

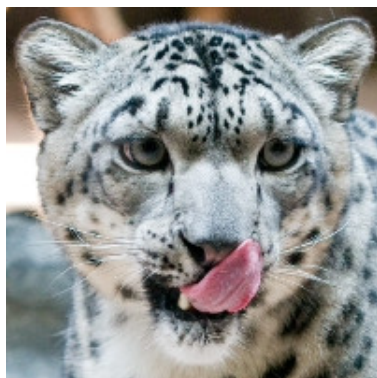
**A Lesson in Darkness - Konrad Curze**  
Horus Heresy Primarchs Audio Drama Sript(2017)

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**LIST OF CHARACTERS:**

- \* Konrad Curze – Primarch of the Night Lords;
  - \* Nivalus – Captain of the Night Lords;
  - \* Tashius Galan – Iterator;
- .....

(approaching footsteps)

Tashius Galan: “Begin transcription”.

Servitor (in a mechanic voice): “Compliance”.

Tashius Galan: “Commission of the compliance of 85-40, dictated by Iterator Tashius Galan and submitted as record to the war council of Terra.

Piamen was a jewel turning in the void. Continents of deep green ringed by vast oceans, wrapped in delicate bands of cloud. She was so like Terra, as our ancestral home had once been. And like Terra mankind lived upon Piamen and thrived<sup>1</sup>.

It had not always been so. Following the cataclysm of Old Night the Piameni languished<sup>2</sup> for centuries beneath wicked aliens that held them in chains. Violent revolution drove the xenos away and for a century Piamen knew peace, alone in the night. A peace that was challenged by the arrival of grand ships. Though these were not the aliens intent on returning Piamen to enslavement. These ships carried humans like those of Piamen.

We came as heralds of the Emperor of mankind, of his uniting of all humanity into a single Imperium. Of progress, of technological and cultural utopia beyond their wildest dreams. All of this we promised to them, if they bent the knee. The Piameni looked back upon their history, upon the bondage<sup>3</sup> they had so recently cast off and rejected us. We begged they reconsider, warning that those who refuse to align with the Emperor’s burgeoning<sup>4</sup> realm would be visited again and not by emissaries. Still they could not bring themselves to give their fate over to the hands of outsiders, even human ones.

Piamen would be free and for a time it was. That freedom ended the moment the Emperor’s promised vengeance translated<sup>5</sup> at the system’s edge.

We failed Piamen. We failed them by what we sent”.

\* \* \*

Piamen Commander (In Piamieni): “Natu Pennemora”.

(soldiers running across the deck)

Weapons filled the hands of Piameni Triari squads sprinting through their flagship. The enemy fleet had arrived in system out of nowhere as if they were part of the void itself. Since that moment the Piameni had been fighting and they were losing.

Voice (In Piamieni over vox): “Volias Todol! Antoris Todol! Creado Todol! Halabu Skilavettis”

A ship after ship from the defense fleet died. Reports filtered through of hulking red-eyed giants rampaging through the lower decks. The Triari clutched their weapons tighter. The Imperial emissaries had warned of knights, gene-wrought gods of war, not monsters. The squad halted at a junction, each man stomach-knotted and static boiled their tongues. Hair rose on arms and necks, ears popped<sup>6</sup> as the air pressure shifted violently. Light and noise from the end of the corridor threw the squad to the deck. The Triari lowered their hands from their faces, scrambling<sup>7</sup> to their feet into a hasty formation. They peered into the darkness blinking away afterimages<sup>8</sup> that stained their sight as oily smoke swirled around their boots. Something was watching them at the end of the passageway, merged with the lightlessness like shadow draped over oil.

(mysterious figure approaching the defenders in a slow stride)

Lightning rushed across hands ending in scything silver talons illuminating an inhumanly tall silhouette. Sparks exposed a gaunt<sup>9</sup> face hidden behind a veil of dark stringy<sup>10</sup> hair. He glinted<sup>11</sup> from a set of grinning teeth filed<sup>12</sup> into points.

Piamen Commander (commanding in Piamieni): “Vim Passak!”

(Konrad Curze slowly approaching the defenders)

The bolts rang from kinetic scatter cannons and bulky spear guns. Any shell that found its mark barely scored<sup>13</sup> the figure’s buzzing<sup>14</sup> plate. He didn’t even break stride. In seconds it was over with only one of the soldiers left amidst the charnel house<sup>15</sup> that had been his comrades.

Last Triari Survivor (pleading in Piamieni): “Bota!”

The man gasped, his weapon falling from his hands as he sank to his knees.

(last survivor breathing hard)

The figure didn't speak the man's language. He had no need to. The Triaris's eyes translated it perfectly.

Last Triaris Survivor (pleading in Piamieni): "Bota! Bota!"

It was the most familiar word in the galaxy. A word the figure linked indelibly<sup>16</sup> to all mankind. A word that made him hate them to his bones. 'Please' ...

Konrad Curze (grimly): "Curze..."

The demigod peered down tilting<sup>17</sup> his head to study the man with cold shark's eyes.

Last Triaris Survivor (hesitating and unsure): "K.... Koz?"

Curze saw hope for an instant, hope that died at the edges of his talons.

(last survivor breathing hard)

Curze ignited his claws splaying them wide and severing the Triaris into bleeding chunks.

(survivor's mangled body parts falling to the deck)

He hadn't even had time to scream. Curze spent several heartbeats watching the blood cock off his talons filling his nose with the familiarity of burning copper. He shifted fractionally, his armored shoulder giving off a soft displeased snarl<sup>18</sup>. The heavy plates of humming ceramite made him uncomfortable, not in any physical sense but rather one of necessity. He stared at the bodies scattered beneath him.

Konrad Curze: "My entire life I wore nothing more than threadbare<sup>19</sup> sackcloth and rags, killing with slivers of metal and broken glass. Simplistic ornaments and implements, but sufficient to my purposes. I never needed any high technology to terminate my environment. Yet I conceded<sup>20</sup>. One of many made after my reclamation<sup>21</sup>. Appearance, they said, a powerful tool to cultivate. The image of the armored knight that seems marrow<sup>22</sup> bound within your race, exemplar of nobility to friend, formidable opponent to foe. Appearance as though I did not render my entire world silent through its use. As though I were ignorant of the power of perception to bend humanity into compliance. I know such truths instinctually, as my creator must have intended. Surely the Emperor knows what lies in his children's hearts. Surely he knows full well what we are and what we will do in the years to come. Or does he simply not care?"

(Night Lords approaching their Primarch)

Boot steps drew the Primarch's attention, yet failed to move him. Squads of midnight-plated warriors passed, the corridor's darkness broken by the gleaming tourmaline<sup>23</sup> of their eye lenses. Seeing Curze the Night Lords faltered<sup>24</sup>. The dilemma was clear in their postures. The desire to kneel in their father's presence so overwhelming, it slowed them to a stilted<sup>25</sup> scraping<sup>26</sup> of ceramite boots. One look from their Captain sent them forward smashing every light source they came across to plunge the warship into darkness.

Curze glimpsed the Captain Nivalus in a puddle of blood upon the deck and his mind draped a skin of flickering images across his vision.

Konrad Curze: "I see a child hold screaming from the prison sprawls beneath Terra. I see Nivalus of the Legion now, rejoicing. His gene sire has been found. He will never again enter battle without the Primarch whose blood beats through his hearts. He and his kindred speak, wondering just who their Primarch will be. Would I share the implacable<sup>27</sup> resolve<sup>28</sup> of Dorn? The Crimson King's esoteric mysticism? The soulful<sup>29</sup> majesty of Sanguinius?"

Nivalus: "My lord..."

Curze did not rise from where he crouched, his back to the Captain.

Nivalus: "We have secured the ship. Crew casualties have been minimized. All systems are in working order as you commanded".

Konrad Curze: "We control the bridge?"

Nivalus: "Yes, lord".

Curze rose in a snarl of energized joints. He dropped something Nivalus could not identify onto the deck.

Konrad Curze: "Secure the ship".

Nivalus: "We have, my..."

Konrad Curze (interrupting): "Make certain. Then meet me upon the bridge".

Nivalus: "As you wish, my lord".

The Primarch slipped into the darkness leaving the Captain to look down on the Triaris' flayed faces which stared back at him without eyes, moaning silently from slack<sup>30</sup> mouths.

\* \* \*

Captain Nivalus approached two Sergeants guarding the bulkhead<sup>31</sup> leading onto the flagship's bridge, looking upon him with blank-faced helms in the gloom. Their midnight plate bore only superficial damage, scuffs and scrapes that did little more than mar<sup>32</sup> the lacquer<sup>33</sup>.

First Sergeant (over vox): "Casualties during the assault were light-getting".

Nivalus: "I have anticipated stiffer<sup>34</sup> opposition in taking her, the elite of a civilization opposing us and only one hundred Legionaries to bring her to heel".

Second Sergeant (over vox): "Eh... Mortals, no matter their training or equipment, can only stand so long against a Legion's might".

Nivalus: "A lesson being taught to thousands of worlds across the Crusade. Tonight, brothers, Piamen is learning it firsthand".

Sergeants saluted clashing armored fists against breastplates as the doors irised open.

(doors opening)

(former crew members moaning from pain in barely audible voices)

Nivalus arrived on what had been the flagship's bridge, but was now an abattoir<sup>35</sup>. Bodies were strewn<sup>36</sup> in all directions, orphaned limbs dangled<sup>37</sup> precariously<sup>38</sup> from consoles tumbling to the deck. People hung from the vaulted<sup>39</sup> ceiling on chains and severed power cables, most without their skin. Nivalus had seen enough death to know from their eyes set and glazed like dolls, that they had been alive while it had happened. The entire bridge crew had been slaughtered excluding what Nivalus concluded was the Piameni equivalent of servitors. Rail-thin men and women hung in glass flutes<sup>40</sup>, their bodies deformed by spurs of pulsing psy-crystal linking them to the ship inner workings. The technology was unmistakably alien in origin drawing a repulsive<sup>41</sup> sneer<sup>42</sup> to Nivalus's lips. None of these slaves had been touched, oblivious to the carnage surrounding them.

Nivalus was no stranger to death. He was a veteran of the Vhnori Resurgence<sup>43</sup> on Terra and dozens of other campaigns won at the edge of eighth Legion's blades. Theirs had always been a cold clinical violence.

Fear was a weapon, a means to an end. And the Night Lords wielded it like a scalpel. This was something else entirely.

Nivalus removed his helmet, butcher's spice filled his nostrils. So hot and immediate it stunned his eyes. Something cold and silvery<sup>44</sup>, a sensation he could not place, coiled around Nivalus's heart. His helmet crushed to the deck, his sword's tip sighing against the edge of its scabbard<sup>45</sup> as his eyes born in darkness found his lord.

Konrad Curze: "This ship is called Storm's Rock".

Curze perched<sup>46</sup> atop the backrest of the ship's command throne, his inhuman height folded into a gargoyle's crouch. The Primarch flexed his talons, watching drops of blood slip from them onto the corpse of an aging man seated upon the throne.

Konrad Curze: "Did you know that?"

Nivalus: "Yes, lord, from the intelligence reports of the Iterators first sent to this world".

Konrad Curze: "I lent it from eating her master's heart".

(Curze savoring the taste and smacking his lips)

Curze licked his lips before nudging<sup>47</sup> the corpse from the seat of the throne to spill onto the deck.

(former captain's body collapsing to the deck and dripping blood)

Nivalus looked up from the corpse of the ship's captain.

Nivalus: "Storm's Rock, named for the battle that granted Piamen independence from a particularly sadistic offshoot<sup>48</sup> of the Eldar xenos breed".

Konrad Curze: "Freedom won with the blood of thousands of hearts. Would they rail<sup>49</sup> against their sacrifice, I wonder, if they saw, how few years it bought before the end. How shallow<sup>50</sup> their future..."

Curze stepped forward, the preternatural<sup>51</sup> quiet of his movements betrayed by the waspish<sup>52</sup> purr<sup>53</sup> of his armor. He stopped before a consol.

(Curze typing something at the consol)

Nivalus: "What are you looking for, lord?"

Konrad Curze: "This ship's crew stands at 270,000. Excluding the servitor population it leaves... 180,000 living breathing souls".

Curze projected a wire-frame schematic hololith of the flagship. The Primarch's talons flowed deftly<sup>54</sup> over the controls illuminating and expanding several internal sections.

Konrad Curze: "The main hangar. There are adjoining cargo sprawls<sup>55</sup> here and here. Empty them and tear down the walls. We need a large open space".

Nivalus: "For what, my lord?"

Konrad Curze: "The crew... Gather them up, Captain. All of them..."

\* \* \*

(everyday bustle of a giant crowded metropolis)

The sun shone through thin clouds over Irrabast, vibrant<sup>56</sup> metropolis of Piamen. Peals<sup>57</sup> of thunder drew millions of eyes upward as the streets darkened. The low clouds hanging over the city became a deep amber.

Storm's Rock, their flagship, presented herself in all glory. Word had spread of war in the heavens. Prayer filled every mouth as their defenders rode out to meet the invaders, prayer that Piamen might keep hold of its freedom. Horns blared<sup>58</sup> from the ship, swaying<sup>59</sup> trees and sending papers twisting through the thoroughfares<sup>60</sup>. After the battle of Storm's Rock, when the last alien died upon Piameni soil, when freedom had been won, horns had sounded across the planet. It was the sound of victory, one that every man and woman of Piamen carried within their hearts. Cheers erupted from the city as they heard the call of triumph once more. People filled the streets with celebration. The invaders had been driven off. Piamen's future would remain her own.

(something collapsing on the ground)

On a street corner people halted in their revelry<sup>61</sup>, craning<sup>62</sup> their necks to see a growing circle of their countrymen at the center of the intersection. Something had fallen and struck the ground, reduced to indistinguishable heap smeared<sup>63</sup> across the rockrete.

(another object falling from the sky)

More cheers silenced, cut off and overtaken by a rising swell of alarm as another shape splattered against the pavement. Then another... And another...

(crowd starting to scream)

The people looked up, panic and confusion twisting their faces as a pinkish red cloud poured down from Storm's Rock. Citizens scattered as more of the shapes came down. They crashed against buildings and flattened groups who failed to avoid their path. A woman screamed as one of the things smashed the roof of an autocab flat, seeing half of a skinned face staring back at her.

Bodies... It was raining bodies...

(numerous bodies falling from the skies with slurping and sniffing sounds)

\* \* \*

Curze and Nivalus watched Irrabast disintegrate into madness through the Storm's Rock's oculus. The blood had yet to dry on Nivalus's gauntlets slathering<sup>64</sup> him to his elbows. He had done as much as the man acting upon his orders. The Primarch had been right. They had needed all the room they cleared and more to do what he had commanded. They had even crushed down the deck into pits to heap the skins of the wailing souls who had been wearing them before being herded off the ship.

Nivalus (unsure and hesitating): "The Emperor... Did he know what you... What we would do here?"

Konrad Curze: "He sent me..."

Curze smiled, a ghoulish flash of teeth framed by blue lips that vanished as soon as it appeared. He looked back at Nivalus, eyes swallowed by dark pupils.

Konrad Curze: "I am not here to be their last chance".

(Curze starting to walk around the bridge)

Konrad Curze: "After my father came to Nostromo, after he brought me into... into all this... he tasked my brother Fulgrim to teach me about Terra, humanity, the grand dream my father is building. Do you know what I learned?"

Curze took a severed head in his claws tracing around the eyes with the talon's tip.

(blood dripping from the severed head)

Konrad Curze: "The similarities that humans share vastly overshadow<sup>65</sup> any differences, no matter the language, culture, history. Every one of

them understands one thing... Fear... Fear is something so profound that it reaches into their little animal brains and renders them silent, malleable<sup>66</sup>, submissive<sup>67</sup>. Fear will bring peace and order to my father's new kingdom. It will bind humanity with chains stronger than any we could ever hope to forge".

(beeping sound attracting Nivalus's attention)

Nivalus strode to a vox station, pushing aside a corpse from the strown consol it attended.

Nivalus: "Transmission relaying from Irrabast and sendings from an astropathic choir, distress calls... We can jam them".

Konrad Curze: "No..."

Distress code (at the background): "Anyone.. Epsilon... Code: Epsilon... Calling immediate... Repeat... Code: Epsilon..."

Nivalus: "Lord?"

Curze's gaze did not stray<sup>68</sup> from the head he held as though he was speaking to it.

Konrad Curze: "Don't interfere! Use this ship to strengthen the signal. Have the fleet do the same, broadcast it loudly and clearly. They want their sister worlds to know what is happening to them. So do I".

Pinpricks<sup>69</sup> of light flickered to silent life as fires began to break out across the city. Order disintegrated, drowned by the human rainfall, driving the population into a delirium<sup>70</sup> of fevered anarchy. Irrabast tore itself apart without a single Imperial boot on its surface.

Konrad Curze: "My brothers, my father... They erect monuments of stone, of gold. I shall make mine of flesh, of humanity itself".

Nivalus: "What of the civilian population?"

Konrad Curze: "These are enemies of the Emperor, Captain, of progress. They were given a choice and this is what they have chosen".

(distress code continuation at the background)

The head collapsed within Curze's grasp. He threw it aside.

Konrad Curze: "It takes nine seconds to drain a body of blood. How many for a civilization? My mandate is to render this world compliant. Terror accomplishes this with swiftness beyond any invasion. Soon all that we shall require to conquer is the threat of our arrival".

Curze gestured for Nivalus to stand beside him. Even in the midst of everything he could not look away from his Primarch. Despite the threadbare<sup>71</sup> sanity of his words, the monstrosity of his deeds, his father was beautiful in a way Nivalus knew he was never meant to understand. This cruel angel...

Konrad Curze: "My blood flows through your veins. You feel it. You know the truth I speak".

Nivalus looked at the blood drying on his hands.

Nivalus: "We have always been the Emperor's retribution, his punishers. But this, sire... They will not call war, they will call it murder".

Konrad Curze: "Two words for the same thing. I suggest you make peace with it, Captain. You are in my Legion now. This is how Night Lords make war".

Curze laid a talon upon Nivalus's vambrace<sup>72</sup> sliding it over the ceramite and gathering a measure of the blood upon its tip.

Konrad Curze: "It felt strange the first time, didn't it? Don't worry, my son. That feeling was simply your eyes adjusting to the illumination of how the galaxy truly works. It passes".

Nivalus looked up from his red hands. Both of his hearts thrummed within his chest. His face felt numb, his lips sliding back from his teeth. He was smiling.

Konrad Curze: "I am this Legion's destiny, its final form, its end state".

Nivalus: "So... we will all be like you then in the end?"

Curze turned slowly, looking upon his son with haunted<sup>73</sup> eyes.

Konrad Curze: "No, not all. Not you".

The smile died on Nivalus's lips. The Primarch turned back to the void, the spell of his stare broken. Blood dripped from his nose staining the hololiths in twisting whirls of scarlet.

Konrad Curze: "This Crusade is not some grand beginning, Nivalus. This is an end. The end. And it is one that will last an eternity".

Curze blinked, his eyes seemed to focus again.

Konrad Curze: "Tell me, what is the population of the capital city?"

Nivalus: "Last census<sup>74</sup> reports it as eight and three quarter million, my lord".

Curze looked down upon Piamen, drinking in the vista<sup>75</sup> of millions of enemies strangled<sup>76</sup> by a fear he created.

Konrad Curze (grimly): “Take the Legion to the surface, Captain. Gather them up! All of them!”