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# THE PURGING OF KADILLUS

GAV THORPE



# THE PURGING OF KADILLUS

*A Space Marine Battles novel*

*By Gav Thorpe*

Faced with an ork invasion of Piscina IV, the 3rd Company of the Dark Angels believes the threat to be minimal. As enemy numbers continue to increase, their commander, Captain Belial, insists that his company are strong enough to resist. But Scout-Sergeant Naaman knows just how dangerous this foe can be, and when a renewed greenskin offensive takes the Dark Angels by surprise, the orks swarm towards Kadillus Harbour. Little do the Dark Angels know of the technological power available to the xenos, and the true scale of the threat they face. Belial, Naaman and their fellow Astartes fight a desperate siege at Kadillus, knowing that they must hold out until Imperial reinforcements arrive or the planet will be lost.

## **About the Author**

Gav Thorpe has been rampaging across the worlds of Warhammer and Warhammer 40,000 for many years as both an author and games developer. He hails from the den of scurvy outlaws called Nottingham and makes regular sorties to unleash bloodshed and mayhem. He shares his hideout with Dennis, a mechanical hamster sworn to enslave

mankind. Dennis is currently trying to develop an iPhone app that will hypnotise his victims.

Gav's previous novels include fan-favourite Angels of Darkness and the epic Malekith, first instalment in the Sundering trilogy, amongst many others.

You can find his website at:  
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A ONE-EYED LION stared down at Boreas from the shattered stained-glass window. His black armour was dappled with red and blue and yellow by flames flickering inside the window. Detonations continually rocked the rubble-strewn street; one shell exploded atop a buttress above him, showering chunks of plascrete from the basilica onto the Chaplain and his squad. Fanged green faces leered from windows in the upper storeys. The orks spat down at the Dark Angels and occasionally rattled off bursts of fire with equal effect.

A growl welled up from deep within Boreas as he waited for the other squad to assemble on the opposite side of the ruined basilica. He looked through the remnants of the main doors into the central nave. The open space was filled with piles of rubble and green-skinned bodies. Banners hundreds of years old lay smouldering in the ruin.

‘In position at the east entrance, Brother-Chaplain,’ Sergeant Peliel reported over the comm. ‘Awaiting your command.’

‘Squad Heman ready for overwatch,’ crackled the next report in Boreas’s ear. The Chaplain glanced over his shoulder and saw the Devastators aiming their heavy weapons from a rooftop on the opposite side of the street.

‘The Lion’s shade revolts at the presence of this filth in his shrine,’ Boreas rasped to his battle-brothers.

‘Bring peace to his soul and honour to his memory with bolt and blade. Commence the attack!’

For the third time since arriving at the shrine, the Chaplain stormed up the steps and plunged through the shattered doorway, bolt pistol in his right hand, crozius arcanum in the left. The eagle-headed maul blazed with blue light that threw sharp shadows across the central hall of the basilica. The walls and windows of the upper floors exploded inwards as missiles and lascannon blasts from Squad Heman pounded the ork positions. Green bodies flopped over the gallery railing above the hall, tumbling to the rubble trailing thick blood.

Plascrete crunching underfoot, the Chaplain turned sharply to his right and headed for an iron spiral staircase next to the crumbled remains of a minor altar. On the other side of the nave, Peliel and his Dark Angels headed for the steps descending into the catacomb.

The orks opened fire as Boreas reached the bottom of the stairs, bullets and blasts of energy sending up dust and shards around him. Sparks surrounded the Chaplain as he pounded up the steps, bullets shrieking from the metal, the whole staircase shaking under the weight of his tread. Behind him, the other Space Marines returned fire. The whole nave echoed with the roar of bolters. Fiery trails cut the gloom, each ending in a small explosion that rocked the upper gallery.

Boreas reached the gallery at a run. It was even darker here; with a vocal command Boreas switched his autosenses to thermal. Several orks were sprawled lifeless along the marble-inlaid floor, blood cooling in greasy pools. He spied the yellow heat-outlines of living foes at the far end of the gallery, their guns blazing harsh white, bullets zipping down into the squad below.

The Chaplain levelled his pistol. A targeting reticule sprang into view as his finger touched the trigger. His first shot took the top off an ork's head, blood spraying against the wall in a red chromatic display. Two bolts took his next target in the chest, exploding the ribcage and breastbone, ripping apart organs. To his heightened senses it seemed as if the orks turned on him in slow motion, drawing up their guns towards this new threat. A fourth round ripped through the shoulder of the next foe, sending the ork spinning through a doorway.

The first bullets zipped around Boreas as he subconsciously registered the thunder of more Space Marines coming up the stairs behind him. Sending another bolt into the gut of an ork, Boreas spared a millisecond glance to his right, across the nave where more orks had gathered.

He saw a blossom of fire and flung himself against the wall as a rocket spiralled towards him, the warhead smashing into the plascrete just behind him. The rosarius hanging on a thick chain around Boreas's neck blazed with power as shrapnel engulfed the Chaplain; the rosarius's energy field converted the mass of the shards into flares of bright light. Boreas heaved himself away from the cracked wall as more bullets skipped and screamed along the gallery. He headed straight for the orks, bolts from his battle-brothers whipping past either side of him, detonations cracking along a crude barricade the orks had built out of splintered furniture and bundled wall-hangings.

The Chaplain emptied the rest of his bolt pistol into the greenskins as he charged the barrier, sending them reeling back. He leapt as he reached the barricade, one foot atop the broken remnants of a cabinet, driving his other into the face of an ork swinging at him with a

snarling chainsword. The alien's head snapped back as Boreas's momentum carried him into the thick of the orks, his crozius crashing under the upraised arm of another foe to liquidate flesh and bone.

Boreas landed and rolled, sweeping the legs from another enemy with his right arm as he regained his feet. Something hammered into his backpack and he turned on his heel, driving an elbow into the face of an ork, fangs splintering, jaw breaking. A heavy blade slashed out of the throng and caught him on the right side of his helmet, its serrated edge scraping through paint and chipping ceramite.

The ork backed away, just out of reach. Boreas hurled his empty pistol into the beast's face, this distraction giving the Chaplain a moment to follow up with a bone-crunching kick to the knee that brought down the alien. The rosarius flared into life again as more blows rained down on the Chaplain, blinding the orks. Boreas smashed one across the face with his crozius, the wing of the eagle-head burying itself deep in a red eye. He chopped with the edge of his hand into the throat of another, lifting the beast from its feet, windpipe smashed.

Bolt-round detonations sprayed the Chaplain with gore as the following Dark Angels joined the melee. Bursting through the barricade, the Space Marines fell upon the orks with chainblade bayonets and monomolecular-edged combat knives.

The dozen or so remaining orks were not about to give up the fight, and hurled themselves at the squad roaring throaty war cries and obscenities. Four of them bore Brother Zepheus to the floor, stabbing at his face and chest, levering their blades into the joints of his armour, blasting away with heavy pistols, the ricocheting

bullets as much a danger to themselves as the Dark Angels.

Boreas's crozius smashed into the skull of an ork pinning down Zepheus, splitting it wide open. The ork reared up, still alive, dragging its serrated blade from a crack in Zepheus's armour. It swung the weapon at Boreas and missed, spattering the Chaplain's skull-helm with droplets of his battle-brother's blood. Incensed, Boreas shoulder-charged the greenskin, tackling it at chest height to drive it into the wall with a snap of bones, plascrete exploding into dust around them. Boreas snapped the ork's neck in the crook of his arm to be certain and cast the limp body to the floor. He turned to see Sergeant Lemael burying his chainaxe into the armpit of the last greenskin, the whirring blades spraying gobbets of flesh and shards of bone over the gallery rail.

Boreas pressed on to the archway at the end of the gallery, past which were found the inner chambers of the basilica. Lemael split his Space Marines into two combat squads, joining the Chaplain with Brothers Sarion, Dannael, Asperus and Zamiel. The remainder of the Dark Angels took up overwatch positions along the gallery while they waited for an Apothecary to attend to the badly wounded Zepheus.

'You might want this, Brother-Chaplain,' said Asperus, proffering Boreas's bolt pistol, which he had evidently retrieved from the pile of ork bodies. The Chaplain took it with a murmur of thanks, slammed home a fresh magazine from his belt and darted a look through the archway, looking for foes. A corridor ran to the northern end of the basilica, shattered windows on the right-hand side, half a dozen doors leading into the scriptoriums on the left. There was no sign of the orks.



Boreas switched off his crozius to conserve its power cell and nodded the Dark Angels forwards.

‘Check and clear every room,’ Lemael told his warriors. ‘Be vigilant for booby-traps. There is no telling what these filthy greenskins have been up to.’

Sarion went up on point, kicking in the remnants of the first door while Dannael kept watch along the corridor. The Space Marines hurried into the room, bolters ready. Within, all had been upturned. Illuminating desks and low stools were broken, and tattered and soiled manuscripts were scattered across the floor. Digiquills and styluses lay in a snapped heap beneath the broken door of a storage cabinet and crude ork glyphs were daubed on the walls in black and red ink. Blossoms of green and yellow and purple and blue showed where pots of other colours had been dashed against the walls, floor and ceiling for amusement.

‘Scum,’ muttered Boreas.

He had expected such desecration, hardened his anticipation of it, but it was still something of a shock to see it wrought in rooms where only a few days before he had walked amongst the company serfs as they copied out the great texts of the Dark Angels Chapter. It had been an ordered, serene enclave in the midst of the bustling port-city, dedicated to reflection on the Lion’s teachings, the wisdom of the Emperor and the doctrine of battle.

His eye was caught by a scrap of plasti-parchment, edges wrinkled and melted from an attempt to set it alight. He hung his crozius from his belt and picked it up, recognising the partially obscured illustration in the margin. He gave an ironic laugh.

‘Page fourteen of the Contemplations of Castigation,’ he told his battle-brothers. He read the first lines out

loud. ‘Blessed be the warrior that punishes the unclean. In his purgation of the Heretic, the Mutant and the Alien, the blessed Astartes proves his purity. Only he that is free of taint can uphold the role of Executioner of the Imperial Will.’

The rest was unreadable, but Boreas knew it by heart. His voice turned to a snarl as he continued from memory.

‘With the honour of that duty there comes the responsibility to prosecute such punishment to the utter lengths of possibility. No Heretic, no Mutant, no Alien is above the reproach of the cleansing fire of battle. If the Imperial Will is to extend to all corners and reaches of the galaxy, there can be no respite from the eternal pursuit for justice and the perpetuation of vengeance against the immoral.’

Boreas crumpled the sheet in his fist and dropped it to the ground. Pulling free his crozius, he thumbed the weapon into life, bathing the room with its blue glow.

‘The vilest of offences has been committed against us, my brothers,’ growled Boreas. ‘The orks do not simply attack a world of the Imperium, they attack a world under our protection. This building is not simply a strategic asset to be held against an enemy. This is a basilica of the Dark Angels, an extension of the Tower of Angels, a spiritual part of lost Caliban. An attack here is an attack against the Dark Angels Chapter. It is an affront to the Lion! It is not only our duty to bring righteous persecution against those who have sinned against us; it is our right!’

Sergeant Lemael answered, echoed by the rest of the Space Marines.

‘Kill the alien!’

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