



Fabius Bile: Primogenitor

Joshua Reynolds

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Exiled into the depths of the Eye of Terror for his dark deeds, former Emperor's Children Apothecary Fabius is drawn back to the Imperium in search of a secret that could be the key to saving his misbegotten life...

He is known by many names - Clonelord, Manflayer, Primogenitor. He is the epitome of deceit and perversion, and feared by man and monster alike. Once the Chief Apothecary of the Emperor's Children, the madman known as Fabius Bile possesses a knowledge of genetic manipulation second to none. Now a renegade among renegades, he is loathed by those he once called brother, and even the most degraded of Chaos Space Marines fear his name. Exiled for his dark experiments, Bile has retreated deep into the Eye of Terror, leaving a trail of twisted abominations in his wake. But when a former student brings word of the ultimate prize for the taking, Bile is unable to resist being drawn once more into the cauldron of war. For in seizing this prize, Fabius Bile might yet discover the one secret he has been unable to unlock... the secret which will prevent his inevitable doom.

It's the start of a brand new series of twisted tales from the mind of an author for whom depraved antiheroes are his bread and butter. And Fabius' vile experiments and complete lack of morality make for a deeply entertaining – albeit monstrously disturbing – tale.

Fabius Bile: Primogenitor Details

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Author : Joshua Reynolds

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From Reader Review Fabius Bile: Primogenitor for online ebook

Marc Collins says

Primogenitor is a strange novel. Rather, it is a novel that evokes strange sympathies in me when we consider its focus. It is a novel that is, for want of a better word, aspirational- and also sumptuously organically beautiful. Reynolds has taken one of the most despicable and twisted characters in the setting and he has made him genuinely, compellingly, likeable.

This is Bile at his most languid, his most erudite, his most...Charming and urbane, I suppose. A cultured being who remembers and reflects long after others have forgotten. The novel succeeds, much as the Ahriman and Abaddon books have succeeded, by peeling back the layers of legend- both in universe and in terms of the setting- and getting to the meat of the men beneath. In this case, Fabius comes across as one of the only sane men in Eyespace, while remaining utterly mad. His aspirations to improve upon humanity and remake it strong enough to survive the epochs of blood to come are grotesque, but relatable.

Directly contrasted with the continued rise of the Black Legion, Primogenitor has Fabius hard at his work- having made countless enemies in his time amidst the Eye. Canticle City is behind them, and the Third are broken in ways that even Skalathrax never managed. Fabius is content to plan and plot and tinker, all in service of his great work. A work that, in many ways, apes the work of the Emperor himself. A stronger and better humanity. He has already made some progress towards that end. What we see in this novel are far beyond the New Men of the rulesets; instead we meet the Gland-Hounds.

The Hounds are post-human. Not quite Astartes, but made from a lesser sort of gene-seed, the Hounds are remorseless hunter-killers who are literally built to take down Space Marines. At the head of this almost Sabbat-like Pack, is Igori. Mother of the future, one of Bile's greatest successes, she has a relentless energy and drive. Brutal in combat and willing to learn from the man she calls Benefactor, she is also doted on by Bile with almost paternal affection.

The rest of the surrounding cast is equally compelling. Oleander Koh, former apprentice to Fabius, is the one who sets the plot rolling with a plot and ambition of his own. Saqqara, a Word Bearer forced to serve Bile against his will (by incredibly pervasive coercion) is a trickle of dark zealotry, sarcasm and subtle gallows humour. Tzimiskes Flay is a stoically silent Iron Warrior who tends metal as easily (if not more so) as he does flesh. Arrian is a World Eater with depths, a consummate warrior who is also careful, considered and content with his place in things. Reynolds crafts a wonderful brotherhood of monsters, all of whom are conversational. This is perhaps the most well-spoken and interesting fraternity of Space Marines we've yet seen in these books. It is an absolute joy to read.

As the plot gallops along and introduces friends and foes- both domestic and alien- we are led into a rivetting look at predestination and fate; the how and why and where of a character's existence and life. Bile, for his part, disdains such notions. It is so refreshing to see a willful atheist in the face of the setting's malignant godheads. This is a man in whom so many of the ideals of the Great Crusade live- spiteful, shrunken and curdled, yes but alive! Bile is a parasite, struggling to live- a monster, yearning to survive and to work- but at the same time he is so much more than so many of the broken monsters who haunt the Eye.

Neatly placing the novel in M34 is the apex of the tale; a siege of the Craftworld of Lugganath. The Shattering. A tidbit from both Chaos and Eldar codexes alike, this event fits with the narrative and helps to give it a martial core. While Fabius is more often than not above outright violence, his fellows and allies are

adept at their work. The warfare soars and sings, quite literally.

This is a masterful story, presented in a stunning Limited Edition. The cover is exquisite, a joy to behold and to touch. It is one of the most beautiful things that Black Library has yet produced and shows a willingness to experiment with the presentation in new and interesting ways. The exclusive short, The Howling Ship, ties minorly into the plot of the novel and is worth it simply to see more of Fabius in action; his every word and pronouncement a minor joy.

I would highly recommend this to any fans of Chaos, the character and the setting. As the jumping off piece for a series, it is a wonder. As a standalone story in its own right? It is a rare joy; a 40k narrative that trumps expectations, embraces truly inspired world-building, and plants us firmly in the unenviable position of rooting for and enjoying an absolute monster.

Michael Dodd says

From the prolific pen of Josh Reynolds comes Fabius Bile: Primogenitor, the first in a new series from Black Library featuring the Chief Apothecary of the Emperor's Children. Exiled from his Legion, loathed and feared in equal measure, his goal is nothing less than to ensure the future of humanity...in his image. Hidden away on the dead Crone World of Urum, surrounded by the horrifying results of his endless experiments, Fabius diligently works away while his body rots around him. It takes the most tempting of targets for him to leave his work behind and rouse himself to war once more.

Read the rest of the review at <https://trackofwords.wordpress.com/20...>

Tepintzin says

HE SO SASSY. My gosh, Josh Reynolds has gotten me to like Fabius Bile. I just have one question, why hasn't he received a job offer from Nurgle?

Mpauli says

Not really an in-depth character portrait of Fabius Bile, but a book that is really imaginative in its description of Chaos in the Warhammer 40K universe.

If you like action and world-building, this might be a better GW read.

Tarl says

I admit, I am a Fabius Bile fan, and Reynolds gave me everything I could have wanted in this book.

Unlike a vast majority of 40k writers, Reynolds paints the picture of a man out for his own goals while haunted by what his legion had once stood for and what it has now become. Bile is portrayed as a complex being trying to deal with a number of elements working against him and his goal; his failing health, the ruin

of the Emperor's Children, to the Eldar and their mysterious ways. Reynolds captures it all and weaves a nice plot out of it.

The one thing I wasn't a fan of was the Harlequins. They always came across as a whimsical Mary Sue creation of GW, and to his credit, Reynolds has portrayed them as this and so much more. In fact, there is something of a Lovecraftian feel about them, which took me off guard and made them actually a little enjoyable, despite my dislike of them.

Besides Bile, Reynolds brings a wonderful collection of characters into the mix, each one as complex and interesting as Bile himself. This helps to pull the story along and keep the reader engaged, as there is something here for everyone. Hell, a World Eater apothecary... who knew they even still existed? And that he wouldn't be a rampant blood letter like his brethren, very nice to see. (though he still loves killing, which was very in character)

If there is one flaw to this book, it is that I already have forgotten the ending of the book. It's only been a week or so since I finished it and already I remember everything up until the ending, with only flashes of what happened at the climax sticking to my brain. Maybe it was because there was so much going on, maybe it was because there was too much introspection on Bile's part, or maybe it was the Harlequins. I actually don't know, and it could easily be my fault rather than Reynolds', which is why I didn't dock any stars for it.

In the end though, Reynolds has crafted a wonderful novel and a perfect start to a trilogy. The story stands alone, yet also hints at something much more. Bile and those around him are a wonderful collection of characters, each fascinating and enjoyable to read about. And Reynolds' writing is fantastic, weaving a number of elements together into this book. This is how 40k books should be handled. Complex characters with believable reasons for doing what they are doing. Well worth the read!

Dylan Murphy says

Fabius Bile: Primogenitor, the (hopefully) first novel in a new Fabius Bile series from the excessively talented Josh Reynolds, was a masterpiece. The novel was a privilege to read from start to finish, wonderfully blending the bloody-mindedness of Warhammer 40k with an absolutely unimaginable amount of world building, full of monstrous yet relatable characters.

To quote a very good friend of mine;

“Reynolds has taken one of the most despicable and twisted characters in the setting and he has made him genuinely, compellingly, likeable.”

- Marc Collins

The story itself was a complex tale of intrigue, violence and discovery, with twists and turns that left me at the edge of my seat every step of the way. Our cast of characters and MC himself were downright amazing. As a Chaos fan, and a fan of the not-so-good guys in general, Fabius and his merry band of mad-men easily lie, kill, and experiment their way to the top. While Space Marines are almost always larger than life, all of our renegades here had a huge amount of character that made them immensely relatable and just out-right outstanding works of talent and skill on Mr. Reynolds part.

So, overall, I don't know what else to say. Marc Collins did a fantastic job on his review (and really needs to join the BL author team, as it was a joy to read). My good friend Rob Grind also has a good one up on goodreads, and I am always envious of DarkChaplain's reviews. If for some reason you still need that push to buy this novel, read one of theirs, as whoever reads this owes it to them to read this.

I've been reading a lot of Warhammer for a long time, and Fabius Bile: Primogenitor almost too easily corrupts its way to the best book I've ever read. Damn good work Mr. Reynolds, and thank you for writing this.

P.S. Tzimiskes for president.

Rob Grind says

A masterclass of writing from Joshua Reynolds. From the first page to the last the story is gripping, funny, prolific and intense. An absolutely compelling cast consisting of apothecaries of various war bands, murderous Gland Hounds built to kill and harvest Space Marine gene-seed, a daemon summoning madman who carries evil spirits around in vials about his person, and some of the toughest, most interesting female characters to ever grace the Warhammer universe. The prose is engaging and witty, the dialogue full of old poetry and story quotes from real life non-fiction and fiction, which really added to the story and gave it more depth and bite.

None of the villains seemed forced, they weren't corny or cheesy in the slightest, they are penned with true malice and realistic levels of rivalry and respect amongst each other. I can't stress enough how fresh and interesting, creative and exciting this book is. I have read literally hundreds of Warhammer novels, and I can easily say without doubt this has skyrocketed to the top of many lists. It may well be the single best Warhammer 40k book I've ever read, its that good. I know it will be an annually revisited tale. Also something worthy of praise is the descriptive ability of the writer, as I was left literally wrinkling my nose at points imagining the smell of contagion and surgery, or blood and fire. A supremely talented writer, and one who I will now be following closely.

My highest recommendation. You really should be reading this :)

Keamy Loken says

Well written with engaging characters. Knocked a star because it just didn't feel very invested in the mission they're on.

Matthew says

An enthralling and action packed adventure. I used to loathe Bile. After this I kinda dig him!

Well worth checking out if you love 40k.

4 out of 5 stars.

DarkChaplain says

Review also published here

Fabius Bile: Primogenitor is one of the most enjoyable books I've read this year. Granted, that is in large parts down to my interest in Fabius himself, as per his various depictions in Warhammer 40,000 and the Horus Heresy, but also because Josh Reynolds is one hell of a writer. Reading this on the heels of *The Master of Mankind* was also a good decision I've found, providing a nice contrast to Dembski-Bowden's more depressing work.

Throughout the Horus Heresy series, Fabius has been depicted as more and more unhinged, especially as far as his experiments are concerned. Father of mutants and "New Men", and creator of the proto-Noise Marines, Fabius stands for corruption, insanity and a lack of restraint, making him a perfect scion of Fulgrim. There's a lot of baggage attached to the character, a lot of preconceived notions on him and his exploits, so what did Josh do? He took it all, skipped a few millennia ahead in the timeline to M34, and reassessed Fabius's circumstances and mindset to make him a pillar of sanity in an insane galaxy - and it works brilliantly.

Of course, the Primogenitor remains an unhinged individual, with his own beliefs and misconceptions, but also impressive insights and maybe the only true atheist in the franchise, after the Emperor's passing. In many ways, Reynolds manages to present Fabius as somewhat of an inheritor of the Emperor's grand dream of advancing humanity, and his rejection of the daemonic. To Fabius, daemons are no more than figments of imagination given form by some convoluted natural phenomenon - and he defies them without fear or particular respect. This serves as platform for a couple of amusing scenes in the novel, which shaped the experience quite deliciously.

‘And what does it mean to you? You are not even real,’ Bile said. ‘A bit of grit in the empyrean is what you are. Whatever message you have is worth less to me than the hiss of a lanced boil.’

As you can see from this short quote, Fabius is written with plenty of... bile and cynical comments on his surroundings. His tongue is sharp from start to finish, yet there is also a surprising degree of warmth in him when it comes to his creations. Whether they be the Gland-hounds, vat-grown, improved-upon near-humans who form a step between regular folk and the Astartes, or even the Kakophoni survivors of his Legion days, Fabius is a generous benefactor. He also has an odd fondness for his apothecary allies/disciples, including the other major PoV character, Oleander Koh.

Oleander returns to Fabius's fold at the outset of the book to propose a grand scheme: Helping the Radiant King, a high-ranking Emperor's Children general, take the Eldar Craftworld of Lugganath, and reaping precious samples for Bile's experiments in the process. Of course, Oleander has his own schemes as well, and clashes with his fellow apothecaries and his comrades under the Radiant King's command throughout. But he is also an idealist and his admiration for Fabius is clear. To the reader, he is an entertaining set of eyes to look through as well. He flirts with daemonettes, even reminiscing about a fling he had with one, and smoking warp essence through a wicked pipe. On top of that, he also hums songs here and there, which readers of Chambers' *The King in Yellow* might recognize...

Speaking of weird fiction references, Reynolds managed to throw a couple more in. None of them felt shoehorned to me - if anything, Josh's extensive knowledge of Weird Fiction helped build a dramatic atmosphere and underline the inherent weirdness of Fabius and his experiments, and the extravagant nature of the acolytes and daemons of Slaanesh. Oleander's songs, Fabius's penchant for classical music and art, the Radiant King's joyful parties, they all play into the theme of decadence that the Emperor's Children are known for, while maintaining Fabius's own indulgences on a more reasonable level than the rest's.

The daemons, too, feel wicked yet playful, threatening but with a sense of irony. They play with their food, and invite the characters to dance with them. I've found Slaaneshi daemons to be hit and miss in most stories, with some authors pulling them off damn well, like Chris Wraight in *The Path of Heaven*, while others, like James Swallow in *Fear to Tread*, completely disappointed me. To my delight, Josh Reynolds nailed them, making them the fickle, whimsical creatures they need to be, hiding their terror and hostility under a veneer of humor and fondness for the subjects of their attention.

In contrast, the Emperor's Children in the book are mostly made up of opportunistic, backstabbing ingrates, ever chasing for greater pleasures and stimuli. Oleander straddles the line for the most part, and Fabius's desires are of a very different nature, but especially the underlings of the Radiant King are in constant rivalry and showcase the degeneracy of the Legion after Fulgrim's apotheosis just right.

Next to the obvious followers of Slaanesh, the novel also gives some attention to a mute Iron Warrior apothecary with a strong belief in brotherhood, a World Eater who speaks to the skulls of his rivals and a Word Bearer forced into service after a failed attempt on Fabius's life - and the Chief Apothecary rewarded him with implanted bombs. The Word Bearer felt as preachy and arrogant as I've envisioned them to be, post-Heresy, attempting to spread their faith across the galaxy once more. But a real surprise to me was the aforementioned Iron Warrior, Tzimiskes, who has some oddly uplifting "conversations" with Oleander and co, and even a PoV scene towards the end. I liked him a lot!

Fabius Bile himself is explored in far greater depth than ever before. I loved Nick Kyme's story *Chirurgion*, which gave a lot of background on him during the Heresy and before, but Primogenitor goes far and beyond with how it redefines the Clonelord. Self-reflective yet driven. Critical but appreciative of others' advances. Reclusive yet surrounding himself with like-minded individuals. Harsh to outsiders yet surprisingly caring for his own. Rejecting authority yet constantly defiant. Broken yet unyielding.

The whole novel celebrates Fabius's achievements yet puts him into a position where he is both highly disagreeable but also incredibly likeable as a protagonist. It dials back a lot of the crazier elements while making them an intrinsic part of the character's development. Even Aaron Dembski-Bowden's *The Talon of Horus* factors into the book, due to Bile's involvement, his experiments and the effects the defeat at Canticle City had on the Legion at large.

Josh's Fabius is the culmination of everything that has come before, while making him into a fresh, innovative character all of his own. It puts him into the spot he needed to be in my opinion, while setting up many paths for him to tread in the future of the trilogy and the franchise as a whole. That on its own is a marvelous achievement in my eyes.

The main antagonists come in the form of the Eldar, both raiders and the dwellers of the Craftworld Lugganath, and, most enjoyably, Harlequins. The latter give Josh yet another opportunity to write excellent dialogue, playing to his strengths and showing the Laughing God's children as twisted, wicked jesters. Everything about the Harlequins is a performance, a dance, an act, and it is expertly staged and complements all the themes throughout the book.

*Prick his flesh, crack his bones, that's the way the story goes. Urge him up, strike him down,
call him out and pass him round. Out*

Despite all its grim themes, *Fabius Bile: Primogenitor* manages to remain upbeat, moving at a steady pace, with its characters circling one another and orbiting Fabius, highlighting the Primogenitor in ways that made the entire book a joy to read. It had me "joybound", theorizing about the twists and turns Reynolds might yet take the story, and wishing for a revamped miniature of Fabius himself to put on my shelf next to the trilogy in the coming years. My only regrets about the book are that I didn't get the Limited Edition of it, which comes in an amazing dress-up and includes an additional short story. Everything else I absolutely adored, and I cannot wait for more.

Eileen says

Welp, you know you've hit rock bottom when the only sane person left is Dr. Mengele.

No seriously, Reynolds does a fantastic job fleshing out (heh) Fabius Bile's character from a one-dimensional mad scientist to an anti-hero you'll hate to love. Of course, being surrounded by Emperor's Children utterly surrendered to pointless debauchery doesn't hurt either, given that he actually looks sane in comparison. Say what you want about Old Fabulous, but his brothers done fucked up and he's the only one who realizes it. You actually feel kind of bad for the guy.

Of course, like most of 40k this book is completely over-the-top with its self-consciously Evil characters with Evil names uttering cliched villain lines. The Radiant King actually goes " *eeeeexcellent* " more than once. But Reynolds sure knows his cosmic horror and that saves *Primogenitor* from pure camp. The opening chapter has Oleander singing excerpts from the original *The King in Yellow* and there are other embedded quotes from Lovecraft. The Radiant King fancies himself as Yog-Sothoth (I am the key! the gate!), apparently. What a crazy book. I'm sure there were more such references but I was listening to the audio so I probably missed them. Will definitely be picking up a print copy.

Just as a side note: I'm actually very squeamish about torture and gore and am pleased to say that Reynolds kept it reigned in. The most graphic passages are bizarro fantasy things like a stage constructed of living flesh.

Kdawg91 says

I am still off on my Warhammer kick and I found this book. I have tended so far to find the chaos side of the Warhammer universe more interesting. Fabius Bile is a scientist, a total madman, for those who don't follow Warhammer, the simple version of him is imagine Dr. House from T.V. with no good redeeming qualities at all. He has a plan for the universe and his kind and honestly that's all he really gives a flip about.

But life and other factors come to call and he gets embroiled in a wild, bloody high speed affair that is a really fun read.) If you like military scifi, chances are you already know about these books, if NOT..check it out.

Brett Bricker says

This is my first Joshua Reynolds book and I am quite pleased with his writing. I went into this book knowing very little, if anything, about the character of Fabius Bile. I can say my understanding has been elevated significantly. Overall, Primogenitor is a great read, filled with an engaging plot and a good characterization of the so called Manflyer/Clone Lord/Tumor King/etc. etc. I found Bile to be an interesting character, who teeters between being the only sane person in the book and a single-minded deluded psychopath with no concept humanity. There are lots of nuggets of information and color in this tome, further adding to understanding the life of the renegade Space Marines in the Eye of Terror, as well as the less touched upon subject of the Apothecaries that support them. Furthermore, the conflict and degeneration of the Emperor's Children legion is fleshed out a bit as well. There are many horrifying descriptions and facts about the sadistic and experimental surgeries and medical procedures conducted by Bile and his kin. While some are interesting (such as how the apothecaries cloned organs), others are done right disturbing. A fair amount of gun and sword play is in no shortage.

Overall, its an interesting read and quite an engaging story. Bile is a fascinating figure without overshadowing the other lead and supporting characters. This is solid science fiction and is quite memorable.

I give this book a 4 out of 5, because while good, it is nothing ground breaking.

Interesting in Fabius Bile or learning more about the post-heresy Emperor's Children? Look no further.

Strongly recommend.

Andrey Nalyotov says

The Road to hell is paved with good intentions.

That's exactly what could be a prologue for the amazing novel Fabius Bile: Primogenitor, written by a uber talented author Joshua Reynolds.

He created a tome worthy of the Gods attention. His prose, details, dialogs plus everchanging and shifting tides of a storytelling and character building are what creates a story, I would even call it a biopic of epic proportions. And through the story could be described as simple sometimes — it's style and Joshua famous attention to details are what creates this masterpiece.

I wouldn't lie if I would call Fabius Bile: Primogenitor the best Joshua Reynolds book to date.

Also I'm a proud owner of a Limited edition for this manuscript. And it is truly amazing. And in my humble opinion — best 'Limited edition to date'. 336 pages of awesomeness with vinyl, screen printed and debossed cover. Bronze and sepia toned page edges that form daemonic images. High classed double ribbon marker in purple and gold of the 3rd Legion. And mighty exclusive short story 'The Howling Ship', which goes as a prequel for the main storyline. And creates another enemy for the Chief Apothecary to bite him in the ass lately. Fabius do like for his enemies to multiply. After all – what is a man without his enemies :)

Story/narrative.

Story follows ?hief Apothecary, Lord lieutenant Commander, Pater Mutatis, Clonelord, Manflyer, Skingrafter, Geliosa monster, Corpsewalker, Butcher and etc. etc. - the one and only, Fabius Bile! Minor

spoilers ahead — Renegade among renegades, hated by everyone in the Eye and beyond, even amongst the ranks of his old Legion — he is a feared person and loathed by those he once called brother. Feared and adorned by man and monster alike. And all because he possesses a knowledge of genetic manipulation second to none. Knowledge that everyone wants to have by their side.

Story moves in the 34th Millennium. And follows millennia later after Abaddon, new and growing power in the Eye of Terror - destroyed the Canticle City. Now Exiled for his dark experiments, Bile for centuries retreated deep into the Eye of Terror, leaving a trail of broken bases, souls and twisted abominations in his wake. But even in the darkest holes of the Galaxy he is not forgotten and hunters have his scent.

But when a former student brings word of the mighty prize for the taking, nobody is able to resist it. The story further presents us with the second 'main' character - Oleander Koh. He gives Fabius, his previous master and teacher a choice, pretty simple one — but with rich bonuses and interesting consequences. Eldar craftworld of Lugganath — ripe for the taking! Even Fabius — patient and wise one, with millennia of experience is unable to resist and slowly draw once more into the cauldron of war.

But everything is not so simple, as it seems. What follows after is one of the most joyful rides you will ever have reading a book. For in seizing his prize, Pater Mutatis might yet discover the one secret he has been unable to unlock... the secret which will prevent his inevitable doom.

During that uber awesome trip Joshua Reynolds show us different slices of life in the Eye, outside it and bonds of brotherhood. And their limits. That's probably the first BL novel which gives Apothecaries time to shine in all their glory. Their subordination, lifestyle, experiments, modifications, role etc. I think a lot of readers after finishing it will deduct that the scariest force in the tabletop ever should be an Apothecary squad.

His main antagonist and protagonist Fabius during his novel road does not struggle to get absolutum dominium or find ad vitam aeternam. What he struggles for is much more transparent - What Fabius Bile: Primogenitor seek in all his altruistic glory is alterius non sit qui suus esse potest (Let no man be another's who can be his own). And it's not a future of humankind as Bile lying to himself. It's his struggle against fate and his 'role' in the universe — everyone so happy to assign him.

Also the story goes truly easily on Fabius monstrous nature and his abominable experiments. Yes — some of the shown vile experiments and complete lack of 'decent morality' make for a deeply entertaining tale. But it is not albeit monstrously disturbing one, as synopsis and advertisement has promised. It has it's moments of butchery and gore — but Bile are one of the most profficient and sane persons in the narrative.

But it is also a Warhammer story — so battles, void warfare, xenos, magic, daemons are all in attendance in this manuscript.

And locations. This time Joshua Reynolds overcome everything he had created before with Sublime and interiors of Lugganath. They are rich and masterfully crafted (as expected from the master) - «Sublime existed in spite of itself»

Visions of Hell and reminder of overwatchful eye is colorful and mastercrafted as a jewel. Chapter about the Carrion Road shows that even 'diabolists' are afraid to truly meet 'his' Gods in the Warp ;)

Characters

Joshua made his characters vivid and alive. You can and you should believe in them. They are 'real', you want to vouch for them, worry for them, vote for their success! And that's probably the best praise I could ever give a writer.

And the prominent one - Fabius Bile: Primogenitor himself!

What Joshua Reynolds actually did with the book – he has answered the main question of the book himself in his authors note for Limited edition. So it's better him to say: *Why Fabius Bile? He is a proper villain. But why does he commit such grandiose acts of barbarity? Why perform such ghastly experiments? What end he envisioned? - Altruism. A twisted, selflessness bent out of shape and twisted into a sort of selfishness, altruism. A desire to improve the lot of others, corrupted into an overriding obsession with perfecting the species. A grand megalomania ... of seeing himself ushering in a new age of gods and monsters. In his own mind , Bile is a hero – a man forced by circumstance into making hard decisions, for the benefit of a whole.*

He alone is capable of understanding what must be done in order to preserve humanity – or a variation thereof.

Chaos as a whole, and its adherents, are a fire set to scour the universe clean. And Primogenitor believes that his creations will survive the conflagration. They will spread in it's wake, like new green shoots pushing out of the ashes. But to do so, they must be made strong. And to build strength first requires pain. But what is a little pain, set against the greater benefit? What are a few millions deaths, when set against a billion lives saved? What are the screams of your brothers, when you can do so much good with the secrets they so jealously hold within themselves?

These are the questions Fabius Bile asks himself.

All that Pater Mutatis will ever do - stem from this twisted idealism. A pragmatic altruism, grown cancerous over time, until it swells into something inhuman.

And that's why he is more human than half the Imperium of Mankind or CSM warbands all combined.

Beneath his coat of faces, within his tumour-riddled body, still beats the hearts of one of humanity's defenders. Others may have given up on the Great Crusade, but Bile still wages it, in his own dark way. Bile believes only in himself. And that's why he is totally different from Abaddon the Despoiler. Manflayer is the last atheist in a universe ruled by feuding devil gods, owing allegiance to nothing and no one save his obsession.

And his personal opinion on Abaddon is beyond hilarious: *Not to mention Canticle City.*

He closed his eyes, remembering the shadow of the dying frigate as it had plunged prow first into the heart of the Third's stronghold. More than just a world had died that day. The Third Legion had ceased to exist as a singular entity the moment Ezekyle Abaddon had decided to punish Bile for trying to repair the mistakes of the past. His hands clenched. The Despoiler had truly lived up to his name that day. A century or more of work, erased by one overzealous thug, wearing his gene-father's hand-me-downs

Bile even more than Abaddon doesn't seem the sort to follow gods, dark or otherwise.

Or their servants and fate given by them. His dialog with Greater Daemons are just epic: **Be off with you, back to whatever child's nightmare you crawled out of... Names are for the sentient....Come then... test me, figment**

That's the trouble with Gods. They don't take 'no' for an answer.

As author mentioned himself: *Gods and the trouble they cause. It's about predestination and prophecy, and how one goes about defying both*

Fabius opinion on religion is a good one too :)

Prayer. Last refuge of the damned. I really must investigate the neuropsychological benefits of selective surgery on the right parietal lobe

And of course the highest points of Fabius hubris and self-belief is his opinion on Imperium of Mankind and his own Legion.

Imperium of Mankind with all this torture and suffering from 'hereteks' are actually the evil one. Because *Torture was a useless thing, in and of itself. It revealed more about the inflicting party than the subject* — and that's coming from Fabius Bile — one of the biggest evils depicted by Imperium, lol.

In comparison to him — 3rd Legion of Emperors Children are truly dead. Just look at the Joybounds from the *Radiant King court*: Merix (slowly mutating but with mind in the past glories); Savona — bloody butcher who isn't even a legionary, Gulos the swordmaster who lives only for himself, Nikola, a lithe, colourfully clad killer frightened as a kid, Lidonius, his warp-touched senses overspill with lust and imaginable glory. **And the Radiant King, in his joyful repose himself** — they epitomize the corruption and death of the last vestiges of discipline and self-control. The 3rd Legion is 'truly dead'. It is ashes, dust and pleasure cries of insane madmen.

And even through this two Fabius burns with desire to unravel and improve upon the human mystery front and centre. All that he does is acquiring the raw materials he required and trying to prolong the life of his knowledge (brain).

All the support cast is amazing in itself. And none more than Oleander Koh — lost brother of the Consortium.

Oleander's demeanour was at once baroque and barbaric. It was fitting, given that he had left a trail of fire and corpses stretching across centuries. Apothecary without bonds, always smoking high densed stuff (distilled tears of blood angel :)), schemer and a friend. And naive altruist in his hope for redemption and old times. Plus his amusements with real space and dark humor is beyond amazing.

Also where have you seen a legionary - quoting Poe and Sheldon?

Strange is the night where black stars rise, and strange moons circle through ebon skies... songs that the Hyades shall sing...

Not every time you will be quoted splendid prose from a CSM *Song of my soul, my voice is dead, die thou, unsung, as tears unshed...*

And did I mentioned he is a polite masochistic CSM. He ask permission to sent you to the warp ;)

My lady, might I escort you from this harsh realm?

Add to that other brothers of Fabius Apothecaries Consortium and you will have an uber cool volative mix. Insanely brave and calculating Word Bearer Saggara, who had a task to bring Bile to heal. As you will figure – it went really well ;) «Urum ate daemons as easily as it ate men, and Saqqara's force had gone from impressive to pitiable in a few days.»

The Chief Apothecary claimed to have implanted a thousand and one contingencies into his most reluctant servant. Saqqara occupied himself trying to discover them, when he wasn't attempting to stir up a rebellion amongst Bile's followers

But he never stopped trying and his omnipotence with daemon conjuring and flask creation makes him invaluable.

Faithful Tzimiskes – an unbreakable Iron Warrior Apothecary, master or repairs, castellax automatons and a tech-priest as a hobby.

Arrian – ahhh, Arrian. World Eater apothecary – with necklace of skulls of his brothers and totally sane for a World Eater. With bottomless depths of dark humor.

And Igori with Gland Hounds, the one and only created by Fabius himself — mother and children of a new better future for the humankind. Gland Hounds already made an appearance before in Skaranx character from 'Remorsless' Legion of the Damned short story by the same Joshua Reynolds.

All of them see Fabius for what he was, is and could be.

In him, the fires of the Great Crusade still flickered, however weakly

There are a lot of jewels here — which also serves as a reminder that mister Fabius is a famous person. One that had a long list of bounties on his head. *No one blamed the sons of Alpharius for doing what came naturally. And no one wanted to be reminded that they were all ultimately expendable, in the eyes of their leader*

But at the same time, they all see that even with his 'altruism', cleverness and might — Primogenitor is alone in his loneliness. As a master painter he has a lot of pupils, but not one of them can see the grand picture, which leaves him totally alone in his grandeur- **They'd shattered under the weight of possibility, and sought solace in performing unnecessary surgeries on themselves or others for the pleasure of it**

But still he is a warrior and as a warrior (a good one to survive) he knows that «Never fight a battle you don't have to». Between enemies who does not respect him and only have an ocean of spite for him — Fabius Bile is known simply as Tumourking, but no one disrespect his ability to survive.

And of course xenos. A lot of xenos, mostly eldars. And mystical Harlequins for the party. We also saw the Third's opinion on them. It's truly hilarious how Emperor's Children sybarites call eldar decadent and pitiful ;)

Cons The only con I could think of is the rushed ending. But in general - that's the main problem of all BL novels. Authors always create an amazing narrative and eventually they should chop something from the 'overgrown' page count. In all else novel has nothing to warrant a negativity.

Verdict

That's the best story of Joshua Reynolds to date in Black Library. It's a book about universal defiance of fate and gods. It's a novel about brotherhood and fear. About ambition and obsession, and the crooked paths they

can lead you down when you're not paying attention.

Again I will quote an author himself: 'It's a story about one man, one defiant man, a character at odds with the very nature of his universe. Things wind down, the centre cannot hold, anarchy is loosed upon the world... that's the story of this universe. Abaddon or Ahriman exemplify entropy, their actions spiralling outward from an initial point of order, to create confusion and chaos in a reality already fraying at the edges. They're all part of the fire which consumes, each in their own way. All except for Fabius Bile. He's what comes after the fire. And whatever happens, his work will continue'.

That's a story of Fabius Bile and at the same time that's the story of the 3rd Legion. Story which follows with the 'memory' of Abaddon destruction of Canticle City in ToH. Its amazeballs on each page — with godly quotes!

10 out of 5 stars! I can't recommend Fabius Bile: Primogenitor enough. Totally worth a read and several rereads after that!

And as a reader I do hope that it's the start of brand new series of twisted tales from the mind of an author for whom depraved antiheroes are his bread and butter. Bow before the master!

Rob Hayes says

This book is my very first foray into the literary world of the 40k universe. I've played a bit of tabletop in my youth, and enjoyed both the Spacehulk, and Dawn of War video games, but I've never stepped into the literature because... well, I expected it to be trash. Part of this is baseless assumption, and part of it is I've been burned before (the Resident Evil tie in novels were not good... at all). But a friend recommended this book to me so I thought why not. And I'm glad I gave it a try.

It's worth pointing out that this book is told from the perspective of the 'bad guys'. They worship the chaos gods, they enjoy pain and suffering (both given and received), and the plot revolves around them attacking a space city because... well let's just say the reasons aren't particularly wholesome. But the other thing that needs pointing out is that there are no 'good guys', in fact part of the thing about the 40k universe is that it's full of bad. I don't know a lot about the lore, but the 'good guys' are often thought of as the Space Marines... who worship an immortal emperor who is kept alive by consuming a million souls a day (or something along those lines). When the 'good guys' worship an intergalactic space vampire overlord, you can be pretty sure the lines of morality will be fluid.

But onto the book. It's twisted, convoluted, brutal, fast paced, nihilistic, and ultimately futile. Which fits the 40k universe pretty well from what I know of it. But damn, it's also a lot of fun. The main cast of characters are constantly sniping at each other, which strangely made them quite endearing, and you get a good feeling that they are nigh on indestructible... but also quite destructible. There's a lot of tension as they jet set their way around the galaxy, and venture into the void space where demons and worse things reside.

There's a lot of lore, and it is occasionally delivered a little dryly, but mostly it fits well into the narrative of the story, and provides tantalising insight into the complexities of the universe. One thing this book really made me want to do, is learn more about the deeper lore behind the scenes... and also play 40k again. I've actually reinstalled Dawn of War for just that reason.

The narrator does an excellent job for the most part, delivering with a practiced nuance, and bringing the characters and their world to life. My only criticism of him is that he used very similar voices for some of the characters, and because of this occasionally lost track of voices when they were all conversing.

Story wise, I have just one criticism, and it's that the book occasionally devolved into what I can only call 40k porn. This does not mean there was nakedness, but that the author occasionally started talking about weapons and armour and bits of lore that had no relevance to the story, but were blatantly there to satisfy the hardcore fans.

So I'm giving it a 4 out of 5. A very enjoyable, fast paced read. I'll probably check out some more 40k novels in the future.
