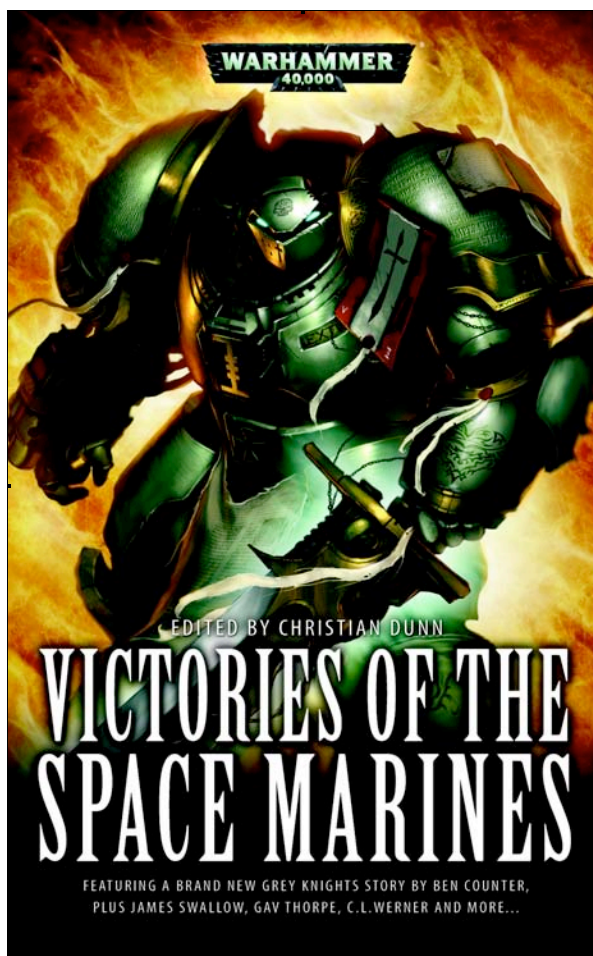




BLACK LIBRARY



VICTORIES OF THE SPACE MARINES

A Warhammer 40,000 Anthology
Edited by Christian Dunn

From planet to planet, the enemies of mankind will stop at nothing to expand their dominion. Worlds are shattered, and their citizens face a desperate fight for survival. There is one hope – superhuman warriors serving the glory of the Emperor, standing proudly in defiance of inhuman foes. These indomitable giants lay waste to the relentless hordes of xenos invaders and defend humanity against the insidious forces of Chaos. Across countless fields of battle, they stand triumphant.

Also available from the Black Library

HEROES OF THE SPACE MARINES
edited by Nick Kyme & Lindsey Priestley

LEGENDS OF THE SPACE MARINES
edited by Christian Dunn

THE ULTRAMARINES OMNIBUS
(Contains the novels *Nightbringer*, *Warriors of Ultramar*
and *Dead Sky*, *Black Sun*)
Graham McNeill

THE KILLING GROUND
Graham McNeill

COURAGE & HONOUR
Graham McNeill

THE BLOOD ANGELS OMNIBUS
(Contains the novels *Deus Encarmine* and *Deus Sanguinius*)
James Swallow

RED FURY
James Swallow

BLACK TIDE
James Swallow

THE GREY KNIGHTS OMNIBUS
(Contains the novels *Grey Knight*, *Dark Adeptus*
and *Hammer of Daemons*)
Ben Counter

SALAMANDER
Nick Kyme

SONS OF DORN
Chris Roberson

The following are excerpts from *Victories of the Space Marines* edited by Christian Dunn. Published by the Black Library. Games Workshop, Willow Road, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, UK.

Copyright © Games Workshop Ltd, 2011. 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.

Taken from *Runes* by Chris Wraight

BALDR SVELOK SLAMMED hard into the acid-laced rock. His plate crunched against the stone, sending warning runes flashing across his helm-feed. Instinct told him another blow was coming in fast, and the Wolf Guard ducked. A massive tight-balled fist tore into the rock where his head had been, showering him with shards where the impact had obliterated the cliff.

Svelok dodged the next crashing fist, his augmented limbs moving with preternatural speed. He almost made it, but the monster's talons raked down across his right pauldron, sending him sprawling to the ground and skidding across pools of acid. He landed with a heavy crack, and something snapped across his barrel chest boneplate. He felt blood in his mouth, and his head jerked back from the impact.

Throne, he was being taken apart. That did not happen.

He spun onto his back, ignoring the heavy crunch as the creature's clawed foot stamped down just millimetres from his arm. It towered into the storm-wracked sky, a living wall of obsidian, five metres high and crowned with dark, curving spikes. Lightning reflected from the

facets of its organic armour, glinting off the slick ebony. Somewhere in the whirl of jagged, serrated limbs was a monotasking mind, a basic alien intelligence filled with an urge to protect its territory and drive the infiltrating humans back into space.

Svelok had never seen a xenos like it. The closest he could get was a creature of demi-myth on Fenris, the Grendel, but these bastards were encased in plates of rock and had talons like lightning claws.

‘You all die the same way,’ he growled. His voice was a jagged edged-rasp, scraped into savagery by old throat wounds. He sounded as terrifying as he looked.

The storm bolter screamed out a juddering stream of mass-reactive bolts, sending ice-white impact flares across the creature’s armoured hide. It staggered, rocking back on its heels, clutching at the hail of rounds as if trying to pluck them from the air. The torrent was relentless, perfectly aimed and deadly.

The magazine clicked empty. Boosted by his armour-servos, Svelok leapt to his feet, mag-locked the bolter and grabbed a krak grenade.

Amazingly, the leviathan still stood. It was reeling now, its hide cracked and driven in by the barrage of bolter fire, but some spark of defiance within it hadn’t died. A jagged maw, black as Morkai’s pelt, cracked open, revealing teeth like a row of stalactites. It lurched back into the attack, talons outstretched.

Whip-fast, Svelok hurled the grenade through the open mouth. The massive jaws snapped shut in reflex and the Space Wolf crouched down against the oncoming blast. There was a muffled boom and the xenos was blown apart, its iron-hard shell smashed open and spread out like a splayed ribcage. The behemoth crumbled in a storm of detritus, toppled, and was gone.

‘Feel the wrath of Russ, filth!’ roared Svelok, leaping back to his feet, fangs bared inside his helmet. He seized a fresh magazine, spun round and slammed the rounds into the storm bolter’s chamber. There’d been three of them, massive stalking beasts carved from the stone around them, horrors of black, tortured rock bigger than a Dreadnought.

Now there were none. Rune Priest Ravenblade loomed over the smoking remains of the largest, his runestaff thrumming with angry, spitting witchfire. Lokjr and Varek had taken out the third, though the Grey Hunters’ armour was scarred and dented from the assault. The xenos monsters were tough as leviathan-hide.

‘What the hell are these things?’ Lokjr spat over the comm, releasing the angry churn of his frostblade poweraxe.

‘The scions of this world, brother,’ replied Ravenblade coolly.

‘Just find me more to kill,’ growled Varek, reloading his bolter and sweeping the muzzle over the barren landscape.

Svelok snarled within his helmet. His blood was up, pumping round his massive frame and filling his bunched muscles with the need for movement. The wolf-spirit was roused, and he could feel its feral power coiled round his hearts. He suppressed the kill-urge with difficulty. His irritation with Ravenblade was finding other outlets, and that was dangerous.

‘How far, and how long?’ he spat, flexing his gauntlet impatiently.

‘Three kilometres south,’ said Ravenblade, consulting the auspex. ‘One hour left.’

‘Then we go now,’ rasped Svelok, combat-readiness flooding his body again. ‘There’ll be more xenos, and I still haven’t seen one bleed.’

Taken from *Sacrifice* by Ben Counter

THE WARP TORE at him.

The unearthly cold shot right through him.

He could see for a billion kilometres in every direction, through the angry ghosts of dead stars and the glowing cauls of nebulae, dark for aeons. Alaric fought it, tore his eyes away from the infinities unravelling around him. The psychic wards built into his armour were white hot against his skin, tattooing him with burns in the shape of their sacred spirals.

Alaric's lungs tried to draw breath, but there was no air there. He tried to move, but space and movement had no meaning here. And beyond his senses, far in the black heart of the universe, he could sense vast and god-like intelligences watching him as he flitted through their domain.

Man, he managed to think, was not meant to be teleported.

The air boomed out as Alaric emerged in real space again, several hundred kilometres from the teleporter array on the Obsidian Sky where he had started the journey. Even a Space Marine, even a Grey Knight, was not immune to the disorientation of being hurled through the warp to another part of space, and for a second his senses fought to make definition of reality around him.

The squad had been teleported onto the grand cruiser Merciless. The familiar architectures of an Imperial warship were everywhere, from the aquilae worked into the vault where the pillars met overhead to the prayer-algorithms stamped into the ironwork of the floor by Mechanicus shipwrights.

The air was a strange mix peculiar to spaceships. Oil and sweat, incense from the constant tech-rituals, propellant from the ship's guns. It was mixed with the tongue-furring ozone of the squad's sudden arrival.

Alaric took a couple of breaths, forcing out the supercooled air in his lungs. 'Brothers!' he gasped. 'Speak unto me!'

'I live, brother,' came Dvorn's reply. Dvorn lay a few metres away, ice flaking from his armour.

'I too,' said Haulvarn. Haulvarn, Alaric's second in the squad, leaned against a wall of the corridor. His journey had been one of intense heat instead of cold and his armour hissed and spat where it met the wall.

Brother Visical coughed violently and forced himself to his feet. In reply to Alaric, he could only meet the Justicar's eyes. Visical was inexperienced for a Grey Knight, and he had never been teleported before. It was rare enough even for a veteran like Alaric. The technology that made it possible could not be replicated, and was restricted to a handful of the oldest Imperial warships.

The whole squad had made it onto the Merciless. That was something to give thanks for in itself. Teleportation was not an exact science, for even the oldest machines could simply fling the occasional man into the warp to be lost forever. He could be turned inside out, merged with a wall upon re-entry or fused with one of his fellow travellers. That had not happened to any of Alaric's squad. Fate had smiled on them so far.

'We're in the lower engineering decks,' said Haulvarn, checking the data-slate built into the armour of his forearm.

'Damnation,' spat Dvorn. 'We're off course.'

‘I...’ spluttered Visical, still suffering from disorientation. ‘I am the hammer... I am the point of His spear...’

Alaric hauled Visical to his feet. ‘Our first priority is to locate Hyrk,’ said Alaric. ‘If we can find a cogitator or take a prisoner, we can locate him.’

As if in reply, a monstrous howl echoed from further down the corridor. This part of the ship was ill-maintained and the patchy light did not reach that far down. The sound was composed of a hundred voices, all twisted beyond any human range.

‘First priority is surviving,’ said Dvorn.

‘Where is your faith, brother?’ said Haulvarn with a reproachful smile. ‘Faith is the shield that never falters! Bear it up, Astartes! Bear it up!’

Dvorn hefted his Nemesis hammer in both hands. ‘Keep the shield,’ he said. ‘I’ll stick to this.’

Alaric kicked open one of the doors leading off from the corridor. He glimpsed dusty, endless darkness beyond, an abandoned crew deck or cargo bay. He took shelter in the doorway as the howling grew closer, accompanied by the clatter of metal-shod feet on the floor. Sounds came from the other direction, too, this time the rhythmic hammering of guns or clubs on the walls.

‘Hyrk has a wasted little time,’ said Alaric. ‘Barely a month ago, he took this ship. Already it is crewed by the less-than-human.’

‘Not for long,’ said Dvorn. He looked down at Visical, who was crouched in another doorway, incinerator held ready to spray fire into the darkness. ‘You were saying?’

‘I am the hammer!’ said Visical, voice returned and competing with the growing din. ‘I am the shield! I am the mail about His fist! I am the point of His spear!’

‘I see them!’ yelled Haulvarn.

Alaric saw them, too. They had once been the crew of the Merciless, servants of the Emperor aboard a loyal and storied warship. Now nothing remained of their humanity. The first glimpse Alaric had was of asymmetrical bodies, limbs moving in impossible configurations, stretched and torn naval uniforms wrapped around random tangles of bone and sinew.

He saw the stitches and the sutures. The humans they had once been had been cut up and rearranged. A torso was no more than an anchor for a random splay of limbs. Three heads were mounted on one set of shoulders, the jaws replaced with shoulder blades and ribs to form sets of bony mandibles. A nest of razor-sharp bone scrabbled along the ceiling on dozens of hands.

‘This side, too!’ shouted Dvorn, who was facing the other way down the corridor.

‘Greet them well!’ ordered Alaric.

The Grey Knights opened fire. The air was shredded by the reports of the storm bolters mounted onto the backs of their wrists. A wave of heat from Visical’s incinerator blistered the rust off the walls. Alaric’s arm jarred with that familiar recoil, his shoulder hammered back into its socket.

The mutant crewmen came apart in the first volleys. The corridor was awash with blood and torn limbs. Carried forward on the bodies, as if riding a living tide, came a thing like a serpent of sundered flesh. Torsos were stacked on top of one another, sewn crudely together at shoulder and abdomen. Its head was composed of severed hands, fastened together with wire and metal sutures into the approximation of a massive bestial skull. Its teeth were sharpened ribs and its eyes

were beating hearts. The monstrous face split open in a serpentine grin.

It moved faster than even Alaric could react. Suddenly it was over him, mouth yawing wide, revealing thousands of teeth implanted in its fleshy gullet to crush and grind.

Alaric powered to his feet, slamming a shoulder up into the underside of the thing's jaw. He rammed his fist up into the meat of its neck and trusted that his storm bolter was aiming at some vital place, some brain or heart the thing could not live without.

Words of prayer flashed through his mind.

Alaric fired.

VICTORIES OF THE SPACE MARINES 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: 978-1-84970-042-9

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

ISBN: 978-1-84970-043-6

- 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