

OUR MARTYRED LADY



PART 1 - TROUBLESONE PRIESTS (2019)

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Scripted by Reverend

LIST OF CHARACTERS:

- * Celestine, the Living Saint
- * Inquisitor Katarinya Greyfax
- * Ecclesiarch Deacis
- * Custodian Longinus
- * Spy Kyrillos
- * Lord Inquisitor Trevayne
- * Assistant Aestus
- * Inquisitor Lock
- * Navigator Elixio
- * Trooper Athanaseos Timmos
- * Arbitrator Meshel

Numerous Guardsmen (marching during the parade): "For the Emperor!"

(crowd chanting)

(heavy wind)

Celestine (unsheathing her blade): "Fear not, sons and daughters of the Emperor's light! Before you comes a horde of darkness, a tide of greenskin xenos that would befoul this world with their taint. Yet behind you stand ten thousand of your brothers and sisters. And I, Celestine, will fight with you, the ever living proof of the Emperor's glorious strength."

Numerous Guardsmen (cheering): "YEAH!"

Celestine: "Look hence to the spire of the basilica of Saint Catherine in whose honor this world has become a shrine. On these sacred grounds trod one who stood before the Golden Throne and laid eyes upon the glorious countenance¹ of the Master of Mankind. Feel her spirit here moving through you, filling your hearts with her courage just as the Emperor filled her heart with his eternal grace. Brothers and sisters in arms of the Imperial Guard, you have been called upon to fight for this world in the name of the Emperor. Think of it not as some land war for which you give your blood, but the flesh of the Imperium, the domain of the Emperor on Terra. By his divine will you have been lifted from your homes and carried across the endless void seas to fight for him. Lift up your hearts even as you lift your weapons! Strike down these unholy abominations of the utter darkness with purity in your souls. Suffer not the alien to live!"

Numerous Guardsmen (cheering): "YEEEEEAH!"

Celestine: "Show these brutes² no mercy for they deserve nothing but your undying scorn³. See their filthy mechanical idols raised to false gods and know that they defile⁴ the memories of all that came before you. If you cherish anything, strike with hatred and purpose and cleanse this world!"

(screaming) For the Emperor!"

Numerous Guardsmen (cheering): "For the Emperor! YEEEEEAH!"

(Imperial Guard and Celestine clashing with the orkish tide in melee)

(thunder roaring overhead)

(clairvoyant vision coming before Celestine's eyes)

Emperor of Mankind (menacing): "Celestine... Heed my words... Our doom cometh near..."

(Celestine trembling in horror, breathing hard)

Timmos: "Our lady of hope, what ails you?"

Emperor of Mankind (still heard): "DOOM! DOOM!"

Celestine: "I... the battle is won?"

Timmos: "Not yet, revered lady, but their greatest engines are broken and with the Emperor's blessing it will be over soon. Are you hurt?"

Celestine: "No! I saw something terrible, a coming disaster".

Timmos: "Here, revered lady?"

Celestine: "No! I saw the Throne world burning, the statues of a thousand saints toppled⁵".

Timmos: "Emperor, save us!"

Celestine (breathing hard): "What is your name?"

Timmos: "Timmos, trooper Athanaseos Timmos, my revered lady".

Celestine: "Do not allow doubt into your heart, trooper Athanaseos Timmos. Trust in the Emperor and your sacrifices shall not go unseen by his eye. I have seen an ill omen, but it is a warning from the Emperor, not a prophecy of what will come to pass".

Timmos: "Then I will give prayer to the Emperor, revered lady, for your protection and strength".

Celestine: "And he shall guide you to your purpose, Timmos, as he has led me to mine".

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(several heretics trying to escape through the city)

Heretic (running and breathing hard): "Keep going! We are nearly there!"

(weird noises behind)

Heretic (running): "Don't look back, keep running!"

Greyfax (to running figures): "Halt in the name of the Emperor! By order of the Inquisition stop immediately or face summary⁶ execution".

Greyfax (over vox): "Arbitrator Meshel, this is Greyfax. I need immediate interdiction⁷ support, three heretics, sub city three, heading towards the Angel bridge dock works".

(interference in the vox)

Greyfax: "Throne! Too much interference. Activate vox record personal archive. Archive recording of Inquisitor Katarinya Greyfax, auto-transmit. My investigation has brought me into sublevels of Archanos hive on Gallant Five. I am pursuing three heretics of interest, terminal workers at the Angel bridge docks. I have yet to ascertain⁸ what they have smuggled⁹ through the security cordon and to which ship they have moved it to.

(Greyfax turning on the vox)

Greyfax (over vox): "Arbitrator Meshel, can you hear me? Interdiction needed at lowest approach to Angel bridge".

(interference in the vox)

Greyfax (treading forwards): "Archiving continued. Fourteen shuttle craft and three heavy loaders are due to leave in the next few hours. I cannot assume that the target vessel is listed on the normal launch schedules. It is imperative that I retain..."

(gunshot preventing Greyfax from finishing)

Greyfax (over vox): "Oh! Under fire, where are you, Meshel?"

(Greyfax under heavy fire)

Greyfax: "I have underestimated the scale of the conspiracy. At least a dozen heretics are holding this supply gate into Angel bridge, elevated and flank positions. I have cover for the moment, but principal targets will escape shortly if I cannot break through".

(Greyfax under numerous volleys of gunfire)

Greyfax: "Huh, let us see if they resist a voice of authority".

(Greyfax using psyker abilities)

Greyfax: "I am an Inquisitor of the Emperor. Resistance is heresy, cease fire and prepare for judgment".

(gunfire remaining tense)

Greyfax: "Ill-minded traitors..."

(explosion, Imperial reinforcements arriving)

Meshel (over vox): "Inquisitor Greyfax, Meshel here. Sorry for the delay, we could receive, but not transmit".

Greyfax (over vox): "I need one of those heretics alive".

Meshel (over vox): "They'll never talk".

Greyfax (using her psyker abilities): "I have my methods".

Heretic: "Get... out... of... my... head... witch".

(Greyfax approaching and grasping one of the heretics)

Greyfax: "Don't move. Which ship?"

(Heretic grunting)

Greyfax: "What were you smuggling? Where is it going?"

Heretic: "You'll never know, slave of the false emperor".

(Greyfax hitting the heretic hard)

Greyfax (menacing): "You are not dead yet, heretic! I can make your passing a lot more painful".

Heretic (moaning): "Too... late..."

Greyfax (using her psyker abilities): "Not for me!"

Heretic (moaning): "I... am... the righteous... Death is my release. I shall not fear..."

Greyfax (using her psyker abilities): "Where?"

Heretic (moaning): "You will never stop him reaching the Throne world".

(heretic suffocating to death)

Greyfax (over vox): "Arbitrator Meshel, I need details of every ship bound for Terra that has departed in the last day".

Moshel (over vox): "I can tell you that myself. None. All Segmentum Solar bound ships transit through Piraeus. Before you ask, about three quarters of all traffic from this system travels via Piraeus".

Greyfax (over vox): "So the trail dies here unless we can stop those ships".

Moshel (over vox): "We don't have the facilities or resources to enforce a travel embargo".

Greyfax (over vox): "Fine, in that case I have only one option, Meshel. Find me a place on the next ship bound for Piraeus. I need to return to Terra".

(vox transmission off)

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(Greyfax writing something)

(someone knocking on the door)

(Greyfax keeps writing, paying no attention)

(four anxious insistent knocks on the door)

Greyfax: "Just come in, Aestus!"

Aestus (entering): "You have a visitor, Inquisitor Greyfax".

Greyfax: "So I surmised¹⁰ from your interruption. I am preparing my findings from Gallant Five for the conclave¹¹. Have Lock deal with it".

Aestus: "It is Kyrillos, Inquisitor. He wishes to speak with you".

Greyfax: "Very well, send him in".

(Aestus leaving to welcome the guest)

(Kyrillos entering the room and approaching slowly)

Kyrillos: "Inquisitor..."

Greyfax (interrupting): "Close the door!"

(Kyrillos closing the door)

Greyfax: "Sit down. I despise your hovering¹² like a hiveless bee".

Kyrillos: "Bee, Inquisitor?"

Greyfax: "A pollinating¹³ insect found on some pre-dark age worlds. I am surprised you haven't heard of them".

Kyrillos: "My cerebral¹⁴ shard contains every entry in the Ecclesiarchal library, Inquisitor, but I find no reference to bees, I am afraid. There are 13 Saint Beatrices, the Emperor's worshiped in the guise of the giant dung beetle¹⁵ in the Teptic sector, but..."

Greyfax (interrupting): "What are you here to tell me?"

Kyrillos: "Sorry, Inquisitor. I've acquired a portion of the address that the Ecclesiarch plans to make at the feast of the Emperor's ascension in seventeen days' time. He's tended it to the senate of cardinals for their approval".

Greyfax: "Of passing interest, but hardly a revelation worthy of this distraction".

Kyrillos: "If I can interface with your auto-scribe, Inquisitor, I'll share with you certain passages that will concern you".

Greyfax: "I shall be the judge of that. The auto-scribe is over there".

(Kyrillos going the auto-scribe, connecting his interface)

(auto-scribe printing the speech)

(Kyrilos tearing the leaf from the printing device and bringing to Greyfax)

Kyrilos: "Here you are, Inquisitor".

Greyfax: "Gathering storm of fires... benighted¹⁶ dioceses¹⁷ across the Imperium calling for sucker... the artifice¹⁸ of the Emperor raw tenure¹⁹... Terrifying prospect of annihilation... The Battle Sisters of the Adeptus Sororitas are exemplars of the Emperor's most faithful warriors... but woefully outnumbered by the alien, heretic and mutant. Hm..."

Kyrilos: "This next part, Inquisitor".

Greyfax: "Findet my Adeptus Ministorum gladly carries the burden of protecting the faith and souls of the Emperor's servants; it is concomitant²⁰ to that duty to protect also the body. Is this leading where I think it is?"

Kyrilos: "Read on, Inquisitor".

Greyfax (clearing her throat): "For too long the arm of the Ecclesiarchy has reached short in its labor due to ancient worries. Ha! Curtailing²¹ the substance of our assistance to the faithful out of the fear of corruption. I see..."

Kyrilos: "Please continue, Inquisitor".

Greyfax: "We no longer possess the luxury of such delicacy in our dealings with the rude universe and so the great resources of the mighty church of the Imperium of which we are so justly proud must be moved to better employment. Luxury, he says..."

Kyrilos: "The next part, Inquisitor".

Greyfax: "Therefore I, Ecclesiarch Deacis the 23rd, with the authority of the Holy Synod shall be revoking²² the terms of the Decree Passive effective immediately upon ratification by the Synod Minstra on... (shocked) He must be insane!"

Kyrilos: "I hope that is of some interest, Inquisitor".

Greyfax: "You can stop looking so pleased with yourself! Why are only now telling me of this? I raised you up from the hive scum of your people, educated you in the ways of espionage and deduction, placed you as an arch-deacon in the very bosom²³ of the Adeptus Ministorum and you bring me this just seventeen days before he's due to make the speech?"

Kyrillos: "I was, Inquisitor! I was only privy²⁴ to the contents..."

Greyfax (interrupting): "Ecclesiarchs do not suddenly decide to raise a personal army on a whim²⁵, Kyrillos! He has the support of the Holy Synod and he's made enquiries with the Synod Ministra on Ophelia VII. This is the culmination of a plan, not the start".

Kyrillos (mumbling): "But I..."

Greyfax (interrupting): "No excuses, I want names, dates, places. Who is involved and what do they intend? Is Deacis the instigator or a puppet, have moves been taken to start assembling the Frateris Templars? Is he planning to travel to Ophelia?"

Kyrilos: "Yes, Inquisitor. I will return to the Ecclesiarchal Palace immediately, Inquisitor. I will have a full report within three days".

Greyfax: "Two!"

Kyrilos: "Two days, Inquisitor".

(Inquisitor keeping silence for a pause)

Greyfax: "Why are you still here?"

(Kyrilos mumbling and leaving the room, closing the door)

Greyfax: "Damn those troublesome priests and their schemes".

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(Katarinya treading in a rush)

Lock (trying to catch up with the Inquisitor): "Katarinya, a moment of your time!"

Greyfax: "I am due to deposition²⁶ the conclave on my activities at Gallant Five, Inquisitor Lock".

Lock (breathing hard): "Except, I know that you are not, Katarinya. You passed your report to Loyshen and recused²⁷ yourself from the conclave".

Greyfax: "Why would I do that, Lock?"

Lock: "I know what Deacis is planning, just stop!"

Greyfax (continuing to walk): "No, I am busy".

Lock: "Do you really want me to shout it out? Here, where everyone is listening? Fine, Lord Inquisitor Trevayne has contacted the Grandmaster of the Officio Assassinorum regarding the Decree Passive issue".

Greyfax (stopping, angrily): "What?"

Lock: "I heard from a very good source that lord Trevayne, our current representative to the Senatorum Imperialis has commissioned an agent of the Officio Assassinorum to forestall²⁸ any potential problems with Deacis the 23rd".

Greyfax: "With approval from the High Lords?"

Lock: "I think not, Katarinya. I made discreet²⁹ inquiries with several other inquisitors with interests in other organizations and they have seen nothing to suggest the matter has even been raised at Council".

Greyfax: "If Deacis is assassinated, it could tear the Ecclesiarchy apart. It would be every bit as divisive³⁰ as what he is proposing. We are already so sorely³¹ tested on every front, a schism³² within the Imperial church could prove very costly. I'll deal with this".

Lock: "What are we going to do?"

Greyfax: "You are going to forget this conversation, Inquisitor Lock. As for what I am going to do, that is my business alone".

(Greyfax leaving Lock)

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Timmos: "We have touched down, revered lady".

(hatch opening, Saint Celestine going out of the pod)

(crowd chanting hymns in amazement and awe)

Celestine (walking out of the pod): "I see I am expected".

Cardinal: "Oh, praise the Emperor, it is true. We are so blessed by your presence, Saint Celestine! The Ecclesiarch has commanded a full humalia in your honor"

Celestine: "Thank you, cardinal! There are so many of you".

Cardinal: "Nearly all of the Synod, revered lady, those well enough to travel. That is a rare occasion when a Living Saint arrives to join us in the feast of the Emperor's ascension".

Celestine: "I have not come to..."

Cardinal (interrupting): "We feared you would not arrive in time of course. There are only two days until the main address. The Ecclesiarch is continuing his preparations, otherwise he would have greeted you himself".

Celestine: "I must speak..."

Cardinal (interrupting): "Of course, revered lady. The Synod will be delighted to grant audience. We have created a special area within the shrine of Dominica so that you could attend upon them".

Celestine (firmly): "No, I must see the Ecclesiarch! Now!"

Cardinal: "I am terribly sorry, revered lady, but that is impossible. He is due to attend the first station of the Emperor's sacrificial enlar. Perhaps, tomorrow?"

(crowd chanting religious anthems)

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(Greyfax rapidly approaching Lord Inquisitor)

Trevayne (sitting in his armchair): "Katarinya Greyfax, rare occasion when one of our best comes to my chambers".

Greyfax: "It is exceptional circumstance that brings me, Lord Trevayne".

Trevayne (sighing and pouring amasec in his glass): "Amasec? Martian vodka?"

Greyfax: "Water, if you have some".

Trevayne (opening a bottle): "The Decree Passive matter, that's why you are here".

Greyfax: "You are well informed".

Trevayne (pouring his drink in a glass): "I am a Lord Inquisitor. I exist to be well-informed. Lock is more conspicuous³³ than he thinks".

Greyfax: "Do you deny contact with Grandmaster Saba?"

Trevayne: "Are you interrogating me, Greyfax?"

Greyfax: "I am an Inquisitor. None are above my scrutiny³⁴".

Trevayne (smiling): "Hehehe! Yes, you actually believe that. I am not concerned by your judgments so it doesn't matter if I confirm your suspicions. Yes, it's true. I deemed Ecclesiarch Deacis a threat to the stability of the Imperium and sanctioned the Officio Assassinorum to remove him. Can I interest you in a sniff of ghost dust?"

Greyfax: "I am not aware of it".

Trevayne: "It comes from Necromunda, an uphive version of the combat stimulant known as Spook. Just enough to let the synapses fire a little faster. Maybe some fervor instead? Or I have some admilladox in a drawer here somewhere".

Greyfax: "Are there any vices³⁵ in which you do not indulge³⁶?"

Trevayne (taking a sniff of ghost dust): "Only self-righteousness³⁷, do you have any vices at all?"

Greyfax: "Stop dissembling³⁸. You appointed an assassin on your own authority, not a vote of the Senatorum Imperialis".

Trevayne: "Deacis is a High Lord. It would be stupid to allow the target of an assassination to know about it. Never mind allowing him to vote on the matter".

Greyfax: "Even so you sought no support from the others? You are our voice on the highest council in the Imperium, a position that comes with responsibilities".

Trevayne (taking a sip of amasec and putting the glass on the table): "It's just a hat I sometimes wear, Greyfax, nothing more. If you demanded an audience with the High Lords tomorrow, you would be the inquisitorial representative instead. I am still an Inquisitor and my duty is clear".

Greyfax: "I have misgivings³⁹".

Trevayne: "Good for you, I do not".

Greyfax: "Regardless I am going to share them with you, Lord Inquisitor".

(Trevayne sighing)

Greyfax: "At first pass I thought the same as you. The Decree Passive was put in place to ensure that no Ecclesiarch wielded the kind of power that corrupted Goge Vandire".

Trevayne: "Being spiritual leader of the Emperor's church is power enough, without adding the ability to raise armies".

Greyfax: "It is a loosely stitch patch on an ancient tear and you know it. The Decree Passive prevents the Adeptus Ministorum from raising men under arms. It has been applied literally for 4,000 years, banning them from recreating the Frateris Templars, but leaving them free to deploy Orders Militant of the Battle Sisters. You must admit that the Sisters of Battle have been a useful force for the Imperium in these dark times".

Trevayne (fidgeting on an armchair and pouring another glass of amasec): "I have to admit nothing, but feel free to continue".

Greyfax: "Four thousand years the Decree Passive has been held as an open lie. Perhaps, it is time we should accept that it never worked as intended".

Trevayne: "You want me to suggest to the High Lords that the Decree Passive is extended to the Adepta Sororitas? Hehe, we should outlaw the Battle Sisters?"

Greyfax: "Do not be obtuse⁴⁰, Lord Trevayne. Do we even have the authority to stop the Ecclesiarch from rescinding⁴¹ the Decree Passive?"

Trevayne: "Our power is absolute and immediate".

Greyfax: "Even so the Decree Passive is an Ecclesiarchal writ⁴², not Imperial law. It was underwritten by Sebastian Thor as a promise that he would not go down the same root as his megalomaniac⁴³ predecessor, adopted within the Adeptus Ministorum. If Deacis wants to change Ecclesiarchal law, can we stop him?"

Trevayne (smiling): "Heh, I find a bullet solves most disputes".

(Trevayne taking another sniff of ghost dust)

Trevayne: "You've walked a purist's path the most of your career, Greyfax. But since Cadia I think you've come to know the shadows a bit better".

Greyfax: "I resent any..."

Trevayne (interrupting): "Those that follow our calling know that we don't deal in legality, only morality".

Greyfax (squirming): "Ha!"

Trevayne: "I defend the Emperor's domains, not the laws passed by lesser servants in his name".

Greyfax: "The Imperium cannot survive more division. I know your background, Trevayne, associations with the recongregators when you were inducted into the Ordo Hereticus".

Trevayne (taking another sip): "And what of it?"

Greyfax: "Sometime you have to break something to fix it. That is their central tenet⁴⁴, is it not? The pieces can be assembled into something new. You must look on the wars raging across our worlds and see a fine opportunity to cleanse the old politics and bring in... What? What would you replace this with exactly?"

Trevayne: "But my past is of no importance".

Greyfax: "I am sure that will be a good defense when I call a conclave to investigate your actions, Lord Trevayne".

Trevayne: "You can't bring attention to the Inquisition's part in this matter. It will pour oil on a fire".

Greyfax: "It is not the Inquisition that lit the fire. It is you, a single Inquisitor".

Trevayne (knocking on the elbow-rest): "That is what we are. Each of us are law onto ourselves guided by our beliefs and morality to protect the Emperor's legacy".

Greyfax: "Yet still accountable to each other, Lord Inquisitor Trevayne. If you do not have the courage to defend your actions before the judgment of your peers⁴⁵, perhaps, you need to think harder on them".

Trevayne: "This is a liberty too far, Greyfax. Perhaps, a conclave should consider your actions of late. I think your time with the Living Saint has blinded you to the corruption growing within the Imperial church".

Greyfax: "I have little enough time for Celestine and her ilk⁴⁶. I am a witch hunter, an agent of the Ordo Hereticus. We have seen the true nature of the universe, where power really lies and it is not in the hollow prayers and vacuous⁴⁷ sermons⁴⁸ of the Ecclesiarchy. We live in unprecedented times, Lord Inquisitor. The Inquisition cannot afford disunity any more than the Adeptus Ministorum. Each of us is being tested in ways we never expected every day that we face the resurging⁴⁹ darkness".

Trevayne: "Some of us..."

Greyfax (interrupting): "Look at where we are now. Half of the Imperium is lost behind the greatest warp storm of the last ten thousand years, blinded to the light of the Emperor's beacon. Daily worlds are lost to the warp, swallowed by demonic powers that threaten everything we try to protect".

Trevayne: "It was you..."

Greyfax (interrupting): "The Lord Commander of our armies beyond that veil is a Primarch, an inhuman super-being created by the Emperor ten thousand years ago, brought back from death by xenos magic we cannot comprehend. You will understand if I think that the Ecclesiarchy wanting to have armies again is not our greatest concern at this time".

Trevayne: "And what would you have me do?"

Greyfax: "Nothing, perhaps we should let them. They might even win a few battles".

Trevayne: "You are going to fight me on this?"

Greyfax: "My investigation into Deacis's behavior will continue. I do not prejudge⁵⁰ the outcome. What you do is your concern".

Trevayne (knocking his fingers on the glass impatiently): "I suppose I should be thankful that you came to me with your misgivings, rather than taking other action".

Greyfax: "I did consider bringing my bolter and putting a blessed round to free your brain".

Trevayne (smiling): "Ehehe, what made you reconsider?"

Greyfax: "The assassination order is already given. Only you can rescind it. Even though I have seen remarkable sights these last decades, I do not believe that you'll be able to do that from beyond the grave".

Trevayne: "That was the only thing that stopped you from performing summary execution?"

Greyfax (after a pause): "Call off the assassin, Lord Inquisitor, and allow me to deal with Deacis in other way".

Trevayne: "Maybe, I will give it more thought, I promise".

Greyfax: "Then I shall leave you to the administrative burdens of your position, Inquisitorial representative".

(Greyfax leaving the room)

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(crowd chanting religious hymns)

Kyrrilos: "It's impressive, isn't it? The Synod and faithful gathered for the highest feast of the church calendar. On this day more than ten thousand years ago the Emperor ascended from the mortal sphere to the heavens becoming our God Emperor"

Greyfax: "Is this what one might call the holy sea? A tide of so many faithful? Looking down on them like this I understand why you call the addressees 'mass'".

Kyrrilos: "There are about 72,000 pilgrims within the central na?ve and another 130,000 in the outer stalls⁵¹, 2468 of the Synod cardinals on the attendance, 3 of whom only in body due to ongoing stasis-induced treatments for various ailments. In the cloisters⁵² and avenues outside wait 14 million more pilgrims".

Greyfax: "Fascinating".

Kyrrilos: "It is estimated that 2.4 billion pilgrims are in transit to or from Terra in any given moment".

Greyfax: "And Deacis would happily give them all guns and armor?"

Kyrrilos: "I thought you were agreeing with him now?"

Greyfax: "There's a broad gulf⁵³ between not wishing the leader of the Ecclesiarchy assassinated and agreeing with his stats that Imperial church are returned commanding regiments of heavily armed Frateris Templars".

Kyrrilos: "What exactly you hope to see from up here where 822 meters above the na?ve floor? I can barely see faces, much less than any weapon".

Greyfax: "I am not looking for anything. I am attuning⁵⁴ myself to the background psychic field. Do you I could just pluck⁵⁵ the mind of an assassin from this morass⁵⁶ of forced piety⁵⁷ and random emotional detritus⁵⁸?"

Kyrrilos: "So why are we all the way up here?"

Greyfax: "So I can get away from the clutter of so many minds. I wish I decided to dispense with⁵⁹ the presence of one more".

Kyrillos: "Inquisitor?"

Greyfax: "Yes?"

Kyrillos: "Look at the cardinals, a new arrival".

Greyfax: "Celestine..."

Kyrillos: "She arrived two days ago seeking audience with the Ecclesiarch. Perhaps, she is involved with this conspiracy".

Greyfax (angrily): "Two days ago? Why am I only learning this now?"

Kyrillos: "Doesn't she look magnificent? That golden armor like the plate of the God Emperor himself".

Greyfax: "Shut up, Kyrillos! Let me concentrate!"

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Kyrillos: "The Ecclesiarch's speech will be starting in thirteen minutes, Inquisitor".

Greyfax: "Yes, yes, and then he will send to that lectern over there in plain sight of the whole congregation".

Kyrillos: "It's quite so. The pulpit⁶⁰ grandiose contains a displacement field generator as well as the armored glasteel screen you can see".

Greyfax: "I see the assassin knows it as well. Now be quiet".

(Greyfax using her psyker abilities to find the assassin in the crowd)

Ceremony Attendant 1: "Living saint looks ever... I wish that the light of the Emperor shone from me".

Ceremony Attendant 2: "Majestic in Excelsis is one of my favorites. I repel, when preacher Donovan..."

Ceremony Attendant 3: "But even so that lives me the support from nearly two thirds of the Synod. If Deacis doesn't elevate me to cardinal superior, I'll move...."

Ceremony Attendant 4: "Deliver us from void clutch! And, dear Emperor, if you can see your right of Vexus Primus Darrell, I'd appreciate it. He says the land on the south wall belongs to him. But my grandfather worked those fields until he died. I don't ask for anything nasty, just a crutch pox⁶¹..."

Alpha Psyker: "The false prophet will soon be destroyed. The ever burning flame will consume these heretics and from their ashes shall be reborn the many-taled lord of creation".

Greyfax: "Oh!"

Kyrillos: "Are you all right, Inquisitor?"

Greyfax: "Silence!"

Alpha Psyker: "By my hand the will of the eight-turned god shall... Upon this pyre I will be elevated to... Come on you filthy traitor, your judgment... Bless this rubric and those that died to create it".

Greyfax (spotting the enemy): "Down there! One of the pilgrims!"

Kyrillos: "Which one?"

Greyfax: "I cannot pinpoint the source, near that statue the one with a cup of blood and the crown of barbs".

Kyrilos: "That would be the second saint Arthur of Alastos, one of the Missionaria Galaxia. He died bringing word to the lost worlds of the Southern Rim. The first Saint Arthur was..."

Greyfax (interrupting): "MOVE!!!"

* * *

(Greyfax and Kyrilos running through the crowd after the assassin)

Greyfax (on the run): "Clear a path! By order of the Inquisition! Make way! Stand aside for the Inquisition!"

Kyrilos (on the run): "I can't see him, Inquisitor. Where's he gone?"

(Greyfax using her psyker abilities)

Alpha Psyker: "I am the burning vengeance of a hated few. By the power of the eight-turned god I will not sin. By the might of the eight-turned god I shall strike down the unholy".

Greyfax (on the run): "This way!"

Kyrilos (on the run): "There are too many people, Inquisitor".

(trumpets chanting)

Kyrilos (on the run): "The Ecclesiarch enters, hurry!"

Greyfax (on the run): "Throne, I cannot reach the assassin! We must take a different course of action".

* * *

Ecclesiarchy Clergyman: "Revered lady, the most revered Ecclesiarch will be speaking shortly. When I indicate it is time, you shall ascend and bathe the congregation in holy light of your blessing".

Celestine: "Ascend? Where?"

Ecclesiarchy Clergyman: "Hm, up, revered lady! You know, born aloft by your wings of the Emperor's lifting benevolence⁶²"

Celestine: "My manifestations of the Emperor's power come upon me in battle when I fight in his name. They are not tricks with which the Ecclesiarch should seek to bedazzle⁶³ impressionable pilgrims".

Ecclesiarchy Clergyman: "I see... Could you perhaps ecleem a little, revered lady? Flames along the sword of saint..."

(distant gunfire interrupting)

Celestine: "Gunfire!"

Ecclesiarchy Clergyman: "Emperor, protect us!"

Celestine: "There, down in the commoners' pews⁶⁴".

Greyfax (using psyker abilities): "Saint Celestine, it is Inquisitor Greyfax".

Celestine: "Katarinya, are you here?!"

Greyfax (using psyker abilities): "I am the one shooting. There is an assassin but he is too far away for me to hit. I am hoping he will get crushed in the stampede⁶⁵".

Celestine: "Where? One of the pilgrims?"

Greyfax (using psyker abilities): "Celestine, I need you to protect Deacis. Get the Ecclesiarch to safety".

Celestine: "I understand, it shall be done".

(Celestine spreading her wings and flying over the heads of the astonished crowd)

One of the pilgrims: "Save us, revered lady!"

Celestine: "My Lord Ecclesiarch, beware!"

Deacis: "Saint Celestine!"

(Celestine gripping Deacis and flying away)

Deacis: "Oh praise the Emperor!"

Celestine: "Hold on tight, Lord Ecclesiarch!"

Deacis (moaning): "Oh... Eh... Where are you taking me?"

Celestine: "There is an Inquisitor, my lord. I shall... "

Greyfax (using psyker abilities): "Not to me, Celestine... Take him to safety!"

Celestine: "The main doors are filled with fleeing cardinals. I have an idea. Cover your head, my lord".

Deacis: "Eh... Celestine, what are you doing?"

(Celestine breaking the glass and leaving the cathedral)

Deacis (scared): "Eh.... Oh...."

Celestine: "Do not fear, Lord Ecclesiarch! The Emperor protects".

* * *

Kyrillos (breathing hard): "The Ecclesiarch is safe. We should get out of here as well, Inquisitor".

Greyfax: "Not yet! Oh, oh... The assassin is still on the loose. I feel something is growing stronger, a thought, a singular purpose".

Alpha Psyker: "The false worshippers shall be punished. The eight-turned god shall rise triumphant still".

Greyfax (breathing hard): "We need to leave".

Kyrillos: "What is it, Inquisitor?"

Greyfax (on the run): "Go! A psychic resonance, something terrible is about to occur".

Kyrillos (on the run): "Shouldn't we..."

Greyfax (on the run): "RUN!"

* * *

(Celestine and Deacis flying away from the cathedral)

Deacis (breathing hard): "Oh... Oh... I... I... I think we are far enough away now".

Celestine: "Yes! Yes, of course, Lord Ecclesiarch! I shall take you..."

Deacis (interrupting): "Oh, wait! What is that light? There within the windows of the cathedral of Saint Thor? "

Celestine: "Pale blue like a plasma blast, perhaps".

Deacis: "It is still growing brighter! Oh, Emperor's mercy!!!"

Celestine: "Shield your eyes!"

(cathedral exploding and collapsing)

Celestine (shocked, breathing hard): "It is gone, the whole cathedral destroyed".

Deacis: "Eh... Oh... What do you mean? (shocked) Oh... Oh... Impossible!"

Celestine: "The cathedral of Saint Thor, nothing left but rubble and ash!"

Deacis: "What of the Synod of Terra? The pilgrims? I see nothing moving".

Celestine: "Dead. Perhaps a few were able to flee the cathedral first".

Deacis: "Who would do this? Tens of thousands slain, why?"

Celestine: "I cannot answer that, but there was an Inquisitor that believed you were the target. If that is the case the assassins failed but might try again".

Deacis: "Assassins? Who would dare to try to kill the Ecclesiarch of the Adeptus Ministorum? This is madness".

Celestine: "We live in mad times, Lord Ecclesiarch. The answers are beyond me but I think that if she escaped, Inquisitor Greyfax might shed a little light on the matter. There is an Inquisitorial keep not far south, we shall be safe there".

* * *

(Kyrillos coughing in the distance)

Greyfax: "Kyrillos! KYRILLOS!"

Kyrillos (coughing): "Over here, Inquisitor! I... Was that a plasma bomb?"

Greyfax: "Worse, an alpha level psychic event".

Kyrillos: "There is something moving amongst the smoke and flames. A figure? Someone burning with purple flames".

Alpha Psyker: "I have become the living martyr, the instrument of the eight-turned god. I will ascend to the realm of the ancients as an undying lord".

Greyfax (using psyker abilities): "Surrender, heretic".

(Assassin sending a screaming psychic wave)

(Greyfax moaning from sudden pain and collapsing to the ground)

Kyrillos: "Inquisitor!"

Greyfax: "My powers are of no use against a mind of this magnitude. There is demon here as much as human".

Alpha Psyker: "All shall be carried as ash upon the winds of change".

Greyfax: "Let us see if the blessed rounds of my weapon can end this?"

(Greyfax unleashing three bolt rounds to no use)

Alpha Psyker: "I am fate's walker, the strider of destiny. My path cannot be changed".

Kyrillos: "The bolts are useless".

Greyfax: "Go, we do not have the means to face this foe".

(Greyfax and Kyrilos setting on a run)

Alpha Psyker: "You cannot outrun from the eight-turned god. You carry your dreams and nightmares within you".

(Assassin unleashing another warp-induced psychic strike)

Kyrilos (running away): "Emperor, save us!"

Greyfax (running away): "Living warp flame? Keep running, the fire is coming towards us!"

Alpha Psyker: "Do not fear the metamorphosis. Life and death are but the endless cycle of change. Embrace the rise of the inevitable one!"

Kyrilos (running away): "It's like the Imperial Aquila, an eagle from the Emperor".

Greyfax (running away): "You are not so far from the truth, a gunship of the Custodians... Down!"

Alpha Psyker: "Discord brings growth, harmony in... AAAAA"

(Custodes gunship shooting the assassin down)

Kyrilos (laughing hysterically): "Ha-ha, die, psyker abomination!"

Alpha Psyker (collapsing in the debris): "Foolishness".

(Custodes gunship landing down)

Longinus (from the gunship): "Inquisitor, ascend the ramp".

Greyfax (breathing hard, boarding the ship): "My thanks, Custodian".

Longinus: "I am the Centurion Longinus, Inquisitor. You are welcome".

Greyfax: "I fear our salvation may be short-lived".

Longinus: "Others are on their way, but I am to deal with the psychic threat".

Kyrillos: "I see them, a shadow hold craft, the Anathema Psykana, the Sisters of Silence".

(walking aboard the gunship)

(Adepta Sororitas gunship landing, Celestine and several battle sisters leaving the ship)

Kyrilos: "Oh, Saint Celestine!"

Greyfax: "What of the Ecclesiarch? Is Deacis safe?"

Celestine: "He is, thanks only to your warning, Katarinya".

Longinus: "It is a little early to celebrate, you are not safe yet".

Greyfax: "An attack on Terra itself brazen⁶⁷ and devastating. This is not the end of the matters, simply the start. There will be far worse to come".

* * *

Deacis: "I have lived all my life on Terra and never before seen a warrior of the Adeptus Custodes".

Greyfax: "Not just warriors of the Adeptus Custodes. You see the blackening of their auramite armor? That is caused by close proximity to the Emperor. This squad hails⁶⁸ from the Companions, guardians of the Golden Throne".

Celestine: "Blessed are they to have labored beneath the sight of the Emperor himself, raised by his hand, his will made flesh".

Longinus: "Are any of you injured? Do you require a Medicae?"

Greyfax: "None of us are injured, Centurion".

Another Custodian: "Inquisitor, we are receiving a secured vox cast from Inquisitor Lord Trevayne".

Longinus: "It was Trevayne that alerted us to the potential assassination of the Ecclesiarch, Inquisitor".

Trevayne (over vox): "I have just spoken with Deacis and informed him that he cannot remain on Terra. Until we figure out the extent of this conspiracy he is still under threat. We have agreed that the cardinal world of Ophelia VII is the best sanctuary for the time being".

Celestine: "Katarinya, it was I that requested your company. I would feel that the Ecclesiarch is safer with you present. We cannot assume Ophelia VII is any safer than Terra and Deacis needs to remain public to keep the faithful strong in their devotion. He has powerful rivals within the Synod Minstra. If there is a conspiracy against him, it is as likely to be discovered there, as on Terra".

Greyfax: "Very well, I shall travel with you to Ophelia VII. Kyrilos, you will come with us also".

Kyrilos: "Huh, I will? But... But I've never left Terra before".

Trevayne (over vox): "If I have need of you or uncover anything of urgency I will send message by astropath to Ophelia VII. I trust that you will reciprocate⁶⁹".

Greyfax (over vox): "I will. When this crisis is passed, you will stand before your peers in conclave".

Trevayne (over vox): "I do not fear their judgment. Be sure you are in similar strength in your convictions, Katarinya".

(vox communication over)

Kyrillos: "Excuse me, Centurion, but it's interesting that you are called Longinus. There was another Centurion of the Companions with that name who intervened against the renegade Goge Vandire. He helped to end the Reign of Blood".

Celestine: "An event that was pivotal⁷⁰ in the founding of the Adepta Sororitas. It was Centurion Longinus that took Alicia Dominica and her closest lieutenants into the inner sanctum to come before the Emperor himself. When they emerged she declared Vandire a heretic and cut him down".

Kyrillos: "A remarkable coincidence".

Longinus: "My name is Xavier Aldamenion Lassid Longinus Aduprehiah Consultori. It is no coincidence that I have chosen to intervene again in the machinations of the Adeptus Ministorum. Though I would not venture my opinion on whether my master would approve or not of the organization, its presence is real and its power considerable. And as such I was tasked to maintain vigil against it from among my order".

Kyrilos: "Hm, what do you mean? Intervene again?"

Celestine: "The Reign of Blood ended nearly 4000 years ago".

Longinus: "Yes, I am surprised it has taken this long and so many political intrigues and disasters for a situation grave enough to occur that I felt the need to come forth again".

Celestine: "I kneel before you. It is an honor to present the blade of Saint Catherine which was once born by one of those you took before the Golden Throne. The Emperor answers our prayers with your presence".

Longinus: "Stand, Celestine! You honor me with this salute, but I cannot accept it nor your prayers. I act only in the interests of Emperor, not for any greater purpose. My blood is sworn to his protection, not the Imperial church or any of his servants".

Greyfax: "That is reassuringly blunt⁷¹".

Longinus: "Time is not an ally today. Others might try to kill the Ecclesiarch when they learn of his survival".

Celestine: "And they have the ability to bring the psyker assassin here, which means even the Sol system is not safe".

Longinus: "We will head directly to the closest Mandeville point and jump to warp space as soon as we can".

(door opening)

Greyfax: "Ecclesiarch Deacis".

Celestine: "The inner chamber is the most secure, Lord Ecclesiarch".

Deacis: "You have my gratitude for this assistance, Centurion Longinus. Oh, it is good that the Adeptus Ministorum and Adeptus Custodes can each serve the Emperor in their own ways but together".

Longinus: "I am coming with you, Deacis. My squad and I will see you safely to Ophelia VII".

Greyfax: "You are Companions of the Throne. I thought you never left the inner sanctum".

Longinus: "Until events of late the Adeptus Custodes did not leave the Imperial Palace. Yet now we travel again with the armies of the Emperor as we did in the time of the Great Crusade. Sometimes the best defense of the Master of Mankind begins a little further from home".

Deacis: "Huh, I am honored".

Longinus: "Do not be, my presence is not for your benefit. I am aware of your intent to gather a new host of Frateris Templars. I am yet to decide if such an act would be a threat to the Emperor".

Deacis: "I see. Hm, it seems I am surrounded by guardians that wish to protect me only for the privilege of executing me themselves".

Celestine: "I have no intent to slay you, Lord Ecclesiarch, and will endeavor to dissuade any other from doing so".

Deacis: "That is a little comfort I suppose".

* * *

Celestine: "Katarinya".

Greyfax: "What is it, sister? I have transmissions from Lord Trevayne to decipher".

Celestine: "Longinus passes word that we are only a day's more travel from the jump point".

Greyfax: "Good".

Celestine: "Katarinya, you have avoided me since we transferred to this Custodian warship, but I would like to know something".

Greyfax: "What?"

Celestine: "It is clear that the vision the Emperor gifted me was warning of these terrible events. Did you receive warning as well?"

Greyfax: "Of a sort".

(Katarinya calling the elevator)

Celestine: "Ah, I understand your reticence⁷². You are after all an Inquisitor and under no obligation to discuss anything with me".

Greyfax: "You are correct".

Celestine: "I had hoped, given that we have fought alongside each other before, that you would trust me by now".

Greyfax: "Thousands of people were turned to ash ten days ago by someone possessing psychic power I had not witnessed before. His last thoughts were of killing unbelievers for his dark god".

Celestine: "All the more reason that we should not be at odds⁷³ with one another".

Greyfax: "I detect the stench of the abyss all over this plot, not political wrangling⁷⁴ between overly protected sects of the Adeptus Ministorum".

(elevator arriving)

Greyfax: "I will see you when... I would rather..."

Celestine: "I have prayed for you, Katarinya. The God Emperor watches over you whether you believe it or not".

Greyfax: "I am not about to share my thoughts with someone that manifests wings, levitates without aid, has returned from the dead at least half a dozen times and claims to receive visions from the Emperor".

Celestine (smiling): "I know you do not share my faith, but if you really believed I was tainted, you would execute me on the spot. I have not seen you show any compunction⁷⁵ about doing so with others that you perceived to be a threat".

Greyfax: "You are tempting me at the moment".

Celestine: "So I must assume that you accept me in some fashion. Do you not see your own powers as gifts from the Emperor?"

Greyfax: "I have seen the source of my powers and test myself against its corruption every time I use them. If you are blind to the font⁷⁶ of your abilities, you accept them without question and that is a path that leads to damnation, no matter how many Ave Imperatori you invoke⁷⁷ before you go to bed".

Celestine: "Even so you cannot ignore the purpose in my coming to Terra. Had I not been on hand the Ecclesiarch would be dead. Do you not see the Emperor's work in this?"

Greyfax: "If I were even to indulge⁷⁸ the idea that the Emperor remains cogent⁷⁹ of any mortal thought and that he possesses the means to communicate with them in any fashion, it is still a stretch that he would do so to return you to life and bring you across the galaxy just to save the life of Deacis, when he was willing for a hundred thousand others to die".

(elevator finally arriving)

Celestine: "It is a burden for you to think that he might have acted to spare you as well. If you were to have faith and accept that as I do, then you would also have to accept that the salvation for the Ecclesiarch was not without further purpose. Katarinya, I know you think I am some kind of charlatan or worse, an abomination. But am I so different to those within your organization, that use the Emperor's Tarot to divine his will?"

Greyfax: "They are equally misguided".

Celestine: "If you cannot..."

(Deacis slowly approaching Celestine and Greyfax)

Greyfax: "Another holy ambush..."

Deacis: "My two saviors in close consultation, I see".

Celestine: "Lord Ecclesiarch".

Greyfax: "It might still only be a stay of execution".

Deacis: "Why do I sense that you are not only talking about the possibility of more assassins?"

Greyfax: "I see that Trevayne was less than forthcoming⁸⁰ about his involvement in this affair".

Deacis: "On the contrary he confessed his part to me in full".

Greyfax: "He told you that he had planned to have you killed?"

Celestine: "The massacre was perpetrated by the Inquisition?"

Greyfax: "No, it was not. Even so it would have been within our rimet to have done so. What count a hundred thousand faithful lost compared to the billions that might be killed in a planetary Exterminatus? Even this grotesque attack would be thought of as controlled and precise by some of my Ordo".

Deacis: "I see... No, lord Trevayne said he had uncovered the content of my speech and had thought to stop me. I had not realized he meant with lethal measure".

Greyfax: "Now you understand the extent of his opposition".

Deacis: "He did tell me it was argument from you that had changed his mind".

Celestine: "Eh, what could an Ascension Day speech contain that would warrant⁸¹ such retribution?"

Deacis: "I plan to revoke the Decree Passive, lady Celestine. Too long your sisterhood has born the front of fighting for the Adeptus Ministorum. It is time we broadened our powers again".

Celestine: "Saint Thor divested⁸² himself of those powers for a reason, Lord Ecclesiarch. I would urge you to reconsider".

Deacis (clearing his throat): "The Adepta Sororitas enjoys considerable benefits from its position as the Ecclesiarchy's only Order Militant. There are some among the Synod who believe the Adepta Sororitas wield that power for their own interests, rather than that of the Imperial church".

Celestine: "I am sure there are".

Deacis: "Such monopoly of military force is not good for the Ecclesiarchy".

Greyfax: "The need of the Imperium is better served if such military might is not concentrated too closely at all. The Ecclesiarchy has its own ships capable of warp travel, a resource purposefully denied to the regiments of the Astra Militarum. To curtail⁸³ the ambitions of colonels and generals, there would be no limit to your ability to move armies across the stars".

Celestine: "I am of similar thought, lord Ecclesiarch".

Greyfax: "The founding of the sisterhood of which you speak came about from the megalomania of Goge Vandire, one of your predecessors".

Deacis: "You think I would unleash another Reign of Blood? What of the great wars that could be won?"

Greyfax: "The power is not for you, but for the position".

Deacis: "I am not seeking your permission, Inquisitor".

Greyfax: "You will not live forever. Any powers you grant yourself will outlast you and be open to exploitation by a successor. Whether I trust you or not is irrelevant".

Deacis: "But you spoke on my behalf. I thought you supported me".

Greyfax: "I spoke against your summary execution to avoid creating a schism within the Imperial church. It was not an endorsement⁸⁴ of your full hardy plan".

Celestine: "Nothing yet has been announced".

Deacis: "To those that matter the announcement is simply a formality. I would sacrifice any authority if I renege⁸⁵ on the pledges I have made to my supporters".

Celestine: "Is your position more important than the future of the Ecclesiarchy?"

Deacis: "I am..."

Greyfax (interrupting): "It is several weeks warp travel to the Ophelia system, Ecclesiarch. Perhaps you should use that time to reconsider your plans. It is not too late to chart⁸⁶ a better course for the Adeptus Ministorum".

(Katarinya leaving)

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Custodian: "Centurion, we have reached safe distance from Terra. The tech-priests report that they are ready to engage the warp engines".

Longinus: "Very well, we will engage Gellar fields imminently".

Celestine: "I will say a few words of sanctity⁸⁷ first, if I may".

Longinus: "Be brief".

Celestine: "Lord on Terra, who watches over humanity and guides us to our lordship of the stars, I ask you to extend your protection to us again this day. I know that you share the pain we have felt these last fifteen days to leave the sacred soil of the Throne world behind in these troubled times. We have not abandoned you, but press on toward the next battle, confident that the sacrifices we make in your name are but a fraction of the sacrifices you have made for us".

Greyfax: "Heh, if that was the brief version..."

Longinus: "Signal the warp engine crew to begin initiation ceremonies. Send word to Ecclesiarch Deacis, that we are about to depart the Sol system".

Celestine: "Where is Kyrillos?"

Greyfax: "Keeping Diaces's company in his chambers".

Celestine: "By which you mean he is spying on the Ecclesiarch".

Greyfax: "Diaces's cloistered⁸⁸ himself away these past two weeks, preparing missives⁸⁹ he claims. I want to know what he intends when he arrives at Ophelia VII".

Celestine: "Was it your cynicism that drew the eye of the Inquisition to you? Or has it developed since you found that calling?"

Greyfax: "A more recent acquisition really. The Imperium is in a worse state than it has been since... well, perhaps for ten thousand years. Sundered, attacked on all sides and from within and I have made so many compromises to what I thought was right just to survive this long".

Celestine: "You speak of the xenos and what happened with the Primarch. You helped to bring hope when there was nothing but despair".

Greyfax: "Did I? I do not have any hope. How is it you can be so positive, who has died again and again for this moldering⁹⁰ pile of humanity?"

Celestine: "The lord on the Throne gave off his life for his servants to prosper. Who am I to do any less if he asks it of me? The Imperium has passed through many dark ages, each of which have seemed like a time of ending. Now is no different. With his strength and our dedication we shall persevere⁹¹ and overcome. You need to have faith, Katarinya".

Greyfax: "In the Emperor or humanity?"

Celestine: "How about having a little faith in me? That would be a start".

(sirens going off)

Servitor: "Commencing translation to warp space".

(warship jumping into warp with a low droning noise)

Custodian: "Centurion, Navigator Elixio wishes to speak with you".

Longinus: "Put him on the main vox".

Navigator (over vox): "Centurion! We have translated to warp space but I cannot locate the Astronomicon".

Longinus (over vox): "How can you not see the Emperor's light? We have just left the Sol system".

Navigator (over vox): "A surge⁹² of the warp storm, Centurion. I feel a glimmer of the light of Terra but I cannot chart a course to Ophelia VII. It is lost beyond the ripples caused by the Great Rift. And something worse, Centurion, clouding the warp with malignancy⁹³. There is a presence close by, something moving toward us".

Greyfax (over vox): "Another ship? Did anyone else know about our planned jump point?"

Navigator (over vox): "Not a ship, something of the warp. Something hunting us, I fear. Diabolis".

Longinus (over vox): "How long do we have until it reaches us?"

Navigator (over vox): "Minutes, no longer. It moves swiftly. I can see the bow wave of its approach. Something with terrible power is coming. It is a growing darkness upon my warp sight".

Celestine (over vox): "I will lead the way. My sisters in the Convent Sanctorum will guide me to them!"

(Celestine treading away)

Longinus: "What does she mean?"

Greyfax: "I do not know, I am not her keeper".

Longinus: "Yet, you would be her judge. Even in the Imperial dungeon word reached me of Saint Celestine and Inquisitor Greyfax, two heroes of the Imperium that almost saved Cadia from the Despoiler. Is it true that you rescued her from beneath Abaddon's diabolic blade?"

Greyfax: "I did, though I wonder if I should have let it fall".

Longinus: "It is also said you can see the lies of your foes even before they've spent the breath to speak them. Yet you seem incapable to see the mistruth you tell yourself each day".

Greyfax: "And what gives you the right or skill to think you know me?"

Navigator (over vox): "I feel the chill of the shadow that falls upon us. Where is the saint?"

Longinus: "The Custodians have long studied the minds of the Emperor's servants and learned to do so from the lessons of our master. You cannot deflect the truth forever. One day you will admit that you hate Celestine so much because you envy her".

Greyfax: "Yes, I would dearly love to sprout wings and fly like a golden..."

Longinus: "Your faith is unshakeable, yet every day you must conquer your own doubts. But it is the teaching of the Inquisition that doubt begets⁹⁴ heresy. You fear yourself more than any foe and the thought that you might be wrong causes you a dread greater than death".

Custodian: "Centurion, we are receiving a request from Saint Celestine to open the forward airlock gates on the command level".

Greyfax: "She cannot be serious".

Navigator (over vox): "The tide turns against us, Centurion. This is no ripple, but a wave that will sweep⁹⁵ us away. I am blinded and deafened by its power. It is almost upon us".

Longinus: "Unseal the lock. Let sister Celestine outside".

Greyfax: "Into the warp? Are you insane?"

Longinus: "If your hand moves any closer to your weapon, Inquisitor, I will relieve you of it".

Greyfax: "My weapon?"

Longinus: "Your hand".

Navigator (over vox): "Ten thousand soul fangs close upon us, the darkness. We shall fall into the abyssal darkness. Centurion, I beg you, activate the warp engines! We must flee back to real space. If we stay we shall be devoured".

Custodian: "Airlock open, Centurion".

Celestine (over vox): "In the greatest darkness look to the Emperor to light the path for the righteous".

Navigator (over vox): "Now, Centurion! We need to..."

(pause of unease)

Navigator (over vox): "Golden light pierces the fog... I see her! The Astronomicon reflects from her soul and banishes the shadows! (sobbing) Blessed are we, delivered from the abyss!"

Custodian: "Look to the main display, Centurion!"

Greyfax: "As I first saw her on Cadia so like an angel painted upon the cathedral roof".

Longinus: "A spark in the night leading us through the shadows".