

# Index Astartes

## First Founding



An in-depth look at  
the First Founding  
Legions of the  
Adeptus Astartes

## BRINGERS OF DARKNESS

The Night Lords  
Space Marine Chapter

by Phil Kelly

The Night Lords have always belonged to the darkness. Ever since their inception, the black seed of their Primarch infected them with violence and despair. Although they once fought with grim efficiency in the name of the Emperor, the Night Lords were among the first to turn to the darkness, sowing misery and fear like a plague across unnumbered worlds.

### Origins

According to the heretical handwritten chronicle of his life, entitled simply *The Dark*, Konrad Curze's earliest memory was of descending from the heavens in a crackling ball of light to the night-shrouded planet of Nostramo. His embryonic form impacted on the dense cityscape of Nostramo Quintus, smashing through countless levels of debris and moldering architecture, through the planet's crust and into the geosphere before finally coming to a halt near the liquid core of the planet. His descent left a scar in the virtually inviolable adamantium strata of Nostramo, the result of the supernaturally resilient Primarch's violent birth into a world that knew no light. The cratered pit his descent had carved into the planet was closed off and regarded with fear and suspicion. Theoretically, the only way the Primarch could have reached the surface was to have swum through molten metal, borne upwards through volcanic vents to the surface. The Arcana Progenitum of Nostramo Quintus details the incident in vague, awkward terms:

*"...a glowing child-form it was, crawled from the Pit onto the broken street, hissing molten metal dripping from its limbs. It was a daemon, no less, with the body of an infant but the expression of an old man, its eyes black and cold as obsidian."*

Due to the pollution-clogged atmosphere, Nostramo was barely better lit at noon than at midnight. A shroud of perpetual darkness kept the planet swathed in dull greys and deep blacks. Only the rich could afford the Nostraman idea of light, little more than dim blue illumination-strips in the ceilings of the ruling hierarchy's luxurious dwellings. The adamantium that riddled the planet's crust, Nostramo's chief export to its neighboring worlds, was the reason for the thousands of metalworks and chemical plants that scarred the landscape and choked the air with noxious filth. The vast majority of the planet lived in abject poverty as foundry workers, whilst the rich grew in affluence, trampling down or killing any who dared oppose the status quo. Murder, theft and extortion were rife. Crime ran unchecked, the only gesture toward law enforcement was the

horrific brutality meted out by the hierarchy's hired thugs upon those who opposed them. Depression was inescapable, and overpopulation was prevented not by war, disease or legislation, but by suicide.

Unlike many of his brother Primarchs, Konrad Curze raised himself, and his survival instincts and iron constitution undoubtedly carried him easily through whatever rigors the pollution-choked city of Nostramo Quintus could throw at him. He spent his early life stalking silently through the streets, feasting on the pack animals that prowled the barrens around the hive-like cities. He did not ascend to heights of intellectual prowess, he was not schooled by the finest tutors in the land nor taught the blade or axe by noble mentors. Rather he rose to the top of the food chain, at first eating rats and other vermin, then the black, lean dogs that stalked the choked streets, and finally the corpses of the many victims of Nostramo's corrupt society. His powerful form, clotted with filth and blood, fuelled the citizenship's fears of this feral menace.

### The Purging of Nostramo Quintus

One of the better known facts about Konrad Curze was that he was cursed by visions of horrifying potency throughout his life. Rather than seeing the myriad possibilities the future could hold, as the sorcerous Eldar claim they are able to, the visions he would experience were inevitably dark and troubled, the blackest paths the future could take unwinding before him. Among the most debated writings of Curze's history are the revelations contained in volume two of *The Dark*.

*"At times, in raptures of pain, I saw what was to occur laid out before me. In these waking dreams, I took countless lives with my bare hands, heads taken as trophies. I died again and again at the hands of my father. My sons butchered and maimed their brothers. My name was to become synonymous with dread. But most vividly and with most frequency, I saw my world pierced by a lance of purest light, splitting it, shattering it into dust."*

Some unrecorded event during his maturation pitched Curze into a destructive cycle of persecution and murder, with his focus always upon the



structured criminal elements of Nostramo's society. This vigilante war may well have started small, with Curze merely intervening when he witnessed something he thought wrong, but soon he deliberately hunted down those members of society that transgressed.

At first, several prominent figures among the city's corrupt hierarchy went missing. Others were quick to fill their shoes. Later that year, as an unusually long and swelteringly hot summer set in, those who protested loudest also began to disappear. The citizens of Quintus quickly ceased voicing their objections. Bodies of known criminals were being found splayed, gutted like fish by the cruel attentions of an unseen assailant. The corpses of hierarchy officials were found hung by

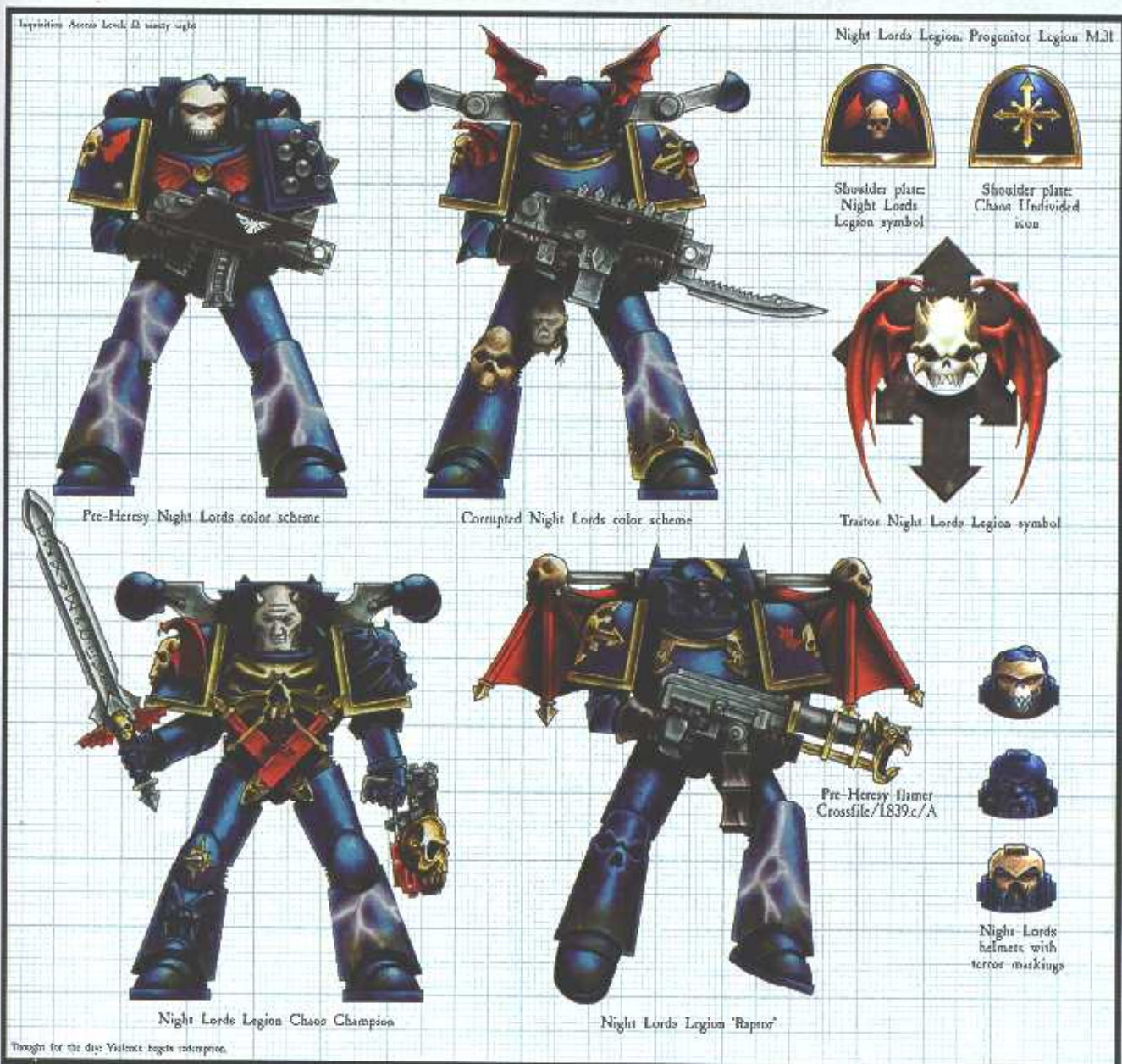
their feet from high windows. Headless bodies were found mutilated, opened so that their corruption could be exposed to the acidic air of Nostramo. Many of the corpses found that summer were unrecognizable due to the severity of the beatings they had fallen prey to. Body parts blocked the storm-drains, the beggars and children of the gutters quick to divest them of expensive jewelry and rich fabrics. It was obvious that Curze had no compunction in putting to death those that defied his law in displays of horrific brutality.

Within the year, the crime rate of Nostramo had fallen away to nothing. Society was transformed, and the ripples were felt all over the planet. Quintus developed a self-imposed curfew; none strayed out later than

early evening. The midnight streets, previously buzzing with activity, were as silent as the grave. Mothers threatened disobedient children with the depraved attentions of the Night Haunter. Soon the name became more commonplace, used by the populace as a whole. Rumors of a hideous, dark creature that stalked the alleyways and tunnels, its filthy claws ever ready to disembowel those who strayed, abounded within the city. The citizens of Quintus lived a half-life of fear, silent lest their words should be taken as heresy. Nostramo was ripe for the rule of the Night Haunter.

### The Dark King

Soon enough, Konrad Curze saw a glimpse of salvation for his world. There was simply no crime left, no





killers aside from himself. He was the only object of fear and hate left in his city. No longer did his people live in cringing anticipation of being robbed or shot whilst they slept, now they feared only him. He had taken the burden of evil upon himself, and found he was more than able to stand it. It seemed his martyrdom lent him strength, and soon even he began to refer to himself as Night Hunter. The following excerpt is taken from the last Annals of Ghereticus, a noble of some standing before he swore fealty to the Primarch.

*"He was waiting for us, the few nobles left alive in Nostramo, and as he squatted engulfed in shadow we thought he was (fragment missing). He dwarfed the luxurious throne he was perched in, the magnitude of his presence incredible. I could hardly breathe as he (fragment missing), his pallid, sunken features coming into the light of the glow-strips. Just then, I thought he was going to leap, and I could not move."*

*But it seemed he had a use for us. We were to become his mouthpiece, the instruments through which he would command the people of Nostramo. His word was absolute; anyone straying from his path would be killed; not by us, or by enforcers. He would find the transgressors himself and make examples of them. There was something in his tone then that made me want to run. Nonetheless, we had no choice but to obey."*

And so Night Hunter became the first monarch of Nostramo Quintus, absorbing accumulated knowledge with diligence almost akin to greed.

Night Hunter ruled with temperance and reason unheard of until word came to him that some injustice had been done,

whereupon he alone would hunt the offender through empty streets until exhaustion forced his quarry to collapse. He would then proceed to mutilate his prey, although not beyond recognition. This unpredictable pattern of benevolent wisdom and hideous vengeance ushered the shocked populace into new realms of efficiency and honesty. Exports of adamantium to their neighboring worlds tripled. The society existed in a terrible harmony of shared wealth and shared fear. None dared have more than his neighbor and under the shadow of Night Hunter's rule the city grew well-lit and prosperous. And as Nostramo Quintus led, the rest of the planet followed, anxious to keep the Night Hunter from their doors.

Imperial historians have correlated Night Hunter's rule over Nostramo Quintus and its surrounding cities with the time the Great Crusade reached the fringes of the galaxy where Nostramo orbited its dying sun. The following is a fragment of Astropath Thoqual's personal records, transcribed during the Great Crusade as the Imperial battle barge *Divinity's Sword* entered Nostramo's system. So far sixteen Imperial Scholars have been fatally chastened after unwisely expressing their concern over the implications therein.

*"I felt I knew well why the Emperor's ship changed course for that bleak orb, even before consulting the cards of the Lesser Arcanoi. They described great wealth, prosperity, stability. The Moon, the Martyr and the Monster lay in a triangle. The King lay reversed at the feet of the Emperor. Strangely, the sign of Hope was also reversed, and the horrific aspect of Death, ever present, lay above the entire tableaux. But the course was set, my misgivings as a mere breath against the maelstrom of his will."*

The history of Nostramo was littered with references to an event called the Coming of the Light. The Emperor's arrival on Nostramo had such an indelible impact in the minds of Nostramo's citizens that the world was irrevocably changed. Though the Emperor's arrival brought hope to the populace, it ultimately brought a terrible curse.

When the eternally dark skies above Nostramo played host to the lights of the Emperor's fleet, the entire population of Quintus, one by one, overcame their fear. They stood in the cold streets, faces uplifted to the sky, many for the first time in their lives. Undeniably, light was coming to their world. It was growing brighter



by the minute. Men stood as children, mouths agape, eyes shielded from a light they could not understand. Many went into seizures of confusion and fear, many cried in joy, many crawled on their bellies, convinced they would all die.

The Emperor of Mankind had watched the way that this world worked from his divine auguries. The citizens were clean and efficient, working towards a common good with determination and silence. The night streets were completely empty as the entire planet slept. Evidently they lived in ignorance of the glory of the Imperium, but their King, undoubtedly possessing great authority and able to command unquestioning respect, had molded the society into a model of productivity. Matchless efficiency. Natural conformity. Total obedience.

Due to the entourage of scribes, attendants and aides that accompanied the Emperor on his journey to the center of Nostramo Quintus, it is possible to accrue a detailed account of the meeting between the Emperor and Night Hunter. Even some of the Emperor's words to the Primarch have withstood the ravages of time.

The Delegation of Light, as it came to be known, entered the city of Nostramo Quintus on foot. The drizzle of acidic rain ceased as if in acknowledgement of the Lord of Humanity's presence. Before them were the citizens of Nostramo, few of whom could bear to look directly at the glowing form of the Emperor, but many of whom wept as the healing light of his radiance reflected from the rain-slicked streets upon their pale faces. Those who dared to glance directly at the burnished gold of the Emperor's power armor found their delicate sight lost to them forever, the shining image of mankind's savior burned indelibly into their jet-black eyes.

Strangely, not one of the citizens made a single sound at the passing of the Delegation. In his subsequent report, Captain Lycius Mysander of the Ultramarines mentioned that the pleading look in the eyes of those who dared to raise their faces must have been because the poor creatures had never seen any real kind of light before. Scholars have since speculated that perhaps they sought deliverance from the regime of fear shackling them to what were almost certainly bleak, joyless lives.

At the end of the sprawling Broadway that led to Night Hunter's faceless tower stood the towering Primarch, his

lank hair shielding his face from the light as the Delegation marched towards him. The crowds parted like dead wheat before a summer breeze. The Emperor opened his arms wide as he approached Night Hunter.

Suddenly, Night Hunter began to shake violently, his hands flying to his eyes, as if to claw them out. A thin scream issued from the Primarch's palsied lips, and he dropped to his knees. His closest advisors were taken aback; this was greater in severity than even the fits they had recently witnessed. Then, with a benevolent smile, the Emperor stepped forward and gently placed his glowing hands on the Primarch's head. His screaming stopped, his hands dropped to his sides, and his body became still. Night Hunter's advisors, fearing the worst, started forward, only to be stopped by the sheer force of the newcomer's presence.

The Emperor spoke to the Primarch, and his reply echoed clear across the plaza. Since that day, it has echoed across the gulf of time.

*"Konrad Curze, be at peace. I have arrived, and I intend to take you home."*

*"That is not my name, father. I am Night Hunter, and I know full well what you intend for me."*

### The Fall of Nostramo

The glimpse of hope given to the citizens of Nostramo by the arrival of the Emperor was ripped cruelly away from them as the Emperor left with their monarch. Many were at first overjoyed that the Night Hunter had been taken from their midst, so that they could talk and act freely once more without fear of gory retribution. But despite the nominal presence of the Administratum, the society soon degenerated into a seething morass of corruption.

In fact, the punctual reports of Administrator-regent Balthius, stationed upon Nostramo after the Emperor's delegation left for Terra, grew steadily less frequent, eventually straying into depression and irreverence. It is rumored by Administratum scholars of the period that he took his own life.

Worse still for the populace of the planet, the Emperor had shown that there was civilization outside of Nostramo's tenebrous star system, that there were better places in the galaxy, and that these places had light and splendor. The curse inflicted upon the citizens was that of futile hope, as each knew in their hearts that those places were far beyond their reach.

*"The Space Marines fear no evil,  
for we are fear incarnate."*

**Night Hunter,  
Primarch of the Night Lords**

The Emperors' light had robbed Nostramo of its last defense against the darkness; ignorance.

Night Hunter quickly adapted to the teachings of the Imperium, though his manner remained dour and silent, even when introduced to his brother Primarchs. With the Primarch of the Emperor's Children, Fulgrim, as his tutor, he learned the complex doctrines of the Adeptus Astartes perfectly, committing them to memory with consummate ease. He often referred to Terra as a paradise, and his physique adapted to the diurnal cycles so unusual to his home planet. Soon, Night Hunter was incepted as the spiritual and military leader of the Night Lords, his genetic progeny, an entire legion of sons to whom the prodigal father had returned.

As the Great Crusade pushed onward once more, Night Hunter demonstrated a highly unusual grasp of military strategy, and his new Legion adapted to his tactics with intelligence and dedication. Although he excelled in many theatres of war, he was completely oblivious to the subtleties of negotiation and parley. It simply did not occur to Night Hunter to use anything less than total and decisive force to achieve his objective. This tendency spread quickly throughout the Night Lords' upper echelons until it was accepted without question. Where a simple surgical strike would suffice, Night Hunter regularly used excessive force to achieve his aims. On several occasions, the Primarch is recorded expressing the opinion that by utterly crushing the transgressor in full view of his compatriots, an enforcer not only solves the original problem beyond all doubt but ensures that those who observe it dare not stray from the path of Imperial law. Ultimately, the actual physical presence of the enforcer is not necessary to enforce the law. This was the belief underpinning Night Hunter's political and military tactics from the beginning.

Over the first few years of his rule as Primarch of the Night Lords, his legion utterly destroyed traces of heresy with the fanatical thoroughness of witch hunters. Night Hunter molded his sons into an efficient, humorless force of warriors to whom killing was second nature, achieving their goals by any means necessary. It is recorded that



early in his career as a military commander, Night Hunter led his finest warriors against a temple devoted to the worship of an agricultural deity, burning the entire settlement to the ground.

An incident in which the Night Lords virus-bombed a continent because an emergent cult devoted to Slaanesh had been uncovered on a remote island was cited as damning proof of their dangerous use of excessive force. Night Hunter encouraged his legions to decorate their armor with icons of fear and death to further enforce their already terrible reputation. Winged skulls, death masks, screaming faces and other hideous images were painted onto the legion's power armor with the greatest of care. Even the shrunken heads of their enemies often adorned the armor of the Night Lords.

The tactic proved incredibly effective. Soon, the extreme measures of the Night Lords became infamous, the mere mention of their presence in a system enough to ensure that civilized planets paid all outstanding tithes, ceased all illegal activity completely and killed those who bore deformities rather than invite a purge from the Night Lords.

As his Space Marines fell in the front lines of battle, Night Hunter ordered new recruits from his home world of Nostramo. He knew the citizens of his home world would obey him without question and was convinced that they would work towards the common good of the Imperium with the same dedication they evinced as his subjects. What Night Hunter did not know was that Nostramo had spiralled into the corrupt and decadent society it had been before he arrived. Only the most ruthless, hardy criminals remained healthy and strong on the cut-throat world of Nostramo, and it was these men, possessed of strength and vicious nerve but absolutely no scruples, that ended up populating the Night Lords' ranks. Warrior cults emerged within these black-eyed, pale recruits, pacts were made and oaths sworn. Incidents of the Night Lords' culling of defenseless populations increased with worrying frequency.

Although a son of the Emperor was answerable to none but the ruler of Mankind himself, Night Hunter's behavior was looked upon with suspicion by his brother Primarchs. The scars left by his former life on Nostramo ran deep. Despite the fact that he spent time with his peers, the Primarch kept himself at a distance, never able to join in their camaraderie or share their joy. He still fell into

convulsions, plagued by visions of his own death, of his Night Lords fighting war after war with the other Legions of the Adeptus Astartes. But despite the concern of his companions, he would not reveal any more than dark hints of the cause of his tormented spirit. This feeling of isolation gradually grew into paranoia, and the gulf between Night Hunter and the brotherhood of the Primarchs widened.

The matter of Night Hunter's heretical beliefs did not come to a head until some time later, and only because Night Hunter had managed to maintain some semblance of trust with his former tutor, the Primarch Fulgrim. Fulgrim's own outlook may have allowed him to understand Night Hunter's twisted logic, even if the resources the Night Lords expended on their purges could have been better spent elsewhere.

It has been concluded that when Fulgrim came to his aid after a violent fit, Night Hunter felt that he could confide his fears in Fulgrim. Given Fulgrim's reaction, it seems likely the Night Lords Primarch told of his certainty that he would be killed by his own father, that their children would die fighting amongst themselves rather than their enemies, and that the light the Emperor had brought to Nostramo would destroy it forever.

Fulgrim in turn confided Night Hunter's story to Rogal Dorn, who took exception to this slight on the Emperor's name. The following description of subsequent events hints at a confrontation between Rogal Dorn and Night Hunter, and given some of the writings it is obvious that the two came to blows. The excerpt is allegedly part of an account by Lord Princeps Ichabod Lethrai of the victory banquet held in honor of the pacification of the Cheraut System in 7232826.M29. It is kept in a solution of oils to prevent its degeneration, and is among the most closely guarded texts within the cloister-archives of the Library Sanctus.

*"...Lying on the stone floor, breathing shallowly, was Rogal Dorn. Blood soaked his robes, great gouges of flesh were missing from his torso. Crouching on the giant warrior's chest like a hideous white gargoyle was the hunched, pallid form of Night Hunter, his flesh covered in a film of sweat. He was panting heavily, and matted hair fell down over his jet-black eyes as he turned to face us. He was weeping, but his face was contorted into a snarl, his features wracked with hate and guilt in equal measure."*

The events immediately following this incident are not recorded, but it appears that the Primarchs held a conference amongst themselves, with Night Hunter exiled to his chambers. What decision they reached has been lost to history, but the conclusion of this terrible chain of events is engraved deeply in the tragic story of the Imperium's darkest hour.

When the council of the Primarchs disbanded many hours later, they found Night Hunter missing, his honor guard butchered to a man. The corridors, walls and ceiling of the cloisters leading from his quarters were slick with blood and peppered with pieces of shattered bone. Night Hunter had already mobilized his legion's craft. By the time the Primarchs had enough craft ready for pursuit, Night Hunter had already entered the warp.

Without the supernatural skill and incredible prescience of the Emperor's Primarchs, many of Night Hunter's pursuers could have been lost that day as the rogue vessels delved deep into the heart of the Empyrean. The journey, malleable within the warp, may have taken hours or months; no reliable records exist. But one thing was certain, despite their valiant pursuit, his brothers arrived too late.

The Night Lords' ships orbited Nostramo, hundreds of weapons trained on the shrouded planet, the rays of the system's dying sun glinting from barrels too numerous to count. As the fabric of space buckled and twisted, disgorging the few craft able to keep pace, the lances and mass drivers of Night Hunter's flagship opened fire upon the planet.

Beam after beam of incandescent light joined the fusillade, all concentrating upon the same point, a weak spot in Nostramo's adamantium crust theorized to be left by the Primarch's initial landing. The lasers of the Night Lords' ships focused a blinding lance of pure energy into the planet's core, and with a cataclysmic explosion, the dark planet burst apart.

## The Horus Heresy

In the wake of his terrible act, Night Hunter became susceptible to the whispered temptations of Chaos. By this time, he was dangerously unhinged, leaving a trail of devastated worlds across the galaxy. Few civilized worlds were totally without blemish, and the pretexts on which Night Hunter launched full-scale invasions became less and less credible. Imperial reconnaissance craft followed

in the wake of the Night Lords' fleet, reporting back to the Emperor's throne room across unimaginable stretches of time and space.

The atrocities the Night Lords were wreaking in the Emperor's name were abhorrent. Blasphemous acts and horrendous violence were the signature of the Night Lords' visitations, the fleet pressing ever onwards so as to avoid retribution. The tastes of the Legion twisted from physical sadism and torture into the infliction of psychological damage, with the dark-armored warriors beginning to slow their frantic orgy of destruction into premeditated campaigns of mind-numbing terror. They became connoisseurs of pain and despair, taking weeks in the infliction of misery and fear upon a planet, feeding upon the dark emotions they conjured. The Night Lords made sure to invade helpless, backward planets where the population could barely comprehend that Hell had come to their world, feeding on their confusion and fright like leeches.

No longer did Night Hunter crusade in the name of the Emperor, who he now denounced as a weak hypocrite without the courage to admit that his own doctrines were just as extreme. Now the Primarch fought in the name of death and fear, knowing full well how the horrific arsenal at his disposal could aid him in his malign work. Night Hunter changed physically during this time, his lips receding completely, his muscular frame

hunching over, and his gnarled hands stretching into grasping talons.

Appalled by his son's grotesque acts, the Emperor was forced by repeated protests to call Night Hunter to account, demanding his presence for a full inquiry into his Legion's methods. But as the edict was issued, and the slow but powerful arm of Imperial law stretched out to Night Hunter, the greatest betrayal the Imperium had ever seen came to terrible fruition. Horus, first among the Emperor's chosen, betrayed him by converting several of the Space Marine Legions to the worship of Chaos. The true extent of his treachery became evident to the Emperor at Istvaan V, and the quest to bring the Night Lords to justice was

abandoned as the Imperium tore itself apart in all-out war.

Night Hunter was quick to pledge allegiance to Horus, and it became clear that all the allegations levelled at the Night Lords were true. From the planet of Tsagualsa, deep in the wilderness area of space known as the Eastern Fringes, the Night Lords launched a campaign of genocide and purest evil that made their previous atrocities pale in





## THE CULLING OF GRENDDEL'S WORLD

In the year 2353843.M34, the Imperial frigate *Hand of Mercy* detected a residual distress call from a small isolated world in the Ysobael Cloud, a twisting system orbiting a small bright star deep in the reaches of the Eastern Fringes. When the world was investigated by the crew of the *Mercy*, every single inhabitant was found dead. Many of the symbols cut into the corpses were identifiable as the sigils of the Night Lords. After an understandably brief investigation, the crew filed a report on the incident, and a squad from the Scout company of the Mortifactors Space Marines was assigned to assess the situation. From their findings, they were able to glean much information about the methods with which the Night Lords conquered the worlds in their path.

The Night Lords initially observe the planet from orbit. This is evident due to their unerring accuracy in finding the communications centers of a given world, where they aim their initial attacks. These are blood-fuelled orgies of carnage, mangled corpses testament to the violence of the assault. The buildings and communications apparatus bear not even the slightest scar or burn; evidently the Night Lords eschew the wasting of ordnance during these purges.

It would be around this point that any frantic warning signals are abruptly cut off, and the screams and pleas of the dying replace any useful information. These demoralizing sounds, in conjunction with static and whispered obscenities, are looped into the world's communication networks. Scenes of butchery and blood-soaked depravity are broadcast across the vid-screens of the terrified population. These looped images and messages were still playing, albeit in a stilted, halting pattern, when the Mortifactors Scouts investigated the empty habitats of Grendel's World.

None of the buildings on the planet were harmed in any way, showing clearly that the Night Lords have no interest in random destruction. If the planet had been able to muster any real defense, the damage wrought by a full-scale battle would be evident. The fact that this is lacking on a world hosting considerable military resource is testament to the Night Lords' skills.

After destroying the planet's electrical grid, the atmosphere is brought into a state of permanent night. This is achieved by the detonation of nuclear-level explosives in uninhabited areas, launched from the Night Lords' ships still in orbit. The resultant fall-out throws up such vast quantities of dust and irradiated smoke that the entire planet is consumed by a blanket of darkness, which was still blotting out the sun during the Scout team's investigation. Levels of radiation poisoning in the corpses littering the streets were dangerously high; presumably the loss of teeth and hair and the deterioration of skin tissue in the populace is a desirable side-effect for the Night Lords.

The psychological trauma caused by these tactics takes a considerable toll in itself, and roughly one third of the planet's casualties appeared to have taken their own lives rather than face the Night Lords. Once word had spread of the Night Lords' arrival, and the population had reached the point of hysteria, the Chaos Space Marines began their sport. This appears to have lasted several weeks, given the varied levels of decay exhibited by the corpses of Grendel's World inhabitants. Closer inspection revealed that roughly 14% of the populace died from fear itself; their cause of death not bolter round or chainsword, but total nervous failure. Men, women and children alike were found dead, and the all-pervading silence, coupled with the unnatural twilight of the nuclear winter, was profoundly unsettling even for the members of the Mortifactors.

Not a single body of a Night Lords Chaos Space Marine was found on the planet. However, given the symbols daubed in blood and the ashen corpses lying dead in their beds, in the streets, and in the parks, the fate of Grendel's World was unmistakably their work. It can only be hoped the senseless genocide of the populace can furnish us with a little more information on how to scour this menace from the face of the Imperium.

comparison. They pledged no allegiance to any particular Chaos power, looking upon such devotion with scorn. Instead, their Primarch fed on fear, and eventually became what he most loathed. Soon enough, the ranks of his once-proud Legion were entirely composed of sadistic murderers and criminals granted the power to oppress anyone they chose by the Primarch's own potent gene-seed. Rather than serving Chaos, the Night Lords used it as a tool in their inhuman works. The galaxy trembled at the very mention of the dread Legion, and slowly but surely, the Night Lords carved a bloody trail towards Terra.

Even at the conclusion of the Horus Heresy, when the Chosen One of Chaos lay broken and beaten on the burning remains of his battle barge, the Night Lords fought on with unforgiving ferocity. They continued to raid the Imperium, all military strategy and carefully planned campaigns of terror discarded in favor of wanton murder and destruction. The hand of Night Hunter was still evident in the acts of his Legion, but it is obvious from field recordings of the time that the battle orders of the Primarch had changed. Where they were originally cold and calculating, the Night Lords now struck against overwhelming odds, their tactics eventually betraying a self-destructive desperation. It is quite possible that Night Hunter was aware of the fact that the Emperor had finally issued the order for his life to be terminated at the hands of the Callidus temple of assassins. Fully half of the existing Callidus operatives were dispatched to locate and destroy the Primarch, hoping his death would disband the Night Lords forever.

The last words of Night Hunter stand as one of the great enigmas of Imperial history. It is thought that the assassin M'Shen was consciously allowed to infiltrate Night Hunter's grotesque palace on the world of Tsagualsa, an edifice constructed entirely from still-living bodies. Expecting to have to deal with numerous guards and loyal retainers, she was surprised to find the halls of bone and flesh completely deserted. The vid-log built into M'Shen's baroque vambraces, kept in stasis at the heart of the most venerated Callidus shrine, shows the final confrontation between the twisted Primarch and the avenging angel. The events are portrayed thus:

Sitting in a pool of shadow upon a throne made from the fused bones of his victims, a carpet of still-screaming faces leading up to gnarled, naked feet, sits Night Hunter himself. His

madness and hate radiate from him, palpable even through such a remote medium as a vid-log. M'Shen stops in her tracks when the fallen Primarch raises his head, her face reflected in the impassive, deep black pools of his eyes. Long moments pass. Then, in a voice thick with contempt and pain, Night Hunter speaks.

*"Your presence does not surprise me, Assassin. I have known of you ever since your craft entered the Eastern Fringes. Why did I not have you killed? Because your mission and the act you are about to commit proves the truth of all I have ever said or done. I merely punished those who had wronged, just as your false Emperor now seeks to punish me. Death is nothing compared to vindication."*

Then the vid-log blurs for a fraction of a second as M'Shen leaps forwards, and the last image in the recording is of dark, staring eyes brimming with madness above a lipless smile before the recording inexplicably shorts out.

## Home World

Nostramo was a dark, bleak planet shrouded by vast clouds of dust and pollution. It had five major cities sitting at the habitable hub of the planet, Nostramo Prime to Nostramo Quintus, each city functioning as a self-contained industrial system. Due to the synchronicity in the orbit of Nostramo and Tenebor, the moon interposed between Nostramo and its dying sun, these cities experienced the equivalent of a Terran night even during the middle of a Nostraman summer. The physiology of the humanoids that lived there remained virtually identical to that of Humans from the Segmentum Solar, another argument in favor of Genetor-Chief Ratifer's Convergent Evolution Hypothesis, with the exception that none of the planet's indigenous life forms have irises: the visible part of their eyes consisted entirely of pupils. Their skin was very pale, and an acute form of albinism, though recessive, was common in the populace.

The geology of Nostramo was nothing short of priceless, as the crust had unprecedented amounts of naturally occurring adamantium. The presence of such abundant quantities of valuable metal meant that the cities of Nostramo enjoyed very profitable trading with their neighboring worlds, although it is well known that these worlds sold the metal on at a much higher price to the traders of the Imperium. An entire strata of the planet's crust was comprised of this valuable metal, and it is thought that the planet had a very

volatile core, hence its megatonne explosion at the hands of the Primarch.

Since the Night Lords lost their Primarch it would seem that they are one of many Chaos Space Marine forces based in the Eye of Terror. Most likely they have found some shadowy daemon realm in which to exist, although this conclusion is mere hypothesis. Without committing extensive resources, it is unlikely the Imperium will be able to tackle the threat of the Night Lords at their source.

## Combat Doctrine

The Night Lords adopted the modus operandi of their Primarch without exception, and thrive in sowing fear and confusion among their enemy. It is common practice for Night Lords Chaos Space Marines to ensure that the communications of a target planet are shut down, broadcasting hideous messages and screams across the airwaves as they begin slaughtering the occupants at their leisure. It is very rare that the Night Lords voluntarily fight a force able to withstand them; they much prefer to attack the weak and frightened. Repeated instances have shown that the Night Lords will not give quarter and are entirely bereft of mercy. Any poor soul offering to surrender will have his pleas answered by mutilation and painful death.

Night Hunter's Legion have no holy crusade, no belief that causes them to spread murder and misery to the worlds they visit. Similarly, they have no martial creed, all concept of honor eroded by the supplanting of vicious criminals into their ranks.

The Night Lords are masters of stealth, able to infiltrate a position quickly and silently. These arts appear to be innate to the legion, and come to the fore during the sick games they use to drive their prey into paroxysms of terror. Even before they turned to Chaos, the Night Lords adorned their armor with imagery of death; this is because they know that fear can be used as a weapon just as effectively as a chainsword or bolter. Given their predilection for picking on weaker foes, a fully-armored Night Lords champion armed with a devastating array of weaponry is always more than a match for the foe he chooses to fight.

## Beliefs

Night Lords are exceptionally versatile in their use of the forces of Chaos, employing the hell-spawned powers of each of the major Chaos deities with equal favor. It is just as likely that the

Night Lords will be seen fighting alongside a group of foul Plague Marines as it is the warriors of the Thousand Sons. However, it has been ascertained that the Night Lords have nothing but scorn for faith in all its forms, whether it be the fanatical bloodlust of the Khornate Berserker or the devotion of the Imperial creed. The only authority they recognize is that of temporal power and material wealth.

Observational evidence would suggest that the only reason the Night Lords fight is for the love of killing and the material rewards this can bring. They take great pleasure in gunning down defenseless prey, especially those too young or sick to stand up to them. It is certainly not for the thrill of battle that they fight, as an army of Night Lords can be expected to try every underhand trick in the book before resorting to honest combat. This is possibly a vestige of their ancestry in the criminal classes of Nostramo where it was commonplace to ruthlessly force the will of the strong upon the weak.

## Gene-seed

The gene-seed of the Night Lords seems to be surprisingly pure. In fact, of all the Chaos Space Marine Legions, the Night Lords seem to bear the least evidence of mutation. This is perhaps due to a stable gene-seed stock, perhaps due to the fact they rarely associate themselves with a particular Chaos power for any length of time.

Although the Night Lords are distinguished by jet black eyes and pale skin, the real legacy of Night Hunter may be psychological. There is a tendency for paranoia and self-destructive behavior in the Night Lords, and it is said that their sorcerers have a pronounced vulnerability to being wracked with painful seizures in which they experience visions, oblique or not, of the future. Night Hunter is believed to have only been able to see the darkest path of all possible futures, a terrible curse, and the visions tended to be self-fulfilling. It is to be hoped that the Night Lords' sorcerers suffer the same fate. This is as yet speculation. However, given their Primarch's susceptibility to such prophecies, it seems more than likely.

## Battlecry

"We have come for you!"



# USING A NIGHT LORDS ARMY IN WARHAMMER 40,000

*Night Lords use the following units from Codex Chaos Space Marines.*

<b>HQ</b>	0-1 Chaos Lord or Daemon Prince, Sorcerer.
<b>ELITES</b>	Chaos Terminators (no Cult Terminators), Chaos Space Marine Veterans.
<b>TROOPS</b>	Chaos Space Marine Veterans, Chaos Space Marines.
<b>FAST ATTACK</b>	Chaos Space Marine Bikers, Chaos Raptors ( <i>see below</i> ).
<b>HEAVY SUPPORT</b>	Chaos Havocs, Chaos Dreadnoughts, Chaos Predators, Chaos Land Raiders, Chaos Obliterators.

A copy of Codex Chaos Space Marines is necessary to field a Night Lords Chaos Space Marine army. The following rules and Codex changes apply. Note that the entire Chaos army must be Night Lords, not just one or two squads.

## FORCE ORGANIZATION

Whichever Force Organization chart is being used, the Night Lords may drop two choices from the Heavy Support section and replace them with a single extra Fast Attack choice. They may not reduce the number of Heavy Support choices below one. On Standard Missions, therefore, the Night Lords could limit themselves to one Heavy Support choice which will in turn provide them with one extra Fast Attack choice.

Night Lords may take any number of units of Chaos Raptors subject to the Force Organization chart, not 0-1 as it states in Codex Chaos Space Marines.

## SPECIAL RULES

**Chaos Undivided:** No member of a Night Lords army can bear a Mark other than that of Chaos Undivided, or use gifts requiring another mark.

**Night Vision:** The Night Lords' peculiar physiology is adapted to Nostramo's state of constant darkness. This means that they can see almost as well at night as a human can in the middle of the day. To represent

this, you may reroll the dice when rolling to see how far a Night Lords unit can see when fighting at night.

## Expert Infiltrators:

When fighting a mission with the Sentries special rules, all sentries must subtract one from their Initiative when attempting to detect a Night Lords attack.

**Terror Attack:** The Night Lords specialize in staging attacks at night, sowing confusion amongst the enemy, and disrupting their communications. These rules do not apply if the Night Lords are the defenders in any given scenario.

- In a scenario that uses the Reserves special rule, the Night Lords player may force his opponent to re-roll one successful Reserves roll per turn (the Night Lords player chooses which). The opposing player must accept the result of the second roll.
- All comm-links, improved comms, scanners and auspexes are ineffective in a battle against the Night Lords due to the disruptive effects of the communications breakdown.
- In any scenario in which the Night Lords are the attacker, the Night Lords player may choose to attack at night. If this is the case, use the Night Fighting rules regardless of the scenario being played.

**Masters of Stealth:** A favored Night Lords tactic is to infiltrate behind enemy lines and then stage a devastating frontal assault, thus forcing their prey to fall back into the clutches of their brethren. To represent this, one Chaos Space Marine Veterans squad may set up anywhere on the table, provided it is 18" away from the enemy, in cover and not mounted in a vehicle, regardless of the scenario limitations. This means that even if the Veterans unit would not normally start on the table, they may set up during deployment nonetheless. This replaces the existing Chaos Space Marine Veterans *Infiltrators* special rule. This rule does not apply if the Night Lords are the defenders in any given scenario.

## NEW WARGEAR

### Stealth Adept

5 points

A Stealth Adept can maximize the benefits of any cover available, and therefore gains an extra +1 to his cover save. For example, a cover save of 5+ would count as a cover save of 4+ for a Stealth Adept. A Stealth Adept still gets no cover save when in open ground.

### Jump packs

15 points for Night Lords

### (Independent characters only)

Many of the Night Lords favor the mobility and speed lent to them by jump packs, and there is a preponderance of these within the upper echelons of their ranks. See the wargear section in Codex Chaos Space Marines for the rules for Jump Packs.

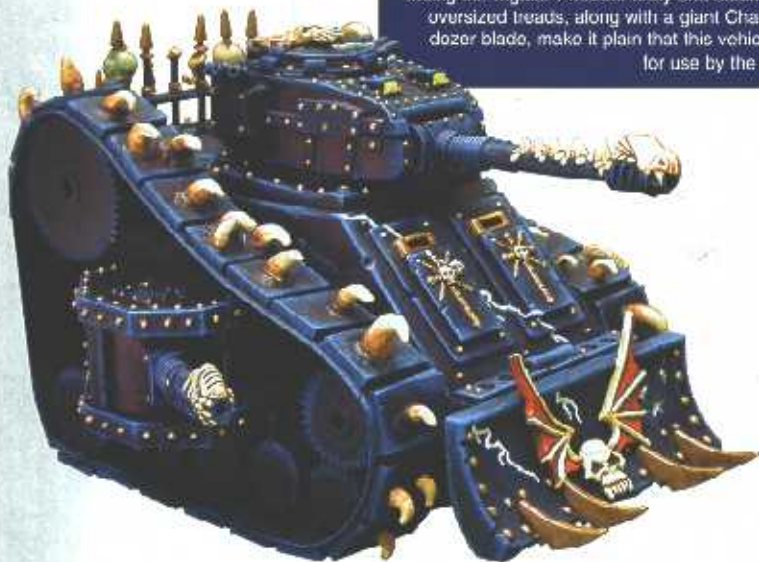




# NIGHT LORDS GALLERY

Now that you know everything you need to know about the Night Lords in Warhammer 40,000, we figured you might like to see a little inspirational material to get you going on assembling your own legion of the night. We also figured that a good place to go was to Brian Hotovec's army, winner of "Best Appearance" at the 2001 Grand Tournament in Chicago. These models, for the most part, bear only a passing resemblance to their original forms, but that's part of the joy of creating a Chaos army, there really are no boundaries.

Taking the regular Predator body and adding suitably chaotic, oversized treads, along with a giant Chaos emblem on the dozer blade, make it plain that this vehicle was not crafted for use by the Emperor's Finest.



Brian Hotovec



Not content with merely visualizing the destruction of his Rhinos on the Battlefield, Brian created a few of these "destroyed" versions. Touches like this can make the difference between a good army and a great army.



The wings on these Raptors are slightly converted wing bits from old Tyranid Gargoyles. The weapons and head are also converted to make these troops unique.



All of Brian's squad Sergeants are heavily converted with great-looking back banners.

This Rhino not only has a customized body (complete with skulls adorning every major flat surface), it also carries a banner that leaves no doubt where these troops' allegiance lies.

