

Any other person, on any other day would have said that it was a beautiful morning. The rising sun was slowly burning off the mist and fog, while the full trees glistened with their wet leaves. The cloudless sky shimmered with the golden rays of the sun. Yes, on any other day it would have been a wonderful sight.

But on this day, standing in stark contrast to the beauty around them, stood the terrifying forms of Chaos Space Marines, specifically those that belong to their terrifying legion known as the Word Bearers. They stood motionless in disciplined ranks, their armor still wet with morning dew and Eldar blood. While the sky itself seemed to reverberate with the sound of mighty bass drums pounding in a slow regular beat. And intertwined with the pounding were the muffled cries of agony from an Eldar Warrior, the sole survivor of a raid from the evening before.

In front of them stood a Land Raider. It faced them while giving off a low angry hum. Its headlights dim but shining with a malevolent light, as if it was glaring at them, daring one of them to break ranks or move a fraction of a hair. If it was from inside this beast that the screams could distantly be heard.

The drums continued to slowly pound until the sound of a scream, a great sound that seemed to come from somewhere deeper than within any living body, silenced them. Even though there was no movement from the marines, they knew the time had come. They could sense a change, the ritual torture killing of the alien had come to a close, now their leader, their link to the true voice of Chaos would emerge.

With a terrible hiss of hydraulics, the front doors of the vehicle opened. For a brief moment nothing but the mist in the air swirled, and then Kor Karoptim, Chaplain of the Word Bearers emerged. His armor was a flat black, but one could easily see that his armored gauntlets were slick with blood. In his right hand he carried his Accursed Crozius, a symbol of his rank and of the dark powers of Chaos. This too was soaked in blood, but as each moment passed the blood on it disappeared as the weapon itself absorbed it. And in Karoptim's left hand was the objective of the night's work, the entrails of the Eldar warrior.

For a moment he stood at the mouth of the Land Raider, from his elevated position he surveyed the marines before him with a menacing inspecting eye. The marines remained motionless, but there was definitely a sense of anticipation in the air. For a moment Karoptim seemed disappointed in the precision the marines kept, his angry scowl inspecting their ranks. And then almost unceremoniously he let the parts of the Eldar fall to the floor, landing perfectly in the center of a Chaos Star.

He stared at the lump of flesh for nearly a minute before he spoke, searching it for all the signs and portents it reported. And when he finally spoke, his voice was not that of a human or a marine. It was a voice that came from a millennia of hate, anger and of unforgiveness.

"The aliens from the dead race continue to attack in the north. They attack our so called comrades of the World Eaters and push for their bases..."

Let them! We will not directly aid them, the World Eaters follow only one of the true paths of chaos, *and those that follow only one path are doomed by its weaknesses.* So says Lorgar in the 478th book of the 8 Paths of Chaos."

"And in Lorgar speaks the true word." The marines chanted.

"The World Eaters will win in the end," Said Karoptim. "And then in their weakened state we shall show them where the true path lies..."

And as for our *'brothers'* who follow the *False Emperor..*"

A low grumble passed over the marines. What would have passed for a smile, slipped on to Karoptim's face.

"And as for the ones who follow the False Emperor, they too make inroads against the blind followers of Khorne. But they too are doomed to failure as all those who follow the False Emperor are."

The murmur continued and then Karoptim looked at them sharply. The marines fell quiet in an instant.

"And then there is the weakling humans, the *'Imperial Guard'* they too fight for the False Emperor, or so they believe. But already from within their ranks our influence grows and soon they all shall sing and burn to the praises to Chaos and all its glory!"

He glanced momentarily down at the Chaos Star again.

"But for now, we must remain hidden. A mere background force, until it is our time. We will continue our raids to the east. The meat of the Eldar tells us that we must favor the paths of the Lords Khorne and Slaanesh. It is with these that we must pray, to summon their servants from the warp. The ichor of the alien favors Lord Klanat the Pilgrim, this tells us that we must follow its example leave behind all machinery, so all our vehicles will be left behind tonight. And finally the blood of the alien favors Lord Tzeentch the Changer of Ways, so you will organize yourselves into squads its number, nine."

He looked up at them, a sneer across his face. "Now go and prepare yourselves. There is much work to be done, not just tonight but for the next few weeks. We must hold back and let the players build a foundation of blood for us, the foundation of our eventual conquest. *For it is with a strong foundation that the greatest of cathedrals can be built.* So says Lorgar in the 97th book of the 8 Paths of Chaos."

"And in Lorgar speaks the true word." The marines chanted.