



LEVIATHAN CARRIER

THE MACHINE (GREATER VARNA)

Level: 9 **Category:** Between Worlds *Special*
Life Points: 6.000 Damage Resistance
Class: Warrior Mentalist
Str: 15 **Dex:** 8 **Agi:** 9 **Con:** 16 **Pow:** 3 **Int:** 8 **Wp:** 15 **Per:** 10
PhR 105 **MR** 15 **PsR** 100 **VR** 105 **DR** 105

Initiative: 75 Natural
Attack Ability: 210 + 210 Bladed Tentacles
Defence Ability: Damage Resistance
Damage: 150 Bladed Tentacles (CUT)
AT: Natural Cut 8 Imp 8 Thr 8 Heat 8 Cold 8 Ele 8 Ene 8

Psychic Projection: 200 **Potential:** 180 (+1 Degree)
Free PP: 0 **Innates:** 1
Psychic Disciplines: Energy, Telepathy
Psychic Powers: Energy Discharge, Energy Dome, Mental Communication, Psychic Connection, Area

Essential Abilities: Physical Exemption, Zen, Psychological Immunity, Pain Immunity, Divine Physical Characteristics, Supernatural Spiritual Characteristics, Access Psychic Disciplines, Empowered Matrices (Psychic Imbalance: Energy, Psychic Imbalance: Telepathy, *Without Concentration*), *Atrophied Limbs*.
Powers: Carrier of Leviathans, Bladed Tentacles (Natural Weapons: Full Additional Attack, -3 AT), Damage Barrier 100, Mystic Flight 10, Sea Carrier, *Artificial Body (Regeneration 0)*, *Magic Vulnerability*.

Size: 31 Gigantic **Regeneration:** 0 (Special)
Movement Value: 0 / 10 / 6 **Fatigue:** *Tireless*

Secondary Abilities: Notice 120

This creation of The Machine, known as the Kraken by Dravenor's soldiers, is a specialized variety of Carrier able to travel through the deep sea. Similarly to their flying brethren, they receive their name from their ability to carry dozens of Leviathans, which they unleash in combat as required.

While estimated to measure around one hundred meters long, their rarity makes it so that there are very few witnesses to their size. Their looks are similar to those of a normal Carrier, although the shape of their body is somewhat adapted to underwater travel, looking like some kind of enormous fish covered in tentacles and blades.

The process of their creation is very complex, and requires a great amount of materials, including almost a hundred larvae and many living beings, usually large marine creatures, such as different kinds of whales.

Krakens have a notable intelligence based on pure logic, although they have no personality to speak of, acting like automatons and never communicating with anyone outside of The Machine's hierarchy.

While it is easy to assume they are nothing more than a normal Carrier that just happens to go underwater, their combat abilities have been greatly adapted to suit their new environment. Not only its many limbs serve as a great method of attack, its psychic matrices can be used to channel devastating energy blasts.

While their main method of moving is underwater, they can also float through the air by deploying a variant of the Carrier's gravity generators, albeit ones with reduced mobility. Truthfully, this is a rare occurrence, as not only is their mobility reduced in this case, but their combat capabilities also suffer and they cannot deploy their Leviathans.

Until a few years ago, many Imperials doubted the reports about this creature, instead saying that the reporting soldiers must have seen a Greater Carrier that was taken down and fell to the sea and that, victims of shellshock, the soldiers falsely attributed these wounded enemies exceptional characteristics that they did not truly possess. Doubts were cast aside, however, when three years ago one of these monsters was defeated. This allowed high command an opportunity to come up with tactics to defeat it. These tactics require the use of several small teams acting in unison, as the creature's large area attacks would devastate any bigger group. The teams must have access to a large combined numbers of sorcerers and wizards, or have access to heavy artillery. Finally, they must launch a simultaneous, coordinated assault using all their ranged means of attack at once. It is extremely important for this attack to be quick and decisive, as these creatures, if not quickly destroyed, might decide to flee from danger by diving deep underwater, into the depths of the ocean.

MODUS OPERANDI

While in theory they are commanding units and troop transports, these creatures have great destructive capabilities and are highly resistant to damage. Usually, they travel close to the sea floor until they detect any enemies, it is then that they release their leviathan payload. It is entirely possible, if whatever enemies it detects are not deemed worthy of its time, that the Kraken will merely deploy some leviathans and leave. If instead the enemy is deemed a high priority target, the Leviathan Carrier will rise to the surface, using its limbs to crush ships, and supporting its attack with its psychic powers.

Leviathan Carrier: These creatures can hold up to 100 Leviathans, with the ability to deploy up to 20 of them each round, “firing” them from its mouth at high speeds.

Empowered Matrices: Leviathan Carriers have many psychic crystals embedded within their bodies and connected in a very stable psychic network that allows them to unleash devastating psychic powers. Such is the stability of this network that they do not have to roll for Potential, always casting their powers with the equivalent of 240 (Almost Impossible) Potential. However, grave damages to their bodies can weaken the network. Thus, a Leviathan Carrier reduced to half or less of their maximum Life Points will see the Potential of its psychic powers reduced to 180 (Absurd).

Bladed Tentacles: The main method of attack of these creatures is their extremely lethal limbs, somewhere in between tentacles and blades. Even just one hit can cause enough damage to a ship to sink it. Not only they have a high damage value of 150 and reduce the enemy AT by 3, but they can do up to two attacks with them without any penalties to their ability (Although their great size means that against creatures of less than Enormous size they cannot attack the same creature with both attacks). As these tentacles are more difficult to control when not underwater, they suffer a -40 penalty to their attack skill when flying or on land.

Control Nexus: The Carrier keeps a psychic link with all Leviathans within a 1 kilometre radius, influencing their behaviour and increasing their combat capabilities. While withing this influence, Leviathans gain a +10 bonus to their Attack and Defence Skills, and become able of executing more complex tactics.

Aquatic Gravity Generator: Leviathan Krakens can move through water with a movement value of 10, without any penalties, and no consequences from deep diving. These generators also allow it to move through the air at a reduced movement value of 6. This is their only way of moving, as they have no limbs developed for more mundane locomotion.

Artificial Body: The solid structure of a Kraken cannot repair the damage it suffers. Only other individuals or specialized Machine facilities can manually repair them.

Vulnerability to Magic: As all other Machine troops, Leviathan Carriers are extremely weak against magic. Not only do they have a low MR value of 15, but any mystical blast doubles its damage against them.

KNOWLEDGE OF DRAVENOR

Generic Knowledge

There are great monsters in the ocean that carry within them hundreds of their “children”. If they notice any ships nearby, they come to the surface to destroy them.

Intermediate Knowledge

There are no longer any great sea predators on the oceans. As such, movements of large fish banks are a clear sign of a Kraken in close proximity, no farther away than a couple of kilometers.

Advanced Knowledge

Truthfully, one of the most effective ways to fight these creatures is to get on top of them when they rise above the surface of the water, as they cannot use their Tentacles without risking damage to themselves. This is a risky tactic, however, as the Kraken may well submerge again, leaving any would be assailants in an unfavourable position.

ABYSSAL CARRIER

THE MACHINE (GREATER VARNA)

Level: 8 **Category:** Between Worlds *Special*

Life Points: 6.500 Damage Resistance

Class: Warrior Mentalist

Str: 15 **Dex:** 11 **Agi:** 10 **Con:** 17 **Pow:** 4 **Int:** 8 **Wp:** 13 **Per:** 8

PhR 100 **MR** 30 **PsR** 90 **VR** 100 **DR** 100

Initiative: 85 Natural

Attack Ability: 200 Crushing Maw / Assault

Defence Ability: Damage Resistance

Damage: 150 Crushing Maw (CUT), 100 Assault (IMP)

AT: Natural Cut 10 Imp 10 Thr 10 Heat 10 Cold 10 Ele 10 Ene 8

Psychic Projection: 20

Potential: 120

Free PP: 0

Innates: 3

Psychic Disciplines: Telepathy

Psychic Powers: Zone Scan (+20), Psychic Location (+20), Area (+60)

Essential Abilities: Physical Exemption, Zen, Psychological Immunity, Pain Immunity, Divine Physical Characteristics, Superhuman Spiritual Characteristics, Access One Psychic Discipline, Increased Maintenance, *Blind*.

Powers: Carrier, Crushing Maw (Natural Weapon, -3 AT, Assault, Burst from the ground), Superior subterranean movement, *Artificial Body* (Physical AT 4, Damage Barrier 80, *Regeneration* 0), *Magic Vulnerability*.

Size: 32 Gigantic

Regeneration: 0 (Special)

Movement Value: 12

Fatigue: Tireless

Secondary Abilities: Notice 120

These Subterranean Carriers, known as Abyssals, are a transport and command specialized model deployed to provide subterranean movement capabilities to The Machine's troops.

Its appearance is different from the two other models of Carrier, as it looks like a long metallic worm divided into several rotating rings, which allow it to move like an actual worm without sacrificing any durability. On one of the outer rings its “head” can be found, which opens with four jaws to show an inner layer of saws, fangs and rock

crushers.

Abyssals are very scarce, not only because of their extremely high cost and their complex creation process, but also because of their limited usefulness. Moving them from island to island has proved, while not impossible, extremely complex. The only real reason for The Machine to develop these creatures is to test their long term usability as a weapon to be deployed beyond the Barrier, and even then trials have been inconclusive at best.

Like all other Carrier models, Abyssals have a logical intelligence, but nothing like a personality, acting like automatons based on programmed responses, rather than taking decisions in a more natural fashion.

Abyssals have no sense of sight. Instead, they use psychic matrices to detect any mind close to their location, and they use this power as a reference when moving underground. Rarely it can also see through the eyes of other troops of a lesser hierarchy, though when it does so it suffers penalties to its abilities, as these senses are not what the Carrier is calibrated for.

As island hopping with the Abyssals is a costly enterprise, the few of them that have been made can only be found on the largest islands, where they are more efficient at eliminating any group trying to retake territory conquered by The Machine.

MODUS OPERANDI

An Abyssal Carrier's modus operandi is quite simple. It will lie in wait, or patrol an area, until it detects an objective. At that moment, it will move to its location, suddenly and unexpectedly bursting from the ground, swallowing whole anything on its path. If it can do so, it will always emerge in the middle of a large group, swallowing as many enemies as it can and immediately deploying its troops.

Carrier: An Abyssal Carrier can hold a large number of troops within itself. These troops can be drones, spiders or chameleons, but whatever their kind, it can hold up to 400 of them, being able to release them at a rate of 50 per round. In order to do this it must at least partially emerge from the ground, and it can't attack on the same round when it deploys troops, as these come from its maw.

Burst from the ground: This is always the first attack that an Abyssal Carrier will perform as it comes out, as it attacks suddenly and unexpectedly, trying to devour its enemies. Anyone nearby at the time of the attack must pass a Notice check against Absurd difficulty, or a Search check against Very Difficult difficulty, or they will apply a -40 penalty to their defence against this attack. It is not really that difficult to notice that something is happening, as the ground shakes violently before the attack, but knowing exactly what is happening, where the attack will happen, and when, is a much more difficult thing to predict. Someone who has already been witness to this attack reduces the difficulty of the checks to Very Difficult and Easy.

This attack is targeted at everyone within a 10 metre radius of the point of emergence of the Carrier. Targets of Big size or less will be attacked by Crushing Maw, while larger characters will instead suffer an Assault attack. This attack can also reach flying targets that are no further than 30 metres from the ground.

In order to perform this attack again, the Carrier must dig underground for two rounds, and then position itself for a further three rounds before it can once again do this attack.

Crushing Maw: The four section maw at the head of the Carrier is its main method of attack, and it is made up of dozens of constantly gyrating saws, blades and other implements of destruction, which cause massive damage and ignore 3 points of enemy AT. This attack

can only be used against targets of size Big or less.

Assault: Against targets of Enormous Size or larger, Abyssal Carriers use its Assault attack, throwing all the weight of its body at its target, which causes an Impact with Strength 14 if the target is hit by the attack and suffers damage.

Blind: While blind, as long as the Abyssal can sense the approximate location of a creature (usually through its psychic powers) it does not apply any of the associated penalties to its combat abilities.

Superior Subterranean Movement: Using its maw, an Abyssal Carrier can dig through the ground by crushing even the hardest rocks. It can move underground using its movement speed, and only the most resistant materials can even slow its advance.

Control Nexus: The Carrier keeps a psychic link with all Drones, Spiders and Chameleons within a 3 kilometre radius, influencing their behaviour and increasing their combat capabilities. While withing this influence, Leviathans gain a +20 bonus to their Attack and Defence Skills, and become able of executing more complex tactics. These ability is only active as long as at least the Carrier's head has emerged from the ground.

Artificial Body: The solid structure of an Abyssal Carrier cannot repair the damage it suffers. Only other individuals or specialized Machine facilities can manually repair them. However, the alloys used on its construction grant it an increased AT, a Damage Barrier of 80, and reduce the base damage of all attacks by 20. This reduction to base damage does not affect magical attacks.

Vulnerability to Magic: As all other Machine troops, Abyssal Carriers are extremely weak against magic. Not only do they have a low MR value of 30, but any mystical blast doubles its damage against them.

KNOWLEDGE OF DRAVENOR

Generic Knowledge

Enormous worms dig deep under the islands. If the ground starts trembling, one of them is going to eat you.

Intermediate Knowledge

One of the most effective strategies against these creatures is the use of a sacrifice loaded with explosives. These sacrifices must attract the Abyssal to a remote location, and deploy the explosives as they are being swallowed, as the Carriers have no protections on the inside of their body. This is a cruel tactic, but a very effective one.

Advanced Knowledge

The best way to avoid the attack of one of these creatures has been shown to be just protecting the minds of soldiers from psychic methods of detection. Of course, these is very costly, and most of the time unfeasible, with large groups, so it works better with smaller teams. However, even a moment's weakness can be enough to alert the Carrier, making it conscious of this suddenly appearing presence. In these situations, the Carrier will most likely send some troops to investigate this, connecting to their eyes to see what is happening.

PRAEFECTUS PRAETORIAN

THE MACHINE (SUPREME VARNA)

"Enhanced Praetorians, weapon systems and technology that make all forms of conventional warfare obsolete with their mere existence, and the knowledge that the only thing keeping mass suicides at bay is that this is not public information. It really makes one think about what they do not tell us. And they wonder why half the officers in special operations end up drinking or hanging themselves from a beam on the roof."

Lieutenant Garro

"Perhaps the Lieutenant's quote may not be exactly inspiring to readers of this document, but his words are important nonetheless. The quote will stay, but Lieutenant Garro is hereby ordered to report for psychological evaluation at New Elciana as soon as possible."

High Councillor Vojislav

The elite amongst the elite, the mere existence of these creatures has been put into question several times already, as it was considered that it was impossible for The Machine to improve on its greatest creation, the apex of its science. Although maybe the real reason for the doubts was simply that the idea of the Mother somehow developing a weapon more powerful than a Praetorian was absolutely dreadful.

But beyond myths and rumours, these monsters are all too real. They are extraordinary versions of the Praetorians, creatures where the fusion on the cellular level of technology and living tissue has gone above and beyond what was believed to be possible, providing them with unique powers and abilities that elevate them above their kin.

It is hard to determine how a Praefectus is created, as they require more than the already rare union between a Queen Larva and a genetically compatible host: in order for a Praefectus to be born, the host must have an extraordinary will and a very high Gnosis. Once these criteria have been met, The Mother invests untold resources during their gestation period, creating a creature without match, one of The Machine's supreme agents. As such, it is not rare that their number is incredibly limited.

They look similar to other Praetorians, but each one of them has small details and peculiarities that are specific to the individual and that are reflected on their physical looks. As such, while they are all clearly Praetorians, they are also distinct enough to be easily told apart by any witnesses.

As The Machine's most advanced creations, Praefectus are on the highest hierarchy of The Machine, only behind The Mother and the Sakshad. It is in this position that they take their role as strategists and generals for the greatest battles, or as devastating, fully autonomous, killing machines.

Praefectus do keep, in some way or another, some of their quirks and some glimpses of their host's former personality and thoughts, beyond the nebulous shadows of memories that normal Praetorians have. They even seem to retain memories from before their transformation, as they have sometimes recognized people from the time before their change. Despite this, their will is fully devoted to The Mother, and they lack any sense of morality beyond the standards of The Machine. Because of these distinct personalities, they are the only creatures of The Machine with individual names, used even by their kin, instead of being referred to by their model.

There are currently five Praefectus Praetorians in Dravenor, serving their roles as generals and troop coordinators. A sixth, Donis Krieger, has been sent beyond the Barrier by The Mother, with the objective of preparing the world for her coming.

STATS AND SPECIAL RULES

Each Praefectus Praetorian is fully unique, with not only different personalities of their own, but also different abilities and combat styles. In game terms, Praefectus Praetorians use the base Praetorian sheet, but apply the following changes:

Superior Presence: A Praefectus Praetorian higher level than a normal Praetorian, between 1 and 3 levels. Not only are different Praefectus Praetorians different levels, but they do not spend their DP the same, making their character sheets different from each other, even if they use the same base sheet.

Singular Mind: The mind of a Praefectus Praetorian is unique, they serve The Machine, but they have their own thoughts and opinions. While they are still a part of the Hive Mind, and as such their will is that of The Machine's, they provide new and different points of view, resulting in unique strategies and approaches. As they also keep their memories from their past lives, they might also conserve some of their past abilities, which would be different and determined on a case by case basis.

Supreme Hierarchy: Praefectus Praetorians are at the highest echelon of the Hive Mind, only behind the Mother itself and the Sakshad, and as such any other creature of The Machine on their presence will follow all of their orders and commands. This, combined with their unique perspectives, can cause these creatures to act in new and different ways from their usual modus operandi.

Modified Psychic Crystals: Although they use the base Praetorian sheet as a starting point, the psychic powers of each Praefectus Praetorian are different. All of them have developed the Physical Increase psychic discipline, knowing at least the powers Increased Strength, Increased Skill and Increased Reaction, but all their other powers might be different, as they can distribute all their other PP as they see fit.

KNOWLEDGE OF DRAVENOR

Generic Knowledge

The existence of these creatures is unknown by most of the people of Dravenor.

Intermediate Knowledge

It is said that there are leaders amongst the Machine.

Advanced Knowledge

Currently, the information that High Command has about these creatures is very limited, as there are only records of two of them, Claudia Dalca and Rom. None of them have been destroyed to inspect their remains yet, the closest to defeating one has been forcing one of them to retreat, a feat that required the direct intervention of two members of the High Council of War.

High Tech Enhancements

Beyond their own superior skills, Praefectus Praetorians have at their disposal exclusive enhancements of incredible power. Weapons too expensive to produce in any kind of high numbers, impossible to replicate Solomon relics, or enhancements that only creatures as powerful as the Praefectus could ever hope to use, all of these are examples of the High Tech Enhancements the Machine provides them. Each Praefectus Praetorian has between 1 and 4 High Tech Enhancements. The effects and rules of some of the known examples of these enhancements can be seen after this, but it is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list, but rather some examples, so it is entirely possible that other different enhancements exist.

Dalila System

This Arcane Disruption system, known by its Solomonic name of Dalila, is unique amongst the Machine, a tool used by the Empire of Solomon to neutralize and eliminate powerful sorcerers that the Machine has only very recently managed to assimilate.

When not powered, the Dalila looks like a cylindric generator, about twenty centimetres long, and ten centimetres thick. When turned on, dozens of small psychic crystals emerge from its interior, connecting to each other through an electric arc that takes the approximate shape of a "lightning whip".

This "supernatural force" feeds off the Praefectus' Vortex, allowing the weapon to disrupt the powers of any creature with magical abilities that the lightning touches. Usually, the weapon is able to dissipate spells, making it a terrifying weapon against wizards.

The Dalila System is usually inserted inside the Praefectus' forearm, which opens (separating the forearm and the hand in two halves) when the system is active.

Incorporated Weapon: The Dalila System is a natural weapon that can be used instead of using Living Weapon. It has a Base Damage of 120, attacks on Electricity, can be used to grapple with a Strength value of 12, can damage spiritual beings and it is considered unbreakable. If the Praefectus suffers a Critical Hit with a final effect higher than 50 on the forearm where the Dalila System is stored, the system will be rendered unusable until it is repaired.

Arcane Disruptor: The main use of Dalila is its ability to break the link between a sorcerer and their spells. Any spellcaster that suffers damage from its attacks will have to roll a PhR check with a difficulty of 100 plus half of the damage suffered, up to maximum of 220. If the check is failed, all spells maintained by the caster are dispelled.

Casting Inhibitor: Beyond merely dispelling already casted spells, the Dalila System can also prevent sorcerers from casting new spells. Any creature grappled by this weapon will suffer intense pain merely by accumulating Zeon. They will have to roll a PhR check against 140 if they are under Minor Paralysis, 180 for Partial Paralysis and 240 for Full Paralysis. If the check is failed, they will suffer half the failure level as damage and any Zeon they accumulated will be lost.

Grappling Style: The Praefectus can fight normally using its Living Weapon while it keeps an objective grappled with Dalila, and will only apply a -10 penalty to its Attack and Defence skills.

Giges Camouflage System

A highly sophisticated version of the systems used by Hounds and Chameleons, far more advanced and able to perform so well and adapt so fast to the Praefectus' surroundings that it effectively makes it invisible.

This system is applied to the external layer of metal covering the Praetorian, which must be a smooth surface. Due to this, Praefectus Praetorians with this enhancement look immaculate, with their body covered by a smooth layer of metal.

After activating the camouflage, the system must process the surrounding environment for a few seconds. After this small period of time, the Giges System is fully operational and it becomes almost impossible to locate its user.

Perfect Camouflage: The Giges Camouflage System makes the Praefectus invisible, although it takes a few seconds to activate. At the start of a round, before rolling for initiative, the Praefectus can choose to activate the Giges System. At the start of the next round, anyone unable to succeed at an Almost Impossible Notice check, or an Absurd Search check, will be unable to see the Praetorian. After another round passes, and for the remaining time that the system is active, the Notice check will be of Inhuman difficulty and the Search check will be of Impossible difficulty.

Psychically Powered: The powering system that The Machine has created for the Giges using psychic energy gives it more power, but it is psychically extenuating for the Praefectus. Every five full rounds that the Praefectus keeps the system active, it consume one Free PP from the Praetorian. If the Praetorian cannot pay this cost, the system shuts down.

Legion Crystals

These crystals, entirely produced using The Machine's technology, have shown a power only comparable to its cost. A Praetorian with this enhancement is equipped with unique psychic crystals that can connect its consciousness with that of creatures inoculated with these crystals. Thus, if one of these crystals enters the body of another creature of The Machine, or even just another biological living organism, the Praefectus would be able to use their body, fully controlling it without losing control over their own original body. For all effects, it would be as if one mind was controlling several bodies at the same time.

Of course, this can be difficult, as extending their minds is not a simple task, and it weakens the Praetorian. The advantages of being in several places at the same time, however, cannot be underestimated.

A Praefectus can be equipped with, at a maximum, twenty Legion Crystals, usually hidden in different compartments along its body. These look like some kind of needle or stiletto, though made of crystal and covered in veins.

Extended Mind: Thanks to the Legion Crystals, the mind of a Praefectus Praetorian can be on several places at the same time. In order to do this the Praetorian needs only to stick one of its Legion Crystals on a lower Varna creature of the Machine. As long as the Crystal is there, the Praefectus will be able to talk, see, order other Machine creatures, and use Psychic Powers through the creature as if it was there.

Control Implant: If a Legion Crystal is implanted into a living being that is not a part of The Machine, the Praetorian can force the body to move as a puppet under its command. It is important to note that this system does not truly control the individual, and as such the Praefectus will not have access to the individual's skills and abilities, instead allowing the Praetorian to use the body as if it was its own.

Any creature implanted with a Legion Crystal that is not already linked to the Machine will have to roll a PsR check against 160, or temporarily become a puppet under the Praetorian's control.

If the creature is forced to perform an action against their nature, the controlled individual will be able to repeat the check once every five rounds in order to become free.

Once the Legion Crystal is implanted, the needle deploys nervous connections through the entire nervous system of the subject. Thus, extracting the needle in a rushed, uncaredful way can cause damage, between 20 and 120 Life Points, depending on its size, with smaller creatures suffering less damage than bigger creatures, and the average damage on humans being of 40 Life Points.

Puppets: While the link between the Praefectus and its puppets does highly increase their physical abilities, these cannot reach the peaks of the Praefectus' own ability. When used on creatures that are already part of The Machine, this gives them a bonus of +60 to their Attack and Defence Skill (the last one does not apply to Damage Resistance creatures), although this bonus does not allow for their skills to go beyond 200. If the ability is used on another living creature, it instead gives them a base skill that will depend on the individual's body and natural faculties, with the average person having an Attack and Defence values of 140, and truly incredible individuals having 180 on both skills.

Due to the pressure on the Praefectus' mind when dividing his attention in this way, so for every puppet that is active at the same time beyond the first two, the Praefectus Praetorian and all of its puppets suffer a -10 accumulative penalty to their abilities.

Quality: The Legion Crystals can be thrown by the Praefectus Praetorians if they use the Ballistic Psychic Power. They counts a +15 Stilettos for this purpose, as well as for the calculation of their durability.

Monofilament System

This enhancement is an attempt by the Machine to emulate the combat style displayed by users of the Impossible Weapon: Cancer Ars Magnus. Praefectus equipped with it have a mass of fine metal threads in the form of long hair or finger extensions, which they can control with absolute precision. These threads are made of special alloys and when used to attack become monomolecular blades that cut through flesh and metal with astounding ease.

Grappling: The Monofilaments are incredibly strong and resistant, allowing them to restraint targets as a wave of threads, extremely hard to evade. When the Praefectus uses the Living Weapon quality Grappling Tail, it can use the Monofilaments to obtain a +40 bonus to its attack roll and Strength 14 for the grappling check, although the base Damage is reduced to 20 if it does so.

Monofilaments: When used as a weapon directly, monofilaments move independent from each other, attacking from several places at once. This adds a new Living Weapon option, Monofilaments. It allows the Praefectus Praetorian to attack five times in a round with only a -30 penalty to all attacks, although the Base Damage of the attack is halved (which would usually mean it goes down to 70). Each one of these attacks can choose its target independently, choosing different targets or attacking the same target with no limitations. For every creature it has under a grapple, the Praetorian loses one of these attacks.

Almost invisible: When the Praetorian uses the Monofilaments to attack or grapple, a Notice or Search check must be rolled, with a difficulty of Very Difficult or Difficult depending on the skill used, or the Blind penalty is applied to the Defence. Creatures with a Perception characteristic of 12 or higher automatically pass this check.

Lambda Core

The Lambda Core, similarly to the cores in Solomon's Hecatoindes, imitates the Ki abilities of a living being. In this way, Praefectus Praetorians equipped with it can emulate the effects of some Ki Techniques when fighting, increasing their already great combat capabilities.

Ki Simulation: Although the Lambda Core provides great abilities, Praetorians don't really have their own Ki, and as such they cannot recharge the Ki points they spend normally. Instead, these points are recharged at the Machine's facilities.

Artificial Generator: A Lambda Core provides the Praefectus Praetorian with the following abilities, regardless of their own characteristics.

Generic Ki Points: 85

Ki Accumulations

Str 3, Dex 3, Agi 2, Con 3, Pow 2, Wp 3

Techniques: Praefectus Praetorians equipped with this enhancement can only use the following techniques:

OFFENSIVE PROTOCOL

Level: 1

MK: 20

Charging energy from the Lambda Core, the Praetorian gets extra impulse to reach its targets at high speed, in an attack that is hard to follow even for the trained eye. With such little time to react, very few are able to stop the blade from piercing their flesh.

Cost: DEX 5, STR 5, WP 4

Effects: +75 Attack Skill

DESTRUCTIVE PROTOCOL

Level: 1

MK: 25

The Praetorian charges the energy from the Lambda Core on one of its blades. When the weapon pierces its target, the energy is suddenly discharged, causing great internal damage, turning the attack into a devastating blow.

Cost: CON 5, DEX 5, STR 5

Effects: Damage x2

SELF-PRESERVATION PROTOCOL

Level: 2

MK: 55

If it feels threatened, the Praefectus Praetorian can direct the energy from the Lambda Core into its weapons, creating a repulsion field. This allows attacks to be blocked by merely having the Praetorian's Living Weapons nearby, without actually having to parry the attacks.

Cost: DEX 5, STR 5, WIL 5

Effects: +50 Block Skill (Multiple), Ki Reduction 2

Chronosystems

Using massive amounts of psychic energy, this system allows the Praetorian to perceive the world at a much slower rate, allowing it to move and react at incredible speeds.

Expanded Reaction: The Praetorian applies a special +30 bonus to its Initiative, and reduces all penalties from Surprise by half.

Opposed Focus: If the Praetorian focuses all its senses on a specific target, it can get a +20 bonus to all opposed actions against said target. Opposed Focus and Defensive Focus cannot be active at the same time.

Defensive Focus: If the Praetorian focuses all its senses on defence, it can apply a +30 bonus to its defensive skill, as long as it is aware that it is going to be attacked. Defensive Focus and Opposed Focus cannot be active at the same time.

Psychic Consumption: Every three rounds that this ability is active, the Praetorian must spend one Free PP.

Automatic Restructuring System

Praetorians using this system have constantly regenerating bodies, which are repaired at high speeds, healing any damage that it has suffered.

Recovery: The Praetorian has a Regeneration Value of 16 for the purposes of calculating how any Life Points it can recover. For the purposes of amputated limbs, any limb that is removed will be regenerated in a maximum of 5 rounds, depending on the damage it suffered.

Abbadon Swarm

This enhancement is based on an offensive and highly destructive version of the Machine's nanotechnology. The body of the Praetorian becomes the container (although perhaps the word hive is more fitting) of a swarm of tiny drones. These creatures are a part of the Praetorian, connected directly to its mind and powered by its psychic energy, and as such are considered an extension of its self. At will, the Praetorian can unleash it, creating a terrifying cloud of destruction around itself. The swarm cannot go far from the Praetorian or take actions, but its destructive power is enough to destroy anything around it.

Swarm: The Praetorian generates a field of destruction around itself, by surrounding its body with tiny drones that take apart everything around it. Any individual within a 25 metre radius of the Praetorian suffers an attack at the start of each round, with a final attack of 250, without the need for any attack roll, and a Base Damage of 50 (THR) that can damage energy. This attack is treated as shot attack for penalties. The Praetorian cannot choose specific targets within this radius.

On the round when the Swarm is activated, the attack takes place at the Praetorian's Initiative, but on the following rounds it follows the rules for Maintained Attacks, taking place before anyone's initiative (with the exception of those that manage to Surprise the Praetorian, who get to act before this attack).

Cost: Activating this ability costs 1 Free PP, and the ability remains active for five rounds.

Commander System

These Praefectus Praetorians are equipped with a system that allows it to increase its ability as a coordinator and strategist for the Machine's troops, making it into a Control Nexus far more powerful than even Carriers.

Control Nexus: : The Praetorian has a mental link with all Machine creatures of Minor, Intermediate and Greater Varna within a 3 kilometres radius, having an influence on their behaviour and increasing their combat capabilities. This provides a +20 bonus to the Attack and Block skill of these creatures, as well as the ability to execute complex tactical manoeuvres.

This system is equivalent in many ways to a Carrier's Control Nexus, and thus the same creature cannot benefit from both bonuses even if its is withing the influence of both a Praefectus Praetorian and a Carrier.

Psychic Consumption

This system allows the Praetorian to consume the psychic energies of other creatures of The Machine to recover its energies and enhance its powers. These consumed creatures are not destroyed, and don't even suffer any damage. Instead, they simply shut down forever, like a machine that has depleted its power source.

Leech: The Praetorian can destroy at will any nearby creature of the Machine with a thought in order to recover its Free PP, at a rate of a maximum of 2 PP per round. Each PP forces the Praetorian to destroy ten Minor Varna creatures, or one Intermediate Varna creature.

PRAEFECTUS CLAUDIA DALCA

THE MACHINE (SUPREME VARNA)

Level: 10

Category: Between Worlds Special

Life Points: 275

Class: Warrior Mentalist

Str: 13 (15) **Dex:** 13 (15) **Agi:** 12 **Con:** 13 **Pow:** 4 **Int:** 12 **Wp:** 16 **Per:** 10

PhR: 100 **MR:** 35 **PsR:** 110 **VR:** 100 **DR:** 100

Initiative: 135 (200) Natural

Attack Ability: 250 (255) Living Weapon

Defence Ability: 250 (255) Living Weapon

Damage: 140 (145) Living Weapon (CUT/THR)

AT: Natural Cut 6 Imp 6 Thr 6 Heat 6 Cold 6 Ele 6 Ene 0

Psychic Projection: 200 (205)

Potential: 140

Free PP: 7

Innates: 5

Psychic Disciplines: Telepathy, Telekinesis, Physical Increase

Psychic Powers: Psychic Illusion, Mind Reading, Psychic Location, Area (Telepathy), Telekinetic Shield, Telekinetic Grapple, Ballistics, Telekinetic Flight, Increased Strength, Increased Skill, Increased Reaction

Essential Abilities: Superhuman Physical Characteristics, Supernatural Spiritual Characteristics, Physical Exemption, Unnatural Size, Zen, *Psychic Consumption*, *Psychic Extenuation*.

Powers: Living Weapon (Natural Weapon, +20 Damage, -5 AT, Variable), Systematic Mind, Vortex, Restructuring, Physical AT 6, Full Transformation, Core, Praefectus Praetorian, High Tech Enhancements, *Magic Vulnerability*.

Natural Abilities: Psychic Projection Module.

Size: 22 Medium

Regeneration: Special

Movement Value: 12

Fatigue: Tireless

Secondary Abilities: Notice 180, Search 80, Track 40, Science 200, *Tactics* 280, *Memorize* 280

Skills in italics are due to the creature's nature as part of The Machine, or due to the Praefectus Praetorian power Singular Mind. Values between brackets are due to changes in value from the powers that are usually maintained.

"The report is very accurate, but... Really? It is a killing machine, a weapon of war. You are not making our men any favours by presenting it with such a... Childish look."

General Phorcys

Claudia Dalca was born in a still peaceful Dravenor. Firstborn of a renowned military family, she was trained to honour her lineage from the day she was able to stand on her feet. As soon as she reached the required age, Claudia enlisted in the army, displaying not only good combat skills, but a gift for reading the enemy's intentions in battle and then overcoming them with risky strategies based on traps and deceit. This skill granted her a series of quick promotions, reaching the rank of commander at a surprisingly young age. But, as this was happening, the Machine was readying itself for war.

As soon as the Decade of Uprising started, Claudia was sent to one of the fronts to try and slow that unknown enemy, back when it was not considered to be the cataclysmic threat it really was. The young woman's work, having barely reached twenty years of age, was exemplar, and while her troops were still losing ground, they were the only ones that were losing slowly and with a very little loss of life. During those days, she did the impossible by slowing noticeably the advances

of the enemy. Unfortunately, this “miracle” did not last long. At a certain point, the Machine simulated a retreat to reorganize and regroup, a strategy that Claudia saw through clearly, ordering her troops to keep their positions. However, not far from her, other commanders fell directly into the trap. The massacre was brutal, and the Machine’s troops penetrated the Empire’s lines. Not knowing this, Claudia did not expect to have her position suddenly surrounded. Despite this, Claudia managed to fight until the end, and the enemy paid dearly for every life they took in that battle... Until the inevitable happened.

Claudia was defeated and captured with minimal damage. Her struggles had awoken on Mazikeen a certain interest about the young woman. Appraising her abilities, Mazikeen decided to make good use of her, and transformed her into one of its most lethal weapons. Thus did the young woman become the third Praefectus Praetorian, adopting the title of The Strategist.

For decades after her “rebirth”, Claudia remained hidden in the shadows, far from most battlefields while she helped organizing The Machine’s forces and perfected its strategies. Sometimes, her silhouette could be seen in the distance, which made her become a rumour within a rumour, a legend amongst soldiers that was never taken too seriously. Some even thought she was none other than The Mother itself.

One way or another, Claudia was not seen again until the fateful battle of Xeros. There, ironically, she fought the battalion led by her father and brother.

All were massacred.

Ever since, the Praetorian’s appearances have been few and far between, each one of them a grave defeat for the Empire of Dravenor. With only one exception, when she directly led an assault on Carre, where General Phorcys was able to make her retreat with a frontal attack led by himself. It seems that, for the first time in her life, Claudia underestimated the power and abilities of an enemy, causing her only defeat to date.

Claudia’s looks are very similar to how she was in life, as she still has the appearance of an athletic teenager with somewhat childish looks and big dark eyes. She has long hair, made of hundreds of wires and fine metallic filaments that reflect a soft, dark shine. The metal parts of her body have the appearance of some kind of gown or toga, giving her a refined look different from any other Praetorian. She is also much shorter and has a more stylized frame than other Praetorians, adding to her almost childish look.

While haughty in life, taking perhaps excessive pride on her natural gifts, this pride has only increased now that she has no moral limitations. In her absolute coldness, she looks at everything around her, even other creatures of the Machine (knowing well that they have no individuality or feelings), with absolute disdain.

Currently Claudia at the hear of the Assimilated Zones, but she constantly travels from one place to another preparing possible combat scenarios and designing (and sometimes even testing) new strategies. At times she is even present (albeit at a distance) while organizing skirmishes against the forces of Dravenor, using them to gauge the effectiveness of her tactics.

MODUS OPERANDI

Despite her incredible combat capabilities, Claudia is not so much a warrior as she is a strategist. She prefers to remain at a distance from the battlefield, controlling the movements of her troops from a safe location. She is usually accompanied by two Alpha Hounds, which are often more than enough to take out any nearby threat. However, Claudia is still always ready to fight if needed, be it due to an unexpected attack or because her hand is forced. As such, she usually keeps the Psychic Powers Increased Strength, Increased Reaction and Increased Skill always active, allowing her to react to any threat fast and with brutal force.

While, similarly to other Praetorians, her whole body is a Living Weapon, she usually prefers to use her hair as weapon, using it as combat monofilaments. When fighting several enemies, her preferred tactic is to grapple several of them with her hair and let her Hounds deal the killing blow, or use her monofilaments to do a series of chained attacks.

Claudia is cunning and a great planner. She always takes into account each possible threat, and calculates the ways to neutralize it, as well as what stratagems can be used against her plans, and the truth is, she is rarely ever wrong. Thus, causing her to fall into a trap is extremely complicated, and those who try to do so tend to find out that it was them walking into a trap, carefully manipulated by the Praetorian.

Praetorian: The Strategist is a Praetorian of The Machine, and as such she has the powers Living Weapon, Vortex, Full Transformation, Systematic Mind, Restructuring, Core and Vulnerability to Magic described in Those Who Walked Among Us.

High Tech Enhancements: Claudia benefits from the enhancements Monofilament Systems and Commander System.

TRIVIA

- She was originally human.
- Claudia retains a strange residual tic she had back when she was “alive”: whenever she is thinking about something important, she gestures with her right hand, as if she was writing.
- While she does not particularly like the other Praefectus, considering them “conceptually inferior” to herself, she specially detests Rom, who she is naturally repulsed by. Sometimes, she has caught herself thinking that, if Rom were to be destroyed, The Machine would be “a bit better”. This might have something to do with the fact that Rom was directly involved in the death of her soldiers and her capture.
- The only exception to the point before is Itanium. The Strategist feels admiration for this Praefectus, which she considers a “first among equals”.
- She likes books. She considers them an obsolete system for storing knowledge, but knowledge nonetheless. She never destroys them if she can help it.
- She feels something akin to respect towards Phorcys, considering that, with his limited resources, he has managed to delay the inevitable more than once.
- After her defeat at Carre she wants to ensure it will be her personally taking the fortress once the time is right. To date, she has made more than a hundred plans for this.
- While technically only Praetorians keep unique names, Claudia Dalcia always calls the two Alpha Hounds following her Alpha and Beta.
- Claudia Dalca has a strange relationship with Mazikeen. While she is an extension of the will of her lady, she prefers not to think about it too much.
- The soldiers of Dravenor have a special fear for her, as she is said to be more of a spectre than a machine, and they call her The Woman in Black.