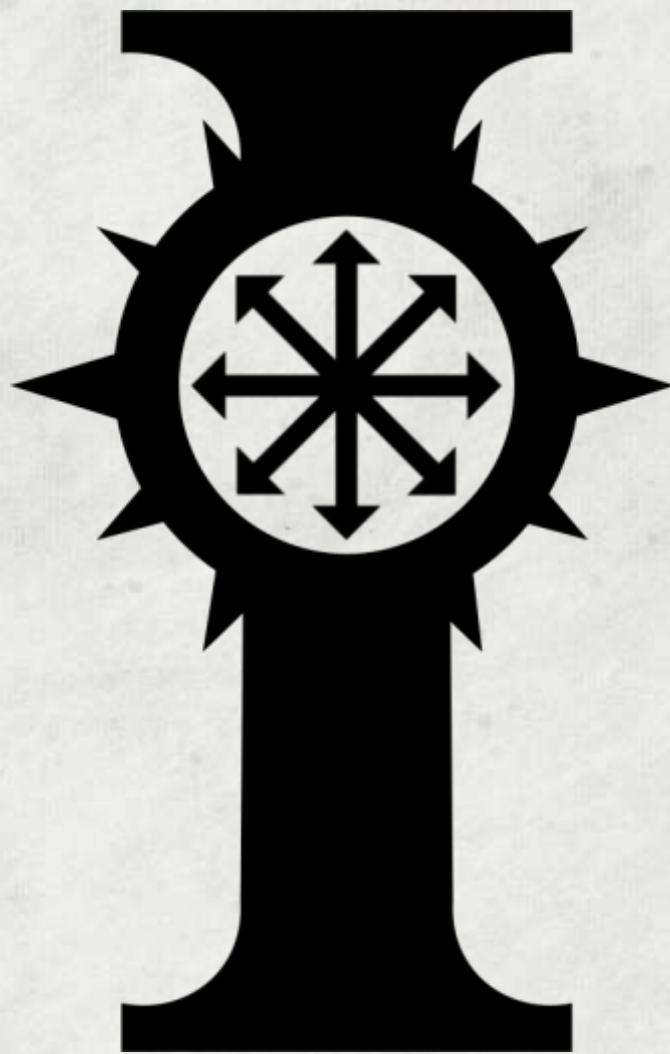


ORA ET LABORA



A BLACK CRUSADE SUPPLEMENT ON MINIONS AND
OTHER SUPPORTING NPCs

WRITTEN BY TEMPELMASTE

VERSION 0.2

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MINIONS IN BLACK CRUSADE

In the realms governed by the Dark Gods, the path to supremacy is rarely traversed alone. It is customary for the most formidable champions to gather legions of devoted servants and followers who pledge their unwavering loyalty. These dedicated supporters, known as Minions, become invaluable assets to those who command them. In the pursuit of power, Heretics too can amass such followers.

Acquiring a Minion Talent serves as the initial step towards gaining a Minion, requiring collaboration between the player and the Game Master to establish the narrative reasoning behind their acquisition. This could involve methods such as purchasing a slave, luring a soldier with promises of wealth and fame, or even forming a pact with a powerful organization. The integration of a Minion typically takes place during downtime periods between adventures, allowing for the gradual strengthening of bonds and loyalty.

To ensure the mechanical representation of Minions, the corresponding Minion of Chaos Talent must be acquired, with XP subsequently invested in them. In the unfortunate event of a Minion's demise, the XP associated with the corresponding Talent is promptly refunded.

Once a Minion is acquired, players can employ the provided rules to create and customize their minion, with minimal restrictions on Characteristics, Skills, Talents, and Traits, limited only by the Minion's designated tier: Lesser, Normal, or Greater. However, the final determination of a Minion's abilities rests with the Game Master before it enters the gameplay.

ACQUIRING MINIONS

When playing Black Crusade, the acquisition of minions is a crucial aspect of a heretic's journey towards greater power. The ways in which a heretic acquires minions can vary greatly depending on their individual goals and desires. Some may seek to corrupt and subjugate willing followers through their charisma and force of will, while others may resort to more violent methods such as raiding settlements or kidnapping individuals for use in twisted experiments. Still others may seek out ancient relics or powerful artifacts that can be used to create or control minions with specific abilities or characteristics.

In the Screaming Vortex, there are countless potential sources of minions for those with the cunning and ruthlessness to seek them out. Powerful Chaos sorcerers may be able to summon or create minions from the raw stuff of the Immaterium, while renegade Adeptus Mechanicus tech-priests may be able to construct complex servitors or modify existing ones to suit their

needs. Other potential sources of minions may include criminal organizations, mutant tribes, and even rival heretic warbands.

However, a heretic goes about acquiring their minions, it is certain that the process will be fraught with danger and require significant effort and resources. The rewards for successfully acquiring and subjugating minions, however, can be immense, as these followers can provide a valuable source of support and power to aid the heretic in their quest for greater influence and glory in the dark, twisted universe of Black Crusade.

REVISED BLACK CRUSADE MINION TALENTS

LESSER MINION OF CHAOS

Tier: 1

Prerequisite: Fellowship 25

Through a diverse range of methods, the character has gained the ability to summon and command Lesser Minions. While these minions are notably less powerful than the character themselves, they still possess their own unique usefulness and can contribute to the character's endeavours. The form of these minions can vary greatly, ranging from brutal and subservient cultists, tainted servitors, to feral xenos hounds.

The character can choose to acquire this Talent multiple times, with each acquisition granting an additional Lesser Minion to their loyal retinue.

NORMAL MINION OF CHAOS

Tier: 2

Prerequisite: Fellowship 35, Infamy 25

Through diverse and often sinister means, the character has managed to acquire a loyal Normal Minion. While these minions are still inferior in power to the character, they possess a greater level of resilience and skill than lesser minions.

Normal Minions of Chaos come in various forms, ranging from disturbing wyrd sorcerers, well-trained traitor guardsmen, to bloodthirsty alien mercenaries.

The character can choose to acquire this Talent multiple times, with each acquisition granting an additional Normal Minion to their loyal retinue.

GREATER MINION OF CHAOS

Tier: 3

Prerequisite: Fellowship 40, Infamy 35

Through dark and formidable means, the character has obtained a Greater Minion. These minions possess remarkable power, approaching the level of the character themselves, and come in diverse and imposing forms. A Greater Minion may take the shape of a relentless Chaos Space Marine, a formidable Heretic Sorcerer, or a monstrous mutant behemoth.

The character can choose to acquire this Talent multiple times, with each acquisition granting an additional Greater Minion to their loyal retinue.

SUPERIOR MINION OF CHAOS

Tier: 3

Prerequisite: Greater Minion of Chaos, Infamy 40

By unholy means and unwavering influence, the character has acquired a Superior Minion. These exceptional minions possess

tremendous power, rivalling the character in their capabilities, and have the potential to grow even stronger through their trials and accomplishments in service to the character's nefarious ambitions. However, the character must exercise caution, as these formidable beings may prove resistant to strict obedience and control.

The Superior Minion of Chaos Talent represents the character's mastery in commanding extraordinary beings of immense power and potential. As a testament to the depth of their influence, the character may possess only one Superior Minion of Chaos at a time.

CREATING MINIONS

CHARACTERISTICS

The dark and twisted minions of the Chaos Gods are fearsome foes, possessing supernatural abilities that are often beyond the ken of mortal creatures. While some Chaos Sorcerers and Warlords prefer to hand-pick their minions, others rely on the fickle hand of fate to determine the abilities of their servitors. If the GM agrees (or insists), players may generate Minion Characteristics using the following rules. This method will result in higher characteristics overall but will also result in a more even and natural distribution. No matter how much a mercenary swordsman may neglect his mind in pursuit of his skill-at-arms, he is unlikely to have Intelligence 01—barring a very unfortunate mutation of the mind!

To make minions even more formidable and more credible, the point pools for each tier of Minion have been radically changed. Each tier has now, way more points to divide among the characteristics, with the characteristic ceiling being elevated, calling for a rising characteristic floor. When creating a Minion divide up these points between Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Strength, Toughness, Agility, Intelligence, Perception, Willpower and Fellowship. A Minion's characteristics cannot fall under a certain floor or exceed a certain ceiling, as determined by the tier level of the Minion. (i.e. players must put at last 5 point, but no more than 35, into each characteristic when creating a Lesser Minion of chaos)

- **Lesser:** The Minion has 150 points to spread among its characteristics with no one characteristic higher than 35 and no characteristic lower than 5.
- **Normal:** The Minion has 250 points to spread among its characteristics with no one characteristic higher than 45 and no characteristic lower than 15.
- **Greater:** The Minion has 425 points to spread among its characteristics with no one characteristic higher than 55 and no characteristic lower than 25.

The overall recommendation for this system, is to use a modified version of the Random Characteristics optional ruleset, found in Tome of Excess. If the GM agrees (or insists), players may generate Minion Characteristics randomly using the following rules. This method is likely to result in even higher characteristics overall, but also in a very even, natural distribution. This is offset by the fact that players do not have the opportunity to “optimize” their Minions' Characteristics as effectively, as with the point pool system.

To generate Characteristics, roll 2d10 for each Characteristic, and add a bonus to the result on each, based on the tier of the minion:

- 15 for Lesser Minions

- 25 for Minions
- 35 for Greater Minions

Before rolling, the player can choose up to two Characteristics and apply a +5 to those scores. For each Characteristic that gains this bonus, the player must choose another Characteristic to suffer a corresponding -5 penalty.

While some Chaos Lords might scoff at leaving the abilities of their minions to chance, others relish the unpredictability that comes with randomly generated Characteristics. In this way, minions are imbued with a raw, chaotic energy that makes them even more deadly and unpredictable on the battlefield. So long as they serve the will of their dark master, their abilities are secondary to their unwavering loyalty and devotion to the cause of Chaos.

EXAMPLE

Tessa's character has acquired a combat servitor, a remarkable creation salvaged from a space hulk and corrupted by the influence of the warp. To ensure that her minion stands out with enhanced abilities, she acquires it as a Minion with the Minion of Chaos Talent, elevating its starting power to the Normal level.

The first step in shaping her servitor is determining its characteristics. For a Normal minion, Tessa has 250 points to allocate among the various attributes, with a maximum cap of 45 and a minimum floor of 15 for each characteristic. With careful consideration, she establishes the servitor's profile: Weapon Skill 45, Ballistic Skill 15, Strength 45, Toughness 45, Agility 25, Intelligence 15, Perception 30, Willpower 15, and Fellowship 15.

By emphasizing strength, resilience, and moderate swiftness, as well as granting the servitor a basic level of awareness and combat proficiency, Tessa sets the foundation for a formidable and versatile minion that will serve her character's needs in the challenging battles ahead.

WOUNDS AND MOVEMENT

A Minion's Wounds and its Movement rate are both derived from its characteristics (though they may be altered later by the selection of certain Talents and Traits). A Minion's Movement is based on its Agility Bonus, in the same way as a PC, using Table 1-4: Structured Time Movement on page 39.

A Minion's Wounds are equal to twice its Toughness Bonus, plus a bonus based on its tier.

- **Lesser:** +2 bonus
- **Normal:** +5 bonus
- **Greater:** +8 bonus

EXAMPLE

Taking a closer look at Tessa's combat servitor, we examine its Agility and Toughness characteristics to determine its movement capabilities and durability.

With an Agility characteristic of 25, the servitor possesses an Agility Bonus of 2. This translates to a Half Move of 2, Full Move of 4, Charge of 6, and Run of 12. These values define the servitor's mobility on the battlefield.

Moving on to its Toughness, the servitor boasts a Toughness characteristic of 45. Considering its Toughness Bonus of 4, it gains additional resilience in combat. Furthermore, as a Normal Minion, it receives a +5 bonus to its Toughness, totalling a Toughness Bonus of 9. This results in the servitor having 13 Wounds, highlighting its ability to withstand damage and continue fighting. However, if Tessa decides to select the Unnatural Toughness Talent in the future, she will need to make the necessary adjustments to the servitor's wound totals to reflect the increase in resilience and overall durability.

- **Normal:** The Minion may choose 8 Skills to be Trained. In addition, up to three of their skills may be at +10, and up to one of their skills may be at +20.
- **Greater:** The Minion may choose 12 Skills to be Trained. In addition, up to five of their skills may be at +10, up to three of their skills may be at +20, and up to one of their skills may be at +30.

EXAMPLE

Moving on to selecting Skills for her combat servitor, Tessa takes advantage of its Normal Minion status, allowing her to allocate up to 8 ranks of skills. She opts to enhance her servitor's versatility and combat prowess with a range of essential skills.

Since Tessa's character is fluent in Low Gothic, her combat servitor automatically gains proficiency in Linguistics (Low Gothic). In addition, she invests in developing the minion's physical abilities by training it in Athletics, Awareness, Dodge, Parry, as well as honing its mental acuity with Logic. To ensure its survival in different environments, she further instructs the servitor in Navigation (Surface) and equips it with essential knowledge in Security and Survival. To emphasize the combat aspect, Tessa decides to enhance the servitor's defensive capabilities by boosting its Dodge skill to +10 and its Parry skill to an impressive +20, reflecting its exceptional prowess in fending off incoming attacks.

SKILLS

Just like their masters, Minions have access to a number of Skills, often at varying levels of mastery. The number and ranks of these Skills are dependent on the Minion's level of power. GMs may also restrict access to certain Skills for Minions (such as Lore or Operate Skills) if there is no reasonable way the Minion could have learned them. Unless the GM states otherwise, all Minions start with one Linguistics Skill of the players' choice as Trained, allowing them to communicate with or at least understand their master. This skill may also be increased if presented with the option to increase skills of minions, in this section.

- **Lesser:** The Minion may choose 4 Skills to be Trained. In addition, up to one of their skills may be increased to +10.

TALENTS

Minions can also acquire Talents, which are special abilities that enhance their capabilities and help them better serve their masters. Like Traits, Talents are a defining feature of a Minion, shaping their personality and abilities. However, the number and types of Talents a Minion can acquire are determined by its level of power.

When selecting Talents, Minions must meet all the normal prerequisite rules, such as having the Psyker Trait for psychic Talents. GMs can also restrict access to certain Talents if they do not fit with the Minion's background. Additionally, unless the GM allows it, Minions cannot select any of the Minion Talents.

- **Lesser:** The Minion can choose up to 5 Talents, none of which can be greater than Tier 1.
- **Normal:** The Minion can choose up to 8 Talents, none of which can be greater than Tier 2.
- **Greater:** The Minion can choose up to 12 Talents, including up to 3 Talents that can be Tier 3.

EXAMPLE

Now turning our attention to Talents, Tessa takes strategic measures to bolster her combat servitor's close-quarters combat abilities and resilience. As a Normal Minion, her tainted servitor is granted the opportunity to acquire up to 8 Talents. However, it's important to note that the chosen Talents must not exceed Tier 2 in terms of power.

Tessa carefully selects a range of Talents that will enhance her servitor's effectiveness in battle. She selects: *Blind Fighting* (Tier 1), *Disarm* (Tier 1), *Double Team* (Tier 1), *Frenzy* (Tier 1), *Battle Rage* (Tier 2), *Combat Master* (Tier 2), *Hard Target* (Tier 2), *Weapon Training (Chain)* (Tier 1)

- Multiple Arms (1-2)
- Natural Armor (1-4)
- Natural Weapons
- Parasite
- Quadruped
- Size (1-6)
- Soul-bound
- Sycophant
- Toxic (1)
- Unnatural Senses

NORMAL

The Minion may select up to 6 Traits from the following list:

- Amphibious
- Amorphous
- Auto-Stabilised
- Bestial
- Blind
- Brutal Charge
- Burrower (1-8)
- Crawler
- Dark-Sight
- Deadly Natural Weapons
- Fanatic
- Hoverer (1-6)
- Incorporeal
- Machine (1-4)
- Monodevotant
- Multiple Arms (1-3)
- Mutant (1)
- Natural Armor (1-6)
- Natural Weapons
- Parasite
- Psyker
- Quadruped
- Regeneration (1-2)
- Size (1-8)
- Sonar Sense
- Soul-bound
- Stampede
- Sturdy
- Sycophant
- Toxic (1-3)
- Undying
- Unnatural Characteristic (1-3)
- Unnatural Senses

TRAITS

Traits are a defining characteristic of Minions, determining their true nature and abilities. The number and types of Traits a Minion can have depended on its power level. Some Traits have variable levels indicated by a number in parentheses, denoting extra armour, multiple arms, or other similar enhancements. When selecting a Trait, the number of variables allowed depends on the Minion's power level, and if a range of numbers is shown, the player may choose a number from within that range. The only exception to this is the Unnatural Characteristic trait, which cannot have a variable number higher than the Minion's associated characteristic bonus (in effect, this trait cannot more than double any one characteristic bonus).

Minions who take the Daemonic trait also gain the Warp Instability trait. GMs may restrict access to certain Traits for Minions if they do not fit with the Minion's background. If a Minion does not take the Size Trait, it is assumed to be Size (4), the size of an average human.

LESSER

The Minion may select up to 4 Traits from the following list:

- Amphibious
- Amorphous
- Auto-Stabilised
- Bestial
- Blind
- Brutal-Charge
- Burrower (1-5)
- Crawler
- Fanatic
- Hoverer (1-4)
- Machine (1-2)

GREATER

The Minion may select up to 8 Traits from the following list:

- Amphibious
- Amorphous
- Auto-Stabilised
- Bestial
- Blind

- Brutal Charge
- Burrower (1-10)
- Crawler
- Daemonic
- Dark-sight
- Deadly Natural Weapons
- Fanatic
- Fear (1-2)
- Flyer (1-7)
- From Beyond
- Hoverer (1-10)
- Incorporeal
- Machine (1-6)
- Monodevotant
- Multiple Arms (1-4)
- Mutant (1-3)
- Natural Armor (1-8)
- Natural Weapons
- Parasite
- Phase†
- Psyker
- Quadruped
- Regeneration (1-4)
- Size (1-10)
- Sonar Sense
- Soul-bound
- Stampede
- Stuff of Nightmares
- Sturdy
- Sycophant
- Toxic (1-4)
- Undying
- Unnatural Characteristic (1-4)
- Unnatural Senses
- Warp Weapons

†The Phase Trait counts as two Traits against the Minion's total.

TRADING TRAITS

Some variables may be improved further by sacrificing the number of Traits a Minion could normally take. Players may further improve the Machine, Burrower, Flyer, Hoverer, and Natural Armour Traits in this way. For every trait they do not take they may increase a variable of one of these Traits by 1.

EXAMPLE

As a Normal Minion, Tessa's combat servitor has the flexibility to acquire up to 6 Traits. In her selection process, Tessa opts for Dark-Sight, Machine (4), Unnatural Strength (3), and Unnatural Toughness (3).

Rather than choosing a fifth and sixth trait, Tessa decides to instead sacrifice both choices to increase her servitor's Machine and Unnatural Strength by 1 point, to Machine (5) and Unnatural Strength (4) respectively.

EQUIPMENT

The arming and armouring of Minions is largely the responsibility of their masters, and a favoured Minion is usually one with the best weapons and equipment. Minions do bring some gear with them when they join the service of the character as determined by their level of power. Minions may only take Common Craftsmanship equipment.

- **Lesser:** The Minion may choose one suit of armour and one ranged weapon or one melee weapon with an Availability of Scarce or lower.
- **Normal:** The Minion may choose one suit of armour and two ranged weapons or two melee weapons (or one melee and one ranged weapon) with an Availability of Rare or lower. They may forgo taking one weapon to take another with an Availability of Very Rare instead.
- **Greater:** The Minion may choose one suit of armour with an Availability of Extremely Rare or lower (if power armour, it may only have one sub-system of the players' choice) and two ranged weapons and two melee weapons with an Availability of Very Rare or lower. They may forgo taking one weapon to take another with an Availability of Extremely Rare instead. In addition, they may choose one extra weapon or piece of equipment with an Availability of Scarce or lower.

Players may forgo taking one of their weapons or armour to take other equipment with an equivalent Availability instead. At the GM's discretion Minions may also come with backup weapons (of Common availability or lower) and other small items and gear such as clothing(basic garments appropriate to their environment, such as robes, cloaks, tunics, or armour padding), consumables(ration packs, stims, medkits, or basic drugs like painkillers), tech (simple devices like pict recorders, dataslates, or other small gadgets that might be useful in their duties) and other miscellaneous items (tools and equipment like small knives, flashlights, climbing gear, or other items that might be useful in their duties or in their daily lives), provided

it is neither expensive or difficult to find. Players cannot choose equipment for their character's Minions which the Minion cannot use itself, nor can Minions give up their equipment readily when they enter play. Once a Minion is in the service of a character, they have only what he gives them from this point on.

EXAMPLE

Tessa wants her combat servitor to have some potent close combat weapons. As her Minion is Normal, she is allowed to choose one suit of armour and two ranged or melee weapons of Rare or lower Availability. In a bold decision, she decides to forgo one of the weapons in order to obtain a highly coveted item of Very Rare availability. Tessa settles on the Castir Greataxe from the Tome of Blood, a potent choice that perfectly suits her combat servitor.

For the protective gear, Tessa selects a full set of Guard Flak Armour. She consults her GM, and they agree to flavour the armour as a specialized combat servitor casing, lending a unique touch to her minion's appearance. Additionally, Tessa provides her combat servitor with tape and other small tools, ensuring that any wear and tear encountered during battles can be quickly patched up.

LOYALTY

The final aspect of creating a Minion is to determine its Loyalty. This is a measure of the Minion's devotion to the character and how readily it follows commands in their absence, or the lengths the Minion goes to in the character's name. A Minion's Loyalty is equal to the character's Fellowship + half the character's Command skill advance.

Whenever the character's Fellowship or Command changes, for whatever reason, the Minion's Loyalty also changes accordingly.

EXAMPLE

Tessa's character has a Fellowship of 45 but no advances in Command. Without any Command advancements, she incurs a significant penalty of -20 to all Command-related actions. As a consequence, her Minion's Loyalty is affected, receiving a reduction of -10. Consequently, her Minion's Loyalty is determined to be 35, reflecting the difficulties Tessa faces in commanding and inspiring loyalty in her servant.

MINIONS IN BLACK CRUSADE

USING MINIONS

Minions differ from NPCs in that they are not controlled by the GM. Instead, they are controlled by the player in the same way as his own character. In effect, a Minion represents an additional, weaker character run by the player, augmenting his abilities in the game and presenting him with different ways to overcome challenges. In addition to augmenting the player's abilities, Minions can also serve a variety of other roles in the game. For example, they can act as loyal retainers, providing support, advice, and information to the player character. They can also act as scouts, spies, or saboteurs, using their unique abilities and traits to gather intelligence or disrupt enemy operations. Additionally, Minions can serve as bodyguards or assassins, protecting their master from harm or eliminating his enemies. With careful management and strategic use, Minions can be powerful assets to the player character, enhancing his effectiveness and providing new opportunities for success.

Minions are not, however, completely subservient to their character's will (even the most fanatical of followers are not completely infallible), and in certain situations may not do what the character wants (or they might just get it wrong). Whenever a player wants one of his character's Minions to either:

- If the character has a history of mistreating or neglecting the Minion, or has recently done something to lose the Minion's trust (e.g., the character has repeatedly sent the Minion into dangerous situations without proper equipment or support).
- If the character is asking the Minion to take significant risks that could result in the Minion's death or capture (e.g., the character wants the Minion to infiltrate a heavily guarded enemy base).
- If the character asks the Minion to perform a task that goes against its nature or beliefs (e.g., a fanatical Minion may refuse to betray the character's cause even if ordered to do so).
- If the character has recently failed to reward the Minion for its service, or has failed to fulfill a promise made to the Minion (e.g., the character promised to help the Minion find a cure for a disease, but has not followed through).
- If the character is asking the Minion to do something that would put the Minion in conflict with another player character (e.g., the character wants one Minion to spy on another player's character or minion).

- Carry out a risky or even suicidal plan or strategy suggested by the character.
- Choose to prioritize the character's safety over their own, even if it means abandoning their mission or exposing themselves to danger.
- Keep a secret or sensitive information from others, including the character's allies or enemies, even if it puts the minion at risk.

In general, any situation where the character is asking the minion to do something that goes against their instincts, beliefs, or self-preservation may require a Loyalty Test. The GM should use their judgment to determine when a test is appropriate, based on the circumstances and the minion's personality and motivations.

The GM makes a Loyalty Test for the Minion. The GM rolls 1d100 against the Minions Loyalty, if the roll is equal or less than its Loyalty then the Minion performs exactly as the player wishes, if the roll is greater than its Loyalty then its nerve has failed, or something has gone wrong and the GM takes control of the Minion for the remainder of the encounter. The GM should role-play the Minion's actions in a way that is consistent with their character and motivations but may not necessarily align with the player's wishes. In extreme cases, the Minion may even turn against the player's character or act in a way that is detrimental to their goals.

MINION INTERACTIONS

Minions can be valuable allies and sources of roleplaying opportunities in your game. As noted in the Using Minions section, they can help the players overcome challenges and provide unique abilities and perspectives. However, they are not mindless automatons, but rather individuals with their own personalities and motivations. It's important to involve them in interactions with other characters and NPCs, and to portray them in a way that fits their character and relationship with the Heretics.

When it comes to roleplaying Minions, there are different approaches you can take. Some players may prefer to focus solely on their own character, leaving the GM to handle the Minion's actions and dialogue. Others may enjoy playing both their character and their Minion, taking on different voices and personalities as needed. It's also possible to mix and match these methods, with the GM handling some conversations and the player taking charge in others.

Ultimately, the key is to work with your group to find an approach that works for everyone. Consider the Minion's loyalty and motivations, as well as their relationship with the Heretics and other characters. A Daemonhost may be resentful and rebellious, while a devout follower may be subservient and eager to please. By involving Minions in your game's interactions and portraying them in a consistent and engaging way, you can make them more than just disposable hirelings, but rather essential members of your group's entourage.