

Blood Harvest

After the Events of the House of Dust and Ashes, the Acolytes are send on a vacation to the Agri-World of Cyrus Vulpa. While their Inquisitor insits on this being a genuine offer for recreation, it, of course, won't be. The first weeks will be mostly interacting with the people of the Village they reside in during their stays. However, news reach them of disappereances among the population of other villages. Eventually, they'll track down the source, which is a Slaught-Overseer vessel which crashed in one of the lakes of the planet. The Acolytes will then have to dive down into the belly of the beast and probably clear it, or at least call in an actual kill-team to clean up the mess. Ultimately the Inquisition might gain some insight into the danger the Slaught are.

The Adventure itself is made for 4-6 Acolytes of ranks 4-5 with at least decent gear, however, it can be solved by more clever players of lower rank, as the most challenging part would be the fight through the Overseer-vessel, but this could be solved by the players gaining support from the gouverneur and local militias, which is perfectly fine and probably the most intelligent way.

Planetary Gazeteer: Cyrus Vulpa

Cyrus Vulpa is probably the Archetype of an Agri-World. Vast fields cover the Landmasses, with settlements of various sizes. Most of these Villages are dominated by massive grain-silos, seeing as grain is the sole export of this world. The water for the vast irrigation-network is provided by the various lakes and a delicate network of canals. The settlements are also connected by a network of railroads, with enormous carts transporting the grain to one of the various Space-Ports, the largest one being Mossard. The Space Port here is huge, optimized for mass-cargo haulers with the immediate area around the city being excavated for storage-facilities for the massive amounts of grains being stored here.

The various small settlements do not look very different, consisting of hangars for the harvesters, large lakes for the water used to irrigate the water and grain-storages similar to the ones in Mossard, yet a lot smaller. Overall, most of those settlements are peaceful yet always busy producing grain for the Imperium.

Mossard

The Capital of the planet is a giant space port, build solely for the export of the vast amounts of grain produced on the whole planet. The port is always busy, with even the manse of the planetary governor being build in the shadow of the facilities for storing and processing the imported grain, it's garden appearing tiny compared to the spacious landing-fields for the

mass-conveyors. The City is also the main-hub of the railways, with a giant terminal build in the center of it. When first landing here, it is a shock for most travellers, as the environment is very different from anything else on the planet, the constant rumbling of the shuttles, the trains and the exhaust fumes of said machinery, the whole atmosphere reminding more of a forge world of the Adeptus Mechanicus, rather than a world producing an at least noticeable part of the sector's foodstuffs used in rations for the Imperial Army. The grain imported from the various areas of the planet is instantly refabricated into combat rations and nutrient blocks, which are far easier to store.

Places to see

As expected, there is not much to see, unless one is interested in efficient food-processing techniques and grain-storage facilities. Still, there are a few places where one could go within the wards where the workers live when they're not toiling to fulfill the Imperium's need for food.

The Gouverneur's Mansion

Encased in a dome of glass, the mansion is a large building made to manifest the rule of the Imperium over even this seemingly insignificant world. Build in the opulent Imperial Gothic Style, it still dwarfs in the shadow of the humongous silos. It is here the Gouverneur spends his days, ruling over the world. Gouverneur Kelron

The Grain Keg

The Grain Keg is the place, where the few off-worlders mix with the local population. It is close to the port and the owner, an old men called Brim, makes a popular variant of the local "Cyrian Headcrusher", a heavy beer which is almost considered liquor. In fact, it is sometimes distilled into "Vulpa Grainhammer", an even stronger drink usually leaving the imbiber in a state leaving nothing in his head expect the feeling of having it crushed by a Thunderhammer. The Bar itself is in a decent condition, with the mix of off-worlders and inhabitants of the planet bringing a healthy business. Lately, there have been a few rumors here and there about people disappearing in one of the farming villages, however, this is dismissed as exaggarations, as the giant harvesters can very well swallow up an uncareful worker (another rumor has it some of the combat-rations taste slightly like iron)

The Market

In this place, people buy what few luxury items they can afford from outside. It is here where the acolytes are able to find some imported arms as well as some more luxury articles, should they be able to afford them (THIS is a relative backwater-world, so the prices should be somewhat higher then usual, with nothing being available of an availability of rare or higher. Furthermore, weapons and combat-related tech should be at least twice as expensive. However, with a Hard (-20) Inquiry test, a criminally inclined Acolytes will be able to track down a Black Market dealer

going by the name “Harrod”, who snagged off some gear of the shipments to the PDF and now has a few grenades with him (5x Frags, 5x Kraks) as well as a Meat Hammer (30m, S/-/, 2D5 + 6, Pen 0, Clip 1, Rld 2Full, Scatter, Tearing) and a box of shells (20) for it. He’s willing to part with for 700 Thrones, mostly due to not finding a buyer.

The Farming Village Greshad

This is the place the Acolytes will end up somehow. It’s a small, sleepy farming village with a population of roughly a thousand souls, who all work on maintaining the agricultural output of the surrounding thousands of hectar of fields. It is assumed every village is somewhat similar to Greshad.

Important Locations

The Grain Keg

It’s basically a smaller version of the Bar in the capital. The villagers meet here, drink together and spend what little free time they have. It also doubles as a Guest-House, for the rare case of visitors arriving.

The Maintenance Hangars

Here the huge harvesting-machines are repaired and maintained. each is about twice the size of an Imperial Baneblade, with razor-sharp blades cutting the plants, threshing them and starting the process of turning the remains into fertilizer. It is here where Tech-Priest Rosh Tradis is found, who is, together with a few adepts and his army of servitors, responsible for keeping the machines in working Order.

Dramatis Personae

Colonel Elrik Talrem

He is the Commander of the local planetary defense forces, which also fulfills normal law-enforcement duties. On one side, he is quite bored with his live on this backwater-place seeing no action whatsoever, on the other side, however, he’s pretty grateful for that.

Mayor David Malard

He’s the Overseer of the small village of Greshad. His personality is quite laid-back and friendly, as long as nothing out of the ordinary happens, in which case he tends to panic and rush, usually messing up even more. Luckily, those working under him manage to cover up for him, so it never actually came to big problems. Lately, he’s been worried about the increasing cases of workers disappearing and the output decreasing, even if only slightly. In fact, he is very worried

especially about the disappearing people, as, due to the small size of the village, everyone knows someone who knows someone who disappeared, but he don't know what do about it.

Tech-Priest Rosh Tradis

The sole adept of the machine-god in this remote town, it'd seem to mostly as a punishment. He, however, accepted this post with a stoic attitude, doing his best to keep the machines up and running. He's surprisingly sociable and famous for being the strongest drinker in the Village, though whether it's due to his augmetics or due to him simply being used to "Highly Toxic substances" how he states it.

Chapter 1 - Arrival

In this Chapter, the Acolytes will be briefed about their next "Mission". If it's played as part of the Haarlock-Saga, it will take place very shortly after the "House of Dust and Ashes". If that is the case, Lady Bles will brief the Players. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

After being dismissed by Silas Marr and waiting a few days for Selvaria's ship, you finally hand in your report to Lady Bles and are now sitting in her already well-known chamber on the red Sofa, while she sits, in her usual, aloof manner, on her chair, with Solomon being visible through the window in the back. "Well, I'll try to make sure the old fox won't hoard all the information you gathered for himself. Anyway, let's put this aside for now. I have a few important matters to attend to, and you look like you certainly need a break after what happened. " She takes a sip from her cup of tea in her usual gracious manner. "I've made a few arrangements so you can have a bit of a rest. Let's see... " She looks over a datapad, the cup of tea still in her hand "The 'Restless Pilgrim' will depart in a few days to Cyrus Vulpa. It's a peaceful Agri-World, so you should be able to rest and enjoy the scenery for a change... after the last few rather turbulent weeks, I think you really earned it. Good work Acolytes and enjoy the days off, since you rarely get those."

She will answer a few questions about Cyrus Vulpa but it's clear she has more important matters to attend (as stated) and really assumes this will only be a little joyride for the Acolytes to unwind and simply rest well.

The journey is a peaceful one, with possible roleplaying-opportunities for those Acolytes who wish to mingle with the Crew a bit, some of the members will surely be inclined for some gambling or drinking. When they finally arrive, however, noone waits for them or greets them at the spaceport, as they are not expected. They also have no Inquisitorial Authority, however, they did receive a few hundred thrones for lodging and food (and considering how cheap rations are here, they can get away with a few extra-coins in their pockets, should they decide to subsist on combat-rations alone.

For now, the players arrived in the capital, which is dirty and certainly not a place fit for vacation, but the players may as well spend some time rumor-mongering and looking for places to stay, where the air is at least a little better (in fact, the air is better pretty much anywhere).

Rumor-Mongering

The base for Inquiry-Tests is simple (+10), changeable to easy (+20) if the players actively talk about what's going on in the Calixis-Sector. These answers assume the Acolytes are Inquiring about unusual occurrences.

Failure	Offworlder you say? Well, care to accompany me for a drink? (make a challenging +0 Carouse test to avoid a nasty hangover)
Basic Success	Offworlder? Hey, care to have a drink with me?
1+ Degrees	Well, everything's peaceful 'ere. S'pposed to be some folks disappearing in some of the outskirt-villages, but that's just them falling into the harvester is my guess.
2+ Degrees	Saw a comet a few weeks ago... didn't look like it was going down somewhere though, 'sploded in mid-air it seems
3+ Degrees	Got a cousin in Greshad... says the Mayor is worried about... something. And folks keep disappearing... hope he's alright...

An Acolyte searching for weapons will have to pass a hard (-20) Inquiry test to find Herrod, the only one with something decent. This Test becomes one step easier if the Acolyte has the career-path Scum, passes a challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore: Underworld Test or has the Peer (Underworld) Talent. All of these effects are cumulative.

They might also ask for directions as to where best spend their vacation and in any case they'll be redirected to Greshad, as "It's one of the closer outposts and the wheather is supposed to be quite nice there this time of the year and the next train there is departing tomorrow around noon."

The train the Acolytes will ride on is a huge, mechanical monstrosity of steel and oil. Probaly a Kilometer in legth it's carriages are big enough to let a Baneblade Battletank seem small in comparison. The Passenger-carriage is right behind the engine, making the trip a rather loud one, but as soon as the acolytes learn to ignore the noise, the clouds from the capital soon clear up, being replaced by the clean, fresh air and wide, golden fields. The Journey itself proceeds without any incidents (This is not really the place for a Train-Robbery, though it is within the Realm of possibility. Maybe the Logicians or someone else have an Outpost here and need

some of the Tech used in maintaining the harvesters.)

Chapter 2 - A Boring village?

The Arrival in Greshad is as unspectacular as the arrival in Mossard. There is nobody to greet them, except a lone Adept and a Tech-Priest overseeing unloading the various Parts and the loading of the grain. The Adept will be quite flustered once he realizes the settlement gets a few guests and is honestly sorry for not preparing a more fitting welcome. The scene unfolds in the following (or a similar) way.

“You exit the train in what looks like a large city. It is dominated by a series of large hangars, all exiting to a wide, central road. Next to them are large storage-silos, not unlike those you have seen in the capital, but a lot smaller. The train is soon getting swarmed by a group of Servitors and Powerloader-Sentinels, unloading some of the containers and connecting a large pipe with one of the carriages. You look around and spot someone wearing the red robes of a servant of the Omnissiah, accompanying someone in a more robust outfit, apparently an overseer. After a while, they seem to notice you and head in your direction. ‘Are you the honoured Quaestors, Sirs?’ He asks, soon correcting himself ‘No... you can’t be, or that’d be the first time they arrive earlier than announced... well, whoever you are, welcome to Greshad! I am Overseer Melron and this...’ he points at the tech-priest who nods with a smile ‘Rosh Tradis. Welcome, strangers!’ It is now you notice the relatively few Augmetics the Tech-Priest is outfitted with. The most obvious ones are a few mechandrites, stored on his and the sound of his steps also indicates at least them are probably cybernetic, but other than that, he seems pretty human.”

What happens now depends on how the Acolytes react. If they state to have come to investigate the disappearances, he’ll be a bit confused, but arrange for a meeting with the mayor. If they simply say they’ve come for a vacation, he’ll be both honoured and confused (seeing as basically noone actually comes for recreational purposes).

In Any case, he’ll leave the unloading to Rosh and leads the Acolytes to the actual Village, which is a small collection of Munitorium-Standard Prefab Hab-Units. Compared to the Hangars and Silos, the Village is surprisingly small and any Guardsmen can estimate there being space for 300-400 people, maybe less, but certainly not more. The Grain-Keg (It’s called the same in every town, incidentally) differs from them simply by having a large sign on it’s front. The Inn itself is quite insignificant, with a few tables, a barkeeper and always a few customers. The Inn-Keeper, Olrek, is a cheerful man who knows pretty much everybody in town. The players have a few hours to get settled in, when Olrek decides there should be some sort of welcoming-party (mostly it’s just for the sake of selling more booze, but hey, everyone knows it and everyone is happy to have an excuse to drink some more ale anyway)

The party itself is a merry gathering of villagers, with a band playing some music and lots of alcohol being consumed. Everyone living in the village is present, which makes the whole place a bit cramped, but it's nevertheless a nice occasion to unwind and forget the stress during the Incident at the House of dust and ashes. Should the Acolytes have not encountered the rumours of the disappearing people yet, emphasize how relaxing it is, having a few festivities, especially since it's for the sake of the acolytes.

Possible events during the party

Brawl

Where there's alcohol, there's aggression. A brawl might very well break out amongst some of the patrons, in which case there'll soon be a crowd forming a cheering circle around the combatants. Let the brawlers make a series of opposed weapon skill tests. Whoever can accumulate 5 more degrees than his opponent wins. Depending on how much alcohol has been imbibed, this might be after five or ten rounds (or more, depending on how long you want to play this out). The winner will get cheers and beers, while the loser will end up embarrassed and beaten (possibly unconscious).

Drinking Contest

Another activity the villagers like is finding out who can drink the most. This is represented by a series of Carouse-Tests: Passing means you can drink on, while failing yields a level of fatigue, with an additional level for each two degrees of failure. Failure means you can drink on, but reaching the fatigue-limit means passing out. Depending on how many levels the character is over the threshold, this might well have embarrassing consequences. Of course, Rosh participates in the contest.

Romantic Interest

With the Acolytes coming from off-world, it is quite realistic some of the villagers are looking for some romantic involvement with them. The Criteria for this are left open, but in general this interest should extend to one or two acolytes at most (to keep it memorable), probably the ones with the highest fellowship or a combination of both fellowship and strength or toughness. Of course the players are free to pursue these passes and play on them by using interaction-skills (such as charm or the various performer-skills)

Along with Carouse-Tests according to the Acolytes alcohol consume, have them roll (or roll for them) a few Scrutiny-Tests at an appropriate difficulty (-10 to -20 should work). Those succeeding will notice a slight mood of discomfort, as if something is bothering everyone.

Should the Acolytes decide to Inquire further in the matter of the village, they will be approached by the Mayor on the next two or three days. Seeing as they have been looking into the matter, he wants to talk to them, mostly to see who they actually are. He is worried about the

decreasing productivity from his district and wants to see whether the Acolytes are sent by the Administratum to ensure productivity of the village or not. Of course, this is not the case and in fact, the central government has not noticed this decrease at all. Should the players have shown no interest in pursuing those leads at all, he will still contact the acolytes and asks them whether they could check out something confidential.

Should they have posed as tourist, read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a small office. It's quite obvious it is part of a prefabricated hub-unit, but it does look quite cozy actually there is a big, wooden desk and a few comfortable chairs. On one side stands a small cabinet with different crystal glasses as well as a small, but for this backwater-world certainly outstanding selection of amasec and different spirits. He points to the chairs: "Please, sit down. Do you want anything to drink?" After the drinks are delivered, he will start. "I hope you liked the party... you see, lately the situation in this village has been a bit... tense, so we needed an occasion to unwind a bit. Actually, I don't want to involve any outsiders in this, but you seem to be no mere tourists, judging from your... aura, I guess. My gut tells me so, and if one thing's true here, then it's that you should listen to your gut. Anyway, lately the production of this village has fallen. Some people went to the main fields, but... ultimately, they did not return, same goes for their vehicles. Thus, for now I have quarantined that area and send word to central, but I fear they have not received any of my messages yet. Now, I'd ask you to investigate this. We... we can't pay much, you see, being a small community, but we'd give you whatever is in our might in exchange. At least it's better than having a Quaestor running around here, or, even worse, Agents of the Inquisition, no?"

Should the players be less subtle in them trying to find out, what is going on, he will be a bit more aggressive:

You enter a small office. It's quite obvious it is part of a prefabricated hub-unit, but it does look quite cozy actually there is a big, wooden desk and a few comfortable chairs. On one side stands a small cabinet with different crystal glasses as well as a small, but for this backwater-world certainly outstanding selection of amasec and different spirits. The Mayor himself looks a bit tense, looking at you with judging eyes. "So, here you are." He starts. Judging from your... meddling... I assume you are no mere tourists. So, what is it you want?

He'll then listen to the Story the Characters will tell him. The only thing he wants to do is keeping the city safe and currently he thinks the Players are sent either by Central to check on him or some freelancing mercenaries. Should the players be able to get some kind of deal out of him, he'll send them to the fields in Question and provide Transportation. Once in the area, they will find the Slaughter-Vessel. Read or Paraphrase the Following:

Chapter 3 - Into the Lion's Den

As you keep driving through the verdant fields, you suddenly spot a large shadow in the distance. You can't make out exactly what it is, but this is likely responsible for the disappearances. You keep approaching the Object and start making out more features: Judging from the size, it is probably a starship, although a pretty small one, only a kilometer in length. The pattern is obviously not human, having a round shape and what might have been a deep black now bears the mark of scorches, of metal smashing into the ground. Indeed the Object seems to be at least partly underground and you can make out the stretch of land were it crashed and ultimately stopped at it's current position. It is almost an uplifting scenery, would it be not for the knowledge that somewhere inside there seems to be something causing the disappearances of the people of the village.

A Hard (-20) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) will reveal the ship being of possible Slaught-origin. As the Players approach it, this will become more clear as they are being attacked by a Slaught-Harvester construct (See "Dead Stars", p. 67) and a three Slaught Vassal-Constructs (See "Disciples of the Dark Gods", p. 81)

Locations in the Ship

The ship is inactive with most of the Slaught (luckily!) having died due to the Impact. However, there are still three Overseer around, who, having survived the crash, try to prepare the infiltration of the world and work on erasing their traces. The Interior is disturbing and dark (requiring artificial illumination or suffer the consequences of darkness) and it constantly smells like rotten flesh. From now on, the players broadly have two choices: Walk into the Lion's den alone or head back to the city and call in back-up from the Capital.

The next part assumes, the players walk into the ship alone and describes several locations for the GM to use

Corridors

The Corridors of the ship are dark, disturbing and smelly. About 2 Meters both wide and high, they are relatively spacious. The walls seem to absorb most light. Due to the confined nature, combat with the constructs will likely be melee-focused.

Food-Chamber

A large chamber filled with rotten corpses of the villagers the Slaught collected. They are all quite dead and quite decayed, a sight that causes an instant test against Fear, as well as a difficult (-10) Toughness-Test or a gift of Nurgle to not throw up. There is not much to do here, but the players might well be attacked by one or more harvester-constructs bringing in more

corpses or even one of the Overseers surprising them. In case of the fight covering the mound of corpses, running and charging is impossible. Should they wish to investigate the corpses they will notice each had it's skull split and the Brain is exposed. There are several of these chambers in the ship.

Fleshcraft-Chamber

This Chamber houses the facilities to produce Harvester- and Vassal-Constructs, thus there is a lot of the unholy Xeno-Tech of the Slaughter available here. Here is a very good place for the players to encounter one of the Overseers, who is currently supervising the production-plant. First, the Fleshy parts are Crafted in huge tanks filled with an unhealthy, green fluid. The finished parts are then extracted and connected by mechanical elements. Each missed shot (including those from salvos) has a 10% chance of breaching one of those tanks, causing the liquid to spill over the Room. This has the effect of the area becoming difficult terrain and requiring a challenging (+0) Agility-test after running and charging or falling prone, face-forward into the disgusting fluid.

Generator-Room

This Room is filled with many pillar-like structures, each roughly one meter in diameter and one meter apart from each other. The Air is filled with the stench of Ozone, as in about three meters height on the pillars, there are statical discharges dancing around the room on the pillars. Should one of the players come into contact with the upper part of the pillar (everything above 2 m height) the discharge will cause him 2D10 Damage with the Shocking Quality. The same goes for their enemies though. Please note that the lightning-conditions here are not "Darkness" but rather "Shadow" Possible encounters here is another Overseer as well as some Vassal-Constructs.

Bridge

Should the players have not encountered all of the Overseers up to now, they will be here, so it might be appropriate to split them up, as they are very deadly. The Bridge itself is lit up by what passes for consoles among the Slaughter and Guarded by a few Vassal-Constructs as well as one Overseer. There is plenty of cover amongst the consoles.

Getting back up

It might well be that the players decide to head back to the capital for now in order to tell the Gouverneur and the Administratum to get some support. This is well within their capabilities and should the players have some sort of writ of authority (kept from an earlier mission or by default) they will quite soon have a small, but powerful strike force of the PDF. Should they not have the writ of Authority, however, they have to sweet-talk their way upwards until they arrive at Colonel Talrem or walk into the ship regardless of knowing that now the Slaughter are better prepared. Should they win the support of the PDF, the site of the crash will become that of a bloody battle, where the players have to actively help the PDF to purge the vessel.

Aftermath

Once the dust settles, the players can congratulate themselves: They managed to capture a more or less intact Slaughter-Vessel, which will keep the Xeno-Scholars of the Ordo Xenos busy. It will, over the next years, give the Inquisition a few valuable clues as to how dangerous the Slaught actually are. This might well include a meeting with INquisitor Van Vuygens, who is desperate to have a look at these new and interesting species of Xenos. Of course it will be a long way to convince everyone of the actual threat these aliens pose, but the Acolytes went the first step on a long journey.

Additional to any experience earned during the sessions, the completion of this adventure should award the players with at least 300 XP. An additional 200 XP can be awarded if all Acolytes survived the Slaughter-Ship without calling in backup to help them, as that's certainly an impressive feat.

They also earned the respect of the people of Cyrus Vulpa, which might prove useful should they search for a place to unwind again.