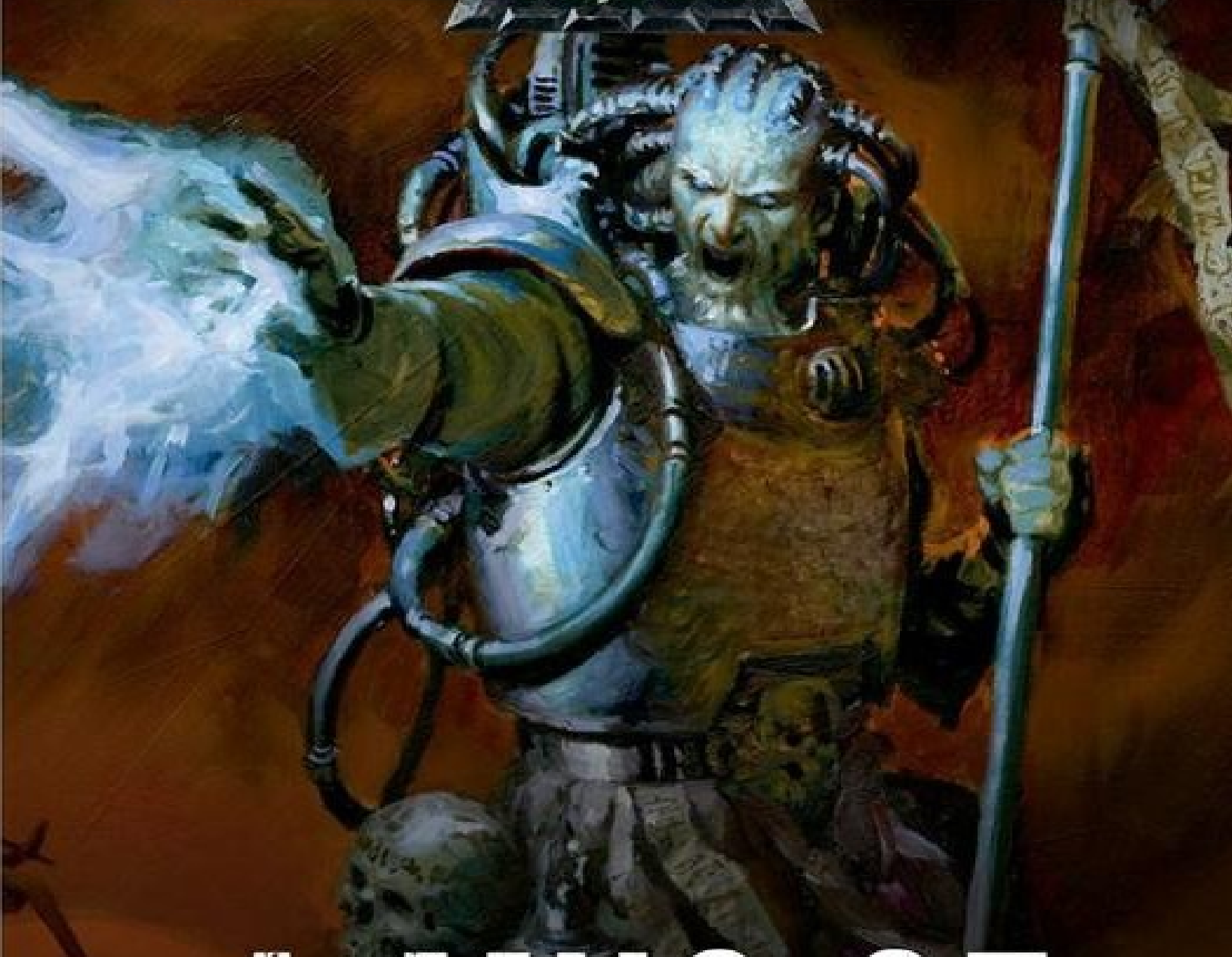


**WARHAMMER**

**40,000**



**A MUG OF  
RECAFF**



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# A MUG OF RECAFF

A CIAPHAS CAIN STORY BY SANDY MITCHELL

## A MUG OF RECAFF

Sandy Mitchell

If anyone had asked Jurgen, which they never did, he would have said the operation had been a great success. As usual, Commissar Cain had outwitted the heretics they were hunting with ease, leading the squad of Guardsmen assigned to escort him straight to the heart of the coven, while the bulk of the raiding force provided a diversion by attacking the heavily-fortified stronghold of the renegades. After a short, intense firefight, most of the cabal lay dead, the few panicked survivors too intent on fleeing for their lives through the corridors of their leader's mansion to put up any further resistance.

'Went rather well, sir,' he ventured as the commissar sheathed his chainsword while making the odd little twitch of the nose he so often did. As always, Cain had made sure he was in the thick of the action, and must be in dire need of a pick-me-up by now.

Fortunately, Jurgen had noticed a kitchen during their initial assault through the servants quarters, and was sure he could find his way back there. As soon as the commissar was engrossed in discussing how best to sweep the building for stray cultists with the sergeant in charge of the escort detail, he slipped quietly away in search of it.

The layout of the rambling house was a little confusing, but he found the object of his quest easily enough by the simple expedient of following the trail of combat damage; the path back to their entry point was marked by las-bolt pocks on the walls, many of which had charred the hanging tapestries or scored the intricate marquetry surfaces of the occasional tables scattered about the place. Most of these had once held ceramics, few of which remained intact, particularly around the scorch marks on the carpet and the widespread cratering of walls and furniture where frag grenades had gone off.

Before long, the opulent furnishings gave way to the starker, more utilitarian environs of the servants quarters, although Jurgen didnt expect to meet any of the staff; most of them had fled screaming as soon as the armed Guardsmen appeared, the ones that hadnt being cut down in short order alongside the masters whose corruption they'd shared.

Too seasoned a campaigner to take anything for granted, Jurgen remained alert, his lasgun held at the ready. The cultists who'd escaped retribution upstairs were almost certainly long gone, but it was always possible that a few had gone to ground, hoping to slip away quietly once the noise had stopped.

So musing, he caught sight of his objective at last, the light gleaming from neatly-shelved pots and pans visible through a half-open doorway.

He was about to walk through it when he hesitated, listening intently. Someone inside was speaking, the voice rising and falling in the unmistakable cadences of a chant.

'Heyla, heyla sheyla, heyla sheyla, heyla hoh'

Jurgen had no idea what it meant, but he didn't really need to. It sounded like warpcraft to him, which boded badly for the Emperor's loyal servants still in the building. It might even inconvenience the commissar, redoubtable warrior though he was. Better put a stop to it now, he supposed. Besides, he needed the kitchen; too bad for the heretic currently occupying it.

Readying his lasgun, Jurgen dashed through the door, his eyes flicking left and right in search of a target. He'd been right, someone was practicing warpcraft: a tall, elegant man in expensive-looking robes, and far too much jewellery, was waving his arms about in time to the stream of gibberish gushing from his lips. His eyes seemed to flicker with balefire as he glanced up at the unexpected intrusion, and his mouth twisted into a grimace of distaste, as though Jurgen was something he'd just found on the sole of his shoe.

The guardsman's finger tightened on the lasgun's trigger, but before he could squeeze it the air between them ripped, sounding, he thought, like the galaxy's biggest fart. Smelled like it too. Something consisting mainly of eyes, mouths and teeth stepped through the rent in reality and lashed out at him with half a dozen whip-like tentacles.

'Finish the scum,' the sorcerer said, disdain dripping from his words like protomatter from the flesh of the newly-incarnate warp-thing.

'Works for me,' Jurgen said, holding down the trigger of his lasgun. The daemonspawn reeled back, keening its distress, as the hail of las-bolts chewed its midsection to pieces. It was far from the first such thing Jurgen had encountered

in his years of fighting at the commissar's side, and in his experience they were never as tough as they were made out to be. Apparently that was something the Emperor had gifted him with; Inquisitor Vail had tried to explain it a couple of times, but she used a lot of long words that made his head hurt, and he didn't really care anyway. The fact that it worked was enough for him.

After a couple more bursts from the lasgun, the warpspawn suddenly vanished, with a pop of imploding air, driven back to the eldritch realm from which the psyker had torn it, just as Jurgen had known it would be. He turned, taking in the rest of the kitchen in a single, rapid glance.

The psyker was still standing in front of the stove, an expression of stupefied astonishment on his face, muttering another string of arcane syllables. Livid green wychfire flared around his upraised fist, then flickered and died as Jurgen took a step towards him.

'You can frak off and all,' Jurgen said, and shot him, wiping the stunned expression off the man's face with a single las-bolt. He slung the weapon as he stepped over the sorcerer's spasming corpse, freeing his hands to pick up the kettle, which gurgled as he shook it.

Already full. That was a bit of luck. The commissar would definitely be needing a mug of recaff by now, and Jurgen meant to see that he got it.