

ACUITOR MECH-ASSASSIN

"We still have no explanation for the death of the passenger. The only witness claims the void-lock unexpectedly opened just as that poor soul walked nearby, while the outer lock was also open. For both to be open is impossible when the auspex registers open void against the hull, yet it happened. I doubt we will ever know why he was so desperate to leave that system, though I am relieved he did pay in advance."

—Captain Artesia Carnelline, *Killian's Prize*

Killers come in all sizes and shapes, some silent and subtle, others brazen, some clad in flesh, some in cloth, and some in steel. There are countless orders dedicated to the art of death in the Calixis Sector, and one among them is the Acuitor Set of the Lathes, less formally called the Mech-Assassins. These executioners are answerable only to Magisters Samadhi of their own order, and usually move according to their masters' will without scrutiny, hidden beneath heavy red robes. Though most are trained in the art of stealth, initiates of the Acuitor Set often infiltrate in plain sight; after all, the Priesthood of Mars is a wholly inscrutable order to all but the most knowledgeable outsiders, and even the greatest citizens across the Calixis Sector do well to treat these strange, mechanical half-men with reverence and fear. It is rare for lay folk to question the actions of even a lowly initiate of the Adeptus Mechanicus, odd or arcane as his behaviours may be, and so the Acuitors pass, seen but ignored. To anyone but the great lords of the Machine Cult, and certain individual Inquisitors with close ties to the Adeptus Mechanicus (or bitter enemies within it), nothing distinguishes an Acuitor Mech-Assassin from the shuffling, augmented, and veiled ranks of Tech-Priests who fulfil the innumerable duties that allow the Sector to grind forward one more day. Nothing, at least, until it is far too late. It is, in no small part, this anonymity that makes the Acuitor Set so very deadly.

Though the truth of the origins of the Acuitor Set is scattered throughout the Lathe Worlds like scraps of data disrupted with an ferromagnetic purge, some shadowy records still remain. During the days of the Angevin Crusade, a pious Magos by the name of Samadhi led his modest forces to several key victories in the Mechanicus' grand campaign against the Adrantians in what would eventually become the Calixis Sector. After the Grant of the Lathes in 380.M39, when the Lathe Worlds were granted to the Cult Mechanicus for their efforts in the Crusade, Samadhi used his new-wrought influence to form a secret organisation. Some stories say that this was with the tacit permission of the already-powerful Lords Dragon, based on a promise of future service to their cause. He then trained and dedicated the members of this sub-cult to the art of eliminating the enemies of the Ommissiah. Samadhi established the hidden fortresses scattered throughout the realm of the Lathes, such as Rasamal on Lathe-Hesh and Tumala in the heart of the shrouded Panopticon, in which his disciples could be sharpened into perfect tools of the Ommissiah and terrifying instruments of death.

TALENT: COGS WITHIN COGS

Prerequisites: Int 35

An Acuitor Mech-Assassin who interfaces with any machine may make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**. If he succeeds, he may pre-set that machine to activate, deactivate, or follow another such simple protocol within its usual repertoire, at either a given time within the next 24 hours or upon his remote command, provided that he is within a number of kilometres equal to his Intelligence Bonus of the machine when he wishes to activate it. The Acuitor must choose the machine's action upon making his Tech-Use Test, and makes any other necessary Tests (such as Security to bypass a guarded cogitator's internal defences or Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) to decipher an ancient device's function) while programming the action.

TALENT: WHISPER OF SAMADHI

Prerequisites: Int 35, Mimic, Deceive

Acuitor Mech-Assassins are consummate infiltrators, and while they have little trouble passing as normal Tech-Priests when dealing with commoners across the Sector, their targets are hardly limited to those outside of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Part of the ancient data tracks of Samadhi helps them to overcome this problem, however. When dealing with other Tech-Priests, an Acuitor may lace portions of the Secret Archive of Samadhi into his binaric cant, subtly scrambling the judgement of the listener. As such, when dealing with other Tech-Priests, Acuitor Mech-Assassins may use their Intelligence Characteristic instead of their Fellowship when using the Deceive Skill, and may use the Mimic Talent to copy the subtleties of the vocal codes and ciphers of any Tech-Priest they impersonate with it.

It is whispered that, one day, Samadhi himself vanished into the depths of the archive of Tumala, perhaps finally betrayed by the frailty of flesh, or perhaps becoming one with the ancient cogitators contained in the fortress. No matter the circumstances of his departure, Samadhi's disciples rallied around the data-tracts that the first Grand Magister of the Acuitor Set left in his wake. His adherents believe that these data-tracts, based on recordings of his own cogitations, contain his ultimate scheme—a plan in which all disciples participate, but that none fully understand. Decanting his stored knowledge into their own minds, the agents of the Acuitor Set followed in their patron's footsteps and tirelessly hunted any they saw as obstacles to the Adeptus Mechanicus. Starting with the first disciples to succeed the patron of the Acuitor Set, all those who have claimed the title of Magister within the organisation have taken on the cognomen "Magister Samadhi" upon their ascension to this elevated rank, and through them, Samadhi's name has become death itself.

In this day and age, the Acuitor Set has quietly expanded, and though its members are still fleetingly rare, there are several worlds upon which they recruit those gifted in treading the Omnisiah's darker paths. Most of the recruits are already seasoned Tech-Priests, those who have already had to call upon their unique skills to slay their foes, either because of battlefield appointments, poor luck, or a logical reason that required violent conflict. After passing rigorous trials, recruits are infused with the data-tracks of the order's long-missing founder. Though recruits remain individuals, each carries a part of the vast, calculating mind that spun the Acuitor Set into being. With the knowledge contained in the ancient data-tracks, all Acuitor Mech-Assassins can act according to a single, immense plan without ever setting eyes on other agents after their training or even grasping the true extent of the design. The labours of all become one in the shadows, casting the grim silhouette of Magister Samadhi over the Calixis Sector long ages after his disappearance.

So it is that these disguised agents roam the Sector, maintaining voidships, repairing cogitators, unjamming weapons, and occasionally slaughtering their unsuspecting prey. The methods by which a Mech-Assassin can kill are varied; some value a clean kill at a distance, while others prefer to slay with elaborately created traps or carefully scripted malfunctions. There are also those who like to feel the "wet-iron" of their victims run in crimson rivulets down their bladed mechadendrites. Many Acuitors also train themselves to enter a state of terrible frenzy on command, flooding their minds with the Samadhi data-tracks that it might guide their movements in the thick of battle. This practice makes them fearless in the knowledge that all proceeds according to the Grand Magister's plan. These counterpoints—clinical, razor-sharp forethought, and savage battle-fury—balance to make a fully trained Acuitor Mech-Assassin one of the deadliest individuals the Lathes have ever honed.

In all cases, however, the sharpest weapon an Acuitor possesses is his mind. Whenever possible, an Acuitor elaborately plans a kill, running simulation after simulation in his augmented cranium and including a wide array of factors that few without the gifts of the Omnisiah could effectively consider. He might stalk his target for months or years at a time, gathering ever more information to be filed away for his grim purpose. An Acuitor Mech-Assassin's honed, clicking mind allows him to utilise nearly anything as a lethal weapon; steam pipes become a scalding trap to an unwary passer-by, a firearm becomes a time-bomb for its user, and an ancient cogitator becomes a shadowy maze from which a known Heretek's mind cannot escape, even as his body sits helpless before it. Even if he cannot kill with his surroundings, an Acuitor might depressurise a voidship's cabin or redirect a reactor's vent into a nearby air duct, all to force an enemy into a vulnerable position. Infinite possibilities for murder unfold before a member of the Acuitor Set, and finding the best one for an enemy of the Omnisiah is simply his role in the great Quest for Knowledge.

BECOMING AN ACUITOR MECH-ASSASSIN

Tech-Priests who are chosen to become Acuitors are pulled from across the Lathes and beyond, and instructed in secret fortresses scattered throughout the Calixis Sector, such as Tumala and Rasamal. Most candidates are those who have proven both faithful and capable of using the skills of the Adeptus Mechanicus to deadly effect. To become an Acuitor is to become a part of a pattern greater than oneself, as all members of the Set mentally carry the data-tracks of Magister Samadhi, which guide them to the targets of their wrath and aid them in making short work of those who oppose the Lathes. Those who can survive the weight of the data-tracks and even begin to decipher the ancient, inscrutable memories, become killers of the greatest calculable efficiency and ruthlessness.

Required Career: Tech-Priest

Alternate Rank: Rank 2 or Higher (500 xp)

Requirements: Logic

Benefits: Cogs Within Cogs (Talent)



ACUITOR MECH-ASSASSIN ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Concealment	100	Skill	—
Contortionist	100	Skill	—
Deceive	100	Skill	—
Demolition	100	Skill	—
Security	100	Skill	—
Silent Move	100	Skill	—
Sleight of Hand	100	Skill	—
Shadowing	100	Skill	—
Tracking	100	Skill	—
Arms Master	100	Talent	BS 30, Basic Weapon Training (any two)
Blind Fighting	100	Talent	Per 30
Deadeye Shot	100	Talent	BS 30
Marksman	100	Talent	BS 35
Mimic	100	Talent	—
Orthoproxy	100	Talent	—
Paranoia	100	Talent	—
Quick Draw	100	Talent	—
Sure Strike	100	Talent	WS 30
Silent Move +10	100	Skill	Silent Move
Tech-Use +10	100	Skill	Tech-Use
Battle Rage	100	Talent	Frenzy
Exotic Weapon Training (Any One)	100	Talent	—
Frenzy	200	Talent	—
Whisper of Samadhi	300	Talent	Int 35, Mimic, Deceive

