



# Execution Hour

*Gordon Rennie*

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## **Execution Hour** Gordon Rennie

The vile and unholy shadow of Chaos falls across the Gothic sector at the onslaught of Warmaster Abaddon's infernal Black Crusade. Fighting a desperate rearguard action, the Imperial Battlefleet has no choice but to sacrifice dozens of worlds and millions of lives to buy precious time for their fleets to regroup. But what possible chance do they have when Abaddon's unholy forces have the power to kill men and murder entire planets?

## **Execution Hour Details**

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Author : Gordon Rennie

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# From Reader Review Execution Hour for online ebook

## Zaphied says

Liked it just fine for the fluff it gives. But strangely not enough space battles for a series based on Battlefleet Gothic.

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## Matthew Hallman says

If you enjoy sci-fi and space battles outside the general Star Trek and Star Wars universes, then this is definitely a book for you

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## Talos says

Very exciting and well-written book. Keeps you thinking and brings out imagination through its clear descriptive text

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## Alexander Suzdaltsev says

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## Jonathan Ensor says

Hard hitting action, which successfully showcases both the grandeur and brutality of the Warhammer 40,000 setting, held back by shallow characters and clunky prose.

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## Taddow says

One of the best Warhammer 40K novels with a good blend of all the different military arms of the Imperium coming to battle the forces of Chaos.

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## Mohamed AbdEl-Azim says

Fast paced , fun and IN SPAAACE !

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## Callum Shephard says

When it comes to Black Library, there are a few key novels which are signified as being massive game changers for the franchise and fan favourites. Ian Watson's *Space Marine*, Dan Abnett's *First and Only*, and Graham McNeill's *Storm of Iron* are the traditional ones, but the Gothic War duology is sadly forgotten these days. While likely down to a lack of reprints until recently, the sad truth is that it's one of the best novels of its kind and covers a subject so often skipped by many authors: Naval life and battle. True, many books do feature this to a fair degree, but so few are exclusively set on warships, and both *Execution Hour* and *Shadow Point* are perfect examples of how to truly nail this.

Set during Abaddon's Twelfth Black Crusade, the series follows the crew of the *Lord Solar Macharius* as they are deployed to help turn the tide in a slowly losing battle against the traitor fleets. Despite being outnumbered and outgunned on countless occasions, the vessel and her captain, Leoten Semper, keep winning battles time and time again. However, as the ever traitorous Eldar offer an alliance against Chaos and the Planet Killer continues on its ponderous course towards heavily inhabited worlds, can even the most staunch of Imperial commanders hope to turn the tide?

Usually when it comes to an omnibus this would be broken down into a novel by novel analysis, as with the *Soul Drinkers* saga, but both books share many of the same qualities. As such this is going to be a more general discussion of the series on the whole.

Now, being a classic Black Library story this is far more *Trollslayer* than it is *The First Heretic*. Everything present in here isn't so much focused on characterisation as it is action and much of the story focuses far more upon the battles, running events and personal stories than it is about deep character examination or internal feuding. While many points in the story will stop to briefly examine the histories behind certain characters or even set up fights between one another, these are kept more to the background in favour of the combat. While this would usually be a detrimental failing of a book, it instead works in its favour, largely thanks to the style it is presented in. Being more famous for his writing on comics than novels to many, Rennie's series here is heavily broken up into very loosely connected but largely independent tales. The first several parts of *Execution Hour* are effectively skirmishes, more isolated than part of some running story and you could easily see this as a part of some omnibus or running trilogy such as the early Constantine trade. It's better suited to light or short bursts of reading to be sure, but it's hardly a failing in of itself.

While the stories are much smaller in scale, they help to give a very quick impression of the crew, the combat and Rennie's very visual forms of storytelling and punchy descriptions help to bring the story to real life. While it might lack the slow speeds or precision descriptions of ship to ship combat found in Ben Counter's works, and often forgets the ranges which enemy ships engage one another in *Warhammer*, it retains the energy and speed to keep the reader engrossed. No one quite depicts a strike cruiser rushing an enemy formation or barrages of missiles striking their target quite like what's found here.

In addition to this the setting is far grimmer and willing to show a far less perfect Imperium than many later novels. While writers would later fully embrace the idea of biased storytelling influencing how the Imperium was shown, the technology here is far more run down and it reflects more of the idealised fascist society you'd expect in *Starship Troopers* than anything else. This actually makes the work seem all the more alive despite its occasionally cartoonish trappings, and while Chaos is still shown as the big enemy it's far more villainous than you'd expect to find in later stories.

Perhaps the biggest thing of note however is the early appearance of Abaddon the Despoiler. While only

briefly showing up in the book, Abaddon here is very much the classic villain in every sense but very intelligent and very powerful. Enigmatic to the last, he shows up here as more the dark lord than semi-reasonable hero of Dembski-Bowden's works, and there is rarely a moment where he does not outshine the story. While very little of his background is gone into, what little we get is truly memorable.

Unfortunately if there is a serious point to criticise, it's that there isn't enough of an impact when it comes to the villains. While Abaddon remains his perpetually awesome brooding self and the early battle against an old vessel once allied with the Macharius are both memorable, there's no single antagonist to help keep the tale going. Even the traitor Astartes planning to use a world's destruction to his own ends and a manipulative Imperial servant don't stand out, and the story feels a little more empty without that looming foe. Shadow Point is more ambitious, but this same flaw seems to largely apply, and it's more a general war you're invested in over any single antagonist. Atop of this, while the combat is frantic and remains furiously detailed, sometimes it can seem oddly short. Despite the scale of the vessels involved, too often even the vast capital ships seem like they're written as frigates with their speed and style of combat. Those more used to what was shown in Dark Mechanicus or Xenos will definitely be thrown off by this.

At the end of the day, The Gothic War omnibus is different, a little more pulp than high literature in many respects, but far from bad in any way. If you're after some bite-sized reading which is broken down into multiple running tales and desire some high grade bolter porn, this is definitely one well worth looking into. Despite the trade's high price tag, it's well worth a purchase.

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## **Student Teacher says**

So for my birthday last year my wife bought me all of the available Print on Demand books from the Black Library. It has taken me a while (like nine months) but I have finally got to this one.

The Gothic War book, which is made up of the books Execution Hour and Shadowpoint are like many of the print on demand books in that they are old and out of print. Unlike some of the old Black Library books, these hold up pretty well as the years have past (at least Execution Hour has). There are no Landraiders that have Dreadnaught carrying capacity (I'm looking at you Crusade for Armageddon). I think this mainly has to do with the fact that it is mainly fleet-based combat, and not a single Space Marine in the book.

It starts out with a couple of short stories that don't really have much to do with the main plot line other than give us an antagonist and a bit of foreshadowing. We meet Leoten Semper, the captain of one of Battlefleet Gothics ships, the Lord Solar Macharius. In the first couple of stories he seems newly appointed, but by the main story, it seems as if either quite a bit of time has passed (I'm not sure how long the Gothic War lasted) or that just the pressure of fighting against during the 12th Black Crusade has forged the crew into a tight knit family.

As we get into the main story, Abaddon is using his new super weapon, the Planet Killer to, well, kill planets pretty indiscriminately throughout the Gothic sector. He now sets his sights on Belatis and heads off in that direction. Astropaths on the soon-to-be doomed world feel the disturbance in the force... er warp and this alerts the Imperium and they start to evacuate the planet and the Macharius is one of the ships sent to protect the evacuation fleet.

Overall this was a very enjoyable book. It is nice to read something that isn't just Astartes or Imperial Guard. The space combat, while not exactly realistic, was fun and it just seemed to be a breath of fresh air. The

author did a good job creating some pretty memorable characters in the form of the Flag Lieutenant Ulanti, Commisar Kyogen, and Petty Officer Borusa aboard the Macharius.

There were a few things I didn't like so much. In the first story, we see the Macharius fight a Chaos ship that will eventually cause the Macharius to be targeted for destruction. In the second story, we see some of the "long-game" that Chaos is willing to go to to destroy their enemies, and then in the main story, after a lot of foreshadowing, it just sort of fell flat.

Other than that, I really enjoyed this book. I am really looking forward to the next book as I believe it goes into some detail about how Abbadon captures two of the Blackstone fortresses in the Gothic sector. I give it three Dauntless class cruisers out of five.

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## Felix Zilich says

החברת הזו היא חלק מהסדרה "The Dark Heresy" של Warhammer 40,000. הסדרה מתארת את המאבק של אסטרטוס, ארגון סודי של האימפריה, נגד הכוחות המאיימים על האימפריה. הסדרה מתחילה עם הסיפור של "The Dark Heresy: The Dark Heresy" ונמשכת עד "The Dark Heresy: The Dark Heresy".

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**David says**

I picked up this gem of a book at a used book store along with Shadow Point, and both books are excellent. I was surprised at the quality of the writing, the interesting characters and the plot pacing. These books are by far two of the better Warhammer 40,000 novels that I have read--and I have read over 100 Warhammer 40,000 novels to date (most are not very good, but I love the genre and the unique dystopian setting in which the stories take place).

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**Michael T Bradley says**

Didn't finish, and didn't love it. I think Gordon Rennie is a great comics writer, and perhaps COULD BE a great novel author, but this felt EXTREMELY rushed (well, the first two short stories didn't; they were fine and enjoyable), badly edited, and just kind of dull. Stuff happens, but ... he hadn't really gotten a handle on how to tell the story he wanted, I don't think. Curious to check out the sequel. Perhaps it will "flow" better for me.

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