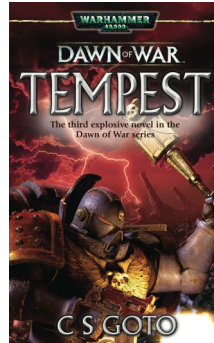


DAWN OF WAR: TEMPEST

The third novel in the 'Dawn of War' series

By CS Goto

Battling to save the Blood Ravens' precious gene-seed, Librarian Rhamah is sucked into the Eye of Terror and crashes down onto a bizarre planet of alien libraries and museums – an ancient eldar world hidden in the tempests of the warp. His battle-brothers mourn the passing of this hero, but his fate is far worse than death...



When a detachment of strangely familiar Space Marines lands on the planet to plunder its forbidden knowledge, Rhamah finds himself embroiled in their confrontation with the planet's mysterious guardians. As the rest of the Blood Ravens begin their search for him, Rhamah struggles to discover his true identity – unaware that his allegiance could tip the balance to deciding the fate of this world and its secrets.

About the Author

C S Goto has published short fiction in *Inferno!* and elsewhere. His work for the Black Library includes the Warhammer 40,000 Dawn of War novels, the Deathwatch series and the Necromunda novel *Salvation*.

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THE ICE-PLANET OF Lorn V spun slowly like a massive comet, pock-marked and scarred by dirty patches of urban decay and huge impact craters. It was an unassuming planet, in many ways little more than a backwater. But the damage that had been stamped onto its surface suggested that its importance was belied by its unremarkable history.

As the *Ravenous Spirit* ploughed into the outer reaches of the Lorn system, Captain Gabriel Angelos of the Blood Ravens Third Company, the Commander of the Watch, stood on the bloody and fire-damaged control deck and gazed out at the floating debris that littered the sector. Tumbling chunks of splintered asteroids raced past the strike cruiser as it advanced towards the central planets, as though they had been thrown out from the heart of the system by a massive explosion.

In his mind's eye, Gabriel could still see the smoking remains of Rahe's Paradise, upon which he had ordered the Exterminatus shortly before. The rain of ruined rock that clattered against the Spirit's armoured plating echoed the hail of destruction that had befallen that ill-fated world.

Intermixed amongst the rubble and the asteroids, Gabriel noticed the crude and cumbersome hulks of ork space vessels. They were little more than massive wrecks even when fully operational, and they floated like gargantuan pieces of refuse, aimless and wretched. Huge holes had been blasted through a number of the craft. Others bore the distinctive imprints of more precise destruction: rows of small puncture wounds around the engine blocks and command

decks, or delicate gashes where surgical strikes had excised the essential systems from the vast floating corpses.

Standing at the captain's side, the Father Librarian Jonas Urelie stared with undiminished awe at the scene. The veteran Librarian had been based at the outpost monastery on Rahe's Paradise for over four decades before it had been annihilated, and he had not seen destruction on this interstellar scale for even longer. Somewhere in his soul he had hoped that he would meet the end of his days delving into the forgotten history of the Blood Ravens on that isolated, volcanic and desolate world. The slower pace of life had suited him, as the atrophies of old age had started to work their decay on his ambitions as much as on his abilities. It was not a dishonourable posting: the research had been important – more important than he could possibly have imagined – and Rahe's Paradise had provided a reliable if small stream of recruits for the Chapter. However, over the last few days, Jonas's world had been exploded, quite literally.

'These are not just ork wrecks, Gabriel.'

The captain nodded. He had already seen the broken and twisted forms of damaged Imperial pattern vessels and Furies. Here and there, he even thought that he could make out the distinctive shapes of salvageable Cobra fighter gunships.

'It seems that the situation in Lorn was more serious than we had imagined,' confessed Gabriel, turning slightly with a smile of resignation on his scarred and tired face. He knew that the Blood Ravens would have been blamed if the Imperium had suffered a loss in this system, and he also knew that any such loss would have been his responsibility. No matter what had happened at Rahe's Paradise, Gabriel had taken the Ravenous Spirit and most of the surviving Third Company halfway across the galaxy on a blind hunch. Captain Ulantus of the Ninth Company, with whom the Third shared the magnificent battle-barge *Litany of Fury*, had been right to disapprove of his departure, and a defeat for the Blood Ravens at Lorn would certainly have proven the straight-laced captain's point.

'There are elder ships amongst the detritus, captain. Did you notice?'

Gabriel shook his head slightly and frowned, fatigue creasing his features. ‘No, old friend.’ He turned back to the large viewing screen that dominated the front wall of the control room. ‘But it does not surprise me at all. Those devious aliens always seem to be one step ahead of us.’

Jonas heard the weariness in his battle-brother’s voice and let his own eyes drift off the viewscreen to inspect his comrade’s face. The captain looked tired and exhausted; his normally sparkling blue-green eyes were dull and lifeless, as though there were no soul enlivening them from within.

‘It is not your fault, Gabriel.’ Even to him the words seemed hollow and inadequate.

The captain breathed the suggestion of a smile, and his eyes squinted with what might have been pain. ‘Perhaps not, father.’ His tone betrayed his thoughts.

The Librarian hesitated for a moment. Although he was one of the oldest and most experienced Marines in the Blood Ravens, he was no Chaplain and he knew his limitations; he was not sure that he was properly equipped to offer counsel to his friend, even if Gabriel had asked for it... which he hadn’t. The Commander of the Watch had been through more than most could bear, and Jonas was well aware of how heavily he had leaned on Chaplain Prathios for support and guidance over the last few years. On top of everything else that had happened, Gabriel now had to deal with the fact that Prathios was returning from Rahe’s Paradise in a sarcophagus, entombed in the chapel of the *Ravenous Spirit*. He was not entirely dead, but he would never see normal service again – the best he could hope for would be to serve the Great Father and the Emperor in battle as a dreadnought. He was certainly of no use to Gabriel’s conscience any more.

In the distance, in a close orbit around the fifth planet of the system, the massive and glorious shape of the *Litany of Fury* began to appear. It looked like a small, malformed moon cresting the horizon of Lorn V. The radiant, blood-red insignia was emblazoned across the prow and the sides of the hull; the black raven’s wings were spread broadly around the glistening droplet of blood at their

centre. It was a sight to warm the hearts of all aboard the Ravenous Spirit. All around the battle-barge, dusty detritus and shards of scrap metal spiralled down into the upper atmosphere of the planet, speckling the world with a rain of fire. It was like a victory salute, or a symphony of welcome.

‘It appears that Captain Ulantus was victorious,’ offered Jonas, meaning the observation to console the troubled Commander of the Watch, but conscious that it may have the opposite effect.

‘Yes,’ replied Gabriel, his jaw clenched as he stared out towards the magnificent vessel. ‘Ulantus is an admirable Astartes.’

Jonas flinched inwardly, conscious of the note of self-reproach that struck through the captain’s words; his attempt at consolation had failed completely. ‘You did what you had to do, Gabriel. Had you not gone to Rahe’s Paradise, we cannot know what horrors would have been unleashed on the galaxy. You did your duty, just as Ulantus did his.’

With slow determination, Gabriel turned his face away from the viewscreen, bringing his eyes to meet those of Jonas.

For a second, Jonas thought that the captain was not going to say anything, but then his eyes narrowed and flashed with a violent, electric blue: ‘You will notice, father, that Lorn V continues to revolve around this star, devastated though it may be... The same cannot be said of Rahe’s Paradise.’

There was poison and violence in Gabriel’s voice; Jonas took an involuntary step away from the captain. He felt the furtive glances and the sudden tension amongst the serfs in the control room. Sergeant Kohath, who had been given command of the strike cruiser for the voyage to Lorn, snapped into alertness at the far side of the command chamber.

‘You did what had to be done, Gabriel,’ pressed Jonas calmly. His voice was lowered almost to a whisper. ‘Ulantus would have done the same, had he been in your shoes.’ The veteran Librarian watched the captain carefully, searching for signs that his aggression was fuelled by something other than self-reproach. The fierce blue stare held him like a magnetic field.

‘He was not in my shoes, Jonas,’ said Gabriel, finally dropping his shoulders and turning back to the viewscreen. ‘That is entirely the point.’

Kohath and Jonas exchanged a concerned look. Neither of them were ignorant of the venerable captain’s recent experiences; both of them had heard the whispered rumours about his state of mind. They shared the awkward moment in silence, turning their attention back to the space graveyard that was scrolling past the main viewscreen. Something caught their eyes almost simultaneously.

‘That’s a Space Marine frigate!’

‘No. But the pattern is close. It looks heavily modified,’ corrected Kohath efficiently. He nodded to Loren, one of the command-deck serfs whose name he had taken the trouble to memorise, but the man was already poring over a glowing terminal, checking the vessel’s signature.

The main viewscreen flickered and changed, bringing up a magnified image of the side of the frigate. The heraldry was clear and instantly recognisable to everyone aboard the *Ravenous Spirit*: an emerald green, three-headed hydra. Next to the icon was the many pointed star of Chaos, with the words *Hydra Dominatus* etched crudely through its heart.

‘The Alpha Legion,’ muttered Kohath, giving a gruff voice to the thoughts of the others. ‘Typical.’

‘Did Ulantus mention anything about the involvement of Alpha Marines?’ Jonas turned his question towards Kohath, since Gabriel’s fixed jaw had offered no response to the discovery.

‘No, nothing. But he also failed to mention the Ultramarines...’ Kohath’s voice trailed off as he nodded towards the spinning wreckage of the Chaos frigate. The legendary blue sheen of a battle-scarred Ultramarines crest tumbled into view as the vessel rotated. In immaculate, cursive, High Gothic, the name *Dominatus Regalis* was emblazoned beneath the Chapter icon.

There was a long silence as the significance of this discovery gradually made itself felt. The three Blood Ravens gazed at the Ultramarines frigate and tried to imagine what could have happened to permit a detachment from the cursed Alpha Legion to board and

take over the vessel. It was not inconceivable that the Dominatus had been taken in a previous engagement between the two forces, but the emerald hydra glistened with such brightness that it might just have been painted that day.

In the back of his mind, the veteran Librarian could vaguely remember reading a secret and forbidden text, buried in the deepest vaults of the great library of the Omnis Arcanum, the near-mythical Librarium Sanctorum. It was an Inquisitorial file written by the infamous witch-hunter, Inquisitor Girreaux. As far as Jonas was aware, the copy of the file aboard the venerable fortress monastery was the only copy outside the hallowed halls of the Ordo Hereticus; having such good relations with the Inquisition had a great many benefits.

The file was a record of the charges against the Ordo Malleus Inquisitor Kravin pressed by Girreaux himself after the Ikrilla Conclave, at which the impassioned Kravin had warned that, unlike the other traitorous Chaos Marines who had fled into the Eye of Terror, the Alpha Legion was recruiting neophytes from within the Imperium, just like the loyal Space Marine Chapters. Girreaux had charged Kravin with heresy, arguing that the once-respected inquisitor was in league with the Alpha Legionaries, and that he was attempting to sow the seeds of panic and suspicion into the Imperium.

More important, however, was the fact that Kravin was the only Imperial researcher to have made any significant headway into the secretive history of the Alpha Legion. Indeed, it was on his research that the Inquisition and the Blood Ravens based their understanding of the origins of that mysterious Chapter. If Girreaux was right, then the Imperium's understanding of the Alpha Legion would have to be reconsidered.

Interestingly enough, one of the only possible sources that could corroborate Kravin's stories was the extensive archives of the Ultramarines. Despite the renowned scholarship of the Blood Ravens, however, not even they had access to the archives of other Chapters of Space Marines.

In his early work, Kravin had postulated that the Alpha Legion and the Ultramarines had been at loggerheads right from the start. Alpharius, the youngest of the primarchs, had felt patronised by the righteousness of Guilliman, Primarch of the Ultramarines, even before the Great Heresy, and he had rejected the teachings of the Codex Astartes. Whether or not this was true, it was indisputable that Alpharius deliberately sought out Guilliman in the Eastern Fringe during the galactic civil war that followed Warmaster Horus's great treachery.

The epic battle of Eskrador was depicted on frescos and murals all over the system, since it was there that Guilliman finally slew the traitorous Alpharius. However, the battle was certainly not a victory for the Ultramarines, who were driven from the planet by the cunning of the remaining Alpha Legionaries, suffering immense losses. In some tomes of Imperial history, Eskrador was counted amongst the greatest ever defeats visited on the Ultramarines, since they were bested by superior strategy rather than greater numbers.

As the ruined and mutilated frigate tumbled, free-floating amongst the debris on the viewscreen, Jonas sighed slightly. Given their particular history, it should be no great surprise to learn that the Ultramarines had rushed to confront the Alpha Legion on Lorn V, but he knew that this would be no consolation for Gabriel. The Blood Ravens also had a long history of conflict with these Chaos Marines; Gabriel himself had recently done battle with them on Tartarus. The Librarian could imagine the chagrin of Ulantus if he had arrived too late or if he had been forced to share the field with the Ultramarines because the *Litany of Fury's* battle company – Gabriel's Third – had vanished off to the other side of the galaxy. Gabriel would blame himself for any such shame.

'Send a message to Ulantus,' said Gabriel, breaking the silence and turning away from the screen. 'Tell him that we will be there presently, and instruct him that I will expect a thorough debriefing on arrival.' He paused for a moment. 'Also, inquire about the status of our young neophyte... We need all the recruits we can get,' he added under his breath. 'If I am needed, I will be in the chapel with Prathios.'

Dawn of War: Tempest can be purchased in all better bookstores, Games Workshop and other hobby stores, or direct from this website and GW mail order.

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