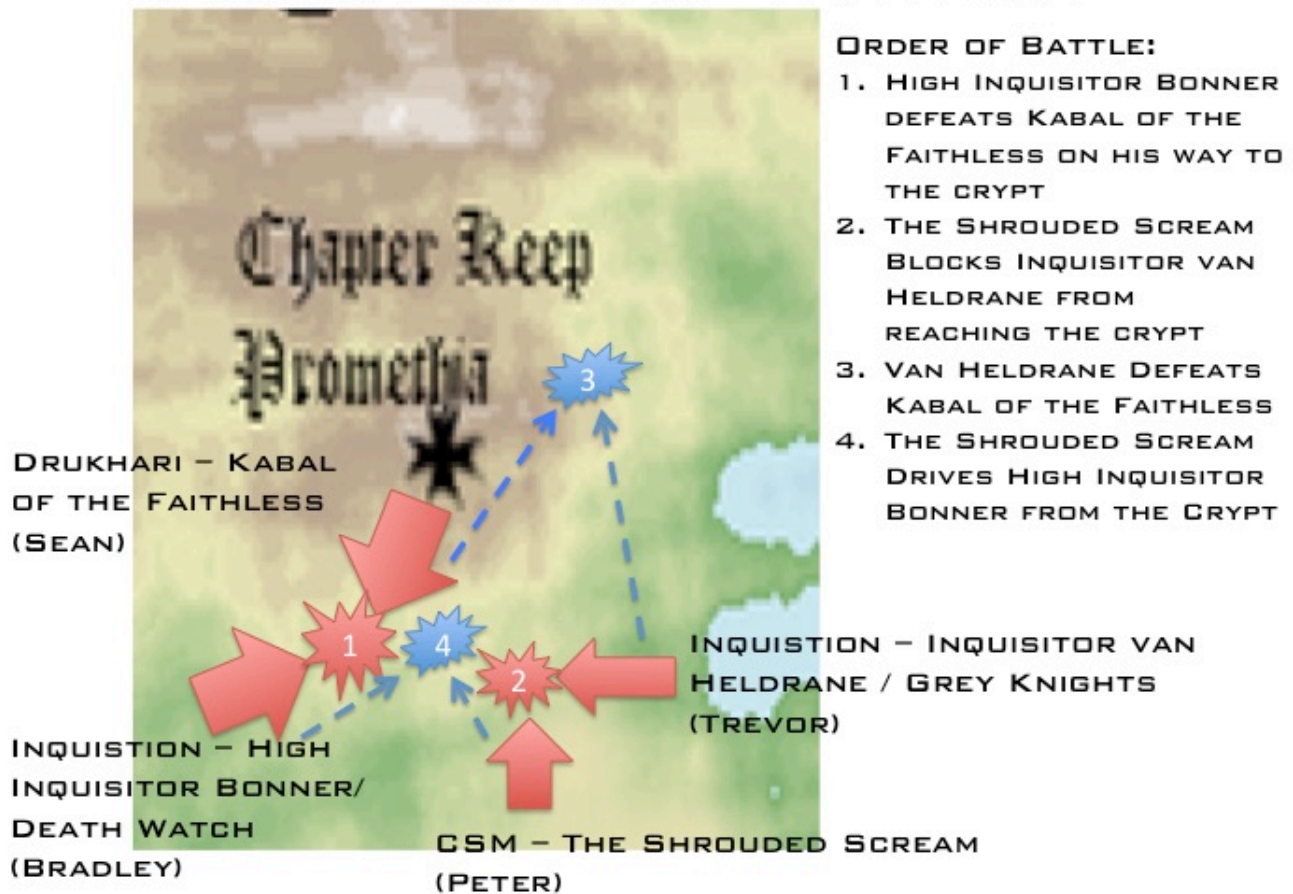


PYRRIAH CAMPAIGN - FALL 2017 CENTRAL THEATER

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Archon Vayre was not easily perturbed. The Drukhari in general were inured to the unbelievable, and his Kabal of the Faithless had knowledge of dark secrets that would make bleed the ears of most humans. Yet, his time on Pyrrhia had begun to open his mind to possibilities that made him question the workings of the universe.

He had opened the webway portal under the Chapter Keep on a quest. Vayre knew things that others of his kind were too ignorant to dare conceive. He knew that those who appeared strong and invincible were in fact frail, like mighty oaks that rot from the inside out. He knew that if enough pain and pressure were applied, they would collapse upon themselves. He knew that the aeldari and drukhari ran and cowered, seeking to save their souls from being consumed by She That Thirsts, when they should instead shove a dagger into the Dark Prince's throat. All that was needed was the instrument mighty enough to strike that blow. That instrument, Vayre believed, was buried deep below the Chapter Keep on Pyrrhia.

But he was surprised. What he sought in the depths of the Chapter Keep was not the instrument he expected. Instead he found something else. A fragment of something older. A hint of something that

PYRRIAH CAMPAIGN - FALL 2017 CENTRAL THEATER

could not easily be accounted for in the way that Vayre understood the universe. Pyrriah had more secrets than Vayre had expected. Vayre realized that the instrument he sought was not a single thing, but rather was scattered across many places in the dark places of Pyrriah, like flotsam left in rock pools when the tide regresses. His quest was reborn as a drive to put together those pieces to forge a weapon to unseat the Dark Prince.

Vayre gathered his Kabal and set off for the steppes to the south of the Chapter Keep, where the mountains of the Central peaks are riddled with ancient monasteries built by the humans on the bones of much older ruins. His journey had not gone long when he encountered opposition. Although Vayre did not know (or care), his foe was a Death Watch taskforce lead by High Inquisitor Bonner. Both Vayre and the High Inquisitor shared a common goal – to penetrate the crypts beneath a particular Templar monastery fortress in the mountains paths on the way to the Chapter Keep. There both hoped to find a weapon of an ancient age that could be wielded against Chaos.



Vayre had not expected much resistance from the human warband, but his forces were not at full power and the humans fought with unexpected skill and determination. Twice Vayre's Kabal fell upon the Death Watch and twice were his blows turned back. With great frustration Vayre retreated with his forces northwards towards the Chapter Keep, to regroup before his return to the crypt.

There on his return to the Chapter Keep, Vayre again clashed with human forces, which seemed to be everywhere on Pyrriah now, like ants disturbed from a hill that was kicked open. But unlike ants, the humans struck hard. Knights in grey metal with control over the fires of the immaterium. Soldiers of discipline in crude metal boxes, which nonetheless put forth a barrage of fire into the Drukhari Kabal sufficient to deplete its already thin numbers. Enough for now, thought Vayre. These firefights were distraction and wasted resources that the Kabal presently did not have. It was time to withdraw and refocus. Vayre must conserve his time and attention to concentrate on matters of great significance – to this world of Pyrriah, and perhaps many others worlds beside.



Meanwhile, High Inquisitor Bonner and his Death Watch team descended into the crypt. Precise stonework became worn and misshapen the deeper he went. It was like entering the entrails of a vast beast made of rock. As he and his Death Watch team explored the darkened labyrinth, shapes and shadows moved among the columns and archways, always present but always out of sight. He soon discovered that they were not alone. An old enemy had

arrived before him: heretic Astartes of the Night Lords Legion. They were called the Shrouded Screams, and they had come to Pyrriah to hunt. And the hunting ground was rich.

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Their first prey had been a contingent of Scions and Grey Knights that were on the road to the Chapter Keep – those same forces that Vayre was to encounter as he retreated to the northern passes. The Shrouded Scream had sought to ambush the Grey Knights and block their passage. Inquisitor von Heldrane was the leader of these forces and had come to Pyrriah on a hunt of his own – a search for an artifact his old mentor had believed would destroy the chaos god known as Slaanesh. His mentor had been a man of hard faith, who demanded everything of those who would follow him, and even more of himself. This opening led to his seduction by the very foe he sought to slay, and Slaanesh reveled in devouring his soul. Now von Heldrane sought to do what his mentor failed to do – find the instrument to destroy the dark god and to purge mankind and the world of Slaanesh forever.



But von Heldrane was not alone among the Imperium with an interest in this artifact. High Inquisitor Bonner had also been a student of the same mentor. He had rose higher in the ranks than von Heldrane, a fact in which the High Inquisitor took great satisfaction. Now fate (or something akin to fate) had brought both men to Pyrriah and on the same course to find what had destroyed their mentor.

Instead the Shrouded Scream had blocked von Heldrane's path and forced a detour to the north. Arvex Enshaden, the Shrouded Lord, was curious as to what drew the attention of so many to this crypt? His warpack of possessed heretics descended first and fastest into the depths of the crypt, and thus were able to spring a trap on the High Inquisitor and his Death Watch contingent. Bolter fire and battle screams soon echoed in the tight confines of the stone pathways and tunnels. Blades flashed and blood stained the stone corridors.

In the end, Arvex remained as master of the crypt. Bonner retreated to the surface, gravely wounded. Arvex explored his new realm and wound his way to the bottommost chamber of the crypt. What he found there was most interesting indeed.

