



STERN RETURNS!

DAEMONIFUGE III

DAEMONIFUGES III

THE THRICE-BORN PART ONE

'I'M DYING.

'I'M DROWNING
ON MY OWN
BLOOD.

'IT WASN'T
SUPPOSED TO
END LIKE THIS..

'I SUPPOSE I SHOULD
BE SCARED, BUT...
BUT NONE OF THIS
SEEMS *REAL*.

'AND ALL THAT
MATTERS - ALL I CAN
THINK OF - IS A
SINGLE QUESTION:

'WAS IT ALL *WORTH*
IT, EPHRAEL?'

STORY: SI SPURRIER
ART: TIERNAH TREVALLION
LETTERS: FIONA STEPHENSON
DAEMONIFUGES CREATED BY KEV WALKER.

'M - MY
MEMORIES
ARE *SLUDGE*...

'I ESCAPED FROM
AHRIMAN FIFTEEN
YEARS AGO... I... I
THINK.

'THINGS MOVED
FAST AFTER
THAT...

...RESTORE YOUR
COMMISSION WITHOUT
RECRIMINATION OR
STAIN UPON YOUR
RECORD...

SKREEEEEEE
E-----

'ON KORSK-451 I *PURGED* THE
PLAGUELORD *GANGRESH*...

'WHEN THE *NOISE-CULT*
OF *TIKOLOSHE* CLAIMED
SANCTUS-TELLIER, I WAS
THERE...

'I DEFEATED *KARAV-KENSUS*
AND HIS *BLOODY SPEARS*.
I QUELLED THE *PAIN-SECT*
OF *TIAM* AND HALTED THE
ASCENSION OF THE
HUNGRY CLAW.

'WHEREVER THE
TAINT AROSE,
THERE I WENT.
AND I ALWAYS,
ALWAYS WON.

'AND THEN:'

BE ADVISED:
YOU ARE SUMMONED
TO THE PALACE OF
MOST-HIGH TERRA TO
RECEIVE HONOURS FOR
DEEDS UNDERTAKEN
IN THE NAME OF HIS
HOLINESS, THE
EMPEROR OF MAN.

'AND OH...
OH, MERCY...

'IT WAS A THING OF
SUCH *FRAGILITY*
AND *BEAUTY*...'

THIS WAY.

KEEP
YOUR EYES
DOWN.

TOUCH
NOTHING.



'I WAS AN INCAUTIOUS
FOOL, WALKING WITH HEAD
HIGH AND GUN LOWERED...

'*SURELY*, I THOUGHT, NO ONE
COULD BE SO *AUDACIOUS*
AS TO USE *THIS* HOLY PLACE-

--AS A *TRAP*.'

BDAM-
BDAM-BDAM-BDAM!

LIE STILL,
WITCH. LIE STILL AND
LISTEN.

ON
GATHALAMOR YOU
SLEW THREE OF OUR
BRETHREN.

THE ORDO
MALLEUS DOES NOT PRACTICE
FORGIVENESS.

CONSIDER
THE MATTER
SETTLED.

AND SO IT ENDS.

AND YES... YES, I
HEAR HIM *CALLING*
FOR ME...

THRICE-
BORN--?

THRICE-
BORN. LISTEN. YOU
WILL DIE SOON.
YES.

YOUR
HOLY WORK: FATED
TO ME NOW. I MUST
HAVE YOUR SECRETS.
YOU MUST IMPART
YOUR GIFT.

HURRY. YES.
TELL ME ALL. LET
YOUR LIFE NOT BE
WASTED.

K-KYGANIL?

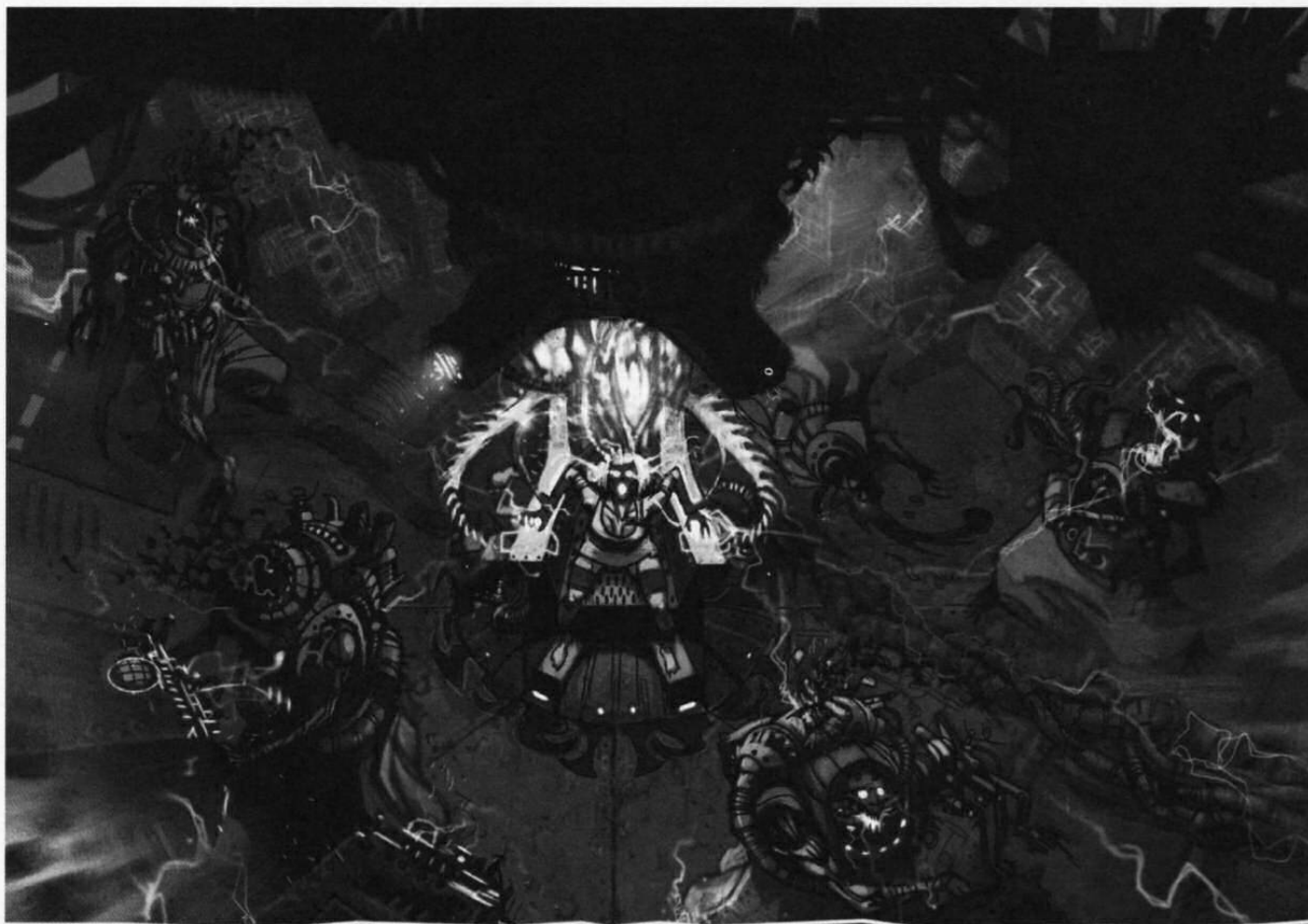
B...BUT...
HOW DID AN
ALIEN ENTER THE
PALACE?

NO.

NO,
THIS ISN'T
RIGHT.

THIS
ISN'T RIGHT!





IMPRESSIVE.
YES.

EVEN
DRUGGED, THIS
ONE HAS MORE
VIGOUR THAN I
THOUGHT...

WH...WH---?



IT
MATTERS
NOT.

I'LL TAKE
HER POWER,
ONE WAY OR
ANOTHER...



I'LL TAKE
HER STRENGTH, AND
HIS KNOWLEDGE...
AND THEN-

...A-AYE,
FARSEER... MM...
THE BLACK LIBRARY
SITS ON YONDER
PATH...

--I'LL MURDER
THE STARS
THEMSELVES.

MEANWHILE:

JUSTICAR.
THE INQUISITOR
SENDS WORD.

HIS CONTACTS
AMONGST THE ELDAR ARE
CERTAIN - WE'VE DISCOVERED
THE VESSEL OF AHRWAN
HIMSELF...

VESSEL ON PERIMETER OF ALL DVC SCH=====

BROTHER-
CAPTAIN - ARE WE
TO PLACE OUR TRUST
IN THE WORD OF
ALIENS?

ACHERON CLASS???
NO LOCK???? VERIFY

NO... BUT
WE MUST DO AS
THE MASTER
COMMANDS...

AND
INQUISITOR
CZEV AK IS RARELY
INCORRECT.

WE'VE
TRACKED THIS SCUM TOO
LONG.

PREPARE
THE ASSAULT
BOATS.

FOR THE
EMPEROR AND THE
INQUISITION-

-- THE
GREY KNIGHTS GO
TO WAR!

L- LORD...
THE SURVEYERS MAKE
REPORT!

MAGGOT!
I COMMANDED NO
INTERUPTIONS!

B-BUT
MY LORD!

WE ARE
ASSAULTED!

Z
Z
Z
Z
Z
Z
Z
Z
Z
Z
K
L
A
N
G--

IT'S
HM! THE ARCH-
FIEND!

FOOLS!

BRING THE
PRISONERS!

GUARD!
ATTEND!

ESCORT
ME TO MY
SHUTTLE!

I'M DRUGGED.
NOTHING MAKES
SENSE...

BUDDA-
BUDDA-
BUDDA

EVERYTHING'S
A TANGLE.

SSSSS--!

FZZAK!

EMPTY-SKULLS!

EMPEROR-
WORMS!

STAY
BACK OR
THE WITCH
DIES!

IGNORE
THE HOSTAGE.

THE
HERETIC
DIES!

JUSTICAR...

WE HAVE
AN IDENT ON THE
HOSTAGE...

SHE'S
WANTED ALIVE BY THE
ORDO - OBJECTIVE A
PRIORITUS.

WHAT?



'THERE'S A
ROAD IN
MY MIND.

'A PATH.

'I'VE TRAVELLED
IT ALL MY LIFE,
AND ALL ALONG
I'VE WONDERED
WHERE IT LED.



'I KNOW
NOW.

'THERE IS NO PLACE
IN THIS GALAXY FOR
EPHRAEL STERN.



'I AM A THING.

'A WEAPON.

'AN EXPLOITABLE
RESOURCE.



'I AM BESET ON
ALL SIDES BY
THOSE WHO
WOULD USE ME...



'AND I CAN TRUST
NONE OF THEM TO
USE ME WELL.



'THERE IS A MOMENT OF
SUBLIME CLARITY.



'THE PATHWAY LEADS,
AS IT ALWAYS HAS.'

'-TO A DEAD END.'



NEXT: THE WAKE

To the High Lords of the
Congresium Malleus, in service
to the eternal *Inquisition*...

THE
EVACUATION
CHAMBER! STOP THE
HERETIC!

I write from the Convent of the
Order Panacear upon *Jenicae
Delta*, in true and honest
testimony of my Holy Work.

Our enemies are
myriad and our
allies few - with
every day what
vestiges of *hope*
remain slip further
from our grasp.

My Lords, a time of *trial*
and *hardship* draws nigh.
As ever it befalls our
blessed *Ordo* to contest
the dominion of *shadow*
and *fear*.

The alien, the
heretic, the daemon.

Such things haunt
my dreams, my
lords, and I confess
that in this dark
time I am afraid for
the *future*.

I have sought comfort in the
scrying of mystics and the
prophesying of psykers, but the
Tarot conceals my fate and I
know not how to proceed...

My mentor is gone from
this world, and all that is
left to me is *revenge*.

THE THRICE-BORN PART TWO DAEMONIFUGE III

STORY: SI SPURRIER
ART: TIERNAN TREVALLION
LETTERS: FIONA STEPHENSON
DAEMONIFUGE CREATED BY KEV WALKER

My master's name was *Silas Hand*, and since my elevation to the rank of *Inquisitor* I have devoted myself to a single task:

To find him - or else destroy his *slayer*.

DEAD.

BRING
THE BODY.

Alas, the gulf between
worlds is mighty, and
information scant.

NEW
INSTRUCTIONS
FROM THE ORDO,
JUSTICAR.

AS THE
EMPEROR
WILLS.

Months had passed since his disappearance
when, in desperation, I turned to the *Librium
Malleus*. There, amongst the clutter and dust,
my search yielded fruit.

I chanced upon the routine account of *Justicar Argan*
of the *Grey Knights*, conveyed via telepath from
Jenicae Delta, and in its pages I found my answer.

HER?

Jenicae is a world at war. The *Plague Lord's* pestilent maw stretches to devour it, and only the valour of the Emperor's warriors holds his minions at bay.



At the heart of this dread place blossoms a rose of purity:

A *Sororitas* convent of the Order Panacear, labouring to vaccinate against the diseases of *Nurgle*.



Justicar Argan, summoned to battle on Jenicae, deposited there the mortal remains of a woman whose name I never thought to hear again.



"Ephrael Stern."





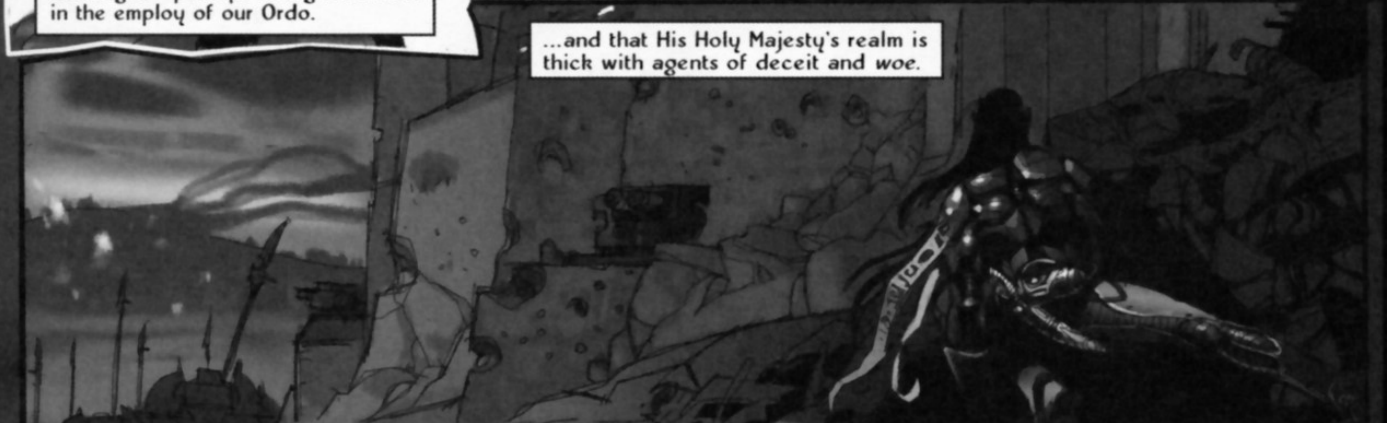
GREY
KNIGHTS, TO
WAR!

Argan did not linger at the convent for long. His testimony of Stern's death was vague - perhaps fitting for a man in the employ of our Ordo.

Inquisitor Hand once opined that we of the Malleus must strive to emulate the world in which we operate...



...and that His Holy Majesty's realm is thick with agents of deceit and woe.



Stern's death, then, remains a mystery; but the suspicion my Master turned upon her before his disappearance could not be ignored.

I resolved to leave immediately for Jenicae, seeking clues; already fearing that I would be too late to examine the body.

The sisters are, after all, a sanctimonious breed: bestowing burial honours upon even those that have fallen from grace.

...ASK THAT SHE BE RECEIVED UNTO HIS AUGUST PRESENCE, AS BEFITS A WARRIOR OF THE SORORITAS...



Is it not said, my lords, that the Taint may best flourish in the unguarded shadows of solemnity and ceremony?

The certainty of their silent vigil hardened my resolve: I *would* solve the enigma of Ephraël Stern.

That she had *perished* troubled me not greatly, for such heretics - thralls to their malefic patrons - are fit only for divine *purgation*.

...HELLO,
MY **PRETTY-
PRETTY...**

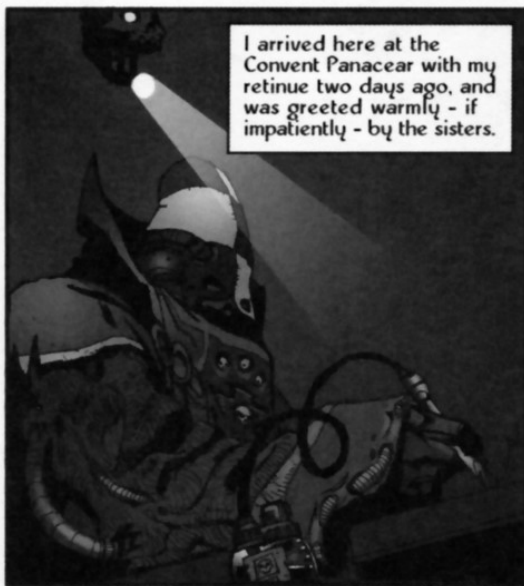
...HELLO,
MY **PRETTY-
PRETTY...**

...MY
MEAT-HOST
SPEAKS HIGHLY OF
YOU...

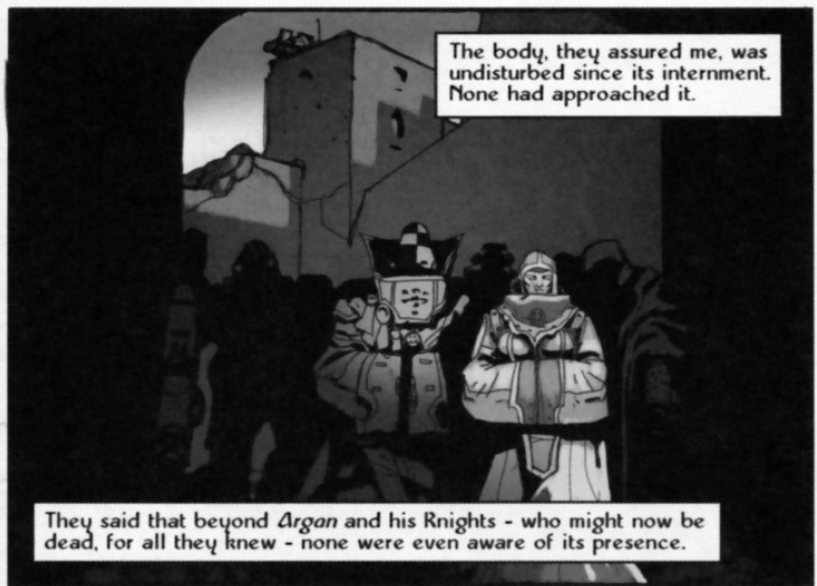
HEH...
WHEN HE'S NOT
**BEGGING FOR
MERCY,**
THAT IS...

ON
HIS BEHALF, I
CAME TO PAY MY
RESPECTS...

PTT!



I arrived here at the Convent Panacear with my retinue two days ago, and was greeted warmly - if impatiently - by the sisters.



The body, they assured me, was undisturbed since its internment. None had approached it.

They said that beyond *Argan* and his Knights - who might now be dead, for all they knew - none were even aware of its presence.



Their *naivety* was troubling, my lords. Do they not know that agents of the *Dark Powers* are everywhere...?

...And that they rarely lie dormant?



OPEN IT. EXUME HER.

I WOULD LOOK UPON THE DEAD FACE OF MY MASTER'S KILLER.

THHHNK



My Lords, I have not discovered the *fate* of Silas Hand. In that respect I have *failed*.



But in pursuing the agent of his destruction I have unmasked an abomination that *must* be pursued.



Ephrael Stern, practioner of arcane sorcery, child of Chaos, *daemon-wench* - shall be found.

She will be found and brought to the Emperor's justice.

Whatever Guardian Devils watch over my quarry shall not avail her now...



In the name of the *Golden Throne* and the *Inquisition*, I shall not suffer this *witch* to live!

I, Inquisitor *FAZAEL* of the *Ordo Malleus*, swear it.

NEXT: ANABIOSIS

THE MAN FROM DIVALIA IS DYING. OR INSANE. OR BOTH.

HE REMEMBERS THE WOUND, IN RARE MOMENTS OF CLARITY.

NOT FATAL, HE'D THOUGHT.

HE REMEMBERS THE INFECTION.

GHAK

JUST A FLESHWOUND.

...BUT TO NURGLE THE AIR ITSELF IS A POISONED ACCOMPLICE... AND THE TAINT HAS DEVoured HIM WHOLE.

THE ENCAMPMENT IS DOOMED, HE HAS DECIDED.

EMPEROR-FORSAKEN AND BLIGHTED.

AND YET...

AND YET IT IS NOTHING BESIDE THE PESTILENCE IN HIS MIND.

SHAAAAARE
OUR DISEEEASSSE...

JOOOOOOOITIN
USSSS

THE THRICE-BORN: PART THREE DAEMONIFUGE III

STORY: SI SPURRIER • ART: TIERNEN TREVALLION
LETTERS: FIONA STEPHENSON • DAEMONIFUGE CREATED BY KEV WALKER



SO HE PRAYS.



HE PRAYS FOR SALVATION, OR
REDEMPTION, OR DEATH.

ANY ONE WILL DO.



AND THE EMPEROR...



THE EMPEROR
ANSWERS HIS
CALL.

CAMPAIGN COMMAND,
NORTHERN CONTINENT,
JENICAE DELTA.

...STILL NOT
SURE I UNDERSTAND
THE... S-SIGNIFICANCE
OF YOUR VISIT, MY
LORD...

THERE
WERE RUMOURS,
GENERAL.

RUMOURS
THAT HAVE REACHED -
AND IMPRESSED - EVEN THE
SISTERS OF THE ORDER
PANACEAR.

RUMOURS
OF A WOMAN. A
HEALER.

YOU HEAR ALL SORTS OF S-
STORIES ON A BATTLEFIELD,
MY LORD...

F-FEW ARE
TRUE...

I KNOW
NOTHING OF
THIS WO--

GENERAL.

TO CONSORT
WITH THE HERETIC IS
TO ENDANGER ONE'S
PURITY...

BUT TO LIE TO AN
INQUISITOR...

...IS TO
FORFEIT YOUR
SOUL.

THE
TRUTH.

NOW.

' I-IT'S THE DIVALIAN REGMENTS, IN THE SOUTHERN JUNGLES. THEY WERE HARDEST HIT BY THE SICKNESS.

' I'VE SEEN THE IMAGES... BY THE THRONE - THOSE MEN HAVE ENDURED HELL ITSELF.

' LAST MONTH WE RECEIVED REPORTS.

' T-THEY SAID A WOMAN - A WOMAN IN WHITE - ARRIVED FROM NOWHERE. STARTED PERFORMING MIRACLES.

' SHE NEVER SPEAKS. NEVER SHOWS HER FACE.

' J-JUST HEALS...'

THESE ARE THE LAST OF THE COORDINATES THE GENERAL INDICATED, MY LORD.

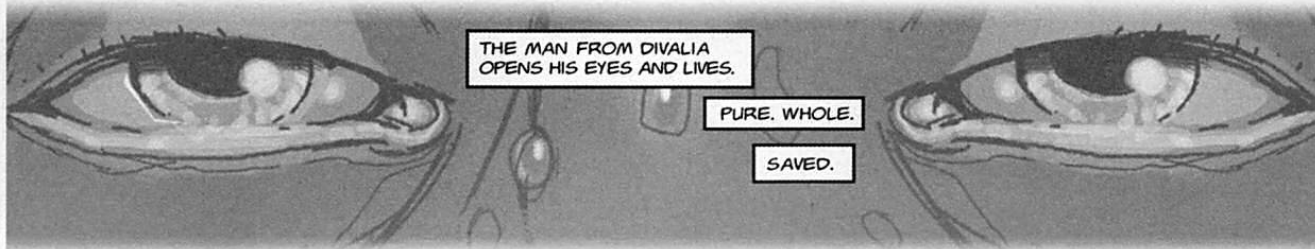
HMM. HIS PENANCE IS SERVED, I THINK.

CUT HIM DOWN. HE'S BEGINNING TO SMELL.

NO MOVEMENT DETECTED.

HMPH.

SPREAD OUT. FULL SWEEP.



THE MAN FROM DIVALIA
OPENS HIS EYES AND LIVES.

PURE. WHOLE.

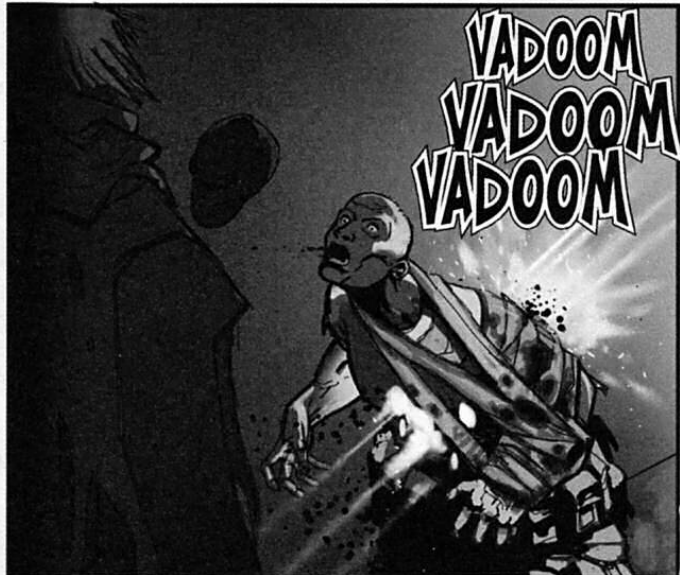
SAVED.



E-EMPEROR
BE PRAISED.

THE
VOICES ARE
GONE...

WH-...
WHO ARE
Y--



VADOOM
VADOOM
VADOOM

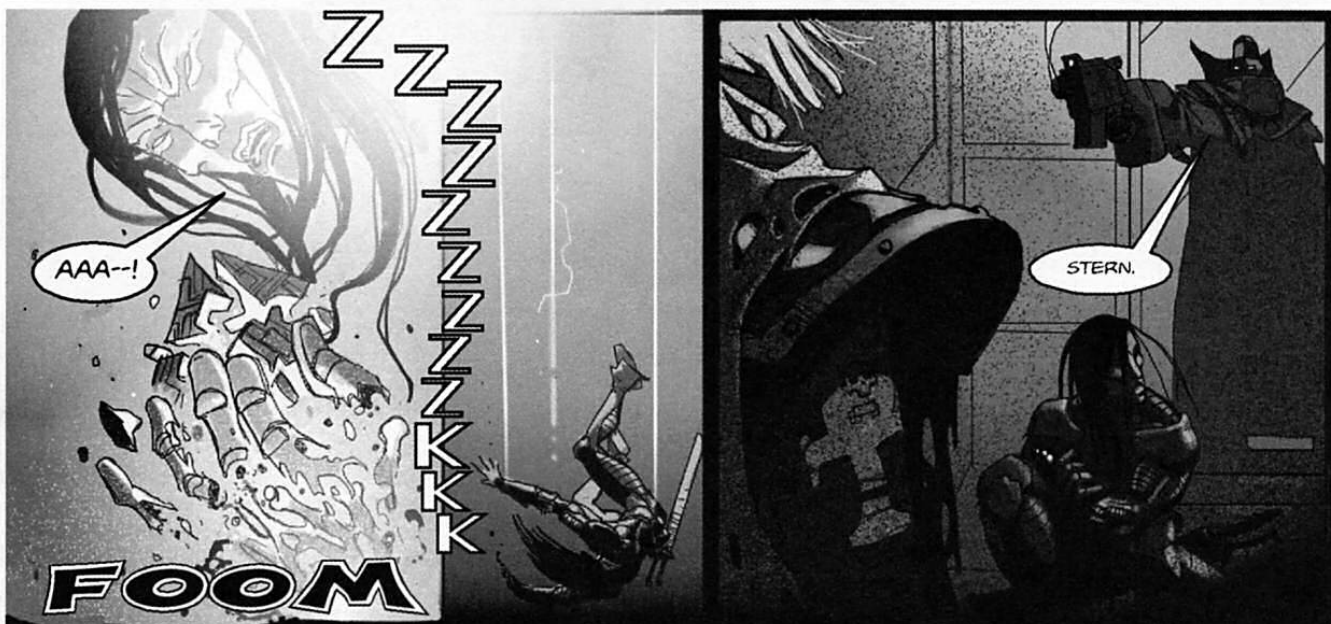


INQUISITOR
FAZAE? I HAVE
HER.

NNNN...

ON MY
WAY.







NURGLE
FILTH!

YESSSS...

SHE DID THIS! THE
WITCH SUMMONED
THEM!

SSHAAARE OUR
DISSEEEEEAAAAASSE...



' I RECOGNISE THIS.

' CHAOS.

' I KNOW IT, LIKE
A *SISTER*
KNOWS HER
BROTHER.



' AND *LOST* OR
NOT, I KNOW HOW
TO *FIGHT* IT.'



C-COME,
THRICE
BORN.

TO *SALVATION*...



AFTER THEM!
THE WITCH *DIES*!



' THIS WORLD... I SEE IT
THROUGH A *HAZE* OF
CONFUSION: GLUTTED BY
SICK IMPRESSIONS AND
PERVERSE DETAILS...

' THE *ALIEN*
IS WOUNDED.

' THE *WEBWAY*
KEY IS DESTROYED

' THE *JUNGLES*
ARE HUNGRY.

' WE ARE FLEEING
TO *NOWHERE*.

' I MUST *AWAKEN*.
I MUST FIND AN
ESCAPE. I MUST
SAVE MYSELF.

' I MUST
REMEMBER.



' THE SHIP OF DEVILS.

' THE LIDDED EYE.

' THE END OF THE
PATHWAY, THEN-

' CONCENTRATE!
REMEMBER!



' THERE WAS
A LIGHT.

' THE LIGHT OF THE
WARP, BUT... BUT
NOT THE WARP... '

' AND THEN
THE BOX.

' AND THE
SHROUD.

' AND THE
CONFUSION.

HHHHH!



' AND THE TAIN.
ACHING AND NEAR,
LIKE AN OLD WOUND...

' ...AND WITHOUT
KNOWING *HOW*,
WITHOUT EVEN
THINKING, I WENT
TO CURE IT. '



'IT'S BECOMING
CLEAR NOW...'

S-STOP...
WAIT...

'I WAS BORN
HUMAN, ONCE.'

'AND AGAIN ON *FARNIS*,
GIFTED WITH *KNOWLEDGE*
BY THE *SCREAMING CAGE*.'

'AND HERE. HERE ON
JENICAE DELTA, WHERE
MY *BONES* WERE LAID...'

'HERE I REFUSED TO
REST IN PEACE, AND
WAS *BORN AGAIN*.'

NO, ALIEN.

WE FLEE
NO FURTHER.

W-WE
CANNOT
TARRY, HUMAN!
WE MUST
FLEE!

NO.

'THRICE-BORN,
WEAPON OF
LIGHT. SCOURGE
OF CHAOS.'

'*DAEMONIFUGE*.'



THIS WAY,
INQUISITOR. HER
PSYCHIC *SPOR* IS
ALMOST *TANGIBLE*.
WE ARE *CLO*.

...OH...

INQUISITOR.

IT IS MY
SOLEMN *ADVICE* THAT
YOU *LEAVE*.

I ASSURE
YOU I AM MORE THAN
CAPABLE OF
DEFENDING MYSELF.



IS THAT
RIGHT, *CHAOS*
BITCH?

THEN
LET US
SEE.



STARSHIP
BELLATOR ULTRIX,
THIS IS *FAZAE*.

LOCK ONTO
MY SIGNAL AND FORM
A *DISPLACEMENT*
SOLUTION.



SEND
DOWN OUR
MUTUAL
FRIEND...



COVER
YOUR EYES,
MY SERVANTS.

THIS
WILL *HURT*.



MM...
THERE YOU ARE,
YES...
DELICIOUS.

I'M
GOING TO EAT YOUR
SOUL.

MM.

