

Bringers of Death

by Neil Roberts

The Ordo Sicarius is one of smaller Ordos within the Inquisition. Neil explores it's reasons for existing and it's methods.

By the thirty sixth millennium the Officio Assassinorum had grown to be one of the most powerful organs of the Imperium, its considerable power unchecked and unmonitored. Vicious internal squabbles led to bloody conflicts within the Officio itself, secret rivalries led to secret battles, which in turn culminated in what is now known as the Wars of Vindication, a conflict so wide and bloody that it was impossible for it to remain secret.

Shortly after the death of Goge Vandire, one of the High Lords of Terra, and following the late High Lord's orders, a member of the Callidus temple named Tziz Jarek assumed the features and identity of the then Grand Master of Assassins. Unknown to the would-be usurper, the Grand Master was prepared and the man Jarek slew was not the Grand Master but another member of Callidus temple masquerading in his place. Sides were chosen, deals made, and Assassins loyal to the Grand Master fought pitched battles against their erstwhile brothers. Many good men and women died defending false truths having been duped by their treacherous masters or Jarek himself into thinking he was the true Grand Master and not the fake. Trained killers stalked trained killers, each side bringing to bear the monstrous weapons and abilities they had access to in an attempt to gain the upper hand. On and on the wars raged, crippling the Officio until the Grand Master finally slew the traitor in personal combat and disappeared into a self-imposed exile.

The Inquisition was horrified that they had failed to see the warning signs of such internecine strife, embarrassed that their gaze had been so blinkered as to blind them to this internal threat, and one of their best and brightest members, Inquisitor Jaeger, was detailed to investigate the causes of Jarek's treachery. His full findings were suppressed and are still restricted to all but the highest levels of the Inquisition and the High Lords of Terra themselves. What is known is that he found not the taint of chaos many expected to be revealed, but instead that simple human greed had ripped the Officio Assassinorum apart.

Jaeger's lasting, and more public, achievement was the founding of the Ordo Sicarius, a new



branch of the Inquisition dedicated to the monitoring of the Officio Assassinorum and the prevention of another War of Vindication.

The original remit of the Ordo Sicarius has broadened significantly in the last four millennia as successive Inquisitors have pushed the bounds of their duties within the Ordo. Initially the Ordo acted as an oversight committee for the Officio Assassinorum, reserving the right to investigate any and all of their activities and membership, which they did with their usual ruthless efficiency. As the activities of the two organisations became more closely linked, the natural progression from investigating the assassins was to investigate the victims of assassination within the Imperium and identify the parties responsible. As alien civilisations increasingly came into both open and covert conflict with the Imperium this led to an increasing knowledge of the non-humans mind-sets and tactics, a knowledge happily accepted and augmented by the Ordo Xenos. Soon, some Inquisitors duties consisted purely of researching alien methodologies and potential scenarios to better recognise or even pre-empt the assassination of Imperial citizens.

As time passed the knowledge garnered by the Ordo Sicarius was turned to more sinister purposes. More than one would-be demagogue or nascent rebel leader fell victim to an alien assassin's bullet. Very few of those bullets had been fired by aliens, but the conflicts averted and the lives saved made such deceptions more than acceptable, even desirable.

Apparent non-human intervention in the affairs of mankind soon became a popular weapon in the arsenal of Istvaanian faction members, and more than one war was actually precipitated by the political machinations of the members of the Ordo Sicarius.



To illustrate. In 398.M37 the Cassiterides system faced a two pronged threat as a pair of Ork Waarghs moved towards it, intent on the eradication of all human civilisation. Two teams of Callidus assassins were dispatched, each with specific orders to remove key figures within each of the Waarghs. Less than six months later a series of internal clashes had erupted into full scale warfare between the two Ork forces. The few Orks that didn't annihilate each other were no match for the system's indigenous armed forces. It took a

total of only ten trained assassins to save countless million human lives.

By the start of the thirty-eighth millennium the Ordo Sicarius had begun to recruit and train assassins of its own, absorbing as it did so much of the apparatus within the Inquisition which already fulfilled this role.

Within the modern Ordo Sicarius there are now two distinct groups. The first are the Inquisitors, specialists in the lore of assassination, dedicated to the acquisition of knowledge above all else. Their more active colleagues are the Operatives, trained, often from a young age, to be focused and pitiless killers, implacable servants of the Imperial will.

Unlike the Officio Assassinorum there is no specialisation within the Ordo Sicarius, no temples or schools of differing techniques and abilities. Each operative is expected to be expert with all manner of weapons and materiel and without equal in numerous armed and unarmed combat styles, both human and non-human. Operatives are rigorously tested at all stages of their training, and such testing is both excruciating and physically damaging. Failure is terminal.

But even in death an applicant may serve the Ordo. The Ordo Sicarius is the only organisation within the Imperium that does not use cloned human material in the construction of its servitors, but instead uses pre-existing tissue. Thus failed Operatives may still serve the Ordo. As a result of this practice the servitors of the Ordo Sicarius are almost uniformly maimed and twisted in appearance, and no attempt is made to correct this aesthetic. In such a manner they serve both as servants and object lessons on the price of failure.

There are two broad categories of activities within the Ordo Sicarius, best grouped as 'hands-off' and 'hands-on'. Hands-off activities include, but are not restricted to, the investigation of assassins and assassinations, research and development, training and exercise, the fostering of so-called 'Assassination Cults' and the induction and testing of promising recruits.

Hands-on activities include surveillance of both enemy and allied forces, espionage, infiltration, body-guarding and, of course, assassination.

Most Inquisitors limit themselves to hands-off activities, while most Operatives are strictly hands-on, but there are inevitably areas of overlap. When an Inquisitor steps on the wrong toes it is not unknown for a hands-off investigation to rapidly become hands-on.

Unlike most branches of the Inquisition the Ordo Sicarius operates under an extremely high level of security, beyond that of even the Ordo Malleus. Unlike the Ordo Malleus this is not to protect the citizens of the Imperium from gaining knowledge deemed harmful to them but to protect the Ordo Sicarius itself from those that they investigate. It is unwise to be too well known when you investigate killers. To this end members of the Ordo Sicarius make extensive use of code-names to obscure their identities and a combination of surgery and polymorphine to modify their features. The one identifying mark that remains constant is their symbol - the Sicari or 'assassin's dagger' - born in one form or another by all members of the Ordo Sicarius

Mission Profiles

1. **Pacificatorius** – Eliminate the target, but no others.
2. **Invideo** – Eliminate the target and all his allies. No one else is to be harmed.
3. **Sterilitas** – Eliminate any and all individuals within the target area.
4. **Acquisition/recovery** – Appropriate an item or weapon from a specified location or individual.
5. **Plant** – Place a surveillance device/bomb/incriminating item on a specific location or person.
6. **Bodyguard** – Escort a specified individual or group from location A to location B, or protect them during the execution of their duties.
7. **Sentinel** – Secure and/or protect a specified location.

Restrictions

One or more of these restrictions may be applied to a mission.

- i. **Comminus** – Hand to hand weaponry only.
- ii. **Manus Imperator** – Ranged weaponry only.
- iii. **Fumare** – Stealth operation. Complete the mission unobserved.
- iv. **Idolon** – Do not be seen. Eliminate any who observe you.
- v. **Quietus** – No one is to be killed. Non-lethal force only may be used.

Rules

ASSASSINS

Equipment: Like their brethren from the Officio Assassinorum, the assassins of the Ordo Sicarius have unlimited access to an impressive catalogue of weapons and technology. Unlike the Officio Assassinorum, this may include xeno-technology.

Abilities: There is a -20% modify to any attempts to detect an assassin.

To generate the characteristics use the randomiser on page 141 of the Inquisitor Rulebook.

INQUISITORS

As Page 97 of the Inquisitor rulebook.

SERVITORS

Equipment: Little more than a partially organic cross-breed of cyber-mastiff and servo-skull, servitors have only the equipment that they are constructed or subsequently retrofitted with.

Abilities: Mindless (The servitor has no central nervous system. It is thus immune to anything that would affect the mind including certain psychic powers, gases, toxins, Dark Eldar Agonisers, and so on. Servitors never need to take any psychological tests.) They will follow verbal orders from those recognised as authorised to give them (that is, individuals designated previously).

SERVITORS

WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
50	50	40	70	40	5	5	200	5

A Servitor's stats are set at the time of its construction. Strength and Toughness are dependent upon the organic components of the Servitor as well as the mechanical and may vary by + or - 20 points.

Servitors are treated as having 6 points of armour and the following damage results.

Superficial:	No effects.
Heavy:	<i>Immediate:</i> stunned for one round. <i>Persistent:</i> -10 S and T.
Serious:	<i>Immediate:</i> stunned for D3 rounds <i>Persistent:</i> -10 S and T and I.
Crippled:	Non-functional.

Assassination Cults

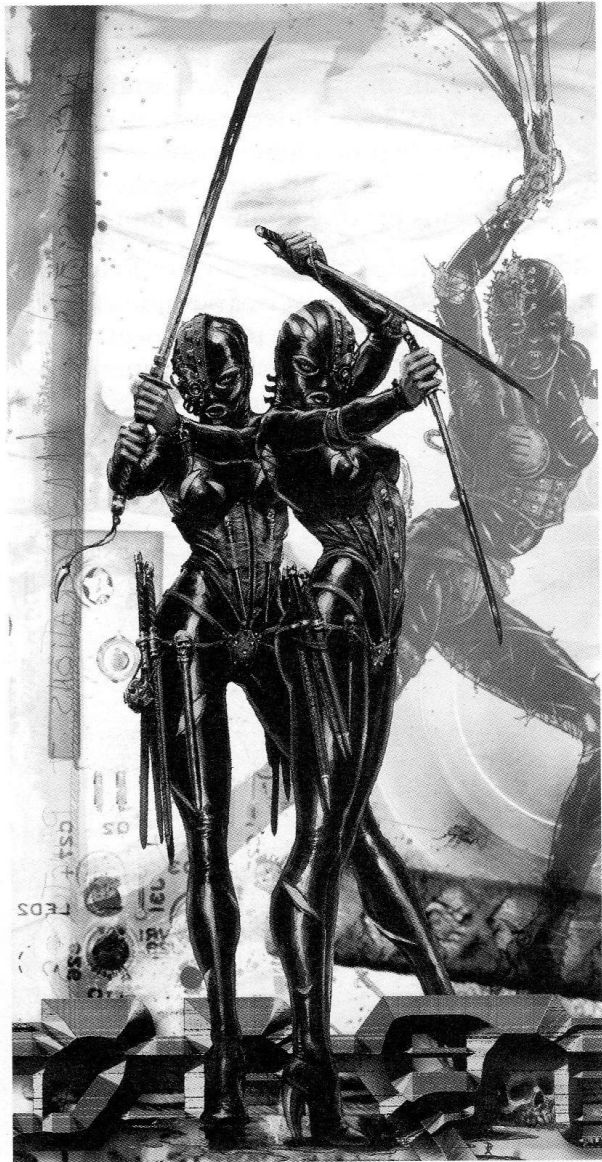
Death Cults are found throughout the Imperium, flourishing on worlds of all types and technology levels, and the names of many have become synonymous with murder and suffering. Rarer, however, are the true Assassination Cults.

While most Death Cults will kill humans as easily as non-humans there is generally a rationale for this behaviour, with the targets being chosen because they possess or lack a particular attribute. This can be as arbitrary as being within a certain age range, being of a certain race, gender or ethnic group or even having a particular hair colour. Sometimes the target is chosen for their faith in the God-Emperor, or for the lack of it, sometimes for being 'impure', or of incredible 'purity' (depending on that cult's definition of purity). What is certain is that whatever attribute is paramount in choosing the worthiness of the victim, that attribute will not be found in the members of the cult doing the choosing, and often not even in the community from which they derive.

In contrast an Assassination Cult does not discriminate in the choice of victim, and will as happily target those within its own community as it will those who are not. That choice can be as indiscriminate as pulling a name out of a hat or picking the next person you see.

Another practically universal feature in Death Cults is their reverence for the God-Emperor, and this is demonstrated through their actions. The act and method of killing, the taking of blood or organs and the delivery of these trophies to sacred sites, acts of cannibalism and blood-drinking - all are carried out in praise of His name as acts of respect and veneration. Whilst the members of an Assassination Cult can be as staunch in their faith as any Death Cultist, their actions are not so much an act of devotion to the God-Emperor as a way for them to demonstrate their superiority over their fellow man and their closeness to their own group's ideal. Bizarrely for organisations granted the status of 'cult', most Assassination Cults lack almost any religious ritual and are entirely secular in nature.

In almost all Death Cults murder is literally a sacrifice, carried out upon a victim who, willing or not, must be slain in a specific manner or location. However, not all Death Cultists are frenzied and expert killers, accomplished at slaying with a variety of tools and techniques. Some are indistinguishable



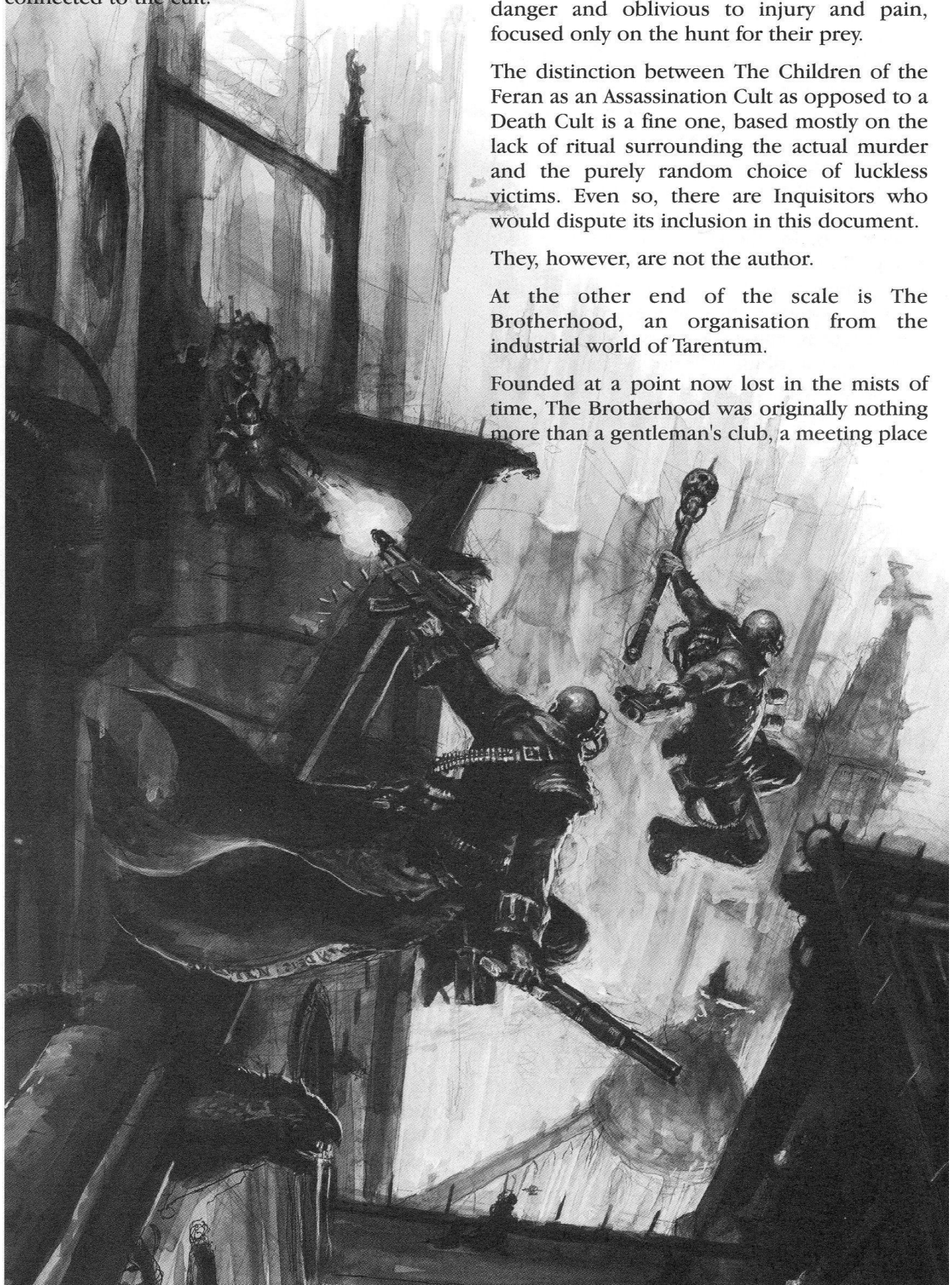
from any other Imperial citizen, bringing death to their chosen victims on an altar with the blow of a sacrificial weapon. These men and women, for all their strength of devotion, lack any martial skills.

In every Assassination Cult the presence of such prowess is a vital prerequisite, not an option. Furthermore, whatever weapon is chosen to carry out the act of murder, it is the act that is the important factor, not the method or location. Often, but not always, the choice of weapon is due purely to personal preference rather than the dictates of the group as a whole. Likewise the location of the act is commonly determined by more concrete factors such as line of sight and field of fire or, in the case of hand-to-hand killing, seclusion.

Many Assassination Cults specialise in a particular weapon or martial art. As in most Death Cults, this is often a close combat weapon such as is found in the Children of the Feran. The Feran, sometimes called the Barbed Cat, is a predator native to the death-world of Oracius IV and is similar to the extinct Terran Leopard, although more than twice as large.

Members of the cult use a three bladed hand weapon designed to leave gashes in their victims identical to those produced by the Feran itself. As such, little attempt is made by the killers to dispose of their victims' bodies as local authorities typically attribute such deaths to wild Ferans preying on the community.

It no doubt helps that members of the local authorities are themselves unquestionably connected to the cult.



The Children of the Feran are also an excellent example one of the few Assassination Cults that practices ritual. Before they hunt they ingest hallucinogenic drugs extracted from the local flora, paint their skins and don clothing made from the Feran's blue-black pelt. Those members that will actually hunt dance for several hours until the combination of drugs and exertion whips them into a frenzy. In such an altered mental state they are insensible to danger and oblivious to injury and pain, focused only on the hunt for their prey.

The distinction between The Children of the Feran as an Assassination Cult as opposed to a Death Cult is a fine one, based mostly on the lack of ritual surrounding the actual murder and the purely random choice of luckless victims. Even so, there are Inquisitors who would dispute its inclusion in this document.

They, however, are not the author.

At the other end of the scale is The Brotherhood, an organisation from the industrial world of Tarentum.

Founded at a point now lost in the mists of time, The Brotherhood was originally nothing more than a gentleman's club, a meeting place

for like-minded individuals within the capital city's more affluent communities. The common ground shared by its members was the hunting of big game, both on Tarentum and the neighbouring planets, and the consumption of large amounts of luxury foodstuffs at their regular meetings.

Several centuries ago The Brotherhood started hunting humans.

The first hunts were aimed at removing those people that had become an annoyance to individual members of The Brotherhood. Workers' rights activists, business rivals and even familial 'black sheep' became victims of apparently random shootings. As time passed the focus of The Brotherhood changed until their current practice in the choice of victims became the norm. At each meeting a single member is first chosen to be the hunter. Competition is fierce for this honour and members vie amongst themselves to accrue enough support from fellow members to ensure their own nomination. When the hunter has been chosen the unfortunate victim's name is drawn randomly from the planetary census roll. In such a way the victim can be anyone, man or woman, young or old, rich or poor: indeed the only guarantee is that since the name comes from the planetary census the victim will be an adult. The hunter then takes his weapon of choice and, by the time of the next meeting, finds, stalks and slays his target.

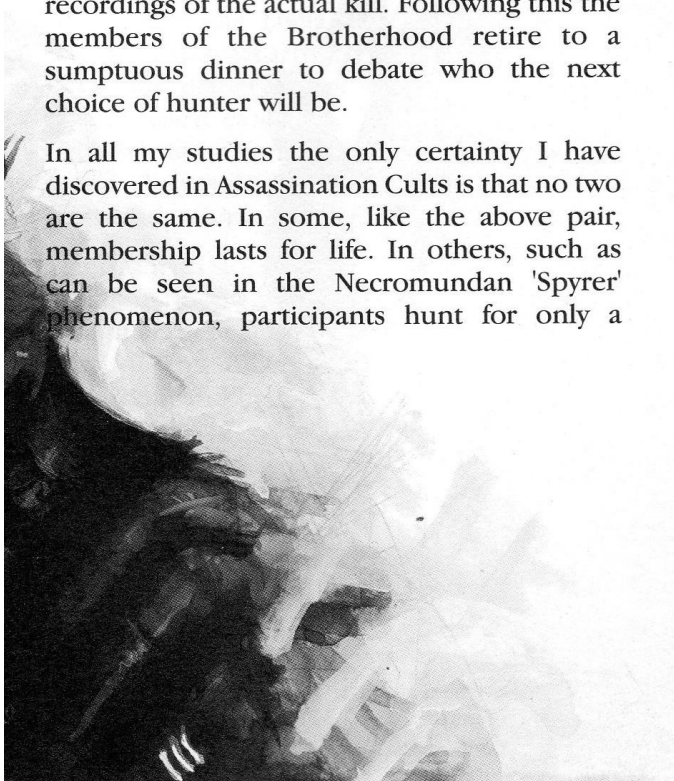
At the following meeting he is expected to present to the assembled members the story of the hunt, complete with vox and pict-recordings of the actual kill. Following this the members of the Brotherhood retire to a sumptuous dinner to debate who the next choice of hunter will be.

In all my studies the only certainty I have discovered in Assassination Cults is that no two are the same. In some, like the above pair, membership lasts for life. In others, such as can be seen in the Necromundan 'Spyrer' phenomenon, participants hunt for only a

short time and then 'retire' to become inactive members. With one group you may join in order to hunt, in the next you hunt to prove your worthiness to join. Most cults do, however, share one aspect.

The hunt, the kill. These are the activities that have significance for the members of the Assassination Cult and it is only natural that these should be commemorated, even immortalised within the cult. To this end every Assassination Cult keeps some form of trophy collection, either in the possession of the cult itself at some secure location or within the members own premises, despite the incredibly incriminating nature of these acquisitions. Trophies taken can range from such crude examples of feral behaviour as skulls, scalps and shrunken heads all the way up to comprehensive pict, vox and holo recordings of the hunts and kills themselves. It is not uncommon for certain of the victims possessions to also be taken for display or later gratification, such as jewellery, clothing or even civilian and military ID papers. As an example, the Children of the Feran, whose cult practices were discussed earlier, clean their sacred weapons free of blood and tissue using small squares of cloth which are then retained by each individual as a memento or trophy. Conversely, many cult members on higher tech hive worlds such as Necromunda, Romulus and Remus (the twin moons of the gas giant Coralis III), and Verghast immortalise their exploits through recording devices either embedded in their equipment or attached to small servo-drones. These recordings are displayed to their fellow cultists either in small, private groups or in larger, more public gatherings of the full membership of the cult. Typically these recordings are not only kept rather than destroyed as incriminating evidence, but often transferred to more reliable and robust storage mediums as such media becomes available.

Unlike Blood Cults and Death Cults, Assassins Cults produce individuals who are almost universally capable of operating within their society without arousing the suspicions of their fellow man as to their lethal pursuits. As such, despite their members sometimes disturbing lack of morals, they make excellent recruiting grounds for both individual Inquisitors and the Ordo Sicarius itself. It should come as no surprise, then, that such cults are not only accepted by those within the Inquisition who have knowledge of them, but are often fostered, patronised or even founded by individual Inquisitors.



Character Examples

Operative

Name: Fiona, Daughter of Brennan IV

Code name: Blandiri (Caress)

Born on the matriarchal shrine-world of Brennan IV, Fiona was, like her mother and grandmothers before her, inducted into the Final Caress Assassination Cult at an early age. As one of the organisations from which the local militia and enforcement agencies drew their membership, scholastic ability as well as martial prowess were considered as pre-requisite paths of study for the fledgling members. And Fiona excelled in her studies.

By the time she started puberty she was renowned for her ability with both bladed and projectile weapons as well as her knowledge of Imperial law and history, but it was with the primitive cestus which she excelled, using the heavy brass weapons to augment the already considerable power of her blows. It was only natural that she would become First Kiss, the finest example of the membership within the cult, and from there practice her deadly arts on local trouble-makers, climaxing in a single handed attack on a group of supposed gun-runners.

Unfortunately for Fiona the gun-runners were members of the retinue of Inquisitor Marcus Lucinius Tulus, and two were killed by her before she was knocked unconscious by the third's shock maul. Although more than mildly annoyed at the intercession of the young woman, Inquisitor Tulus knew potential when he saw it. Within two months Fiona had begun her training.



FIONA

WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
94	86	72	71	98	93	85	126	63

Fiona is Right Handed

Abilities: Nerves of Steel; Force of Will; Acrobatic; Hipshooting; Deadeye Shot; Dodge.

Equipment: Carapace Armour (All locations except the head); Boltgun MkIV w Rangefinder and Stalker Silenced Shells; Shock-Fist (On the left-hand. Counts as a shock-maul with a range of 0 and parry at -30%).

Servitor

Name: Not recorded

Code-name: Iracundus (Resentful)

His real name and homeworld are lost, having been expunged from the Ordo's records. All that is certain, beyond his gender, is that he is a failure. What more needs to be known?

IRACUNDUS

WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
50	50	38	76	40	5	5	200	5

Handedness is not an issue for Iracundus - he has no functioning organic limbs, only two servo limbs.

Equipment: Iracundus has been fitted with a basic manipulator and a drill unit. He makes improvised attacks in close combat with a reach of 1 and doing 2D6 damage. He does not parry.



Researcher

Name: Marcus Lucinius Tulus, Son of Damnonium Promunturium

Code name: Cruciatius (Instrument of torture)

The third son of a minor noble family, Marcus Lucinius Tulus was never going to be an Inquisitor. Throughout his ridiculously expensive schooling he was never better than average. His academic grades were mediocre, barely enough to get by, and his physical prowess was little better. By the time he was old enough to enter the Administratum he had yet to achieve anything remarkable.

Tulus had already foreseen his life, and it was to be a life of boring mediocrity. What else could a third son expect?

And then the war came. In less than a week his personal world had been as surely devastated as the rest of the Damnonium Promunturium. As a member of the privileged elite Tulus quickly learned truths too dangerous for the common man to know. Rebel factions within the nobility itself had mobilised their own personal forces in an attempt to depose the planetary government, calling upon nearby mercenary pirates to bolster their numbers. It was his parents' decision that he should be kept far away from the conflict, not out of any familial loyalty but out of despair for a son they felt to be a feckless failure. Presented at long last with both cause and opportunity, Tulus turned his squandered abilities to the task at hand, ruthlessly interrogating captured rebels and meticulously documenting their confessions. By the time Inquisitor Lucia of the Ordo Sicarius arrived upon the planet Tulus had amassed extremely detailed files on rebel troop dispositions and their leadership.

Ten bullets stopped the rebellion in its tracks, and when Lucia left she took along a new student. Tulus didn't look back then, and he hasn't looked back since.

TULIUS

WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
95	83	65	70	70	83	90	85	92

Abilities: Leader; Ambidextrous; Nerves of Steel.

Equipment: Power Armour (All locations except the head); Las Pistol; Power Fist; Power Sword.

