

GENESIS

by Michael J. Hollows

THE SOUNDS OF battle raged as the solitary drop pod smashed into the soil throwing up mud. Artillery shells whistling as they fell with the sounds of bolter fire echoing in the valleys. But this was no ordinary engagement. This was a full scale invasion force. This was an army seeking to regain control of the planet in the name of the immortal God Emperor.

A figure emerged from smoke surrounding the landed drop pod after its violent landing. The tall commanding figure was encased in obsidian armour dark as the night, a dark leather cloak fashioned from the hide of some ancient beast hanging from his shoulders and whipping in the wind. Long black hair enveloped a wise and knowing face, with eyes already scanning the battlefield for targets. Hefting a crackling thunder hammer in both gauntlets, he was an image of death, a funereal vision brought forth to destroy all in its path, an Angel of Death.

This figure's name was Kris Hoo'pr, Captain, warrior of the Emperor.

THE GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE surrounded him, the spires of once magnificent cathedrals and administratum buildings piercing the darkening sky at impossible angles. The city had in the past been a sprawling marvel. But it had long since been perverted by those occupying this world, the sanctified cathedrals being used in the enemy's archaic and corrupt rituals.

Before the city lay the shanty towns, small plascrete and metal shacks once inhabited by the local populace and now hastily torn down and erected as piecemeal barracks for the defenders. They knew his army was coming.

Kris knew how this battle would go; he spent hours aboard his battle barge compiling and rendering animations of how things would play out. Assessing the layout of the terrain and simulating how his enemy would react to each attack, each roll of the dice. Analysing each movement of the battle before approving it. The enemy would not be expecting him so soon, he had deployed ahead of his warriors, aiming to make a surprise strike at the heart of his enemy.

VAULTING OVER THE crumbling barricade in front of him, he sought his first target. The nearest traitor marine was not expecting such a violent and forceful attack, the crash of the drop pod having mingled in with the sounds of the artillery barrage. The crimson armoured warrior tried to aim his bolter at the Captain, but before he could fire a round Kris swung his right arm overhead smashing the end of the thunder hammer against his enemy's helmet. The power field encasing the head of the hammer and the force of the blow destroyed the helmet in a shower of sparks and splattering blood. The enemy warrior was disorientated and blinded by the attack and Kris swept his hammer from left to right in a backhand swing to finish him off, crushing his internal organs and leaving him a crumpled heap in the bloodied dirt.

Further to his left amongst the shorn plascrete of the shanty towns was another group of traitor marines. Distracted by the army groups that Kris' chapter was here to reinforce, they had not noticed his landing or the gruesome death of their comrade. Running headlong to their position he shouted a warcry in the name of the Emperor on Terra.

'Traitors, I will kill you all! For the Emperor!'

The first of the traitor's, roused by the cry, managed to pivot and fire his weapon, sending a stream of mass-reactive shells towards the Captain. Because of the rapidness of the turn only some of the shots hit home, others spinning off in to the distance. Kris didn't care. The battle-vision was on him. Time had slowed down and the carefully laid animations of his battle plan were running within his mind. Kill these vile traitor marines and clear a beachhead for the rest of his forces to land. That was his only goal for now.

He leapt into the muddy debris-filled trench amongst the chaos marines, his hammer swinging from side to side, cleaving and smashing his enemies from the ground. Their armour, adorned with strange fetishes that hurt the eye and protruding horns, was no match for the Captain's ancient Thunder Hammer. One enemy to his left was crushed with the full motion of his hammer and another to his right lifted from his feet with the backhand swing and obliterated with another forceful thrust. His moves, fluid and precise were as a dance, an ancient form of taking life. His arms raised and moving side to side, he head scanning the scene for targets, it was a dance of death.

There was only one traitor left before him, he had ran out of rounds and discarded his weapon, sensing death was near. The crimson warrior clutched his ritual combat knife and crouched down, ready to meet death with pride. Kris would allow him no such honour and quickly swung the powerful hammer with the last of his strength, smashing the traitor's armour to pieces in a welter of blood. Blackened gore splattered up the Captain's armour, joining that of the traitor's comrades and some of his own he suspected. Having dispatched the last of these foul creatures he dropped to the ground, his armour pitted and scored, his energy spent, and looked to the sky.

IT WAS A beautiful sight to behold, the massed drop pods of his Chapter looming through the cloud cover, descending from the stars to cleanse this planet. But without him it would not have been possible.

Finally reinforcements were arriving. The armoured mass of his 7th Company plus some attached squads from the 10th, the scout company.

With a tremendous will of force, Kris summoned all the strength and energy left to him. His genetically enhanced body would staunch the bleeding from his many wounds and there would be time to repair to his armour later. For now he would show these younglings, show them that age was not a thing to be feared, that age only brought experience and wisdom. That no matter how old he got he would still fight and destroy the enemies of the Imperium of mankind.

Today was the anniversary of his Genesis Day, the day he was reborn in the image of the Emperor as a battle-brother of the Adeptus Astartes, all life before that forgotten. Today was the day he would make his name in the eyes of the

Emperor...