WARHAMMER 40,000

SPACE MARINE BATTLES™

VISIONS OF WAR

THE ART OF SPACE MARINE BATTLES



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THE ART OF SPACE MARINE BATTLES

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



Defenders of humanity, scions of the Immortal Emperor, the Space Marines are warriors without peer. In battle, they are devastating, bringing death and destruction to the alien, the traitor and the daemon.

Visions of War: The Art of Space Marine Battles is a compilation of artwork selected from the pages of the explosive Black Library series. These sprawling, war-torn vistas are presented in glorious colour, and can be viewed in their full, panoramic form. For the first time, you can zoom in on many pieces to better appreciate the vivid detail, and some include animations showing the artwork's development from the artist's initial sketch.

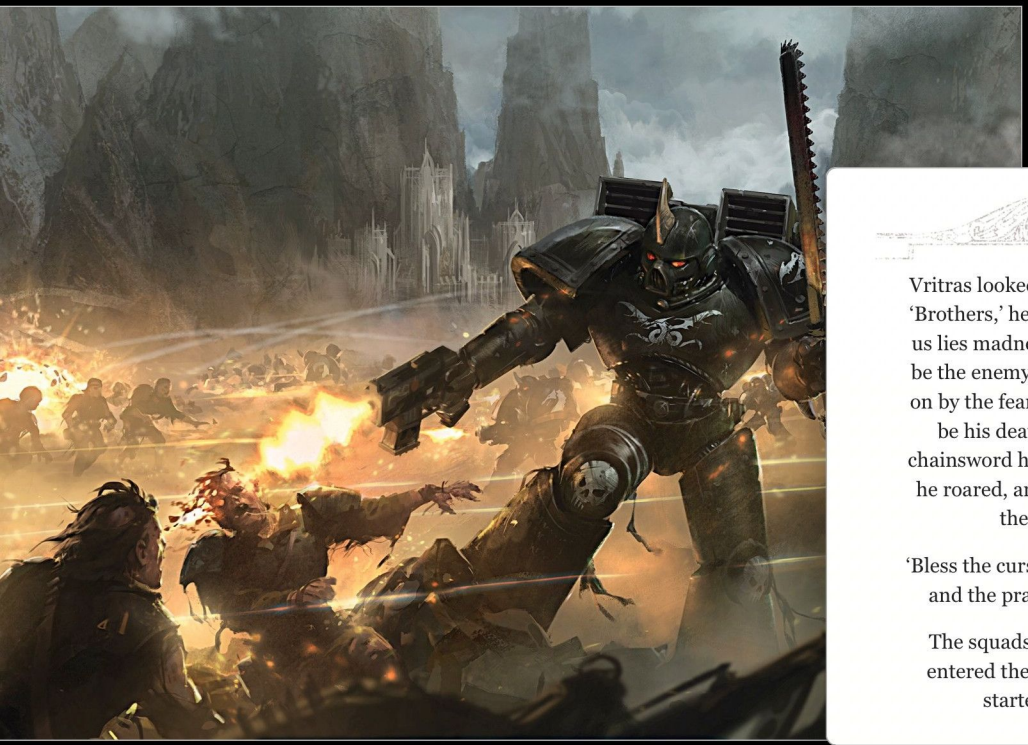
Also included are a pair of stories featuring the indomitable Space Marines in battle: 'The Thrill of the Hunt' by Anthony Reynolds and 'Heloth' by L J Goulding.





THE DEATH OF ANTAGONIS

Slawomir Maniak



Vritras looked at his four squads. 'Brothers,' he announced, 'before us lies madness and death. Let it be the enemy's madness brought on by the fear we bring, and let it be his death.' He raised his chainsword high. 'Fire and bone!' he roared, and his men shouted their answer.

'Bless the curse!' Massorus called, and the prayer was repeated.

The squads reformed as they entered the vault. The echoes started up again.

THE DEATH OF ANTAGONIS

Slawomir Maniak



Visions of War is split into the following chapters:

- **Visions of War** – the art of Space Marine Battles
- **New Stories** – *Heloth*, a Scythes of the Emperor story, and *The Thrill of the Hunt*, a White Scars tale.
- You May Also Like…

At the start of the first chapter are three pages of thumbnail images – tap an image to go directly to the relevant page. Within the book, if text is coloured red, this signifies that it is a hyperlink, and tapping it will take you either to a different page within the book, or to an external web page.

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Where you see the pinch-out icon, pinch out the art as per the arrow directions to see a much larger version of a part, or all of the image, which you can move around within.



Where you see the tap icon, tap the art to reveal its interactivity.



The play icon signifies that this piece of artwork has been animated – tap the image to play.



Tap the text icon to read an extract from the relevant story.



Tap the back arrow to go back to the relevant thumbnail page at the start of the chapter.

It is the 41st millennium. For more than a hundred centuries the Emperor has sat immobile on the Golden Throne of Earth. He is the master of mankind by the will of the gods, and master of a million worlds by the might of his inexhaustible armies. He is a rotting carcass writhing invisibly with power from the Dark Age of Technology. He is the Carrion Lord of the Imperium for whom a thousand souls are sacrificed every day, so that he may never truly die.

Yet even in his deathless state, the Emperor continues his eternal vigilance. Mighty battlefleets cross the daemon-infested miasma of the warp, the only route between distant stars, their way lit by the Astronomican, the psychic manifestation of the Emperor's will. Vast armies give battle in His name on uncounted worlds. Greatest amongst his soldiers are the Adeptus Astartes, the Space Marines, bio-engineered super-warriors. Their comrades in arms are legion: the Astra Militarum and countless planetary defence forces, the ever-vigilant Inquisition and the tech-priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus to name only a few. But for all their multitudes, they are barely enough to hold off the ever-present threat from aliens, heretics, mutants – and worse.

To be a man in such times is to be one amongst untold billions. It is to live in the cruellest and most bloody regime imaginable. These are the tales of those times. Forget the power of technology and science, for so much has been forgotten, never to be re-learned. Forget the promise of progress and understanding, for in the grim dark future there is only war. There is no peace amongst the stars, only an eternity of carnage and slaughter, and the laughter of thirsting gods.

VISIONS OF WAR


















































FALL OF DAMNOS
Jon Sullivan









DAMOCLES
Kai Lim





















WRATH OF IRON
Jon Sullivan







At the head of the Iron Hands was Arven Rauth, cracking the ground beneath his imposing Terminator-clad bulk, wreathed in a lambent aura of electrical discharge. In one hand he carried a power axe, in the other a storm bolter, and his helm lenses flashed the colour of raw heartblood.

Alongside him came Iron Father Khatir, as intimidating a presence as any of them, his gauntlets bleeding waves of blue-edged flame. Alone of all the Iron Hands in that place, Khatir broke combat-silence, roaring a deafening, vox-amplified challenge as he crashed into combat.

'Traitors of Shardonyx!' Khatir







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'Traitors of Shardenus!' Khatir roared, and the echo of his battle-cry resounded from the dome above, shattering its lumens. 'Judgement has come to this world! Surrender and your deaths will redeem you! Resist and your souls will be damned!'

WRATH OF IRON
Jon Sullivan











WRATH OF IRON

Jon Sullivan




Jon Sullivan 2011

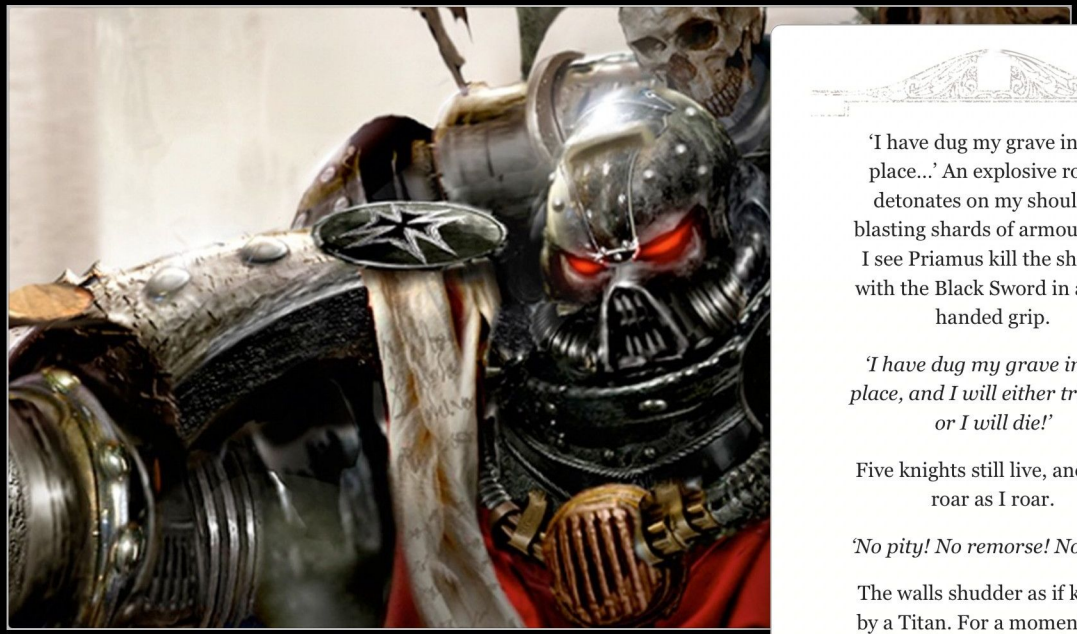








HELSREACH
Jon Sullivan





‘I have dug my grave in this place…’ An explosive round detonates on my shoulder, blasting shards of armour free. I see Priamus kill the shooter with the Black Sword in a one-handed grip.

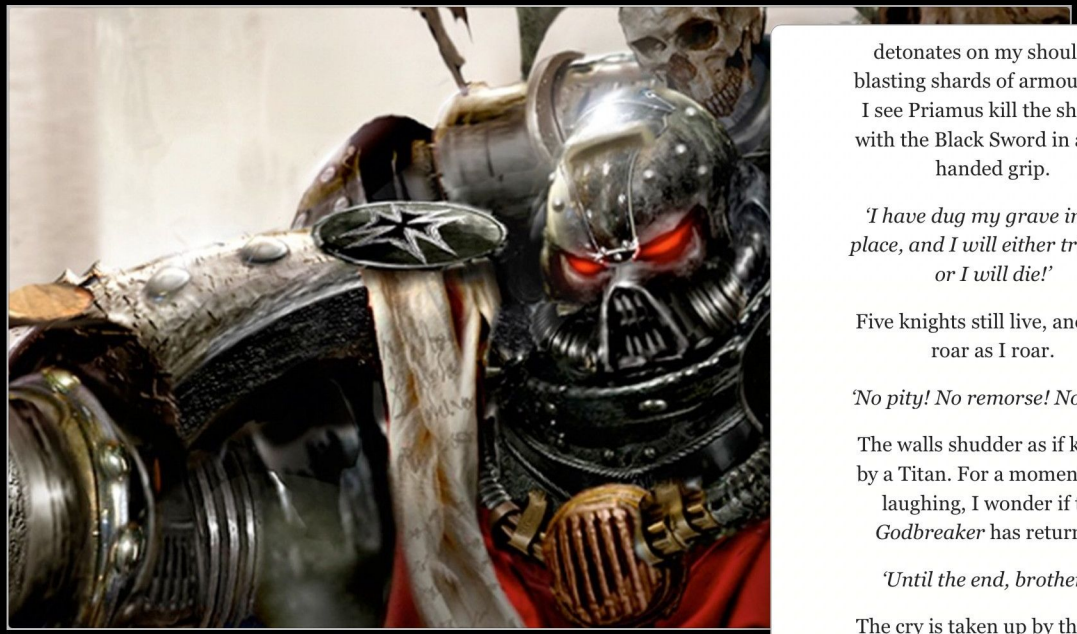
‘I have dug my grave in this place, and I will either triumph or I will die!’

Five knights still live, and they roar as I roar.

‘No pity! No remorse! No fear!’

The walls shudder as if kicked by a Titan. For a moment, still laughing, I wonder if the *Godbreaker* has returned.

‘Until the end, brothers!’





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'Until the end, brothers!'

The cry is taken up by those of us that yet draw breath, and we fight on.

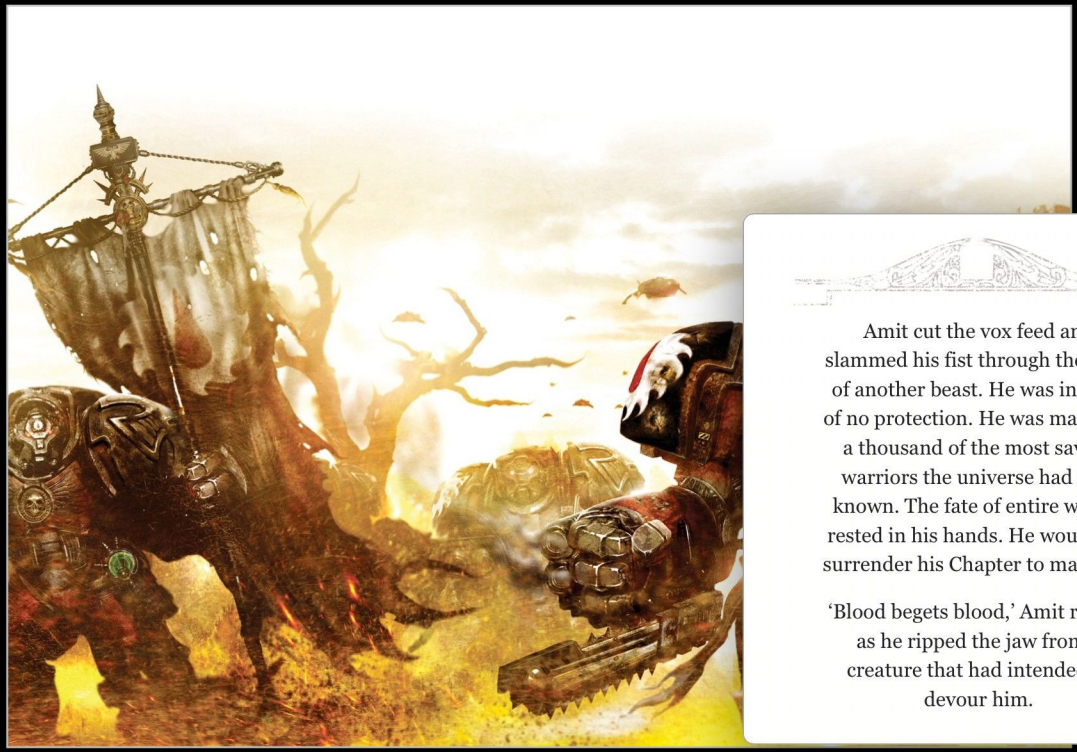
HELSREACH
Jon Sullivan







FLESH OF CRETACIA
Clint Langley



Amit cut the vox feed and slammed his fist through the skull of another beast. He was in need of no protection. He was master of a thousand of the most savage warriors the universe had ever known. The fate of entire worlds rested in his hands. He would not surrender his Chapter to madness.

'Blood begets blood,' Amit roared as he ripped the jaw from a creature that had intended to devour him.

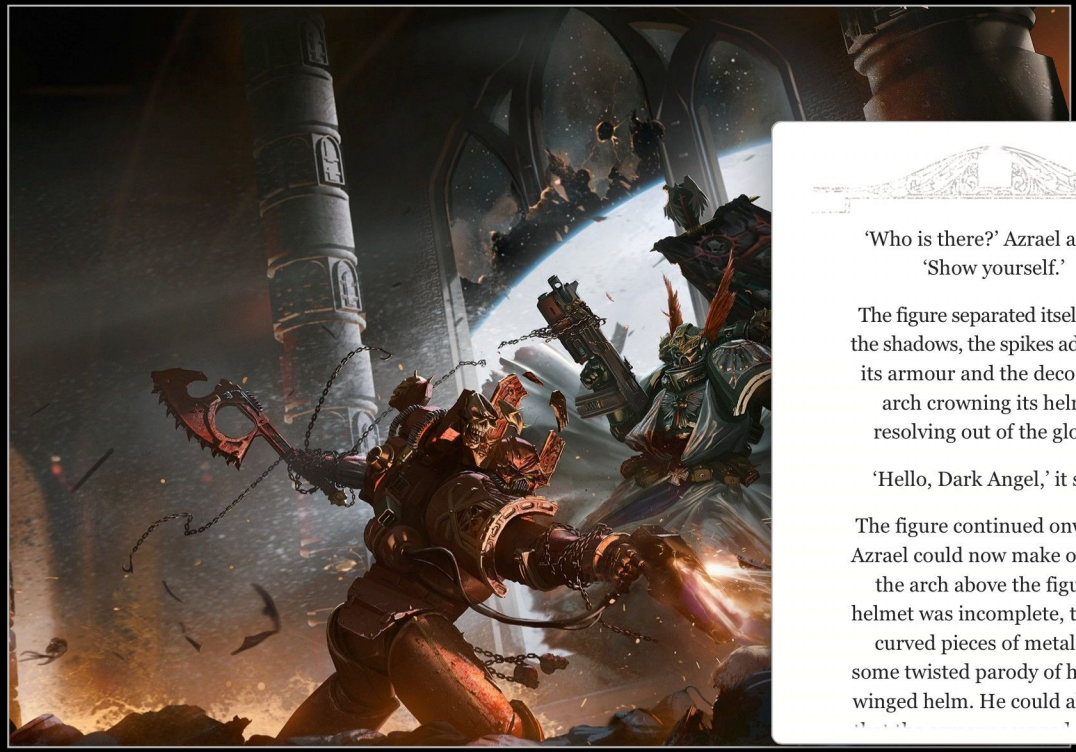
FLESH OF CRETACIA
Clint Langley





TRIALS OF AZRAEL

Kai Lim

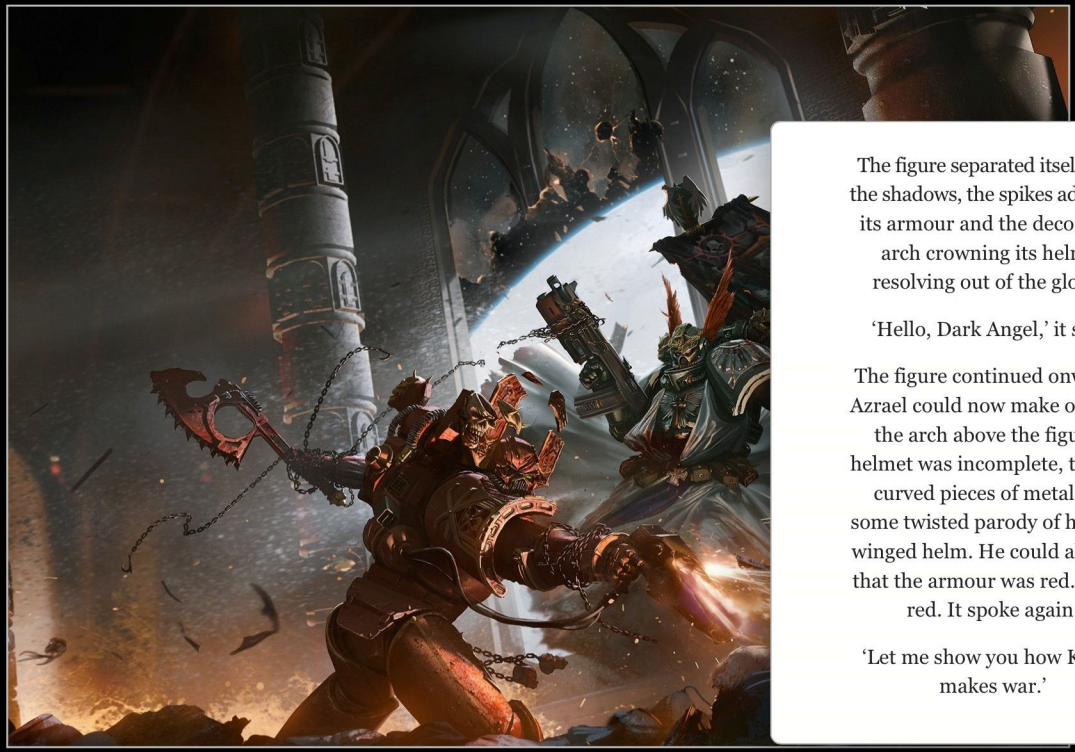


‘Who is there?’ Azrael asked. ‘Show yourself.’

The figure separated itself from the shadows, the spikes adorning its armour and the decorative arch crowning its helmet resolving out of the gloom.

‘Hello, Dark Angel,’ it said.

The figure continued onwards. Azrael could now make out that the arch above the figure’s helmet was incomplete, the two curved pieces of metal like some twisted parody of his own winged helm. He could also tell



The figure separated itself from the shadows, the spikes adorning its armour and the decorative arch crowning its helmet resolving out of the gloom.

'Hello, Dark Angel,' it said.

The figure continued onwards. Azrael could now make out that the arch above the figure's helmet was incomplete, the two curved pieces of metal like some twisted parody of his own winged helm. He could also tell that the armour was red. Blood red. It spoke again.

'Let me show you how Khârn makes war.'




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THE GILDAR RIFT

Jon Sullivan





Blackheart struck downwards, the axe glinting in the refracted blue light still sparking uselessly from Arrun's lightning claws. The captain's eyes were transfixed on the razor edge as it fell towards his chest. He felt the first two blows as they struck: the blade biting deep furrows in his battered armour. Even to the last, his hallowed power armour stubbornly tried to shield him. The third blow shattered the breastplate completely, shards of ceramite and plasteel pattering from the Tyrant's own wargear and driving deep into the captain's crippled body.

THE GILDAR RIFT
Jon Sullivan




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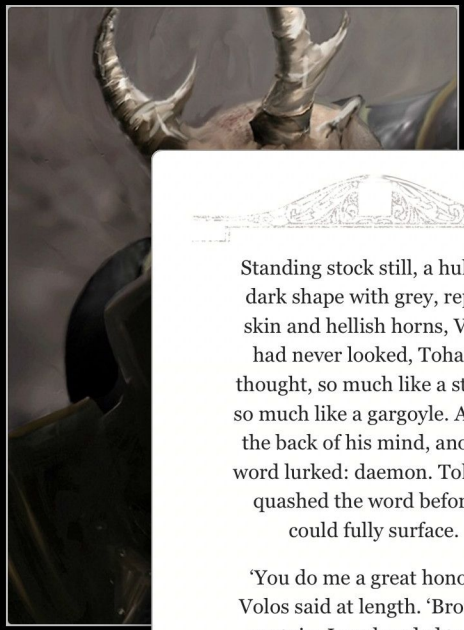






VOLOS,
THE DEATH OF ANTAGONIS
Rhys Pugh



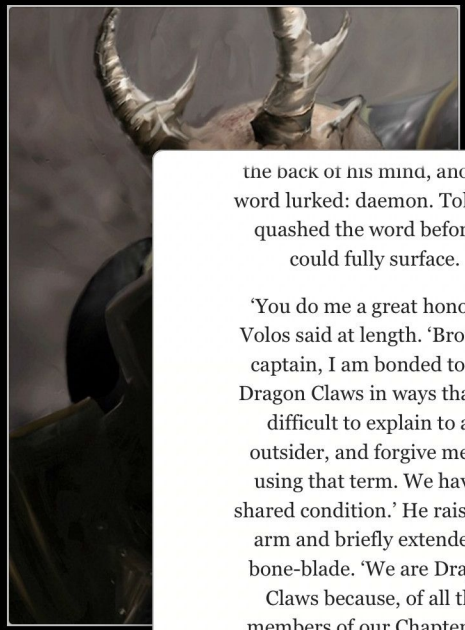


Standing stock still, a hulking dark shape with grey, reptile skin and hellish horns, Volos had never looked, Toharan thought, so much like a statue, so much like a gargoyle. And at the back of his mind, another word lurked: daemon. Toharan quashed the word before it could fully surface.

'You do me a great honour,' Volos said at length. 'Brother-captain, I am bonded to the Dragon Claws in ways that are difficult to explain to an outsider, and forgive me for

VOLOS,
THE DEATH OF ANTAGONIS
Rhys Pugh





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'You do me a great honour,' Volos said at length. 'Brother-captain, I am bonded to the Dragon Claws in ways that are difficult to explain to an outsider, and forgive me for using that term. We have a shared condition.' He raised an arm and briefly extended a bone-blade. 'We are Dragon Claws because, of all the members of our Chapter, we are the most... deformed. And I say that with a certain pride.'

VOLOS,
THE DEATH OF ANTAGONIS
Rhys Pugh







DEATH OF INTEGRITY
Jon Sullivan





Voldo's world narrowed to a maelstrom of flashing claws and teeth as the leaping genestealer landed on his shoulders. Its four arms wrapped themselves around him, clawed feet scrabbling madly at his breastplate. Its long, hollow tongue lashed at his helmet, seeking to implant him with its vile seed. He drove upward with his power sword, the weapon's field crackling as it passed through the beast's

DEATH OF INTEGRITY
Jon Sullivan

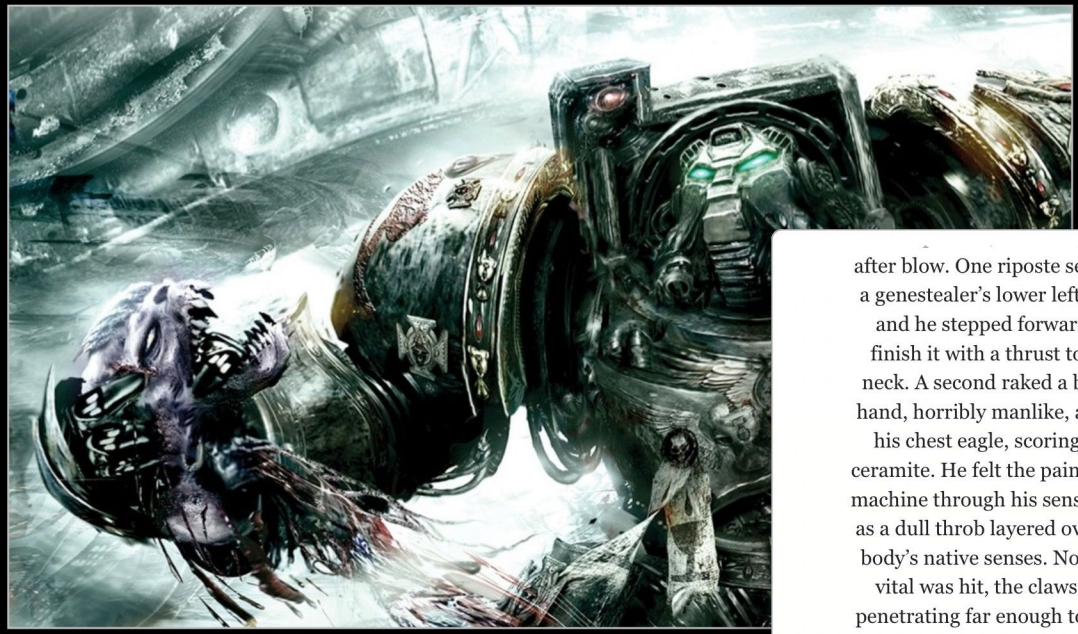




it passed through the beast's chitin and into its gut. Voldo wrenched the weapon and flung his arm out to cast the creature's body from his armour. Immediately he was re-engaged, two more scuttling over the floor, another imitating the first's leap.

The genestealers were so fast it was all he could do to match their speed with his sword. He cut and parried, deflecting blow after blow. One riposte severed

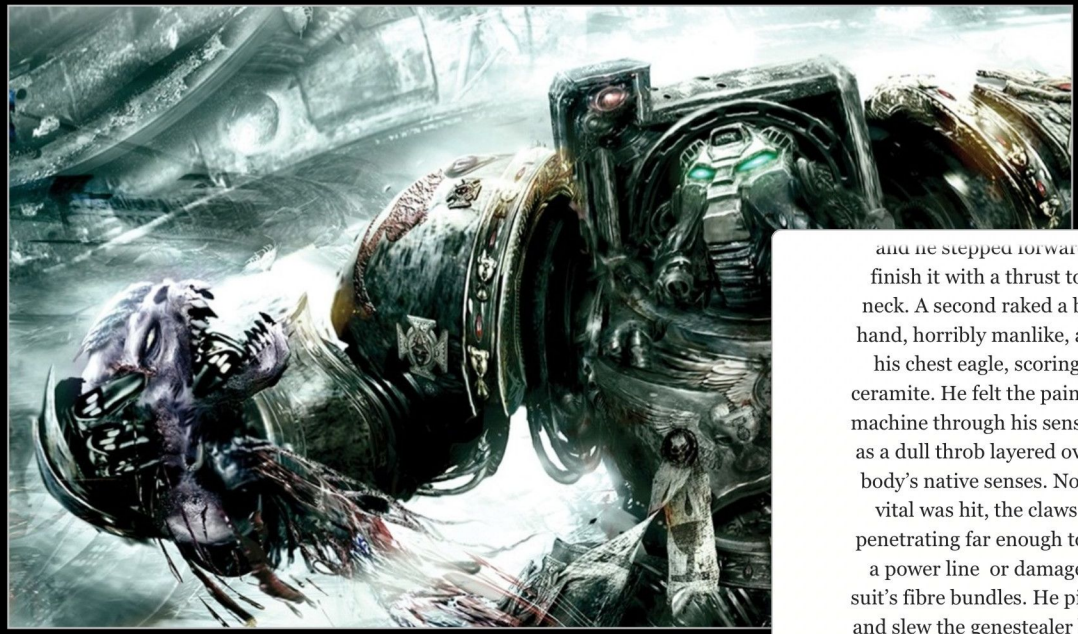
DEATH OF INTEGRITY
Jon Sullivan





after blow. One riposte severed a genestealer's lower left arm, and he stepped forward to finish it with a thrust to the neck. A second raked a broad hand, horribly manlike, across his chest eagle, scoring the ceramite. He felt the pain of the machine through his sensorium as a dull throb layered over his body's native senses. Nothing vital was hit, the claws not penetrating far enough to snag a power line or damage the suit's fibre bundles. He pivoted, and slew the genestealer before

DEATH OF INTEGRITY
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DEATH OF INTEGRITY
Jon Sullivan





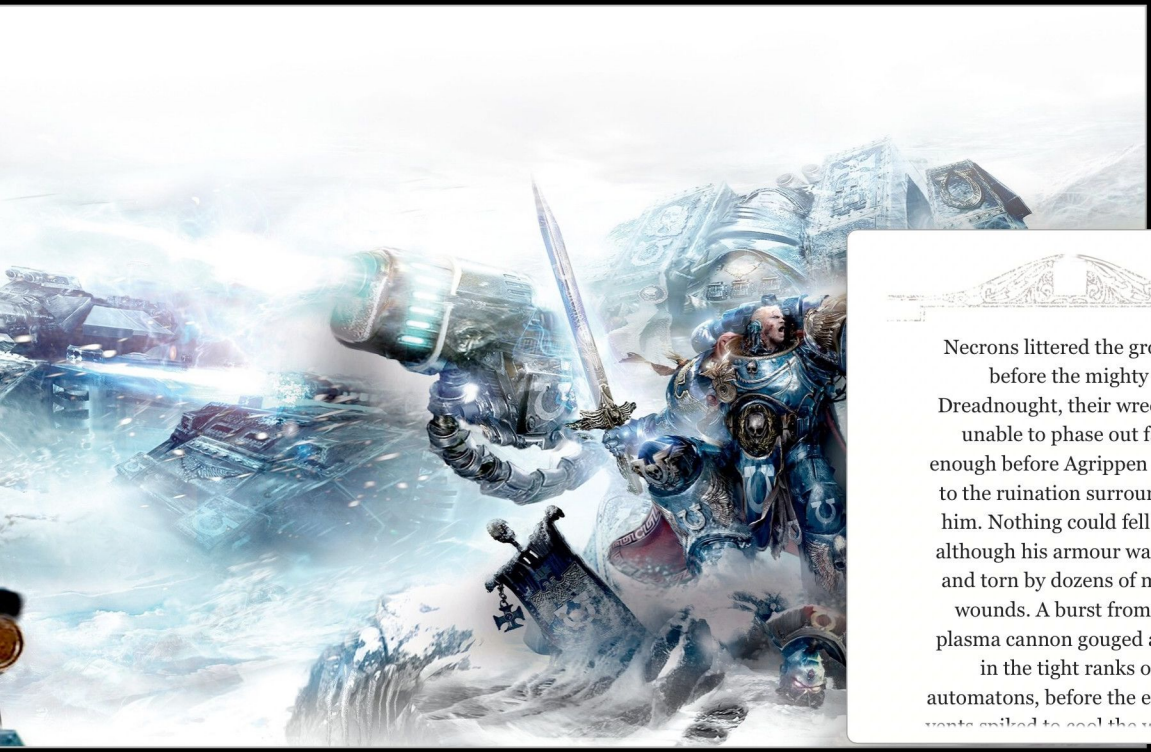






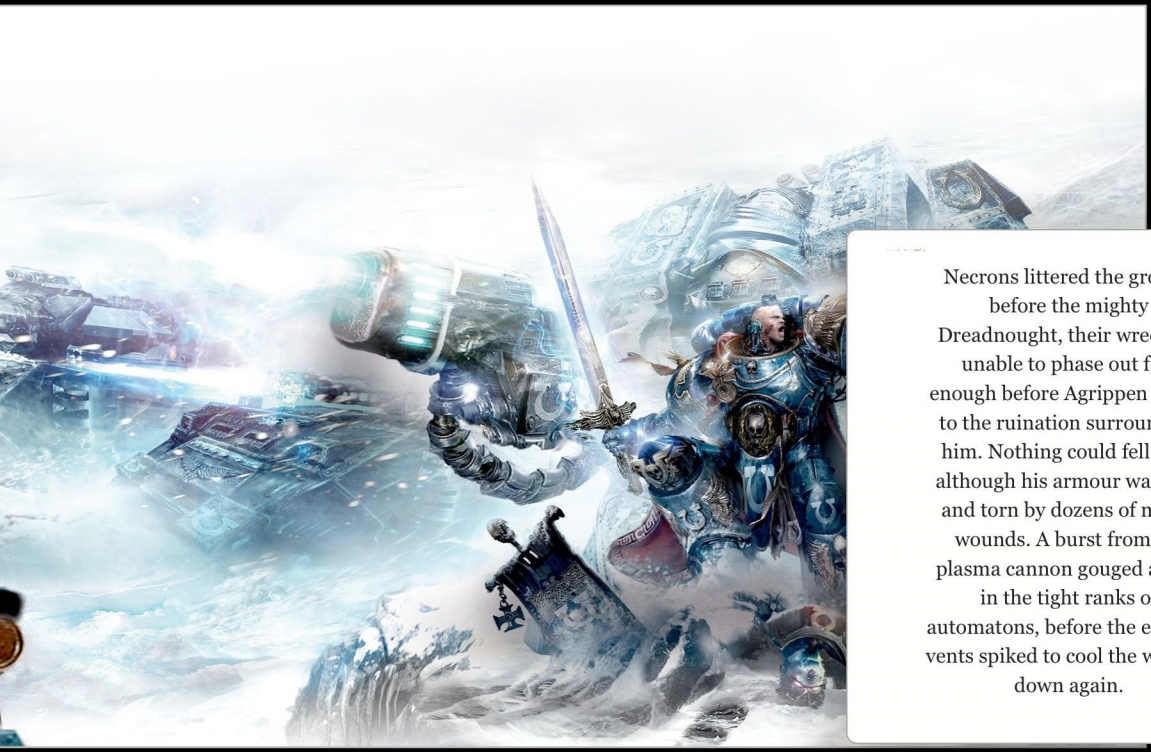


DAMNOS
Jon Sullivan



Necrons littered the ground before the mighty Dreadnought, their wreckage unable to phase out fast enough before Agrippen added to the ruination surrounding him. Nothing could fell him, although his armour was rent and torn by dozens of minor wounds. A burst from his plasma cannon gouged a hole in the tight ranks of automatons, before the exhaust vents spiked to cool the weapon

DAMNOS
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DAMNOS
Jon Sullivan


XIII
SPACE MARINES


ULTRAMARINES



THE WAR FOR RYNN'S WORLD

Cheol Joo Lee



Cortez took a deep breath. With a single thought, he activated the vox-amp set into his helmet. His voice boomed like thunder, drowning out the last of Aldren's screams.

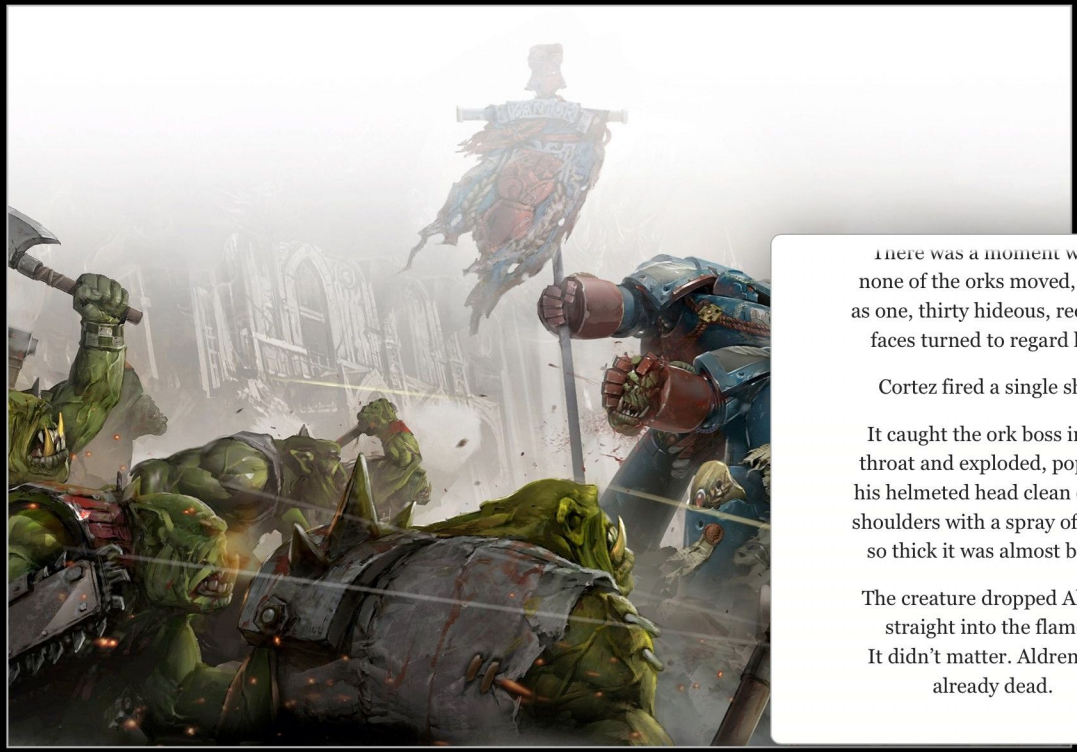
'You! Xenos scum!'

There was a moment when none of the orks moved, then, as one, thirty hideous, red-eyed faces turned to regard him.

Cortez fired a single shot

THE WAR FOR RYNN'S WORLD

Cheol Joo Lee



There was a moment when none of the orks moved, then, as one, thirty hideous, red-eyed faces turned to regard him.

Cortez fired a single shot.

It caught the ork boss in the throat and exploded, popping his helmeted head clean off his shoulders with a spray of blood so thick it was almost black.

The creature dropped Aldren straight into the flames. It didn't matter. Aldren was already dead.

THE WAR FOR RYNN'S WORLD

Cheol Joo Lee


WARRIOR





BLOODSPIRE AND DEATHWOLF

Jon Sullivan











ARMAGEDDON
Kai Lim









THE ASCENSION
OF BALTHASAR
Jon Sullivan





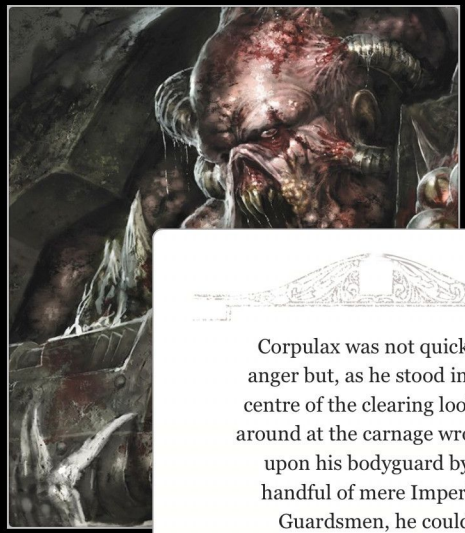




CORPULAX, PANDORAX

Helge C Balzer





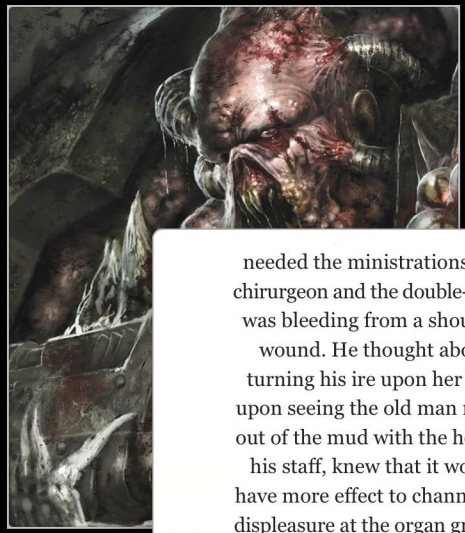


Corpulax was not quick to anger but, as he stood in the centre of the clearing looking around at the carnage wrought upon his bodyguard by a handful of mere Imperial Guardsmen, he could understand why some saw the attraction of following the Blood God. Four Plague Marines lay dead, another two needed the ministrations of a chirurgeon and the double-agent was bleeding from a shoulder

CORPULAX, PANDORAX

Helge C Balzer







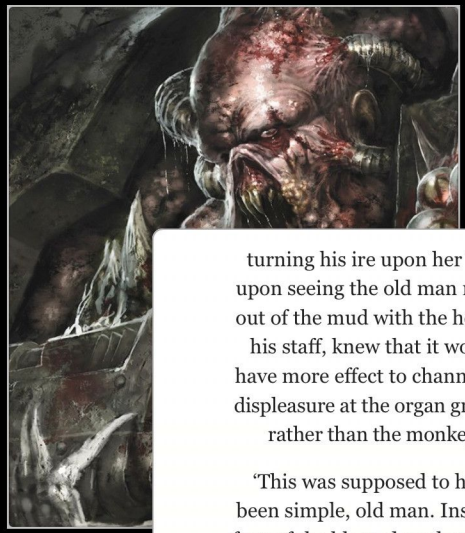
needed the ministrations of a chirurgeon and the double-agent was bleeding from a shoulder wound. He thought about turning his ire upon her but, upon seeing the old man rising out of the mud with the help of his staff, knew that it would have more effect to channel his displeasure at the organ grinder rather than the monkey.

'This was supposed to have been simple, old man. Instead, four of the blessed are lost to us and one of Dinalt's acolytes has escaped. Lord Abaddon will

CORPULAX, PANDORAX

Helge C Balzer







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'This was supposed to have been simple, old man. Instead, four of the blessed are lost to us and one of Dinalt's acolytes has escaped. Lord Abaddon will flay your soul for this,' Corpulax said, his voice bubbling with rage.

CORPULAX, PANDORAX
Helge C Balzer













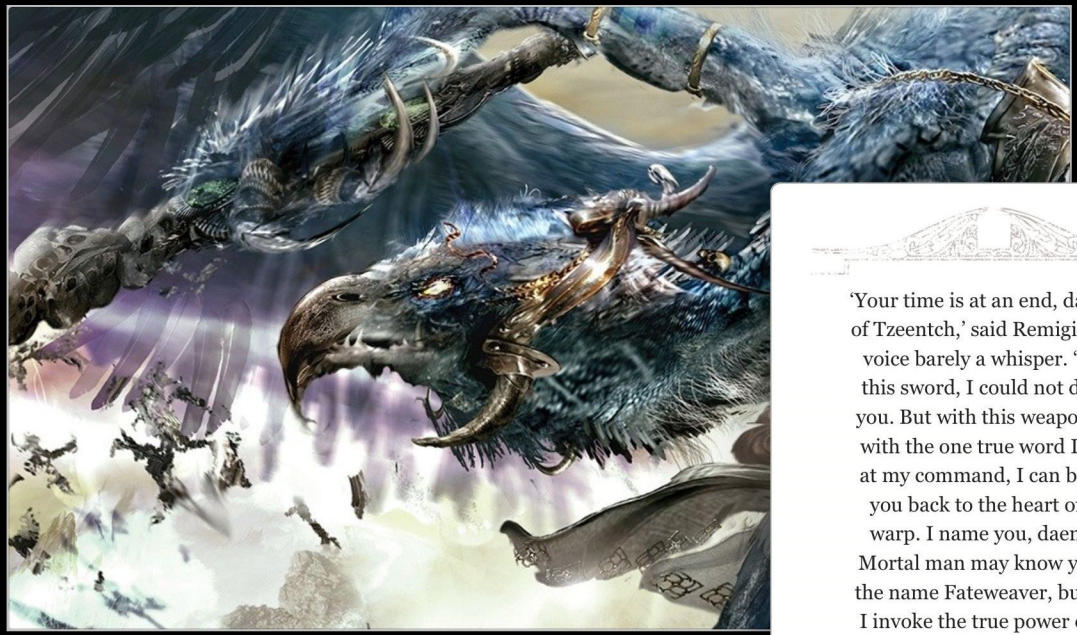






ARCHITECT OF FATE

Jon Sullivan

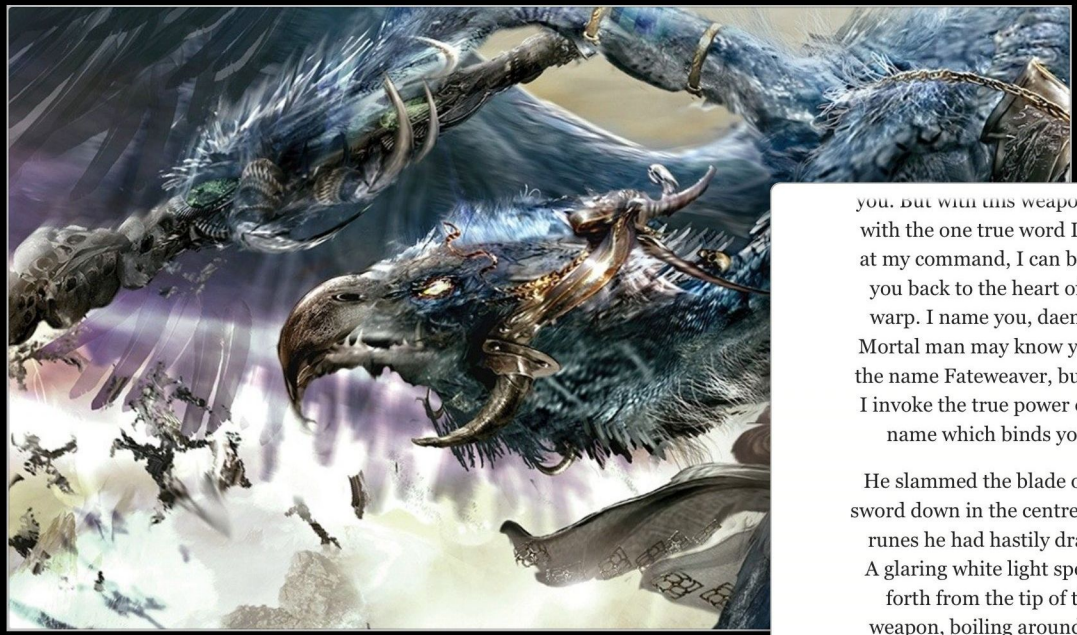




‘Your time is at an end, daemon of Tzeentch,’ said Remigius, his voice barely a whisper. ‘With this sword, I could not defeat you. But with this weapon and with the one true word I have at my command, I can banish you back to the heart of the warp. I name you, daemon. Mortal man may know you by the name Fateweaver, but now I invoke the true power of the name which binds you.’

He slammed the blade of the sword down in the centre of the

ARCHITECT OF FATE
Jon Sullivan



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He slammed the blade of the sword down in the centre of the runes he had hastily drawn. A glaring white light spewed forth from the tip of the weapon, boiling around the wards on the deck and around the inquisitor.



ARCHITECT OF FATE
Jon Sullivan




Jon Sullivan 2011





BATTLE OF THE FANG

Jon Sullivan





Redpelt was close at hand, his chainsword juddering and bolt pistol pumping. Everything was moving at staggering speed. There were no mortals in this fight. Rossek's Blood Claws did what they always did, fighting with abandon, relishing the unfettered exercise of their kill-urge, keeping Morkai a jaw-snap away and no more.

Bjorn waded into battle, as imperious and uncaring of the

BATTLE OF THE FANG
Jon Sullivan



kill-urge, keeping Morkai a jaw-snap away and no more.

Bjorn waded into battle, as imperious and uncaring of the odds as he'd ever been. His lightning claw blazed with thrashing, curling energy, trailing electrostatic barbs along the stone as it flexed open. His assault cannon pounded a stream of bolts into the reeling enemy, hurling even the Rubricae aside as the blazing energy pulses exploded into them.



BATTLE OF THE FANG
Jon Sullivan



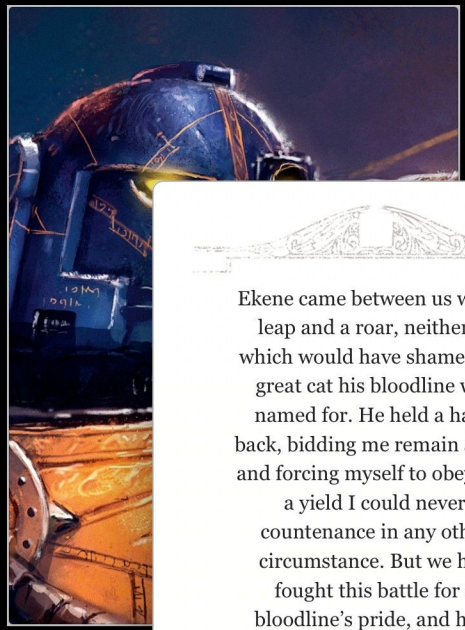

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CELESTIAL LION, ARMAGEDDON
Sam Lamont



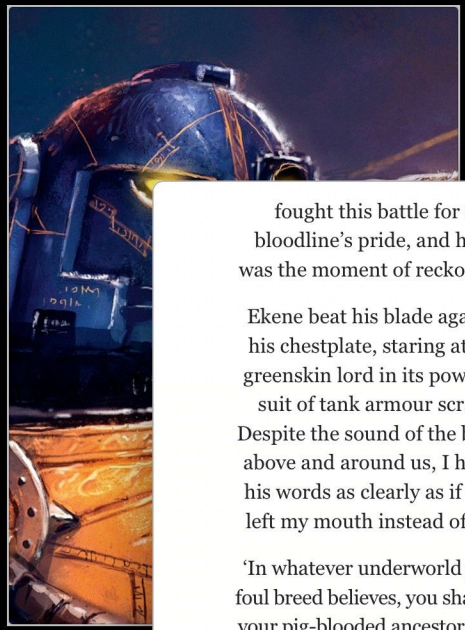


Ekene came between us with a leap and a roar, neither of which would have shamed the great cat his bloodline was named for. He held a hand back, bidding me remain away, and forcing myself to obey was a yield I could never countenance in any other circumstance. But we had fought this battle for a bloodline's pride, and here was the moment of reckoning.

Ekene beat his blade against his chestplate, staring at the

CELESTIAL LION, ARMAGEDDON
Sam Lamont





fought this battle for a bloodline's pride, and here was the moment of reckoning.

Ekene beat his blade against his chestplate, staring at the greenskin lord in its powered suit of tank armour scrap. Despite the sound of the battle above and around us, I heard his words as clearly as if they left my mouth instead of his.

'In whatever underworld your foul breed believes, you shall tell your pig-blooded ancestors that you died to the blade of Ekene of Elysium, Lion of the Emperor.'

CELESTIAL LION, ARMAGEDDON
Sam Lamont





BLOOD AND FIRE

Kai Lim





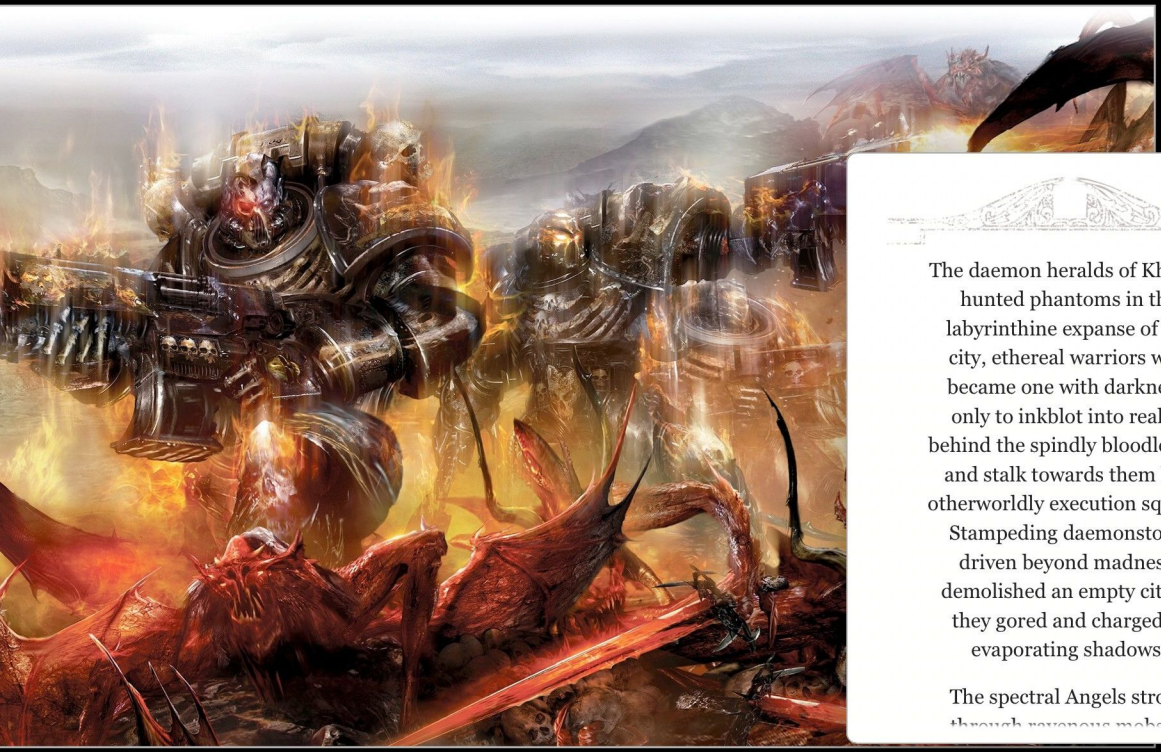






LEGION OF THE DAMNED

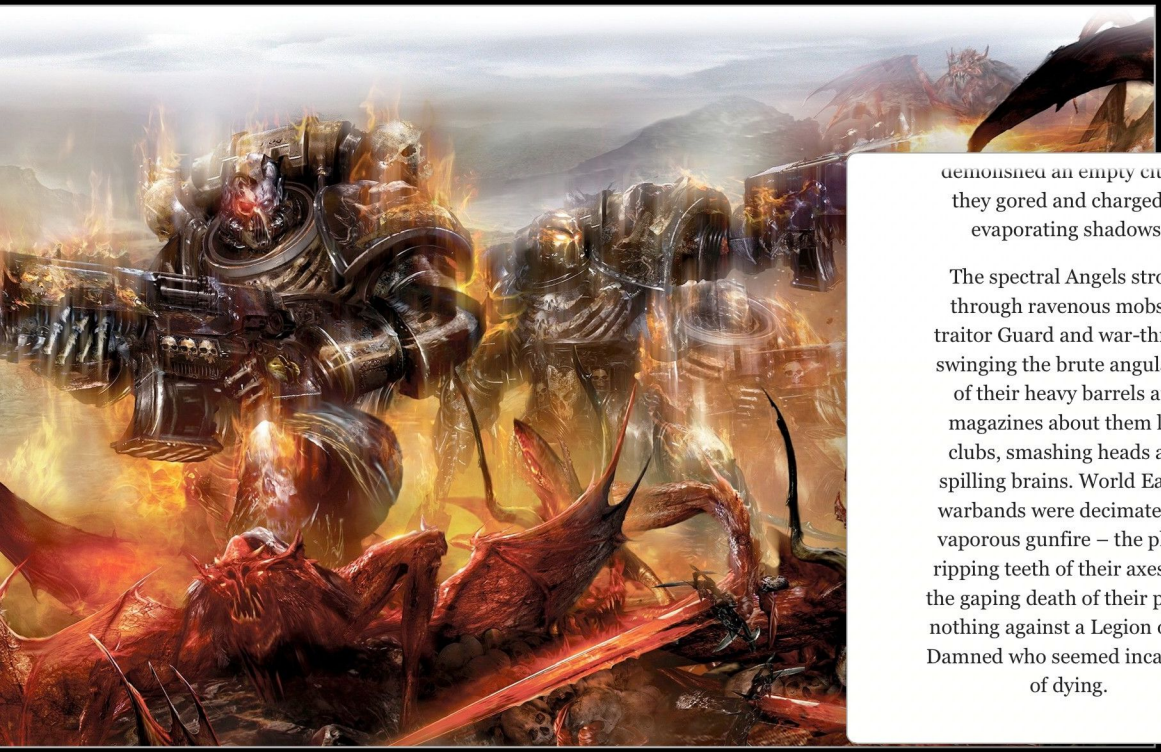
Jon Sullivan



The daemon heralds of Khorne hunted phantoms in the labyrinthine expanse of the city, ethereal warriors who became one with darkness, only to inkblot into reality behind the spindly bloodletters and stalk towards them like otherworldly execution squads. Stampeding daemonstock, driven beyond madness, demolished an empty city as they gored and charged at evaporating shadows.

The spectral Angels strode through ravenous mobs of

LEGION OF THE DAMNED
Jon Sullivan



demolished an empty city as they gored and charged at evaporating shadows.

The spectral Angels strode through ravenous mobs of traitor Guard and war-thralls, swinging the brute angularity of their heavy barrels and magazines about them like clubs, smashing heads and spilling brains. World Eaters warbands were decimated by vaporous gunfire – the plate-ripping teeth of their axes and the gaping death of their pistols nothing against a Legion of the Damned who seemed incapable of dying.

LEGION OF THE DAMNED
Jon Sullivan

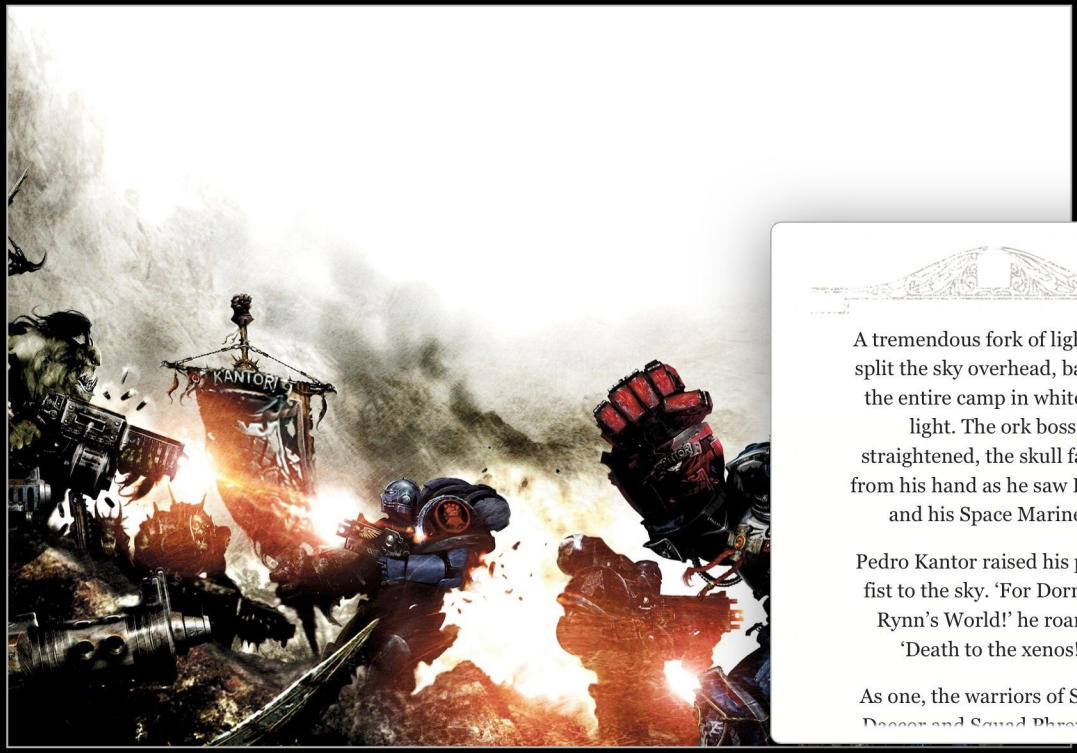





Jon Sullivan 2011



TRAITOR'S GORGE
Clint Langley

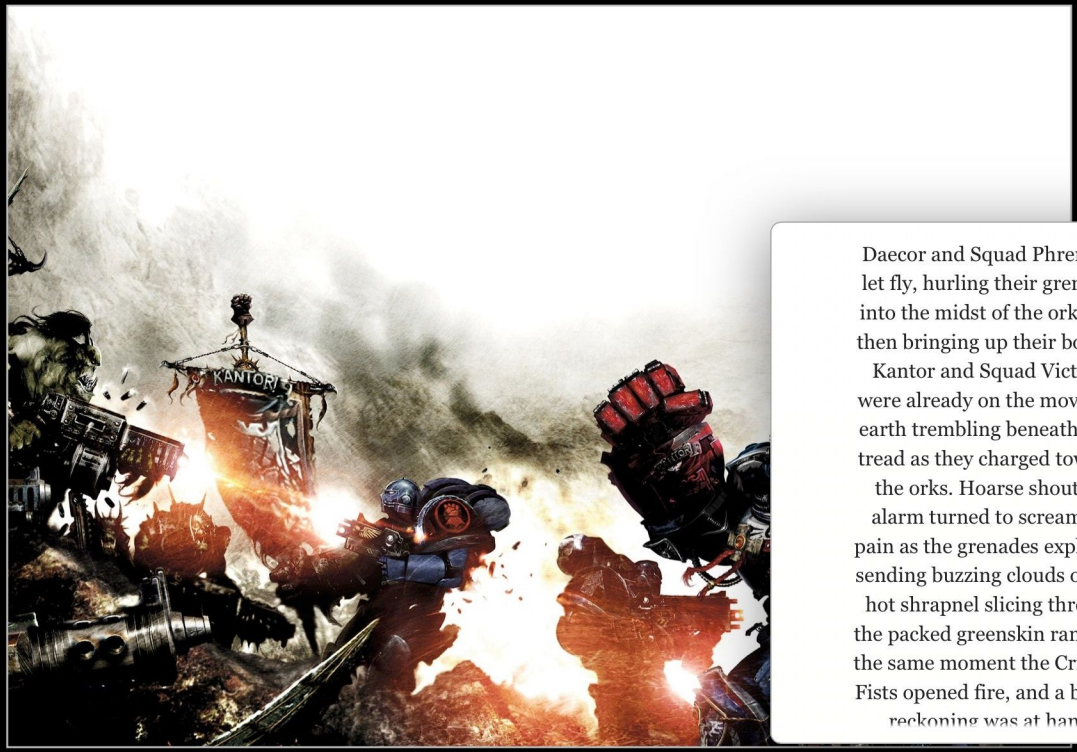


A tremendous fork of lightning split the sky overhead, bathing the entire camp in white-hot light. The ork boss straightened, the skull falling from his hand as he saw Kantor and his Space Marines.

Pedro Kantor raised his power fist to the sky. ‘For Dorn and Rynn’s World!’ he roared. ‘Death to the xenos!’

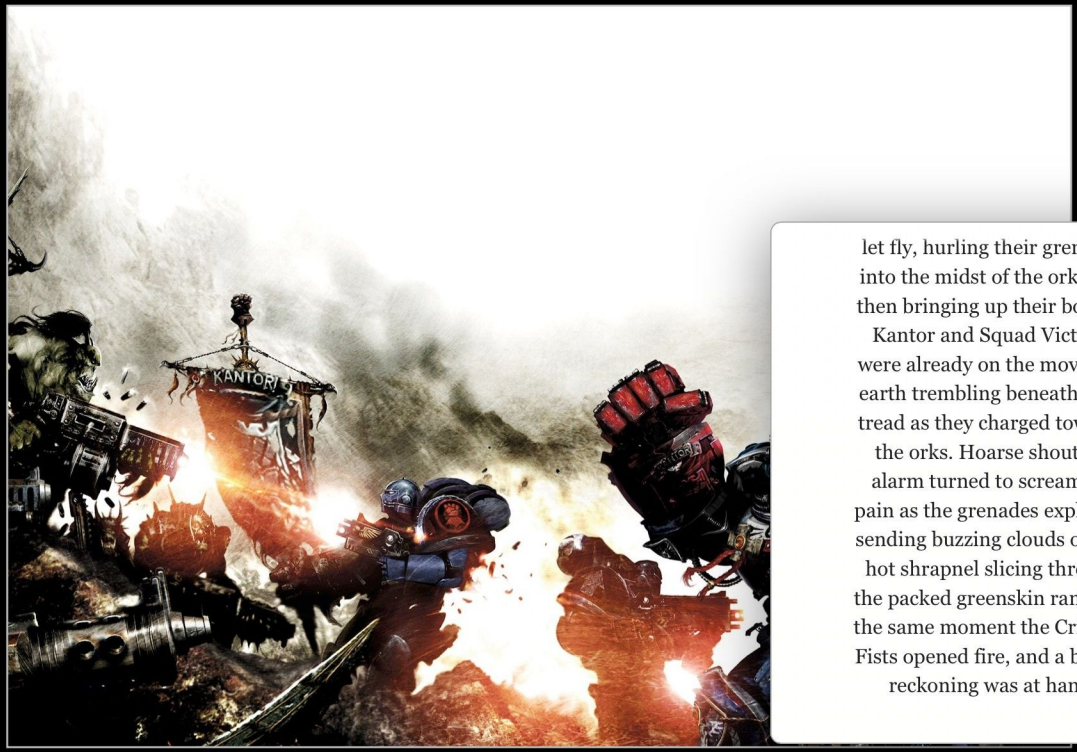
As one, the warriors of Squad Daecor and Squad Phronotes

TRAITOR'S GORGE
Clint Langley



Daecor and Squad Phrenotas let fly, hurling their grenades into the midst of the orks and then bringing up their bolters. Kantor and Squad Victurix were already on the move, the earth trembling beneath their tread as they charged towards the orks. Hoarse shouts of alarm turned to screams of pain as the grenades exploded, sending buzzing clouds of red-hot shrapnel slicing through the packed greenskin ranks. At the same moment the Crimson Fists opened fire, and a bloody reckoning was at hand.

TRAITOR'S GORGE
Clint Langley



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TRAITOR'S GORGE
Clint Langley


KANTOR





HELOTH
Jon Sullivan









KRAEGON THUL, MALODRAX

Helge C Balzer





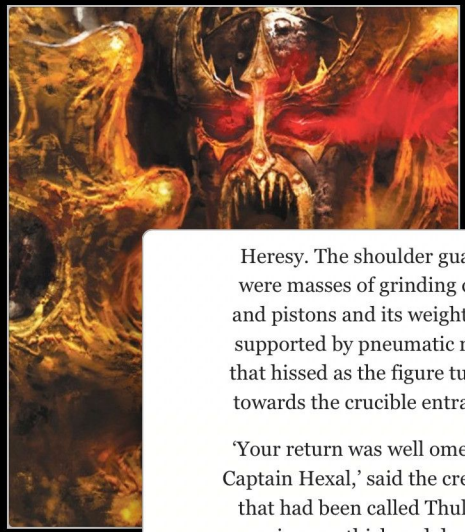


Over the anvil stood a figure taller than any Space Marine. It was encased in armour so gnarled and jagged it looked like it had accrued over thousands of years rather than being forged by any hand. Beneath it somewhere was an ancient mark of armour, but Lysander could not recognise it from any of the illustrations he recalled depicting the days of the Horus Heresy. The shoulder guards were masses of grinding cogs

KRAEGON THUL, MALODRAX

Helge C Balzer





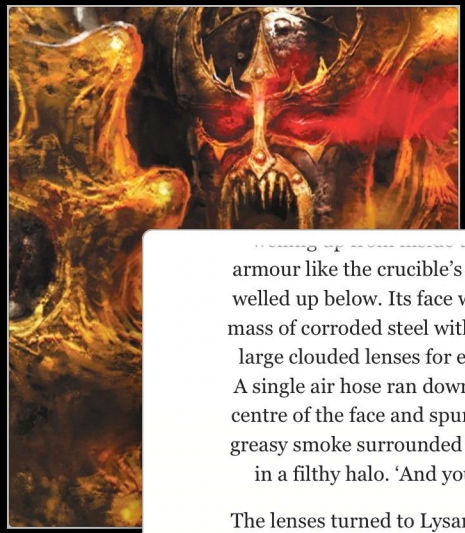


Heresy. The shoulder guards were masses of grinding cogs and pistons and its weight was supported by pneumatic rams that hissed as the figure turned towards the crucible entrance.

'Your return was well omened, Captain Hexal,' said the creature that had been called Thul. Its voice was thick and deep, welling up from inside the armour like the crucible's fires welled up below. Its face was a mass of corroded steel with two large clouded lenses for eyes. A single air hose ran down the

KRAEGON THUL, MALODRAX
Helge C Balzer





armour like the crucible's fires welled up below. Its face was a mass of corroded steel with two large clouded lenses for eyes. A single air hose ran down the centre of the face and spurts of greasy smoke surrounded Thul in a filthy halo. 'And you.'

The lenses turned to Lysander.

'Would that I could make you understand why you are here. That you could see through our eyes, we who were abandoned by the same Terra you swear by.'

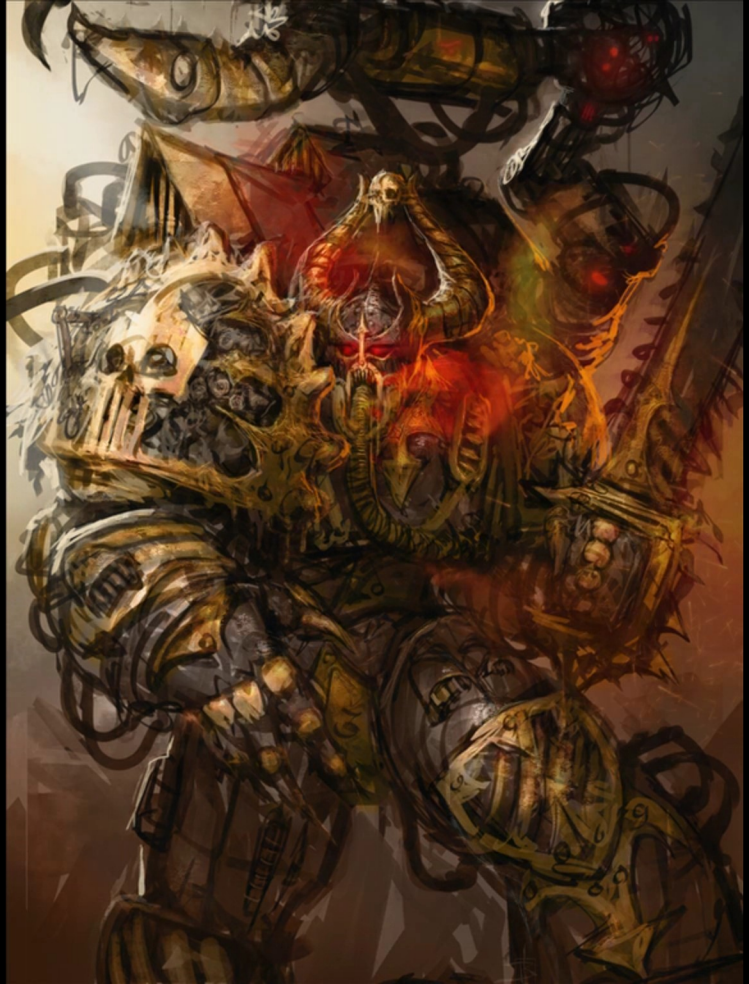


KRAEGON THUL, MALODRAX

Helge C Balzer





















MORTARION'S HEART
Jon Sullivan





Destiny. It would always come back to destiny.

'I am the spear of light that will drive out the darkness,' said Draigo, his iron glare fixed upon his foe. 'I shall become the scourge of all daemon-kin and devil-spawn. The warp itself shall know my name and despair.'

His eyes shone brightly within his helm. The Titansword flared with the growing psionic charge

MORTARION'S HEART
Jon Sullivan



with the growing psionic charge, purple flame coruscating along the blade's edge.

'I defy you, "Death Lord" – I defy you as I defy all your kind, and I shall not rest until the galaxy is cleansed. The Emperor's divine retribution for your unspeakable sins is at hand, and I alone am the agent of His true will. None since noble and mighty Janus himself, First Lord of the Chapter, have known such holy rapture and glory as I shall.'



MORTARION'S HEART
Jon Sullivan







OVERFIEND
Clint Langley





The Overfiend's reflexes were daemonic. A massive hand snatched up Ba'birin. The grip was adamantine. Ba'birin slashed the blade across the xenos monstrosity's forehead. The Overfiend howled and crushed him into the scrap. It was like being hammered by a Dreadnought's power fist. His helmet cracked in two. The Overfiend raised his fist. Ba'birin jerked up, rolled down slope. The fist came

OVERFIEND
Clint Langley



down-slope. The fist came down on air and wreckage. Ba'birin stood and jabbed his chainsword between leg plates, sawing at the ork's tendons. The Overfiend stumbled forwards and dropped to a knee. And still he was fast. Faster than anything that huge had a right to be. He pivoted, shooter blasting out indiscriminate hell.

Fast. Too fast.

The blow knocked Ba'birin down into the debris. He



OVERFIEND
Clint Langley





jumped back up, head ringing. The Overfiend had turned to face him. The ork brought his fist down hard enough to shatter marble. Iron fragments flew from the meteor impact. Ba'birin lunged, blade whirring at the Overfiend's face.

The other Salamanders had crossed the top of the hill of debris. They were almost here. They were too far. He had to give Ha'garen a few more seconds. This was the anvil on which his destiny was being shaped. He would make sure it

OVERFIEND
Clint Langley





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OVERFIEND
Clint Langley







RYNN'S WORLD
Jon Sullivan



From the treeline all around the ork camp, the bark of bolter-fire sounded in short, sharp, tightly-controlled bursts. Each of the Crimson Fists had already picked his target and lined it up before the order was given. On Kantor's command, the first lives were taken. Explosive headshots sent a dozen carcasses slumping to the ground, blood pumping out in great fountains



RYNN'S WORLD
Jon Sullivan





the ground, blood pumping out in great fountains.

Cortez, Viejo and Segala each bore power fists of their own, and they employed them to deadly effect now, punching and ripping at anything that came within range. The other Fists carried long combat blades with monomolecular edges and cruel serrations. These they wielded with the cold efficiency that many decades of daily practice had given them. They slashed and stabbed at the arteries and vital

RYNN'S WORLD
Jon Sullivan



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RYNN'S WORLD
Jon Sullivan



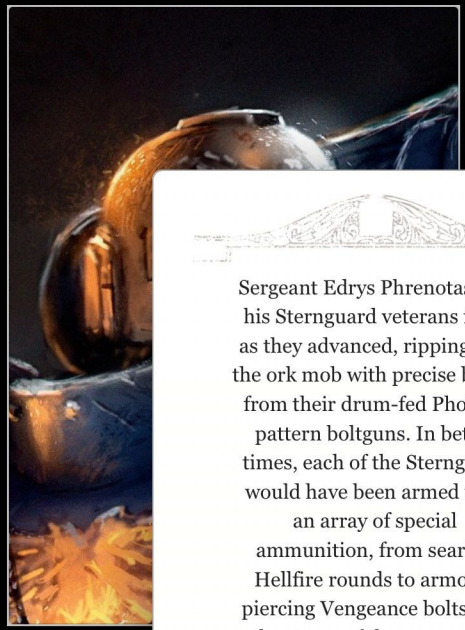






STERNGUARD VETERAN, THE WAR FOR RYNN'S WORLD
Sam Lamont

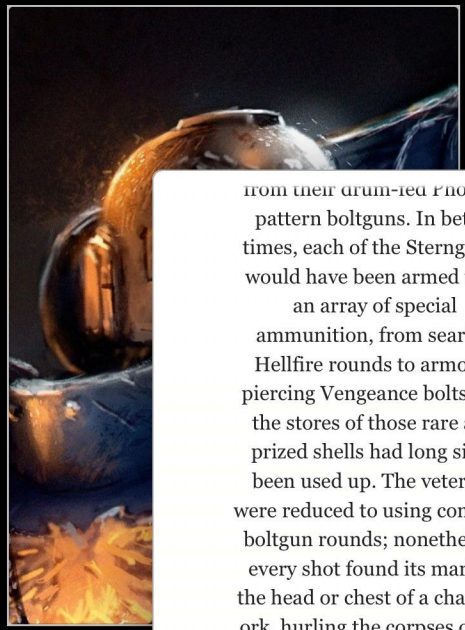




Sergeant Edrys Phrenotas and his Sternguard veterans fired as they advanced, ripping into the ork mob with precise bursts from their drum-fed Phobos-pattern boltguns. In better times, each of the Sternguard would have been armed with an array of special ammunition, from searing Hellfire rounds to armour-piercing Vengeance bolts, but the stores of those rare and prized shells had long since been used up. The veterans were reduced to using common

STERNGUARD VETERAN,
THE WAR FOR RYNN'S WORLD
Sam Lamont





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STERNGUARD VETERAN,
THE WAR FOR RYNN'S WORLD
Sam Lamont


MORTIS





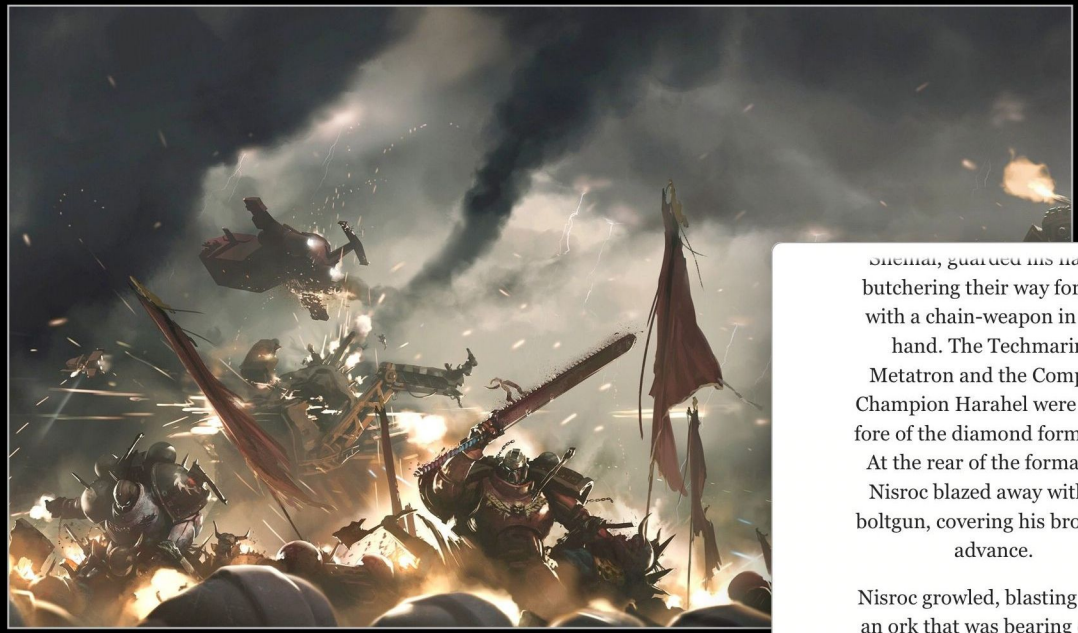
BLOOD IN THE MACHINE
Kai Lim





‘I. Am. Wrath!’

Beside Seth, the five members of his command squad cut into the mass of orks with the same unrelenting ferocity. The veterans, Nathaniel and Shemal, guarded his flanks, butchering their way forward with a chain-weapon in each hand. The Techmarine Metatron and the Company Champion Harahel were at the





Sheimal, guarded his flanks, butchering their way forward with a chain-weapon in each hand. The Techmarine Metatron and the Company Champion Harahel were at the fore of the diamond formation. At the rear of the formation, Nisroc blazed away with his boltgun, covering his brothers' advance.

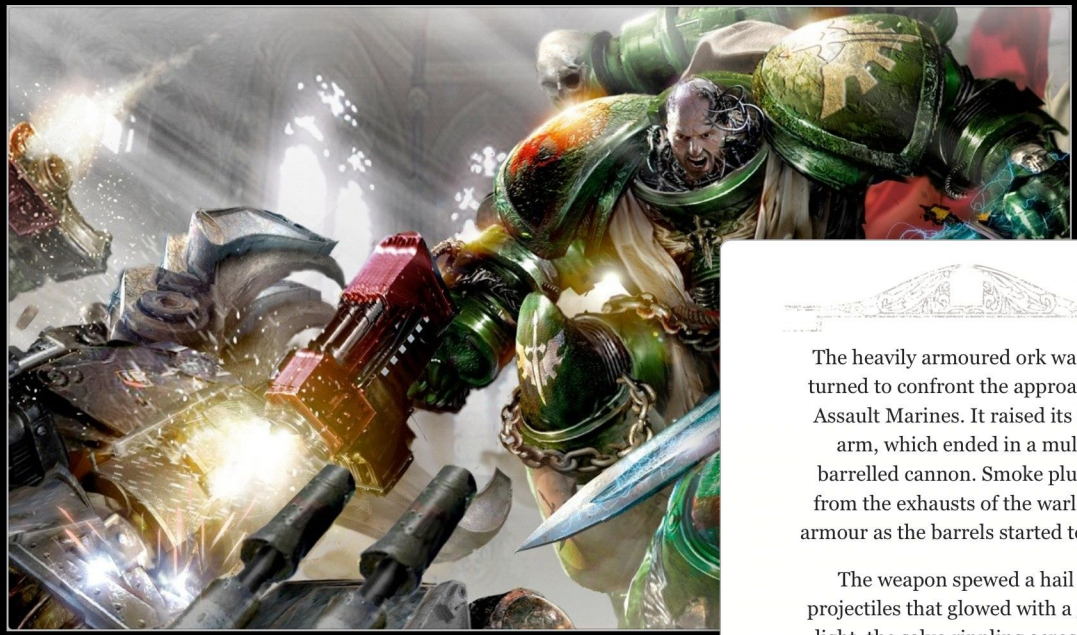
Nisroc growled, blasting apart an ork that was bearing down on him with a barbed cleaver. 'Master Seth, to your left.'







THE PURGING OF KADILLUS
Jon Sullivan

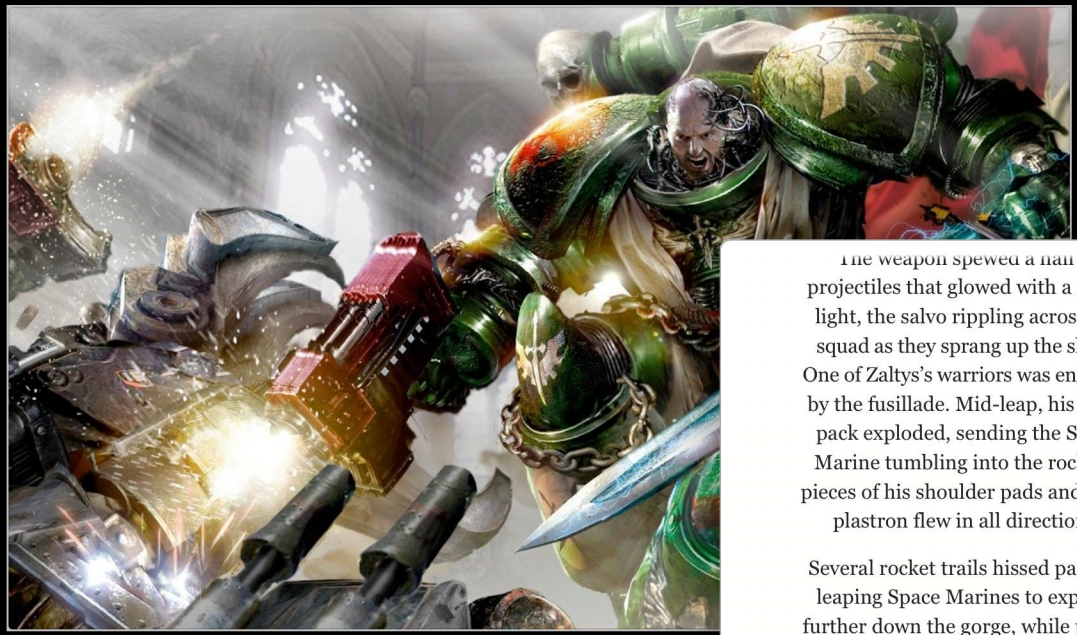


The heavily armoured ork warlord turned to confront the approaching Assault Marines. It raised its right arm, which ended in a multi-barrelled cannon. Smoke plumed from the exhausts of the warlord's armour as the barrels started to spin.

The weapon spewed a hail of projectiles that glowed with a green light, the salvo rippling across the squad as they sprang up the slope. One of Zaltys's warriors was engulfed by the fusillade. Mid-leap, his jump



THE PURGING OF KADILLUS
Jon Sullivan



The weapon spewed a hail of projectiles that glowed with a green light, the salvo rippling across the squad as they sprang up the slope. One of Zaltys's warriors was engulfed by the fusillade. Mid-leap, his jump pack exploded, sending the Space Marine tumbling into the rocks as pieces of his shoulder pads and chest plastron flew in all directions.

Several rocket trails hissed past the leaping Space Marines to explode further down the gorge, while pulses of plasma screeched through the squad like miniature stars.



THE PURGING OF KADILLUS
Jon Sullivan

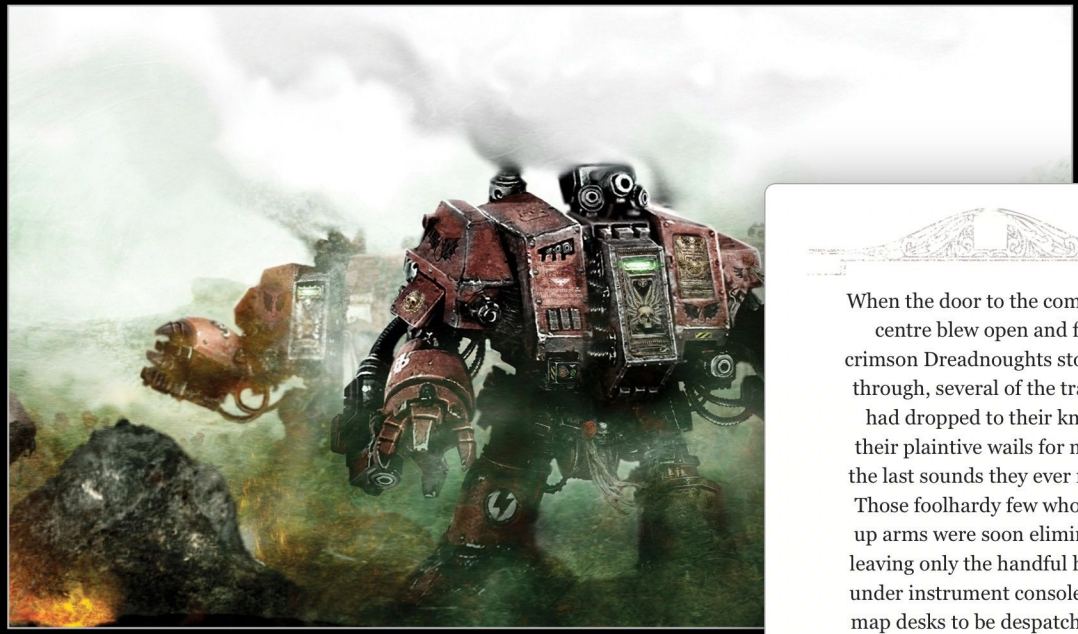








THE STROMARK MASSACRE
Clint Langley

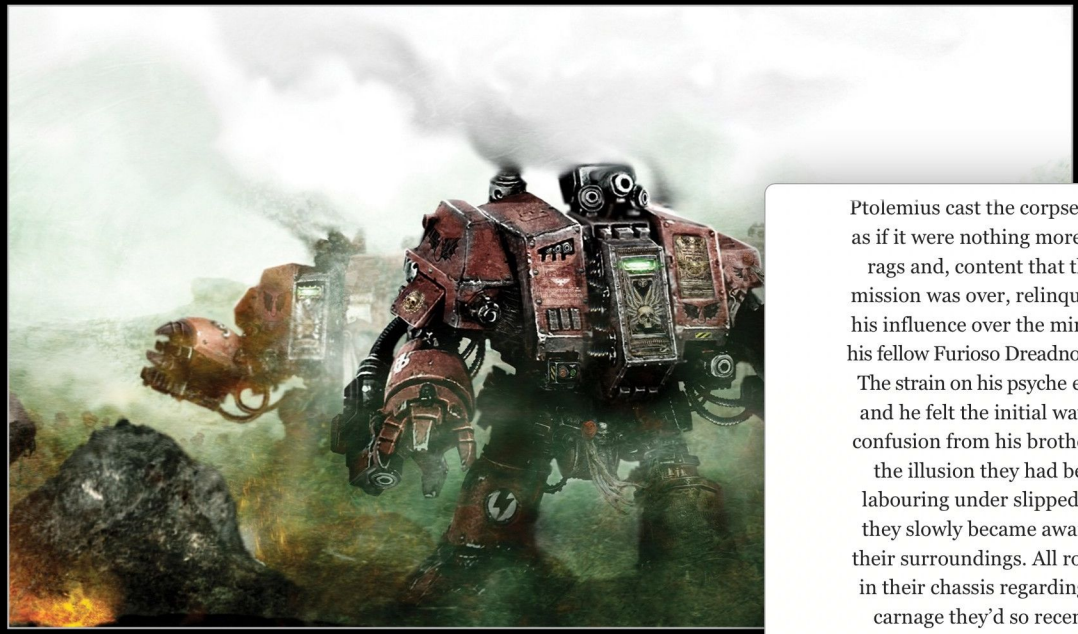




When the door to the command centre blew open and five crimson Dreadnoughts stomped through, several of the traitors had dropped to their knees, their plaintive wails for mercy the last sounds they ever made. Those foolhardy few who took up arms were soon eliminated leaving only the handful hiding under instrument consoles and map desks to be despatched by The Pent.

Ptolemius cast the corpse aside as if it were nothing more than

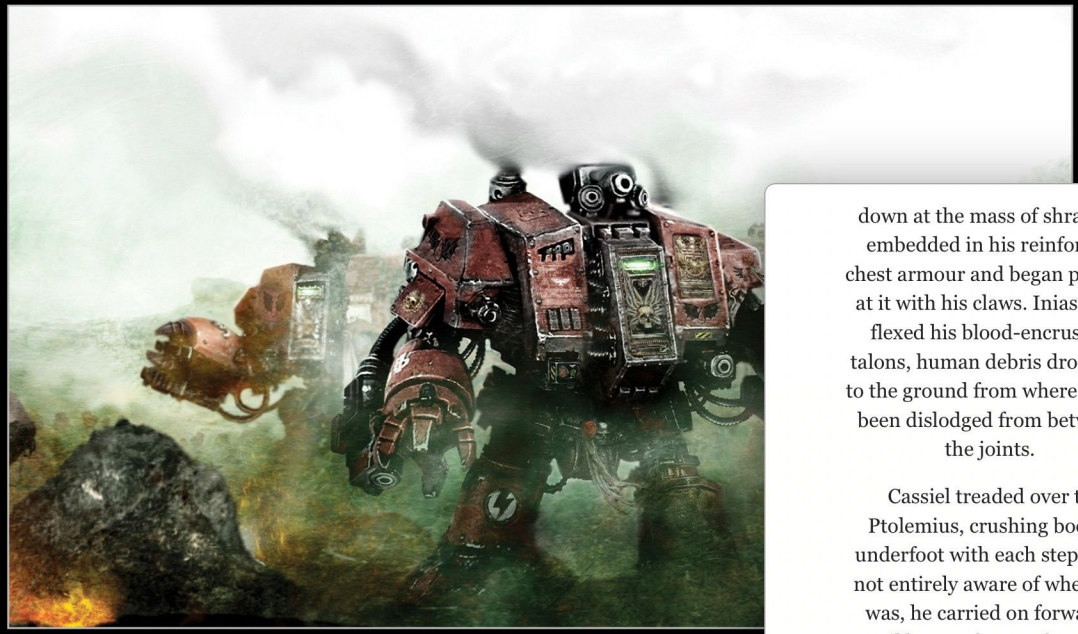
THE STROMARK MASSACRE
Clint Langley





Ptolemius cast the corpse aside as if it were nothing more than rags and, content that their mission was over, relinquished his influence over the minds of his fellow Furioso Dreadnoughts. The strain on his psyche eased and he felt the initial wave of confusion from his brothers as the illusion they had been labouring under slipped and they slowly became aware of their surroundings. All rotated in their chassis regarding the carnage they'd so recently wrought, taking in the product of their rage. Torriel looked down at the mass of shrapnel

THE STROMARK MASSACRE
Clint Langley





down at the mass of shrapnel embedded in his reinforced chest armour and began picking at it with his claws. Iniastigon flexed his blood-encrusted talons, human debris dropping to the ground from where it had been dislodged from between the joints.

Cassiel treaded over to Ptolemius, crushing bodies underfoot with each step. Still not entirely aware of where he was, he carried on forwards until he was face-to-face with the Librarian.

'Did we win brother? Did we





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'Did we win brother? Did we fulfil our oath and bring yet more glory for the Angels?'

THE STROMARK MASSACRE
Clint Langley



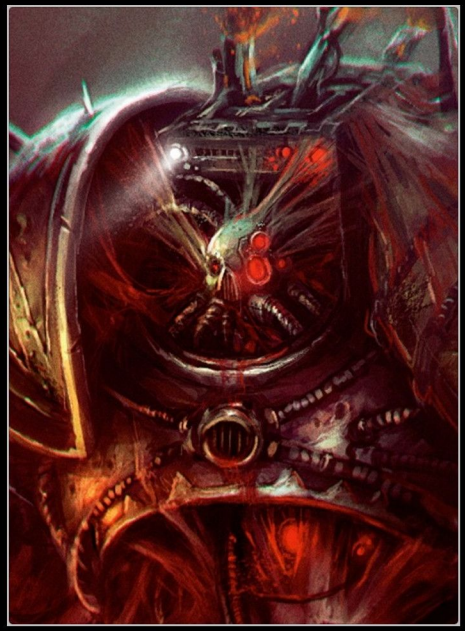


SONS OF WRATH

Kai Lim







IRON WARRIOR,
THE SIEGE OF CASTELLAX
Sam Lamont







THE SIEGE OF CASTELLAX

Jon Sullivan











PANDORAX
Kai Lim































VEIL OF DARKNESS

Jon Sullivan







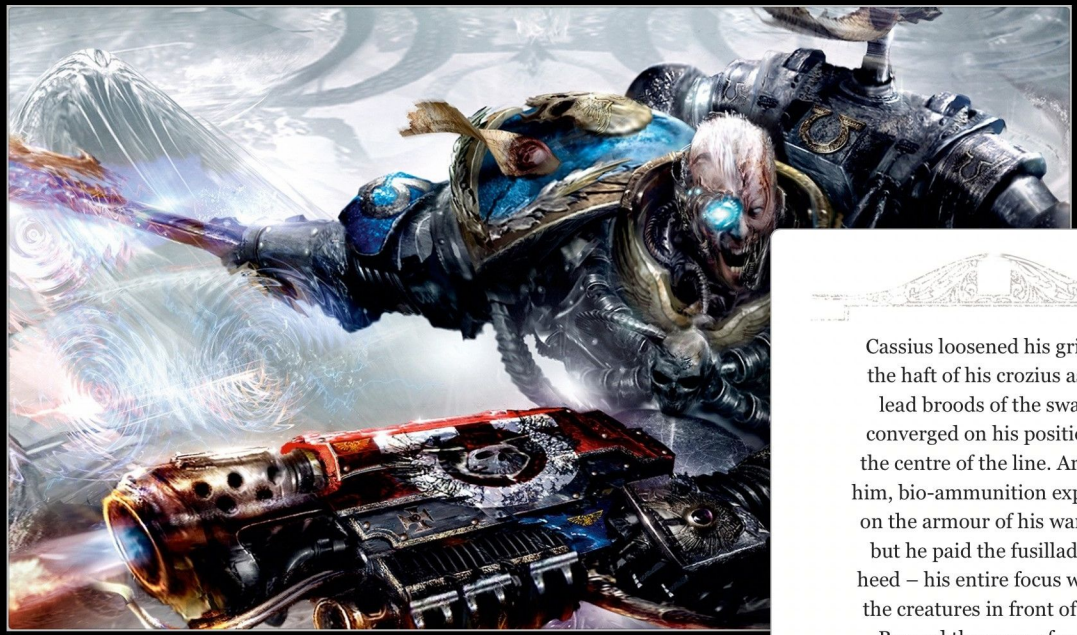






CATECHISM OF HATE

Jon Sullivan

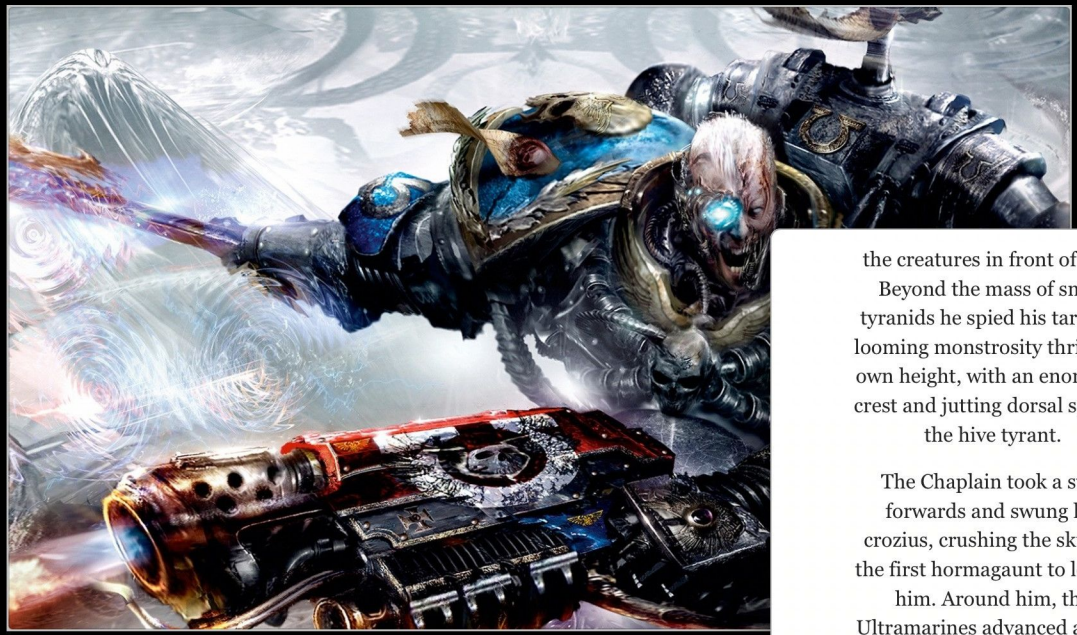




Cassius loosened his grip on the haft of his crozius as the lead broods of the swarm converged on his position at the centre of the line. Around him, bio-ammunition exploded on the armour of his warriors but he paid the fusillade no heed – his entire focus was on the creatures in front of him. Beyond the mass of small tyranids he spied his target, a looming monstrosity thrice his own height, with an enormous

CATECHISM OF HATE

Jon Sullivan



the creatures in front of him. Beyond the mass of small tyranids he spied his target, a looming monstrosity thrice his own height, with an enormous crest and jutting dorsal spines: the hive tyrant.

The Chaplain took a step forwards and swung his crozius, crushing the skull of the first hormagaunt to leap at him. Around him, the Ultramarines advanced apace, their weapons tearing through the first wave of tyranids.



CATECHISM OF HATE
Jon Sullivan




Jon Sullivan 2011





THE PLAGUES OF ORATH

Kai Lim























MALODRAX
Clint Langley





The brood mother brought her chainsword – the chainsword Lysander had given her – up towards him. Lysander caught it against his own chainblade and the two screeched as their teeth ground against one another. Lysander was face to face with the daemon, and the stench of her was almost enough to knock him out.

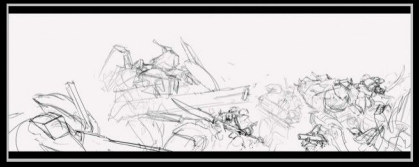
'Stay,' she gasped.

Lysander drew back his fist and plunged it into her face. Bone and teeth splintered. Foul-smelling gore spattered across his face.

MALODRAX
Clint Langley

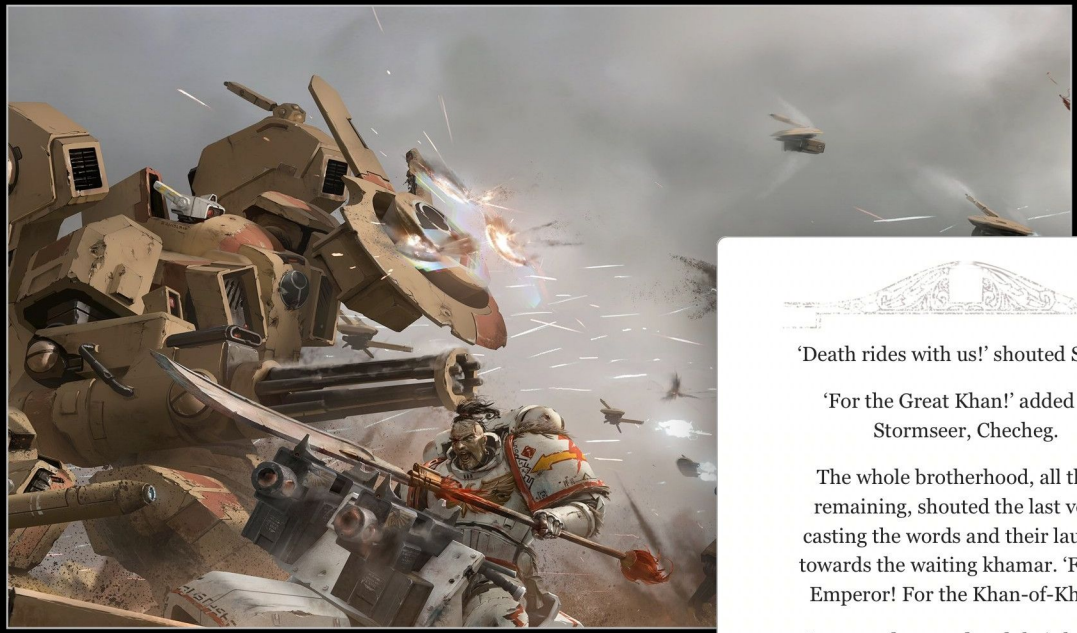


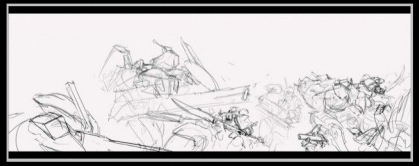




THE SHAPE OF THE HUNT

Kai Lim





‘Death rides with us!’ shouted Suljuq.

‘For the Great Khan!’ added the Stormseer, Checheg.

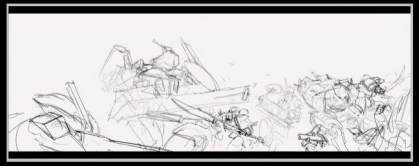
The whole brotherhood, all those remaining, shouted the last verse, casting the words and their laughter towards the waiting khamar. ‘For the Emperor! For the Khan-of-Khans!’

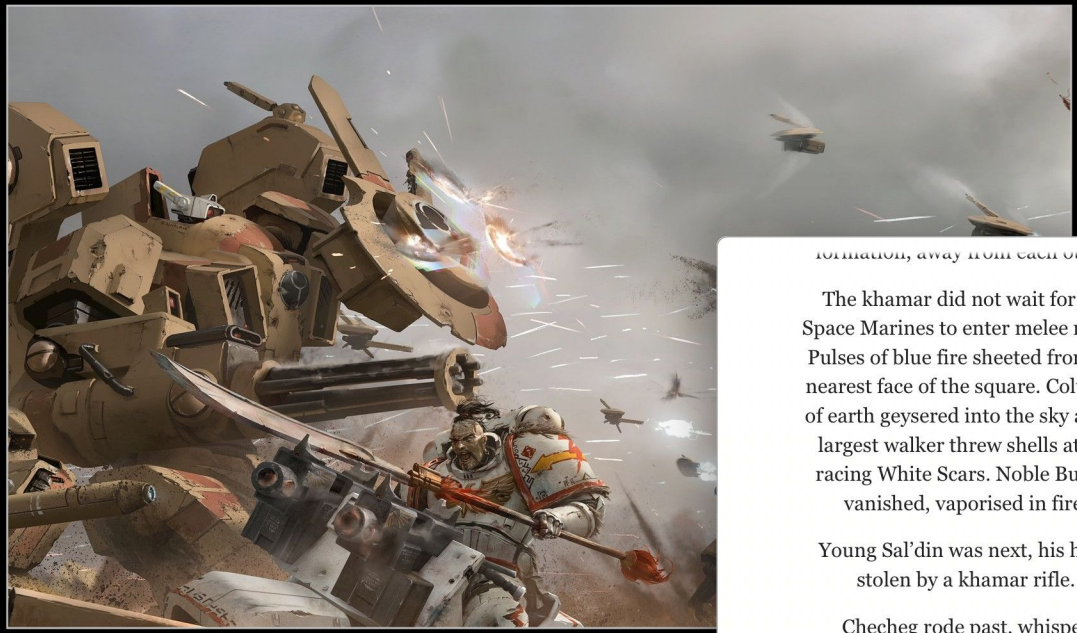
Iron steeds roared and their bolters began firing. Gaps opened in the xenos line as pinpoint shots from

began firing. Gaps opened in the xenos line as pinpoint shots from mass-reactive shells found their marks. They spread out, presenting a broad front, forcing the khamar to widen the square. All the while, they fired. All the while, they killed. All the while, they laughed.

They dashed in close, then they blew apart. They galloped out of formation, away from each other.

The khamar did not wait for the Space Marines to enter melee range. Pulses of blue fire sheeted from the nearest face of the square. Columns



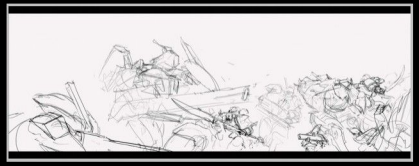


formation, away from each other.

The khamar did not wait for the Space Marines to enter melee range. Pulses of blue fire sheeted from the nearest face of the square. Columns of earth geysered into the sky as the largest walker threw shells at the racing White Scars. Noble Burilgi vanished, vaporised in fire.

Young Sal'din was next, his head stolen by a khamar rifle.

Checheg rode past, whispering invocations to the heavens, to the Great Khan, to the Emperor.

























HUNT FOR VOLDORIUS

Jon Sullivan





THE ARTISTS...

HELGE C. BALZER

Helge C. Balzer produced internal artwork for the Space Marines Battles titles *Malodrax* and *Pandorax*. He was born in 1979 in Northern Germany and from his teenage years, he has worked in various artistic fields. He studied 3D computer animation and concept art and worked as a matte painter, modeller and animator. He currently lives in Marburg, Germany, working as a freelance illustrator, concept artist and art director in the movie and games industries.

CLINT LANGLEY

Clint Langley is one of Black Library's most prolific novel artists, responsible for covers for the Gaunt's Ghosts, Ciaphas Cain, Chronicles of Malus Darkblade and Necromunda series, amongst many others. He also produced art for the Warhammer 40,000 collectable card game and comic strips for *Inferno!* and *Warhammer Monthly*, as well as art for the licensed Warhammer 40,000 roleplaying games. He lives with his family in East Sussex, where he studied art and design at Hastings College.

SAM LAMONT

Sam Lamont has provided internal artwork for many Black Library products, including the Space Marine Battles titles *Siege of Castellax*, *Traitor's Gorge*, *Armageddon*, *Death of Integrity*, *Damnos*, *Pandorax* and *Damocles*. He also contributed art to the Horus Heresy titles *Brotherhood of the Storm*, *Corax: Soulforge* and *Tallarn: Executioner*. He worked for Forge World for three years, contributing to their Imperial Armour, Warhammer Forge and Horus Heresy books, as well as to several Warhammer 40,000 Codexes. He is currently a freelance illustrator and concept artist.

CHEOL JOO LEE

Cheol Joo Lee first worked in the Warhammer 40,000 universe as concept artist on the Dawn of War videogames. Since then, he has produced dozens of covers for Black Library, notably for the Salamanders and Warhammer Heroes series, *The Emperor's Gift*, *Valedor* and the Space Marine Battles anthology *The War for Rynn's World*. His cover for *Skarsnik* was shortlisted for the David Gemmell Ravenheart Award in 2014, and his art has been exhibited across North America. He lives in Canada.



KAI LIM

Kai Lim's Black Library credits include the covers for *Damocles*, *Armageddon*, *Blood and Fire*, the Plagues of Orath novellas and the Soul Drinkers omnibuses, He is a co-owner at Imaginary Friends Studios, a 10-year-old entertainment design outfit based out of Singapore that does everything from graphic novels to conceptual design for film, animation, games and advertising. The only thing he adores more than his craft is maybe giant, screaming, bleeding robots waging epic war across distant stars against seemingly impossible odds. And milky tea.

SLAWOMIR MANIAK

Slawomir Maniak's Black Library work includes the Space Marine Battles novel *The Death of Antagonis*, the Mars trilogy, the Orion trilogy and the audio drama *Red & Black*. He was born in Gdansk, Poland, and lives there now. He started as a self-taught artist and has been in digital art for over ten years. He also works as a conceptual artist and has contributed ideas to many well-known universes and franchises.

RHYS PUGH

Rhys Pugh produced the cover for the Black Library novel *Commissar* as well as internal illustrations for the Space Marine Battles books *The Death of Antagonis* and *Legion of the Damned* and the Horus Heresy novella *Brotherhood of the Storm*. He has worked extensively on Forge World's range of Imperial Armour and Horus Heresy books, as well as doing concept art and 3D modelling for various companies. He was born on a farm in Aberystwyth and now lives in Nottingham.

JON SULLIVAN

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TALES OF WAR



++Target #70443 Heloth is neutralised! Repeat, Heloth is neutralised. We have first blood! Recall the fighter wings. Helm, bring us around. We'll see which of these other xenos brutes still hungers for a taste of our guns after that! Ordnance control, commence your–

Say again, my lord, say again.

Damn. Emergency, emergency. Reset battle condition. Requesting permission to re-engage the hive ship Heloth. We'll blast that dead beast right out of the Mirali sky.++

++Vox-log transcript from the battle-barge Honour's Might, immediately prior to the historic last stand of the Scythes of the Emperor at the Giant's Coffin bastion on Miral Prime, 992.M41++

HELOTH

L J GOULDING

Hive ship. Bio-wreckage. Ruined mother of monsters, and the twitching birth-sac of insidious, alien horror.

#70443 *Heloth* was all of these things, and more besides.

The stench of her burning choked the jungle – flakes of sticky ash drifted in a nauseating rain, settling amidst the mud and gore slicks of the area around the crash site. Slain out in the void, she had come tumbling like a clutch of falling stars to smite Miral Prime with her immense, smouldering bulk, spread now across an area the size of a small city. Little of the original landscape remained beneath her, and the fire was still spreading.

Even in death, it seemed that the hive ships of the tyranids might visit destruction upon their prey-worlds.

Thus had Veteran-Brother Menele's thoughts been darkened as Second Company pulled back to their Rhino transports. With the horrendous losses they had suffered, it had not been an orderly withdrawal so much as a rout, though his admittedly wounded pride in the Chapter would never allow him to admit it.

On the bouncing, shuddering floor of the Rhino's troop compartment, Captain Agaitas was dying. His armoured midriff had been torn open, the blood loss catastrophic. Attended by the Apothecary, he writhed and groaned in agony, cursing the xenos and rolling his blinded eyes in a face raw with fresh burns.

'They... have us...' he gurgled. 'The Coffin... will... fall...'

Menele looked to the Apothecary, who shook his head grimly. He was not a member of Agaitas's command squad, and so Menele couldn't recall his name. It hardly seemed to matter, now.

Brother Vasilis crouched against the far wall, clutching the ragged company standard tightly in his gauntlets. The fabric still steamed where it had been splattered with bio-acid from the attack that had killed Kostis and Gallagar, and Agaitas's last command had been for Vasilis to raise it up again from the mud. 'The noble horsemen of Sotha do not lie at the feet of abominations,' the captain had said, right before one such abomination ended him. It was Menele who had ordered the retreat.

Like all of his company-brethren, he knew every stitch of the banner as though it were his own flesh: Conabos, the dark horse, rampant upon a chequered mosaic field and overlaid with the golden scythe of Second Company. None of them would see it lost to the tyranid onslaught, here on this unworthy and barbaric world. The Scythes of the Emperor had already lost too much.

The Rhino's internal comm-link chimed. '*Two more large hostiles, coming around to outflank us from the south-east. Moving to evade.*'

Menele glanced back through the transport's viewing aperture. Their driver was pushing the engine to its maximum load, the blazing trees and undergrowth rendered as a fiery blur surrounding the column as they sped from the crash site. Behind them, Third Squad's Rhino was aflame, the hull's gold and sable Chapter livery blistering away in the heat, and their driver was struggling to keep pace.

Further back still, the Scythes' pursuer was gaining.

It towered over the jungle, its great forelimbs thundering through the burning trees with each heavy step, toppling and shattering their trunks in cascades of bright embers. The titanic beast let out a roar loud enough to rattle the troop compartment around Menele even over the shriek of the protesting engines, before spraying another wild flurry of bio-plasma bolts into the Rhino convoy.

Each impact was a burst of green-white fire that flashed like summer lightning. Most tore harmlessly into the ground, showering scorched earth and sickly glowing fragments of wood, but he saw one strike another transport in the left frontal track housing. It was only a glancing hit, but something sheared off within the mechanism and sent the vehicle slewing madly to crash into a protruding spar of bio-debris from the fallen *Heloth*, some five metres thick. The Rhino's momentum lifted its rear end clear off the ground before hammering back down, the engine stalled out.

Menele cursed, and slammed the aperture slot closed before turning back to his brothers. 'That's Ninth Squad. They struck out hard.'

He looked down at Agaitas, whose delirious curses had given way to what looked like murmured prayers – his slack, bloody lips were moving, though barely any sound seemed to escape them.

Several of the battered warriors inside the Rhino regarded their captain with grim acceptance, the masks of their faceplates appearing almost morose in the compartment's dull light. But Menele knew that, as disheartening as it might be, no purpose of morale or honour was served in allowing Agaitas to linger on in this moribund state, and he could not stand by and watch it go on any longer.

He gripped the young Apothecary's shoulder pad, and spoke firmly. 'Give him peace.'

The Apothecary lifted his gaze from his patient – Throne, the lad could not have been more than a decade out of the Scout company, Menele realised. Were the survivors from Sotha spread so thinly that this was the best they could offer as replacement for Brother Musides? Nonetheless, the old veteran kept his thoughts to himself.

'Give him peace,' he repeated. 'Our mission to secure *Heloth* has failed, and our brother-captain has already paid the ultimate price. Take from him the Chapter's due, and be done with it.'

No one else spoke. The Rhino bucked and slewed, the track suspension squealing as they sped on.

The Apothecary nodded slowly. He reached for his pistol-like carnifex – Menele gritted his teeth at the bitter, bitter irony of the name – and placed it against Agaitas's temple with reverent care. When activated, the pneumatic

mechanism would deliver a euthanizing metal bolt into the brainpan of the patient, ending their suffering in a painless instant. There was no Chaplain to administer last rites, nor indeed any words that would make this grim duty any easier, nor soothe the passing of his noble battle-brother.

The captain held out a trembling hand towards Brother Vasilis and the company standard. His fingers grasped for what his sightless eyes could not find.

Then, with a loud *clack* that made Menele start in spite of himself, the carnifex did its work. Agaitas's hand fell to the floor, and he dropped limply into the crook of the Apothecary's waiting arm.

But the respectful silence that should have followed was cut all too short.

A monumental impact close by hurled Menele and two others across the compartment, and the Rhino's engine note rose sharply as the tracks whirled in the empty air. Menele slammed face-first into the bulkhead, feeling gravity shift around them as the transport rolled; then he was skidding back across the ceiling panels, with Agaitas's dead weight across his legs.

Someone's boltgun went off in the crush. The Apothecary's pristine breastplate exploded in a shower of red.

'Pile ou–' Menele began, just as the rear hatch of the Rhino burst inwards in a devastating flash of green fire.

Like *Heloth*, they too were burning now.

Consciousness returned to Menele slowly and fitfully. His limbs were heavy, but he felt armoured hands raising him up.

Three of them stumbled clear of the wreckage – three, from the seven that had boarded. Vasilis still bore the standard, walking the pole like an oversized crutch as he helped Menele back up the incline. Beyond them lay another Rhino – Third Squad's? – its rear section completely obliterated by a direct hit, and pieces of armoured bodies littered the smouldering earth all around. Bolter fire rang out in the middle-distance, and Menele caught sight of battle-weary survivors from Ninth and Sixth Squad falling back by sections from what remained of the tree line. Some bore power falces, the blades slick with tyranid blood where their field generators had failed under the sheer weight of the enemy's number.

And after them, between the blackened trees, came the xenos.

In the shadow of the bladed giants that were stalking the Scythes, lesser tyranid warrior-forms leapt and howled and hunted, with their nightmarish, multifarious forms silhouetted against the flames. Another deafening roar from the nearest bio-Titan shook the burning jungle, only this time much closer and answered by hooting calls from the beast's approaching kin.

How could there be so many? The hive ship was dead...

His system already pushed to the limit by supra-hormones and combat stimms from his battleplate, Menele forced himself to stand unaided, and took stock of the situation.

Then he drew his chainsword, and opened a tactical vox-channel.

'Brothers, to me. We will stand as one.'

Affirmatives echoed back to him, all sense of squad-level command long abandoned – Menele counted fewer than thirty ident returns on his visor display. Brother Vasilis stood at his back, firm and resolute, planting the standard and letting the banner unfurl in the fiery breeze.

'Here they come,' the warrior muttered, drawing his own blade with his free hand.

The tyranids surged forwards, catching the slowest of the retreating Space Marines even as the rest formed up in an improvised defensive cordon. Menele snarled, and made a series of swiping gestures with his chainsword.

'Regroup! Two romphaean lines... Fire at will!'

The first xenos fell to the thunder of mass-reactive fire, their sinewy bodies tumbling into the ashen mud. Severed limbs and ropes of bright ichor flew through the air.

But still they came.

Striding forwards, Menele loosed carefully aimed shots from his bolt pistol, dropping three gaunt beasts before they could close with the first defensive line. 'Hold rank!' he bellowed, stooping to retrieve a fallen falx and tossing it over to one of his unarmed battle-brothers. 'Prepare to engage!'

With bolt shells whipping over their heads, the Scythes' first line readied themselves. Menele took his place in the line too, staring hard in hatred at their xenos attackers as they closed the gap between them.

The tyranids swept over them like a living, bladed tide. Swinging axe, chainsword and falx alike with deadly, practised skill, nonetheless the warriors of Second Company might as well have been trying to reap the great oceans of Sotha with their blades. Menele hacked again and again, but felt the battle-brother to his right fall beneath the xenos assault – then the warrior to his left. Menele spun and fired point-blank into the gaping, fanged maw of a tyranid beast, then came about to snatch a glance back to the second defensive line.

The moment of inattention almost cost him his head. Literally.

A barbed claw came down over his shoulder and struck into his plastron. He twisted with the blow, driving his chainsword hard into the braying tyranid warrior's upper shoulder, but the strength of the thing's attack sprawled him from his feet and sent the embedded forelimb raking up his visor. Ceramite and plasteel tore with the sheer brute force of it, and Menele's helmet twisted painfully about his face as it was wrenched half-free of the armour's neck seal.

He crashed down with the wounded beast on top of him, his vision crazed by the sudden loss of half his faceplate. He blinked hard with his exposed right eye, trying to shake away the disorienting overlay of his damaged auto-senses.

And he realised that he was gazing directly into the cold, predatory eyes of his foe.

Without thinking, he rammed the chainsword into its abdomen and gunned the motors, carving through chitinous exoskeleton and softer tissues with equal ease. The beast convulsed with the blade's action, gore spraying Menele's armour and staining the mud beneath them both, and it swatted at him with jerking, palsied limbs. Finally, he snatched up his pistol and blew out the top of the tyranid's crested skull.

The first line had dissolved into half a dozen smaller melees, but the second held true. His brothers fired indiscriminately into the alien throng, or fought them blade-to-claw in the early dawn light. He dragged himself to his feet and hacked down some foul winged creature as it swooped for him, and for just one moment he dared to believe that the remnants of Second Company might hold out until Chapter Master Thorcyra could send–

A shadow fell over them all. The shadow of the bio-Titan. Its roar almost knocked Menele from his feet.

It opened fire into the Scythes' position with its great, fleshy weapon analogues. Bio-plasma burned through armoured Space Marines and tyranid warrior-forms alike, hurling them aside like so many insects. Menele saw Brother Vasilis obliterated where he stood – one second he was there and the next he was gone, and the tattered, scorched company standard was hurled down once more.

Dazed and exhausted, Menele staggered through the carnage towards it. The horsemen of Sotha would never fall. Second Company would never fall.

Still trading fire and fury with the xenos, the other survivors moved to cover him. Another bio-Titan crested the trees behind them, bellowing at the first as though they might be two bull phantines vying for territory out on the plains.

Menele sank to his knees in the filth, grasping the banner pole and hefting it upright again. Another warrior, his armour scorched by plasma fire, came to aid him.

Then, the wider vox-link crackled. '*...report... status... Second Company...*'

Confused, Menele looked beyond the battle to the rising Miral sun. They had not received communications from the Giant's Coffin bastion since the first attack at *Heloth*. Even so, the voice came through again, more clearly this time.

'*Approaching Chapter forces, report now. Tell us how to help you.*'

He turned to his battle-brothers. 'It's the Coffin – they must have visual on us!' He pressed a finger to the link in the side of his ruined helm and spoke as clearly as he could. 'Coffin, we're surrounded. The Titans took out our air support, and chewed through the column in less than an hour. The jungle is already swarming with tyranid hatchlings from the *Heloth* wreck.'

'How many of you remain? Can you make it to the outer walls?'

Menele scanned the encroaching horde, and the faces of his brethren as they fought against it.

They were exhausted. Spent.

'Unlikely. We're down to–'

Above them, the two bio-Titans lunged at one another, snapping with teeth as long as sword blades, their tread shaking the ground. Menele cried out to those stragglers still engaging the smaller tyranids on the muddy slopes, who might yet be crushed by these great monsters that appeared to have forgotten the original battle entirely.

'Pull back! Pull back, brothers!' He resumed his report as quickly as he could. 'We're down to less than two squads. They hit us hard. The captain is gone, although we're rallied to the company standard. I don't think we're going anywhere, Coffin.'

They all knew it – they had nothing left. Nothing that could wound a bio-Titan at close range. Not a single Devastator, nor heavy support vehicle.

But the bastion at the Giant's Coffin had such weapons in abundance, and now they were within visual range. Menele hoped that he would not have to spell it out for whoever was on the other end of the vox-link.

There was a long pause. '*Second Company. Hold position.*'

'Understood. For Sotha, brother.'

'*Aye. For Sotha.*'

Menele cut the link, and raised his chainsword high. 'Second Company, stand fast! Let the xenos horrors come and bask in the glory of our noble standard!'

The Scythes of the Emperor knew what such an order meant. In short order they pulled back, spending the last of their ammunition as best they could. They raised their voices together in the old Sothan battle hymns, and in laments for their lost brethren. Many gauntleted hands gripped the haft of the banner pole, and as one they held it aloft even as the tyranids tore into them.

The shrieking thunder of incoming artillery strikes drowned out their songs, and their death-screams. The standard of Second Company fluttered, ragged, in the backwash of each colossal detonation. Menele and his battle-brothers were united until the end in their defiance of the xenos, with what remained of their lives measured not even in seconds, but in fractured, half-glimpsed instants of indiscriminate annihilation.

And the dark horse Conabos stood, proud as ever, upon the banner's chequered field.



++Brothers.

The viperous eldar pirates who have plagued us time and again have struck across the sector. We marshal our forces now and bring them to battle.

These xenos filth have ravaged Chogoris in the past and struck us grievous blows, not least the death of the mighty Kyublai Khan, my predecessor. By the actions of the Huntmaster, we were avenged on that occasion, but still the aliens owe us a reckoning in blood, and we shall claim it.

Khans, marshal your forces. The White Scars ride!++

++Transcript of the address by Jubal Khan, Chapter Master of the White Scars at the commencement of the Menoptera Purge, 988.M41++

THE THRILL OF THE HUNT

ANTHONY REYNOLDS

He lowers the magnoculars. He has seen enough. The enemy are here; the Hunt will ride before the twin suns set.

His name is Ajai Khan. He was born in the saddle, on a world of wide skies and open plains. He has not truly been human for seventy-three years, but he still remembers.

He squints against the glare of the lower, yellow sun reflecting off the snow. He is not wearing his helmet – he never does when outriding. His face is the colour of tanned leather. His scalp is shaved on the sides, but he wears his hair long on top. It is charcoal-black and bound in a long tail that hangs down his back. Ritual scars mar his high cheeks. They are jagged, and resemble thunder bolts, mirroring the markings acid-etched upon the heavy white plates of his armour.

Ajai Khan stands astride a heavy bike, a big muscular, brutish thing, as he looks down upon the enemy from the edge of a forested bluff. The wind rippling the razor-leafed pines is bone-numbingly cold. It feels good against his skin.

The wind changes abruptly. It is what saves him.

A new scent reaches his nostrils, something exotic that he cannot instantly place, like an unknown, but not unpleasant, mix of spices. It is close. It is... alien.

The enemy are upon him.

His head snaps around and he sees one of them, close. It is coming at him up the lee of the bluff. It is slender, almost spindly, climbing on all fours like an insect, arms and legs splayed. Its armour is a dull grey-green and segmented, and its helm is strangely elongated, ending in jutting mandibles. Its lenses glitter, black and soulless.

He aims and fires. His bolt pistol bucks. There is a distinct double-cough as the bolt is launched from the barrel then ignites, propelling itself towards the target. In the same instant, the bike roars into life beneath him, like a beast angry at having been disturbed from slumber.

The xenos are quick, inhumanly so. The enemy scuttles to the side, avoiding his first shot. It detonates within the rock hidden beneath the snow. He sees more of them now, creeping and arachnid. The time for stealth is past – the xenos rise as one and sprint towards him, running lightly atop the thin crust of snow.

Ajai Khan brings his bike slewing around, kicking up a spray of white, and snaps off two more shots. Both miss their mark, but they at least slow the enemy. Marginally.

Holstering his pistol, he guns the bike. It launches forward with a throaty roar, like a steed given its head. He thumbs firing runes and twin bolters bark. He catches one of the xenos, the closest, with a glancing blow that tears off an arm. Blood sprays across the snow. Even their blood smells wrong. Stray bolts fell a pine, which crashes earthwards with a torturous groan, and kick up snow and ice.

They try to intercept him, slender chain-blades whirring and delicate pistols flashing. Flickers of light spear from their

mandibles and biting pain cuts along his left side. He doesn't have the time or space to draw his long-hafted glaive. He slews his bike into one of them, slamming into it with bone-shattering force. It is hurled away and smashes into a tree. When it falls, its limbs are bent unnaturally beneath it. Then Ajai Khan hunkers down low in the saddle and lays on more power. The bike accelerates willingly.

A chain blade swings at him and he ducks to the side. It rips out a chunk of his fairing. More dart-like flashes strike at him, biting and stinging, but then he is away, hurtling through the forest at speed. The trees flash by him. He knows that he is hurt – he feels blood trickling inside his plate – but he doesn't feel any pain. All he feels is the rush of wind against his face, and he smiles.

There are others in the trees, running on paths parallel to his own. It defies logic, but they are keeping pace with him, sprinting through the shadow of the bladed firs, ghosting him like pack-predators.

This is not how it is meant to be. The White Scars are the hunters. They are not meant to be the hunted.

He leads them on, never slowing, ducking under low-hanging branches and skidding around ice-encased boulders the size of Warhound Titans.

More of them have joined the hunt now. Dart-like jetbikes are accelerating through the trees behind him, closing fast. For a moment, he feels a pang of what might be jealousy, or longing. Once, the Chapter had ridden above the ground. Now, only a handful of jetbikes remain in the Imperium, and Ajai Khan will be unlikely to ever see one, let alone ride to war in the saddle of one of those revered steeds.

He pushes the errant thought aside and veers hard to the right. He hits a snow-covered ridge at speed, launching into the air. He stands in the saddle, keeping balance as the engines scream. He hits the ground hard and accelerates, pushing the bike to its limits. He is in open terrain now, relishing the speed. Ahead is a line of trees, but the enemy are fast; he is not going to make it. He slams on the brakes and brings the back wheel around sharply, spinning to face his pursuers. The time for running is done.

It is almost dark now, and the shadows are long. He unhooks his long-hafted glaive, taking the comforting weight in his hand.

The eldar descend on him, coming over the ridge in a wave. They spread wide to encircle him, thinking that this is the last desperate stand of a prey finally realising it can run no further.

They are wrong.

They are out in the open, halfway between him and the ridge, when they realise their folly. By then it is too late – they have come too far to turn back.

With a deafening roar, his brethren emerge from the tree-line behind him. It is a sight to behold – a full arrowhead of charging White Scars, leaning forward in the saddles of their bikes, glaive-points lowering as they come in for the kill.

The engine of Ajai Khan's bike bellows in greeting and he accelerates sharply, lowering his own glaive. His brethren fall in around him, letting him take the point of the arrowhead.

This is the way that war was meant to be waged – at speed.

Ajai Khan laughs aloud, and his brothers laugh with him as they sweep in for the kill.

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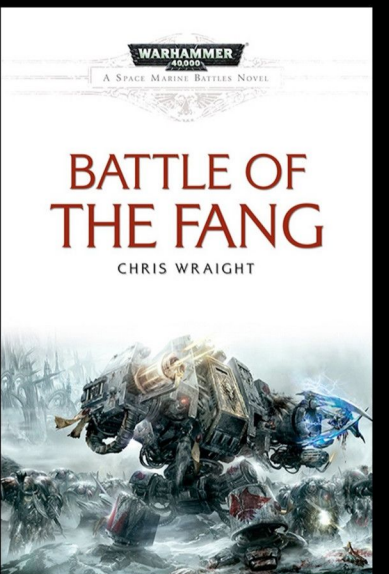
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