

THE VERDIGRIS HOST

Unofficial Fan Dossier · Anvil of War

„We rot, that we may not burn. We watch before we wound. We carry what we broke. We ask no eye to see us.“

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CORE IDENTITY

Progenitor Legion	Emperor's Children
Founding	c. 860.M30 — No founding; a sub-host of the III Legion, never disbanded
Homeworld (name)	Lachrimae
Homeworld type	Penitent (origin, not a world class)
Combat doctrine	Reconnaissance & guerrilla
Allegiance	Traitor (one of the nine Traitor Legions)
Chapter strength	Splinter chapter / very small
One-sentence definition	A sub-host of the Emperor's Children that fled its own hunger into Nurgle's slow embrace, and now wages patient, hidden war with no god's approval and no hope of absolution.

The four pillars

The Slow Hand

The Host never ends a war quickly. It poisons supply, turns the population, and waits. A victory won in a night is distrusted as a victory won for display.

The Unseen Eye

Scouts form the true core of the Chapter, and every brother serves among them for a full decade. Command decisions are built on reports that are days old and quietly confirmed twice.

The Borne Weight

Wounds are not repaired to look whole. Plates are patched, scars are left open to the air, and relics are kept in the tarnished state they were found in. Restoration counts as vanity.

The Refused Mirror

No brother may look at his own reflection. Lenses are fogged and polished surfaces are left to dull. The Chapter holds that the Legion fell through a mirror, and that it can fall the same way again.

Comparison vs. progenitor legion

Aspect	Progenitor legion	This chapter
Patron	Slaanesh	Nurgle, sworn in penance
Ideal	Perfection and sensation	Endurance
Warfare	Spectacle and excess	Hidden, protracted, patient
Armour	Ornate and lacquered	Tarnished and patched
Relation to the Primarch	Adored or feared	Mourned from a distance
Organisation	Fractured warbands	Codex-shaped companies

Senses	Deliberately heightened	Deliberately dulled

Further core facts

Fact	Value
Progenitor	Emperor's Children
Founding	None; a sub-host of the III Legion, never disbanded
Homeworld	Lachrimae, a penitent world taken in the Eye's margins
Fortress-Monastery	The Weeping Cloister
Codex Compliance	71 %
Battle Cry	“Slowly, and without end!”
Chapter Strength	187 Heretic Astartes

CORE IDENTITY (CONTINUED)

Forms of Address / Title Cascade

Level	Designation	Context of use
Single brother	Patinate	Self-reference; earned at the Drowning Font
The Chapter	The Phoenician's Tarnish	Among themselves and before Legion heralds
Ceremonial title	The Verdigris Host, Penitents of Lachrimae, Last Muster of the Third, Keepers of the Slow Mirror	Oaths, rites, declarations of war

Chapter Maxim

We rot, that we may not burn. This teaches endurance. Neophytes learn that decay is slow and hunger is fast, and that the Host chose the slower death because it leaves time for penance.

We watch before we wound. This teaches patience. A neophyte lies in the Lachrimae fens for nine days without moving before he may lift a weapon, and he is told that this is where the Chapter's doctrine begins.

We carry what we broke. This teaches remembrance. Every Patinate bears the name of someone he harmed in the Legion's excesses. He does not ask forgiveness. He only keeps the name.

We ask no eye to see us. This teaches humility, which is the Host's hardest virtue. Neophytes are taught that the Legion's old sin was the wish to be seen, and that concealment is the first discipline against it.

LORE & HISTORY

Founding history

The Host has never considered itself a warband. Its annals hold that it is the 3rd Muster of the Legion's 71st Company, still in formation, still numbered, and never released from Legion service. After the Legion scattered in the Eye, the Muster marched on intact under Lord Commander Theodric Varr. Around it, brothers were tearing themselves apart for new sensations, and Varr saw where that road ended.

In the Eye's margins he found Lachrimae, a world of flagellants, and offered his brothers to Nurgle. His aim was to be kept from consummation rather than to be exalted. The Chaplains teach that Grandfather's rot is a brake on Slaanesh's appetite. Nurgle's cults consider the bargain insincere. They are probably right.

Homeworld description

Lachrimae is a drowned world of salt fens under a bruise-coloured sky. Its population descends from Imperial flagellants who were cut off when the Eye swelled over them. They still whip themselves at dusk, and they now pray to the Host.

Sorrow-eels grow as thick as a man's thigh. Aspirants catch them barehanded, and their anaesthetic slime is rendered into the balm that dulls a Patinate's senses. **Lanternmoths** swarm towards any light and die in it. Neophytes are made to watch them until they understand why the Host fights unlit.

Chapter cult

The Host worships Nurgle the way a man with a fever holds on to cold iron. It does not seek rebirth or plenty. It seeks delay. The Chaplains deny that the Grandfather loves them, and teach that he is merely patient enough to be useful. Rites are held in silence, and no hymn may be beautiful.

Gene-seed quirks

The Legion's heightened senses persist, and the Host suppresses them with sorrow-eel balm. A Patinate's skin turns grey-green and cold. His wounds weep a thin copper fluid and never fully close. His Omophagea is atrophied, and he tastes almost nothing.

Curse Progression

Stage 1 — The Glint: - One small patch of armour polished back to bright purple. - The rebreather loosened so he can smell the fens. - Lingering in cover too long, watching the enemy with evident pleasure.

The Chaplain records the date and assigns a second brother to scout alongside him. No one reproaches him. The patch is re-tarnished with fen-salt that same night.

Stage 2 — The Burnish: - The polished patches spread across pauldron and helm. - The rebreather is removed entirely, and fresh scent-cuts appear along the jaw. - He breaks cover to be seen before he

strikes.

The Master of Penance, a Chaplain, keeps such brothers on the Slow Stair. There he tallies each new bright patch and each deliberate exposure, and reads the tally to the brother at dawn.

This is the last stage from which brothers have returned. Few do, and the Chapter records each return by name in the Green Scriptorium.

Stage 3 — The Shining: the brother has turned back towards Slaanesh. The Chapter calls this condition *the Shining*.

He is not executed at once. He is sent ahead of the Host into the enemy's sight, where he spends himself. The Host considers this the only mercy it has left to give.

The Lost Company

The name. The formation is called the Burnished. In the Host's idiom, to burnish something is to undo penance, making bright again what time had rightly dulled.

The removed feature. The penitent's cowl of undyed fen-cloth is taken away. On a brother in good standing it hides the helm and marks his refusal to be seen. A bare, gleaming helmet tells every onlooker that this brother wants to be looked at.

The added equipment. A drip-censer is set into the backpack exhaust vent, fed by the power plant's waste heat. It burns bog-resin continuously and trails green smoke. A Burnished brother can hide from no one.

FOUNDING

Distinction

Outsiders often take the Host for a Death Guard offshoot, given its allegiance and its patience. The resemblance is convergent development, not gene-seed kinship. Every Patinate carries the gene-seed of Fulgrim's line, and every one of them knows exactly what that inheritance asks of him.

HOMEWORLD AND FORTRESS-MONASTERY

Fortress-Monastery Locations

Location	Function	Distinctive feature
The Hall of Tarnished Mirrors	Remembrance	Hundreds of mirrors turned face to the wall, each with a harmed name scratched into its back
The Drowning Font	Initiation	Black fen-water under a single dripping pipe, smelling of eel-slime and copper
The Sealed Lung	Hidden vault	Breathing sounds behind a door no outsider has passed

The Slow Stair	Watch post for the afflicted	Stone steps worn into troughs, and censers burning bog-resin
The Green Scriptorium	Archive	Parchments furred with verdigris, read by touch in darkness

COMPANIES

Companies

Hadrion
Role: Intercessors

Hero name: Aurelian Abranxe

Hero title/epithet: Sergeant

Aurelex
Role: Intercessors

Hero name: Cassander Lucullus

Hero title/epithet: Sergeant

Heliakon
Role: Hellblasters

Hero name: Aristaeus Melanthor

Hero title/epithet: Sergeant

Polydoros
Role: Terminatoren

Hero name: Serapion Vairosean

Hero title/epithet: Veteranen-Sergeant

Vespasior
Role: Scouts

Hero name: Savona Thalassar

Hero title/epithet: Veteranen-Sergeant

COMPANIES (CONTINUED)

I — The Last Muster

Doctrine. The Last Muster holds 28 veterans who remember the Legion before the Eye. Terminator squad Polydoros, under Veteran Sergeant Serapion Vairosean, emerges only once a target has been isolated for weeks. The Dreadnought Callixion is interred among them.

II — The Fen-Walkers

Doctrine. Captain Kasperos Charmosian's company moves by night, travels through sewers and marsh, and rarely fights in the same place twice. Hellblaster squad Heliakon, under Sergeant Aristaeus Melanthor, breaks whatever the others cannot reach.

Hero: Sergeant Aurelian Abranxe, Intercessor squad Hadrion.

> *If they hear us, we have already lost the argument.*
> *— Aurelian Abranxe*

On Morvenhollow, Abranxe held Hadrion under a flooded drainage culvert for six days. On the seventh he surfaced in the governor's cellar.

III — The Stillwater

Doctrine. The Stillwater specialises in contaminated wells, collapsed bridges and quiet killings of officials. It is reckoned the most patient company, and suspected of being the most pious.

Hero: Sergeant Cassander Lucullus, Intercessor squad Aurelex.

> *The Grandfather is a slow teacher. So am I.*
> *— Cassander Lucullus*

Lucullus once let a garrison believe itself unbesieged for four months while its water turned. Then he walked in unopposed.

IV — The Salt-Bearers

Doctrine. The Salt-Bearers wage war on logistics: convoys, depots and fuel. The Predator Aurellion runs with them, its hull deliberately left tarnished beneath the fen-cloth.

V — The Weepers

Doctrine. The Weepers are the smallest company and the last reserve. They garrison the Weeping Cloister and guard the Slow Stair.

Scouts — The Unlit

Doctrine. The Unlit move among heretic cults, stoke uprisings, and decide which cults are allowed to live.

> *Every cult thinks it found us.*
> *— Savona Thalassar*

Thalassar spent three years as a cult's hidden prophet before handing it to the Salt-Bearers.

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

Characters

Kasperos Charmosian
Title/role: Captain

Solomon Narkissos
Title/role: Lieutenant

Apollonar Phaedron
Title/role: Chaplain

Callixion
Title/role: Dreadnought

NOTABLE CHARACTERS (CONTINUED)

Lord Penitent Evander Ossuaire, Master of the Host

Ossuaire leads all 187. He is gaunt beneath grey-green Mark IV plate and wears a double cowl, and he has not spoken above a whisper in two centuries. He carries a rust-pitted power maul and a bolt pistol whose bronze has long since turned green.

> *We are not saved. We are only late.*
> *— Evander Ossuaire*

When a herald of the Legion demanded that the Host return, Ossuaire gave the herald his hospitality for a week. Neither of them spoke about the demand again.

Lord Commander Theodric Varr, Founder

Varr led the Muster into penance. The Host remembers him in plate stripped of all ornament, carrying a single unadorned power sword. The Green Scriptorium records that he died of a wound he refused to let the Apothecaries close.

> *I would sooner be eaten slowly by a patient god than swallowed whole by a hungry one.*
> *— Theodric Varr*

Captain Kasperos Charmosian, II Company

Charmosian commands the strike force described here. He carries a plasma pistol and a chainsword whose teeth have been filed blunt, so that it cuts slowly. He is precise and tired, and suspected of the Glint.

On Tessaly Drowned he spent a year bleeding a Slaaneshi uprising dry before striking its temple. He struck it at the exact moment its supplies ran out.

Lieutenant Solomon Narkissos, II Company

Narkissos is young by the Host's standards and fiercely devout. He wears a cowl stitched from the robes of Lachrimae flagellants and fights with a combat blade and a bolt rifle. His name weighs on him, and he knows it.

> *A mirror is only a slower blade.*
> *— Solomon Narkissos*

Chaplain Apollonar Phaedron, Master of Penance

> *I count your sins aloud so you cannot love them in private.*
> *— Apollonar Phaedron*

He brought three brothers back from the Burnish. He sent eleven into the Shining.

CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns

The Drowning of Saint Irael's Choir

Era: 812.M41

Enemy: The Exquisite Throng cult

Duration: 14 months

Outcome: Cult erased, world lost to plague

A Slaaneshi choir had seized a cathedral-world and was broadcasting its rapture over the vox. The

Stillwater silenced it well by well. When the last singer stopped, no one was left alive to hear him. The Host counts this campaign as a victory. It records it as a sin.

The Unlit Crown

Era: 911.M41

Enemy: The Crowned Uprising, a mortal rebellion

Duration: 3 years

Outcome: Uprising turned, then abandoned

Thalassar's predecessors raised a heretic revolt against the planetary lords of Hesk Varinel. When the rebels began to worship the Host, it withdrew and left them to the Imperial Guard. The Chaplains still argue over whether this was penance or cowardice.

The Salt Wick Rising

Era: 998.M41

Enemy: The Children of the Wick cult

Duration: 8 months

Outcome: Unresolved

A Slaaneshi cult on the moon Salt Wick offered the Host what it called “return”. Charmosian's company is still fighting there. Three brothers have entered the Glint since landing.

THE FLAW

The Host has never left the Legion. That is its oldest pride, and its present trap.

Its muster-roll is still carried under Legion numbering, and it still answers the Legion's heralds with hospitality, as custom requires. Those heralds have returned four times this century. Each time they carried the same summons: rejoin the Phoenician's hosts and give up the Grandfather. Ossuaire has neither answered nor refused. He believes a refusal would make the Host a warband like any other and end the fiction it lives by. He also believes an acceptance would send every brother into the Shining within a decade.

The officers do not agree on this. Charmosian quietly wants the break made. Narkissos wants the summons burned in public. Phaedron keeps a count of how many brothers slip into the Glint in the weeks after each herald leaves. The numbers climb every time.

The Nurgle cults of the region regard the Host as a guest who never pays. They have begun to withhold recruits from the Lachrimae fens, and the Scout company has not been at full strength for 60 years.

Nothing has been decided. The next herald is expected.

SHORT STORY

The Candle in the Cistern

Salt Wick smelled of perfume. It came up through the grates at night, sweet and rotten, and it went on long after the cult had stopped burning its incense. Aurelian Abranxe breathed it through a rebreather sealed with eel-slime and still tasted it at the back of his throat.

Squad Hadrion lay along the lip of the cistern. The water below was black and still. Above, in the cult's pleasure-hall, someone was singing.

“Eleven voices,” murmured Savona Thalassar beside him. The Scout sergeant's cloak had rotted to the colour of the stone. “Their prophet is the twelfth. She sings lower.”

“Then we wait for the twelfth.”

They waited. It was the one thing the Host did well, and in private Abranxe sometimes thought it was the only thing.

At the second hour, Captain Kasperos Charmosian came down the drainage shaft without a sound, followed by Lieutenant Solomon Narkissos. The captain's cowl hung loose. On the curve of his left vambrace was a small bright patch, a finger's width of purple polished back through the green.

Abranxe saw it. Narkissos saw him see it.

Nobody said anything.

“She's offered terms,” Charmosian said. His voice on the squad channel was dry. “A cult-herald came to the Salt-Bearers' lines at dusk. They say they know what we are. They say the Phoenician has not forgotten his sons.”

“They say that to every host they meet,” Narkissos said.

“Yes.” Charmosian looked up at the grate, at the light moving behind it. “She says she can give us back our senses. Just for a night. To remember.”

The singing rose. It was beautiful. Abranxe had forgotten that anything could be.

“Sergeant Lucullus reports the wells poisoned on the eastern side,” Narkissos said. “In four days, the district drinks. We don't need to go up at all.”

“In four days,” Charmosian said, “there will be children drinking too.”

That was the Host's arithmetic, and it had never balanced. Abranxe carried a name scratched into his knee-plate: Irael, a choir-boy from a cathedral the Stillwater had silenced before he was born. He did not know the boy's face. He knew exactly the size of the letters.

“We go up,” Charmosian said.

Narkissos turned. “Captain.”

“We go up, Lieutenant. Quietly. We kill the singers and we leave the wells to the Chaplain's judgement.”

“The wells are already poisoned.”

“Then the Chaplain's judgement will be brief.”

They went up through the grate. Hadrion moved as the fens had taught them, weight low, each step tested. The hall above was lit with a thousand candles, and the lanternmoth part of Abranxe's mind flinched from them.

The cultists did not scream. They had no time to. Hadrion's bolt rifles coughed through suppressors packed with fen-cloth, and the singing broke off voice by voice. Eleven. Abranxe counted as he killed. It was a Stage 1 habit, the Chaplain had once told him, counting for the pleasure of the number, and he made himself stop at nine.

The prophet stood on the dais in a gown the colour of the Legion as it had been. She was not afraid.

“You're so dull,” she said to Charmosian. Her voice was low and warm. “Look at you. You were the most beautiful things in the galaxy.”

Charmosian did not raise his pistol.

Abranxe watched the captain's hand. He watched the bright patch on the vambrace, and saw how the candlelight found it and held it. It was the only thing in the room that shone back.

“Captain,” Narkissos said.

“I know,” said Charmosian.

“Captain.”

“I *know*.”

The prophet smiled and stepped forward. She reached out, as if she meant to touch the cowl and lift it back.

Thalassar shot her from the gallery. There was one flat report, and she folded down onto the dais with her hand still outstretched.

For a while no one moved. The candles went on burning. Somewhere outside, in the district, a bell began to ring for the night watch, as it had rung every night of the eight months the Host had spent on Salt Wick.

Charmosian knelt and pulled a fold of her gown over her face. It was a small, careful gesture. Abranxe could not tell whether it was mercy or whether the captain simply could not bear to look at her any longer.

“The wells,” Narkissos said.

Charmosian stood. He rubbed his thumb once across the bright patch on his vambrace, slowly, as a man touches a scar.

“Tell Phaedron,” he said, “that I will come to the Stair when we are home.”

He did not say which of them should decide about the wells. He walked back down into the cistern, and his squad followed him, and behind them the candles burned down one by one until the hall was dark.

In four days the district drank. No one wrote down what followed.