The Horus Heresy®

Macragge's Honour



Dan Abnett & Neil Roberts

THE HORUS HERESY®

Dan Abnett and Neil Roberts

MACRAGGE'S HONOUR

The vengeance of Ultramar

BLACK LIBRARY

The Horus Heresy®

It is a time of legend.

The galaxy is in flames. The Emperor's glorious vision for humanity is in ruins. His favoured son, Horus, has turned from his father's light and embraced Chaos.

His armies, the mighty and redoubtable Space Marines, are locked in a brutal civil war. Once, these ultimate warriors fought side by side as brothers, protecting the galaxy and bringing mankind back into the Emperor's light. Now they are divided.

Some remain loyal to the Emperor, whilst others have sided with the Warmaster. Pre-eminent amongst them, the leaders of their thousands-strong Legions are the primarchs. Magnificent, superhuman beings, they are the crowning achievement of the Emperor's genetic science. Thrust into battle against one another, victory is uncertain for either side.

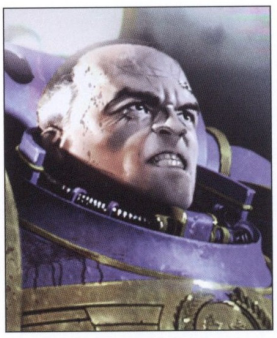
Worlds are burning. At Isstvan V, Horus dealt a vicious blow and three loyal Legions were all but destroyed. War was begun, a conflict that will engulf all mankind in fire. Treachery and betrayal have usurped honour and nobility. Assassins lurk in every shadow. Armies are gathering.
All must choose a side or die.

Horus musters his armada, Terra itself the object of his wrath. Seated upon the Golden Throne, the Emperor waits for his wayward son to return. But his true enemy is Chaos, a primordial force that seeks to enslave mankind to its capricious whims.

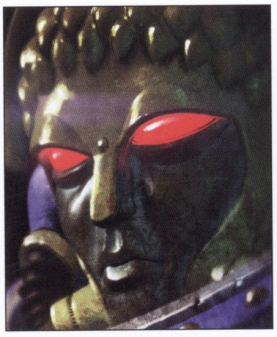
The screams of the innocent, the pleas of the righteous resound to the cruel laughter of Dark Gods. Suffering and damnation await all should the Emperor fail and the war be lost.

The age of knowledge and enlightenment has ended.
The Age of Darkness has begun.

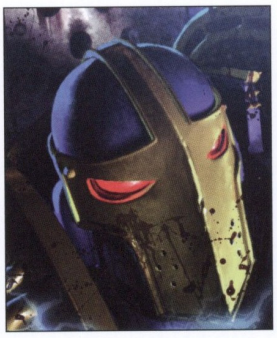
Dramatis Personae – XIII Legion 'Ultramarines'



Marius Gage
Chapter Master of the XIII Legion,
First Chapter



Aerion Mersaror
Centurion, First Company,
Captain of Vindicus Squad



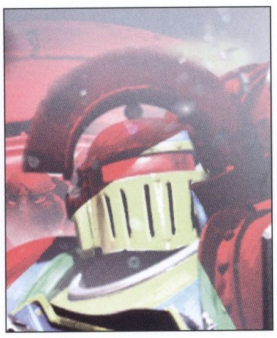
Laus Edros
Captain, 70th Company



Alektus
Battle-brother, First Company



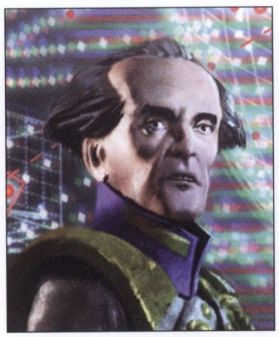
Draxus Iax
Battle-brother, First Company



Gais Brontir
Honoured Veteran,
Naxos Kill-squad



Martial Vivorus
Honoured Veteran,
Bellaxes Kill-squad



Ouon Hommed
Acting Shipmaster, *Macragge's Honour*



Kolos Zarataini
Officer of Auspex,
Macragge's Honour

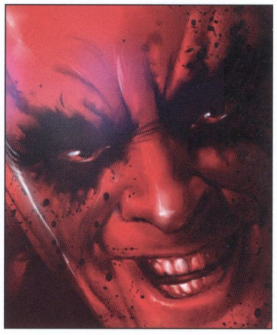


Jana Lighthour
Acting Officer of Artifice,
Macragge's Honour

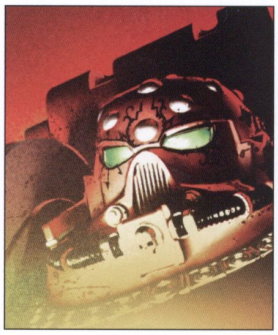


Sire Sargune Mara Sept Loquoi –
Navigati Secundus,
Macragge's Honour

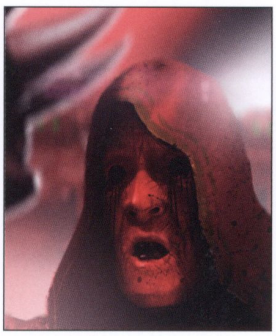
Dramatis Personae – XVII Legion 'Word Bearers'



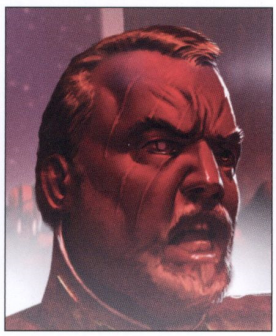
Kor Phaeron
The Black Cardinal,
Master of the Faith



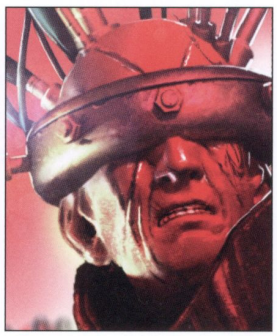
Ehl Eweth
Gal Vorbak



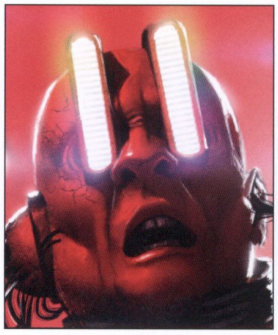
Gemiah Daemos
Hierophant,
Kor Phaeron's retinue



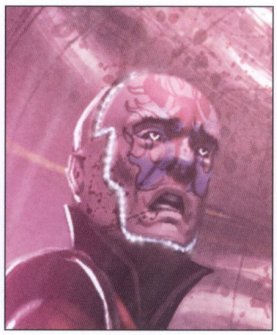
Sire Antonus Antwark
Shipmaster, *Infidus Imperator*



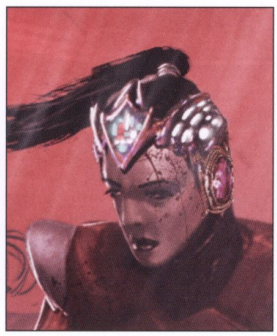
Gelkewh
Primary Helmsman,
Infidus Imperator



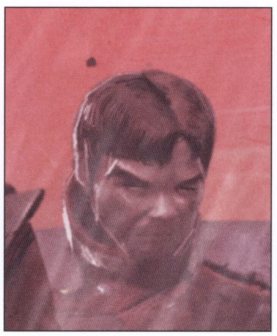
Unselm Ka
Master Devisor, Host of Sensors,
Infidus Imperator



Lhantor
Housekeeper,
Kor Phaeron's retinue



Aklion
Wordsinger,
Kor Phaeron's retinue



Terkos Torok
Master of the Lifewards,
Kor Phaeron's retinue

[mark: 20.24.10]

THE MASTER CONTROL room is on fire. Flames and smoke are rapidly filling the habitats of the Zetsun Verid Yard. Thiel and the remainder of the kill squad retreat rapidly towards the transverse assembly deck. They pack tight around the wounded, limping primarch.

'The flagship is inbound,' says Thiel.

Guilliman nods. He seems to be recovering some strength.

'The sun,' murmurs one of the squad.

They look up through the vast crystalflex observation ports and see the Veridian star. It is stricken, its light ugly and sick. A bubonic rash of sunspots freckles its surface.

'I think we have won something just in time to lose everything,' says Guilliman.

Thiel asks him what they should do, but the primarch is not listening. He has turned his attention down, to something he can see on the through-deck beneath the assembly layer.

'Bastards!' he hisses. 'Can't they just burn?'

Thiel looks.

He can see half a dozen of the surviving Word Bearers. They carry the bloody carcass of Kor Phaeron. Somehow, the wretched Master of the Faith seems to be alive, despite the fact that Guilliman tore out his primary heart. He is twitching, writhing.

Leading the party, Thiel sees the Word Bearer whose helm and skull he cut away.

Tchure turns to look at them, sensing them. The side of his face is gore, teeth and bone exposed.

Thiel draws his boltgun, reloaded with ammunition from a fallen brother. The other Ultramarines start to fire too.

The Word Bearers shimmer. Spontaneous frost crackles out in a circle around their feet, and corposant winds around them. They vanish in a blink of teleport energy.

'Gage! Gage!' Guilliman yells.

'My primarch!' Gage responds over the vox-link.

'Kor Phaeron is running. He's gone from here, teleported out! He'll have run to his ship.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Just stop him, Marius. Stop him dead, and send him to hell.'

'My primarch–'

'Marius Gage, that's an order.'

'What about you, sir? We are moving into the yard to recover you.'

'There are ships docked here,' Guilliman replies. 'The *Samothrace*, a couple of escorts. We'll board one and be secure enough. Just get after him, Marius. Get after the damned *Infidus Imperator*.'

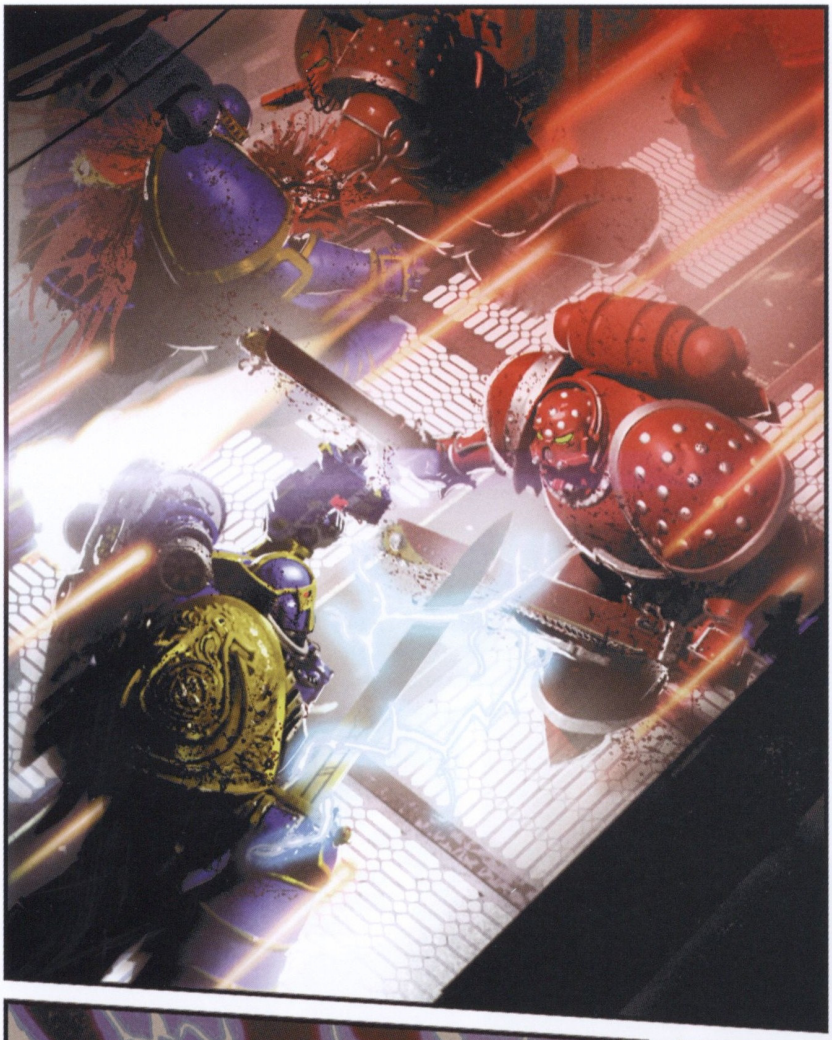
[mark: 20.27.17]

THE WORD BEARERS battle-barge *Infidus Imperator* turns in the debris-rich belt of Calth nearspace, ships dying in flames behind it. It engages its drive and begins a long, hard burn towards the outsystem reaches.

As it accelerates away, raising yield to maximum, the *Macragge's Honour* turns in pursuit, its main drives lighting with an equally furious vigour.

It is the beginning of one of the most infamous naval duels in Imperial history.


Adamar Shipyards, Calth Orbit.
Mark: 20.34.19
INTO THEM! FIVE HUNDRED WORLDS!
"--SHIP NOW RUNNING! PREVENT IT FROM LEAVING THE SHIPYARD ZONE!
SKKK22KKT
--EPEAT! THE INFIDUS IMPERATOR IS RUNNING FROM THE FIGHT!
--THIS IS GUILLIMAN! I WANT THAT SHIP STOPPED BEFORE--"
Your primarch pleads, Ultramarine.
He knows he has lost.
NOTHING IS LOST. NOT CALTH. NOT THIS FIGHT.
ONLY YOUR TREACHEROUS LIVES.
Perish, in the name of Lorgar!

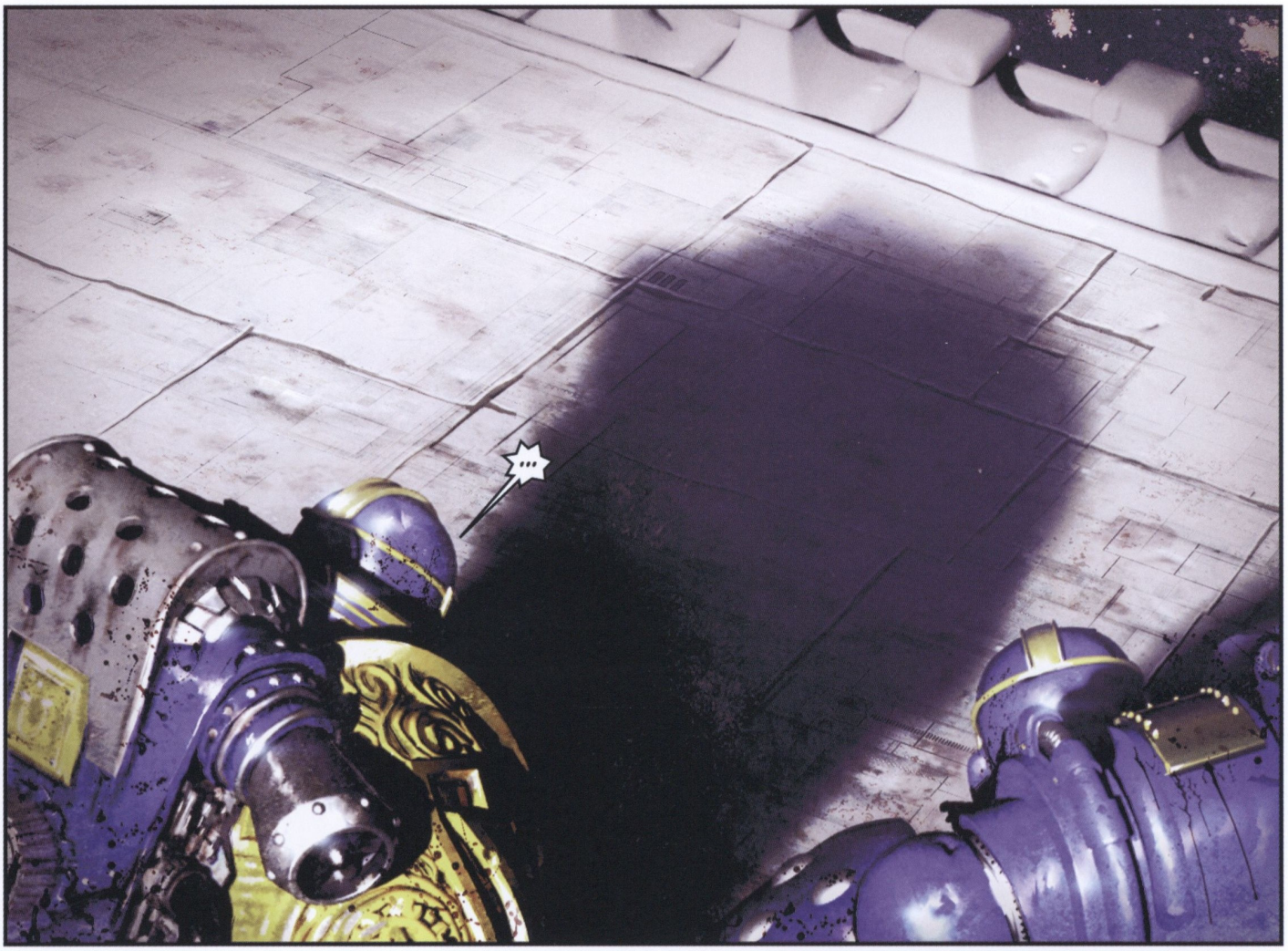



Perish!


YOU FIRST.


BLOW THAT HATCH! GET IT OPEN!

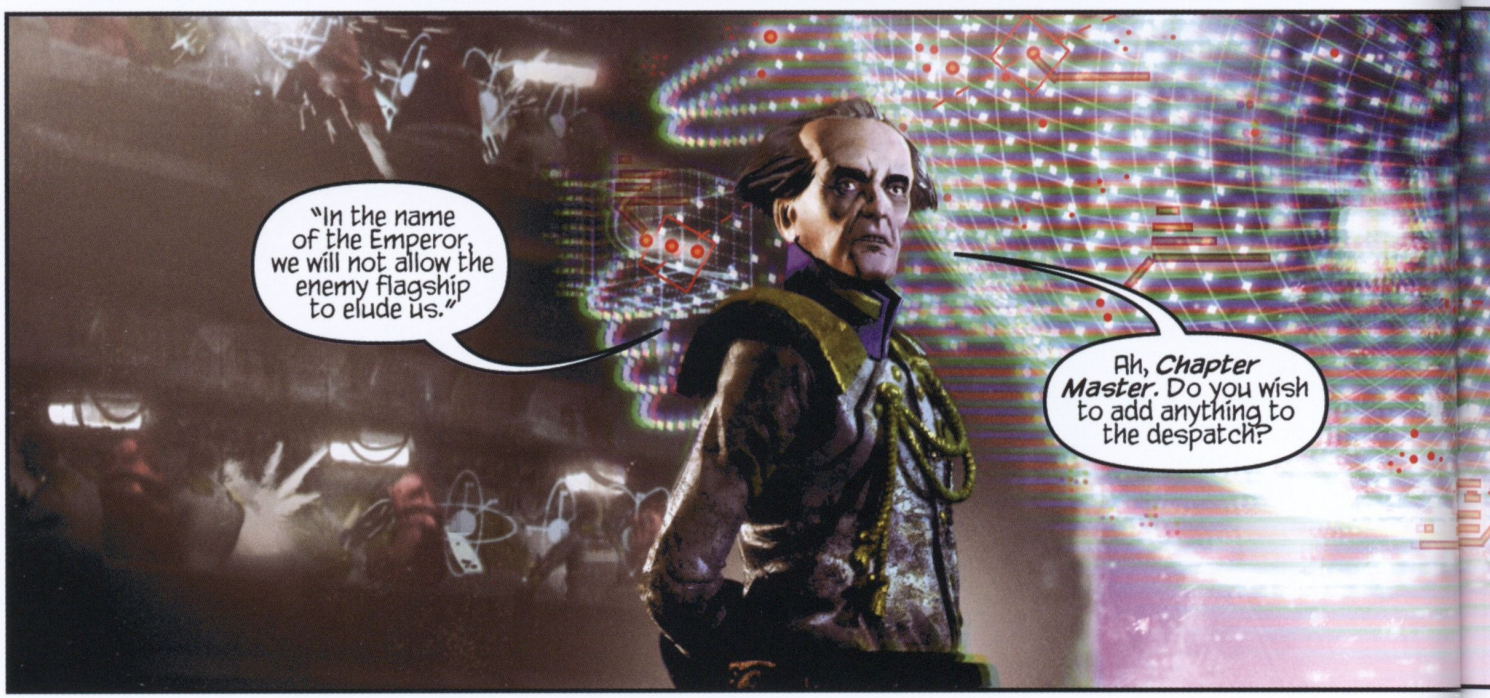

IN THE NAME OF TERRA...
THEY WERE RIGHT. WE'VE LOST EVERYTHING.
AND THEIR CURSED FLAGSHIP IS RUNNING.
IT'S TOO FAR OUT TO STOP N--


...

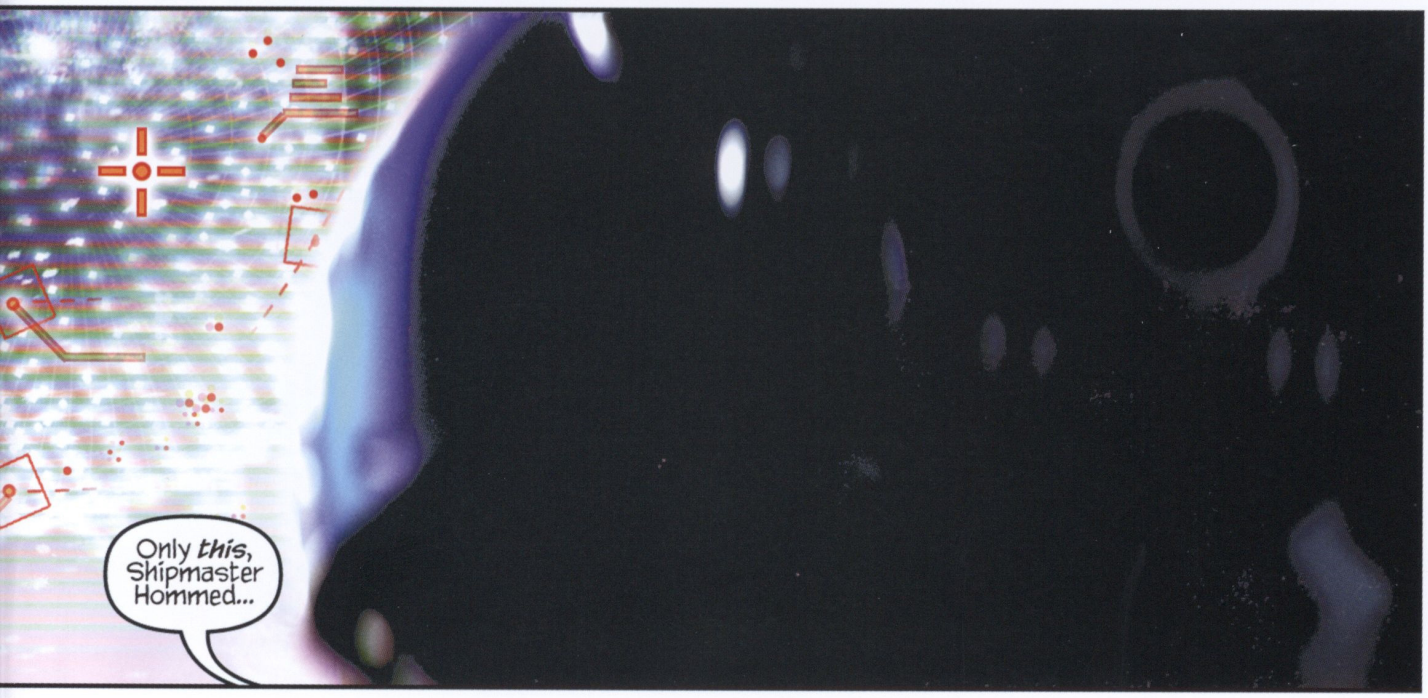

INCOMING!
INCOMING!

MACRAGGE'S HONOUR!
IT'S IN PURSUIT! IT'S IN PURSUIT!

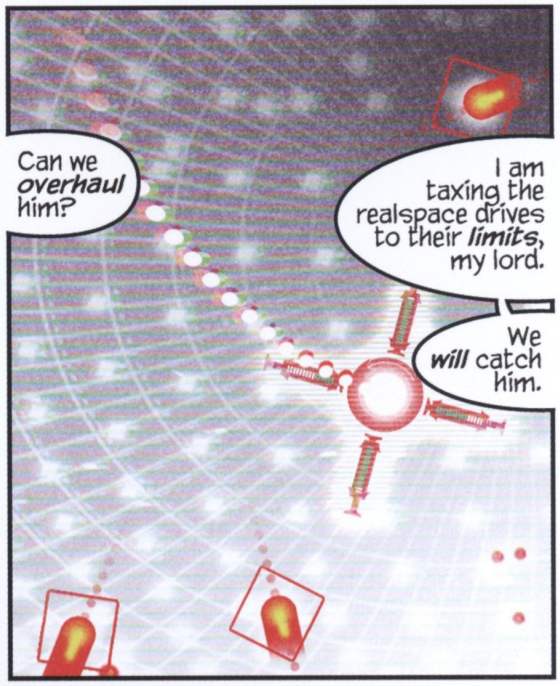

Officer of Vox, despatch a message *directly* to the primarch.
Message begins: "From Ouon Hommed, acting shipmaster of the flagship *Macragge's Honour*...
"...we are shields raised and moving at full realspace burn in pursuit of the target vessel, as per your command..."

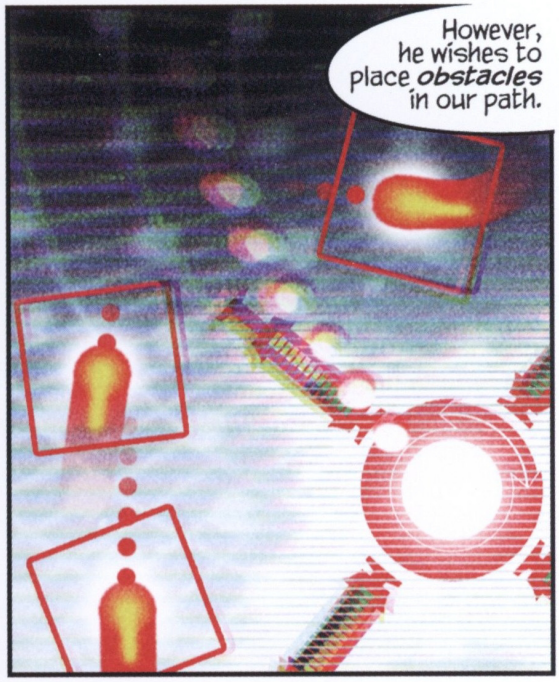

"In the name of the Emperor, we will not allow the enemy flagship to elude us."
Ah, *Chapter Master*. Do you wish to add anything to the despatch?

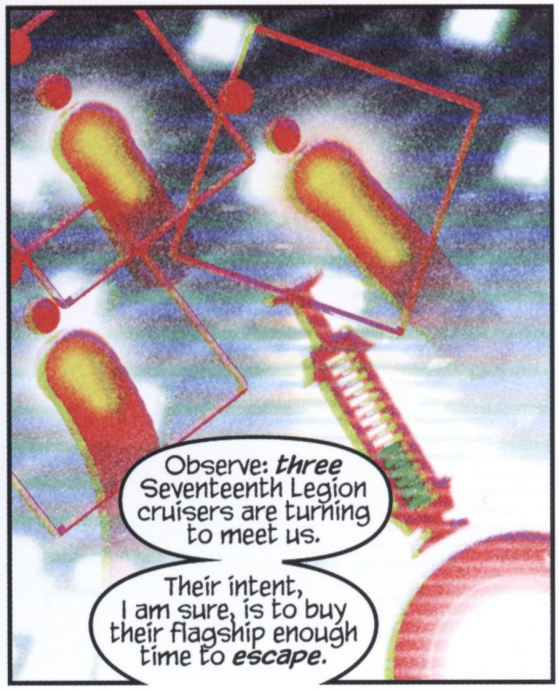


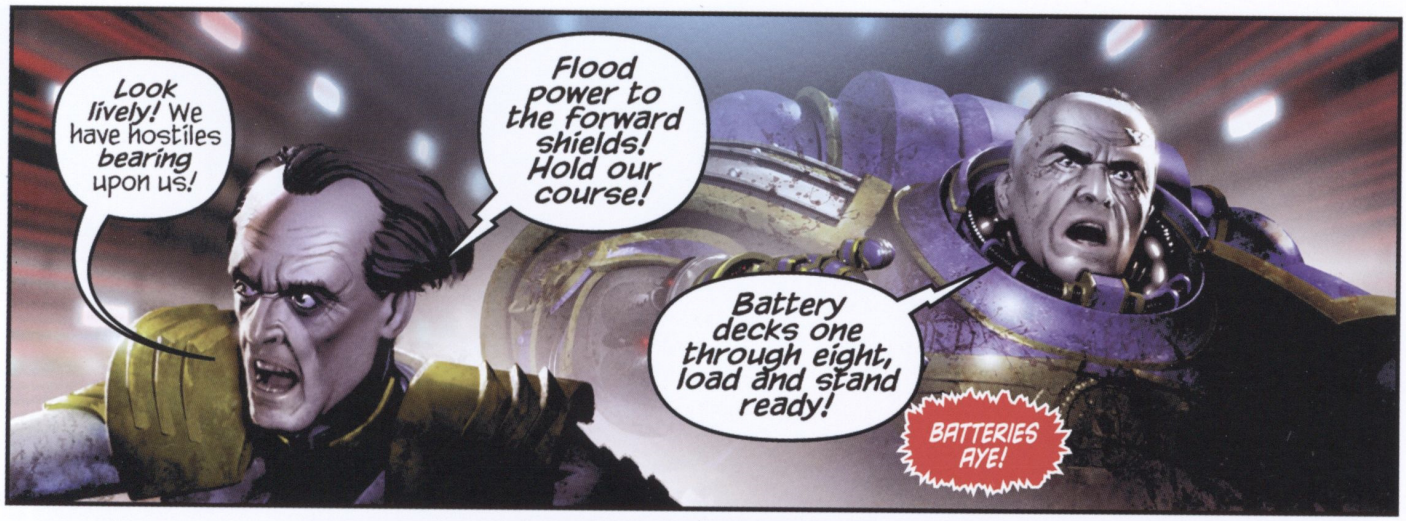

Only *this*, Shipmaster Hommed...


...inform the primarch that his loyal son *Marius Gage* has combat command of the Macragge's Honour and will not rest until the blood of Calth is *avenged.*
Transmit the message, vox station.
We have a ranged auspex lock on the *Infidus Imperator*, Chapter Master.
It is making best speed towards the nearest viable translation point so that it might escape to the warp.
Is that animal *Kor Phaeron* aboard?
We believe so.


Can we *overhaul* him?
I am taxing the realspace drives to their *limits*, my lord.
We *will* catch him.

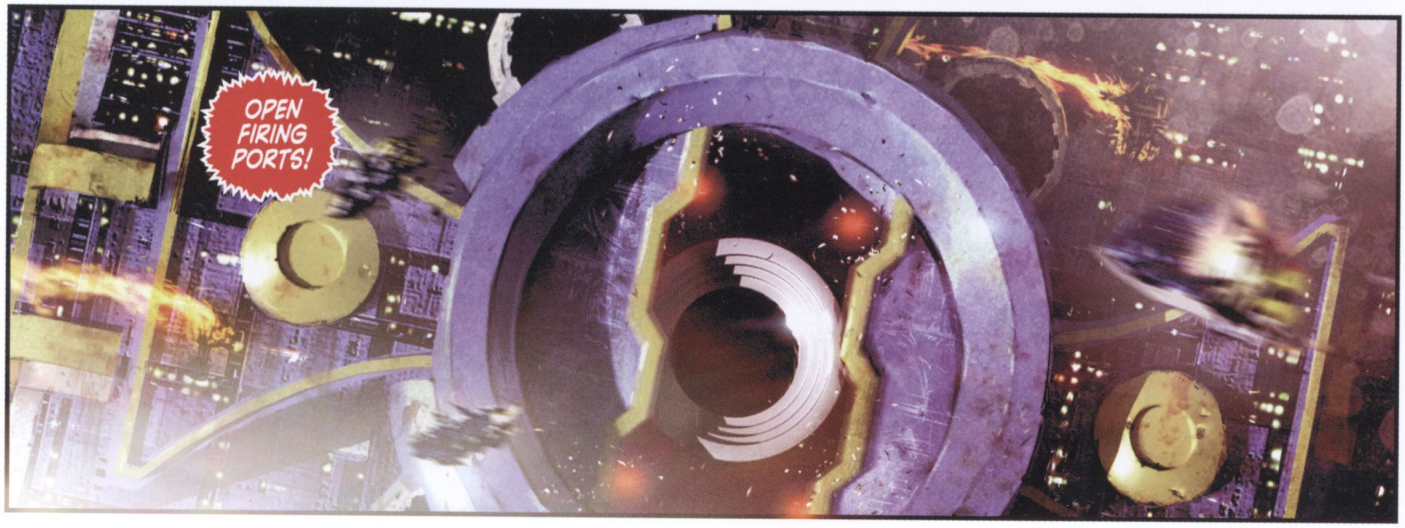

However, he wishes to place *obstacles* in our path.

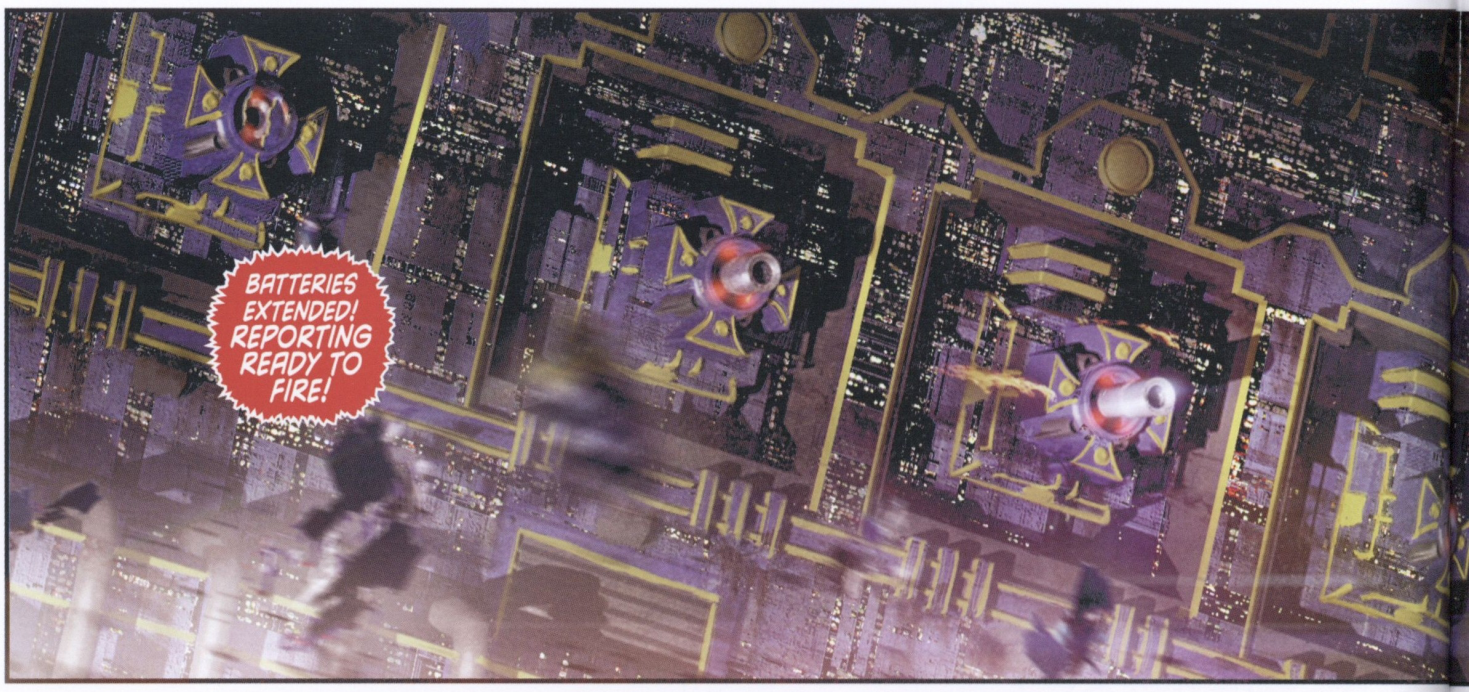

Observe: *three* Seventeenth Legion cruisers are turning to meet us.
Their intent, I am sure, is to buy their flagship enough time to *escape.*

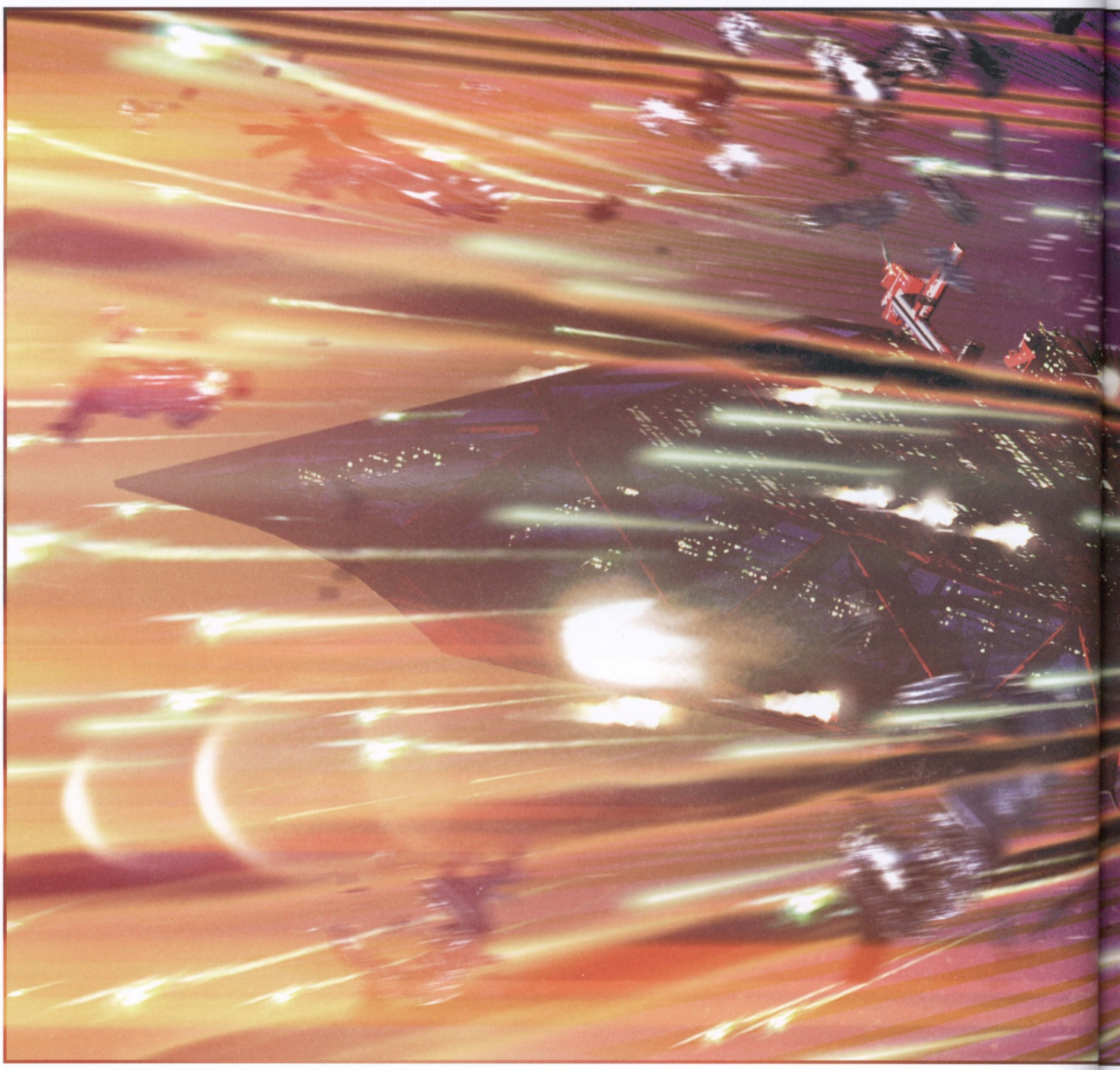

Look lively! We have hostiles bearing upon us!
Flood power to the forward shields! Hold our course!
Battery decks one through eight, load and stand ready!
BATTERIES AYE!


...load the munitions! Put your damned backs into it!


No slacking!
When the engagement order comes, I expect rapid re-loads!


OPEN FIRING PORTS!

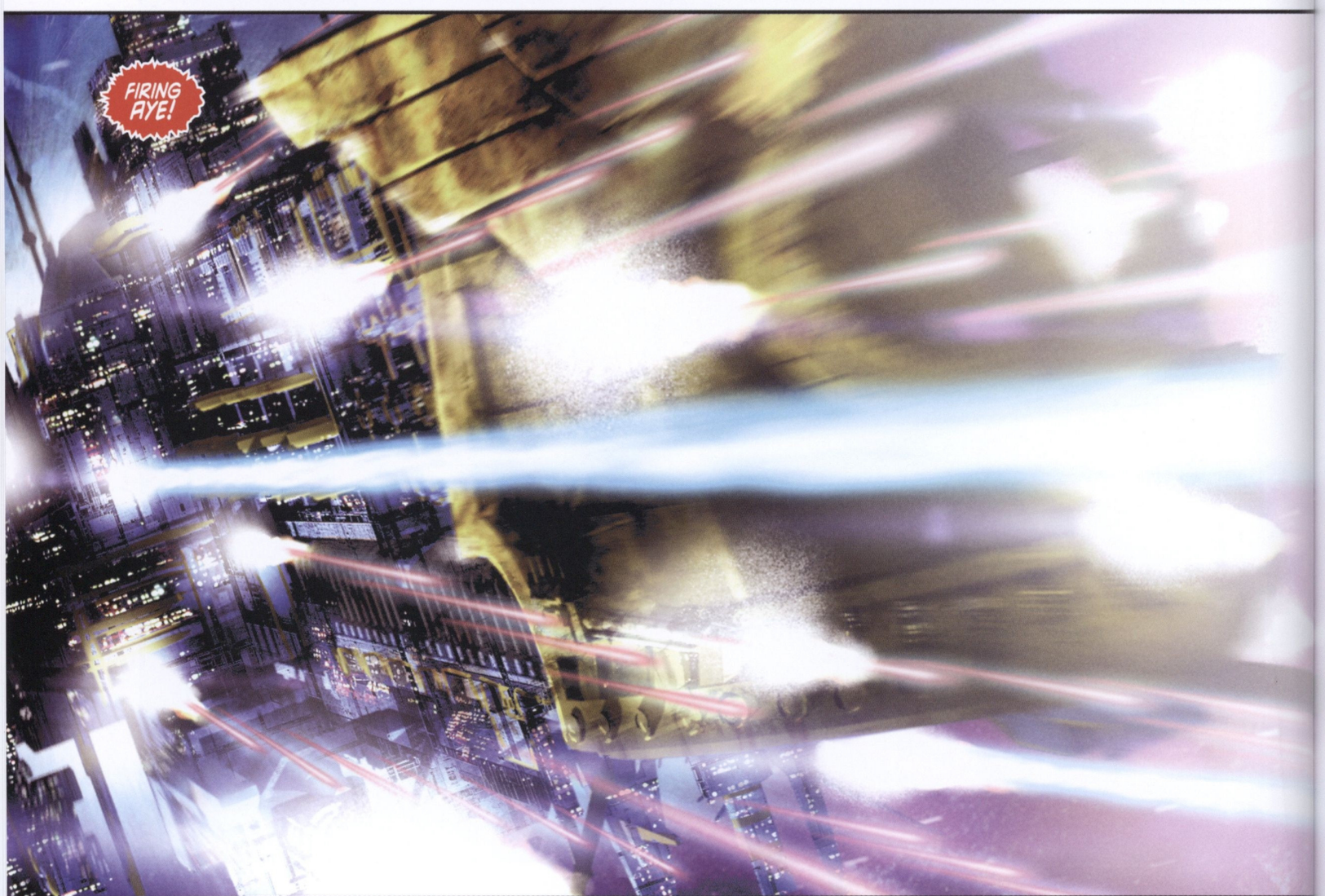

BATTERIES EXTENDED! REPORTING READY TO FIRE!




Wait for it.... Wait for it....
We fire only when they are close enough to ensure hard kills!
THEY'RE COMING RIGHT AT US, SIR!
SHIPMASTER, THE HOSTILES ARE FIRING!


Ughnn! SHIELDS ARE HOLDING!


Now! Main batteries fire!


FIRING AYE!


MULTIPLE HITS! TWO TARGETS DESTROYED!
THE THIRD IS STILL COMING!


Arrghhh! VOID SHIELDS HAVE RUPTURED! WE'RE HIT!


"DAMAGE REPORT!"


Engineering department seven is *lost*, shipmaster. *Eighty-one* dead.
Batteries re-target! *Fire again!*


FIRING AYE!
Hit *confirmed!* We've *crippled* it!
Leave it to burn out...
...the Infidus Imperator is our priority.
I want Kor Phaeron...


"... dead or alive."
EEAARRGHHH!
INFIRMARY DECK, THE INFIDUS IMPERATOR.
The pain will pass, exalted master... we must repair the damage Guilliman wrought upon you.
He tore out my living heart. Bind me with your sorcery!
While I yet have life, I will annihilate all who follow him!
Let us come about! Let us meet our tormentors!
My lord?
Do it!


Yes, my master!
Kor Phaeron orders full turn! Come about! Come about!


They've stopped running, sir.
They're turning to meet us.


Well, he's still capable of surprises. I thought he would flee.
But if it's a clash he wants...

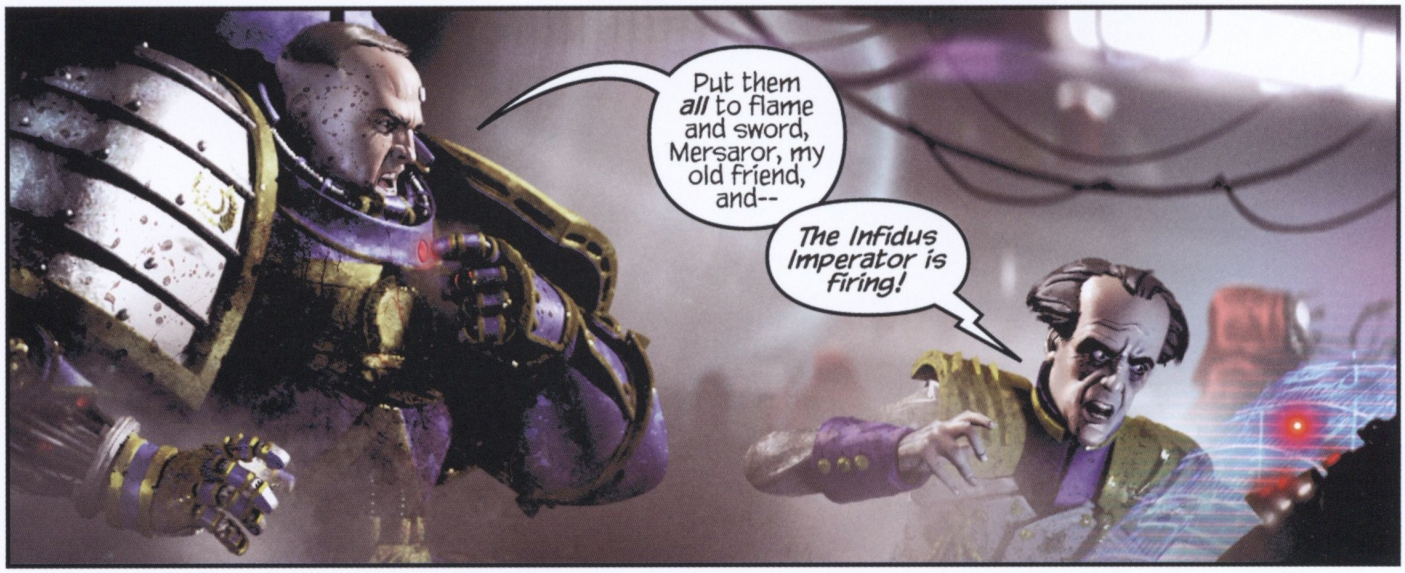





...Hold course.
Boarding parties ready!


THIS IS CAPTAIN MERSAROR.
BOARDING PARTIES STAND READY AND AWAIT YOUR ORDER.


THE CATAPHRACTII WILL LEAD THE WAY.


Put them *all* to flame and sword, Mersaror, my old friend, and--
The Infidus Imperator is firing!


IT'S FIRING EVERYTHING IT HAS!
BRACE FOR IMPACT! RESERVE POWER TO THE SHIELDS!
PREPARE PORT BATTERIES FOR BROADSIDE! WE'LL PASS THEM IN THREE... TWO...


...FIRE!
SUSTAIN BARRAGE!


SUSTAIN BARRAGE!


Commence boarding action!


ALL RAMS! ALL TORPEDOES! LAUNCH!


IN THE NAME OF THE EMPEROR!
FIVE HUNDRED WORLDS!


HULL PENETRATED! DEPLOY! DEPLOY!
KNOW NO FEAR!
EXTEND DOCKING CLAWS AND SIEGE BRIDGES!


THIS IS MERSAROR!
GAINING ENTRY THROUGH THEIR GUN-PORTS!
NEUTER THE BATTERIES! SLAY THE GUN TEAMS!
HOSTILES! HOSTILES ARE ON US!
I SEE THEM!
ENGAGE! WE MARCH FOR MACRAGGE!


STAY WITH ME! HOLD THE LINE!
GIVE THEM NO QUARTER!
KNOW NO FEAR!


GET THE HATCH DOWN! CUT THROUGH TO THE NEXT COMPARTMENT!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE FIVE HUNDRED WORLDS..?
MERSAROR TO GAGE!
THEY'RE PREPARING SOME FOUL SORCERY!


Burn them *all*, Captain! Stop them *dead* before--
Energy build up! Unknown type!
Have they *fallen* for our ruse?
Have they come close enough for us to *kill* them?
Yes, my master.
All the ritual chambers are ready.
We may not have been able to *outrun* them...
...but we can damn their souls for *eternity.*
Complete the summoning.
STOP THEM! STOP THEM BEFORE--


NO...
NO!


SOUL OF TERRA! WE'RE TAKING DAMAGE ON ALL DECKS!
WHAT HAVE THEY UNLEASHED AGAINST US?


I say *again*, Shipmaster! What have they *hit* us with?
U-unknown, sir!
Multiple strikes! Major hull damage and structural harm! Shields-- urrk!
The... sir, the ship's *mass* has just increased by *three hundred and fifty tonnes.*
We've been *boarded!*
By what? By *troops?*
YES, MY LORD. NO TELEPORT SIGNATURES.
THE WORD BEARERS HAVE CONJURED THEMSELVES ABOARD OUR DECKS!


THEY'RE EVERYWHERE! MAIN HANGARS! ENGINEERING! GUNNERY STATIONS!


Then it is *well played* to the wretch Kor Phaeron.
He has *counter-struck* effectively.


Make ready to repel boarders!
All stations! Drive them off the ship!


My lord...
...I do not believe it was *just* troops they sent aboard....


Squads ready! With me!
I'll know the source of that howl or--
Great void.
Daemons?


I have seen enough damned daemons today!

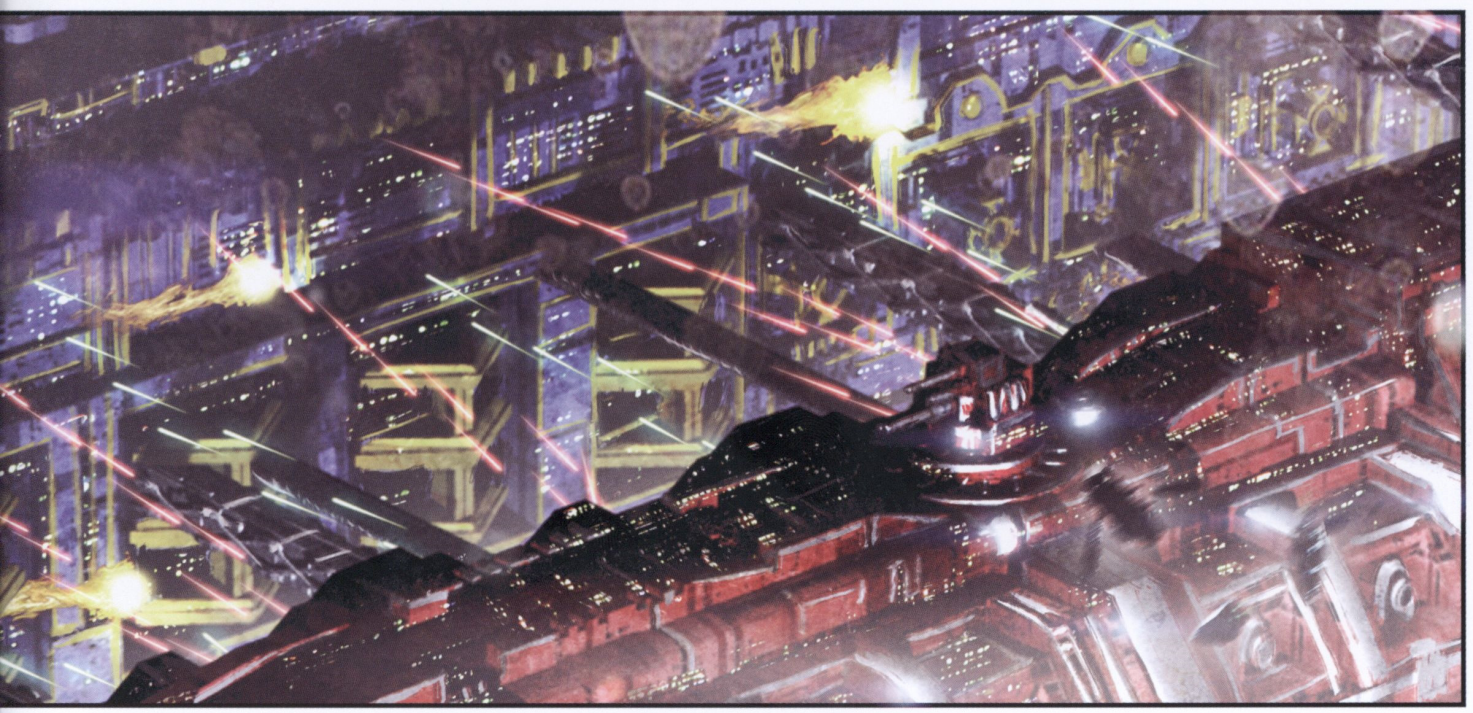

Kill it! If it was ever alive, kill it!


Kill it or this ship is lost!










Are they all *slain* yet?
Have we *scourged* them?
The dark beasts of the warp have been *let slip.*
They *feast* upon the souls of Ultramar.
Their ship will soon be a *corpse,* exalted lord.
I would have preferred to slake my fury on *Guilliman* himself, but his *flagship* is a worthy prize.
Come, we have bought ourselves *time...*
...My strength returns.
Break the boarding lines and come about.
And prepare the *final* ceremony for consecration...


Your claws are sharp, daemon.
Mine is sharper.


Now...
...if there are *any* other abominations like this aboard my ship, *find* them and kill *them too.*
I've shown you how it's done.
YES, SIR!

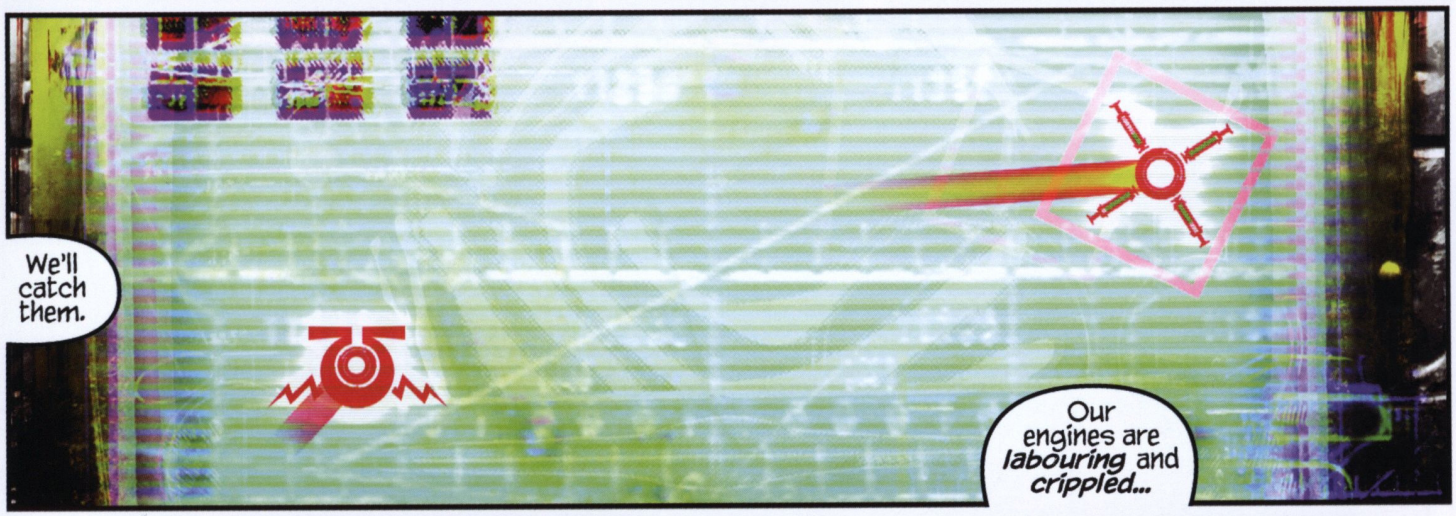

The *Infidus Imperator* is breaking away!
Bridge lines are *shredding!*
THE ENEMY IS RIPPING CLEAN AWAY FROM US!
How many of our *own* are still aboard that ship?
No signals, sir. It appears our boarding forces have been *wiped out!*

THEY'RE LEAVING US FOR DEAD!

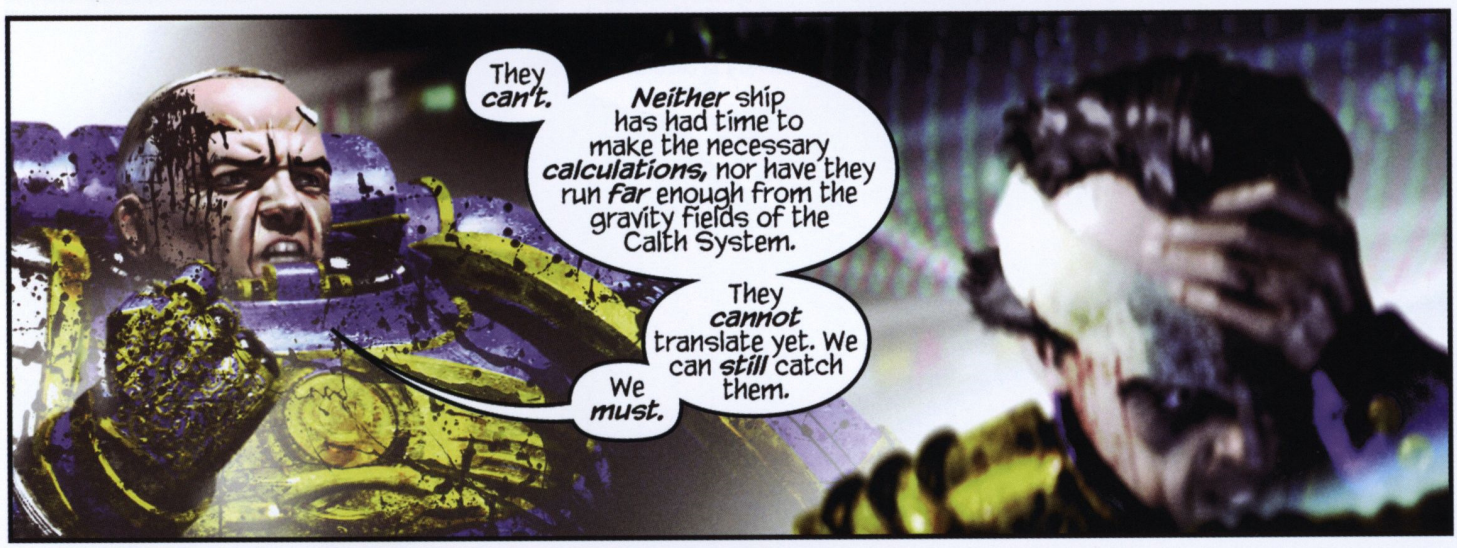

PURSUE THEM! NOW!
You heard me! Light the drives!
We're hurt, sir! There's not enough power for all systems--
Then divert some!
We don't need power for guns or shields unless we catch them!
Dump everything to the engines!
Let us at least engage the foe, then we can worry about how to fight him!
Besides, Gage gave me a solemn order...
I did, Shipmaster, and you have executed it well.


Light the damned engines!
DRIVES ARE FIRING!
GET INTO THEIR WAKE AND MAKE BEST SPEED!


THEY'RE EXTENDING THEIR LEAD, CHAPTER MASTER...


We'll catch them.
Our engines are *labouring* and *crippled*...


...they're extending *rapidly*, and if they make the jump into the immaterium, we--


They *can't*.
Neither ship has had time to make the necessary *calculations*, nor have they run *far* enough from the gravity fields of the Calth System.
They *cannot* translate yet. We can *still* catch them.
We *must*.


Erebus's warp-craft holds true...
Now we increase our lead by a measure they cannot *hope* to match.
The *final* ceremony is ready.
It is time to *exit* this reality and *enter* the warp.
My lord! That is not *possible!*
We have yet to *complete* our calculations! We are not *ready* to safely translate! It--

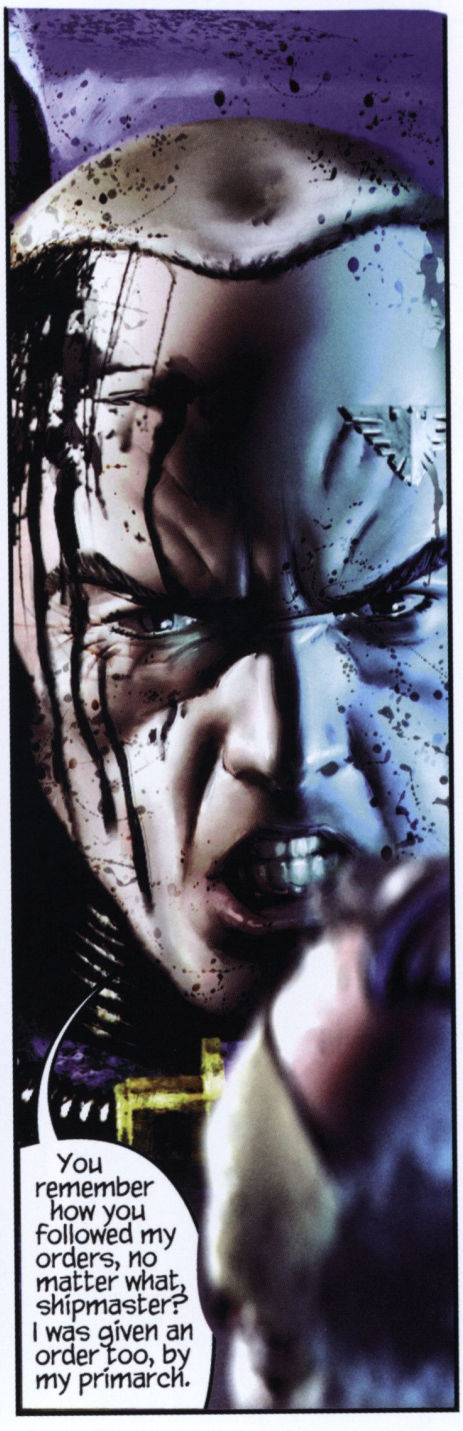

We do not *need* calculations, shipmaster...
...we *are* the warp!




Lord Gage!


We have *lost* them. The enemy ship has *translated.*
I have no *idea* how they opened space like that.


We *follow* them.
But we have *no translation calculations.*
We have no *notion* of their transit vectors...


You remember how you followed my orders, no matter what, shipmaster? I was given an order too, by my primarch.


We don't need calculations or vectors. We follow *theirs.*
We ride *their* wake into the warp.
We go where *they* go.
Make it happen.
Match the Infidus Imperator's pathway into that route and *follow* it.
And may the Emperor have *mercy* on our souls.


BRACE FOR TRANSLATION!




BY THE FIVE HUNDRED WORLDS, WE'RE THROUGH...
AND THEY ARE STILL IN VISUAL!


We... we have translated successfully to the empyrean?
This is not a... dream?
Not a dream of mine, my lord.
We are in the warp.
Our position?
Instruments report... no position, my lord.


We have *no* vector. Not even a *warp signature.*
I have been in the warp *many* times, and know its dangers...
...but I have *never* made a transit like this.


Navigation? Please corroborate my readings.


We have made an un-vectored translation by following the enemy's wake.
Even the *tenuous* laws of warp-transit are now *lost* to us.
Provided we can maintain a *fix* on the Infidus Imperator, we have a pathway and a bearing.


If we *lose* that track...
...we will be lost *forever.*


The flagship? It is *still* with us?
It *followed* us into the warp-cut and *continues* its pursuit.
It is *relentless.*
But their engines are *damaged.* We can probably *lose* them in the long run.
Not for certain. Our drives are weakened through *hard use* of maximum yield.
We have *over-taxed* the power reserves.
We cannot *count* on out-performing the Ultramarines vessel.
But it is likely, exalted lord, that their only navigational reference is *us.*
Indeed?


I don't *just* want to evade them. I don't *just* want to escape.
I don't *just* want to lose them in the warp...
...I want them *dead.*
Hear me!
We're going to shake them off our heels, and once they're *lost* and *blind...*
...we're going to come about and *cut their throat!*


Course heading, lord?
Incline maegister three-forty-five variable axis, and bear through that shoal of dead suns.
Aye!
Course set! Executing!


THEY'RE TURNING!


Stay on them! Don't lose the scent!


Do we have range on them? Firing range?
Who knows? We're in the warp. There is no range.


COME ABOUT! KEEP ON THEM!


THE INFIDUS IS TURNING HARD!
It's heading--


I don't *care* where it's heading.
I'm following it all the way to *hell* if needs be.
Indeed, sir.
But the Infidus is burning *fast* towards that formation of planetoids. There may be a threat of collision or--


JUST FOLLOW!

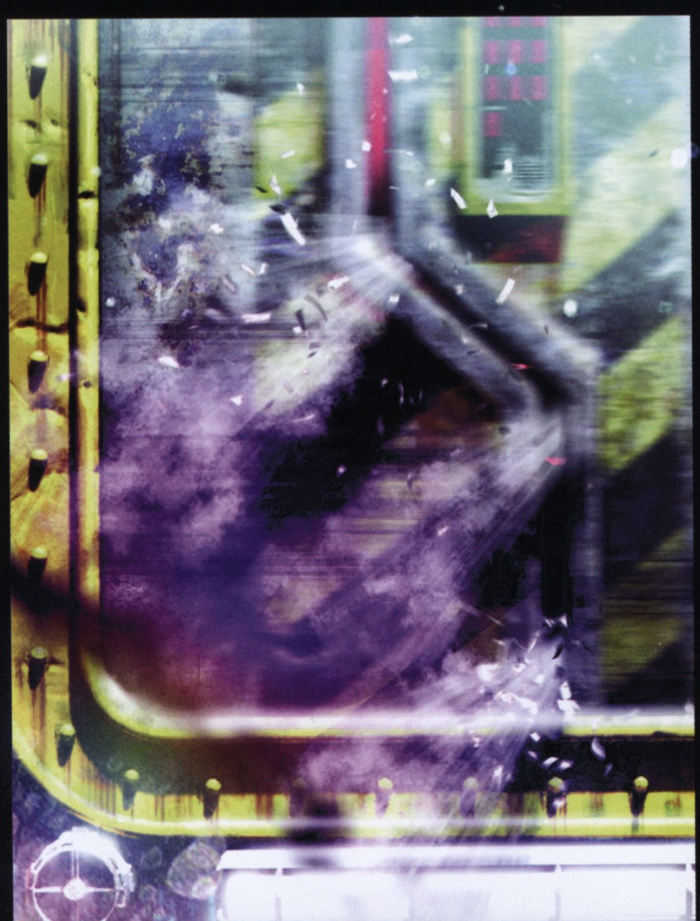

The Ultramarines ship remains *locked* to our course, lord!
Turn *harder!* Incline *four-five-five seraph!*
Lose them amongst the *corpse-moons!*
I think... I *think* we're holding him.
Lose him, and we lose *everything,* shipmaster. We--
What in Terra's name!?
Brace for impact! *Brace for im--*


Nghhh!
What hit us! WHAT HIT US?
The Officer of Detection reports we have struck... a swarm of organisms, my lord.
Warp entities, sir! Millions of them! The upper hull is covered!
My lord... many of them have survived the collision!


Multiple reports of structural damage, sir!
They are eating the hull...
Shields! Shields!

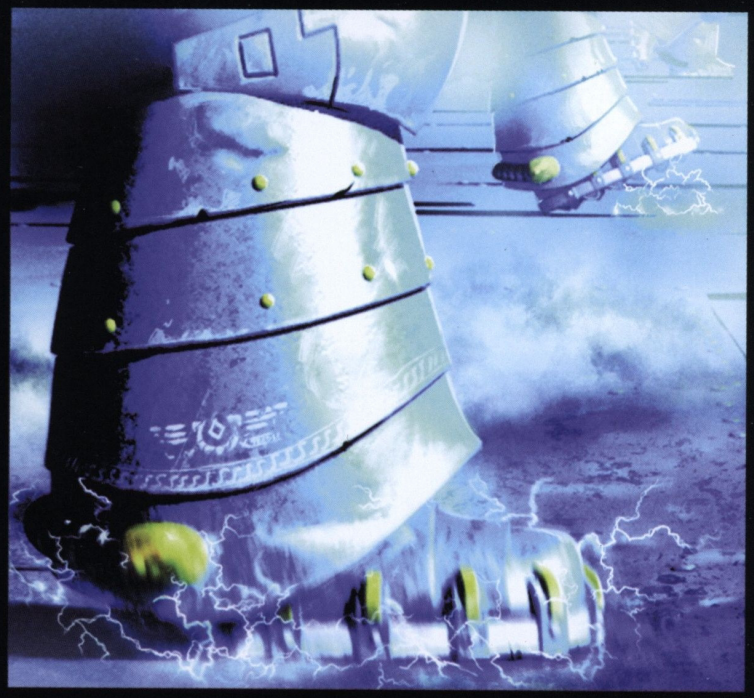

We're in a warp anomaly, First Master!
Our shields are meaningless! These abominations even penetrated our Geller Field!


Then the ship must be cleansed by more traditional methods ...while we still have a ship!
Kill-squads to the voidlocks! Prepare for hull fighting!






ACTIVATE MAG-LOCK PLATES!




SPREAD WIDE! FORM KILLBLOCK FORMATION AND ADVANCE! FIRE AT WILL!


STEADY RATE! STEADY RATE!
DON'T LET ANY OF THEM BY!




Gh-- hkk--


THE COMMANDER IS DOWN!
HOLD FORMATION! KEEP FIRING!


KEEP FIRING!

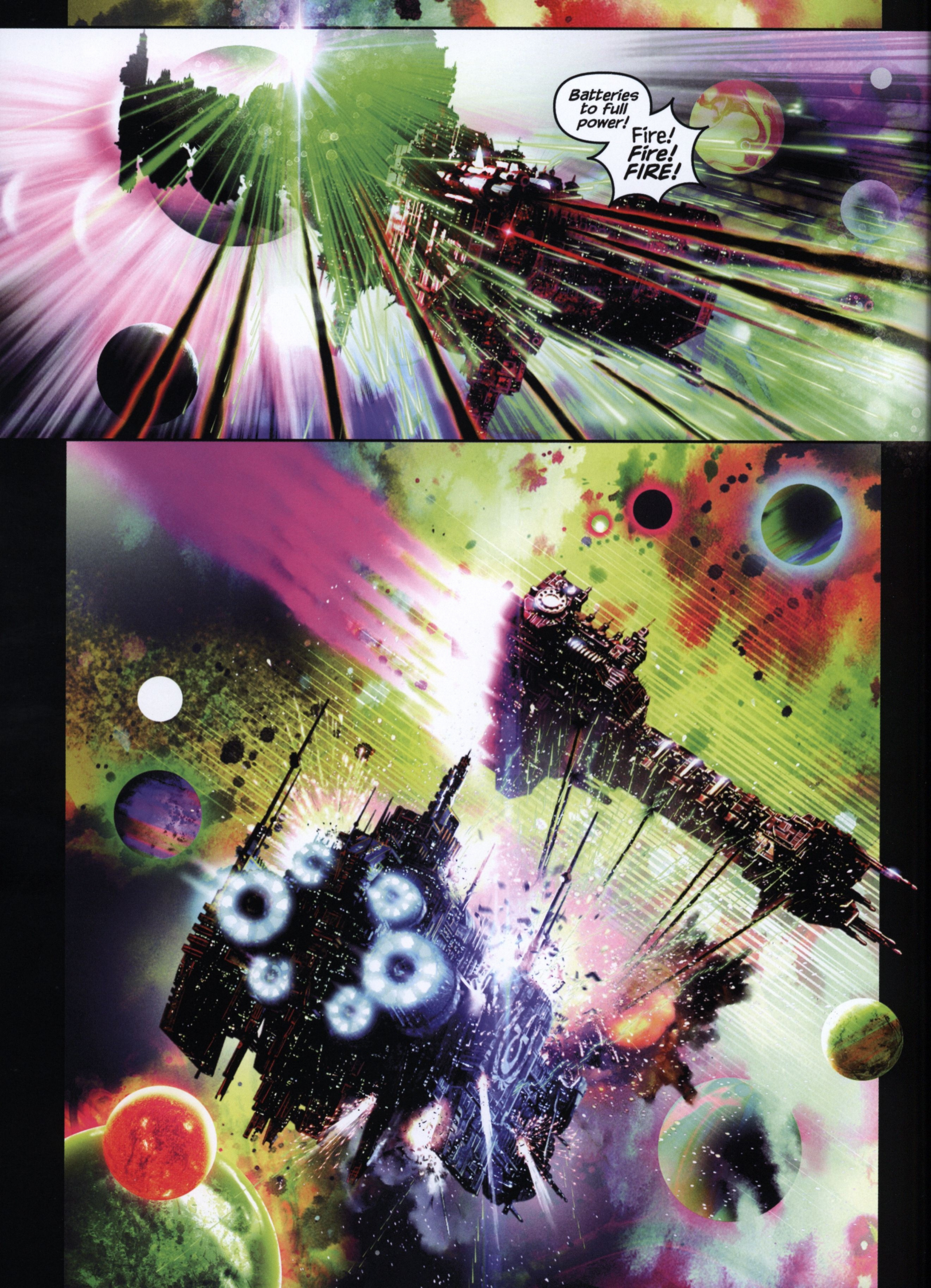



T-BOOM BOOM
SHHKK
Uhhkkk!
SPLUTCH
K-TUM
K-TUM
K-TUM
SQUEEEE
HOLD THE DAMN FORMATION!
Ahhkk!
SPLETCH
Eaarrghh!
SHRIKK
ZZAP
ZZAP
ZZAP
ZZAP


Report?
The hull is now *cleared*, Lord Gage.
Our losses?
Eighty-eight per cent, lord.
Then any further boarding actions we might have considered are out of the question.
Shipmaster?
Where is our quarry?


Because of the warp-strike, my lord, we have... we have *lost* them.
Their wake is *gone.* We have *no* visual.
We're *lost.*


Lord Kor Phaeron, we have them at our mercy.
They cannot *see* us.
Their status... their *helplessness*...
...this is *genuine*?
Just as you *wished*, lord. They have killed their speed.
They have *clearly* lost our track.
As you predicted, once they lost *visual*, they had no means to detect us, because we *are* the warp.
Power to the batteries. Bombardiers, ready *hullcutter shells*.
It is time to *crush* Macragge's *oh-so-noble* honour.
Prepare for a *killing* pass.


Batteries to full power!
Fire! Fire! FIRE!


--SHIELDS FAILING!--
--CRITICAL HITS ON DECKS FOUR, SIX AND EIGHTEEN--
--MULTIPLE DAMAGE TO--
--ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY FAILURE--
Where is the enemy? Where *is* he?
The Infidus Imperator is ***not*** differentiating a clear enough signature!
I'm... ***sorry.*** I can't ***see*** him.
Make ***another*** pass.
Hit them ***again.***

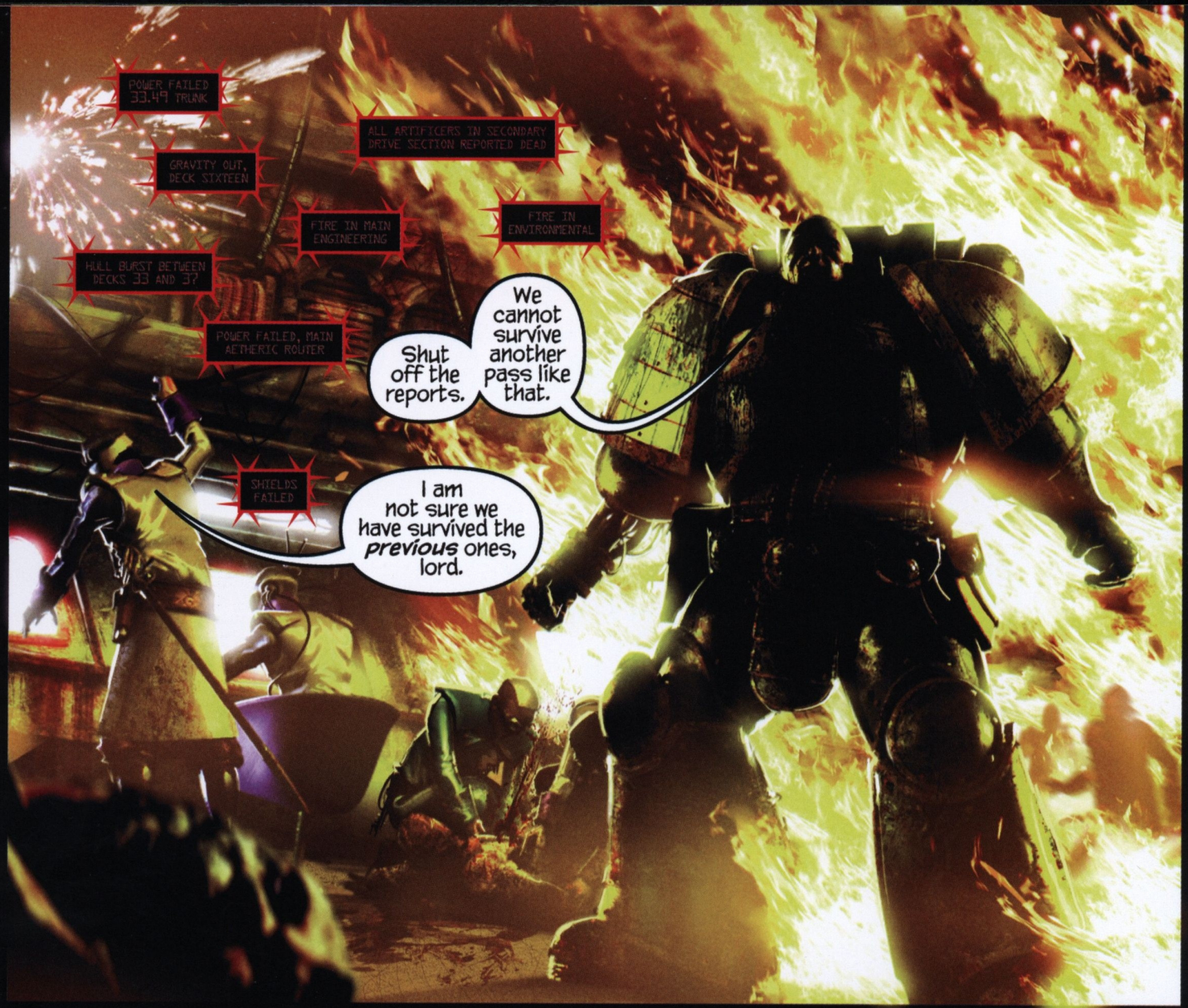
Burn them!


Stabilise! Stabilise!


Get me a damn target! A firing solution!


There's nothing to lock on to! We're blind!


So perish all servants of the False Emperor!


POWER FAILED 33.49 TRUNK
GRAVITY OUT, DECK SIXTEEN
HULL BURST BETWEEN DECKS 33 AND 37
POWER FAILED, MAIN AETHERIC ROUTER
SHIELDS FAILED
ALL ARTIFICERS IN SECONDARY DRIVE SECTION REPORTED DEAD
FIRE IN MAIN ENGINEERING
FIRE IN ENVIRONMENTAL
Shut off the reports.
We cannot survive another pass like that.
I am not sure we have survived the *previous* ones, lord.


We have *some* gunpower left.
I could... I could fire a *broad spread,* and try to cover *all* approach angles...
Flail *blindly* in the hope of hitting *something?*


Foolish, I know.
The probability of success is *negligible.*
But I would rather do that, than do nothing and then *die.*


Spoken like a true son of Ultramar, Shipmaster Hommed.
Ready your batteries, *broad spread...*


A contact! I have a contact!
That's not possible!
Approaching vector six-five-seven, liriad apex. Faint but clear. Unmistakable.
But we cannot detect their corrupted signature!
It's not theirs sir, it's one of ours.
Great darknesses!
That's a homing tracer! That's the homing tracer of an Ultramarine's wargear!
Serial identifies it as...
"....Captain Mersaror!"
This is... Mersaror...


...if you can hear me, Macragge's Honour...
...lock onto my signal. Make *me* your target.




Hurry! *Hurry!*
They will soon find me and *silence* me!
Hurry!


Approaching vector six-five-seven, liriad apex.
Shipmaster, make *that* your target.
Commit *all* ordnance.
Approaching vector six-five-seven, liriad apex, all ordnance, *aye.*


Set target approach vector!
All viable ordnance to bear! Prep firing cycle.


MAIN BATTERIES LOAD!

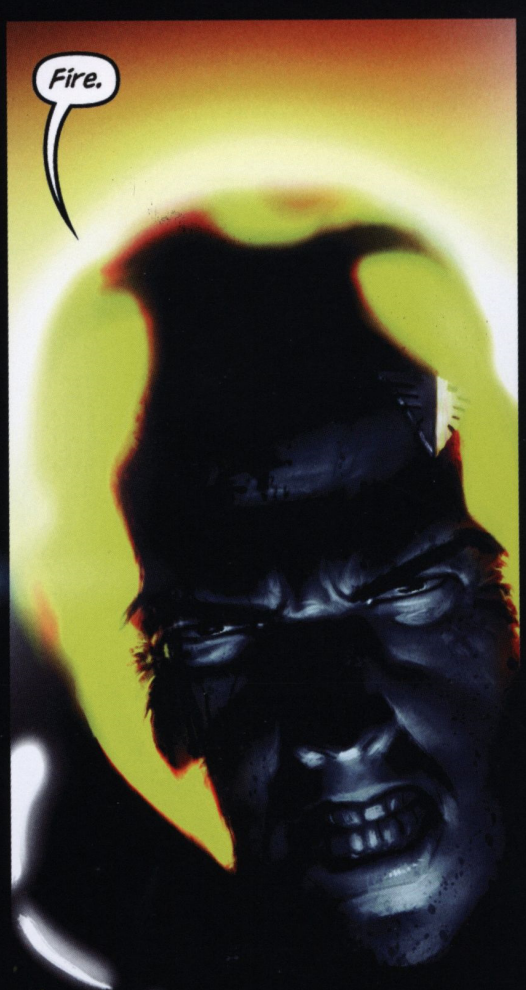

DIVERT ALL AVAILABLE POWER TO THE BEAM-WEAPON MOUNTS!


Full motive power!
Bring us in!
Finish them!
They don't have a clue.
Let the last and only thing they see be the flash of our murderous batteries!


Hurry! Hurry my lord!


Ughhn!
Hurry, before I am gone!




Fire.






What?


Reinforce the *shields!* Come about! Come *about!*


Main engineering is annihilated!
Artifice is lost!
My lord, what order shall I--
My lord?


My lord, first firing cycle is complete. We are in danger of *exhausting* gunpower.
Your orders?


Make *sure* of it.
Give them *everything.*


Commence second firing cycle!
Blow them to HELL!





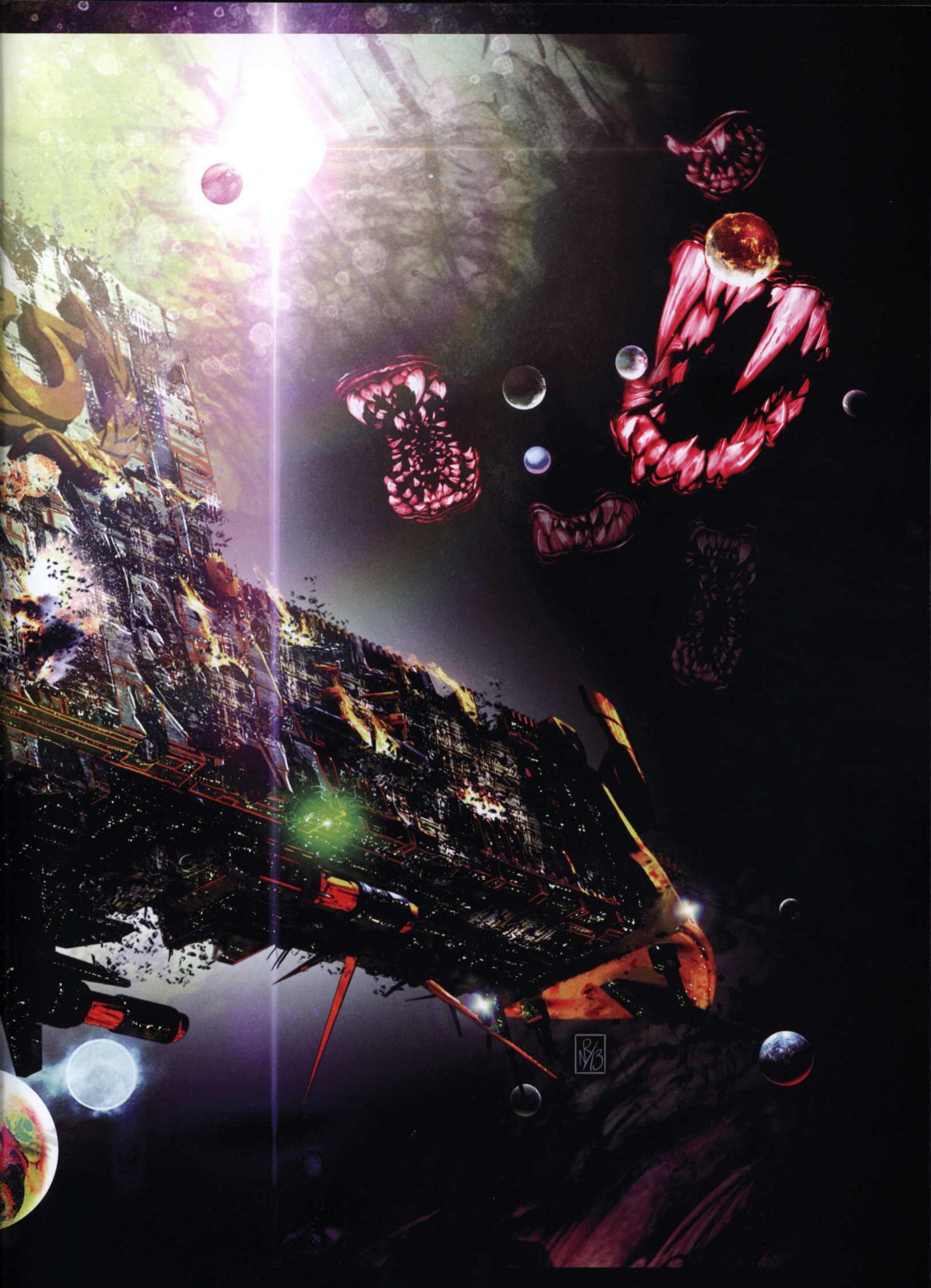



My lord...


...kill *confirmed.*
My compliments to you and your crew, shipmaster.
Begin recovery and repair protocols. Secure the ship.
Prioritize drives, detection grids and astronavigation.
We are lost in the heart of the *warp anomaly,* my lord.
We must find a way to be *not* lost in the warp anomaly, shipmaster.
The battle is *done.* The enemy is *destroyed.* We have *obeyed* our orders.
Now we have time to *think,* and *breathe* and *mend.*
Now, without the fury of battle upon us, we have pause to allow our best minds to examine and *solve* our predicament.


We will heal this ship, and we will find our way back home.
It may take years, my lord.
It may take lifetimes...


...but we *will* find a way back.






At
last.


My lord Kor Phaeron, what *place* is this?
Where have you *brought* us to? Where has your sorcery *carried* us?
To *salvation* and *sanctity.*
But it is a *wild* place! How can we be *safe* here?
We needed an *escape* route. The Octed *answered* me.
The Primordial Annihilator received my prayers and granted me *this.*
They whispered its *name* to me.
The winds of the warp blew us here, for they *knew* we would be safe on this world.

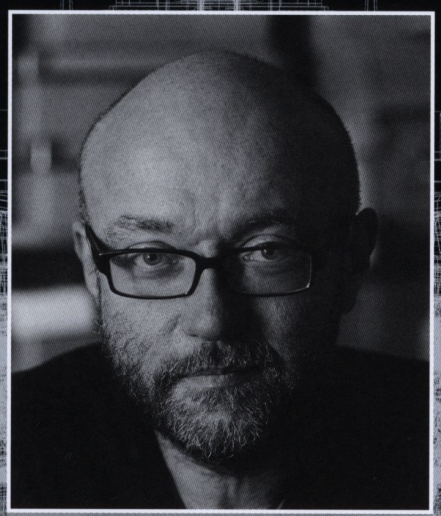

What name did they *give* to it, lord?
Sicarus, brother.
And where does Sicarus lie, my noble lord?


"In a place of sanctuary. In a place of freedom. In a place where our enemies can never touch us."
END.

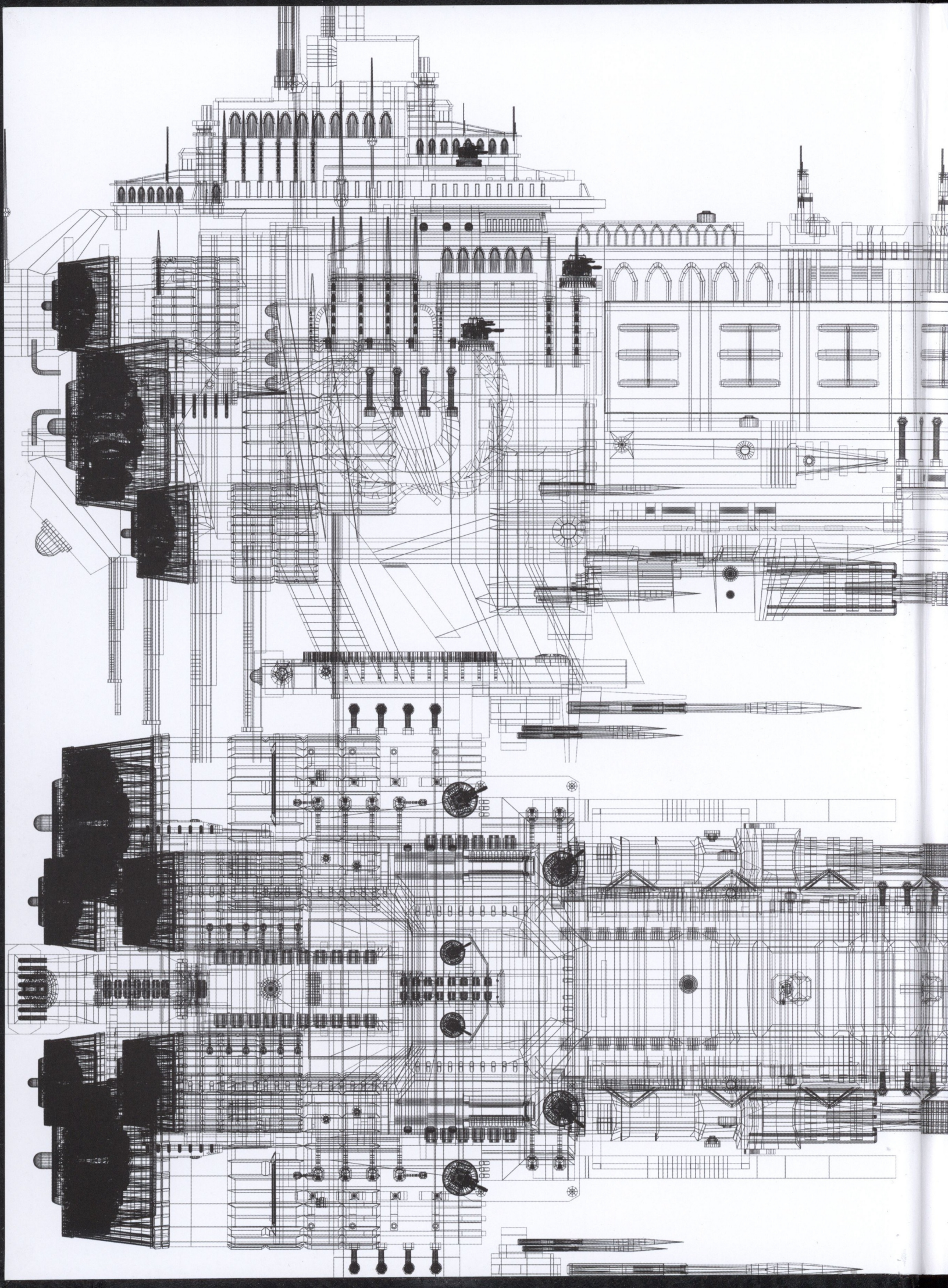


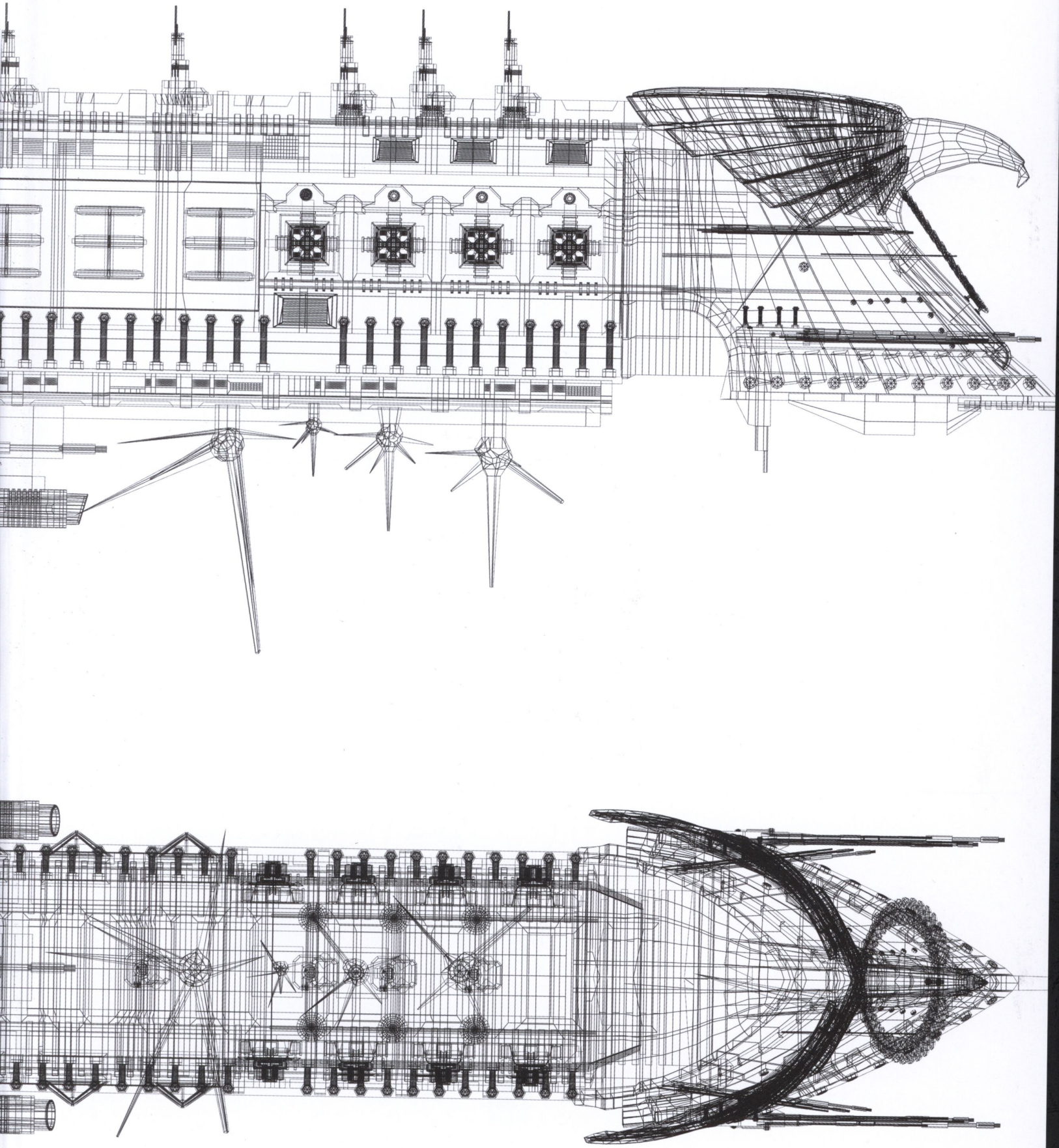
Neil Roberts (also known by the creative moniker SkinnyElbows) is a freelance illustrator, painter, sculptor, 3D modeller and comic book artist.

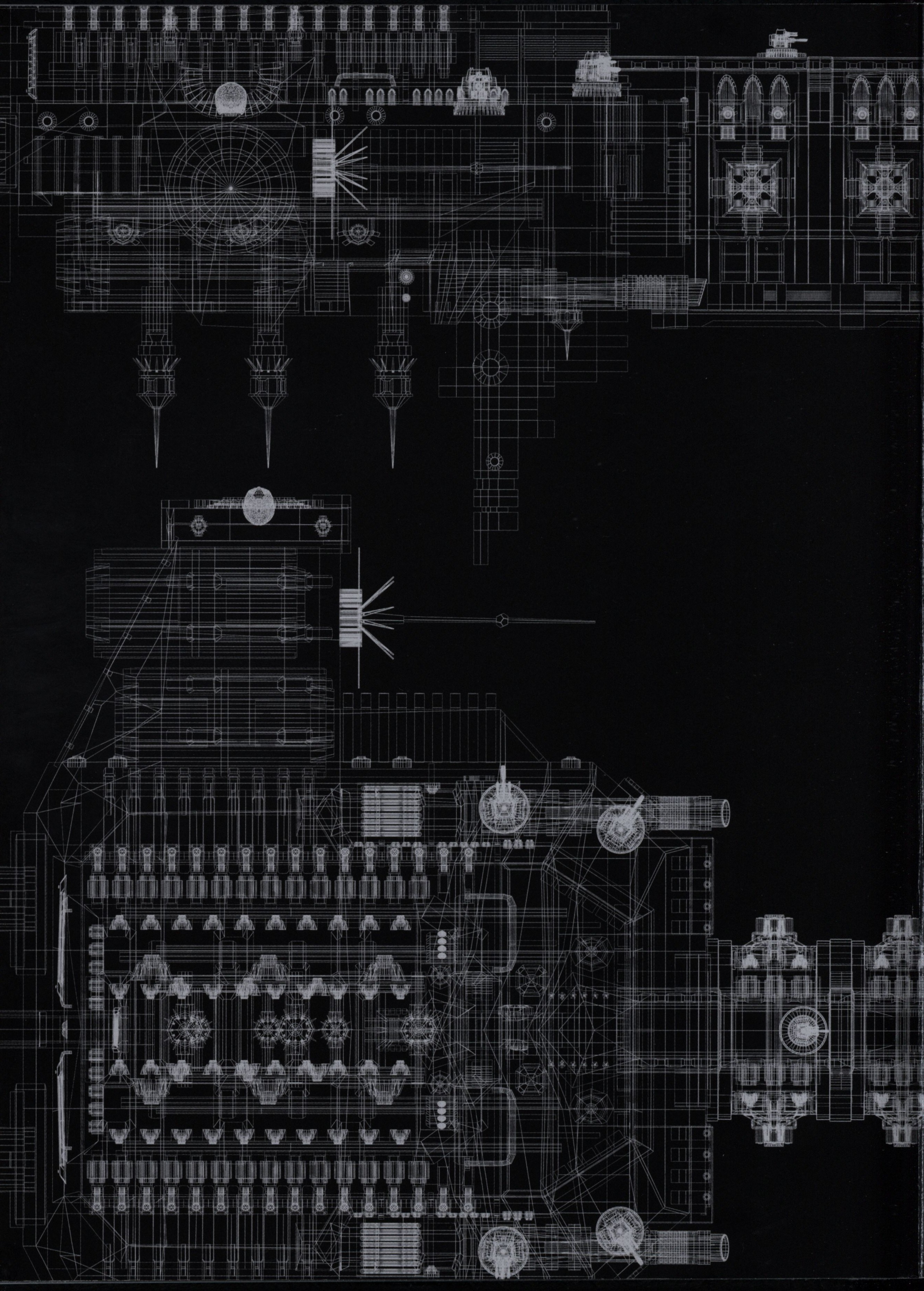
His work has graced countless Black Library novels and novellas, though he is best known for the covers of the *New York Times* bestselling Horus Heresy series.

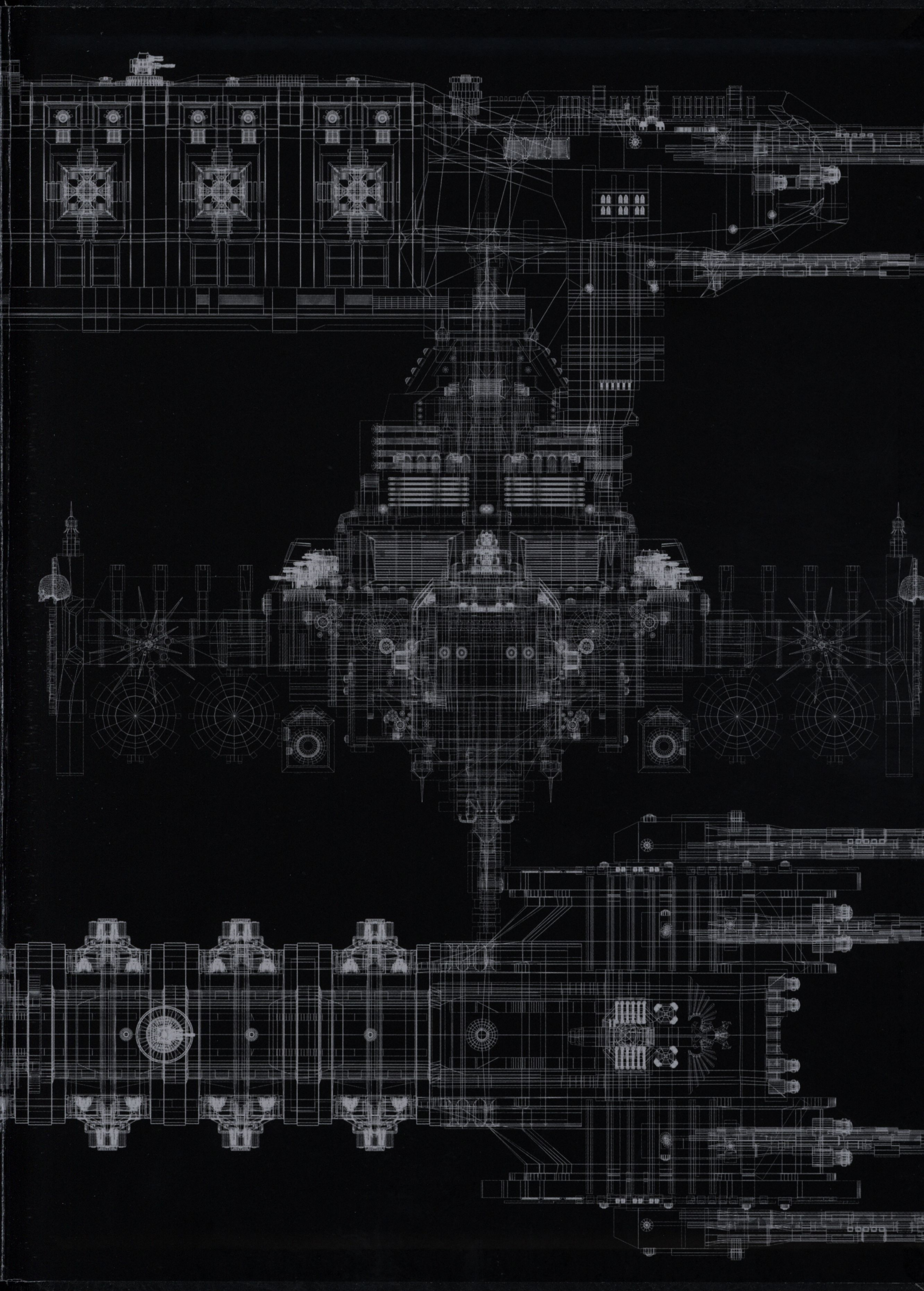


Dan Abnett has written over fifty novels, including the acclaimed Gaunt's Ghosts series, and the Eisenhorn and Ravenor trilogies. His Horus Heresy novels *Prospero Burns* and *Know No Fear* were *New York Times* bestsellers. In addition to writing for Black Library, Dan scripts audio dramas, movies, games and comics for major publishers in Britain and America. He lives and works in Maidstone, Kent.











© Copyright Games Workshop Limited 2013







