



FALL OF DAMNOS

NICK KYME



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When Damnos is hit by cataclysmic earthquakes, an ancient force is awakened. Deep beneath the earth, the necrons rise from their slumber to decimate the human populace. All appears lost until salvation comes from the heavens.

The Fall of Damnos Details

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From Reader Review The Fall of Damnos for online ebook

Andrew Ziegler says

I would have rated this with 4 stars, but the ending really left it flat, and that has been the case with 3 of the 4 Space Marine Battles books I have read. Open ended or cliff hanger endings in stand alone novels do not sit well with me.

Michael Alexander Henke says

With a lot of novels you can feel pretty confident that the good guys will come out on top. That's not the case when it comes to the Warhammer Universe. Even when the good guys win, it's usually a pyrrhic victory at best. From the title alone you can tell that win or lose, the planet Damnos is doomed.

Like the other books in this series, this is one is a little short on plot and really long on action. While there is some interesting character development with the individual Space Marines the plot basically boils down to Ultramarines fighting Necrons. This is the first 40K novel I can remember reading that features the Necrons as the primary antagonist. It's easy to see why they are one of the most feared armies in 40k. Implacable automatons with the ability to self repair from even the most heinous damage, and weapons that can cut through a Space Marines armor with ease. The Ultramarines definitely have their work cut out for them here, and you can't help to feel sorry for all the poor humans caught in the middle.

Darrel Vater von Katzen says

I was initially very disappointed with this book and I have to admit I nearly quit reading it at 1/3 the way through. I am glad I stuck with as the rest of the book was great.

Seeing the internal politics of the Necrons was really nice to read.

Mick says

The fourth entry in the excellent Space Marine Battles series, *The Fall of Damnos* features the 2nd company of the Ultramarines chapter led by Captain Sicarius and Chief Librarian Tigurius fighting the alien Necrontyr across the surface of the planet Damnos. Like previous entries, and much of the Black Library's output, it's an enjoyable, action-packed, and not particularly challenging read. Nick Kyme broadly follows the template of the series, featuring a Space Marine force taking on incredible odds - in this case with the assistance of the local military and guerilla forces, who sometimes steal the show - with chapters of solid action and heroics.

Where the best entries in this series excel is in character study. Here, much of the focus falls on Cato Sicarius, who makes the fateful decision to defend Damnos at all costs early and whose men pay for it dearly. Sicarius' chief defining trait, aside from the superhuman abilities which mark all Space Marines, is arrogance. It's arrogance that may be rightfully earned - he is after all a Captain of a Space Marine company and heir apparent to the role of Chapter Master - but it leads him to some rash decisions, a fact which

inspires unease in his men.

Sicarius doesn't steal all of the limelight. A whole raft of characters, both Astartes and mortal, get their own subplots. A highlight here are two mineworkers introduced at the beginning, who despite being merely human manage to excel in the war against the Necrons, helping to highlight the difference between the superhuman fearlessness of the Space Marines and the ordinary courage of Imperial citizens. The Necron leaders also get some characterisation, although this didn't work nearly as well for me, and could have been either excised entirely (as it didn't particularly effect the rest of the plot) or given more room to develop. This is solid military science fiction, of the sort that anyone who's a fan of Warhammer 40,000 or just in need of an action-packed read should be able to enjoy. That's practically the *raison d'être* of this series, and *The Fall of Damnos* is a particularly strong entry.

Michael T Bradley says

This was really good, and great fun to read. I'll admit, I started to get some of the characters mixed up toward the end, but most of them stood apart & I enjoyed watching Praexos's arc. Agrippen is my favorite character. He's like the gruff uncle who crushes babies. Ultramarines seem so uninteresting, but both Kyme & MacNeill write them in such a way that I find them pretty fascinating. And the Necrons here are intriguing, as well, kind of insane butchers. My main issue with the book is that the Necrons go from godly power levels (taking out a whole ship with one laser launched from the planet!) to, literally chapters later, being taken down by humans with icepicks. That's a hell of a power differential. But it was entertaining, so I guess I don't mind. A little frustrated there were a lot of dangling plot threads at the end, and I'd kind of wish for a sequel, but I think it would be tough to do something that's not just more of the same ...

Tom says

Necrons = good, but new necron codex, entirely disregarding the C'tan, instead devolving the necrons into petty lords and fiefdoms, this book was bland. Ultramarines fight, die, don't get completely annihilated, the necrons are more interesting in a way, as they have personalities, but they lack the old menace of the genocidal machine automatons guided by malevolent beings akin in power to greater demons, if not to the chaos gods themselves.

Patrick Hayes says

An enjoyable read simply because the villains of this book are the Necrons, and to find books featuring them are few and far between. These machine antagonists seek to reclaim a world they've been buried under for centuries, and it was only be sheer luck that a call escaped the world asking for help from the Space Marines.

I enjoyed reading from the perspective of the Necrons, though I failed to get a clear idea of why some of the higher level ones were involved in power struggles. In fact, the main reason why the Necron battle took a major turn against them is never really explained with satisfaction; it just happens, we, and the Marines, see it happen, but what specifically is going on is up in the air.

There were also a lot of Marines running around; so many that I lost track early on of where each group was

and where they were fighting. I'm not a fan of referring to maps as I read, so I just plowed through the novel, knowing that the protagonists would be whittled down considerable under the onslaught of the mechanoids, and they were.

The book became much easier to follow at the half way point, and I found the "normal" humans who were helping the Marines to be a very welcome addition to the story, as non-Marine humans are usually treated poorly by the Emperor's soldiers, and I appreciated that.

So, this was a mixed bag for me. I didn't really enjoy it until half way done, and in the end there's no conclusion, only a hiatus of battle, waiting for a sequel.

Michael S says

Put off by Warhammer...? Don't be its a cracking thrill of a war campaign. Surprised how much I enjoyed it! Think 300 or simply Spartans in mechanised armour. Enjoy.

David Alexander McLane says

Think of 300, except Ultramarines instead of Spartans, a frozen planet called Damnos instead of Thermopylae, and an endless horde of Necrons instead of the Persian immortals and you get Fall of Damnos.

Overall, not a bad book, and definitely picks up steam in the second half. There's some cool maps and diagrams inside as well to add a bit of flavor to the story. Definitely recommended to fans of Warhammer 40k.

Steve says

Great story, highlighting the bravery of the defenders and yet the utter futility of war.

Callum Shephard says

Set on the doomed world of Damnos, the story follows the conflict between the Ultramarines' Second Company and the necron horde which dwelt beneath the planet's surface. Having been awoken long before their arrival, the astartes led by Sicarius find the world's military broken and the remaining populace in full retreat. Determined to turn the tide, the Ultramarines mount an assault, but internal politics cause many to question the captain's orders. After so much has been lost, how can any hope to find victory against an undying foe such as the necrons?

If there's one thing to be said about Fall of Damnos, it clearly emphasises the scale of events, the cost behind them but most of all the story's direction. Within a chapter it's made very clear how great a threat the necrons truly are, with their forces being awoken and proceeding to rout any who oppose them. We see progressively bigger Imperial forces brought against them only to be smashed down in their advance. Along

with setting up a number of important human characters, it gets a lot of details out of the way while setting up the book's foe. In a very short space of time it establishes their enemy very effectively while keeping them grounded enough in power to show they can truly be fought. Better yet, their SPESS TOMB KINGZ aspects are kept to a bare minimum in this sequence, allowing for some genuine terror to seep through as they pick apart the Imperial military on the planet.

This point needs to be praised for two reasons: Firstly getting much of the busywork over and done with so what is actually advertised can actually be focused upon, a problem more than a few novels make. Secondly as it makes it very clear (even more so than the title) this will not be a joyous war and will be a fighting retreat at best. While Kyme is visibly hamstrung by much of the source material from the fifth edition Codex: Space Marines, he never goes so far as to repeat Mat Ward's mistake of trying to write the Damnos Incident as some kind of victory or at worst a draw. Only a handful among them truly believe it can be won, through either stupidity or arrogance.

Speaking of arrogance, there's the characterisation of Cato Sicarius and his role within the book. Despite having little more focus than any other character of the novel, Sicarius is easily its biggest strength as it utilises the few character details he was actually given beyond an obscenely long list of skills and victories. Much like in The Chapter's Due and the previously reviewed Veil of Darkness, Sicarius is a risk-taker who skilled, brilliant, but failing to know when to retreat or when the battle is lost. This point is made clear many times when the captain is fighting the necron menace, mentioning that others would have retreated and sentenced the world to exterminatus than lose soldiers fighting as he is here, particularly his rival First Captain Agemman. The actual rivalry is made into a plot point, with distrust among the Second and First Company elements accompanying the mission and internal politics between figures being in the background even as the chapter battles against the xenos. While never fully addressed, this internal political conflict is handled far better than many 41st millennium titles with it as a major plot point such as Soul Drinker and The Death of Antagonis.

The secondary characters of the company react to the politics in varying degrees, but ultimately have their own tales to tell. Each given varying degrees of focus and their own tales become either relevant to themselves as a personal arc or the story as a whole. While Scipio and Praxor ultimately fall into the former, the likes of Tigurius are unfortunately in the latter camp and heavily overlooked as a result. Often feeling fairly two dimensional, the librarian only serves to show the power of the necrons and highlight a concluding sequence of the book. Furthermore the number of secondary characters both within the Second Company and among the humans leaves many aspects either unexplained or underdeveloped such as many characteristics surrounding the guerrilla fighter Jynn. We're told she's a fantastic figure on par with Creed or Yarrick yet it's never really. This is one of the book's flaws: There are a good twenty characters if not more which are being used to try and give the story scale yet the ambition behind using them overwhelm's Kyme's ability to balance them out. There's easily enough named figures here to rival the cast of A Song of Fire and Ice installment, yet he needs to write about them all in only a fraction of the page length.

In order to tell the characters' stories and that of the space marines the book utilises constant flashbacks, but these are added at the worst of moments. Almost as soon as the space marine drop begins with the Ultramarines assaulting the necron forces, it jumps back to hours prior to flesh out their personalities. A choice which immediately kills all momentum behind events and the excitement behind the attack. While some are better placed, they frequently either get in the way of the events on Damnos or feel drawn out.

A more positive note is the tactics utilised by the Ultramarines. While all Black Library authors have varying grasps of military tactics, Kyme take the time to make note of troop movements, rearguard actions and the movement of forces in trying to support one another. It's definitely a cut above that of the previous Gaunt's

Ghosts novels and even Graham McNeill's Ultramarines series, making the Company feel more like a tactical military force than a band of vaguely organised knights. That being said, some moments are very questionable such as guerrilla fighters apparently having astartes grade bolt clips at their camp. There's also more of an effort to define the relationship between the astartes and mortals. While unfortunately lacking much of the reverence or respect many novels have come to use as a plot point surrounding them, the astartes are frequently referred to as "angels" and seen as religious warriors directly connected to the Emperor's power. A point which, while always a part of many books, is more evidently explored here.

Unfortunately Fall of Damnos' greatest weaknesses ultimately come from two things. The first is the source material behind the conflict, with Kyme having to use many previous details written by Ward which are either childishly simplistic or are more at home in a superhero comic. A constant point of this is the various names of the squads such as the Immortals, the Lions, the Titan Killers and such. All of which are very at odds with the overall themes of the space marines in the book. As bombastic as they might be, they are professional soldiers as much as they are crusaders and such nicknames simply feels like an attempt to appeal to a younger demographic. Many factoids taken from the previous Codex: Space Marines are always extremely at odds with the book's themes and even the Ultramarines themselves.

The other big problem is the necrons. While far more toned down than in many other stories which feature their new incarnations, these versions of the necrontry are overblown, well past the point of being able to be taken as a serious threat. This is especially true about the flayed ones, for all their descriptions of gore, wearing the skins of others and madness, their leader constantly screaming for a tailor and wearing them as robes turned horrifying insanity into utter hilarity. The few times the necrons do work beyond the opening chapter are always when the necrons are either silent or completely missing beyond their basic troops. The choice of descriptive names, one in particular being given the title Stormcaller, were similarly questionable.

Fall of Damnos is extremely hit and miss, but there are good ideas in here. Much like Veil of Darkness, you have to stomach Invisible Space Pharaoh Wizard Necrons and the book is visibly overstuffed, but many of the interesting ideas present here are enough to warrant a look. While I would still recommend Warriors of Ultramar as a book involving the Ultramarines facing a losing battle on a planetary scale, Kyme's personal touches make this worth going through at least once. For the internal politics, the tactical details, the varied characters and managing to turn Sicarius into an actual character rather than a fanboy's personal Mary Sue.

Joanne says

wow

Procrastinador Dilettante says

Tenho que confessar que demorei quase 2 meses a ler este livro (lendo muitos outros pelo meio) e isso aconteceu, não por falta de qualidade do mesmo mas sim pelo facto desta obra não ser de leitura fácil.

Digo que não é de leitura fácil por duas razões: primeiro, remete muito para um livro anterior ("Assault on Black Reach") onde são apresentadas muitas das personagens deste (todos eles Ultramarines) assim como os conflitos e rivalidades que existem entre eles. Em segundo lugar, há algumas partes que são escritas do ponto de vista dos inimigos - os Necrons - e a princípio são um bocado confusas.

No entanto, nenhuma destas razões faz com que eu desaconselhe o livro, pelo contrário. Apesar de remeter muito para o AoBR, a verdade é que achei excelente a maneira como o autor nos mostra que os Space Marines, mesmo sendo seres super-humanos sem emoções, acabam por sofrer dos mesmos problemas que os simples humanos. Há lutas por poder, por prestígio, há hesitações e dúvidas, mesmo que mascaradas por uma sempre presente devoção ao Imperador e por uma certeza quase religiosa de que os Space Marines são o pináculo da evolução humana em termos de guerra.

Quanto aos Necrons, tal como seria de esperar de uma raça que sempre me fez lembrar o Egipto do tempo dos faraós, a intriga palaciana é o "prato do dia". Um pouco como acontece com os próprios Ultramarines...

Mas para além desse passo óbvio, o autor também nos brinda com algo que considerei inesperado - a descrição da loucura que afecta muitos dos Necrons. Estamos a falar de seres que abandonaram os seus corpos orgânicos, trocando-os voluntariamente por corpos mecânicos. Apesar de o terem feito de livre vontade, as constantes hibernações e ressuscitações acabam por pesar na sanidade deles e muitos acabam por enlouquecer, vivendo apenas para matar e destruir.

O único defeito que posso realmente apontar ao livro é o facto do final ser um bocado precipitado. Mas os livros desta série - Space Marine Battles Novels- costumam ser sempre assim. Tenho a impressão de que os autores são um bocado forçados pela Games Workshop a escreverem um determinado número de páginas e pronto. Não se podem "esticar muito" e isso por vezes nota-se nos livros.

Resumidamente - é um livro que exige ao leitor que se dedique à leitura. É preciso ter um bocado de paciência para começar, mas assim que se entra no seu ritmo, vale bem a pena

El-jorro says

Bookworm Speaks!

Warhammer 40K

The Fall of Damnos by Nick Kyme Review

The Story: On the frigid, mining world of Damnos, mankind dug too greedily and too deep and an unimaginably ancient foe has been awakened, the Necrons. The undead warriors of living metal swiftly and mercilessly subdue the planet until a single city remains. Captain Sicarius and the Second Company of the Ultramarines are dispatched to Damnos to defend the last city and vanquish the Necrons.

The Good: Lately, there has been some controversy as to women being unfairly represented in Warhammer 40K. When you look at the majority of fiction out there, this is not an unfair hypothesis, especially in how the Space Marines are an all boys club. In this case, thought while definitely male dominated, the writers of Games Workshop do a good job of presenting strong female characters. Case in point, Jynn, an inhabitant of Damnos and leading a platoon of warriors against the Necrons. She is a wonderful character and the way she bonds with Ultramarine Scipio feels very authentic and her strength is frankly much more inspiring than that of the genetically enhanced super-soldier. If female Space Marines ever come to fruition, Bookworm bets it will be mentioned upon that it was unfortunate that it did not happen sooner.

The characterization of the Space Marines is elaborated as well, surprisingly with the Venerable Dreadnoughts. The Dreadnoughts are a particularly fascinating aspect of the Space Marines. Due to their very nature, most are not given a great deal of characterization. How Brother Agnathio, in spite of being a formidable fighter, is not entirely lucid and does not know exactly where he is or who he is fighting. It's a nice touch to the Space Marines and adds a dose of humanity to them. The thing about the Space Marines is that in spite of the post humanism, strength, speed, and eidetic memory, at their cores the Adeptus Astartes are still human.

While the stories of Uriel Ventris and Pasanius Lysane are always a perennial favorite when it comes to the Ultramarines, it is very good to see other Sons of Macragge be explored with a bit more depth. What the text has over most of the Graham McNeill saga is how it explores Ultramarine's war making from a broader perspective and illustrates Astartes Battle Strategy, whereas, books like Nightbringer and Warriors of Ultramar were largely told from Captain Ventris and a few civilians perspective. The broad approach works well here.

The Flaws: While Fall of Damnos is not the worst, it does feel like one of the weaker volumes of the series. The main flaw of which could very well result in Bookworm being hailed as heretic and being sentenced to servitor conversion: the Necrons are boring. As 40K villains go, the Necrons are among the weakest. Even though Nick Kyme does a good job of telling the story of the Necrons, they were rather dull and despite attempts to diversify the viewpoints, it all sounded the same. The Necrons have been described as space zombies and its not hard to see why and the way there lore is presented is kind of interesting but it just seems a little too overwrought at times, like a Necron dominated galaxy is inevitable. Part of the appeal of Warhammer is that as overwhelming as the enemies of the Imperium can be, there is still hope that they can be overcome with strength and spirit of man. This does not seem to be the case with the Necrons and they suffer for it. Invincible enemies are not very engaging.

Also, a common flaw with many space marine novels, is that the various battle brothers personalities are a little flat at times and frankly not very different from the others and its a little hard to keep track of them. Frankly, there are times where their personalities are pretty much interchangeable. While the text does a good job of telling a broader perspective of the war as a whole, it does make it

On the subject of personality, where this book lets the reader down is in the characterization of Captain Cato Sicarius. He is played very close to the chest we are not offered much off a glimpse into his thoughts other than his lust for glory and his aspirations for Chapter Master. While there is nothing particularly wrong with his portrayal, for those who are familiar with his portrayal in the Ultramarines Novel series by Graham McNeill, such as Bookworm, it is a disappointment to not see Cato Sicarius explored with more depth.

Final Verdict: A interesting look into on of the most famous chapters in Warhammer but probably not the best.

Three out of Five Stars

thecultureworm.blogspot.com

Daniel says

The most Honorable and Courageous Ultramarines of Macragge in eternal combat with the foul Necrons. Does it get any better this? I think not, gentle readers!

Seriously, this is a grand romp with the Space Marine Chapter born and bred to fight the vile xenos scum. Well written characters and awesome combat scenes, laid out in a manner which dazzles the mind and makes you hang on the edge of your seat. One of the greatest things done here is the author making a connection between the regular fighters of the war on this frozen planet, and the gene-bred juggernaut that are the Ultramarines. Usually one doesn't read of there being any connection between the two, but in this book it is a powerful underlying theme. The author knocked this one outta the park!

Danny
