

WARHAMMER QUEST

BLACKSTONE FORTRESSES



DEADLY ALLIANCE

The debris-scattered chambers and echoing corridors of the Blackstone Fortress hold many secrets. Those that would uncover them must face blood-hungry aliens, the fanatical servants of the Dark Gods and the arcane defence systems of the structure itself. Yet as the fortress stirs, this environment has become even more hostile for those who seek to plunder the wealth hidden within.

Deep in the bowels of the ancient structure is a riotous, tearing morass. There, chambers shift and merge with alarming rapidity. Walls slam together, cracks yawn wide, and great blackstone slabs plunge from ceilings that served as floors moments before. This is the Seethe, and it offers a deadly end for any who would risk exploring the fortress.

In this desperate hour, an enigmatic figure promises a chance of ending the horrifying phenomenon. This creature is a Zoat, one of a species cloaked in as much mystery as the fortress itself – and in order to conquer the Seethe, the alien proposes to lead the explorers into the very heart of the Blackstone Fortress.

INTRODUCTION

Amidst the shifting chambers of the Blackstone Fortress roils the Seethe, an area in constant flux. Those who have entered this perilous terrain have all fallen prey to the shardquakes which wrack its corridors and chambers. An enigmatic alien known as the Archivist offers hope – it claims to be able to quell the worst of the effects and even prevent the Seethe spreading any further. This Zoot promises great rewards for those who are prepared to escort it and ensure it arrives at its destination safely, but their journey will not be easy...

Deadly Alliance is an expansion for Warhammer Quest Blackstone Fortress and Warhammer Quest Escalation. It adds a new quest to be undertaken by groups of explorers, as they accompany the mysterious Archivist to confront an evolving danger at the heart of the Blackstone Fortress. This phenomenon is the Seethe, and it makes braving the ancient structure even more hazardous.

To complete their quest, the explorers must journey to three Dark Vortices at the heart of the Seethe and reclaim the ancient relics trapped within them. Reaching these locations will not be easy, and each poses its own dangers to the group. The relics themselves – fragments of an ancient Zoot, laden with technology – are unwieldy,

making progress difficult for the explorers, and the Archivist is a mistrustful ally. The group will have to decide how much time – and archeotech – they are willing to invest to retain the Archivist's aid as they push through the Seethe. If they can successfully claim the three relics, they will then have to make a final expedition to end the threat of the Seethe once and for all.

The Deadly Alliance expansion includes a new series of expeditions for your explorers to undertake as they search for the Dark Vortices, followed by an expedition into a final location. You will find complete rules for using the Archivist in this expansion, as well as for including this new miniature in your other games of Blackstone Fortress.

The quest to quell the Seethe is a new quest which you can choose to play instead of starting a different quest. We recommend completing the quest for the hidden vault and the quest for the Black Shrines before starting the quest to quell the Seethe, as they will give you a good knowledge of the game, and the narrative running through it, before starting this new quest.

"It is folly to try to chart all the twisting threads of fate's course. The paths before us are as disordered as the morass we have encountered at the fortress' heart."

– Aradia Madellan

COMPONENTS

Blackstone Fortress: Deadly Alliance includes the following components:

Citadel Miniature

- 1 Zoat

Booklets

- 24-page Deadly Alliance booklet
- Shardcell sheet
- Assembly guide

Boards and Tiles

- 3 double-sided location tiles

Counters and Markers

- 5 trust counters
- 4 pairs of scourge markers
- 3 gravitic distortion markers
- 5 shift markers
- 1 Mysterious Objective discovery marker
- 3 double-sided shard fragment counters/Forerunner relic markers

Cards

- 1 Archivist retinue character card
- 1 Archivist trust card
- 15 exploration cards
- 3 Forerunner relic cards
- 12 discovery cards

Other Components

- 1 Shardcell envelope



Scourge markers



Shift marker



Gravitic distortion marker



Trust counters (value 1, 2 and 5)

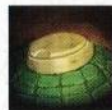


Double-sided
Mysterious Objective
discovery marker



Shard
fragment
counter

Forerunner relic markers



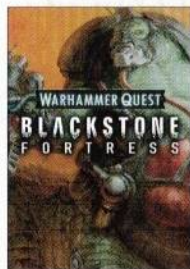
Corpex
Aperture



Lupina
Weld



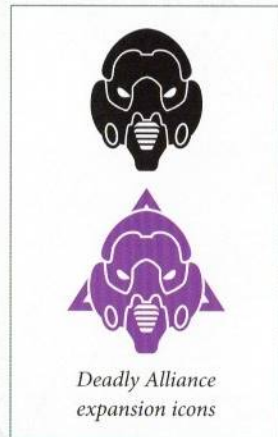
Mandrageran
Orbis



Shardcell envelope



Shardcell sheet



From left to right: exploration card, Forerunner relic card, Shardquake discovery card, Archivist retinue character card, Archivist trust card

ALIEN PRESENCE



The Archivist

"The technologies this 'Archivist' has discovered provide us with an opportunity - a chance to resolve the question of the Seethe. I suspect that its physical strength, and its firepower, will also play a part as we enter the fortress once more. We would be wise to leverage this alliance to our mutual advantage."

- Neyam Shai Murad

ZOATS

In a galaxy shrouded by war and darkness, the Zoats are amongst the most mysterious of species. They are rarely encountered by agents of the Imperium, and little has been recorded by those officials who have had cause to treat with them. However, the lure of the Blackstone Fortress is strong enough to draw even one of these enigmatic creatures to the melting-pot of Precipice.

Zoats are large, scaled, heavily muscled quadrupeds. However, their hulking physiques belie their true nature; these aliens are highly intelligent, technologically advanced and mercilessly manipulative in pursuit of their goals.

They appear so rarely in Imperial records that those tasked with analysing the potential threat presented by these aliens can only speculate upon their means and intentions. Their movements are nomadic, and some Inquisitors claim they are the survivors of an ancient but dying race. Though groups of Zoats have been observed on occasion, most reports concern only a single such creature, reinforcing the likelihood of their extreme scarcity; certainly no evidence has yet been found of a Zoa home world or population centre. Each Zoa appears to serve

only their own ends. However, xenologists cannot discount the possibility that they are each working towards some inscrutable common purpose.

Zoats rely upon bio-technology in order to survive in the known areas of space; parts of their metabolic systems require augmentation, and they also sport devices that provide support for their skeletal or muscular structures. When in territory claimed by the Imperium, they wear atmospheric breather masks. Many also boast synthetic organs that allow them to digest alien proteins. These multifarious innovations are gradually added to and upgraded throughout a Zoa's long lifespan, either to enhance the alien's faculties or simply to keep the Zoa functioning as its body ages.

Perhaps the most disquieting of the Zoats' technologies are the devices through which they communicate. These psychic resonators allow them to speak directly into other's minds, ensuring their messages are interpreted exactly as they intend. Their direct communication, and their manipulative talents, often see Zoats establish positions of authority. They have served as ambassadors, power brokers and data traders amongst the lawless bounds of such areas as the Sectors Fronteris. In more established Imperial territories, a Zoa may work from behind the scenes, enacting its will through unwitting proxies to wield considerable power. Perhaps for this reason, a common Imperial superstition holds that Zoats are heralds of disaster; where one is able to establish its web of influence, whole societies are soon working towards the callous alien's ends.

THE QUEST

In this expansion, the explorers are convinced to escort the Archivist through the Seethe in order to silence the murderous shardquakes and quell the roiling morass at the heart of the Blackstone Fortress.

STARTING THE QUEST TO QUELL THE SEETHE

The quest to quell the Seethe is a standalone quest that can be attempted if the explorers are not currently on another quest, such as the quest for the hidden vault. Before starting an expedition, the explorers can choose to undertake the quest to quell the Seethe. If they do so, follow the rules presented here to set up an expedition for this quest. Once the explorers have started this quest, they may not start another until it has been completed. The quest to quell the Seethe uses some new rules and some existing rules from those presented for the quest for the hidden vault on pages 12-13 of the *Blackstone Fortress: Rules* booklet. Use the existing rules for Discovery Markers and Discovery Cards, and New Expeditions, along with the following new rules.

The Deadly Alliance Discovery Deck

This expansion uses a new discovery deck for expeditions as part of the quest to quell the Seethe. This is made up of two types of discovery card:

Archeotech Cards

The archeotech cards use the same rules as in the *Blackstone Fortress: Rules* booklet and the *Blackstone Fortress: Precipice* booklet. In addition, an archeotech card is removed from the discovery deck and added to the databank after each expedition (pg 12), representing the increased danger of spending prolonged periods in the Seethe – the risk of Shardquake cards being drawn from the discovery deck increases. Finally, archeotech cards can be given to the Archivist during combats, restoring the trust it has in the explorers (see the Archivist's trust card).

Shardquake Cards

The Seethe is an area of great environmental danger, yet also offers vast, untapped wealth. This is represented by Shardquake cards (pg 9). When these cards are drawn from the discovery deck, the explorers will be placed in immediate danger, but stand the chance to find great riches as well.

Failure

The quest to quell the Seethe ends in failure if fewer than four explorers are available at the start of an expedition, if the Archivist dies, or if a seventh archeotech card would be placed in the databank (pg 12). If any of these events happen, the players have failed this quest. The explorers will have to restart this quest, or choose another quest.

SETTING UP AN EXPEDITION FOR THE QUEST TO QUELL THE SEETHE

Set up the expedition as described in the *Blackstone Fortress: Rules* booklet, but with the following changes:

During step 2, in addition to picking an explorer, the Archivist must be taken as a retinue character – no other retinue character can be taken instead. After each player has picked an explorer, the hostile player (or the leader if there is no hostile player) removes all Forerunner relic cards and markers from the databank and gives those relics to the explorers of their choice (pg 12). Note that there will not be any Forerunner relic cards or markers in the databank when you start this quest.

The Archivist begins this quest with its trusting side face up and with 10 trust on the trust card. This card contains the rules for tracking the Zoat's trust in the explorers and managing this is key to success in the quest to quell the Seethe.

During step 3, instead of creating the discovery deck following the rules on page 7

of the Rules booklet, take any remaining archeotech cards and the Shardquake cards, shuffle them together and place them face down on the Precipice board. The rules that cover how the Shardquake cards work can be found on page 9.

During step 4, instead of creating the exploration or encounter deck following the rules on page 7 of the Rules booklet, use these rules instead.

Encounter Deck

Take the encounter cards and find the cards for the Ur-Ghuls and Spindle Drones (a total of eight cards) shuffle them, deal four face down and place the remaining cards back in the game box. Now find the cards for Traitor Guardsmen, Cultists, Chaos Beastmen, Chaos Space Marines and Negavolt Cultists and shuffle them. If you wish to use encounter cards from other expansions (such as No Respite or the Dreaded Ambull) shuffle them together with these cards, deal twelve face down and put the remaining encounter cards back in the game box. Now take all of the dealt cards and shuffle them together to make the encounter deck.

Exploration Deck

Use the challenge and combat cards from the Deadly Alliance expansion instead of the exploration cards from the Blackstone Fortress game, or another expansion (such as Escalation).

Choose which Dark Vortex within the Seethe the explorers are travelling to, as described on the following page. This will affect the number of exploration rounds, as each Dark Vortex has a different access route.

During step 12; the leader reads aloud the following text instead:

'The Archivist gestures over the maglev control panel and the transport chamber begins to move. Without further explanation, the Zoat busies itself with an arcane device that emits a long series of organic noises. Long minutes pass before the maglev suddenly grinds to a halt, as if in distress. A twisting corridor lies ahead of the explorers, reforming before their eyes. They have entered the Seethe. The Archivist waits patiently as each explorer alights, then follows them into the gloom.'

EXPLORATION ROUNDS

Each expedition in the quest to quell the Seethe is launched either with the intention of travelling to a specific Dark Vortex within the Seethe to retrieve a Forerunner relic or, if all three relics have been discovered, with the intention of conquering the Shardcell, where the Archivist's final objective lies.

At the start of each expedition, the players must decide which Dark Vortex they intend to travel to. They cannot choose a Dark Vortex which contains a relic they have already discovered. Each destination has an access route in the same way as a stronghold (as described below and, on page 12 of the Precipice book). To create each access route, deal out the number of cards listed below from the challenge and combat decks face down, and then shuffle the dealt cards together and place them face down.

- For the Crawling Deepes, the access route consists of three combat cards and two challenge cards. The explorers reach the deeps after the fifth exploration card has been resolved – turn to page 14.

- For the Shifting Morass, the access route consists of three combat cards and three challenge cards. The explorers reach the morass after the sixth exploration card has been resolved – turn to page 16.
- For the Shadowed Halls, the access route consists of two combat cards and two challenge cards. The explorers reach the halls after the fourth exploration card has been resolved – turn to page 18.
- If all three Forerunner relics have been discovered (meaning that those relics are in the databank or on a character card), instead shuffle all of the combat and challenge cards from this expansion, and deal out seven face down to create the access route. The explorers reach the Shardcell after the seventh exploration card has been resolved – refer to the Shardcell sheet.

The Dark Vortices

The Dark Vortices take the form of three combat encounters, each with their own unique rules and theme. If the explorers reach a Dark Vortex during an expedition, it will require additional rules to set up. The

maps and rules for each of these areas can be found on pages 14-19. Make sure to read all of the rules for a Dark Vortex carefully before you start the combat, as they will often change how hostiles or explorers are set up for that combat.

The instructions for each Dark Vortex will tell you what the explorers need to do to conquer that area, and the rewards they receive for doing so. If all of the explorers are taken out of action before this happens, the expedition ends in failure (see opposite) and no rewards are received.

Dark Vortex Hostile Groups

The hostiles in a Dark Vortex hostile group are not deployed at the start of the combat. Instead they are deployed when the corresponding discovery marker shown on the map is revealed. A discovery marker is revealed when an explorer has unblocked line of sight to the hex with the marker. When this happens, the discovery marker is flipped over and the hostiles from the corresponding group are deployed following the rules from page 6 of the Combat booklet. If this occurs during an explorer's activation

(even if it happens during a Move action), the explorer's activation is paused, the hostiles are deployed, and then the explorer's activation continues.

If, when a discovery marker is revealed, it is the mysterious objective discovery marker (pg 2), then reveal the face-down discovery marker that is not on the battlefield and deploy the corresponding hostile group.

When a hostile group is deployed, place the corresponding initiative card in the earliest empty space on the combat track.

How the discovery markers are set up (including the mysterious discovery marker) is explained in the rules for the specific Dark Vortex (pg 14-19).

ENDING AN EXPEDITION

Instead of the rules for ending an expedition found on page 11 of the Rules booklet, an expedition comes to an end if any of the following occur:

1. The Archivist is taken out of action during a combat.
2. An explorer dies in the recovery step.
3. In the exploration step, all of the players agree to end the expedition instead of drawing an exploration card.
4. The terms under 'Victory' for that expedition's destination are met.
5. During a challenge, a relic is dropped and cannot be given to another explorer that will not automatically drop it.
6. If a combat ends and there are relic markers in any hex on the battlefield, the expedition fails and those relics are placed in the databank.

THE SEETHE

The Blackstone Fortress is a terrifying place to venture into. The environment twists and reshapes itself around explorers, sometimes leaving them stranded in airless passageways, or trapping them forever in sterile, lifeless halls.

The Seethe, however, is far worse, as the shifting nature of the Blackstone Fortress is magnified tenfold. Entrances to rooms slide shut moments after the explorers pass through, and whole sections of corridors vanish as they fold in on themselves, only to reappear moments later, filled with groups of enemies or untold riches. Explorers are sometimes even teleported, or dropped down yawning chasms, to appear far from their comrades and often surrounded by hostiles.

This lethal environment is represented by three rules.

Shardquake cards

Each time one of these cards is drawn from the discovery deck, the leader rolls on the Shardquake table on the back of this booklet and resolves the result. Then the Shardquake card is shuffled back into the discovery deck.

Seethe Events

Whilst on an expedition in the quest to quell the Seethe, use the Seethe event table on the back of this booklet.

Shifting

The Seethe is a mutable landscape, shifting to leave explorers lost and wrong-footed. Fortunately, the Archivist bears a device which can mitigate the worst of these effects, and, in time, pull the chambers back into a semblance of their previous position.

Some combat maps include chambers which may shift – these chambers are shaded blue or yellow and each colour has a different shift icon, as shown below.



When setting up a combat, set up the map following the rules on page

6 of the Combat booklet, with the following change. Do not set up any chambers that are shaded blue – these will appear during the game if a shift occurs.

The first time a rule calls for the battlefield to shift during a combat, place a shift marker on each of the chambers shaded yellow on the current combat map.

At the start of the next event phase, any

explorer on a chamber with a shift marker on it is taken out of action. Any hostile on a chamber with a shift marker on it is slain. Remove these miniatures, and any counters relating to those miniatures, from the battlefield. Then remove any chamber with a shift marker on it from the battlefield.

Then set up any chambers shaded blue on the combat map, following the rules on page 6 of the Combat booklet.

If a rule calls for the battlefield to shift and the yellow shaded chambers have already been removed from the battlefield, invert the sequence outlined above – place the shift markers on the chambers shaded blue on the combat map, and at the start of the next event phase, replace them with the chambers shaded yellow on the combat map.

If there are any shift markers already on the battlefield when a rule calls for the battlefield to shift, there is no further effect.

On some combat maps there will be only blue shaded tiles. In these instances do not place the blue shaded tiles on the battlefield

when setting up the combat. In these combats, when the battlefield shifts, place those chambers on the battlefield and place shift markers on them. Do not treat these chambers as placed on the battlefield until the start of the next event phase, when the shift markers are removed.

Finally, some combat maps will only have yellow shaded chambers. In this instance, those yellow chambers are removed as described here, and will be replaced in a subsequent event phase if the battlefield shifts again.

These rules do not apply to combats that do not have any blue or yellow shaded chambers.

WARNING!

The Seethe is a very dangerous place, especially when a shift occurs. If you are careless with where you place your explorers, you might find they are instantly taken out of action, potentially killing them and forcing you to restart your expedition.

At the start of the combat, the battlefield is set up including the chambers shaded yellow, but not the chambers shaded blue. When the battlefield shifts, use the shift markers to remind you which chambers will be removed.



At the beginning of the event phase after the battlefield has shifted, the yellow shaded chambers (and shift markers) are removed, and the blue shaded chambers are added.



THE RELICS

As the explorers make their way through the Seethe, their goal will be to collect three Forerunner relics – the Mandragoran Orbis, the Lupina Weld and the Corpex Aperture. Once they have done so, the Archivist assures them, they will be able to gain access to a final location from which the Zoat can end the affliction of the Seethe once and for all.

When a rule calls for a relic to be given to an explorer, that explorer takes the appropriate relic marker and places it on their character card so it covers one of the activation dice spaces – the explorer is said to have that relic. This prevents that activation dice being rolled in the initiative phase in the same manner as a wound or grievous wound counter. If an explorer has a wound or grievous wound counter in each activation dice space, they cannot have a relic placed on their card – if that would happen, the relic is dropped as described below.

When a relic is dropped, place that relic marker on the battlefield in the same hex as the explorer that dropped it. If an explorer is taken out of action, all relics they are carrying

are dropped before the explorer's miniature is removed from the battlefield. In addition if a wound or grievous wound token is placed on the activation dice space that a relic marker also occupies, the relic is dropped.

An explorer can be given a dropped relic by moving into the same hex as the relic marker and making a Recover (1+) action. If a relic is dropped during a challenge, it is immediately given to an explorer that will not automatically drop it.

Finally, relics can be traded between explorers (except the Archivist) in the Leader step during expeditions, or at any time when the explorers are in Precipice.

Each Forerunner relic also has a card which details the benefits and hindrances that come with carrying such a powerful alien artefact. While an explorer has a relic, place that relic's card next to their character card.

PRECIPICE

Each time the explorers return to Precipice during the quest to quell the Seethe, their mission becomes more dangerous. In the legacy step, instead of drawing a legacy card, the leader places one archeotech card from the discovery deck in the databank. When the seventh archeotech card would be placed in the databank, the explorers fail this quest and must either start this quest again, or choose another quest.

Pausing the Quest or an Expedition

Pausing the quest to quell the Seethe follows the same rules as on page 7 of the Precipice booklet. If this is done, place the Archivist retinue character card and trust card, in addition to any trust, wound and grievous wound counters from those cards, in a stasis chamber. Place any remaining trust counters in the game box. Place any relic markers and relic cards that have been discovered in the databank. If you are pausing a quest mid-expedition, place the relic marker and relic cards in the stasis chamber of the explorer carrying it.

AFTER THE QUEST

All of the cards from this expansion are marked with an icon allowing them to be added to and removed from your existing Blackstone Fortress card decks with ease, enabling full customisation of your Blackstone Fortress adventures. Those marked with a  icon can be added to the relevant decks for one-off games or other quests (such as the quest for the hidden vault).

Those marked with a  icon are only intended to be used when attempting the quest to quell the Seethe.

THE DISCOVERY DECK

The Shardquake discovery cards used in the quest to quell the Seethe can be mixed in with the discovery cards from the quest for the hidden vault for playing one-off games, but not for future quests. Adding these cards to your discovery deck allows you to represent the explorers making their way back to the Seethe (likely by accident!), or the periphery

of that dangerous realm. If you do decide to run another one-off expedition in the Seethe, use the event table on the back of the Combat booklet instead of the one from the Deadly Alliance booklet. If a Shardquake card is drawn from the discovery deck, roll once on the Seethe table on the back of this booklet.

THE EXPLORATION CARDS

The exploration cards for this quest are not designed to be added to other exploration decks for one-off games or other quests unless you add the Shardquake cards to your discovery deck. This is because the battlefield only shifts as a result of Shardquake cards and certain results from the Seethe event table. As the Seethe event table is not used in one-off games or other quests (as the Archivist may not be present) you will need to have the Shardquake cards available, as explained above, to make sure that the exploration cards function as they ought to.

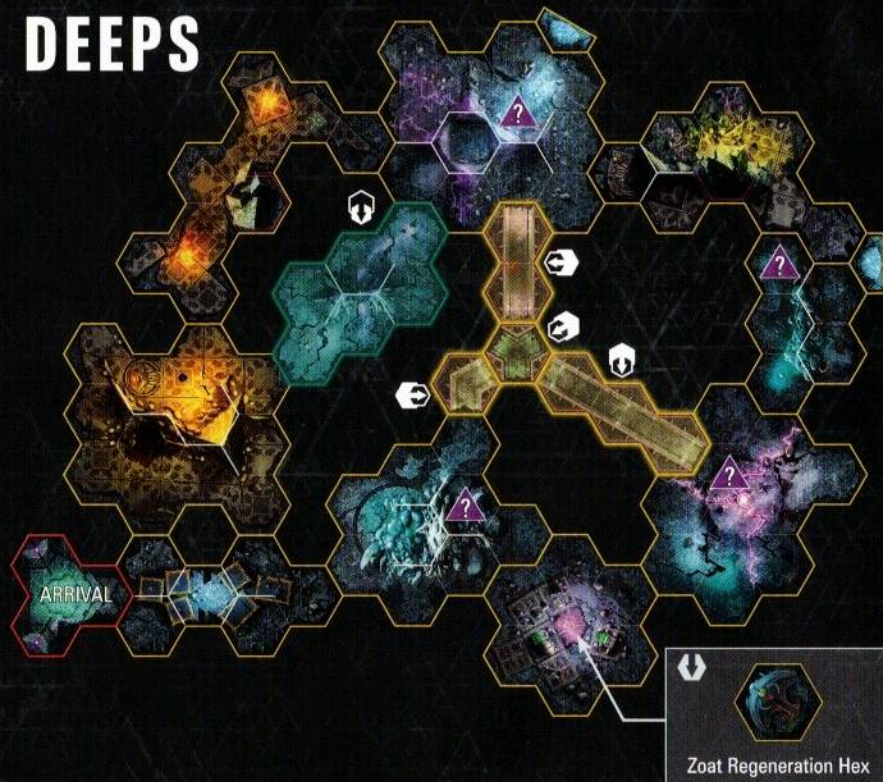
QUEST TO QUELL THE SEETHE

THE CRAWLING DEEPS

As you step from the maglev, you enter a protean environment that seems to seek out and punish interlopers. Spikes spear from the walls, pits yawn open beneath your feet and entire chambers constrict, crushing all inside. If you are to claim the Corpex Aperture and escape with your lives, you will have to do so quickly.

HOSTILE GROUPS

- 1** 4 Ur-Ghuls
- 2** 4 Spindle Drones
- 3** 1 Cultist Firebrand
7 Cultists
- 4** 4 Negavolt Cultists



DARK VORTEX RULES

Discovery Markers: After setting up the stronghold, but before the first turn begins, take the four discovery markers labelled 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the mysterious objective discovery marker, place them face down, and shuffle them around so that the players do not know which is which. Then, keeping the markers face down, place one in each of the hexes indicated with a  on the map. There will be one discovery marker left over – make sure this remaining discovery marker is kept face down. If each discovery marker is revealed, and none of them are the mysterious objective discovery marker, then place the mysterious objective discovery marker on the battlefield in the furthest hex from any explorer.

Hidden Foes: When building the initiative deck, do not add any cards for the hostile groups. When a hostile group is revealed, place that group's hostile initiative card in the earliest available space on the combat track.

The Corpex Aperture: Once the mysterious discovery marker is revealed, the next explorer to perform the Search (4+) action on that discovery marker is given the Corpex Aperture. If an explorer does not have the Corpex Aperture when the combat ends, it is not placed in the databank.

Sentient Malice: When an explorer (not the Archivist) is activated, roll the Blackstone dice. On a 1-5, place a scourge marker on their character card and the matching scourge marker on the chamber they are in. If they already have a scourge marker on their character card, do not add another – instead, move the matching scourge marker to the chamber they are in.

When an explorer is activated, before rolling the Blackstone dice as described above, if they already have a scourge marker on their character card from a previous round and are in a chamber that has any scourge markers, they suffer 2 wounds.

When a hostile is activated in a chamber that has any scourge markers, they suffer 1 damage. The Archivist is not affected by chambers with scourge markers on them.

Zoat Regeneration Hex: This is an empty hex. When an explorer in this hex takes the Recuperate (1+) Action, re-roll failed vitality rolls for that action.

CONQUERING THE CRAWLING DEEPS

In order to conquer the Crawling Deeps, the explorers that are not out of action must be in the maglev transport escape chamber and have the Corpex Aperture.

REWARDS

Victory in this expedition sees the explorers leave with the Corpex Aperture relic. In addition, gain 3 trust.



QUEST TO QUELL THE SEETHE

THE SHIFTING MORASS

The relic you seek lies at the heart of a constantly surging mass of blackstone. As the maglev transport alights against the vortex's briefly stable core, you hear the sounds of hostile forces trapped within. You must hold them off while the Archivist uses its advanced technology to drag further chambers from the elemental landscape until the Mandragoran Orbis is found.

HOSTILE GROUPS

- 1** 4 Ur-Ghuls
4 Spindle Drones
- 2** 1 Cultist Firebrand
7 Cultists
- 3** 4 Negavolt Cultists
- 4** **Twist:** Minions of the Morass (see opposite)



DARK VORTEX RULES

Discovery Markers: After setting up the stronghold, but before the first turn begins, take discovery marker 1 and place it in the hex on the central chamber where shown. Then take discovery markers 2, 3 and 4 and the mysterious objective discovery marker, place them face down, and shuffle them around so that the players do not know which is which. Then, keeping the markers face down, place one in each of the hexes indicated with a  on the map. There will be one discovery marker left over – make sure this remaining discovery marker is kept face down. If each discovery marker is revealed, and none of them are the mysterious objective discovery marker, then place the mysterious objective discovery marker on the battlefield on the furthest hex from any explorer.

Drifting Chambers: Set up the combat map as shown. The chamber section that contains discovery marker 1 is referred to here as the central mass. The chambers on the map that contain the discovery markers labelled with a  are drifting nearby in the mass of near-liquid blackstone and are referred to as islands. The explorers cannot move to islands until they are attached to the central mass. Once an island is attached to the central mass and the leader has placed portals on it, that island becomes part of the central mass and follows all rules for the central mass.

Minions of the Morass: After this discovery marker has been revealed, re-roll reinforcement rolls if hostile reinforcements fail to arrive for hostile group 1 in this combat. In addition, halve the result of all reinforcement rolls for hostile group 1 (rounding up).

CONQUERING THE SHIFTING MORASS

In order to conquer the Shifting Morass, the explorers that are not out of action must be in the maglev transport escape chamber and have the Mandragoran Orbis.

Chamber Coordinates: The Archivist can use coordinates found throughout this area to draw chambers to the central mass. In order to locate a coordinate, an explorer must perform the Search (4+) action on a discovery marker. Once they have done this, place that discovery marker on the Archivist's character card (the explorer that performed the action also draws a discovery card). During the Archivist's activation, if it has one or more discovery markers on its character card and it is on the Zoat console, it will always take the Geomantic Lure action, after which its activation ends.

Geomantic Lure: Discard one discovery marker next to the Archivist. The hostile player chooses an island and places it next to the central mass so that at least three hexes from each are in contact with each other and none of those hexes are within 1 hex of any hex in contact with a portal. Once this has been done, reveal the discovery marker on that chamber and deploy that hostile group following the rules for deploying hostiles on page 6 of the Combat booklet. Then the hostile player places one portal so that it is in contact with exactly two hexes and is not within 1 hex of any hex adjacent to another portal.

The Mandragoran Orbis: Once the mysterious discovery marker is revealed, the next explorer to perform the Search (4+) action on that discovery marker is given the Mandragoran Orbis. If an explorer does not have the Mandragoran Orbis when the combat ends, it is not placed in the databank.

REWARDS

Victory in this expedition sees the explorers leave with the Mandragoran Orbis relic. In addition, gain 3 trust.



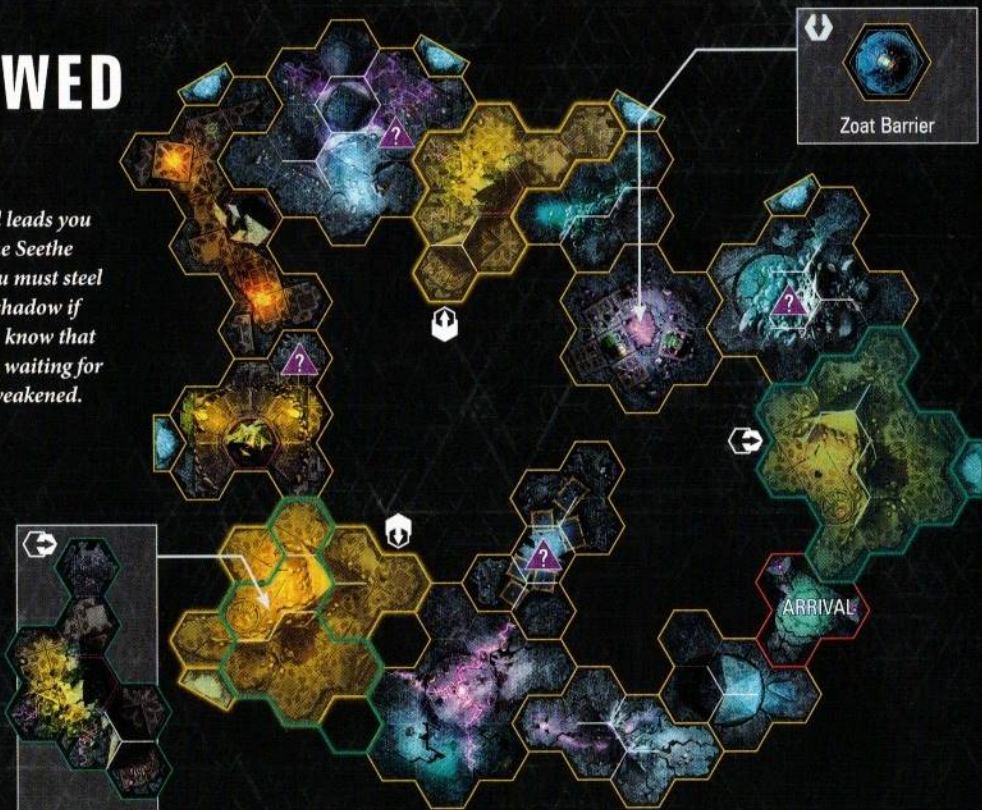
QUEST TO QUELL THE SEETHE

THE SHADOWED HALLS

Your quest to claim the Lupina Weld leads you to the Shadowed Halls, an area of the Seethe shrouded in oppressive darkness. You must steel yourselves to enter the encroaching shadow if you are to achieve your aim, yet you know that unseen horrors lurk in the darkness, waiting for your party to become separated or weakened.

HOSTILE GROUPS

- 1** 4 Ur-Ghuls
4 Spindle Drones
- 2** 1 Cultist Firebrand
7 Cultists
- 3** 4 Negavolt Cultists
- 4** **Twist:** Light-devouring Gloom (see opposite)



A DESPERATE HOUR

Over long millennia, countless adventurers have lost their lives within the Blackstone Fortress. Bands of heretical warriors roam its echoing chambers, cruel aliens wait in the darkness to feed upon any who dare trespass within, and the structure's arcane defences never sleep. Yet in recent times, this perilous environment has grown even more deadly.

The Blackstone Fortress is in a state of upheaval. Its ancient weaponry has started stirring to life, activated by the corrupting influence of the Chaos Lord Obsidius Mallex. Though the denizens of the nearby station of Precipice were able to disrupt Mallex's plans, they could not silence the fortress' guns, and many who have attempted to flee Precipice since have been incinerated by the ancient weapons systems. Those explorers that remain aboard Precipice have little choice but to venture into the darkness once more, hoping against hope to find some way to quiet its fearsome firepower. Instead, they must brave the influence of a forbidding new anomaly.

An area of the fortress that lies directly beneath the fallen Citadel of Mallex has started to constantly shift and reshape itself.

There, the very stuff of the fortress roils as if in the heart of a crucible – chambers yawn open and squeeze themselves shut in moments, surfaces ripple with shifting energies, and fragments of blackstone cascade from above like waterfalls.

When reports reached Precipice, the varied denizens were troubled by this latest development. The station's data traders began to fearfully consider what it might portend. Scanning drones and parties of warriors were despatched to the fortress to investigate it, but few returned; this ever-changing landscape is even more hostile than the rest of the ancient mega-structure, and it is near-impossible to navigate a path through it. Most worryingly, the few survivors who made it back reported that the affected area of the fortress seemed to be spreading. Tales of this madness-inducing

environment were traded in Precipice's corroded corridors, where it soon became known as the Seethe.

The explorers aboard Precipice continued to brave the fortress' dangers, though many of their expeditions have been brought to a sudden halt as they encountered the shifting morass of the Seethe. Ancient treasures still lay unclaimed in the darkness, but it became more and more difficult to navigate the fortress to reach them, and any hope of silencing the structure's weapons seemed doomed to failure.

UNFORESEEN AID

The possibility of salvation came from an unexpected source. One of Precipice's data traders made itself known to certain capable explorers aboard the station, offering an

opportunity to quell the Seethe's roiling once and for all. This trader was known to its fellow dealers as the Archivist and was a Zoat, a species that stood out even amongst Precipice's diverse populace. It conducted much of its business through proxies, but when it communicated directly with those explorers who responded to its proposal, its voice spoke directly into each of their minds. Through this unsettling means, the Archivist explained that it had a personal interest in one of the fortress' secrets.

The Zoat was something of a savant – it possessed a vast repository of information on scores of wide-ranging and often esoteric subjects, which it bartered to secure access to valuable fresh data. In the course of its business, the Archivist had heard rumours of a Blackstone Fortress being discovered on the Western fringe of the galaxy. Over time the Archivist had amassed considerable knowledge about the ancient mega-structure, which eventually led it to Precipice. There the alien had begun to study the artefacts brought back from the fortress by intrepid investigators. Before long, it had made a startling discovery.

TECHNOARCHAEOLOGIST – DAEDALOSUS

Environmental analysis: Seethe Abnormality

- Volume of phenomenon: >270 deca-hectares (δ110)
- Quantification constancy at 37%
- Relevant variables include:
 - + base fortress mutability indeterminate;
 - + data erratic even by Blackstone Fortress metrics;
 - + suffusion of diverse symptoms [ref: Dark Vortices, file Gamma-267q42];
 - + scope of abnormality inconsistent;
 - + reports imply system cognisance [ref: file Beta-579c55h].
- Initiatory supposition: The structure accords not to the verity of the Holy Machine, and thus its fluctuations defy logical parameters. Nonetheless, these latest symptoms suggest a modulation of the Blackstone Fortress' disposition. Causation incalculable.

SEETHE EVENT TABLE

ROLL	EVENT
1	Justified Paranoia: Lose 2 trust. Then shift the battlefield.
2-3	Signs of Betrayal: Lose 1 trust.
4-6	Not Dead Yet: The leader must pick one hostile that was slain during the combat and has not returned to the battlefield, and then deploy them as close to an explorer as possible.
7-10	Confirming Suspicions: An explorer chosen by the leader loses 1 inspiration point, or lose 1 trust.
11-14	Mutable Landscape: Shift the battlefield.
15-17	Inspiration: The leader picks an explorer. That explorer receives 1 inspiration point.
18-19	Heroic Effort: The leader picks an explorer that is out of action. Deploy the explorer in the same hex as another explorer or as close to another explorer as possible, and then make a vitality roll for them. If no explorers are out of action, the leader picks an explorer. Make a vitality roll for that explorer.
20	Growing Faith: Gain 1 trust.

SHARDQUAKE TABLE

ROLL	EVENT
1	Valuable Discovery: The leader picks an explorer. That explorer draws a discovery card. If it is a Shardquake card, ignore it and shuffle that card back into the discovery deck.
2-7	Fluctuating Corridors: Shift the battlefield.
8-12	Plunging Pillars: Roll the Blackstone dice for each chamber that contains hostiles or explorers. On an 11+ every explorer in that chamber suffers 1 wound, and every hostile in that chamber suffers 1 damage. Finally, shift the battlefield.
13-17	Sudden Relocation: The hostile player (or the leader if there is no hostile player) must choose one explorer. That explorer is removed from the battlefield and placed on the furthest empty hex from their current position. If this cannot be done, ignore this result.
18	Unexpected Arrivals: Immediately make one reinforcement roll for each hostile group.
19	Impaling Shards: Roll the Blackstone dice for each explorer (except the Archivist). On a 1-5, that explorer suffers 1 grievous wound.
20	Uncovered Wealth: The leader picks an explorer. That explorer draws 3 discovery cards and keeps up to 2, shuffling the remaining cards back into the discovery deck. An explorer cannot keep any Shardquake cards – they are shuffled back into the discovery deck. Finally, shift the battlefield.