapon, and use it in combat.								
ATTACKS Claws: Melee (Brawling) 70, 4 + SL difference Damage. <i>Penetrating (1).</i> Cult Bonesword: Melee (One-handed) 60, 6 + SL difference Damage. Heavy Saw: Melee (Two-handed) 60, 7 + SL difference Damage. <i>Loud, Rend (3).</i> Autopistol: Ranged (Pistols) 45, 5 + SL Damage, Medium Range. <i>Close, Loud, Rapid Fire (3).</i>								
Possessions: 5d10 solars								

HASTIL STARN - CULT MAGUS

Medium Human (Genestealer Cultist), Leader

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
40	40	40	50	60	70	60	70	50
ARMOUR		WOUNDS		CRITICAL WOUNDS				
2		21		5				
INITIATIVE		SPEED		RESOLVE				
12		Normal		4				

Skills: Awareness 70, Awareness (Psyniscience) 80, Discipline (Psychic) 80, Intuition 80, Logic 80, Melee 60, Presence (Interrogation) 80, Psychic Mastery 80, Rapport (Deception) 65, Ranged 50, Stealth 70

TRAITS

Spiritual Leader: The Cult Magus is connected to the Genestealer Broodmind, and Grants Advantage on Discipline Tests to other Genestealer Cultists within Long Range.

Broodmind Psyker: The Cult Magus can use the following Psychic Power:

Mind Control: Psychic Mastery 80, Warp Rating 3, Medium Range. The Cult Magus overrides a creature's autonomy, subjugating it. Choose a creature within Medium Range. The target must win a **Hard (-20) Discipline (Psychic)** Test Opposing the Magus's Manifest Test or fall under the Magus's control until the start of their next turn. While the target is under the Magus's control, the GM dictates the creature's behaviour, including what it does during its turn. Whenever the creature takes Damage and at the end of its turn, it repeats the Opposed Test, ending the power immediately if it wins. Once a creature wins the Opposed Test, it is immune to this power for the next hour. The creature is aware of the Magus's attempt to control them whether the Magus wins or loses the first Opposed Test.

Warp Threshold: 7

ATTACKS

Magus Biodagger: Melee (One-handed) 60, 5 + SL difference Damage. *Inflict (Fear, Poisoned and Stunned), Penetrating (2)*. When a non-Genestealer Cult character is damaged by this weapon, they must make a **Routine (+20) Fortitude (Pain)** Test, or die instantly, wracked with agony as the countless voices of the Hive Mind explode in their consciousness, devouring their mind.

Magus Stave: Melee (Two-handed) 60, 4 + SL difference Damage. *Defensive*.

Autopistol: Ranged (Pistols) 50, 5 + SL Damage, Medium Range. *Close, Loud, Rapid Fire (3)*.

Possessions: 10d10 solars

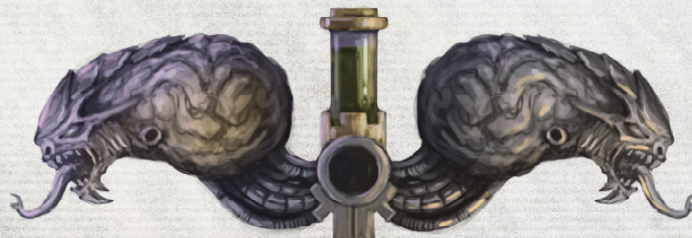
HASTIL STARN

Hastil was born to fire and ruin, and has never forgotten it. A child of the Lower Hive, Hastil's family was one of hundreds more caught up in a sweep of their hab sprawl when she was just an infant. While the Mireclaw were able to spirit young Hastil away through their web of secretive tunnels and passage ways, her family were detained by the hated Macharian Vigilites. Though Hastil never saw them again, she was informed some years later by one of her brood kin that her parents had perished in captivity, having never spoken a word of the Mireclaw's secrets.

Hastil has harboured a burning rage for the Imperium since that day, and perhaps this is what drew her to the attention of the Star Gods. She was marked for something more, a position of prominence among her kindred. Though she does not know how, the signs of this were detected by her cousins in the darkest tunnels reserved for those who cannot venture into the wider hive. Their many loving claws embraced Hastil and brought her before Father Mire, who stirred in his half slumber long enough to make his will known — she was to be his emissary, his magus.

That was many years ago, and Hastil has grown in power. She can hear the thoughts of her nearest kin on a whim, and in emulation of Father Mire's own gifts she can even dominate the minds of others outside the brood. She has acted as a spiritual guide to the Mireclaw, interpreting Father Mire's commands, spreading their influence, and bolstering the hearts of her kindred. It was she who promoted the distribution of Gratis, a compound that makes those who take it more open to the Star God's enlightenment, and her own mental domination. Though there are others in the cult more skilled at tactical planning, it is by Hastil's commands that they act, and it is Hastil to whom they look when seeking approval for a new venture. Of late, she has approved ever more daring plans.

Though the Magus has ever been troubled by dreams of fire and ruin, an inheritance of her childhood, of late these dreams have changed. In them, a gust of wind from above extinguishes the flames, and a great clawed hand plucks her from the ruins of her childhood home. She stares in to the countless, unblinking eyes of her gods, and knows that their time draws very near indeed.



Powers of Rokarth

Noble Houses



HOUSE CASTYX

The ruling noble house on Rokarth, descended from a centuries long line of Rogue Traders.



HOUSE NETHECARÉ

A noble house with extensive interest in biochemistry and hydroponics, crucial to Rokarth's tithe and local food supply.



HOUSE TAJ

A popular noble house who deal in security, public protection, and arms. Has long-standing connections within the Astra Militarum and Imperial Navy.



HOUSE VYLATHI

A noble house who, on the surface, deals in livestock and related pursuits. But their true strength lies in their network of spies scattered across Voll.

Merchant Guilds



MERCATOR CARNEM

The Meat Guild of Voll. They control all rendering and supplying of protein products produced on Voll, for the people and the planet's tithe.



MERCATOR DILAQUO

The Reclamation and Water Guild of Voll. They collect, transport, and produce raw chemical materials derived from Voll's acid rich environment.



MERCATOR LENIMEN

The Chem Guild of Voll. They research and produce chems and medicae equipment, often prized throughout the Macharian sector.

Infractionist Gangs



BLOCK 24-96

A gang who runs from protection rackets, to arms and theft. They can offer any kind of vice below the Upper Hive.



THE CUTTERS

A gang known for illicitly acquiring and re-purposing technology to fuel their power and line their pockets.



THE SCARRED HANDS

A gang composed almost entirely of scarred and downtrodden chemical manufactorum workers.



THE VYLATHI KNIVES

A gang who trade in illegal chems and information. They style themselves off the noble house from which they take their name.