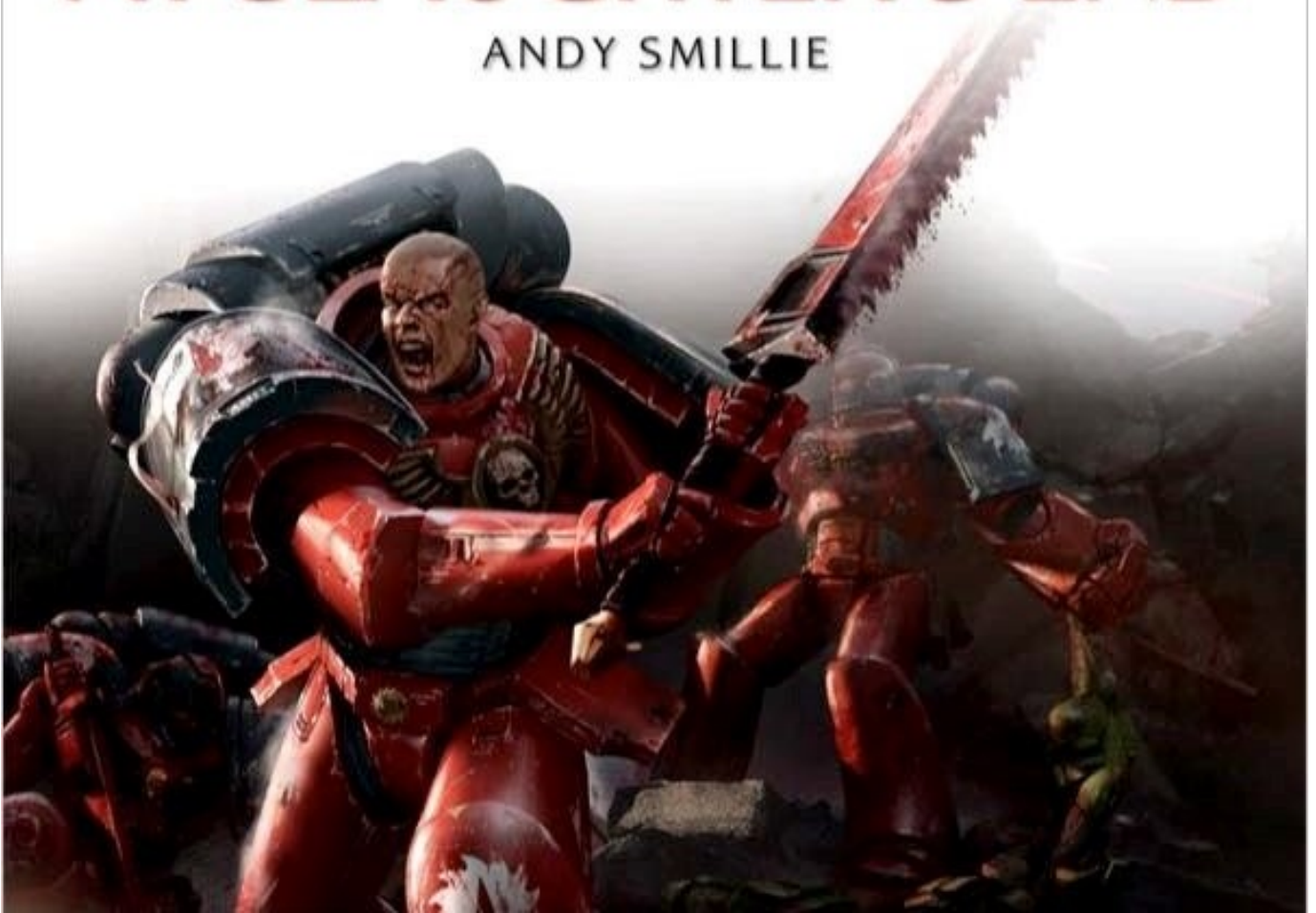


WARHAMMER
40,000
SPACE MARINE BATTLES™

AT SLAUGHTER'S END

ANDY SMILLIE



At Slaughter's End

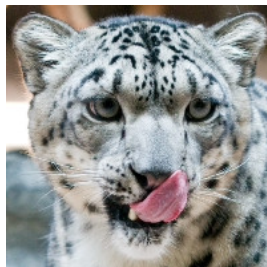
An Space Marine Battles Audio Drama (2014)

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Scripted by Reverend

Created by



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List of characters:

- * Amit - first Chapter Master of the Flesh Tearers Chapter;
- * Bordack Scathren - berserker of the World Eaters Legion;
- * Calassel - fallen Dreadnaught of the Flesh Tearers.

(wind blowing, footsteps, debris falling)

The dead littered the desert. Undulating dunes of bodies and broken vehicles lined the horizon. The lifeless eyes of traitors and loyalists alike stared up at the blood-streaked sky. Had their voice left in their guttered and torn bodies, they would have offered the heavens a plea. They would have begged their gods not to be left like this, abandoned prostrate before merciless suns that would steal the moisture from their flesh and bake their bones to dust.

Amit grinned, a feral smile of malice and disdain that stretched his gore-soaked cheeks. There were no gods listening. The blood-armored World Eaters had failed in their slaughter. The roar of their patron had rumbled in anger across the heavens and faded to a desperate whisper. Not even the Emperor's light stretched to the earth of this world. The men of the 225th Potonian rifles had died in his name but they were beyond his sight. They had died in agony and terror, their screams devoured by the roar of chain-swords and the braying snarl of demons.

The Chapter Master stopped to regard a regimental flag as it flailed in the wind. It was torn and frayed, a grim homage to its bearer whose entrails were strung out behind him like macabre pellets. Touching a hand to the rent in the armor plate protecting his abdomen Amit pressed on. War had rendered the world a lifeless husk. The howling wind was a funerary dirge in ode to the recent dead. There was no one listening. No one save him. All else were slain except...

(distant groaning sound)

Amit stopped walking straining to hear over the howl of the wind. Someone yet lived. A dark hope filled Amit's weary limbs and numbed the pain racking his battered body. He started towards the sound turning south-west and climbing down over mounds of corpses. Bones and armor plates gave way beneath his tread, snapping with a knurled crunch as his boots drove them into the earth. The sand under foot was stained of ruddy brown soaked through with blood and filth. The once

fine grains had been churned to a wet mulch thick with viscera and entrails, the work of centuries undone in a matter of days.

At the bottom of the hill Potonian bodies had been stacked upon one another like sand bags. Behind the corpse wall a dozen Flesh Tearers lay dead. It was the work of a butcher. Each of the Flesh Tearers had been ripped apart. Severed limbs and chunks of torso were strewn across the murder crater. Shattered blades glinted in the sun, evidence of a desperate defense. Venerable brother Calassel lay toppled in their midst. The Dreadnaught had a gaping hole in his sarcophagus. The fused metal and charred edges of the wound suggested a melta bomb. Amit muttered a silent prayer for the fallen warrior and skirted around what remained of the hulking war machine. He followed the sound of labored breathing.

(World Eater groaning and breathing hard trying to move)

Amit glared down at a World Eater. His enemy lay pinned beneath the arm of fallen Calassel.

Amit: "Tell me, traitor, what is it like?"

The World Eater bared his teeth in a snarl, his bloodshot eyes bulging in their sockets as he struggled against the weight of the arm. Unable to lift it he cast around in search of a weapon. Amit circled him, taking care to stay out of reach. Battle had stolen the color from the World Eater's armor leaving it the dull grey of bare ceramite. Only the deepest grooves of his war-plate still bore a hint of crimson, dark scabs that were themselves, sleek with arterial fluid. The meat of his cheeks was burned away so that blackened bones stretched across his face like a rash. An what remained of his hair was matted to his skull by blood and mucus.

(World Eater groaning from effort)

Amit sat down on the corpses of two guardsmen. The pair of Potonians lay slumped over one another, their heads lost among the carnage surrounding them. The World Eater stopped struggling for the moment in control of the single-minded rage coursing through his veins.

Bordack (growling): "Who are you?"

Amit: "I am your enemy".

Amit picked up a pauldron and threw it into the World Eater's eye line. Parted from one of his fallen brothers it bore the Chapter's symbol.

Bordack (growling): "Mmm, Flesh Tearer. I will kill you".

Amit: "When?"

Amit tapped the Dreadnaught's arm with the blade of his eviscerator.

Amit: "How long shall I wait?"

Bordack (growling): "Mmm, you mock me.. You... ".

Amit (interrupting): "You mock yourself! Look at you! A broken warrior pinned impotent beneath his last victim, abandoned by his patron to die an ignominious death. A coward's end".

Bordack (growling): "No! I will claim your skull for Khorne! He will elevate me from this accursed place".

Drool flaked the World Eater's mouth as he thrashed against the immovable weight on his chest.

Amit: "Answer my question, berserker and I will allow you a chance to death you crave!

Bordack: "You think me a fool? You will not free me. You will butcher me where I lie".

Amit crouched next to the World Eater's head.

Amit (whispering): "Last... chance... Answer me or I will leave you here to die".

Bordack: "Free me and I will kill you".

The World Eater's eyes strained in their sockets swollen by the promise of murder.

Amit: "Then you will succeed where hundreds of your retched brethren have failed. It's been almost an hour since I finished killing the last of them".

Bordack: "Bald words, Flesh Tearer, but you will not find me a such easy prey. I am Bordack Scathren, first disciple of the Bloodied Skull, chosen champion of Khorne. My axe will drink deep of your veins".

Amit: "Perhaps".

Amit gave a tight-lipped smile and stepped away. He could feel his hearts rising in his chest, his muscles twitching in anticipation of slaughter. The stench of blood and death was choking. It gripped his throat like a vise, a mounting pressure that would only be released when he smashed the World Eater's skull beneath his boot.

Amit: "But first..."

Bordack: "Very well... What? What is it you would have me tell you?"

Amit: "How did it feel to fall to your rage?"

The World Eater grinned, his eyes widening in amusement.

Bordack (laughing): "Fall? I did not fall! I ascended. I walk the one true path".

Amit: "Spare me your falsehoods! I have no wish to hear of your Blood God".

Bordack: "Better to follow a god than the memory of a dead father and a corpse-Emperor".

Amit growled and struck the World Eater in the face.

(Amit growling and hitting Bordack)

(Bordack laughing)

Bordack: "Yes... I see it now. It has taken me these long centuries, but I see it. I see it in your eyes. The truth of it burns like bail fire".

Amit (growling in fury): "Speak..."

Bordack: "It was the Emperor himself who set us on this path. He gave our fathers, gave us - you and I - the strength and will to kill".

(Amit growling ever more angrily)

Bordack: "He sent us to slaughter in his name. He made butchers of all of us. Yes, the Emperor. He was the first and greatest of Khorne's children".

(Amit growling and losing his temper)

Amit grabbed the World Eater by the head, his armored fingers digging into flesh to crush bone.

Amit: "Speak ill of the Emperor again and I will rip your head from your shoulders".

The World Eater grinned darkly.

Bordack: "You would prove my point".

Amit roared and let him go thundering his fist into Calassel's armored shoulders.

Bordack: "You are a fool, Flesh Tearer. You cannot hide your true motives from Khorne. His axe cleaves through the meat of lies. Now..."

enough of this prelude. Ask me the question you have come half a world to have answered and let us be done with one another".

Amit: "You know... what... I.... ask".

Bordack: "Khorne would hear it from your tongue".

Amit: "The thirst, the hunger of violence and slaughter. After all the deaths you have wrought how many more must you kill to gain a moment's respite? How much blood must you spill to silence the roar in your veins?"

Bordack (laughing): "There is no respite beyond the moment. The nails do not allow it. To kill is life itself, it is to breathe and with each breath it grows stronger. That is what it is to butcher in the name of the Blood God. It is what it means to be a true child of Khorne".

Amit: "You... are... as craven as the hounds that follow your filth breed to war. It was foolish to expect truth from a madman".

Amit turned and started away from the World Eater.

Bordack: "The truth is the same whether you would believe it or not, Flesh Tearer. Nothing is more glorious than the kill. What else matters in this universe? What is there that better defines us? We are butchers or butchered? The living or the dead. Do not pretend you do not already know this. Word of your deeds has long since been carried to the skull-throne of Khorne".

(Amit roaring and turning on his chain-sword)

Amit lunged at the World Eater, a surge of anger bringing his blade within a breath of the traitor's neck.

Amit: "Even in our darkest hour we are nothing like you. You are not that rage and hatred".

Bordack bunched his fists in exclamation.

Bordack: "There is nothing more. You call it a curse? Ha! A convenient excuse to deny your true nature. The nails burns into my skull with every breath, driving me to blood. But you, you have no such depthless torment compelling you. The Blood God runs in your veins. You are a truer son than even me".

Amit: "No!"

Bordack: "Tell me, Flesh Tearer. What's been the story of your existence if not one of bloodletting and slaughter?"

Amit: "Enough!"

Amit tore his blade down through the Dreadnaught's arm cutting the World Eater free.

(Amit turning off the chain-sword)

The World Eater staggered to his feet.

Bordack: "It seems the slaughter has touched us both, brother".

He gestured to the gaping wound in Amit's abdomen. Amit kept his eyes fixed on the World Eater's.

Amit: "We have spoken enough. It is time one of us died".

Bordack: "Agreed. Your skull will make a worthy addition to Khorne's throne".

The World Eater circled away from Amit upturning his empty palms and gestured to the eviscerator wielded by the Flesh Tearer.

Bordack: "He will reward me greatly for defeating you unarmed".

Amit (throwing down a sword): "No!"

Amit tossed away his weapon.

Amit: "I will tear your head from your body with my bare hands".

(both Marines groaning)

They charged headlong into one another, arms spread wide in acceptance of the pain the other offered. Rage... Rage stole all else from them. They fought to redefine violence, battering each other with savage ugly blows. Fury met fury, wrath met wrath. Bone broken, ceramite fractured. They attacked with unrelenting frenzy, neither giving any thought to defense. Above the clamor of their blows a familiar rumble returned to the heavens.

(thunder in the sky)

Bordack (breathing hard): "You see, Flesh Tearer? Khorne recognizes his own".

(rain starting to fall heavily)

The World Eater smiled as blood began to rain overhead.

(Amit growling insanely)

Amit snarled and struck him again, a heavy right cross that sent his teeth spinning to the sands.

Bordack (laughing): "Even now you do his work".

Amit hit him again. The World Eater swung out with a right hook. Amit took the blow on the cheek as he closed, driving his elbow into the World Eater's brow. The traitor staggered, his eye ruined. Catching the lip of his pauldron Amit pulled him close and smashed his head into his opponent's nose. The World Eater's face was lost behind the mask of blood.

Bordack: "Killing me will only bring you closer to his embrace".

Amit: "So... be... it!"

Amit struck him again and again, hammer blows that smashed the bones of his face until it was a lump of beaten flesh. The World Eater went slack in Amit's grip.

Bordack (moaning from pain): "Khorne cares not from whom the blood flows, only that it flows".

(Amit snarling)

Amit roared in pure hatred and wrenched the World Eater's head from his shoulders.

(Amit breathing hard)

He tossed the head aside and looked to the bloodied sky.

(thunder, hearts beating)

The rumble overhead mixed with the thunderous beating of his hearts so that he was no longer sure which was which. He stood alone, a lord of slaughter in a world of the dead. And his cheeks grew wet as the blood continued to fall.

(hearts beating)