

WARHAMMER
40,000

**GALL OF
CHAOS
SIEGEMASTER**

by **CHRIS WRAIGHT**

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I see the marks of his work from orbit, long before *Tacitus* reaches drop-range. I have time to study them, shifting blurred images across the lenses, and what I see inflames the anger that has been intermittently dormant for the long month I have spent in the void getting from Scraw's Reach to Harrowar.

It makes me angry for the waste of resource. I find I care about this even more than I did before the Legion broke itself apart and every usable rivet became as precious to us as diamonds.

The last time we had spoken, he and I, we had lamented this. We had remembered how it had been in the Stor-Bezashk, when we had commanded access to our unmatched leviathans, those machines of glorious, terrible power. We had both been in that brotherhood. We had both been there when our instruments of reduction had vomited their innards out against those damned, Dorn-crafted gates.

But now we scratch around for blunted blades and pretend the rust was always there. So it stirs my anger that he has diminished himself further. As I see what he has done on Harrowar, my eyes are dark with fury.

My crew evade my gaze. They clank and shuffle in the darkness of the bridge-wells, preparing the lander.

I look down at the world my brother travelled to, eighty Terran years before this day, and whisper the curse that he will find most hurtful.

'You have wasted yourself.'

'Warsmith Bakulos,' the slave-drone vocalises.

I do not look at it, that creature of iron and pulled sinew, but its intervention tells me descent is prepared. I rise from my throne, armour hissing, and draw my helm to me. The patina of old wars is on it, thick like oxidation.

My retinue falls in behind me as I walk – three battle-brothers of my warband, clad in dark, chevroned iron, the icon of the Corpse Grinders on their blunted shoulder-guards. I have not seen their true faces in a hundred years, nor they mine, for our mortal skins are now bound up with our armour, the union of body and ceramite our Father himself had flirted with, on occasion, back when he still possessed the inclination for invention.

My quarry has hidden his location well, but not the effects of his presence. As the lander burns down through Harrowar's choked atmosphere, I see the webs of scarring stretch out, gradually sharpening into networks, and networks inside networks. The earth is beaten down by the tread of a billion boots, made slick and black, then burned again, until it all glints like coal.

We come down fifty kilometres southwest of the main battlefield on what my tactical feed tells me is Kurr's nineteenth offensive complex on the primary continental mass. Constructions loom up around us, half-lost in the dirty film of Harrowar's poisoned air. I see refineries meshed in pipe-clusters, glowing sickly with chem-discharge from ranks of terraced chimneys. I see munitions works, armour manufactories, cavernous hab-blocs. He has built all these things himself, for the mark of ancient Olympia is on them – no Imperial would have used such obsessive layers of redundancy.

In the distance, I hear the low *crump* of artillery pieces. They are firing in sequence, metronomically, and I recognise the report of the guns – Kroeger siege-pattern maulers, tracked on nine-metre gauge rails, macro-calibre, capable of levelling any wall in existence, given the time.

He has had the time. He has had it in shovel-blades.

His men come to acknowledge me, clenching their fists in wary salutes. Two hundred line the drop-site, most hanging back, clad in dark grey tabards over heavy blast-armour. They are in poor condition, these men.

The principal kneels and waits for me to grunt in acknowledgement. When he rises, I see he bears the Corpse Grinder's eyeless skull on his chest, fused in molten lines like spilled solder. His own eyes are gone, replaced by twin range-finder lenses for the guns, and he squints up awkwardly.

'Warsmith,' he says.

'Where is he?' I ask.

'At the front, Warsmith.'

'Which front?'

He looks confused.

'Give me a location,' I press.

‘Will you observe the war?’ he asks.

I see then that he is simple. His mind has gone. Kurr has done it, perhaps. All the men stare at me. I will learn nothing from them.

One of my retinue aims his bolter at the principal, but I gesture for him to lower it.

‘Show me,’ I say. The man grins. Grins and nods.

It takes us almost an hour just to reach the edge of the trench system. We go in a convoy of armoured crawlers caked with black dust, their segmented tracks five metres high. As I crouch in the crew bay, I remember trundling across other dark sands on the world where it all started for us.

He had been next to me then, my deputy in the unit, keen for an action that was not garrison-duty or wall-breaking. He had smiled before putting his helm on, looking hungry, like a famished infant.

‘We will like this new war better,’ he had said.

I had not been so sure. ‘They too have been our brothers.’

Then his helm had gone on, hissing as the seals closed tight. Only blank iron had faced me then, a pitted mask of silver-grey.

‘They were never our brothers.’

Now I sit back, cramped in the mortal-scale spaces of the present, breathing in the fumes, smelling the sweat-fear of those that ride with me. Perhaps, out there, he still wears that same helm, battered by the millennia. He did so the last time I saw him on Scraw’s Reach, with the multihued sky of the Eye reflecting in the lenses.

As we travel, my armour tells me much of what passes outside the crawler’s hull. There is little movement of men. We overtake another convoy, grinding hard north, and I taste its promethium stink. Everything beyond the armourglass slits is dark, thrown into dirty shadows by the shrouded sun, cold as dormant forge-ash.

When we arrive, the principal hastens to make things ready. The crawler’s rear door squeals open on rust-strangled hinges, and I make my way into the open.

‘Ur-67,’ he tells me, gesturing north against a hot, flaked wind.

I see trench lines spider away from me, hundreds of them, extending out across a wide plain of rock and rust. Bodies crawl within them. War engines, belching gouts of smoke, wallow slowly among the formations. Streaks of black stain the sky, leading like twine back down to the angled maws of artillery ranks.

They fire then, briefly swallowed up in avalanches of boiling smog, and the

ground shudders. In the distance, far even for my eyes to make out, I see the Enemy behind his walls. I take in the defensive scheme in an instant – high bastions, marked with Gothic crenulations, studded with faint red points of light. I see spires beyond those walls, rearing into the haze, belching their own smoke. They still bear their Imperial aquilas, despite the ruins they now squat inside. That one place, Ur-67, might yet have a million defenders.

‘How long have you been fighting?’ I ask my guide.

He is barely listening. He looks out, rapt. He watches the arcs of the shells, but his smudged lenses give little away.

‘Ur-67,’ he says again.

I turn away from him. My retinue are stomping down the slope toward the first trench complex, kicking through a grey layer of boot-churned mud, scanning for any signs they can use.

The Enemy cannot hurt us, not at this distance, but they are still there. I begin to find something compelling about the vista – bled clean of colour, framed by a low and lowering sky. Ruins march across that no-man’s-land, naked, stone-stripped down to their corroded skeletons of burned adamantium. He has made a tomb-world here, and yet its inhabitants do not die.

My lieutenant, Shohvaz, returns to me and bows. He is bearing a data-slate, mud-streaked but functional.

‘One of his?’ I ask.

He nods and activates the power cell. I see cartography on the lens – construction schematics, some logistical data-screeds. So he was building recently, heading up to the northeast, past Ur-67’s outer margins and into the glacial zone. I know there are other spires there, perhaps also still defended.

‘He has gone after them all,’ I say.

Shohvaz says nothing. He is disgusted by this and would happily see Harrowar destroyed from orbit. Such things are difficult now – costly to muster, draining the resources of a sundered Legion with its countless feuding factions – but they can be done. I do not try to persuade him of my own course, for despite his revulsion, he will not disobey me. Some dregs of the Stor-Bezashk remain, and we were ever the disciplined ones.

I turn to the principal. ‘We will take your transport,’ I tell him.

He is not listening. He is looking out at the city he has failed to reduce. He is watching the guns prepare to fire again. Their report is a like a heartbeat on this world: endless, thudding out time.

His mouth hangs open. His skin is grey-white, pocked with sores. He will die of

those, and still that city will stand.

‘North,’ I tell Shohvaz, turning away, and I find that I share his disgust.

But I also remember Gugann. That was good fighting. For once, we were given an enemy that we could slaughter and run down, and the killing was neither ranged nor static. We landed en masse, bringing the Grand Battalions in waves from low orbit. The Lord of Iron had spent the warp-stages planning, bringing us together from our sundered garrisons, and we hit the xenos hard, then harder, then again and again, never allowing them respite.

‘Choke them,’ our Father had said, and we knew what he wanted. We struck, then did not let them catch a breath. When we had our fingers around their throat, we tightened. It was a fine thing, to watch them gasp and retch. We of the siege brotherhood landed our earth-borers, and we broke the roofs of their tunnels, pushing into the wet earth and generating cascades of blood-rich slurry around us.

I did not know the name Kurr then. We were in different fighting units of a large Legion, and only Isstvan would bring us together as full battle-brothers, but it was Gugann that gave me my first sight of him. I had delivered my heavy pounders into the heart of the caves, pushing on even as the earth cracked and gaped around us. We had to drive the slave crews hard to keep up with the main tactical squads, and they hauled on long iron chains until their muscles split from the bone.

We had taken position high inside one of the central chambers where the xenos had gathered to fight. I was following orders, establishing fire-points behind our infantry advance, angling the shell-paths to bring ruin among them before they could pull their own blades into contact. I had not finished that before I saw more Legion units break out from the left flank, demolishing the earth walls and showering the routes ahead in powdered soil. They had done something to their crews – maddened them, given them stimms, something forbidden – and they dragged the mortar trains as if they were stampeding animals. They pulled ahead of us, opened fire first, and filled the arterial spaces with raging fire.

I should have been furious, but was instead intrigued. I strode ahead of my crews, magnifying the battlescape with my helm lenses, singling out the warrior responsible. He was at the forefront of his gun trains, swinging a chainsword, roaring through the grille of a sloping helm.

He was impatient for the kill. That was not something we were known for, neither then nor since – we were the methodical ones, the stoic breakers of lesser

wills. We had stood quiet like cattle while our Father had ordered the Decimation, bound by our orders, bound by our stolid souls.

I voxed him, ordering him to pull back lest my own greater guns pulverise his troops where they marched.

He laughed back over the link. 'If you can catch us, we will deserve it.'

If you can catch us.

I never did. I never got close. I do not think I have been close since.

The climate falls away fast as the land rises, clutching us with fronds of ice and making the crawler stutter. There are just the four of us, myself and my retinue, and we can bear the cold, but the machine struggles.

The sky darkens further, plunging into midnight blue. Ice creeps across the bare rock, worming its diamond fingers into the crevices. We go ever further north, winding along the sheer edges of mountain passes. I see clouds forming below us, heavy with grey snow, and realise we are over a thousand metres up. The armourglass freezes over and turns opaque, and a sheen of white creeps across the outline of our armour-shells.

It takes two standard days to clear the mountains, creeping like some enormous metal insect through rubble-choked passes. On the far side, our progress is slower still, descending moraines of silt and frozen rubble that choke the crawler's tracks and block the air filters. I could have summoned a flyer, but he would have detected it. In any case, this is the way we have always preferred it – against the earth, the tick-tock grind of progress, creeping closer to the quarry with every engine-cycle.

When we are low enough to reactivate the crawler's augur units, we scan ahead. The mountains are giving way to wind-blasted tundra. Atmospheric auroras sway above us, curtains of bright-green ionisation against an iron-black horizon.

Soon there are trenches again. I do not know how he excavated them here – the ground is like adamantium, the air frigid and lethal – and yet they stretch across the tundra in massive patterns, chewed into the earth, lit by oil-plumes. I see troops, first dozens, then hundreds, huddling in greatcoats around braziers, shivering even as they reach for the gun breeches and call up the shell-gurneys.

The crawler shivers to a halt, its engine-spirit screaming, and we leave it. I am used to awe from humans, to being seen as an ironclad god to be feared and loathed, but these armies here are beaten into numbness. They stare at us and hang back, but they do not run – they are too sick and cowed by old authority.

These ones, too, bear Kurr's marks, the marks of the Corpse Grinders, and they are also laying siege to a city that should have fallen a long time ago. I look up and see it on the edge of the north-western horizon – spires like charred rib bones thrusting up from the ice, ringed on all sides, defiantly alive.

I find the army's commander, cloistered in a sprawling rockcrete bunker at the heart of his trench city, bent low over a pile of mouldering maps. The bunker chamber is cramped, even more so with transhuman occupants. The walls are stained with frozen mould, and the lumens gutter behind their cages. The commander, a thin man in worn fatigues and cloak, stands up when he sees me enter, and a flicker of fear kindles in his blue eyes.

So he has at least enough life in him to fear me.

'I seek Kurr,' I tell him.

Something ghosts across his tired face then – anger, maybe? – but he masters himself. 'The Supreme Commander is at the front,' he says.

'There is more than one.'

He half-smiles, wearily. 'And they are ever growing.'

I move towards the table of maps and see the full extent of the endless earthworks that Kurr has constructed, and for an instant, I do not believe it possible. He was of the Stor-Bezashk, and so knows his art, but still.

'How long have you been fighting here?' I ask.

'Three years at Ur-43. Two more here.'

I run a gauntlet down the edge of the map, and the rotten paper flakes off with my fingertip. 'You are close to breaking it?'

'It will fall soon. We are promised more guns.'

'You have plenty of guns.'

'And men. They die quickly here. I have twenty thousand promised, but delays... in the mountains...'

He trails off. It looks like he cannot remember why they are not here. I lose patience and lash out, grabbing him by the throat. His eyes flare wide, but he does not struggle, and hangs like a gutted fish in my grip.

'You have had *eighty years*,' I hiss at him. 'How many spires have fallen?'

He cannot answer, for he does not know. I realise then that he must have been born here, spawned in a slave-pen somewhere among the rest of Kurr's indentured millions. This world is the entire universe for him. I imagine he does not even know why he is fighting.

'Where is Kurr?' That is all I truly need.

He can just about gasp out an answer. 'North. The polar stations.'

Perhaps I should have expected it. The summit of this world, circled by the isolation of its howling wastes.

I let him fall, and he crashes to his knees, dragging air into himself hungrily.

I turn to Shohvaz, and beckon towards the door.

‘North again,’ I say.

We were once more than these petty bands. We once formed one of the greatest armies assembled in the species’ history. At the muster before the first departure from Olympia, our battalions filled the parade grounds of the Magister Palatial in Lochos, rank upon rank, standing immobile in the grey dawn. Ever afterwards we were dispersed by the Crusade, but on those occasions when we came together, we were among the mightiest, the most steadfast, the hardest to break.

In the end, no Legion broke us. They did not need to, for we broke ourselves. True enough, we survived the confusion of the Siege’s dissolution, keeping together, keeping our discipline. We remained strong enough to face Dorn again on Sebastus IV, and that was a great victory, whatever the liars of Terra have written since. We endured as, one by one, the loyalists’ own primarchs faded from history and ours did not.

I do not know what caused the madness on Medrengard. None who lived through it know. There are whispers that Perturabo instigated it, though I do not believe that myself. If I am wrong, and his design was to bring about a second Decimation, then it was a failure, for everything was shattered: all our strength, all our unity – gone amid a hundred years of sustained insanity.

I came to the bloodshed late, arriving at Medrengard with my Grand Company. I had hoped to be wrong, or hoped to end it, but that was foolishness, for greater forces were at play with us. We were fired upon before we had even gained the planet, and other fleets closed on us like predators. *Tacitus* was a lesser ship for me then, but it proved our salvation when the reactors on *Krastus* blew, and we were able to take sanctuary amid the spinning metal. Then we could fire back, and the macrocannons opened up, and we were killing our own again, only this time it wasn’t just our own species but our own gene-brothers.

I pushed clear of the void-carnage, running before a pack of hunters until the black sun loomed on the forward augurs and its pale world swam before it. The comm-lines swelled with incoming messages, alliances were formed, bargains struck. We learned the names of new warbands, culled from old Crusade-era monikers, and they were already fragmented and re-forming, seething like molten metal on an anvil.

In the earliest days, we had been called the ‘corpse grinders’ by those who despised our way of war, and so that became our name again, taken in anger and incomprehension. We raised our own tower on Medrengard and ringed it with the artillery once used to level the Carrion Emperor’s walls. Then we entered the power games of the daemon world, watched over by our deranged Father, who remained either unable or unwilling to intervene and caught up in resentments that we would never fathom.

That was when I met Kurr again for the first time since the long flight from Terra. I had taken my warriors out onto cracked glass plains, hunting the daemons that we bound to our machines. Not for the first or last time, we were drawn into the battles of other warbands, and the skies sang with the laughing screams of the neverborn. Lightning the colour of entrails lashed across the tilting earth, and we were surrounded by a force more than three times our strength. I expected to die then. I ordered our formation, swearing to damn the souls of as many faithless as I could before the end, and the taste of defeat in such a cause was bitter on my lips.

But I was cheated of that. In the endless shifting tumult of those pointless wars, we were not alone. Warriors of the old Legion burst out of the fog, breaking the enemy cordon. Then it was a true fight, as hard as any we had prosecuted. I lost my old comrades, but I gained new ones, for Kurr had known it was us. He fought like a demigod, crashing through ranks of warriors with his chainsword whirling around him.

We came together in the heart of the fighting, and by then, I knew that we would win, and that I would see more black-sun dawns on Medrengard.

‘Warsmith,’ he acknowledged, lowering the bloody tip of his blade.

‘Why?’ I asked.

‘We are the siegemasters. There will be other worlds to conquer.’

Then we were fighting again, cutting the heart out of our own Legion, purging the weak or the unlucky.

He was right. In time, there would be other worlds for us to reduce, crushing the hope out of them as the Imperium weakened, but I was never easy with him after that. The life-debt weighed on my shoulders, so when the time came, I sent him on his own missions, keeping him at distance, and that worked for us for a long time.

All until Harrowar, when he finally went dark.

For the first time on this cursed world, I detect warriors of my own kind. They

detect me too and come to meet us long before we arrive at the location our sensors tell me he must be at. The snow is falling fast now, gusting jerkily as if pulled by daemonic fingers. Since leaving the heavy transport behind, thirty kilometres south of here, we have waded through it, thigh-deep in places. Even now it cakes our pauldrons, melts against the heat of our power packs, drips in slushy trails in our footfalls.

They emerge from the permanent night of this latitude, twelve of them, all bearing bolters. Like the mortals they command, the sign of the warband is on their chests, scraped in molten metal in place of the old aquila. They do not salute. Shohvaz and the two others of my retinue draw their own weapons, but I make no move.

I am their Warsmith. I am Kurr's Warsmith.

'Warsmith,' says one of them, his voice clipped by the extreme cold. His helmet visor is rimed with frost, his greaves streaked with bloody ice. I recognise him then: Skarrak, one born of the gene-ranks on Medregard before the schism. He has served with Kurr for a long time, just as all the others here have.

'You know why I am here,' I say.

Skarrak nods. 'He knew you would come, eventually.'

I try to gauge the balance of their loyalty. They have been with him for decades, fighting a war that should have been over a half-century ago.

'Tell me of him,' I say.

Skarrak almost replies. Then he changes his mind, gives a signal, and the bolter muzzles drop. 'He waits within,' he says, falling back to reveal the edifice beyond.

It takes me a while to perceive it, lost in the murk and the driving snow-flurries. Then I see my mistake – I have taken its black face for the night sky, but it fills that sky, up and up into the storm, a wall of sheer ebony. My vision adjusts, and I see the buttresses, the octagonal towers, the gates and the guns. It resembles nothing so much as the primarch's tower on our own home world, crusted here with a shield of ice, splitting the winds like a thrown dagger.

I cross a single bridge, a narrow span across a gulf that goes down into eternal dark. Shohvaz and the others remain at the inner gate on my command, and I pass under the heavy lintel alone. Within, all is echoes and emptiness, and the cold is crippling even through my battle-plate. I press on, my boots clanking on stone. I pass through galleries, vaults, silent halls. Eventually I reach the centre, below the level of the ice, a single chamber buried deep, impervious to the world outside.

He is standing there, face hidden by the old helm, the chainsword still in his hands. A hololith of Harrowar spins slowly in the gloom beside him. Other things lurk in the shadows – maps etched on bronze plate, schematics, skin-bound books piled high and slowly freezing into ice-mush.

‘Well met, Bakulos,’ he says.

His voice has changed. It is not just the age – that affects us all – but the resonance. It has gone, dried out like stretched leather.

‘You knew I would have to come, sooner or later,’ I say. I do not reach for my weapon yet, though I judge I will have to kill him. We have never fought before, so it will be interesting to see which one of us is the stronger.

‘No, I thought you might forget me,’ Kurr says, drily. ‘But we never forget, do we? So yes, yes, you had to come, chasing me down.’

I look at the hololith. It shows all of the siege lines, ringing the entire hemisphere, enclosing hive-clusters and city-states. To maintain it, he has created an empire of his own, sucking in men and materiel and hurling it against walls that do not fall.

‘Look at it,’ Kurr said. ‘I am only doing what we have always done.’

‘You were ordered to destroy this world,’ I say.

‘True.’ He shuffles closer, and I smell the acrid mix of armour oils and physical sweat. He has daubed his plate with something – blood, maybe – and it glistens in the cold. ‘Another void-rock, spoiled and sucked clean. Then we move on, and they come back after us, and they rebuild, and we are all sapped a little more.’

He extends a hand towards the hololith and traces the lines of the trench systems. ‘So I remain true to what we were. We guard, we watch. That is what our Father forgot, and it turned his mind. We should never have wished for what the others had – there was a reason we were not trusted.’

I find I cannot take my eyes off the hololith. Kurr has lost none of his artistry, and his tactical placements are impeccable. Beautiful, even.

‘You could end this in a month, brother,’ I say.

‘And that would finish everything. Bakulos, look at this and tell me it is not perfection. My commanders come to me and say ‘When will we launch the attack, lord?’, and I try to show them that it is not yet done, and more building is needed. I think they see it, sometimes, but some have had to be... corrected. I try to teach them. I tell them ‘Not yet. Not until all is done.’ I think they are seeing that now.’

I look at him. Green lith-light bathes his battered helm.

‘I came to end this,’ I say.

Kurr chortles, a sound that limps from his vox grille, drained of the old humour. ‘Or you will end me. Is that what you think will happen here?’ He draws closer to me, and I hear the rasp of his near-frozen respirator. ‘Gaze on it, Bakulos: a siege that never ends, that is never lifted. We breed our armies, they breed theirs, all into endless suffering, locked tight in formations that span horizon to horizon. I made it. This is what we wanted, and the Eye rejoices – there is nothing finer.’

His hand rests on the grip of the chainsword, but mine is still empty.

‘I came to give you a chance,’ I say.

‘No, you came to see what I had become. So now you have seen it, what comes next?’

I move instantly, crashing my fist into his throat. He must have known the blow was coming, but it sends him staggering and give me time to draw my bolter.

I sense his shock – he really believed I could be persuaded – and I fire, point-blank, at his helm. The reactive shell explodes as it impacts on the cranial shielding, dropping him. For a moment I think that has done it, but he powers back up, the blades on his sword whirring, his helm cracked open.

‘I built *perfection*,’ he snarls, lurching towards me.

I pull away, firing again, but he swerves clear and swings the blade at my neck. I seize his wrist and brace, holding the blurred teeth just above my gorget-seal. His breathing is ragged, wet with frenzy, and I sense his strength.

I drop the bolter and punch with my free fist, smashing the lump of it into his helm-lenses. Still, he leans into the chainsword, bearing me down, and I punch again, then again, harder and with an edge of desperation. Blood flies across my own vision, and my fist connects with flesh now.

Finally the chainsword falls away, skidding and snarling across the floor in a welter of sparks. Kurr collapses, his face a pulpy mess. I catch a glimpse of old, old flesh amid the pumping blood, as grey as the ice of Harrowar.

Once I am sure that he is dead, a feeling of sudden emptiness wells up within me. Our fates have danced around one another for ten thousand years, intersecting across time like the junctions of his trench lines.

I look back at his work, picked out in the translucent green of the hololith projection, and see again how flawless it has been. He has created stasis, two forces locked together with no hope of release. It could be eternal here, the slow suffocation of all souls, just as we were charged with in the Crusade. We had resented it so much then, fuelling the change of allegiance, feeling that we were wronged.

I am only doing what we have always done.

I hear noises from outside the chamber. Skarrak enters, and Shohvaz. They look at me, and at Kurr's corpse, and I can sense Skarrak's raw hope.

'Then we attack now,' he says, relieved. 'We end this.'

All over Harrowar, I imagine them saying the same thing, once they know the truth. Those with the wit left to realise it will know that their nightmare can be over: the cities will be stormed, smashed into dust, and we will move on.

I cannot take my eyes from the hololith. I cannot take my eyes from Kurr's vision, and I see for the first time that it is incomplete.

Shohvaz takes a step towards the generator. He wants to shut it down.

'I can give the order,' he growls. 'We have the forces in place.'

I know we do. Kurr always had what he needed, but that was not the point.

There are gaps in the siege-lines. They could be extended, given time and effort, and that would make the vision complete.

I can sense their impatience. They want action now.

So I do not look at them as I speak, for I am already planning, something I have not done in this way for a long time. I wonder if this is how it started for him.

'Not yet,' I say. It will be beautiful when it is finished, and I already know where the digging will start. 'Not until all is done.'

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Wraight is the author of the Horus Heresy novel *Scars*, the novella *Brotherhood of the Storm* and the audio drama *The Sigillite*. For Warhammer 40,000 he has written the Space Wolves novels *Blood of Asaheim* and *Stormcaller*, and the short story collection *Wolves of Fenris*, as well as the Space Marine Battles novels *Wrath of Iron* and *Battle of the Fang*. Additionally, he has many Warhammer novels to his name, including the Time of Legends novel *Master of Dragons*, which forms part of the War of Vengeance series. Chris lives and works near Bristol, in south-west England.

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Published in 2015 by Black Library, Games Workshop Ltd, Willow Road,
Nottingham, NG7 2WS, UK.

Produced by Games Workshop in Nottingham.

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ISBN: 978-1-78572-021-5

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