

SALAMANDER

A Warhammer 40,000 Novel

By Nick Kyme

Hailing from the volcanic world of Nocturne, Space Marines from the Salamanders Chapter are in search of an ancient artefact that leads to a world overrun by Chaos. They are the fire-born: implacable warriors with iron hard determination. But all is not what it seems as far more dangerous foe is revealed. As bitter rivalries break out amongst the Salamanders their endurance will be tested to the limit. Will the Salamanders survive long enough to discover the truth about this world and the revelations that will shake the very foundations of this Chapter forever?



About the Author

Nick Kyme hails from Grimsby, a small town on the east coast of England. Nick moved to Nottingham in 2003 to work on White Dwarf magazine as a Layout Designer. Since then, he has made the switch to the Black Library's hallowed halls as an editor and has been involved in a multitude of diverse projects. His writing credits include several published short stories, background books and novels.

You can catch up with Nick and read about all of his other published works at his website: www.nickkyme.com

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Published by the Black Library. Games Workshop, Willow Road,
Nottingham, NG7 2WS, UK.

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Tsu'gan screamed as he plummeted from the stone
parapet towards the temple floor below.

'No!' The word was wrenched from his throat.

He heard rasping laughter as he fell.

Nihilan had planned this doom. He had fooled them all.

It was this, the cold realisation of his failure, which sat
like ice in Tsu'gan's gut.

He remembered the armoured shadow, closing in from
where he should have been; where, as a loyal
Salamander, he should have stayed sentry. Hubris and
arrogance had impelled him to disobey. Tsu'gan had
believed glory was worth the risk.

The world passed by in a blur as Tsu'gan traversed the
short distance to the ground. In his maddened urgency,
he'd lost sight of the ambusher who was closing on
Kadai. His captain was alone, standing before the pooled

remains of the warp creature he had just vanquished, and he was weakened...

Blinding light ripped into the darkness like a jagged knife, careless of the damage it wreaked. Tsu'gan kept his balance, a few seconds extending into lifetimes as he followed an incandescent beam searing through the gloom. He saw Dak'ir glanced by it, his battle-helm corroding, his pain at the beam's malign caress emitted as a wail of agony. The force of it, surging from the multi-melta, spun him away from certain death.

Undeterred, the beam sped on and struck Kadai. The captain's body was lit up like an incendiary. Terrible light engulfed him. Kadai screamed and the wrenching sound echoed Tsu'gan's own as he landed in a crouch, shattering rockcrete beneath his Astartes bulk.

Heart thundering in his chest, Tsu'gan was on his feet and running, heedless of the danger presented by the shadows around the edges of the temple. The distance to his captain seemed so impossibly far, the chances of Kadai's survival so remote. Yet he hoped.

It was only when he closed and he saw Kadai's armour fold in on itself that he realised his beloved captain was dead. He skidded to a halt, not wishing to touch the corroded remains, and slumped to his knees. Tsu'gan hung his head, even as he heard the cries of N'keln and his battle-brothers returning to reinforce them. Only, they were too late.

‘Salamanders! Slay them!’

Barking bolter fire brought a crescendo of noise. Tsu'gan was dimly aware of the bucking forms of dying cultists – the followers of the debased cult that had brought the Salamanders to this graven place – as N'keln and the others tore them apart. He felt hollowed, as if a dagger had been thrust into his gut and all of his innards carved away. Physical agony, more painful and invasive than any torture, spread through his bones to his very core. It was as if he had ceased to exist in the world and merely watched as it revolved around him.

A solid shot spanging off Tsu'gan's pauldron brought him to his senses. Grief and denial became rage. Shaking hands became fists grasping his bolter. Tsu'gan was on

his feet again. He looked to the dark, but Kadai's murderer had fled.

A cultist came at him, seen from the corner of his eye. The wretched creature's stitched mouth prevented a battle cry. He wielded an eviscerator in bone-thin fingers. Ragged robes flapped around a withered body like a corpse.

He would have to do.

Tsu'gan ducked the clumsy swipe of the chainblade, hearing the churning teeth as they raked over his head. In the same motion, he brought up his fist into the wretch's stomach, felt ribs crack and then the soft meat of his belly. With a bestial roar, Tsu'gan ripped out a fistful of viscera and finished the cultist with a heavy blow from his bolter stock.

Tsu'gan barely registered the skull collapsing beneath his wrath when he turned and drilled three robed figures fleeing off into the dark. The muzzle flare from his bolter lit up their escape and they danced like doomed marionettes before the ammo storm. He found another, snapping its neck with a blade-like hand. Two more fell

to his weapon's retort, their chests exploded as the volatile rounds did their gruesome work; another crumpled beneath an elbow strike that shattered her neck and left it sagging.

Green-armoured forms were moving around him too – his battle-brothers. Tsu'gan was only vaguely aware of them as he killed. He never moved far from his captain's side, maintaining a cordon of protection that none would breach and live. The cultists were many and he revelled in their slaughter. When his bolter ran dry, Tsu'gan cast it aside and lifted the still whirring eviscerator, torn from the dead cultist's grasp.

A red haze came upon him. He cut and cleaved, and rent and slashed, and gored and sundered until a grisly wall of body parts surrounded him. When the cultists thinned at last and the final few were chased down and executed, Tsu'gan felt the strength in his mighty legs fail him. He fell again, once more to his knees, in a pool of enemy blood. With the tip of the eviscerator's blade, he carved a long groove into the stone floor so the tainted vitae

would not touch his captain. Tsu'gan then closed his eyes and despaired.

'Brother-sergeant,' a voice came to him through a grief-filled fog. 'Tsu'gan,' it insisted.

Tsu'gan opened his eyes and saw that Veteran Sergeant N'keln stood before him.

'It is over, brother. The enemy are slain,' he said, as if it was any comfort. 'Your battle-brother will survive,' he added.

Tsu'gan looked nonplussed.

'Dak'ir,' clarified N'keln. 'He will live.'

Tsu'gan hadn't even realised he was there. Kadai was all that mattered. Tears were streaming down his face.

'Kadai...' said the brother-sergeant, his voice barely a whisper. 'He is dead. Our captain is dead.'

SALAMANDER can be purchased in all better bookstores, Games Workshop and other hobby stores, or direct from this website and GW mail order.

Price £6.99 (UK) / \$7.99 (US) / \$9.50 (CAN)

ISBN 13: 978 1 84416 740 1 (UK)

ISBN 13: 978 1 84416 741 8 (US)

- 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
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