



APOCRYPHA NECROMUNDA



HIVE OF BLOOD



The wilds, wastes and badzones of Necromunda are filled with legends and myths of every colour and kind imaginable. Some of them are even true. Wander into any drinking hole in Hive Primus and crack open a bottle of Wild Snake (or Second Best if you're a little light on creds) and within moments some crusty-faced local will be bending your ear with a tale or two. Maybe their little corner of the underhive was once the site of a showdown between the notorious Carrion Queens and the equally nefarious Irontree Reavers, or perhaps the legendary bounty hunter Kal Jericho drank at the very bar you're sitting at now and they got close enough to touch the hem of his duster. Whatever the yarn, you'd do well to listen carefully, for hidden in every story is at least a grain of truth, and maybe even a lesson or two that might keep you alive when you're next out wandering the badzones looking for trouble...

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Little is known about the origins of the rebel Lady Credo, though there is no shortage of rumours and tales. Some claim she is the illegitimate daughter of Gerontius Helmawr, sister to the notorious bounty hunter Kal Jericho and eager for revenge on her absent father. Others have it that she is not human at all, but is a shape-shifting xenos, come to Necromunda to murder its masters and bring about its doom. Perhaps the most interesting of these fanciful origins, however, is that of the 'Hive of Blood', a tale almost as old as Necromunda itself, but now attributed to the rebel Credo.

The story goes that, long ago, when the reign of the God-Emperor over Necromunda was still new, a mighty gang king known as Esos Vyarium held dominion across its southern wastes. A cruel and despotic ruler, he controlled the Stygian Spire Cluster of the Southern Polar Expanse, his empire stretching as far as the Great Blight in the east and the Sea of Bones to the west. It is said that Esos was once a general in the armies of the Iron Lords, former rulers of Necromunda, when it was known by the name of Araneus Prime. The spires he now controlled were his reward for fighting in their wars, and though the Iron Lords were no more, he and the empire he had forged remained strong.

For generations Esos ruled, kept alive some say by Dark Age technologies, or perhaps his own biological perfection – some believing him to be a genetic creation of the Iron Lords. During his reign he took many consorts, and had by them numerous children, much as would the Lords Helmawr of later ages. Of all these children, however, it was said he considered only one worthy to take his throne after his demise. Her name was Alantia. As fair and strong a woman as the blighted world had ever seen, she excelled in all things, but was especially adept at war, having proved herself in battle time and again against the enemies of Stygia. Despite her coldness and sullen moods, Alantia was beloved by the people of the spires, few questioning the dark looks she sometimes gave her father, or the time she spent alone in her chambers. Even so, Esos doted on his daughter above all others, and in his eyes she was the hope for the future of his line and the continuation of his legacy.

Unfortunately for Esos, he would not be granted this indulgence. To the north of the gang king's empire the Dreaming Spire, so named for its vast narco-chem factoria, was preparing for invasion. Its warlord, the infamous Gorthum the Despised, had long coveted the hives of Stygia for their riches and distance from the meddlings of the Primari Lords and their Imperial masters. For a generation Gorthum had been bleeding the hives of Ceres to the north, stealing away its citizens and building a force to bring down the Stygian Spire Cluster – and now at last he was ready.

In their thousands and tens of thousands the warriors of Gorthum spilled across the frozen ash plains and chem glaciers, the spiked wheels and tracks of their war machines churning up the grey ice and snow. And, upon the Stygian Shelf, where the ancient frozen sludge seas of the south ground themselves to noxious ruin against the true polar wastes, they met the armies of Esos. Fur-cloaked chem-warriors, augur-killers and skull-faced stalkers, the Stygian forces had waited among the dirty snow drifts and ice caves of the Stygian Shelf, before spilling out on tooth-tracked runners and haulers to spring their ambush.

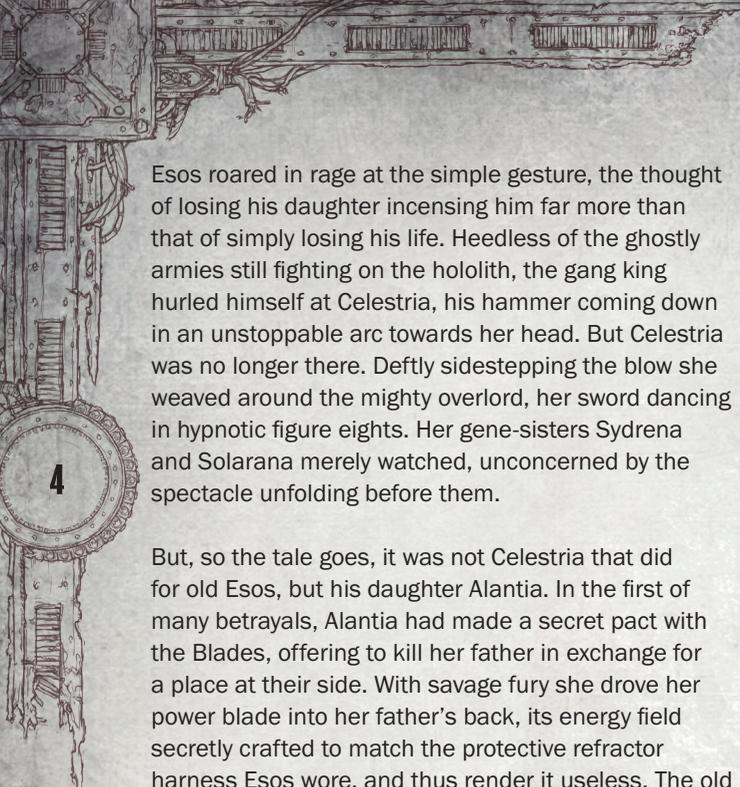
Fierce fighting engulfed the wastes along the edge of the shelf, the frigid ashen plains soon covered in steaming splashes of crimson where warriors had fallen. From the spire of Hive Penoltus, rising up from the very centre of Necromunda's south pole, Esos and his daughter Alantia watched the battle unfold in flickering images upon the gang king's vast hololithic tacticum, in the safety of the hive strategium chamber. Esos was content that his armies and defences would be more than a match for the forces of the Dreaming Spire; had the sudden attack been the full extent of Gorthum's plan, then perhaps it might have mattered.

Unknown to Esos, the master of the Dreaming Spire had made a deal with the Blades. A trio of ancient warriors, the Blades were notorious upon Necromunda for their meddling in the affairs of the hive kingdoms. Some saw them as saviours, champions of the weak, the bane of tyrants and overlords. To others they were cold-hearted mercenaries who dealt only in betrayal and worshipped only coin. Or, in the case of Gorthum, the rare and powerful chems produced by the Dreaming Spire. But to Alantia, the Blades were freedom and adventure, and each night in her youth, her chamber-maidens had recounted the tales of Celestria, Sydrena and Solarana to a wide-eyed Alantia, much to the grumbling of her father who knew the truth behind such fanciful tales.

So it was, as Esos and Alantia watched the battle for the ice wastes unfold, the Blades and a small force of Gorthum's most able warriors were already stalking the halls of Hive Penoltus. From the lowest levels of the hive they fought, carving a path towards Esos' strategium. Even the finest augmetic-sentries and servo-soldiers of Penoltus were little match for the three women, such was the Blades' skill. Only when the invaders breached the spire was their intended target confirmed and Esos alerted of the threat swiftly heading his way. Immediately he ordered his daughter to make her escape, though she refused to leave his side despite his urging. With no time left to argue, he readied himself and told Alantia to get behind him.

The Blades swept into the strategium chamber, their armour spattered in the blood of Esos' guards. Only a handful of Gorthum's men had survived the ascent and, rightly wary of such a renowned warrior as Esos, held their ground as the Blades advanced. The old warlord eyed the three women cautiously, hefting his ancient archeo-hammer, a relic of an age even older than the Imperium of Mankind. In the silence his power field thrummed, haloing him in a hazy blue glow.

But the Blades did not attack. Seconds crept by, and Gorthum's men began to fear betrayal – were the Blades in league with Esos? Without a word, Celestria, her hair shimmering like a waterfall of gold as she moved, stepped forward and held out a hand for Alantia.



Esos roared in rage at the simple gesture, the thought of losing his daughter incensing him far more than that of simply losing his life. Heedless of the ghostly armies still fighting on the hololith, the gang king hurled himself at Celestria, his hammer coming down in an unstoppable arc towards her head. But Celestria was no longer there. Deftly sidestepping the blow she weaved around the mighty overlord, her sword dancing in hypnotic figure eights. Her gene-sisters Sydrena and Solarana merely watched, unconcerned by the spectacle unfolding before them.

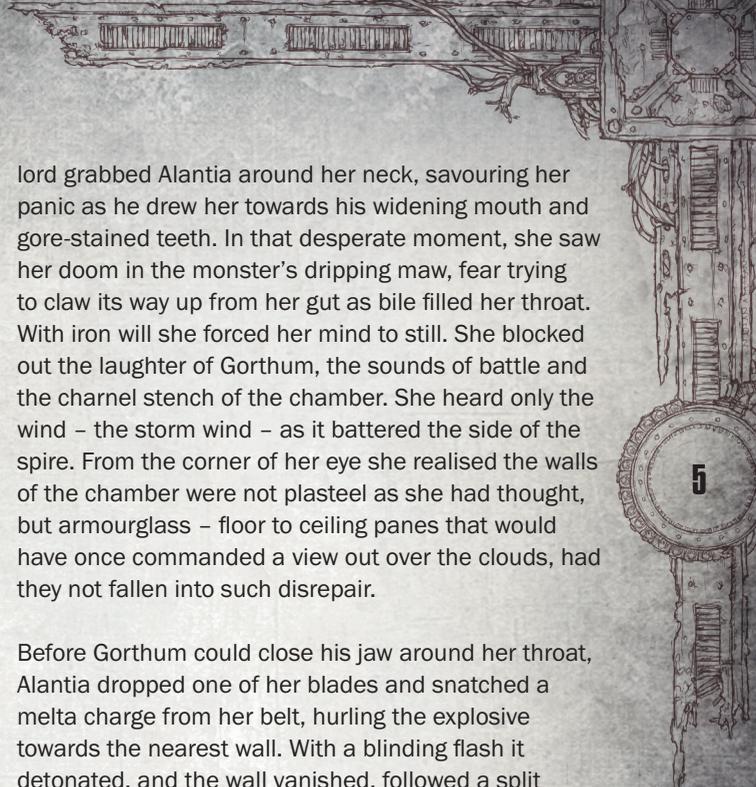
But, so the tale goes, it was not Celestria that did for old Esos, but his daughter Alantia. In the first of many betrayals, Alantia had made a secret pact with the Blades, offering to kill her father in exchange for a place at their side. With savage fury she drove her power blade into her father's back, its energy field secretly crafted to match the protective refractor harness Esos wore, and thus render it useless. The old warlord had but moments to look into his daughter's eyes as he collapsed dying at her feet, and in those clear blue orbs he at last saw how she had despised the prison she had been born into.

So began the War of Blood. Alantia and the Blades began their slaughter of the southern hive clusters' leadership. That very day, even as the armies of slain Esos fought to bitter victory over the invaders from the Dreaming Spire, Alantia slew her father's most trusted lords. By the time the toxic skies darkened, few loyal to Esos remained, most ending as corpses adorning the gardens and temples of the spire. With the Stygian Cluster all but in their grasp, Alantia and the Blades turned their attention to Gorthum and the Dreaming Spire – for it had not been enough for them to merely bargain for the wealth of its chem factories: they would control them, and as part of the secret deal made between Alantia and the Blades, they would help her rid the southern clusters of Gorthum's malevolence.

Full of righteous fury and determination, Alantia led the armies of Stygia against the Dreaming Spire, convinced that with the aid of the Blades she could not fail. Unknown to the young upstart, the gang king Gorthum had made fel promises and dark bargains many years before to increase his power. Taking on the mantle of the Blood King, his court made sport of human sacrifice and fed upon the very flesh of their subjects. Called the Drinkers of Blood by their loyal followers, Gorthum and his nobles were slaves to the god they called the Lord of Bloody Bones.

Heedless of the danger, Alantia and the Blades led their armies into the hive sprawl surrounding the Dreaming Spire. At first their chem-fighters and ash warriors faced only mortal foes, turned out from the factories and hastily armed with tools and explosives. Such enemies were little match for the new mistress of Stygia, and like a surgeon's blade through soft flesh, the attackers breached the lower levels of the Dreaming Spire.

Inside they found a charnel house of horror. Desperate to defeat Alantia and her allies, Gorthum had turned to his dark master, sacrificing thousands in great bladed execution machines, their blood flowing down the levels of the hive like water. Defenders clad in cloaks of human skin and armed with saws and blades of bone charged from the shadows, their bodies filled with daemonic energy, their thoughts consumed by mindless rage. What had been a swift advance for the attackers became a grinding crawl – each corridor, stairwell and dome a savage battle to overcome.



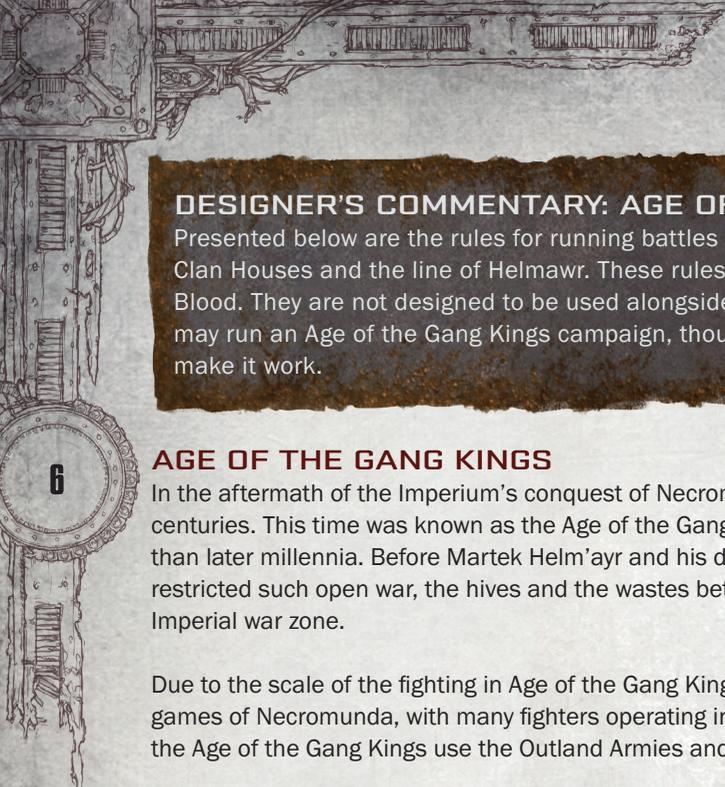
The ferocious defenders surrounded Alantia and her allies, hundreds of elite soldiers of Stygia cut down by the servants of the Blood King, and even the Blades taking wounds in the furious melee. As they climbed the hive, the way back was cut off by screaming hordes – the only path to victory lay ahead. Undeterred, Alantia and the Blades pressed on, until at last they came to Gorthum’s throne room. If the hive had been a nightmare then the chamber of the so-called Blood King was even more so. The walls themselves seemed to weep gore, while the invaders had to wade knee deep through the mutilated remains of countless sacrifices to Gorthum’s vile god. In the centre of this hellish scene the lord of the Dreaming Spire sat atop a throne of heads and arms, his distended belly glistening with fresh blood as gore drooled from his oversized mouth – lips all but rotted away, revealing rows of worn, serrated teeth. If the sight of the thing Gorthum had become was not enough, other horrors too filled the room. Polymorphic warp-beasts, their shapes endlessly changing, stalked among the shadows, while things that perhaps had once been men and women, but were now little more than piles of bone and muscle, lurched forwards to attack.

The two sides fell upon each other at once. The Blades danced among the growing carnage, while their followers fought desperately against their warp-tainted foes. Alantia, meanwhile, pushed down her revulsion, struggling through mounds of corpses to reach the Blood King himself. Little sense could be made of the melee, only the deep booming laughter from Gorthum cutting through the screams as he beheld such wanton bloodletting. Alantia, a power blade in each hand leapt upon the bloated hive lord and plunged her weapons into his flesh again and again. As swiftly as they were made, the wounds closed, all the time Gorthum’s laughter never ceasing. With ease the hive

lord grabbed Alantia around her neck, savouring her panic as he drew her towards his widening mouth and gore-stained teeth. In that desperate moment, she saw her doom in the monster’s dripping maw, fear trying to claw its way up from her gut as bile filled her throat. With iron will she forced her mind to still. She blocked out the laughter of Gorthum, the sounds of battle and the charnel stench of the chamber. She heard only the wind – the storm wind – as it battered the side of the spire. From the corner of her eye she realised the walls of the chamber were not plasteel as she had thought, but armourglass – floor to ceiling panes that would have once commanded a view out over the clouds, had they not fallen into such disrepair.

Before Gorthum could close his jaw around her throat, Alantia dropped one of her blades and snatched a melta charge from her belt, hurling the explosive towards the nearest wall. With a blinding flash it detonated, and the wall vanished, followed a split second later by a howl as the chamber’s air rushed out into the upper atmosphere. Depressurisation tore the throne room apart, the thin air of the spire heights causing the supports themselves, long rusted and neglected by their makers, to burst out in a shower of shattered glass and broken bodies. Gorthum and Alantia were ripped away from each other by the blast, Alantia grabbing hold of a twisted girder long enough to see Gorthum hurled away by the wind, bloated limbs flailing in the air as his flesh began to slough away under the toxic maelstrom. Alantia caught a glimpse of the Blades and other combatants likewise thrown into the void, moments before she herself tumbled away into the sky – her last view the headless hive and roiling storm, before darkness took her.

Some say this is where the story ends, and claim the tale of the Hive of Blood is a story of greed and betrayal and how children always rise to usurp their parents. Others claim it is a warning about the price of power and what both the evil and the righteous will do to get it. A few tellings of the tale, however, go on to say Alantia did not die that day, but was found, broken and bloody, by another. And this girl, this first traitor of Necromunda, has survived all these long centuries to become the rebel Credo... still hungry for the power her father had long ago promised her.



DESIGNER'S COMMENTARY: AGE OF THE GANG KINGS

Presented below are the rules for running battles set in the Age of the Gang Kings, before the rise of the Clan Houses and the line of Helmawr. These rules allow you to recreate the events described in *Hive of Blood*. They are not designed to be used alongside a *Necromunda* campaign. If the Arbitrator wishes they may run an Age of the Gang Kings campaign, though significant changes will need to be made in order to make it work.

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AGE OF THE GANG KINGS

In the aftermath of the Imperium's conquest of *Necromunda*, a period of lawlessness endured for many centuries. This time was known as the Age of the Gang Kings and saw a greater number of large scale conflicts than later millennia. Before Martek Helm'ayr and his descendants ratified the Clan and Noble Houses and restricted such open war, the hives and the wastes between them were the site of bloody battles the equal of any Imperial war zone.

Due to the scale of the fighting in Age of the Gang Kings battles, the forces involved are much larger than typical games of *Necromunda*, with many fighters operating in close-knit units rather than as individuals. Games set in the Age of the Gang Kings use the *Outland Armies* and *Wasteland Warfare* rules presented here.

LOST HOUSES AND ANCIENT EMPIRES

During the Age of the Gang Kings the Clan Houses and Noble Houses, as they are known at the end of the 41st Millennium, did not yet exist. While this means Goliaths, Escher, Cawdor and similar gangs are not suitable, their gang lists could be used to represent a progenitor to their House – such as the followers of the Blades who would, in time, become the foundation of House Escher. The *Outcast Gang* list, from *Book of the Outcast* is also very appropriate to this setting, as it allows players to field diverse collections of fighters to suit a variety of themes.

OUTLAND ARMIES

When creating an Age of the Gang Kings force, the normal rules for founding a gang are not used. Instead, players construct their forces using the following guidelines:

- Increase the starting gang credit limit to 5,000 credits. As always, the Arbitrator may increase or decrease this amount if they wish.
 - The force must include one model with the Leader special rule.
 - Up to 25% of the total credits may be spent on models from a different gang list to your Leader.
 - One model without the Gang Fighter (X) rule may be included for every three models with the Gang Fighter (X) rule.
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WASTELAND WARFARE

Games set in the Age of the Gang Kings use a limited version of the core Necromunda rules to speed up play, as well as the addition of a new rule: Coordinated Attacks:

- The following rules are **NOT** used when playing Age of the Gang Kings scenarios:
 - "I Get Knocked Down...", Pinned and Seriously Injured, the Broken, Out of Ammo, Blaze, Blind, Concussion, Intoxicated, Insane and Webbed Conditions, Bottle Checks, Recovery Tests and Rally Tests, Stray Shots and Injury Dice.
- The following Weapon Traits are **NOT** used; count weapons with these Traits as not having them:
 - Backstab, Blaze, Concussion, Knockback, Limited, Plentiful, Rad-phage, Scarce, Seismic, Single Shot, and Web.
- All fighters are considered to have a 360° vision arc.
- When resolving damage against vehicles, they lose a number of Hull Points equal to the weapon's damage. If a vehicle is reduced to 0 Hull Points, it is removed from play.
- Fighters reduced to 0 wounds are removed from play.

COORDINATED ATTACKS

In Age of the Gang Kings, players may activate fighters (not vehicles) with the Gang Fighter (X) special rule in groups, provided they are close to each other. When a player activates a fighter with the Gang Fighter (X) special rule, they may also activate any other friendly fighters with the Gang Fighter (X) special rule within 6" of that fighter (treat this as if the fighters had been activated using a Group Activation).

This does not affect Group Activations made by Champions and Leaders.



WAR IN THE WASTES

“Tremble before the might of Stygia’s legions!”

Esos Vyarium, Master of the Great Stygian Spire Cluster

In this scenario, two armies serving rival Gang Kings fight for dominance over Necromunda.

BATTLE TYPE

This scenario is an Ash Wastes battle; vehicles and Wargear that grant the Mounted condition may be included in either gang’s starting crew.

SKIRMISH BATTLE

This scenario is a Skirmish Battle as described in the *Necromunda Core Rulebook*.

BATTLEFIELD

This scenario uses the standard rules for setting up a battlefield, as described in the Battlefield Set-up & Scenarios section of the *Necromunda Core Rulebook*. This scenario is designed to be played on a 6'x4' battlefield.

CREWS

This scenario uses the Age of the Gang Kings rules for building a gang, as described on page 6. Each gang uses the Custom Selection method to determine their crew and can therefore include as many models as they wish.

DEPLOYMENT

Starting with the winner of a roll-off, one player deploys a model within 12" of one of the long battlefield edges. The other player then places a model within 12" of the opposite battlefield edge. Both players continue placing models until both sides have deployed all of their models.

GANG TACTICS

At the start of each round, before rolling for Priority, each player randomly generates two gang tactics from those available to their gang. At the end of each End phase, all unused gang tactics are discarded.

ENDING THE BATTLE

At the end of the fifth round or if either gang has no models left on the battlefield at the end of any round, the battle ends immediately.

VICTORY

If one gang has scored more Victory Points than the other at the end of the battle, they are victorious. If both gangs have scored the same number of points, the battle ends in a draw.

AGE OF THE GANG KINGS

War in the Wastes is an Age of the Gang Kings skirmish scenario and uses the Age of the Gang Kings rules presented on pages 6-7.

BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY

Each gang is trying to wipe out their opposition, leaving themselves victorious. Each player scores Victory Points as shown in the following table:

Models Taken

Out of Action/Wrecked	Victory Points
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Fighter with the	1
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Gang Fighter (X) rule	
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Champion, Brute or	3
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Hired Gun	
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Vehicle	5
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Leader	6
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BATTLE FOR THE DREAMING SPIRE

If players wish, they may use this scenario to represent the battle between Alantia, the Blades and the forces of Stygia against the Blood King and his frenzied hordes. In order to do this, make the following changes:

- The battle is played as an Underhive battle, meaning vehicles and Wargear that grant the Mounted condition may not be included in either player's starting crew.
- One gang should be represented by House Escher, led by Lady Credo (or a model using rules for Lady Credo). The force should also include three Gang Queens or Death Maidens to represent each of the Blades.
- The other gang is represented by a Corpse Grinder Cult gang, with additional elements from the Helot Chaos Cults gang list, and led by the Eightfold Harvest Lord (or a model using rules for the Eightfold Harvest Lord).

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WARHAMMER

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