

DARK MAGENTA

Everything You've Been Told (about women) is a Lie

By Keiran Mathers

Inquisitor tends to be quite a male dominated game. Games Workshop's own Inquisitor range has a majority of male figures, and their most iconic creations are described as always being male. So it would be fair to say that you don't see a huge number of female models on the Inquisitor table.

There seem to be a variety of reasons for this. Inquisitor is that unique mix of role-playing and skirmish, and like all role-playing games there is a bit of a stigma attached to 'cross-playing'. There may be an unfair perception that women are less likely to be in combat than men, or less able when the bullets are flying. It may also be that a slight young woman is less 'cool' than a hulking, armour clad inquisitor with a big sword. Even in the Black Library, unless they are a Battle Sister, women are often reduced to weak supporting roles (Eisenhorn, I'm looking at you) or by dying to give the protagonist a reason to take bloody revenge.

All of this is a bit of a shame. The dark future of the 41st millennium is, bizarrely enough, a remarkable environment for female characters because their backgrounds can be so varied. The varied ranks of the Battle Sisters, disciplined brain-washed religious nutters are one end of this scale, while the other might be female Sector Lords or High Lords of Terra. Cultural conditioning, the main force in shaping personality and outlook, can be whatever you want in the creation of Inquisitor characters.

So let's talk about women in *Inquisitor*. But not just female models, but actual female characters with an air of reality about them. Too many of the few women on the board will be a classic male fantasy – either strange fetish clad desire objects or top-heavy super-hot action babes with no real difference to men. Now, there is nothing wrong with that per se, but since the enjoyment of the game is improved by really thinking about character, it pays to work out what makes your character tick.

The first thing to work out is the societal pressures which were exerted upon the character in their early life. Intrinsic gender differences are much less important than societal and environmental pressure – people will mostly become what they are made to be, regardless of sex. The difference here is how does it differently affect women? What were the social pressures upon them specifically?

In the case of a hive worker, this may be a conservative outlook and a close relationship with her peers. If you'll never see the outside of your world, why bother even thinking about it? An unthinking subservience to authority might be the result of a Ministorum world upbringing, or a superiority complex from those who are born and raised on Ultramar and the Imperium's finest worlds.

A woman from the finest worlds of the Imperium may find everything else deeply parochial and have an air of snobbery about her. A hive woman may be extremely closed minded and defensive, used to a close family and Hive House to support her. She may also have been

discriminated against, forbidden to do certain works and trapped in a society she does not agree with.

Environmental pressure can also exert a physical effect – our hive woman would be pallid and washed out, probably quite hunched from the life of crawling through tunnels without natural light. The Rogue Trader book rather wonderfully

describes the 'void-born' as being taller, quite gangly and having a strange air about them, the result of living in mostly artificial gravity. So, our hive woman would probably be quite small but muscular and wiry, strong from the manual labour she works in but small so she fits better in the Hive's close confines. A void born woman would look much more like a super-model, tall and thin with almost elfin features, but physically be weaker due to the lower gravity she is used to.

So, already we have our woman physically taking shape. So decide what was that early environment? The Imperium generally regards conformity of its citizens, but what was the conformity expected upon their particular world? Was it an Ecclesiarchical world, and what does their interpretation of the Imperial creed mean? Did she come from the heaving environments of Terra, and somewhere like it?



From that decision, we can start building a personality. Background is only important because it informs personality, which informs behaviour and how they act on the table. Inquisitors are, by their very nature, independently minded people, strong willed and

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disciplined. But even taking that into account, what they have learnt would still affect them.

Let's say Inquisitor Hannah comes from the agri-world of Lerion VI. It's a sparsely populated rural world, with a conservative attitude towards society. Therefore, being strong minded, Hannah would have to have fought her way through her conservative society, harder than the men folk, to get off-world. That could have affected her in many ways, but first I'll choose to say it has made her spiky and independent to the point of unruly. Anyone who has battered their way through a society like that would mean that they valued their independence more than most. She'd struggle in the political machinations and hierarchy of the Inquisition, but would make an excellent, self motivated field agent.

Equally valid would be deciding that Hannah didn't batter her way through society, but negotiated through cleverness. This Inquisitor Hannah would be a manipulator and political schemer, loving the machination of the Inquisitional politics but still maintaining a certain independence in her goals. She would be more collaborative and frankly, rather calculating.

Compare either of these to the respective experience of Inquisitor Henri in the same situation on the same world. He would need the same force of personality to over-come the conformity of his world, the same strength of will to make the decision to leave. But his path, in this situation, would have been entirely different. He may have found support somewhere in society to leave, held to be a great trail-blazer setting out. Equally, he might have had to physically fight his way out, as he'd have been challenged by small minded men unwilling to let him 'rebel'. He might have also been beaten 'for his own good' and to change his mind.

The starting point is the same but due to the genders, the result is radically different. Inquisitor Henri might be a little

more trusting and willing to work in a larger group because he has been supported before. He might be more prone to violence as he's had to physically compete on his way out. Henri might tend towards the mono-dominant philosophy as well, having seen how small-minded people need to be instructed in the correct way of behaving through strength and conflict. But equally, he might purposely take acolytes from rural environments, knowing how hard it is to get out.

The aim of this example is not to say 'all women are oppressed and victims'. It is to show how the gender often defines the early experiences and therefore the behaviour. A female character requires a consideration of what it is to be a woman in any situation and the understanding therein. After all, these personalities types may very well be reversed in the case of a matriarchal society, and woman can be perfectly good mono-dominants when they learn to be that way!

Early experiences do not even have to go back as far as childhood. If a female acolyte is taught by her Inquisitorial master that she is more useful because she is a woman, the natural confidence will build. Equally, if she is condemned because of her gender, then this could either destroy her or temper her to work even harder.

So, that's the way to approach the creation of a female character. First decide where women stand in the society they inhabit, and then consider the effect that will have on the person. That will give you 99% of the characters personality, rather than any nebulous 'gender' differences.

In terms of how they act on the battlefield, that is totally up the character. To say 'female characters' will act one way is to be far too prescriptive, it will totally depend on the characters background and personality. After all, all men do not respond in the same way, either.

Now, put those bullet-proof bikinis down...

Gloria Excellus

Gloria was born upon the Ecclesiarchy world of Ophelia VII. Her mother was a devout and distant authority figure, always praying or commending her soul to the Emperor. So Gloria found the statues of the saints were her parents, the endless words of the preachers her teacher. Taught to be dutiful and devout to honour the Emperor in body and soul, she began to desire a life spent in prayer and devotion.

She knew she was not strong enough to become one of the Adeptus Soritias, and so could not defend the Emperor with her martial skills. Other roles in the Ecclesiarchy were closed to her, as these were chosen to be the sole preserve of the men she grew up with. Marriage was always an option, honouring the Emperor with a child, but Gloria felt drawn to do more than that which she saw the other women. While watching the great parade of the Soritias, she felt the Emperors lightly tap her on the shoulder. An idea, watching the devout pray, began to form in her mind, a divine idea.

The next day, Gloria stood upon a road corner and began to preach. She started speaking with the words that meant the most to her: 'The Emperor Protects'. Her voice sang through the crowded streets, and she discovered her gift – her voice, while not hugely loud, could carry far and wide. The words flowed through her in an unbroken stream, a building sermon she created without thought, the words just appearing in her mind as she spoke. Gloria preached the Emperors creed and drew a crowd to her words. She repeated this the following day. Within a week, a fellow preacher gave her a vox-caster to make her voice that much stronger.

Here, stood outside of the temples, she could not be challenged, though most other preachers believed her to be a novelty rather than a committed believer. But as her words became further known through Ophelia VII, the crowds grew larger and more rowdy. The slight figure of Gloria knew she could whip up a mob with a few well chosen phrases, but the devotion was becoming intense. She took to carrying an old las-pistol beneath her robes, ready to use if the crowd become too much to handle. Gloria didn't truly trust herself to hold back the mobs worst instincts if she should get the wrong words.

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But despite this she found both confident and devotion. The question of her life's aim fell away, and in the Emperors service she found great happiness. Gloria remained apart, feeling the Emperors presence in every moment as she felt her walked by her side. He was her father guiding her, and her lover renewing her soul every day.

Her ambitions began to grow. Here, on Ophelia VII, the masses were already indoctrinated, willing to listen and believe. She wondered if her gift could be used elsewhere, across other worlds and places where the Emperors light was weaker. She had heard stories where entire systems had fallen away from the Emperors faith. She pitied these poor lost souls, and become enamoured with the idea of converting them.

It took a chance encounter with Rogue Trader Francois to change this. Having heard of the preacher and her voice, he tracked her down – not hard when the mob listening was over a mile wide. He needed the cover of a preacher to allow his warrant of trade to remain current. Gloria struck him as the perfect type as she was young, devout and hopefully naïve. He made her the offer she wanted, to take her across the stars with the Emperors creed.

She carefully agreed. Gloria's voice was her gift, and she did not trust this rogue trader enough to know he wouldn't exploit it. But the Emperor would protect her, of that she was sure...



Gloria is right-handed

Equipment: Ecclesiarchical Robes, Las-pistol, vox-caster (range, 36"). Robes are thick and count as armour 1 on all location except head.

Abilities:

The Emperor Protects: Gloria believes that the will of the Emperor is with her, and she should carry on regardless of pain or injury. She classes as having an extra level of light damage on all location.

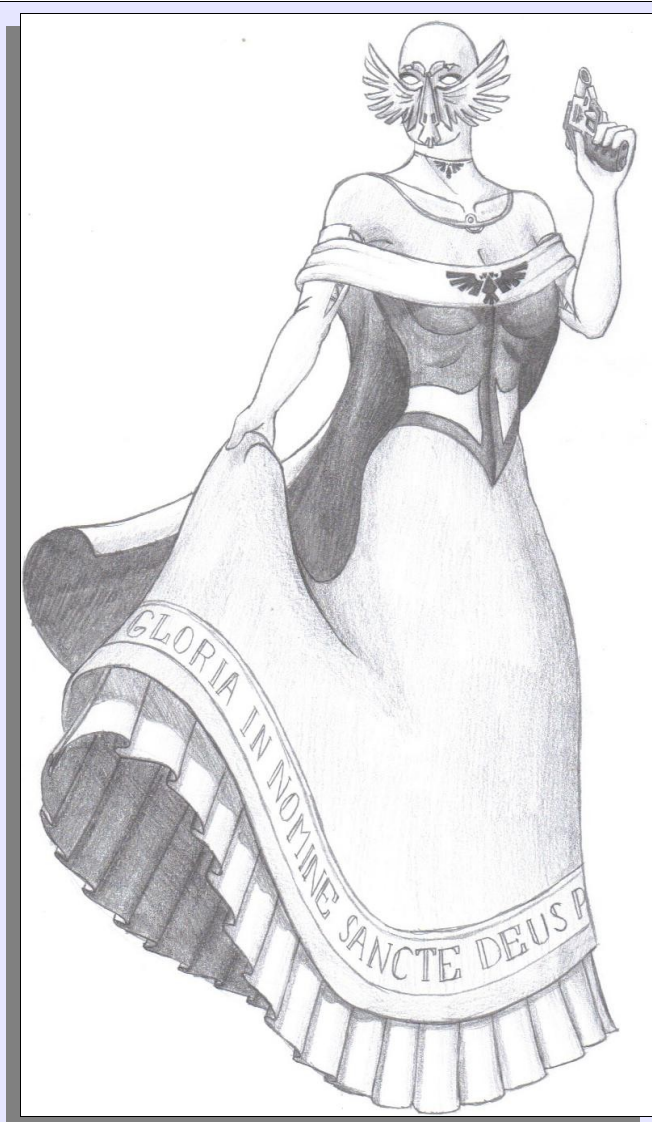
Bow before his Majesty, Sinners: Using her vox-caster, Gloria summons up the power of her oratory. All those, including friendly characters, within hearing range of Gloria must take a nerve check immediately. If they succeed, they successfully ignore the sermon, unmoved by its power. If they fail, however, make a roll on the d10 chart beneath:

1-3: I am not worthy: A wave of guilt sweeps over the character, rendering them motionless as they consider their hundreds of flaws in the eyes of the Immortal Emperor. They can make no actions in their next turn.

4-6: Forgive me for what I have done! : The character is suddenly struck by a great wave of grief and remorse for all their sins, small or large, of the past. Their actions in their next turn are halved due to this distracting introspective.

7-9: The Emperor Sees all and knows all: The character believes that the Emperor himself is watching them from the sky. They must spend as many actions as needed to move toward the nearest piece of cover at a run, to hide from this all-seeing eye. Once in cover, the character will return to acting normally.

10: She is a true prophet! She shall not be harmed!: For their next turn, the character will defend Gloria as best they can. This will be at the GM's discretion, but could include standing in the line of fire, opening fire on someone who fired upon Gloria, and generally acting like a bodyguard to the best of their ability.



	WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
Gloria	40	45	40	50	55	75	38	60	50

About the Author

Kieran Mathers is trying to be a freelance writer and is currently based in France. He writes novels, short stories and articles, some of which he might one day sell. His Inquisitor characters are famous for having reams of fluff and generally only surviving a single game.

Illustration by Kenneth Gardner, Miniatures by Dave Knowles.

