

WARHAMMER 40,000



SPACE WOLVES 2 THE GAGED WOLF

WARHAMMER
40,000



SPACE WOLVES 2
THE GAGED WOLF

SPACE WOLVES

THE CAGED WOLF

Ben Counter

Ulrik's breath misted in the chill heart of the Fang. The Vaults of Rest had to be kept cold to preserve the delicate technology down here – and to keep the slumbering bodies from putrefying in their sleep.

Ahead of Ulrik was one of the huge war machine berths. The stone was lined with cogitator screens and archeotech devices that clicked and whirred in the half-darkness. Set into the berth, linked to the Fang with hundreds of cables and hoses, was a Dreadnought. Even asleep and without its arm-mounted weaponry, its brutal shape, like a bipedal tank, spoke of danger and fury.

Ulrik placed a hand against the Dreadnought's sarcophagus. The ceramite plating was caked in frost.

'Brother Bjorn,' said Ulrik. 'Your Chapter has need of you.'

Ulrik's words echoed around the vault. There was no other reply.

'You walked with Lemman Russ,' continued Ulrik. 'You were there when he left us, and you heard his promise to return. Now a daemon has woven lies that claim Russ is dead, and it seeks to shake our spirit with such deceit. You could end our disquiet, brother. If you stand amongst us and tell the sagas of Russ, the Changeling will find no purchase in our hearts.'

Ulrik was aware he was being watched. The Chapter thralls who worked in these vaults were a strange and uncommunicative breed, used to working in the near-dark and quiet of the Fang's deeper layer. They waited in the shadows now, their deference to Ulrik the Slayer shown by their silence. The Dreadnoughts in these vaults needed constant care to ensure their systems continued to support the mortally wounded Space Marines interred inside, and waking a Dreadnought required hours of tech-rituals. These thralls, though they were rarely seen by any

of the Space Wolves, had as sacred a duty as anyone in the Fang.

‘But it uses the flesh of truth to clothe its lies,’ said Ulrik. ‘It speaks of how Logan Grimnar, the Great Wolf, found the corpse of the primarch on the Eastern Fringe. And it is true that Grimnar has not returned from the Great Hunt. He is long overdue back at the Fang, and none can say where he is. So we must find him, even though the trap laid by the Changeling is as clear as day. We must walk into the jaws of the Great Enemy, Brother Bjorn, for I see no other way. Unless you can counsel us to greater wisdom. Unless you can awaken, brother, and speak.’

Bjorn did not reply. The Dreadnought did not move. Ice had encrusted the hydraulics of the legs and the mountings of its shoulder units. Bjorn had not awakened for years, and the time between his periods of activity had slowly grown longer over the centuries. How long before he woke again? A decade? A century?

‘Inform me of any change,’ Ulrik said to the thralls lurking in the shadows, and headed back towards the upper levels where the Wolf Lords were gathering. If there had been a chance to seek the ancient Bjorn’s counsel, it was gone now. Bjorn was unable or unwilling to stir, and now Ulrik only had one decision he could make.

The eleven Wolf Lords of the Space Wolves were gathered in the Repository of Battles. The circular chamber was lined with shelves holding books of battle-sagas and campaign histories. Thousands of conflicts were described there, from the Horus Heresy to the Great Hunt the Chapter had just completed. The lords stood around the huge circular table, waiting for Ulrik. A conclave of all the Wolf Lords would normally take place in the Great Hall, before the whole Chapter, but not this time.

Ulrik entered. Eleven pairs of eyes glanced down in respect. Even the Wolf Lords acknowledged the authority of Ulrik the Slayer, for the Wolf Priests were set aside in the structure of the Chapter, a parallel chain of command that could overrule any of them on the rare occasion it became necessary.

‘Does he wake?’ asked Berek Thunderfist.

Ulrik did not need to answer that question. ‘With the Great Wolf still lost to us and the Changeling having made its play against the Chapter,’ said Ulrik, ‘there is no excuse for inaction. And yet the Changeling has made its way among us once, and Njal Stormcaller still lies comatose because of it. I cannot leave the Fang unguarded when the daemon has shown itself cunning enough to breach

our walls at will.'

'Then leave an honour guard,' said Engir Krakendoom. 'As we did for the Great Hunt. Name which one of us shall remain and the rest shall tear the galaxy apart until we find the Great Wolf!'

'No,' said Ulrik. 'You shall all remain. The Changeling's objective is to break the will of the Space Wolves. If we fragment across the galaxy, it will prey on us one by one. The Chapter will stand united. If the Changeling wants to break us, it will have to break us all at once.'

'I will not abandon the Great Wolf to his fate,' snarled Lord Morkai.

Ulrik did not flinch before Morkai's glare.

'The Great Wolf will return to us,' he said, 'as surely as Lemman Russ will at the Wolf-time. I will see to it in person. I shall take a small and swift force and travel to the Eastern Fringe, following the route laid down by the Stormcaller's rune-readings, and I shall find Grimnar. You, my brothers, will defend the Fang and the spirits of your Chapter. That is where your keenest duty lies. The Changeling will make his move against us again, and soon, and you will all be here to meet him.'

'You would have me skulk here, when the Great Wolf is lost?' Krom Dragongaze slammed a fist into the table. 'The Changeling knew of the Great Wolf's destination. Fell powers have closed in on him. He battles daemons and traitors and Throne knows what else, and yet we are to sit and watch over the Fang like so many nursemaids?'

'You are,' said Ulrik. 'That is my command. In the absence of the Great Wolf Grimnar, it is my voice that carries the authority of Lemman Russ.'

'You can try to stop us,' said Morkai. 'But our lord needs our assistance, and woe betide anyone who stands in our way.'

'Ready the fleet!' demanded Engir Krakendoom. 'Arm the ships! We leave with the dawn's breaking!'

'Wait!' shouted Berek Thunderfist. 'It was Ulrik the Slayer who took me from my tribe and made me a Space Wolf. He did the same for most of you, too. It was under his tutelage that you became what you are today. I trust him more than I trust myself. If it is his word that he alone seek the Great Wolf then I shall bow to it, much as it may pain me.'

'If we are all of a mind,' retorted Morkai, 'then what force in the galaxy can stop us?'

'Lemman Russ bade all of us kneel to the word of the Wolf Priests,' said Berek, 'and yet how often has Ulrik used that authority? It is rare indeed that he stands

against any one of us. I have faith that if he now overrules us, there is a good reason for it.'

'And which of us,' said Lord Bran Redmaw, 'knows the mind of the Changeling? All we can be sure of is that it wishes to kindle despair within us. It is a cunning creature and we will surely make its work easier if we stampede across the galaxy in our rage. When the Changeling comes for me, I would have you, my brothers, by my side.'

'Whatever you choose,' said Ulrik, 'whether you obey the word of Russ or usurp it for your own will, make the decision soon, for neither Lord Grimnar nor the Changeling will wait for us.'

None of the Wolf Lords spoke up. For a moment it looked like Krom Dragongaze would voice defiance of Ulrik, but the moment passed and he swallowed his words.

'Then I will select a strike force from your Great Companies, said Ulrik, 'and take the *Canis Pax* as my ship, for it is among our swiftest. I will leave before the breaking of the dawn. The rest of you, make fast the defences of the Fang and ensure the spirits of your brethren are made ready. The Changeling will make its move against us again, and you will be ready for it when it comes.'

The warp was angry.

Ulrik could feel it. He had made many voyages through the immaterium, slipping into the parallel dimension to travel vast interstellar distances, and each time he had felt the uncleanness of the warp cling to him. This time, as the *Canis Pax* plied its inconstant tides, he could almost hear the scratching of a million predators at the hull of the strike cruiser. In the time between moments, he was sure he caught the distant whisper of something dark following the ship hungrily, lusting after the morsels inside.

For his strike force, Ulrik had selected one pack of Blood Claws, led by Lief Stonetongue, two packs of Grey Hunters under Hef Sunderbrow and Tanghar Three-Finger, and a number of Wolf Guard. Baldyr White Bear, Wsyr Flamepelt, Olav Brunn, Thord Icenhelm and Brok Oakenheart were all veterans equipped with Terminator armour who had seen just about every form of war that existed in the galaxy, and had served in the retinues of their Wolf Lords for untold years. Ulrik had selected them for their experience, and because he had seen them ascend through the ranks of the Chapter since their initiation rites. He could trust them to obey him without question. They had brought a small armoury with them on the *Canis Pax* – Rhinos and a Land Raider assault tank, along with a

clutch of drop pods for an orbital assault and a Stormwolf gunship to support them from the air. It was a necessarily small force, but one ready to cope with anything that waited for them on the Eastern Fringe.

Baldyr White Bear was on duty watching over the bridge as Ulrik walked through the blast doors. Shipmistress Asgir was at the helm, a woman so gnarled with age it seemed the starch of her Naval uniform was the only thing holding her up.

‘Lord Slayer,’ said Asgir as Ulrik approached. ‘It’s as rough as a kraken’s hide out there. Something doesn’t want us to get through.’

‘Are we making better time?’

‘We’ve reached the jump point,’ replied the shipmistress. ‘It’s been damnably slow, though. Navigator Morone is on the verge of speaking in tongues, I am sure of it.’

Ulrik imagined the ship’s Navigator, his third eye pressed to the sensorium that looked out onto the warp, mind churning as he was assailed by the insanity that only he could comprehend. ‘Breach real space as soon as possible,’ said Ulrik. ‘We are expecting to be in hostile territory when we emerge.’

‘The *Pax* has another few crash breaches in her,’ said Asgir. ‘Not sure about her crew, but they’ll live with it.’ The shipmistress smiled, showing some missing teeth. A lifetime ago she had been trained at an officers’ school of the Imperial Navy, but after serving with the Space Wolves for so long a little of Fenris had rubbed off on her.

‘I do not like the smell of this,’ said Baldyr White Bear. His Terminator armour was well-scored with old battle wounds – its previous owners had refused to remove the scars, and Baldyr continued the tradition. Baldyr had the tall crest of violently red hair and forked beard typical of the White Bear tribe, for though he was a Sky Warrior now, he had never strayed too far from the traditions of his tribe. ‘There are dark forces threatening us.’

‘Warp ghosts,’ said Asgir. ‘The voidborn are talking of it. The crew think it doesn’t reach my ears but I hear everything that happens on my ship. If a shoal of ghosts has caught our trail, it could be what’s slowing us down.’

‘Not that,’ said Baldyr, shaking his huge battered head. The servos of his Terminator armour sighed as he folded his arms. ‘Not something that’s following. Something that’s waiting for us.’

‘Lord Slayer,’ said Shipmistress Asgir. ‘We’re at the immaterium zenith. There’s no time like the present.’

‘Make ready for crash breach,’ said Ulrik.

Alarms blared throughout the strike cruiser. The crew's training would have them securing loose gear before finding the safest footing they could. The bridge crew were firing up the real space navigation cogitators while strapping themselves into the bridge's restraints. Ulrik activated the mag-locks on his armour's sabatons, clamping himself to the deck, and watched the viewscreen for the first sight of the Eastern Fringe.

The *Canis Pax* shuddered violently as the Geller fields around the ship flared and the warp drive ripped a hole in the veil between dimensions. There was a sense of a sideways lurching, a nauseating shift in balance, and the image of a stretch of real space crackled onto the viewscreen.

The stars stopped halfway across the screen, for this was the very extreme of the Eastern Fringe, where the galaxy ended. Everything beyond was empty void, with only the smears of distant galaxies to suggest there was anything out there at all. Tales described how men went mad when they reached the edge of the galaxy and suddenly realised how insignificant it was to be a human being.

Ulrik did not feel insignificant. Any part of him that might have once been in awe of oblivion had long since been tempered into something stronger.

The purplish half-disc of a planet hung to one side of the viewscreen: Dactyla, a cold and rocky world in distant orbit around a dying star.

'Shipmistress, we have contacts in the void,' said the crewman at the comms helm.

'Is it the *Eternity Fang*?' asked Asgir.

The crewman scanned for a sign of the Great Wolf's ship.

'Xenos,' he replied.

'Bring them onto the viewscreen,' said Ulrik.

The image shifted again, cycling through several magnified views of blurry shapes against the blackness. The final one resolved into a spaceship as large as the *Canis Pax*, surrounded by a shoal of smaller escorts. Its lines were smooth and streamlined, as if designed to swim through an ocean, and its red hull panels were mottled like the skin of a fish.

'Xenos indeed,' said Ulrik. 'Tau.'

'I fought them at Kolhelo Reach,' said Baldyr White Bear, darkly. 'Slippery and cunning things. And the daemon said Grimnar faced the tau here.'

'The daemon mingles its lies with the truth,' said Ulrik, 'so that weaker men believe them.' But in spite of his words, Ulrik's teeth gritted when he recalled the daemon's words. Everything the Changeling had said had so far been proven true.

‘The tau are contacting us,’ said a crewman. ‘They’re requesting... a summit.’

‘A summit?’ asked Ulrik.

‘One of theirs, one of ours.’

‘Tell them I have no need to match wits with an alien. We shall take what we came here for and leave.’

‘More contacts,’ said the crewman at the navigation helm. On the spherical holo-display above his cogitator, several red warning runes were flaring up as the *Canis Pax*’s sensors picked out more tau ships around Dactyla.

‘Reading one tau capital ship,’ said Shipmistress Asgir, looking up at the viewscreen. ‘The *Canis Pax* is a fine ship, Lord Slayer, but that xenos craft is her equal. And she’s not alone.’

‘You wish to speak plainly, shipmistress?’ said Ulrik.

‘We cannot break through, my lord,’ said Asgir. ‘Not here. They have many times our tonnage in the void and they can hit us from a damnably long way away. We’ll be drifting metal before we get to high orbit.’

Ulrik made a show of thinking on this for a long moment. In truth, he was quelling the wolf that snarled inside him. The greatest challenge for any Wolf Priest was to cage that inner beast, so he could offer counsel and even overrule the lords of the Chapter without his reason being warped by his anger. It was an unnatural thing to do, for rage was as intrinsic to Fenris as the storms that tore across its glaciers. But it was a necessary blasphemy, for no Wolf Priest can do his duty with the wolf running rampant.

‘Contact them,’ said Ulrik. ‘They have the advantage, for now. I will speak.’

The arranged location was a shuttle anchored halfway between the *Canis Pax* and the tau fleet. Ulrik waited in the passenger compartment as a ship of the same size, also unarmed, approached. The hull rang as the xenos craft docked with the *Canis Pax*’s shuttle. Ulrik could hear the hiss as the airlock pressurised.

Ulrik had come here alone. Even the shuttle’s pilot was a monotask servitor instead of a crewmember from the *Canis Pax*. Ulrik was taking a risk in making himself vulnerable before the xenos like this. It might be a war machine or even an explosive device that greeted him when the airlock opened. But the tau usually observed the protocols of negotiation, if only so their treacheries could be sewn all the more cunningly. It was not a question of Ulrik trusting the tau to honour the rules of the parley – it was knowing that it was in their interest to do so.

The airlock opened. The creature that walked in had a basically humanoid

shape, except for the hoofed shape of its feet and the four digits on each hand. Its heavily embroidered golden robes hung over a set of body armour with plates painted deep red. A sheathed knife was mounted on the side of its chest-plate, and the faceplate of its helmet was a featureless bone-coloured oval. Aside from the knife, which looked ceremonial or like a badge of office, the being was unarmed.

A pair of hovering drones accompanied the alien, the disc-shaped devices ringed with eye-like sensors. No doubt they were transmitting everything to the tau fleet.

‘What are you?’ said Ulrik.

The tau removed its helmet to reveal a face with blue-grey skin, a lipless mouth, a vertical slit in place of a nose and large eyes like polished black stones.

‘I am Shas’el Dal’yth Sona Malcaon,’ the alien said, in slightly accented Low Gothic. ‘Commander of this fleet. This world is under the protection of the Tau Empire.’

‘Your kind work in castes,’ said Ulrik. ‘You’re not the ambassador caste.’

‘Our water caste ambassador was lost in action,’ replied the shas’el. ‘Thus, I speak for the Tau Empire here.’

‘What do you want with this world?’

The shas’el’s expression changed, but Ulrik couldn’t read the alien’s face. ‘I have answered your questions. I would have my openness reciprocated. Who are you, and why are you here?’

‘I am Ulrik the Slayer of the Space Wolves, a son of Fenris. I am seeking one of my own, the Great Wolf Logan Grimnar.’

‘This will be the *gue’ron’sha* who made war on my people,’ said the shas’el, ‘without warning or cause.’

Ulrik did not flinch, but the tau’s words hit hard. The Space Wolves had been here at Dactyla, and they had fought the tau. It was just as the Changeling had said.

Eventually, the story would reach a lie. It had to. The Changeling could not have told a complete truth if it had wanted to. It was a deceiver by nature, and it could not change that nature any more than Ulrik could stop being a Space Wolf. Every step closer to the end of the story brought Ulrik closer to the truth, and when he had it, whatever plan the Changeling had laid would unravel.

‘I have no wish to fight you,’ said Ulrik. ‘When we have the Great Wolf, we will leave.’

‘And then you will return,’ said the shas’el, ‘and exterminate us. This is the way

of your Imperium.’

‘We will—’

‘You will leave,’ interrupted the shas’el. ‘You will not make demands of us. You will not be granted shelter on our world, nor a petition to our rulers or mercy from our guns. Turn your ship around, Space Wolf, and leave, or you will be blasted from the void. There is no need of the water caste’s words here. There is no need for negotiation. You will obey us or you will die. This is the Imperial way of diplomacy, is it not? You should know it well.’

‘Let us recover our dead,’ said Ulrik. ‘This is no more than you would ask of us.’

‘We would ask nothing of you,’ said the shas’el. ‘I called for this meeting so I could see you face to face, one warrior to another, and avoid more unnecessary bloodshed. If you possess any of the honour of which your Imperium likes to speak, you will preserve the lives of your people and swallow your pride, and leave this world to the Tau Empire that is sovereign over it. Were I water caste I would speak on, no doubt, but I am fire caste, and I see only war. So the talking is done.’

Shas’el Malcaon turned and walked back to the shuttle’s airlock, twin drones in tow.

‘Wait,’ said Ulrik. ‘You cross one Space Wolf, you cross us all. We are not like the humans of the Imperium you may have encountered in the past. We will swear an oath and pursue you to the end of the galaxy.’

‘You are at the end of the galaxy, Space Wolf,’ replied the shas’el. ‘And we can bear a grudge as well as you.’

The airlock door hissed closed.

‘They are telling the truth,’ said Shipmistress Asgir. ‘They can destroy us if they wish.’

‘This is one of the fastest ships in fleet,’ replied Ulrik. ‘Can we outrun them?’

Asgir looked between the faces of the Space Wolves assembled in her ready room. Their huge armoured bodies crowded the normally spacious room, which was hung with antique star charts and the accumulated trophies of a lifetime commanding ships in the void. Ulrik was accompanied by his force’s pack masters, Hef Sunderbrow and Tanghar Three-Finger, and the Blood Claw Lief Stonetongue.

‘We can outrun their capital ship,’ said Asgir. ‘But the rest of their fleet will get around us to block our path. Wherever we go, they can bring us to bear and

hammer us with their weapons.’

‘Can we not shelter on the far side of Dactyla?’ asked Lief Stonetongue. The members of a Blood Claw pack were typically few in years, for the recklessness of a young Fenrisian was suited to the Blood Claws’ close combat method of war. Stonetongue was much older than his charges, for he had proven so proficient in up-close butchery that he had not moved on to the Grey Hunters as most Blood Claws did. The lower half of his face was tattooed blood-red, as was typical of the Stonetongue tribe, and he wore a jangling collection of enemies’ fingerbones from rings through his ear. ‘Redmaw’s flagship pulled that off in the Battle of Ghul Mar Reach.’

‘Redmaw wasn’t fighting the tau,’ replied Asgir. ‘We could get to the sensor shadow behind Dactyla, but we’re being constantly scanned from planetside. The tau have an installation down there that would be watching us every mile of the way. No one on the *Canis Pax* can make ordure without the aliens knowing.’

‘An installation,’ said Hef Sunderbrow, one of the Grey Hunter pack leaders. ‘Just one?’

‘The planetary scans say it’s a single command centre with several sensors covering all angles of the planet,’ replied Asgir.

‘A command centre we can destroy,’ said Lief Stonetongue.

‘Not from orbit,’ said Asgir. ‘Their fleet would shoot us down before we got close. And they’ll have the place covered with enough point defence to seal it up.’

‘Good,’ said Stonetongue. ‘It’s never satisfying to win a battle from orbit.’

‘Speak for yourself,’ said Asgir. ‘Vaporising xenos from a thousand miles away is what keeps me warm at night.’

‘Loath though I am to deny the shipmistress’ proclivities,’ said Tanghar Three-Finger, ‘I would be much aggrieved to leave Dactyla without wetting the rocks with some xenos blood.’ Three-Finger was solid and predictable, a Grey Hunter who bowed to the chain of command. He had no imagination, but he was trustworthy, which to Ulrik was as valuable a quality. His shaggy mane of red-brown hair hung down over the many honours pinned to his armour.

‘How long can the *Canis Pax* survive if the tau move against us?’ said Ulrik.

‘If they throw everything they have?’ said Asgir. ‘Twelve hours. After that we’ll be spent, and those flat-faced grox-rutters will be free to do whatever they want to us.’

‘Then we will make twelve hours enough,’ said Ulrik. ‘Three-Finger and Sunderbrow, remain on the *Canis Pax* to repel any boarders.’

‘And where will I be?’ asked Stonetongue, with a dangerous smile.

‘With myself and the Wolf Guard,’ said Ulrik. ‘On Dactyla.’

Dactyla was as bleak a rock as existed in the galaxy. Its dying star was a smouldering red eye that bled a painful light. The planet itself was a knot of broken rock jammed together into a jagged sphere. The world had once held a sizeable Imperial population, as evidenced by the husks of cities still clinging to its intact land masses. Some time after settlement the planet had been pushed and pulled by a sudden burst of conflicting gravities, shattering the surface and forcing its abandonment. Now it was dead and empty, the dried-out skeleton of a world scattered with ruins.

Njal Stormcaller’s rune-readings had brought Logan Grimnar to this place. Throne knew what was on this planet worthy of the Great Wolf’s attention. Ulrik knew that whatever it was, it was not the corpse of Lemman Russ. Nevertheless there had to be something on Dactyla, something that pulled at the threads of fate strongly enough to have Njal’s runes point the way.

Perhaps Dactyla’s secret was the same thing that had stoked the tau’s interest here. Their structures dotted the rocky world, gripping the mountain peaks or floating anchored in Dactyla’s thin upper atmosphere. It seemed that even the industrious xenos were only just clinging to the planet, the spindly transmitters and scanners like scraps of spider web about to blow away on a solar wind.

One of the few stable points on the planet was the southern pole, where a broad plateau of rock was covered in shattered and fallen Imperial ruins. Once a mighty city had stood here, but now only ruins remained. It was here that the tau had set up the heart of their operations, a series of connected domes protected by drone turrets and a hangar of fighter craft. The *Canis Pax*’s scans had suggested a conventional gunship or shuttle landing would be suicidal, as the tau were a technologically adept race and their anti-air weaponry would swat such a craft out of the sky.

Thankfully, the Space Wolves did not do things conventionally. The *Canis Pax*’s complement of drop pods was prepped and loaded into the launching bays, and as the strike cruiser fled from the tau fleet past the disc of Dactyla, they were deployed.

Twelve minutes later, just beyond the predicted range of the tau air defences, they landed in a deep, black-shadowed valley, and the Space Wolves invaded Dactyla for the second time.

Lief Stonetongue crept back from the top of the ridge. His Blood Claws waited

with uncharacteristic patience just below the ridge. The thin air of Dactyla necessitated the wearing of helmets, even though Blood Claws often showed their bravado by going into battle bare-headed. They had painted their faceplates with the black and red stripes they typically wore as warpaint.

‘Drone patrol’s passing,’ voxed Stonetongue. ‘But we can’t get in unseen. The xenos will be alert to us in a few minutes.’

‘Then we shall teach the tau how to fight,’ replied Ulrik. He was further down the ridge with the Wolf Guard, huge in their Terminator armour, beside him. ‘Lead the charge, Brother Stonetongue.’

Lief Stonetongue let out a long, rising howl, amplified through the force’s voxnet. The Blood Claws joined in, and as the sound reached a crescendo Stonetongue lifted his power sword high and let its energy field leap to life. At the flash of the power field the Blood Claws pack sprinted up the slope and onto the plateau.

It would have been better to do this with the strike cruiser’s armoured vehicles. It would have been better to land the drop pods right on top of their target. But the tau had not given the Space Wolves either option, and so the Blood Claws led the way across the open ground towards the complex deemed most likely to harbour the tau command centre. The strike force could not even use the Stormwolf gunship for air cover – the xenos would bring it down in a heartbeat. This had to be done on foot.

‘Where are you, xenos?’ snarled Stonetongue as he ran. ‘My sword-arm will grow lazy without alien flesh to carve! Would you see my brethren grow fat and indolent, like overfed dogs? Present yourselves and let us teach our bodies discipline by sundering yours!’

The Wolf Guard followed, creating a formation around Ulrik. Their purpose was to protect him as much as it was to play their part in destroying the tau. A tau drone streaked towards the Space Wolves and Brok Oakenheart shot it down with a burst of fire from his assault cannon, the report of the gunfire a strange high thud in the thin air.

The closest dome, one of the smaller outlying structures, lay a short sprint from the Space Wolves. A section of the dome slid aside to reveal a cadre of tau fire warriors armed with long-ranged pulse rifles, flanked by a squadron of a dozen drones each equipped with a pair of automated guns. The tau squad leader activated a handheld device and a series of armoured panels sprang up along the ground around the dome, creating instant rows of cover behind which the tau took shelter.

‘Down!’ ordered Ulrik.

Lief Stonetongue had been on the brink of ordering his Blood Claws to charge in, heedless of the gunfire, to get to grips with the xenos. The tau had superior ranged firepower but up close they could crumble – Stonetongue knew it, and must have been slaving to reap his tally of death in hand-to-hand combat. But by the time his Blood Claws got there they would have been riddled with pulse rifle fire. They might win out, but at the cost of battle-brothers Ulrik could not afford to lose. Not here. Not like this. Every Space Wolf was worth a hundred of these aliens. Ulrik ordered them to seek the shallow cover of the plateau’s dips and scattered rocks, and they obeyed in spite of their instincts.

‘Wolf Guard! Open fire!’ Ulrik pointed towards the tau with his crozius, but the Terminator-armoured Space Wolves beside him did not need much instruction. Oakenheart spun up the barrels of his assault cannon as the other Wolf Guard took aim with their storm bolters.

The assault cannon hammered into the armoured barricades. Storm bolter fire spattered around the tau, who dived into cover as bolter shells burst in miniature explosions. Two drones fell, caught in the metal storm.

‘Now, Blood Claws! Break them!’

The fire had streaked over the heads of the Blood Claws. Now Stonetongue’s brethren leapt to their feet, following up with bursts of bolt pistol fire as they ran. Several of the Blood Claws hurled frag grenades which burst in glittering blasts of shrapnel. By the time the young warriors hit, the tau were barely back on their feet.

Most of the tau had not fired a shot. Gun drone fire fell among the Blood Claws, but there was nothing Ulrik could do about that. He had to trust in their wargear to keep them safe for these few dangerous seconds, and ensure that any who fell would live on as their gene-seed was harvested.

Stonetongue vaulted the barricade. He pounced upon the tau squad leader, who was distinguished by turquoise-coloured flashes on the panels of his red armour plating. Stonetongue crushed him to the ground and followed up with a downwards thrust of his power sword. In the flash of the sword’s power field, Ulrik saw the silhouettes of the other Blood Claws leaping into the fight.

It took seconds. The Blood Claws ripped through the tau. While each fire warrior was a deadly soldier when looking down the sights of his pulse rifle, he had no way to fight back when up close with the raging Blood Claws. Arms were torn from shoulders. Chests were carved open with chainswords. The squad leader’s torso was almost obliterated, leaving a lower trunk and the scorched

stumps of his arms and head as the power sword's field seared through flesh and bone.

The Wolf Guard did not join in the charge. They stayed beside Ulrik, shredding the hovering drones with bursts of fire. Armed with storm bolters and Oakenheart's cannon, the Wolf Guard sported the firepower of many times their number of unaugmented soldiers.

With the drones scattered and broken, Ulrik joined the Blood Claws at the barricade. They had performed well. Tau blood was pooled liberally on the ground and sprayed across the walls of the dome entrance. Inside the dome, along with banks of alien technology with a purpose Ulrik could only guess at, was the sealed doorway into the covered passageways that connected the domes. The way in.

'Un-bar the gate, Brother White Bear,' said Ulrik.

Baldyr White Bear was armed with a chainfist, a massive power gauntlet with a chain-toothed blade extending from the back of the hand. He rammed the blade into the doorway, and the teeth and power field acted in unison to chew rapidly through the reinforced tau construction. In seconds a rectangle was cut away large enough for a Terminator-armoured Space Marine to move through.

Already Ulrik could hear alarms and orders in the tau tongue blaring across the base. The assault had begun scarcely two minutes ago, but the xenos were already reacting. The tau were swift and intelligent in the methods of war. They were adaptable and they possessed exceptionally advanced technology. Fenrisian fury would have to win this fight, fury and speed.

Ulrik felt the wolf inside him snarling at the back of his mind. It wanted to be loosed, to lead him rushing through the tau base killing every alien he found, dragging Stonetongue's Blood Claws in his wake. But he could not open up the cage. He was the counterpoint to Stonetongue's recklessness. Without him, the Space Wolves were nothing but headstrong dogs haring after every prey they found, running straight into the gunsights of the tau Fire Warriors.

Ulrik was first through the breach. The passageway was lined with pipes and cabling, and branched off into a web of connected tunnels. At the centre of the web, the scans had suggested, was the eye without which the tau would be ignorant to what was going on over Dactyla. Ulrik's task was to blind it. If he could not, the *Canis Pax* would be destroyed and Logan Grimnar would stay lost.

'They're trying to get around us,' voxed Baldyr White Bear. 'I can smell them. They think they can corner us like vermin in a nest.'

‘Keep moving and do not let them funnel us into a crossfire,’ replied Ulrik. ‘They cannot match us in prowess. They seek to best us with cunning.’

‘There was never a xenos so cunning as my blade!’ snarled Stonetongue through the vox. Ulrik knew the tone in his voice well – his wolf was loose, guiding him headlong. A Space Wolf full of such fury could not be stopped.

Ahead of the strike force was a set of massive blast doors, sealed in response to the Space Wolves’ assault. They were near the centre of the complex now, and there was only one way forward.

Baldyr White Bear did not need ordering to set about the blast doors with his chainfist. These held up better than the previous doors and sparks showered as Baldyr ground his way through the armoured slab. The Space Wolves found what cover there was among the coolant pipes and crates of war materiel.

Ulrik glimpsed a tau warrior at the far end of the corridor behind them, ducking behind cover. This one was accompanied by a handful of drones armed with long-barrelled variants of the fire warriors’ pulse rifles. Its helmet had a set of glowing orange lenses on the front that looked like targeting or magnification equipment.

Mobile projectors were pushed into the corridor, and above the projectors sprang fields of a shimmering milky haze that obscured the tau moving into position. A pulse rifle shot punched through the haze, boring through the wall beside one of Stonetongue’s Blood Claws. Another caught one of the Blood Claws in the shoulder and sent him sprawling, roaring in pain and anger, to the floor. Two shots hit the Wolf Guard Wsyr Flamepelt, one shearing through his greave. His dropped to one knee, grunting angrily through gritted teeth.

‘We are not trapped like prey,’ roared Stonetongue. ‘They have cornered a predator, and we will turn and devour them!’ He had his power sword drawn and the Blood Claws were making ready to mount a charge. ‘Blood Claws, Fenris’ fury, this floor is far too bare of alien heads!’

Ulrik grabbed Stonetongue by his collar and slammed the pack leader against the wall.

‘You will not charge into their guns,’ said Ulrik, his voice low but powerful. ‘We stay together. We fight as one. Let them string us out and we will be slain one by one. Bury your anger. We are not here to give your men’s lives for a few more alien dead.’

More shots hit home. Another of the Blood Claws was hit in the throat and clutched at where the shot had caught the join between helmet and collar. Flamepelt took a shot full on his shoulder pad – he was barring the way to

Baldyr White Bear, shielding his fellow Wolf Guard with the wall of his armoured body.

Bolt pistol fire was stuttering down the corridor in return, but the tau were impossible to target properly through the light-bending field. Oakenheart's assault cannon hammered bursts of fire, but they were random, too, and the sniper drones kept firing. Every third shot seemed to wound a Space Wolf – one sliced a good chunk from Ulrik's shoulder pad, and sheared one of the vents from the backpack of his armour.

Finally, after what seemed like hours, Baldyr White Bear shouldered aside a section of the blast doors. Ulrik led the way through, more sniper fire pinging and shrieking through the air behind him.

Beyond was unmistakably the nerve centre of the tau operations on Dactyla. The huge circular room was full of concentric cogitator banks of advanced alien design. Screens were everywhere, with those on the curved surface of the dome overhead showing enormous orbital displays. Information streamed across each screen, making for a glittering constellation of colour.

The tau had prepared for the Space Wolves. Waiting behind the banks of cogitators was a band of creatures who did not resemble the tau at all. They were insectoids almost seven feet tall, clad in vibrant blue carapaces. They had clawed talons and buzzing wings, and each had six compound eyes set into its mandibled face. More than a dozen sheltered in cover, each with a bulky blaster weapon and segmented body armour of unmistakably tau design.

'Auxiliaries,' voxed Baldyr White Bear as he entered the nerve centre. 'Xenos from the Tau Empire. Vespids.'

Ulrik vaulted one bank of consoles as the first fire came down. The vespids rose into the air, firing from every angle, and whining shots burst around the Wolf Priest as he sprinted and rolled.

Flamepelt was next into the room, supported by Oakenheart. He fired up into the vespids with his storm bolter, shooting down two that were too slow to dart out of the way of the stream of explosive shells. The vespids fell, wounded, and Lief Stonetongue led the Blood Claws in falling on them. Then Thord Icenhelm and Olav Brunn of the Wolf Guard followed, sending chains of storm bolter fire chattering across the dome, forcing the vespids down into the range of the Blood Claws' chainswords.

Xenos blood sprayed across the consoles. Stonetongue leapt off a cogitator and grabbed a vespid's trailing limb, dragging it down and slicing the creature clean in two through the abdomen with a slash of his power sword.

Tau reinforcements were making it into the command centre. A squad of fire warriors were accompanied by more auxiliaries, these ones the lanky, avian creatures the Imperium knew as kroot. Beside the orderly tau, they had a feral look, and were festooned with feathers and trinkets. They carried knives of bone and bronze for the kind of up-close fighting the tau themselves eschewed. One of the kroot was holding back a trio of animals with the same savage, scaly appearance. They snarled like attack dogs, and their master let them off the leash.

The kroot hounds bounded towards the Space Wolves. Ulrik felt the weight of his crozius arcanum in his hand, the power weapon an emblem of a Wolf Priest's authority. The gilded wolf's skull head was surrounded by a power field, crackling blue-white.

One kroot hound leapt at Ulrik. Its beak-like maw opened wide to snap down on him. Ulrik met it with a swing of his crozius, shattering the bony jaw and driving it back into the creature's brain. It was dead when it hit the ground, and by the time the second hound closed in, Ulrik's plasma pistol was in his hand.

The weapon kicked as superheated plasma burst in a plume against the kroot's shoulder. It burned through skin, muscle and bone, and the kroot hound thudded to the floor a yard from Ulrik. As the pistol's power coils recharged, Ulrik ducked forwards and drove the crozius down into the beast's spine. The power field disrupted the gristle holding its vertebrae together and its upper back disintegrated.

The Blood Claws hit the kroot in a thudding, brutal melee. Chainswords sawed into kroot flesh. Xenos knives sought out joints and seals in power armour. Lief Stonetongue stayed up on the console, slicing down with his power sword at the kroot who tried to surround him.

'Wolf Guard!' ordered Ulrik. 'Bring down the fire warriors! Cleanse this place!'

The Wolf Guard hammered bolter shells at the tau. Pulse rifle fire spattered back in return but the Wolf Guard did not duck and scrape for cover as other troops might have – they were relentless, trusting in their armour to hold as they advanced towards the tau.

The tau were disciplined and skilled soldiers. They were veterans of countless battles, exemplars of their species' way of war, but they had not faced anything like the Wolf Guard before.

Flamepelt roared through the pain of his injuries and smashed into the broken cogitator housings, firing as he went. Baldyr was beside him and Oakenheart took up the rear, ripping out volleys of autocannon fire. The dome was full of

bursting shrapnel and through it the Wolf Guard advanced until they were within power fist range.

Flamepelt was bleeding from several pulse rifle wounds, but the pain just seemed to give him more strength. A swing of his power fist caught one tau square in the chest and smacked the resulting gory mess against one of the huge orbital display screens, shattering the image of the stars over Dactyla and spreading xenos blood across the wall. Flamepelt cracked another tau's skull with a downward swing of his storm bolter.

Baldyr swatted aside the last kroot hound with his chainfist. The creature was thrown across the dome in pieces. Ulrik ran in behind Baldyr to get among the tau, blasting one point-blank with his plasma pistol as the glittering arc of his crozius scattered three more.

It took a lot to keep the wolf caged in the thick of the fight. The Space Wolves were not here just to take alien heads – their mission was to blind the tau sensors watching Dactyla's skies, and Ulrik could not let the force get split up here pursuing the enemy for its own sake. The son of Fenris wanted to embrace the berserker rage of his people and paint this place with alien blood, but the Wolf Priest reined it in and focused.

The leader of the fire warriors was trying to direct his disintegrating squad from the rear, snapping shots from his rapid-firing carbine as the Wolf Guard closed in and the kroot line threatened to collapse under the Blood Claws' assault. Ulrik picked him out from the fray and waded through the fight towards him, shouldering aside the fire warriors who tried to bar his way.

The tau leader backed away towards the doorway through which he had tried to storm the dome, firing as he went. Pulse fire cracked and thudded against Ulrik's breastplate as he pursued. The tau glanced behind him, then back at Ulrik, and in that moment the Wolf Priest saw that he had changed.

Where there had been only the blank surface of the tau's visor, now there was a pool of formless dark. It plunged down through the tau's skull and into another reality, where ancient stars boiled away and new nebulae bloomed into existence. It was a glimpse of infinity, a vision of the void beyond the void, and it could ensnare a man's mind with the endless possibilities it promised.

It could not ensnare Ulrik. He had one of the strongest minds of any son of Fenris, moulded by the icy embrace of his home world and tempered by battles with the fiercest of daemons. He would not fall into the vision's trap, or feel despair. He was a Wolf Priest. He was the Slayer.

Ulrik tore his eyes away and shook the fog from his mind. He had glimpsed the

same thing not long ago, when he had torn the disguise from the imposter speaking in the Great Hall of the Fang.

A daemon. The Changeling. It was here, on Dactyla.

Ulrik barely noticed as he smashed aside a kroot that leapt at him with its blades outstretched. He did not acknowledge the fire warrior who was crushed beneath his armoured feet as he ran. He saw nothing but the daemonic presence, and heard nothing but the echo of the Changeling's laughter as he had heard it in the Great Hall.

The wolf was loose. Ulrik felt its shackles breaking in his mind. Its howl filled his consciousness. He was running through the chambers of the base now like a hunter pursuing his quarry across a Fenrisian glacier, past banks of alien technology and the scattering bands of tau labourers. The fire warrior leader was just ahead – on open ground Ulrik could outrun the alien, but the base was cluttered and the creature knew his way.

The daemon had followed the Space Wolves to Dactyla, to spring whatever trap it had prepared for them there. Ulrik had outwitted it by ordering the bulk of the Chapter to remain on Fenris. Now it was time to finish his victory over the daemon by trapping and destroying its physical form. If the Changeling could feel regret, it would regret ever having picked out the Space Wolves as the target for its games.

His quarry bolted through a doorway and the door descended behind him. Ulrik slid beneath it and caught it on his shoulder, roaring as he forced it back open. The motors of the doors screamed and smoked as he pushed his way through.

He was outside the dome now, on a stretch of rocky plateau between the base's structures. Ruins of ancient Imperial buildings filled the area. Overhead, silvery fire streaked across the sky as the *Canis Pax* led the tau fleet in an intricate dance. Shipmistress Asgir was keeping the strike cruiser alive against the firepower of the whole tau fleet. When the Changeling was defeated, then Ulrik could worry about assisting with her battle in orbit. For now, his objectives had changed.

A pack of kroot emerged from one dome, interposing themselves between the Changeling and Ulrik. Ulrik crashed into them, bowling half of them over with the force of the impact. They carried long rifles with blades attached to the barrels which they wielded like halberds. Ulrik parried one and shattered the knee of the kroot who held it with a downwards strike of his crozius. The power field leapt up and his follow-up strike into the kroot's chin took the alien's head clean off its shoulders. Ulrik whirled, catching two more in crozius' arc, casting

them broken and bloody across the rock.

Ahead, another section of dome slid aside. The fire warrior being puppeted by the Changeling disappeared inside. From the dome strode a bipedal battlesuit twice the height of a Space Marine. One arm ended in an energy cannon and the other held a circular shield that cast a force field around it. On the side of its armoured chest was an oversized combat knife in a sheath, worn not as a weapon but an emblem of rank. Ulrik recognised it through his fury.

Shas'el Dal'yth Sona Malcaon. The tau leader who had demanded the Space Wolves leave Dactyla or die. One more tool of the Changeling.

The wolf inside Ulrik howled. If Ulrik had to go through this alien too, then he would. He was a Space Wolf. The blood of Lemman Russ burned in him. Nothing could stand before him when he was gripped by the fury.

Ulrik batted another kroot aside. They scattered as the battlesuit approached, propelled on incandescent jets from the exhausts mounted on its back. The suit crunched to the ground just ahead of Ulrik and took aim with its cannon. Ulrik rolled to the side as a tremendous burst of energy ripped into the ground beside him, blasting a deep trench through the rock.

Ulrik was back on his feet. He leapt at the battlesuit. This was a machine designed to keep foes at a distance, and to capitalise on their vulnerability as they fled. Ulrik would not flee. He found a handhold between two armour plates and swung up towards the battlesuit's head, an armoured rectangle fronted by a nest of glowing lenses. He drew back his crozius and rammed it into the battlesuit's eyes, letting the power field discharge to blast the head apart.

The battlesuit's shield arm had an oversized hand that now reached up and closed around Ulrik's thigh. It threw him off and he landed hard, skidding on his back along the rock. The battlesuit was reeling, blinded.

Ulrik was barely able to focus enough to check his body for injuries. He was battered, but he'd suffered nothing that would keep him from fighting. The rest of his mind was taken up with the rage.

He would tear this machine apart, piece by piece, and when the morsel of alien coward inside was revealed, he would rip it open and hold the bloody chunks up to the sky.

The power field of his crozius had recharged. This time it would tear off the battlesuit's arm or split its torso open. Ulrik ran at the machine, taking advantage of its blindness to cross the arc of its cannon.

A panel on the battlesuit's chest opened up like a hatch on a spaceship. Inside, lit by the winking readouts of the battlesuit's controls, was the shas'el. A faint

pane of clouded air suggested an energy field that kept the cockpit's atmosphere pressurised in Dactyla's thin air. The tau's lipless mouth was open and the warning lights inside his cockpit were reflected in the liquid black of his eyes.

He saw Ulrik just in time to bring the shield arm around. The energy shield flared as Ulrik slammed into him at full speed. He bounced off and sprawled on the rock. The shas'el brought the shield down like a guillotine blade into Ulrik's abdomen. Trapped against the rock by a weight of shimmering energy, Ulrik struggled like an insect on a pin.

The battlesuit's cannon swung around to aim at him. If the tau ever smiled, Shas'el Dal'yth Sona Malcaon smiled then.

Ulrik forced his arm out from under him and drew his plasma pistol. The weapon was powerful enough to sear a hole right through solid power armour, but its power coil needed a few seconds to recharge after each shot. That meant Ulrik only had one pull of the trigger.

He fired straight up. The bolt of plasma hit the shield generator and the energy field crackled out of existence. Ulrik rolled out of the way as the cannon fired into the ground at the battlesuit's feet.

The explosion lifted Ulrik off his feet and threw him against the battlesuit's leg. Ulrik stayed conscious and aware as the side of his breastplate buckled with the force. His inner armour of fused ribs cracked, and shards of bone were driven into his chest cavity. He felt every one, needles of fire shrieking through him as his organs were burst and lacerated.

Ulrik hit the ground and gasped in a breath. His torn lungs flared in pain. Beside him was a glowing crater in the ground where the cannon had vaporised rock. Ulrik still had his crozius in one hand and pistol in the other. He holstered the pistol, ignoring the pain from the torn muscles down his side.

The wolf inside Ulrik was not quietened by the pain. He only heard it louder now. He reached up and grabbed the lower edge of the battlesuit's open cockpit, pulling himself back up to the level of the shas'el.

Ulrik was face to face with the alien. The shas'el looked surprised to see Ulrik still living. As Ulrik brought his crozius back for the kill, he caught the reflection of his skull-faced helm in the tau's large black eyes.

The reflection changed. The shape of the wolf's skull distorted and broke apart in a spray of stars. Galaxies spun away and thunderheads of glowing stellar gas boiled out from an endless void. Millions of years spiralled away in chains of dying stars.

Ulrik was almost lost. Again, he forced his mind away. A terrible realisation

was breaking at the back of his mind.

He heard distant laughter, and he understood.

Something slammed into Ulrik's side. He fell away from the cockpit and hit the ground by the crater again. The tau fire warrior, the one Ulrik had pursued from the command centre – the Changeling – had run up and knocked him away from the shas'el.

Ulrik's injuries cried out again. The shas'el turned to face Ulrik. The image of the void rippled across the fire warrior's helm and the shas'el's face, and Ulrik heard that laughter again, ringing from some dark place.

Of course the Changeling was not on Dactyla. The daemon was on Fenris, lurking at the threshold of the Fang, waiting for its chance to invade the minds of the Space Wolves. It had cast an illusion to distract Ulrik and force him to make himself vulnerable in a way that no Wolf Priest ever should. Because the Changeling knew Ulrik's one weakness.

The caged wolf. The rage of Fenris. The Changeling knew it was inside Ulrik, and that when it ran loose all the mental discipline the Wolf Priest had created would shatter and be forgotten.

Ulrik rolled onto his front. His strength was bleeding away as he crawled. The anger was gone now, and he could feel only pain. He had suffered physically before – he had no fear of pain alone. But the pain was a reminder of how completely he had been outfoxed by the daemon. It had known every move Ulrik would make, the exact way to make him forget himself and become the furious son of Fenris that lay inside. He had split off from his battle-brothers and made himself vulnerable, and got himself cornered alone by the enemy in a way that would have had him scolding the most ignorant of novices.

The fire warrior backed off. The battlesuit manoeuvred to stand over Ulrik now, the face of the shas'el visible in the open cockpit. The battlesuit lifted a massive armoured foot, and raised it over Ulrik.

In that moment, when death became certain, a strange emotion surfaced somewhere amid the pain and regret. It was a peculiar form of admiration – nothing positive, nothing that suggested forgiveness or kinship. But nevertheless, Ulrik could not help but acknowledge the sheer cunning of the Changeling, the way it had found the one weakness in a man who should have no weakness at all. For all Ulrik took pride in being a Fenrisian and a son of Lemman Russ, his homeworld and his primarch had engendered in him the flaw in his mental armour that the Changeling had exploited.

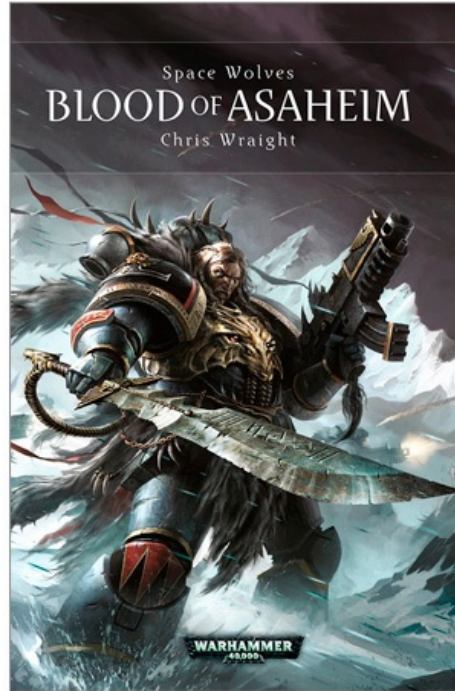
The battlesuit's foot rushed down to crush and destroy.

Beyond the battlesuit, the void was streaked with starship fire. And somewhere among those stars, Ulrik realised with what would surely be his last thought, lay a Fenris now open to the predations of the Dark Gods.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ben Counter is one of Black Library's most popular Warhammer 40,000 authors, with two Horus Heresy novels to his name – *Galaxy in Flames* and *Battle for the Abyss*. He is the author of the Soul Drinkers series and *The Grey Knights Omnibus*. For Space Marine Battles he has written *The World Engine* and *Malodrax*, and has turned his attention to the Space Wolves with the novella *Arjac Rockfist: Anvil of Fenris* and a number of short stories. He is a fanatical painter of miniatures, a pursuit which has won him his most prized possession: a prestigious Golden Demon award. He lives in Portsmouth, England.

[A Space Wolves pack defends a vital Imperial world from the forces of the Plague Lord.](#)



BUY NOW



READ IT FIRST

EXCLUSIVE PRODUCTS | EARLY RELEASES | FREE DELIVERY

blacklibrary.com

A BLACK LIBRARY PUBLICATION

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

Produced by Games Workshop in Nottingham.

Legends of the Dark Millennium: Space Wolves – The Caged Wolf ©
Copyright Games Workshop Limited 2015. Legends of the Dark
Millennium: Space Wolves – The Caged Wolf, GW, Games Workshop,
Black Library, The Horus Heresy, The Horus Heresy Eye logo, Space
Marine, 40K, Warhammer, Warhammer 40,000, the ‘Aquila’ Double-
headed Eagle logo, and all associated logos, illustrations, images, names,
creatures, races, vehicles, locations, weapons, characters, and the distinctive
likenesses thereof, are either ® or TM, and/or © Games Workshop Limited,
variably registered around the world.

All Rights Reserved.

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-78251-703-0

This is a work of fiction. All the characters and events portrayed in this
book are fictional, and any resemblance to real people or incidents is purely
coincidental.

See Black Library on the internet at

blacklibrary.com

Find out more about Games Workshop’s world of Warhammer and the
Warhammer 40,000 universe at

games-workshop.com

eBook license

This license is made between:

Games Workshop Limited t/a Black Library, Willow Road, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, United Kingdom (“Black Library”); and

(2) the purchaser of an e-book product from Black Library website (“You/you/Your/your”)

(jointly, “the parties”)

These are the terms and conditions that apply when you purchase an e-book (“e-book”) from Black Library. The parties agree that in consideration of the fee paid by you, Black Library grants you a license to use the e-book on the following terms:

* 1. Black Library grants to you a personal, non-exclusive, non-transferable, royalty-free license to use the e-book in the following ways:

o 1.1 to store the e-book on any number of electronic devices and/or storage media (including, by way of example only, personal computers, e-book readers, mobile phones, portable hard drives, USB flash drives, CDs or DVDs) which are personally owned by you;

o 1.2 to access the e-book using an appropriate electronic device and/or through any appropriate storage media; and

* 2. For the avoidance of doubt, you are ONLY licensed to use the e-book as described in paragraph 1 above. You may NOT use or store the e-book in any other way. If you do, Black Library shall be entitled to terminate this license.

* 3. Further to the general restriction at paragraph 2, Black Library shall be entitled to terminate this license in the event that you use or store the e-book (or any part of it) in any way not expressly licensed. This includes (but is by no means limited to) the following circumstances:

o 3.1 you provide the e-book to any company, individual or other legal person who does not possess a license to use or store it;

o 3.2 you make the e-book available on bit-torrent sites, or are otherwise complicit in ‘seeding’ or sharing the e-book with any company, individual or other legal person who does not possess a license to use or store it;

o 3.3 you print and distribute hard copies of the e-book to any company, individual or other legal person who does not possess a license to use or store it;

o 3.4 you attempt to reverse engineer, bypass, alter, amend, remove or otherwise make any change to any copy protection technology which may be applied to the e-book.

* 4. By purchasing an e-book, you agree for the purposes of the Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000 that Black Library may commence the service (of provision of the e-book to you) prior to your ordinary cancellation period coming to an end, and that by purchasing an e-book, your cancellation rights shall end immediately upon receipt of the e-book.

* 5. You acknowledge that all copyright, trademark and other intellectual property rights in the e-book are, shall remain, the sole property of Black Library.

* 6. On termination of this license, howsoever effected, you shall immediately and permanently delete all copies of the e-book from your computers and storage media, and shall destroy all hard copies of the e-book which you have derived from the e-book.

* 7. Black Library shall be entitled to amend these terms and conditions from time to time by written notice to you.

* 8. These terms and conditions shall be governed by English law, and shall be subject only to the jurisdiction of the Courts in England and Wales.

* 9. If any part of this license is illegal, or becomes illegal as a result of any change in the law, then that part shall be deleted, and replaced with wording that is as close to the original meaning as possible without being illegal.

* 10. Any failure by Black Library to exercise its rights under this license for whatever reason shall not be in any way deemed to be a waiver of its rights, and in particular, Black Library reserves the right at all times to terminate this license in the event that you breach clause 2 or clause 3.