



DEATH OF INTEGRITY

GUY HALEY



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Having tracked a genestealer brood across the sector, Chapter Master Caedis of the Blood Drinkers calls upon his old allies in the Novamarines to assist in the destruction of the space hulk designated Death of Integrity. But before they can unleash their plasma torpedoes, the Adeptus Mechanicus intervene and task both Chapters with a secretive mission into the heart of the hulk. With deadly xenos creatures seemingly lurking around every corner, Caedis treads a fine line between glorious victory and the damnation of eternal bloodlust carried by all sons of Sanguinius.

Death of Integrity (Space Marine Battles, #13) Details

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From Reader Review Death of Integrity (Space Marine Battles, #13) for online ebook

Fernando D says

Lovely sci-fi pulp fiction.

No need for deep thinking in this one; great read anytime you just want to strap on some power armor and blast those aliens into gooey weightless chunks with your brother Space Marines. The author does a great job of immersing us in the dark gothic universe of Warhammer 40k and the way he crafts the language and culture of the various factions of the Imperium of Man that we encounter is beautifully done,. Not much beyond that, but enjoyable enough for 3 stars and a look at the next WH40K he wrote.

Frank says

I only give it three stars, but it's a very strong three stars. There's a ton of decent things in this novel, with only a few bits that, for me, end up being a big barrier to my complete enjoyment, but that I suspect most other people really won't mind at all. (Or at least they'll be much more forgiving of them, if they see them as problems at all.)

Without going into much detail, I'll happily say: it ticked a large swathe of 'right boxes'. There's a large and varied casts, lots of threads, a plot that feels both plausible and convoluted yet also 'high end' to justify the grand level it all takes place at. It's a pretty nifty rendition of the 40k universe too, with lots of very neat details and observations made, both aesthetically and conceptually.

Again: the three-stars is a personal thing, if you tend to enjoy 'better' Space Marine fiction (which I certainly do), I'd be very surprised if you didn't really enjoy this novel. Hell, I'm keen for other folks to read it just so I can chat in detail about it!

Stuart says

"Please don't kiss me, I'm a virgin!"

There are some people out there who remind me of the TV character 'Ray Donovan' - "I'm not the sort of guy you fire!" In this case, "I'm not the sort of guy you criticise" - I'm talking about the publisher (Black Library) who don't react well to criticism. According to some friends, prior to them taking down all their social media pages, they were removing fans for being critical of their products. That's fine, it's within their power. The problem I had with it was these were fans who have been supporting their product since even before Black Library became a business. I myself have been targeted by fanboi's for even speaking out and suggesting there is a issue with how they interact with customers, that their marketing is shockingly bad, that their product aren't consumer friendly. That's also fine, it's the internet, you can say what you want without fear of repercussions. However, like Ray Donovan, in real life I'm not the sort of guy you want to annoy - I've never been fired (yet lol). I'm saying all this as I feel I can no longer support this publisher financially, not directly anyway. Shame.

Right the review. It's been a while since I wrote any book reviews, so I may be rusty here. *Death of Integrity* by Guy Haley, a Space Marine Battle Novel - is a rip-roar of a read. Let's set the foundations here. Two Space Marine Chapters, The Blood Drinkers (Blood Angels progenoid) and The Novamarines (Ultramarine progenoid). Two completely different Chapters, two completely different ethics and approach to warfare, two completely different mentalities. Throw in one space hulk codenamed Death of Integrity and thousands of Genestealers. Ah brings me back to my Space Hulk days. We're not done yet, the Adpteus Mechanicus join in on the shenanigans - they want certain technologies centred within the space hulk, the Space Marines just want to destroy the hulk and those xeno-scum within it. Complications arise who has seniority and authority, which the Mechanicus duly enforce with legal rights from the High Lords of Terra. Forcing both Chapters hands - which essentially means they're going in.

That's the overview of the story, I wanted to talk about a different dimension that Guy handles really well - that being the meshing of two Chapters back-stories in a manner that allows for detail while no usurping the main story. The Blood Drinkers Chapter, like all the Blood Angel successor Chapters they struggle with the 'Thirst' and 'Black Rage' - that being the need to consume blood and KILL friend and foe alike. "The Black Rage" doesn't really occur until the "Thirst" becomes uncontrollable (something the Blood Drinkers have 'learnt' to keep at bay). Not really the sort of folks you want watching your back. These guys like diving in headlong and getting stuck in 'where the metal meets the meat.' Chapter Master Caedis is described by First Captain Galt as 'looking like a dried out husk - even his eyes appear bereft of moisture' - sexy! There is a interesting back story to the Blood Drinkers, one that reveals just how far they have come/or fallen. This is handled intelligently and overlaps between real-time and to a 'vision' - if I say more I'll spoil it.

The Novamarines are just like any other Ultramarine, their tactical astute, a bit boring and do everything by the Codex Astrates - easily compared to the Roman's and their many guides on standard operating procedures i.e. how to build a marching camp, what to do with a enemy flanks you, how to craft a spade from spare parts etc. Like many other novels I've read from BL, there seems to be this overarching theme of self doubt of one's command. It's rather tried and tested. I find it hard to swallow that a 1st Captain is afflicted by such doubts. Yes, there are reason for this - a portent, a vision, etc. I just found it to be very A-typical.

So this brings me on to my favourite ugliest bastards in the 40K universe, the Genestealers. They have one purpose and one purpose only, to breed and take over planets. They like to kiss, it's called the 'Genestealers Kiss' - it'll be the best and only kiss you remember. By this point you're sprouting a extra arm or two, a lovely set of sharp pointy gnashers, oh and a rather serpentine tongue. Now you will find your thoughts suppressed by a greater mind - no sorry you're not going surfing now, you're going to go and find other beings to kiss!

As you can tell, there is a fair bit going on during *Death of Integrity*, it's handled really well by Guy Haley. Much like his previous novel *Baneblade* which is just as good (if not better) than this. My main issue with the novel was the Mechanicus, who were rather rubbish characters in my opinion. They were obviously there to add a element of complication to the story, but their arrival seemed to be just too obvious. They wanted artefacts on the Space Hulk, they superseded any authority the Space Marines had. It just didn't sit well with me - no Chapter would bow to the Cults of Mars. I just couldn't see it - within canon anyway. The whole point of the Chapters is so they act with their own authority. Hmm. Putting that aside, if you like both a intelligent plot, mixed in with countless foes and plenty of bolter-porn, give this one a read.

Key

Space Hulk - A meld of several hundred or thousands of ships that have passed/got lost through the warp.

The Warp/Immaterium - A alternative dimension, pure physical energy, where other beings reside. Humanity use the warp to travel through space quicker. Like Star Wars Hyperspace lanes.

Loganf says

Why did it end on a cliff hanger? What happened to Voldo and Caedis? What happened?

El-jorro says

Bookworm Speaks!

The Death of Integrity by Guy Haley

In the grim darkness of the far future, there is only war. As it is written in the tomes of the 41st millennium.

The Story: In the Imperium of Man there are hundreds or a thousand Space Marine Chapters but the focus seem be more on the first founding chapters such as the Dark Angels or the Space Wolves. Here, Guy Haley treats us to two successor chapters and their stories are allowed to be fleshed out. This is a favorite of Bookworm, when the short passages of the index are expanded.

Having tracked a genestealer brood across the sector, Chapter Master Caedis of the Blood Drinkers calls upon his old allies in the Novamarines to assist in the destruction of the space hulk designated Death of Integrity. But before they can unleash their plasma torpedoes, the Adeptus Mechanicus intervene and task both Chapters with a secretive mission into the heart of the hulk. With deadly xenos creatures seemingly lurking around every corner, Caedis treads a fine line between glorious victory and the damnation of eternal bloodlust carried by all sons of Sanguinius.

The Good: Space Hulks are key component of 40k lore. They are an amalgamation of starships, asteroids and ancient technology that have fused together over their journey through space and are usually infested with violent alien enemies like tyranid gene stealers, which are the main opponents in this story. This already sets up a very intriguing and dynamic setting for the books actions. The claustrophobic and poisonous setting and the sheer amount of material that composes a Space Hulk lends itself to a surprising amount of variety in the settings. The constant shifting of the hulk makes the setting itself become an enemy and more than just a background.

This is how films like Alien succeeded. A fight on a planet and one can just flee into the distance, it is not like that on a space born setting. There is no where to go and the walls are closing in. It creates a tangible feeling of tension and isolation.

Where this book really comes into its own is how the author differentiates between the Novamarines and the Blood Drinkers. The contrast between them is so intense that it can't help but imbed itself in the reader's memory. The Novamarines are successors of the Ultramarines and the Blood Drinkers are of the Blood Angels. While all are sons of the Emperor, both Chapters differentiate in ways that it creates tension between the groups and how they react to threats that really illustrates the author's flexibility. He does a good job of shifting perspectives between the various protagonists of the story and keeping each one unique.

This is illustrated in how the different chapters prepare for war. The Novamarines are the sons of Roboute Guilliman who hailed from the civilized world of Macragge, their ceremonies are solemn, reflective and dignified. Whereas the Blood Angels are passionate, savage, and hot-blooded (no pun intended).

The Flaws: Because there are so many characters in this book we are not given time to sufficiently explore all of their personalities in depth, except perhaps Mantillo Galt. That is very much a missed opportunity. Also, while not necessarily the villain of the story, the head of the Adeptus Mechanicus, Magos Plosk is also very one dimensional. They do a good job of making his motivations understandable but he does not change very much through the text. Even Plosk's big revelation near the end, towards the reader, is not particularly interesting. When reading it, the reader is more likely to go "huh?" rather than "woah!" It doesn't need to be said which one is preferable, at least to Bookworm.

The book is primarily told from the perspective of the Novamarines and since they are a successor of the Ultramarines, once again this may be evidence of Black Library's favoritism towards the Ultramarines. The Blood Drinkers are interesting but again, their personalities come off as a little flat more towards the end. A major plot point is that the Blood Drinkers, like all the successor chapters of the Blood Angels, constantly struggle with the curse of Sanquinius, i.e. the Red Thirst and Black Rage, extreme bouts of blood lust and rage. This is contrasted by their beautiful appearance and sophisticated ways. This is shown several times through the text to great effect but the problem is that, again they are largely blank slates and the fact that there is barely any middle ground. It's one side or the other.

Final Verdict: Death of Integrity may not be the strongest Space Marine Battles book, but the iconic setting and action-packed storyline with surprising amount of heart, easily overcomes its flaws.

Four out Five Stars.

jordan.danbrantley.com

thecultureworm.blogspot.com

Joanne says

WOW !!! real page turner from start to finish!!! so much happens and leaves you wanting more- have to look for other books that continue parts of this story.

Eric Cheung says

Review may contain spoilers.

First things first, readers and fans should be aware that there is a particular ending in this story that could potentially shatter their image of the Warhammer 40K universe.

The story is about two chapters of the Space Marines, the Novamarines and Blood Drinkers, trying to destroy a spacehulk named Death of Integrity, because the Tyranid infestation within has been spreading across worlds. They are interrupted by the Adeptus Mechanicus because there are ancient technological artifacts onboard, and the Explorator aims to retrieve them.

There are numerous sequences of fighting in the typical style:

"Nine storm bolters and two assault cannons gave voice. The howl of the wind was lost under a storm of explosions. A swathe of genestealers were cut down, falling as crops fall before the harvester. Craters the size of men's heads marred their exoskeletons, their innards burst outwards as if as desperate to escape as the genestealers were."

That poetic kind of action description is not really for me since it doesn't really put me into the action, but rather fancifully tells me. Other readers may like it though.

Somehow with the epic scale of everything, like terminators ranging in the hundreds, the mission always feels restricted to about four or five squads, and their numbers are not really well understood through the writing. I always imagined about six space marines gathered together in each squad getting into some kind of trouble, and never had enough detail to imagine a much larger scale.

Also, I feel that because majority of everyone is in terminator suits, somehow their armor had to be described as being totally ineffective. Just about anyone caught from a genestealer claw has his armor ripped to a point of malfunction, which doesn't make sense.

Finally, the ending. Everything else was fine throughout the rest of the book. All the sequences and their missions goals kept me going, but the ending was what threw me off completely. I don't want to spoil anything but I have to say, it shattered the illusion of the Warhammer universe and threw me straight into reality.

Throughout the years of reading and playing the games, I was really absorbed into the 40K universe. It was different, savage, morbid and hardcore. It seemed like a far distant future that was very unlikely, with endless war and the horrible lack of sympathy toward life. After reading this ending however, the Warhammer 40K universe suddenly became realistic, as though it was a completely viable future for us, which made me sad.

I always admired the Space Marines for their strength, blind dedication, and their ruthlessness. But after this ending, I realized just how primitive the Imperium of Man really is. Their lifestyle routines of blessing the machines for the machine spirits, reciting litanies and all that seemed like things that actually worked because what do I know? It's their universe. Maybe blessing a machine does make it work better. With this ending however, all those things they do was completely shut down, ridiculed and reduced to "specious beliefs". All of those things were revealed to be petty superstitions in a culture they have blindly succumbed to, which really upset me. I mean sure, I guess anyone who really thought about it would've known, but I understood the Warhammer universe to be a universe separate from my own.

All in all, good book about clearing spacehulks, but definitely left a bad impression for me with that sudden

ending.

Jetpack says

This is an excellent account that shows a Space Marine incursion into a Space Hulk and their battles with the genestealers inside. It really does a nice job of showing the complications of battle in the hulk, and just how interesting a hulk is. The red-robed priests of Mars have their own agenda (Shocking!) and all in all, this is really well done.

Definitely pick up for a WH 40K fan, science fiction or military fiction fan.

Jeff Sinclair says

Would consider giving it a 3.5. Good story of space marines clearing out an epic spacehulk and encountering a pre-empirium mystery.

Lee Rawnsley says

A nice story on two very different space marine chapters , I really enjoyed it

eFTy says

Compared to the typical Warhammer 40k action-in-space novel, this one was very good. It had unique characters, character development, plenty of tension and no plot armour. There was some predictability, but there are more than enough revelations to make up for them. If you're a fan of 40k I'd say put this at the top of the pile.

Worth mentioning there are two related short stories, Rite of Holos which is a sort of intro and Final Journey, which takes place right after. Neither are required reads, but both flesh out the setting and characters enough to be worth hunting them down.

Cory Rathbun says

This book was fantastic for any 40k fan! Two different Chapters, tons of lore, Mechanicus, tyranids, and a space hulk! Highly recommended for any Warhammer 40k fans. Surpassed my expectations.

Taddow says

This is basically what I expected it to be- a story about Space Marines clearing out a Spacehulk. Despite

some of the stale parts of the corridor to corridor travel and fighting, I thought this book shined with the inclusion of two Space Marine Chapters working together and deeper look into the Blood Drinkers Chapter and their efforts to deal with the Thirst. The surprise that they eventually found deeper in the hulk added some extra intrigue (since this is something that is mentioned in the fluff but few examples are described). Lastly, I found it to be a pleasant surprise when I realized that the Death of Integrity is a hulk that was mentioned in my old Warhammer 40,000 Compilation book in the same titled diorama.

Callum Shephard says

The problem with Death of Integrity is that this should not have been hard to screw up. The idea of space marines purging a hulk of genestealers is a scenario as old as the setting and provides a wealth of opportunities. It can feature very straight forwards tales, concepts attempting to break new ground, character focused individual stories or just all out action fests. Combined with two contrasting chapters and the involvement of the Adeptus Mechanicus, there was the potential here to do something truly great. This is why it's so baffling that what we got fell so short of the mark.

Following a battle against eldar corsairs, a large detachment of the Novamarines chapter are called by their allies, the Blood Drinkers, to assist in the destruction of a space hulk. The titular Death of Integrity, has been chased by the Blood Drinkers' chapter master for years and is rapidly approaching a heavily populated Imperial system. With time against them, they seek to halt its path before the genestealers infesting the derelict can bring ruin to more worlds. However, something immeasurably dangerous and valuable lurks within, sought by a brilliant but ruthless servant of the Mechanicus...

While this may sound like an interesting plot, the concepts behind it are hamstrung severely by the execution. Foremost among these is the structural and pacing problems within the tale. While the novel actually gets off to a fairly solid start, once the terminators board the vessel things unfortunately start to unravel.

The entire initial excursion fails to truly gel with later events and, despite a number of plot crucial moments onboard the fleet, it comes across as a false start. With the group only there as a precursor to the major assault, the whole event feels as if it should have taken a far shorter time. There are no truly major revelations which justify dragging out the operation and the time isn't even taken to introduce the villain beyond a fleeting hint. As a result you're just waiting for the novel to hurry up and get to the meat of the plot. Unfortunately when it finally does, the novel rushes through it at twice the speed of the previous excursion but without anywhere near as much detail in the combat.

Unfortunately poor structuring and pacing are not the novel's only problems. Many environments lack distinction and become formless voids due to a lack of detail, and the action lacks the punch it needs. The writing is very focused upon the technical aspects and details of the equipment rather than using more poetic terms. While this benefits the work in some respects, making it one of the very few books to actually treat terminator armour as an actual powered suit of machinery, it unfortunately detracts from many other elements. Far too often, rather than utilising emotive language, it instead features details which are simply stated to be there. It's not so much telling the story, selling it to the reader, as it is stating what is there.

Unfortunately this flaw also carries over to the characters themselves. Beyond their chapter/organisation and occasionally their rank, the personalities of each astartes are completely interchangeable. Each with an extremely basic and very dry personality which fails to offer any figure to connect with, and even the one or

two exceptions to this are hardly outstanding figures. It could be argued that this has been intentionally done to reflect the lack of human traits within the Mechanicus or psycho indoctrination of the space marines, but we've also seen this done far better in other tales.

What doesn't help atop all of this is that, while Haley has obviously done his homework, he seems to have taken details from less than accurate sources. The most glaring of these Novamarines share attitudes seen in Ultramarines successors in the fifth edition Codex: Space Marines. Rather than having a true identity unto themselves, they behave as little more than subservient extensions of the Ultramarines' power. Lacking truly characterising traditions and seeing themselves as a separate force, the chapter seems to constantly be "remembering Macragge" and members seem to view themselves as less than their progenitor. This is highlighted specifically in a conversation between Novamarines and Blood Drinkers representatives. The Blood Drinkers themselves follow the "WE'RE CORRUPT! WE'RE DOOMED! WE'RE DYING OUT!" mentality which was ramped up to the Nth degree in all of Sanguinius' chapters the last Codex: Blood Angels. However, at least in that case it's presented as an individual trait to some degree. It's unfortunately this aspect which prevents this novel from being recommended as a source of inspiration about one faction like Daemon World.

Then of course there is the last second reveal of the book's villain whose reveal is crammed down into a third of the space it should have taken. It's one who the idea behind seemed great, but the novel ultimately lacks the focus and detail to fully explore as much as it should.

All this said, while Death of Integrity might be a poor novel, it's mostly one which looks as if it needed a few more re-writes and still retains a good few qualities. As with the terminator armour, the bigger details and ideas are handled quite well and with far more convincing effectiveness than by other authors. While the novel might be lacking when it comes down to the action and characterisation, the planning and technical aspects are all spot on. This is most evidently seen in the massive joint operation to clear out the hulk, and the rare justification for sending terminators against genestealers. There were ideas here which were good, but the execution was ultimately lacking.

If you want to see a good Imperial story by Guy Haley, give Baneblade a look as it plays towards his strengths. If you want to see a novel which has the same end goal and reveal as this one, but does it far better, Ben Counter's Dark Mechanicus is the way to go. Death of Integrity though? Skip it.

Nick Rapson says

I'm a big fan of the Space Marines Battles books and this one came very highly recommended. Reading the first 25% or so of the book was pretty slow going but that's nothing new - there are a lot of characters and idiosyncrasies to introduce. Usually this is not the case but this book involved two relatively obscure Chapters of Space Marines.

I pushed on with the book because the person that recommended it to me promised a jaw-dropping twist at the end of it. Unfortunately, the dialogue felt very dry to me. A large part of it was "Lord Captain" this and "Master Commander" that. "We're brothers in battle" and "Honour is everything" are mantras that can be found in most Chapters of Space Marines but this book had it to excess.

It's a pity because I was really looking forward to reading the book but less than half way through, I've put it down and am unlikely to pick it back up.

