



**WARHAMMER**  
40,000



# BL⊕⊕D GUILT

CHRIS WRAIGHT



WARHAMMER  
40,000



BLOOD GUILT

CHRIS WRAIGHT

# CONTENTS

Cover

**Blood Guilt - Chris Wraight**

About the Author

A Black Library Publication

eBook license

# **BLOOD GUILT**

**Chris Wraight**

The Tower of Hegemon, like all the edifices of Old Terra, had mutated over the long ages. Once, it had been a thriving nexus, humming with the activity of serfs and overseers. Its cogitator banks had been full of data-processing machine-spirits, chewing through location markers for a billion citizens on a world newly forged into Unity. The tall windows had been fashioned from crystal flex, and the warm light of a young sun had poured through them.

Now the cogitators were near silent. Their huge copper-faced banks were tended ritually by the distant descendants of those first menials, their robes clattering with the armour of ancestral bones, but the lenses remained dark. Musty chambers hung with cloaks of shadow, rarely visited, their walls stacked with the cracked leather spines of books that were seldom opened.

From far below came the noise of forges turning. Armour-wrights chiselled and etched occult names into ancient auramite, one after the other, recording battles that no one outside the tower would ever hear of, and whose heroes and monsters would find their way into no other Imperial records. The crystalflex windows were gone, replaced by heavy armourglass defence-slits. The sun was gone too, its sky turned grey like mourning ash. Old candles, each fashioned from priceless beeswax, guttered quietly in stone alcoves or drifted aimlessly on wandering suspensors.

The tower was larger now. Its original outline had been modified in the era of Dorn, brutalised and reinforced to withstand the predations of the

Warmaster. In the years that had followed, as the Edict of Restraint came into force, those walls were extended further and the old foundations were delved deeper. Archives were expanded, ready to receive the centuries' worth of compiled records. Its golden-armoured inhabitants, now donning black in remembrance of failure, padded through the deeper vaults, treading paths into the planets crust as they traced ritual processions and marked the passing of epochs.

While they held vigil in that darkening citadel, the stars burned. Empires rose and fell, threats came and went. A hundred High Councils were convened, and their occupants disputed, and then sickened, and then died, and then more were chosen. The tower became subsumed into the surrounding grasping mass of construction. Grey walls were raised around it, above it, through it, until the old carcass merged into the sprawl of the greater Palace, consumed as if dissolved in acid. A visitor would never have known where the halls of the Adeptus Custodes began and where they ended, save perhaps for some inner sense to warn them, some premonition that those chambers were the home to immortals, and that death lay behind its many doorways.

Of the Ten Thousand, less than half remained locked within that sarcophagus of eternity. They were the scholars and the seers, their proud heads bent in supplication before altars of learning and mysticism. They were the astrologers and the prognosticators, examining the fall of the tarot and interpreting old dreams. Many more remained on the high walls beyond, patrolling in endless rote. The most honoured of all no longer walked within Hegemon, but were kept in seclusion within the Sanctum Imperialis, lost in communion with the Emperor Himself.

Of the remainder, only a few were Ephoroi; the far-seekers, the ones who roamed. They passed down from the high portals and went into the world-city, sometimes in glory, more often in obscurity. In the lost age, the Ephoroi had been numerous, pursuing Blood Games across the entire globe before returning to the Palace. Now they were almost extinct, an order whose time had passed. So rare were their excursions that many even among the educated could speculate that the Adeptus Custodes were no more, just another part of the flotsam that had been dragged away along with the primarchs.

But they lingered still, just like the faint candle-flames in their stone

alcoves. Their tasks had not altered since the earlier days of the order, and still they hunted threats to the Throne with the remorseless obsession of Martian thought-machines, treading the many perilous trails of the world-city and bringing back tidings of its degradation to the silent tower. Some hunts would take days, others years, others never ended. This one had taken seven months. It had begun with a turn of a single tarot card, identified as anomalous by the seers. Investigations had followed, combined with the consultation of nine grimoires and the close interrogation of specialist astropaths stationed within nine different nodes of the Sanctum Imperialis. Psycho-conditioned serfs were sent out into the spires, their eyes replaced by augur-repeaters and their bodies stuffed full of datacores. Simulations were run, models were compared, testimonies sought.

And then, at the end of it all, a single hunter was loosed. Like a hawk undipped from the jesses, Navradaran of the Ephoroi left the confines of the Tower of Hegemon under the cover of night and slipped into the maw of the eternal conurbation, a ghost in gold, already moving fast, his quarry fixed before his blood-red eyes.

The Lord Sleox was not used to hurrying. His robes, heavy as rolls of tapestry, caught up in his ankles as he went, nearly sending him tumbling to the floor. A retinal scroller-feed told him that the lifter was past due to depart, and things were being cut far too fine.

He stumbled down the long corridor, its walls lined with portraits, feeling his heart-rate thud and his breathing grow quicken. It did not do to display concern. A scion of the House Sleox was never concerned, at least not in front of the staff. Even in the utmost extremity, one had to retain a certain level of decorum, of self-command, lest the most basic and fundamental tool of nobility - deference - be eroded.

'Is all well, my lord?' asked Ysica, her face a picture of concern.

'Absolutely well,' Sleox replied, picking up the pace. 'Some important news has come in from our holdings on Geres, that is all.'

Ysica looked confused. Sleox could understand that - the House had many holdings on Geres, that was true, but it had been a long time since a senior member of the cartel had visited in person. That was what indentured agents were for, and the House had hundreds of those.

She didn't demur, though. That was good, and reflected well on her training. In any case, there was no time for a fuller explanation, even if he had been inclined to give one. Things had become perilous with a speed that had, to be frank, unnerved him. The game had always been dangerous, but some enemies were more potent than others.

'Ensure the *Hervol* is primed for immediate dispatch,' he said as he walked. 'I want orbital clearance settled before we get there. No fuss. And keep your queries limited to private channels.'

Ysica nodded, scampering a little to keep up. Her face creased in concentration as she activated her inbuilt comm-bead and double-checked the hastily made arrangements.

Sleox hardly noticed. His slippers sank into thick rugs underfoot, one after the other in a long procession across a polished hardwood floor. Everything in the mansion was authentic, bought with coin pulled from a commercial empire of considerable heft. That empire had been a front, of course - the aura of respectability, and it had kept things looking just legitimate enough. Until now.

He reached the end of the gallery and a pair of glossy doors slid back. The gritty air of Terra's streets wafted over him, let in by the open aperture of a subterranean groundcar depot. One of his private fleet was waiting for them, a tracked monster with ablative plating and a swooping promethium fume-grille.

Its doors hissed open and Sleox got in, followed by Ysica. The groundcar boomed into motion immediately, snarling up the ramp and out of the aperture. It thundered through a long tunnel before veering out on to the main transitway, clogged as ever with hundreds of vehicles shuttling between the great rearing spire-complexes.

'*Hervol* reports clearances obtained and engines already fired,' Ysica relayed. 'Lifter also reports ready for dispatch, and orbital visas are coming over the grid within moments.'

'Not soon enough,' Sleox growled, looking out of the narrow viewports as the groundcar picked up speed. He leaned up to the vox-grille set into the las-proof screen between them and the driver. 'Faster. Get me there and you'll be rich. Fail and you'll be dead.'

He adjusted his robes and pulled a scanner out from an angle-mounting at head-height. The lens flickered then resolved into a scatter-graph of

pulsing green dots. He frowned as his eyes ran over the sweep, scouring for signals.

'Not good,' he muttered, craning over to look up through the nearside viewport. 'Damn it.'

As ever, the visual field was clogged and overhung with the titanic flanks of the spires, soaring up in terraces of milky sodium-glare and casting thick shadows at their feet. The transitways swirled and ducked like a bloodstream network, tangled and clotted. The filmy air above was almost as congested, hung with processions of smoggy flyers and cargo-barges.

Sleox wasn't concerned about the cargo-barges. He *was* concerned, though, about the jet-black flyer with locked wings that was gaining fast, sliding among the more cumbersome aircraft like a shark among shoals.

He leaned forwards, grabbing the vox-grille. 'Faster,' he ordered again.

The driver dared a backward glance, just to make sure. He was already risking the attention of the Arbites by weaving through the press of ground-traffic so recklessly, but he saw the look on Sleox's face, nodded and returned to the controls.

Ysica picked up on her master's nervousness.

'Lord, er, is there anything I should—' she began.

'Tell the lifter to gun its engines,' Sleox said, drumming his fingers on the plush leather armrest. 'Tell them to be ready to boost as soon as were in.'

There was no use in telling her what this was about. She wouldn't understand any part of it anyway, and if she got properly scared then her usefulness was ended. Perhaps she would have to be quietly removed too, but only once they got clear of Terra and out into the safety of the deep void. Geres was a sanctuary, the kind of place even an Imperial noble could lie low for a while and gather resources again. The key thing was to get there.

The groundcar skidded as the driver pushed it hard between two oncoming munition-trucks. Its engines were already straining, their ancient coolant systems creaking under the powerload.

'Faster,' said Sleox for a third time, watching the flyer come in closer. It was dropping lower now, clearly tailing them, gaining a lock and preparing to fire.

Sleox checked the forward scanners. They were coming under the heavy lintel of the dropsite now, a looming jumble of misshapen towers that

thrust up around the perimeter of many staggered rockcrete aprons. Lifter cranes wheezed up and down within cages, ferrying the orbital craft up from underground storage racks and out on to the exposed launch pads. The entire site trembled continually, its foundations shivered by the procession of take-off and touchdown.

The groundcar shot down the first of the under-tunnels, snaking through the twisting innards of the crypt-stratum before emerging at a core departure well. Servitors milled around them as the overloaded engines clanged down to idle, followed swiftly by uniformed customs officials. Militarum troop-carriers trundled through the poorly lit underpasses, their lumens sweeping the dank interior for any number of ill-defined threats.

Sleox slammed the door-release and sprang out, pushing his way through the crowds and racing across the short distance to the vacuum elevators. Ysica scrambled to follow, tripping in the dark and clutching at her dataslate. From behind them came the sound of atmospheric turbines. Surely the flyer couldn't follow them down here? You never knew, though. Not with these pursuers.

They piled in and the vacuum elevator shot up, streaking inside its enclosed tube, before juddering to a halt at the disembarkation level. Sleox and Ysica bundled out and raced across the asphalt, ignoring the soot-thick air that roared and swirled around them, leaving the groundcar's driver to screech back off into the dark without them. The lifter had been primed as instructed, and its heavy engines were already whining up to boost velocity. Dozens more were in similar states, ranked and ready for lift-off, their many undercarriages lost behind gouts of engine smoke and hydraulic discharge.

Sleox looked over his shoulder. Soldiers in black-and-gold helmets were tumbling out of another elevator just twenty metres away, sweeping their lasguns around and searching for the right lifter to intercept.

'On board, *now!*' he cried, racing up the ramp. Ysica was barely halfway up before the launch klaxons kicked off and the deck began to drum. Void-seals slammed closed, secure bolts rammed into place, lock-chains sprang loose and clattered across the apron. Sleox threw himself into a launch-chair and strapped the restraint harness on with fumbling fingers. Ysica did likewise, just as the roar of the engines hit full tilt and the lifter finally pushed off.

For a moment, Sleox stayed put, breathing heavily, his back erect against the shaking lifter walls, waiting for the impacts of las-fire on the hull. The hold, capable of accommodating twenty, was almost empty - just the two of them, sat opposite one another, surrounded by the rumble of atmospheric drives.

Seconds passed. Then minutes. Then, finally, he relaxed. He let out a short laugh and took a deep breath. They were away. Once they rendezvoused with the *Hervol* things would be fine - he had already paid handsomely to ensure that the passage through orbit would go undetected.

'Signal the captain,' he said, unclipping his restraint harness as the ascent entered its dominant phase and the decks stopped shaking. 'Tell them we got out, but tell him to be careful - this is not over yet.'

Ysica began to transmit and Sleox reached over for the cockpit door release. The lifter wasn't a big vessel - just four principal chambers, plus the high-mounted cockpit, but there were more comfortable places to sit out the journey.

The interior doors slid open with a grind of servos. On the far side stood a giant, clad in gold and draped in robes of purest black. Sleox only had time to register that this wasn't one of his crew, and only partly to register that this wasn't even truly one of his species, before a single bolt-shell punched cleanly into his chest and sent him crashing into the far wall of the hold.

It didn't explode - the detonation would have ruptured the lifter's skin - but it was still enough to carve a hole in his ribcage from which there would be no return. Lord Sleox's last expression was one of darkly comical surprise, a look that he retained even as his broken body slid down the wall and crumpled on to the hold's deck.

Ysica looked up at the giant before her, her mouth open. Her face was white, her limbs rigid. The giant slowly entered the hold, ducking low under the doorway. The lifter continued to make its way up through the atmosphere, travelling on the trajectory given to it by its now deceased master.

For a moment neither of them spoke. Eventually, Ysica summoned up the courage.

'Wh-what did you want with him, lord?' she asked, terrified.

'Nothing,' said Navradaran, placing his guardian spear before him. 'I came to find you. As you very well know.'

The pretence dropped. Ysica leaned back, still strapped in, hands folded in her lap, and shot her killer a look of regret.

'He was worried about the Arbites,' she said, almost affectionately. She looked over at Sleox's corpse. 'He thought they'd uncovered his little games. If he'd known that *you* were after him—'

'I wasn't.'

'No. I suppose not.' She looked around her. 'So are we still on course?'

'To one of my ships, yes. Do not attempt to derail this vessel - the crew are under my command and the systems have been cleansed.'

Ysica smiled wryly. 'Very well. I won't, then.'

She looked absurdly slight set against the leviathan before her. She appeared young, slim, dressed in a standard aides garb of bodyglove and half-cloak, the sigils of House Sleox embroidered proudly in blue thread. He was gigantic, a lumbering demigod of auramite, a paragon of the past made flesh and thrust into the decayed vista of the present.

'It must have been useful,' said Navradaran, evenly enough, 'to employ that man's services.'

Ysica snorted. 'He was a fool. They all were. Greedy and incautious. The only thing that keeps them safe - for a while - is their numbers. Terra is home to billions of fools. They flock together for warmth, so it seems.'

'How many were there?'

'My employers? I don't remember.' She laughed. 'Really, I don't. It's been a very long time. You work for one and then another, and they blur into one. I don't even remember when they first sent me here. It was before the smog came, though. I still remember how the stars were, before the toxins closed over for good.'

Navradaran looked at her steadily the whole time, his face hidden behind a mask of gold.

'Then you are very old.'

'By mortal standards. You have to be.' Her face became more serious. 'We deal in millennia, you understand. That's our unit of currency. Most of them here never understood that. They lived for their own lifetime, gauging success by how many wars were won and lost on how many worlds. They could hear of a victory and think that the corner had been turned, but failed to see the bigger picture. It's all been going the same way, right from the start. All the same way. It just takes a while to get the

pieces on the board.' She sighed, and rolled her shoulders. 'You'll have the same perspective, I guess. How did you find me?'

'These lordlings you cultivated,' Navradaran said. 'They were nicely judged. Corrupt enough to enrich you, not so corrupt they would be uncovered easily. Of sufficient influence for you to learn things, but not so central that we would already be watching them. They were a little too perfect. We study these patterns. We rehearse what we would do, were our roles reversed.' He leaned on the spear-shaft. 'And we delve into the paths of fate. We are not as blind as you suppose.'

Ysica nodded in mock salute. 'And yet I have been here for a long, long time. Your runes have taken a while to lead you to me.'

'Things have unfolded as they must.'

'Yes, you really believe that, don't you?'

The roar around them began to fade away as the lifter pulled clear of the atmosphere. Internal engine-noise remained, but the shielded hold became curiously quiet, and even the vibrations in the decking diminished. They might have been in any chamber of the Imperium just then.

'That's your weakness,' Ysica said idly. 'You've allowed yourselves to become passive. I've often wondered why you did that.'

'You clearly know much about us,' said Navradaran calmly.

'Ha. Sarcasm. That's good.' She looked amused. 'But, yes, I do know all about you. I was schooled in your ways before they sent me here, all the better for evading you. You're Ephoroi. The most dangerous of all, for one of my calling. I'm glad it's you that ended me, though, rather than a Watcher of the Throne.'

'We are all Watchers of the Throne.'

'For all the good it does you. You know that it's just a tomb now? There's *nothing down there*.' She laughed again. 'That's the irony. You actually see it. You see what it's become. And still you guard it. You're like dogs sniffing at the corpse of their master, hanging around with nowhere else to go.'

Navradaran resembled a graven image. He never moved, his voice never altered its inflection.

'Do you hope to enrage me?' he asked. 'I fear you will be disappointed.'

'No, I've no chance of that,' Ysica said. 'If the Warmaster couldn't rouse you to anger, I don't think I will.' She looked almost rueful. 'It's

depressing, actually. I can respect an enemy who hates me. You, though... It's like your hatreds are all locked away, buried in that one old war and pushed down hard. You were the most damaged of all, I think. And you don't even perceive it.'

'We understand our limitations.'

'Really? I don't think you understand anything. Even the Space Marines make more effort than you do, and they're just brutes. At least they try to learn, try to develop.' She sighed. 'You're the only ones left who remember. Maybe that's why you do so little. It must be such a heavy burden, *knowing*.'

The Custodian took a single step towards her, just one, but despite herself she shrank back. 'You were doing more than observing,' he said. 'We know about the cabals you seeded, deep in the city. As we speak, they are being uprooted.'

'The ones you know about,' Ysica replied. 'You'll find a few. You might even find hundreds. As I said, this is the work of millennia.'

'What was your purpose in this?'

Ysica smiled. 'You want me to *tell* you?'

'I think you will.'

She looked at him shrewdly. 'Or you'll break out the instruments'

'No. You will tell me because your work is done. You were not simply going along with your lord's games this time. You were using him to leave Terra.'

'Very good. Then you'll know it's too late for this to be prevented.'

'There have always been cults.'

'Not like these.'

'Terra is watched like no other world.'

Ysica grinned. 'And yet the day will come when you'll be blind. For all your guns, all your warships, your entire Imperium hangs on a single thread. Take it away and everything topples. That day will be soon, Ephoroi. You might have prevented it, perhaps, had you stirred yourself earlier, but it was easier, wasn't it, to languish in your old guilt and torpor. You've been indulgent. You've been slow.'

'What have we to feel guilty about?'

'Come, now, we're both too old and battered for that.' She looked up at the impassive mask and a flicker of regret crossed her features. 'We could

have had such conversations, you and I. Do you think I *like* spending my time with dullard lords and rabid inquisitors? Their pride is matched only by their ignorance. They defend that which they don't understand, and in doing so only hasten their own demise. But we've seen how things really stand. We know the manner of power in the universe. We both have our Eyes of Terror - mine in the void, yours entombed right here.'

'What was your purpose in this?' he repeated.

'To watch. To report.'

'And more.'

'Possibly so.'

The lifter's ascent began to lessen. Fresh thrusts kicked out from the voidcraft's hull, pushing into an approach vector. Somewhere up above it, nearing all the time, a true battleship was waiting, its hangar cantilevering open and its cannons trained.

'You do not have long to live,' said Navradaran. 'You have been a traitor to your species. Unburden yourself now and your soul's torment will be eased.'

Ysica shook her head. 'Don't try that filth on me. I'm a traitor to nothing. *Nothing*. There isn't anything left now, save the coming storm. There's no nobility in cleaving to an empty promise. All you have ahead of you is the same gradual stagnation, the slow falling apart. I can forgive the others for that - they don't know any better. But you. *You*. It disgusts me.'

Navradaran loomed over her, keeping his grip tight on the spear. 'What was your purpose in this?' he asked again.

Ysica looked up at him. The sham-fear was all gone now, a product of her many years of subterfuge, and her dark eyes were steady. She saw her reflection in the polished gold, and for a moment it was as if two masks were placed against one another, each as rigid and unknowable as the other.

'You took your names from our oldest legends,' she said softly. 'From ancient Grecia. That was the tale of your kind, that they were tyrants of old, ruling in tandem with kings. And you would issue the call to war against the people you'd enslaved, such that they could be slain freely without blood-guilt. And for that you called yourselves righteous, and divine, but hid the truth where it could never be found, for you knew that the souls you'd enslaved were more numerous than could be counted, and

in every generation they grew, and no matter how many wars you launched or how many pogroms you enacted, one day those numbers would sink you. That's why you remained here, locked behind gates that were built to withstand the apocalypse. You understand your own hypocrisy. Every time you lift your blade, you feel the weight of your old sins on it. You never shed the guilt - it merely grew in the shadows while you looked elsewhere.'

'What was your purpose in this?'

'What good would it do now, to know?'

'We will find out, one way or another.'

'Then you will waste more energy on things that cannot help you. He's coming now - did your cards tell you that? The boundaries of the Eye are breaking. It doesn't matter whether you go to meet him or wait for him here, the result will be the same.'

Navradaran listened patiently. 'And you prepare the way for him.'

'He needs no prophet.'

The deck jolted. The entire lifter shook, as if mighty arms had taken it up and grasped it tight. The engines gradually wound down, and from the outside came the distant howl of a cargo bay repressurising. Ysica knew what was coming now - troops rushing across the interior hold, shackles being brought, null-chambers activated. Once that door opened, all that remained for her was pain and madness, for as long as she could endure it.

She moved. She moved faster than ever before. All her long training went into that movement - releasing the restraint, reaching for her blade, sweeping it up to her neck and plunging it through the flesh.

Except that she never made it. Navradaran was faster, just as he had to be, catching her weapon-arm and breaking it before she could ram the knife home. She cried out as her wristbone snapped, feeling a wave of nausea sweep through her.

And then the Custodian was closer, leaning over her, whispering the last words she would hear before the interrogations came.

'You will not die here,' he said, firmer than before. 'You have not earned that mercy. Only when the last truth is taken from you, when the last confession is extracted, will death come at last, and then you will realise the full magnitude of your crimes.'

Ysica fought to remain conscious. Above them, doors were crashing

open, boots were hitting the deck.

'I will only ask you one more time. What was your purpose in this?' She stared at him and all her assurance was gone. There was anger there now, and the beginnings of fear.

'I was watching you, Custodian,' she said. 'I was watching the watchers. I was ascertaining whether you would be a threat to him, when he comes.' The outer airlocks were unsealed. The noise of men shouting came from the far side of the hold's doors.

'And what did you tell your masters?' Navradaran asked.

She looked at him defiantly, drinking in that long, last stare.

'That you're not ready,' she said. 'That you're nowhere close.'

'That is what she said?' asked the Captain-General, looking out over the sea of spires.

'The last of her words to me,' replied Navradaran, standing beside his master on the high balcony. Behind them both rose the old walls of the tower, whitened from the passing of aeons.

'You place credence in them?'

'She was a creature of falsehood,' said Navradaran, carefully. 'But she had lived here a long time. Many thousands of years, perhaps, in different bodies, dwelling in different places. She had seen many things change.'

'A record of her full testimony under agony came to me last night,' Valoris said, his voice like the grate of rusted steel. 'It is as you say, the cults are being seeded. Intelligence can be passed to the Inquisition, but they do not have the numbers for them all.'

'Then I will return to the city,'

'No, not this time.' The Captain-General turned his war-ravaged face towards Navradaran's. 'They tell me dreams have returned. Heracleon has already spoken to you of them, I understand.'

'He mentioned a name.'

'Speak to him, but do not linger. Perhaps she is even right. Perhaps we have remained on Terra too long.'

'She said those things to introduce doubt,' Navradaran said.

'And yet they may also be true. She is not the only diviner to emerge. Those others that we capture tell us the same things, and they no longer fear.'

Above them, in the luminous night skies, riven by billions of lights and barred by the contrails of a thousand flyers, humanity teemed much as it ever had done. The sacred pinnacles jutted into a haze of filth, their turrets proud against the dark. They were all oblivious out there, just as they had been made to be.

'What, then, is your command?' asked Navradaran.

'Take ship. We are gathering an old harvest now and I wish for it to be hastened. If these accounts have any authority, then we will need to complete the great work before the chance is lost.'

'Then you believe her. You believe that he is coming.'

'He has always been coming,' said Valoris. 'The only question is when, and on what battlefield we meet him.'

'Have you an answer, then?'

The Captain-General turned away. His severe face peered out into the gloom, as if his bloodshot eyes could somehow tear the murk asunder. 'Not yet,' he murmured. 'The path ahead is still in shadow.'

Navradaran nodded. 'The way will be made clear.'

Valoris did not smile. 'A fragment of a dream,' he said. 'The only thing I took from fifteen years of contemplation. Let us hope I read it right, for we no longer have the luxury of error.'

'What did it tell you?'

Valoris stared out into the gaudy night.

'The same thing I have been telling our star-speakers for months. The same thing I shall tell you and all others who I send out in pursuit of this slender hope.'

Only then did the Captain-General turn again to regard him.

'He calls His daughters home, Navradaran,' he said. 'That is our task now, the only one that matters - to ensure they answer.'

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Chris Wraight** is the author of the Horus Heresy novels *Scars* and *The Path of Heaven*, the Primarchs novel *Leman Russ: The Great Wolf*, the novellas *Brotherhood of the Storm* and *Wolf King*, and the audio drama *The Sigillite*. For Warhammer 40,000 he has written the Inquisition novel *The Carrion Throne* and the Space Wolves novels *Blood of Asaheim* and *Stormcaller*, as well as the short story collection *Wolves of Fenris*. For Space Marine Battles, he has written the novels *Wrath of Iron* and *War 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.

The Adeptus Custodes are the Emperor's praetorian guard, the defenders of Terra and watchers over the Golden Throne. But when a threat arises, they and their Sisters of Silence allies may find themselves pressed almost beyond endurance...



BUY NOW



**READ IT FIRST**

EXCLUSIVE PRODUCTS | EARLY RELEASES | FREE DELIVERY

[blacklibrary.com](http://blacklibrary.com)

# THE BLACK LIBRARY NEWSLETTER



**Sign up today for regular updates on the  
latest Black Library news and releases**

**SIGN UP NOW**

## **A BLACK LIBRARY PUBLICATION**

Published in Great Britain in 2017 by Black Library, Games  
Workshop Ltd,  
Willow Road, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, UK.

Produced by Games Workshop in Nottingham.

Blood Guilt © Copyright Games Workshop Limited 2017. Blood Guilt, 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.

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](http://blacklibrary.com)

Find out more about Games Workshop's world of Warhammer and the Warhammer 40,000 universe at  
[games-workshop.com](http://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 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.