

Return of the Scarlet Prophet

An Imperium Maledictum Mini-Campaign

Synopsis

The PCs are special troubleshooters for the Rogue Trader Alastair Troca, loyal servant of the Emperor and his house but also a shrewd trader looking for new business opportunities. The short campaign described here starts with the party defending the business interests of their patron and ends with them being embroiled in a major conspiracy that could cost them their lives. **Will Troca and the party become casualties of the cult uprising or will they help him turn the table and even manage to rise to the position of captain of the House Troca flagship?**

Adventure Flavor

Easy Dice Difficult Dice

Story-Driven Tactical

Characters Die Characters Come back

Dramatis Personae

Alastair Troca, a rogue trader of ambition who works within the system: A pious but shrewd Rogue Trader who has good ties to Cardinal Shyne, the ruler of Lux Eternus. Troca is currently in competition with his sister for the command of the house's flagship, the *Invisible Fist*. Troca is old but with an awake and curious mind, always interested in what lies beyond the horizon.

Persephone Troca, his sister and rival, who likes to bend the rules: Alastair's sister and rival. Artificially young, full of swagger, and considered to be too daring by conservative circles of the Imperium. On the other hand, she is ahead of all other Trocas when it comes to making money.

Gaius Sarma, a loyal retainer with a dark secret: The loyal right-hand man of Alastair. Hailing from a forge world and heavily augmented. Constantly working, showing clear signs of deteriorating health. Everybody tells him he should work less but he just shrugs it off. No private life.

Cardinal Ephemus Shyne, XXXX: Fatherly priest who knows he should not indulge in his weakness for luxury. A good ally of the Trocas but also heavily in debt with them. He is the ruler of *Lux Eternus*.

Sister Discordia, loyal troubleshooter and sleeper agent: A stout nun who is well-versed in the use of the flamer and the shock maul. Fixes problems for the cardinal.

Genetor Primus-Apocore-12, a mysterious actor behind the scenes: A tech priest and former ally of Alastair who was lost about 14 years ago on an expedition. He provided a lot of the best technology to the Trocas. The genetor was a mixture between a mad scientist and a zealous priest.

Smaegil, XXXX: The magos the genestealer cult of the *Rusty Claw*. A young woman that seems quite introverted but uses her psychic powers to get her way.

Benediktus Fang, shady dealer with fantastic resources: A small fat man wearing rich furs who is involved in the cold trade (i.e., the smuggling of xenos artefacts). A friendly surface barely conceals cold brutality.

Secret Backstory

The following facts will see the light of the day during the campaign.

- 30 years ago, Primus-Apocore-12 and the Troca's went on an expedition to the frontier world of *Solace's Finale* together. A warpstorm separated the two ships. When the Troca's caught up with the genetor, his ship was missing and there were signs of a pitched battle on the ground.
- The genetor was attacked by genestealers and was infected. He hid his ship in an outer orbit near *Desperion* and started a cult in the underhive.
- The genetor took one of his brood brothers (Gaius Sarma) and sent him to act as a spy in the Troca's organization. He also sent a young woman to do the same in the service of the cardinal (Sister Discordia).
- Apocore's cult came into conflict with a cult of Khorne that slew the genestealer primarch. With that the cult deviated from its regular pattern. Apocore is now the deranged leader of the cult, fighting for control with Smaegil, the cult magos.
- Apocore has worked a lot with the Trocas but also with the cardinal and has designed the defenses of his cathedral.
- Apocore plans to use the *Great Conclave of St. Macharius* that takes place on *Lux Eternus* to spread the genestealer curse all over the sector.
- In order to enter the inner sanctum where the conclave is being held, the genetor needs a key that is hidden in a relic called the *Azure Plate*.

Tales

Family Sabotage

The party is ordered to observe and maybe even sabotage an expedition by Alastair's sister Persephone. While use of force would be a serious breach of the unwritten rules of competition, the rogue trader would love to see his sister fail. The expedition was sent to the Death World of Characaros to recover a rumored arms depot from the time of the Macharian Crusade.

After a few initial problems with local threats, the PCs witness an attack on Persephone's team by

highly disciplined and heavily augmented troops. They might decide to help or not but one way or the other, they will be involved in the battle.

In the aftermath, research reveals that the troops were directed remotely by somebody who resembles Primus-Apocore-12, erstwhile ally of the Trocas!

Outcomes

- The mystery player Primus-Apocore-12 is introduced.
- The weapon cache might fall into the hands of the cult of the *Rusty Claw*
- Persephone might be captured by the cult.

Into the Underhive

The PCs are ordered to investigate the party that acted against Persephone. The first scene is a visit to the opera on *Desperion* where different nobles share rumors about the genetor and who he might be connected to. Fang, a member of the cold trade coffers them good business opportunities that they would have to keep secret from the partron but that would give them better equipment and connections.

Eventually, Claw or some other contacts reveal that people matching the description of the attackers have been spotted in the underhive near the main heat sink.

To their great surprise, the PCs are immediately harassed and attacked multiple times by a gang that does not look favorably on up-hivers to enter their territory. Even worse, the gang is a cult of Khorne.

When the party defeats the cultists, they find a prisoner that belonged to the *Rusty Claw*. Now, the Claw is gone from their hiding place, having moved elsewhere. Investigation reveals that the Khornites have slain a genestealer patriarch, a fact that has brought a lot of grief for their rival cult.

Outcomes

- The party learns about Apocore's involvement in the design of the cathedral's and the the

Troca's fleet defenses. They also learn about a possible escape route from the prison

- The party might become involved in the cold trade
- The party might find out that Apocore is connected to genestealers.
- The Rusty Claw has lost its leader and is now pushing its agenda forward at a greater speed.

Expedition to Solace's Finale

The recent troubles have left Troca's earning reduced. The party is sent to the ruined city of Shog-Nogoth on Solace's Finale to recover valuables for his coffers. The city is human but predates imperial times and is rumored to contain vast treasures. Its position was only recently found by Gaius Sarma in church archives and is given to Troca as a repayment for debts by the cardinal. In their company are also members of the cardinal's staff who have some salvage rights as well.

The expedition is basically a dungeon crawl through the ruins. However, the expedition is attacked by a genestealer cultist sniper and his henchmen.

Outcomes

- Gaius Sarma might be revealed as a traitor who arranged the ruins as a trap
- Benediktus Fang might ask a little favor done in the city that causes problems for the party
- Some church members might end up dead
- Troca's financial troubles might be fixed or not

Escort Duty

In preparation for the conclave, the cardinal plans to move a newly-acquired relic to his shrine world. The relic is a carapace armor that was worn by personal guard of Macharius himself. It is called the "Azure Plate". The relic is transported on Alastair Troca's ship and guarded by a sister of battle.

Unbeknownst to the party, members of the Cult of the Rusty Claw have been smuggled on the ship by Gaius a while ago. If he was not unmasked, there is even a purestrain genestealer secreted away in a grox carcass in the galley.

When the ship exits the Empyrean, the stowaways start to attack the crew and go for the relic. As a distraction, they take as hostage the oarsman, a person well-liked onboard.

If they manage to get it, they will use a small shuttle to escape to an asteroid field while other fighters attack and distract the pursuers.

Outcomes

- Is the oarsman hurt or killed leading to conflict among the crew?
- Is the relic stolen by the cult?
- Gaius might be unmasked.

The Procession

The day of the conclave has arrived. It starts with a 100km procession to the great cathedral on Lux Eternus that the party is tasked to help organize. (This is a fun element where diplomacy is used to secure interesting and colorful participants and keep out people like Fang.)

Just as the procession is about to start, Sister Discordia shows false evidence that the party and their patron are guilty of various crimes (depending on what has happened):

- They might be responsible for the loss of the relic
- They might be involved in the cold trade
- They might have arranged the death of the cardinal's agents in Shog-Nogoth.
- They are planning to cause the procession to fail to embarrass the cardinal

The party either flees or is thrown into prison. (Where they can escape due to the inherent weaknesses of the defenses.) The cardinal uses his resources to hunt them.

Meanwhile, the cult strikes at the waiting dignitaries in the conference center. There are several variables here:

- The cult troops might have better or worse equipment (depending on the first tale)
- Can the relic be used to access the ancient tunnel to the conference center?

- Is Persephone a hostage or is she rallying troops to fight off the insurgence?

Outcomes

- The dignitaries of the sector's key worlds might be infected by the cult
- The party might end in shame or come out as heroes