

The Gobbo Who Stole Sanguinala

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Overview

After their most recent mission, the Acolytes have been granted some R&R in the Upper Hive by their Inquisitor, just in time for the Sanguinala celebrations. Amidst the festivities, however, all is not well. The scheming Red Gobbo, a mischievous and cunning gretchin, has opened a portal from Gorkamorka straight into the backroom of a manufactorum belonging to a local toymaker, Sigismund Gelt. His plan is to steal as much loot from the 'umies' as possible, having learned that gifts are especially common this time of year. Ultimately, he wants to distribute his findings to the rest of his kind in an effort to improve morale. To do so, he is sending loyal gretchin through to steal whatever they can using the manufactorum as a base. Several workers have stumbled upon the greenskins during their expeditions and have been swiftly dispatched. Their bodies, bearing large calibre bullet holes and savage choppa cuts, have been taken undercover of night cycle to various places away from the manufactorum. The Gobbo is cunning, after all.

A Celebration Interrupted

While appreciating a Sanguinala parade through one of the main Upper Hive thoroughfares, the Acolytes are alerted to a disturbance by a scream from a nearby side street. If they investigate, they find a couple of residents - merchants, by their dress - standing over the grisly remains of a worker. This is Thaddius Grohl and he has been shot to death. A Challenging (+0) Medicae or similar skill reveals that the bullet wounds are far too devastating to be caused by the usual gang autoguns. Something much larger calibre caused them.

Greenskin sluggas, even ones sized for Gretchin, take slugs of a calibre rivalling the shells of bolt weapons.

The Sanctionaries soon arrive and take charge. This is the third murder this month where the victim displayed such wounds. The victims are listed in the next section.

If the Acolytes reveal themselves as agents of the throne, the Sanctionaries gladly hand over the investigation. Sanguinala always comes with a rise in crime as a result of unrestrained revelry and stresses of the holiday and, given the nature of the killings, it really seems like something the Inquisition should investigate, don't you think?

Investigating The Murders

All three victims still have their oath-cogs (the greenskins don't know enough to recognise them as identification and didn't think to remove them). A Routine (+20) Inquiry test with the Sanctionaries will reveal their names and their occupations, or else an Acolyte can make a Challenging (+0) Tech Use to reveal the same from the cogs themselves.

Thaddius Grohl, private security enforcer for the Protector's Guild. Finding out information on where he was working requires visiting the guildhall and dealing with an adept of the Guild (Confident Personality, starting Disposition of 60) He was recently bought on as extra security for Gelt's premises for the celebration season. Acolytes can also ask around his fellow enforcers. They say that in the days before he died, he'd been making outrageous claims about seeing "ugly little creatures" sneaking about the manufactorum but hadn't been able to catch any yet. With suitable Influence tests this information can be found out from enforcer's in the guild. Otherwise, off-duty enforcers can be found in the local drinking establishments. Up here in the Upper Hive, such places are cosy, ornate affairs with table service. A far cry from the drinking holes and gang hideouts of the Lower Hive.

Octus Strivek, manufactorum worker at Gelt's Emporium. He was transporting raw goods to

the stores in the lower levels of the manufactorum (where the warp portal opens) and fell afoul of the gretchins' traps. A man with claimed connections to gangs working who occasionally bragged about the day he'd leave behind this drudgery and become a free man. If asked, his coworkers in the manufactorum assume he'd finally made good on his promises. As well as the fatal gunshots, his body displays non-fatal but debilitating burns and shrapnel wounds from the booby trapped areas around the portal.

Ada Kharchenko, Adeptus Administratum clerk. She was bringing a late supper to her wife, Roberta Kharchenko, a designer working for Gelt's Emporium. Unfortunately she stumbled upon the gretchin on her way through the complex and was killed. The Kharchenkos live in a hab block near the Emporium, within walking distance of a lesser known entrance to the lower storage levels. Roberta is obviously distraught but puts on a brave face for her children. She blames herself for working late too often to get a project finished. Lately, she is especially bitter because Gelt has been making everyone work late to make up for the missing inventory. Beyond this, she knows nothing. Her youngest, Titus, is a frail lad. He hobbles in during the interview to comfort his mother, but is plagued by a wracking cough.

Gelt's Emporium

The Emporium

Gelt's Emporium is one of the Upper Hive's most prestigious toy manufacturers in Desoleum. Despite the grim times in which the Hive finds itself, the pampered offspring of the Hive nobility and mercantile elite still enjoy a wide variety of games and toys. Gelt's is most famous for its stunningly intricate military figurines, the most popular being those depicting Desoleum's own Astra Militarum regiment, the Oathsmen Grenadiers, which are enjoyed by children and adults alike.

The Emporium refers to the large shop front which sits pride of place in one of the Upper Hive's commercial districts. The outside is built

to resemble a grand Imperial palace complete with towering gothic columns, flying buttresses and ornately carved gilt friezes. Rather than depicting heroes of the Imperium, the friezes depict all manner of toys and games - all products of Gelt's Manufactorum. Parading around outside, entertainment servitors juggle clubs and balls or perform elaborate acrobatics routines on trapezes, while others strut around on augmetically lengthened stilt-like legs, breathing fire from brightly polished brass grills. Jaunty music blares from artfully hidden speakers.

Inside, the palatial interior is brightly lit. Hoards of wealthy Hive dwellers shuffle between shelf upon shelf of extravagantly packaged toys, while exquisitely dressed shopping assistants bustle back and forth. Above, a small fleet of servo skulls carry packages to waiting customers. Efficient, dead-eyed servitors scan Oath Cogs and take payment.

In the centre of the room is a gargantuan Sanguinala display. The scene depicts the slaying of the great Primarch Sanguinius by the arch-traitor Horus, moments before the Emperor himself, resplendent in golden armour, slew the fiend. Closer inspection reveals that all the figures are actual humans in costume, standing motionless apart from the odd blink or the slight shifting of position.

Sigismund Gelt

Gelt is a large, well fed man with a ruddy face and a set of impressive, finely groomed moustaches. He has an office at the top of the Emporium overlooking the street.

Gelt is only mildly shocked to hear about the murders, and instead seems more concerned that supplies are lower than usual. His inventory is falling short and he doesn't know why. The real reason is obvious, of course: The Red Gobbo and his gang are stealing everything they can get their hands on. He makes no apologies for demanding that his workers put in extra hours to make up for the missing inventory. He also confirms that he paid the Protector's Guild for extra guards to keep an eye

on the stockroom, although doesn't know about Thaddius's sighting.

The Manufactorum

Access to Gelt's manufactorum is most easily achieved via an elevator in the back of the Emporium, access to which requires a suitably authorised Oath Cog. Before reaching the elevator, however, they must pass through the Stockroom, a vast warehouse of finished toys and other goods. Throughout this cavernous space, fulfilment servitors zip on tracked chassis. As the Acolytes enter, a servitor rolls up to a nearby shelf and a telescoping arm lifts the servitor's torso level with an upper shelf. Rather than finding a package, however, the space on the shelf is vacant. After mutely scanning back and forth over the space for a few moments, the servitor drops back down to floor level with a hiss of pneumatics, and disappears out of sight.

If the Acolytes do not get permission from Gelt beforehand, then Ordinary (+10) Stealth tests will be needed to avoid Protector Enforcers that Gelt has stationed about the place. The servitors, as the Acolytes have seen, care not for their presence unless directly interfered with.

The rest of manufactorum is split into several levels:

- The Designers' Studios and Prototyping Workshops are the topmost, spread across a series of halls and populated by designers poring over rolls of blueprints, as well as scribes hunched over datapads and cogitators keeping track of raw material inventory or manufacturing timelines. The workshops consist of individual rooms containing all manner of tools, both manual and machine, where workers bring the designs from above to life.
- The next dozen or so floors house the main Manufacturing Levels. A deafeningly noisy space filled with ancient, yet meticulously maintained, machines producing all the fine products seen in the Emporium above. Human workers and dumb labourer servitors bustle about, all intensely concentrating on their particular role.

This combination of noise and obviously intense work means getting any information out of the workers is particularly difficult, and all social tests are at a -20 penalty, but if they do manage to strike up a conversation the employees may tell of odd goings on in the deeper levels of stores - feelings of being watched, or hearing chattering, skittering noises in the gloom.

- The lowest levels of the manufactorum are reserved for the Storerooms of raw materials, spare equipment and other things necessary for the efficient running of the facility. It is in the storerooms that Octus was working when he stumbled upon one of the gobbos' booby traps. Navigating this warren of corridors and rooms is tricky, but eventually the Acolytes should come upon the room in which the gretchins' portal opens.

The Red Gobbo's Den

The Red Gobbo's gretchin comrades have set up a small den in an abandoned storeroom. It is here that their warp portal opens, which happens every day or so. Once opened, the portal remains for several hours - enough time for the gretchin to disperse into the manufactorum, fill their sacks with toys and return. In order to keep their operation secure, they have laid several crude traps. In order to spot them, a Difficult (-10) Awareness test must be made.

- A series of explosive traps. These consist of crude anti-personnel mines or tripwires attached to dangling stikkbombs, and are arrayed throughout the corridors surrounding the den. If triggered by an Acolyte, they deal 2d10 explosive damage with a 2 metre blast radius. This damage is halved on a successful Challenging (+0) Agility test.
- Tripwires connected to bundles of tools and assorted scrap suspended above the ground. If triggered, the bundle drops to the ground. This can be heard by anyone

in the surrounding area and alerts the grots to the presence of the Acolytes.

- A gretchin ambush. Several gretchin are left behind at any one time to keep watch. Once the Acolytes draw closer to the den, a number of gretchin will spring out of hidden compartments and attack. If the group is reduced to a single gretchin, the survivor will try to run and alert the others.

A successful Hard (-10) Navigate test while making their way through the storeroom results in the Acolytes encountering the gang of gobbos as they prepare for the Red Gobbo's return, opening the possibility of setting up an ambush of their own. A failure means that by the time the Acolytes arrive, the portal is open, and the gobbos are in the middle of offloading their most recent "acquisitions" through it under supervision of the Red Gobbo himself.

A number of gretchin are armed with weapons - most with grot blastas and a smaller number with larger sluggas, who put up a fight long enough for their unarmed comrades to fling the last of the stolen gifts through the portal and flee. The Red Gobbo also stays and fights with his own slugga, but if required he will use his Touched By The Fates ability to avoid death and escape. Aside from this extra ability, use the Grot statblock to represent the Red Gobbo.

If an Acolytes decides to follow the gretchin through the portal they will find themselves far from their original location, in the middle of the Red Gobbo's hideout. Needless to say, this is a much perilous position to be in, and getting back home is an adventure in itself. Otherwise, a couple of stikkbombs thrown back through the portal serve as a parting gift from the gobbos.

Just being discovered by the Acolytes, a force too great to dispatch and dump like the three previous victims, is enough to put a stop to the operation, and the gobbos do not return.

If the Acolytes met with Gelt and agreed to help him he acknowledges that he is in their debt, and offers his not inconsiderable clout with the Upper Hive trade guilds in return. In such a case, the Acolytes gain 2 Influence.

In any event, for finding and thwarting the Red Gobbo's plans, each Acolyte receives 300 XP.