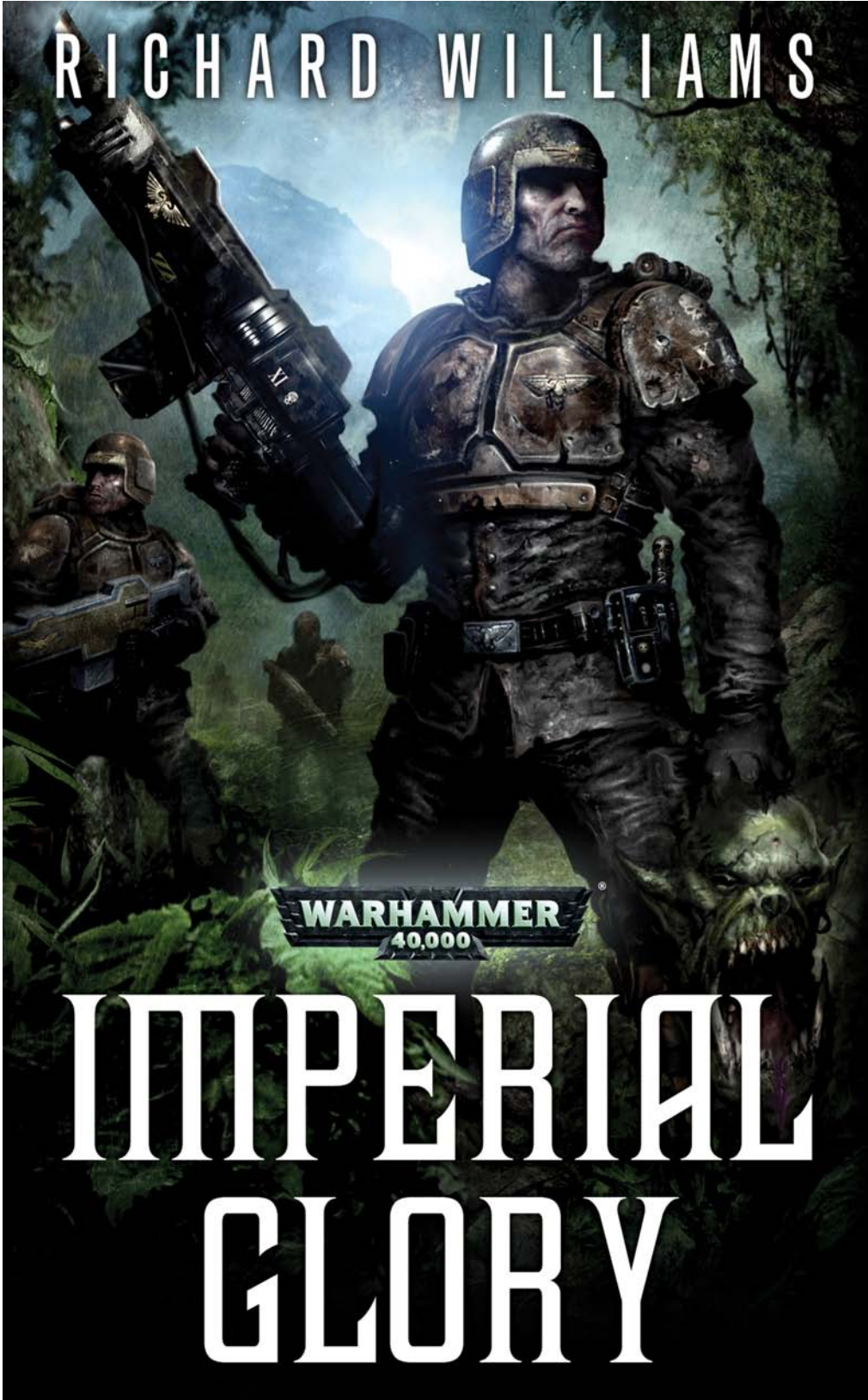




BLACK LIBRARY

RICHARD WILLIAMS



WARHAMMER
40,000

IMPERIAL
GLORY

IMPERIAL GLORY

An Imperial Guard Novel

By Richard Williams

Tired and broken by war, the men of the Brimlock Eleventh Imperial Guard are a force on the verge of collapse. Having been stretched across the galaxy by their loyalty to the Emperor, they are presented with one final battle that will allow them the reward they all seek: to colonise the distant world of Voor and live out the rest of their days in peace. All that stands in their way is a force of savages – a plague of feral orks that has spread across the planet. But can the Brimlocks' battered bodies and minds hold up to this greenskin invasion?

About The Author

Richard Williams was born in Nottingham, UK and was first published in 2000. He has written fiction for publications ranging from *Inferno!* to the Oxford and Cambridge May anthologies, on topics as diverse as gang initiation, medieval highwaymen and arcane religions. In his spare time he is a theatre director and actor. *Relentless* was his first full-length novel and his latest book is *Reiksguard*.

By the same author

WARHAMMER 40,000

RELENTLESS

WARHAMMER

REIKSGUARD

More Imperial Guard fiction from the Black Library

REDEMPTION CORPS

By Rob Sanders

DEAD MEN WALKING

By Steve Lyons

HAMMER OF THE EMPEROR

By Steve Parker, Steve Lyons and Lucien Soulban

(Contains the novels Gunheads, Ice Guard and Desert Raiders)

The following is an excerpt from *Imperial Glory* by Richard Williams. Published by the Black Library. Games Workshop, Willow Road, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, UK. Copyright © Games Workshop Ltd, 2010. All rights reserved. Reproduction prohibited, in any form, including on the internet. For more details or to contact us visit the Black Library website: www.blacklibrary.com.

CARSON CAUGHT SIGHT of the ork war-party as it crashed through the jungle. The orks had the scent of their quarry in their nostrils now and were chasing it hard to run it to ground. Their prize was still a dozen paces ahead of them. It was big, bigger even than the orks, though its own skin was pale. It ran like a bull, head down, arms pumping, smashing the smaller branches in its path into splinters. But it was slowing, tiring, and the orks pressed after it all the harder.

It managed to reach the base of one of the giant trees and collapsed there a second, chest heaving. It glanced to either side, but then it heard the war-cries behind. It turned and stood at bay. It reached down onto the ground, like a wrestler preparing to charge, and roared its defiance at its pursuers.

The orks paused a moment, catching their own breath, relishing the imminent kill. They readied the clubs, stones and spears they carried. The ork in the lead, wearing a headdress of teeth and fur, raised a bone sharpened into a pick and led his warriors in a mighty bellow of their own in reply.

Got you, Carson thought, and he pulled his trigger. The las-bolt from the heavy pistol struck the ork right in its gaping maw. Its eyes bulged wide as the back of its mouth and the top of its spine were incinerated in a flash. It dropped its bone and clutched feebly at its throat as it fell, not a mark on it.

The jungle trail erupted with light as a volley of las-fire burst from the undergrowth. The fire was focused, with three or more shots hitting the closest orks, incinerating their faces, throats and the side of their heads. An autocannon opened up, its shots whipping through the foliage like angry insects. Those struck tumbled to the ground; the rest of the orks,

caught by surprise, wavered a moment, unsure which way to face. There was a second volley, and a half-dozen more ork bodies hit the dirt. Inexperienced troops, caught so completely off-guard, would break. They would dash for cover directly away from the fire and thus expose themselves to the second line of ambushers placed to strafe fire down the length of the other side of the trail. Veterans would never have allowed themselves to clump together so, they would strike back along the route they had come, even while their comrades behind them would strike forwards looking to flank their attackers.

Orks, being orks, just charged straight down your throat. Even as the third volley lashed out, the orks were ploughing into the jungle towards their unseen adversaries. Ahead of them, shapes in grey uniforms, stained brown with dirt, started to rise from the ground to run. The orks bellowed again, hacking and slashing at the undergrowth as their attackers ran from their charge. For an instant it looked as though they had broken out through the ambush, and it was at that instant that the second line, stationed behind the first and not on the other side of the trail, opened fire.

The Brimlocks of the first line ran, one hand on their hot lasguns, the other holding down their tanna-stained helmets. No one needed to remind them to keep low as the las-fire flashed over their heads at the orks running after them. The second line shot twice more, as those of the first line dove into their firing positions and whirled around, ready to add their fire. But the orks' charge had been shattered and the few of them that reached the second line were impaled by a half-dozen bayonets even as they raised their clubs to strike.

'Hold your fire!' The order echoed across the line.

The last ork stumbled away. Even orks could sometimes be made to see the sense of living to fight another day. There, in front of it, however,

stood the great white bull-monster that the war-party had chased into the killing ground. The monster swung a huge branch and smacked the ork off its feet.

The ork crumpled, unconscious, and fell into the leafy undergrowth. Across the rest of the jungle there was a moment of silence as the survivors drew breath, waiting to see if it truly was the end, or whether another threat was to emerge.

‘Good job, Frn’k,’ Carson called. The bull-monster, an ogryn with a corporal stripe tattooed on his arm, nodded and picked up the ork at its feet. He slung it over his shoulder, then turned and gave Carson a crude salute.

‘Now keep it safe,’ Carson continued. ‘That one’s for the colonel, special delivery!’

There was a smattering of laughter from the jungle and, one by one, K Company began to emerge from between the trees.

‘Section leaders, count up and clean up. Booth, take a squad up-trail, look out for any stragglers. We’ve got what we came for. I don’t want any surprises.’

Carson rolled over and sat up. He unstrapped his helmet and shook out his dirty blond hair. A caterpillar dropped into the mud, righted itself, and crawled away.

‘Sorry for the inconvenience, I’m sure,’ he muttered. He then rested his hand on his thigh and lowered his head. ‘Come on. Come on,’ he said to himself. He did not move. ‘All right.’

He twisted around to check on the men. Booth’s platoon had already disappeared up the trail. Carson thought it unlikely that they would be disturbed, however. The company had been scouting the jungle for two hours already and this was the only band of orks they’d encountered. Red had distributed cremator-packs to the men and they were torching the

bodies. Frn'k the ogryn had instinctively returned to Corporal Gardner and was trying to carry both the ork and Gardner's heavy autocannon at the same time, while Gardner patiently tried to get Frn'k to drop the ork.

Carson noticed that Red was coming over to him. The company's colour-sergeant carried his lasgun in his off-hand, while in his right he wielded 'Old Contemptible' his iron-black mace. It was an anachronistic weapon to wield on the battlefield, to be sure, but one that had proved its worth, in raids such as this, where prisoners needed to be taken.

Carson did not know why they had been sent out to bring in a prisoner. The order had come to him from Major Roussel, straight from the colonel, so he could not argue against it. Perhaps it was simply habit, just as his men knew exactly how to set up the ambush without specific orders. Habit formed by many repetitions.

But there was nothing that the commissar's interrogators would get from the ork that Carson had not already learnt from killing its kin. He looked at the leader he had shot as a cremator turned it to ash. Its body was underdeveloped and its skin was light, not nearly as tough as the fully-matured orks he had fought in space. It was no survivor of the rok's crash; it was a new-spawn. No matter how few orks had survived the impact, their kind was now growing within the dirt of Voor.

Red was closing on him quickly. Carson turned away and placed one of his pistols in his lap, so that it might appear as though he was correcting some fault. Red would not believe it, though; Carson's pair of heavy pistols had not misfired as long as he'd had them. They were beautiful pieces: each one had a rorschbone stock, customised to fit regular Guard power-packs, a sculpted antique lock and breech, and finely-etched patterns down their barrels – wings on one, vines on the other. But their true beauty was on the inside. There, embedded within, was a glistening power-amplifier that made his shots twice as deadly as a regular lasgun.

These pistols had made him what he was today. They had to take some of the blame at least.

Carson felt, rather than heard, the colour-sergeant standing over him. One expected such a big, blustering NCO to stomp around, smacking the earth with every step, but Red could be as silent as a breath, as many drowsy sentries on both sides had learnt to their cost.

‘Red,’ Carson pre-empted. ‘What’s the bill?’

‘One injured, sah. Corporal Marble.’

‘How bad?’

‘Put his foot on some bug-hill. Twisted his ankle and split his lip. Ducky’s taking a look at him. He’ll get him walking.’

‘Good.’ Carson surreptitiously tested his leg again. Still nothing. He played for time. ‘Remind me to put Frn’k up for a commendation when we get back to Dova.’

‘A commendation, sah?’

‘You don’t think he deserves one?’

‘Of course, sah. Just think he’ll prefer a day’s extra rations over a sheet of paper he can’t eat.’

‘Good point. Let’s do that. And let’s see if we can’t get his commendation on some kind of rice-paper as well. Then he can have his cake and eat it,’ he said, chuckling half-heartedly. He looked up at the fearsome colour-sergeant’s stone expression and thought better of it.

A flicker of movement in the corner of his eye caused Carson to twist again to look back at the rest of the company. Mouse was there, moving quickly from body to body ahead of the cremators, checking them for anything of value.

Red saw him as well. ‘Private Chaffey, get your miserable self back to your squad!’ he shouted.

Mouse snatched up guiltily from the body he was inspecting. With a

second's defiance, he triggered the cremator before scampering away. Carson sighed.

'I do wish you'd give up on him, Red.'

'He's a parasite, sah.'

Yes, Carson reflected, Mouse was. But on Mespots, he had traded for the promethium that prevented the company dying in the desert; and on Kam Daka, it had been he who had bribed the tribesmen to allow them past the rebels' positions. But then again on Azzabar, the wrath of the eldar had come down on their outpost for days, until Red happened upon the large jewels that Mouse had looted from their warriors' armour. Carson had torn a strip off the private after that. Red had made it plain that he wanted him handed over to the black-coats, but Carson had refused. There were no extra points in war for playing by the book. As much as Red detested him, Mouse was a resource and Carson would keep him as long as his worth outweighed the risk.

Red was watching him intently now, waiting for him to give the order to move on. Carson tried his leg again. Still nothing, but he had run out of excuses.

'Do me a favour, Red. Keep the men occupied for a few minutes.'

'Ah, right you are, sah.' Red twitched his moustache and pursed his lips in concern. 'Shall I get Ducky up here for you as well, sah?'

'No, no,' Carson waved him away. 'A couple of minutes, that's all I need. Then I'll be right as rain.'

'Yes, sah.' Red gave a crisp salute and turned back to the company. 'Right, you shockers, peg your ears back and listen up!'

IMPERIAL GLORY can be purchased direct from this website and GW mail order, Games Workshop and other hobby stores, and better bookstores.

In the UK: Price £7.99

ISBN: 978-1-84416-888-0

In the US: Price \$8.99 (\$10.99 Canada)

ISBN: 978-1-84416-889-7

- Online: Buy direct care of Games Workshop's webstore by going to www.blacklibrary.com or www.games-workshop.com.
- Bookshops: Distributed in the UK and the US by Simon & Schuster Books. Games & hobby stores: Distributed in UK and US by Games Workshop.
- UK mail order: 0115-91 40 000 US mail order: 1-800-394-GAME