



Ravenwing

Gav Thorpe

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The Ravenwing stand apart from the rest of the Dark Angels Chapter - these dynamic Space Marines take to the battlefield upon steeds of adamantium and plasteel, and swoop from the skies in lightning-fast speeders to bring death to the foes of the Imperium.

When he joins their prestigious ranks, Brother Annael finds himself thrust into a whole new world of shadowy intrigue, and privy to secrets unknown to his common battle-brothers. In the wake of the conflict at Kadillus, hints of a dark conspiracy begin to emerge, and it soon becomes apparent that the Ravenwing has a sacred duty far more vital than hunting down orks...

Read it because

It's a fast-paced action-adventure tale that pits the Dark Angels against greenskins, pirates and Chaos Space Marines and lays the groundwork for the mind-bogglingly epic drama to come in the rest of the trilogy.

Ravenwing Details

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Author : Gav Thorpe

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From Reader Review Ravenwing for online ebook

adam-p-reviews says

Ravenwing is the brand new book from Warhammer 40k writer Gav Thorpe and is the first of a new three book series called The Legacy of Caliban Trilogy. The book is also a sort-of sequel to the other Warhammer 40k book, The Purging of Kadillus that I reviewed a few weeks ago. In this novel we follow Brother Annael; a new recruit to the Ravenwing. The Ravenwing are a group of Dark Angels that are above the usual Space Marine. They ride around on giant motorcycles and land speeders and are usually used as reconnaissance for the Dark Angels when they are fighting battles or chasing down their foes. However, unknown to Annael until his acceptance into the Ravenwing, they are also used to hunt the Fallen, the evil Space Marines who turned on the Emperor during the Horus Heresy and killed their own Patriarch- Lion El'Johnson.

When a distressing signal is received from the planet of Piscina IV, the Ravenwing are sent on the hunt for a powerful Fallen Librarian. The Librarian manages to 'turn' the leader of the Dark Angels on Piscina IV, Grand Master Belial, (from The Purging of Kadillus!) and makes him doubt his faith in the Dark Angels, forcing him to kill himself and his brothers. However before his death, Belial leaves the leader of the Ravenwing, Grand Master Sammael, a message directing him to the infamous pirate Space-Port of Port Imperial. When the Ravenwing arrive at the Port, they find that the pirates have formed a cult around the Fallen Librarian and fight a fierce battle to protect him from the justice of the Dark Angel Inquisitors as he manages to flee. However, the trail is not lost and the hunt is still on as the Ravenwing follow the mysterious Librarian to his lair where more of his loyal and corrupt followers fight to the death to defend him.

This was another good book from Gav Thorpe but I honestly didn't enjoy it as much as The Purging of Kadillus. I don't know why this was, I think it might be to do with the fact that The Purging is a Space Marines Battle Novel and was really fast paced, full of battles, action and all in all, for someone like me, a great book to get into the Warhammer 40K literary world. Ravenwing on the other hand, is the first book in a series so perhaps was not going to be as fast paced as the one-off Space Marine Battle Novel. I also didn't enjoy the characters as much as I thought I would. I think that this might be because I'm not that big off a fan of the Ravenwing as a unit anyway- which probably explains why Telemenus was my favourite character!

Nevertheless, saying that the novel wasn't fast paced and then reading it in 3-4 days might seem a bit contradictory. Don't get me wrong I did enjoy the book but not as much as The Purging and I'd suggest that you read that book before you read Ravenwing. Nevertheless, I am looking forward to the next book in the series Master of Sanctity!

For more book reviews check out <http://adam-p-reviews.blogspot.co.uk/>

Milo (BOK) says

"Fast paced, action packed, Ravenwing is a great opener to the trilogy that will leave fans desperatley for more." ~The Founding Fields

I wasn't quite as looking forward to Ravenwing as some people were. Whilst I enjoy the majority of Gav Thorpe's works (The Purging of Kadillius aside), I'm not the biggest fan of the Dark Angels Chapter. In fact,

every novel that I've read about their chapter (Descent of Angels, Fallen Angels and The Purging of Kadillius) were let down, and I'm a fan of the Space Wolves, their rival chapter, and despite disliking a few of the actions of the Sons of Russ, I would take them as my favourite legion/chapter over the Wolves anyway. So I went into Ravenwing ready to not enjoy it. But as it turned out, not only did I enjoy it, Ravenwing was a powerful enough read to get the Dark Angels into the Top 5 of my list of Space Marine Chapters for the first time since... well, ever – alongside the Space Wolves, Ultramarines, Blood Angels and Salamanders. So – what made Ravenwing so good? This is what I'm going to be explaining in this review.

"The Ravenwing stand apart from the rest of the Dark Angels Chapter – these dynamic Space Marines take to the battlefield upon steeds of adamantium and plasteel, and swoop from the skies in lightning-fast speeders to bring death to the foes of the Imperium.

When he joins their prestigious ranks, Brother Annael finds himself thrust into a whole new world of shadowy intrigue, and privy to secrets unknown to his common battle-brothers. In the wake of the conflict at Kadillius, hints of a dark conspiracy begin to emerge, and it soon becomes apparent that the Ravenwing has a sacred duty far more vital than hunting down orks..."

Apparently, whilst Ravenwing is the first novel in a trilogy, it follows on from the events in Purging of Kadillius and Angels of Darkness by the same author. Whilst I have not read Angels of Darkness, I still managed to understand what was happening and got along without any issues in the book. As it's been a while since reading Purging of Kadillius, I probably should go back and re-read it, but I didn't like it a lot so I probably won't. But whether you're a newcomer to the Dark Angels or an old die-hard, you'll be able to follow what's going on in this book with little difficulty, as Thorpe manages to superbly introduce the Chapter to new readers whilst providing several references that will satisfy the older fans.

Read the full review: <http://thefoundingfields.com/2012/12/....>

Vernon Burt says

Black Library fiction is never going to be the height of fiction writing, but this came pretty darn close. The Space Marines are well presented and Gav Thorpe does a good job of managing the different levels of awareness between the 5th, 2nd and 1st companies. The plot is very action-centric and you can be assured that everything ends in bolter fire and overly gruff talking.

Jared Stanley says

Fun, but not amazing. The first third just kind of flew past and didn't really catch me, but then I really got into it. I wished the Ravenwing used their motorcycles more. It was kind of weird to set a good chunk of the book in places that they can't use them (especially the climax). The ending was a little anticlimactic, but I definitely want to read the next one sometime.

Taddow says

When I first started reading this book I was a little disappointed because it appeared to be a mix of battle

scenes showcasing new units from the Dark Angels Codex (which is my favorite Space Marine Chapter and one of the Warhammer 40,000 armies I play) but then my interest peaked when I realized that I was reading a pseudo-sequel to one of my favorite books, *Angels of Darkness*. Sadly, while this story continues to offer intriguing insight in the Dark Angels Chapter, I just didn't feel the same effect from the author's writing as I did in the previous book. The tone, controversies and dilemmas did not have the same amazing effect as they did in the previous book. Hopefully the next books in the series will improve.

Abhinav says

You can find the full review over at The Founding Field:

<http://thefoundingfields.com/2013/04/...>

Shadowhawk reviews the first book in the Legacy of Caliban trilogy, penned by Black Library's resident Dark Angels expert.

"A worthy successor to the classic Dark Angels tale, *Angels of Darkness*, this book furthers the plots and events of that novel and presents a really intriguing look into the chapter from the perspectives of the specialist warriors of the Ravenwing." ~The Founding Fields

The Dark Angels are one of the most intriguing Space Marine (Adeptus Astartes) chapters within the Warhammer 40,000 setting. They are certainly the most secretive and one of the most accomplished, with a roll of honour that goes back to the Imperium's founding, to a time when the Emperor himself still walked among Mankind. They were the First Legion to be created, and that is a mark of their distinction among their fellow cousins of the Adeptus Astartes. There have been several stories about them in various formats over the years – audio dramas, short stories, novels, etc – that explore their secretive nature, both cause and effect, and they have all been fairly intriguing to say the least. In the ongoing 50-book *Horus Heresy* series, the entire mythology behind the Warhammer 40,000 setting is being explored and the Dark Angels and their Primarch, Lion El'Jonson, have featured in a few of the more prominent stories, as the various writers explore how and why the Dark Angels came to bear the great shame that the chapter still endures ten thousand years later.

Ravenwing is Gav Thorpe's latest book, a direct (continuity-wise) successor to *Angels of Darkness*, which remains one of the best written 40k books to this day, pretty much a classic, if I may be so bold. *Angels of Darkness* presented some rather shocking revelations about the Dark Angels, and these revelations have been the cornerstone of their lore ever since. The stories featuring them in the *Horus Heresy* series have either supported or invalidated these revelations, depending on how you look at them, and the overall picture is of a chapter that is conflicted with its own past down to the very core of its existence. In this new book, the first in a new trilogy exploring the chapter and its the arch-enemies of the Fallen, Gav Thorpe takes the strands first woven in *Angels of Darkness*, further and shows what the fallout of these events has been.

The novel is told from three distinct and perspectives that are integral to the story. Each perspective offers a very distinct look at the Dark Angels' hierarchy and shows how convoluted a system the Chapter has evolved to keep the terrible truths of the *Horus Heresy* from its rank-and-file members. This entire concept is at the heart of what *Ravenwing* is, and why I loved the novel so much. To my knowledge, there hasn't been such a detailed look into the Dark Angels as yet, certainly not one that has been as compelling, not even *Angels of Darkness*, which had a completely different focus.

The first character we meet is that of Battle-brother Annael, newly inducted into the Ravenwing from the Fifth Company, and thus one of the few members of the Chapter who knows something of the truths that the Chapter has hidden for ten thousand of years at any cost. For a Chapter mired in secrecy and half-truths for the betterment of its battle-brothers, Annael's arc throughout the novel exposes some of these secrets. Internal misinformation is something that the Dark Angels are very good, and through Annael we see how this entire web is woven by the Interrogator-Chaplains and the Grand Masters of the Chapter. Annael, given his new promotion, provides a sympathetic view on the warriors of the Ravenwing and the Second Company's current leadership. He is one of them now and the novel is as much about his adjustment within his new Company, as well as him learning more about the Fallen and how these traitorous Space Marines have affected the course of the Chapter's history.

With Annael's induction into the Ravenwing, the character has already gone through his "loss of innocence" phase, where he learns of how the Lion was killed, and is promised eternal vengeance as long as he is a part of his new brotherhood. Gav takes things a few steps further and he teases out further hints that show how Annael grows over the course of the novel. He learns some further truths on his own, and is faced with moral dilemmas with respect to the consequences of his actions and his orders. The way the novel ends, Annael is still doing some soul-searching, and his need to learn the full truth is not sated.

Through him, we are also exposed to a whole different style of warfare within the setting: mobile assaults via bikes and land speeders. The Ravenwing, being a "pursuit" force that relies on speed and mobility, is all about hunting from the saddle. To the best of my knowledge, there are no other books in the setting that focus on this style of warfare, at least not to the degree that the character is a major one. There are several scenes in Rob Sanders' *Legion of the Damned* with Space Marine Scouts on bikes, but the characters are fairly minor in the grand scheme of things. A case could also be made for Andy Hoare's *The Hunt For Voldorius* which features the White Scars' Third Captain Kor'sarro Khan and his bike-mounted Command Squad, but we never really get a good sense of mobile warfare in the book, not to the extent that Gav Thorpe handles it.

We see Annael and his brothers fight through huge city-blocks, open plains, and even a Star Fort (a very large space station). Each situation is different from the one previous, and while it took me a bit of creative adjustment to make sense of bike-mounted squadrons fighting through the tight corridors of a Star Fort, I can't deny that Gav Thorpe wrote all these scenes with an eye for detail and that he made full use of bike-mounted tactics and strategies. These scenes made for some of the most thrilling moments in the novel, partly also because these were unique scenes.

Then we have Grand Master Sammael, the current senior officer of the Ravenwing, and thus one of the most highly-placed individuals within the Chapter who knows much about the deepest secrets held by the Dark Angels. He made for a very different sort of character than Annael. One of the reasons for this is because of the knowledge he possesses, and the duties and responsibilities that come with such knowledge. Another reason is that he is a much more confident character, confident in his purpose and confident in his command. Throughout, he makes some really tough decisions, and it is quite fascinating to see his thought-process. Given his status within the Chapter, I expected a much more... arrogant character, but Gav has done a great job at humanising him, at making him someone that I could sympathise with.

Much as Boreas was challenged in *Angels of Darkness*, so it is with Sammael in *Ravenwing*. It is given that in any story about the Fallen, any Dark Angels characters involved will face a certain crisis of faith. This is expected, and this is the norm since the very existence of the Fallen is a challenge to the authority and existence of the Dark Angels, one of their darkest secrets that if it is ever made public, the Chapter could very well be labeled traitor and rogue. Boreas, being an Interrogator-Chaplain, faced a great personal

challenge when Astelan made him question his beliefs and his convictions in Angels of Darkness. In Ravenwing, Sammael has to do a lot of the resultant soul-searching on his own, particularly after he is made aware of Boreas' final transmission to the Chapter forces at the end of Angels of Darkness. Interrogator-Chaplain Malcifer is able to provide a solid rock of belief and convictions for Sammael to latch on to, but the conflict exists until the very climax of the novel.

Michael T Bradley says

I really had no interest in reading this since a) I thought Purging of Kadillus was utter weaksauce, b) that was Dark Angels, like this one, by Gav Thorpe, c) I didn't want my memory of Angels of Darkness (which I love) spoiled any farther, and d) I've read two DA HH books fairly recently, and they aren't much more interesting back then. BUUUUT then I found out that Cypher apparently plays a decently large part in this trilogy, so I picked this up. Holy crap, this ALMOST redeems the monotony of Purging of Kadillus!

We follow a Ravenwing detachment of DA (but ... even that only like 50% of the time; we also follow a non-Ravenwing squad, so ... the title of the book is a bit misleading) as they follow a trail from planet to planet, searching for one of the Fallen. We get to visit some of the places talked about in AoD, as well as revisit Kadillus (whose fate is utterly creepy). We get to tackle the problem of, 'How do Ravenwings fight in a cramped space ship?' (the answer: pretty goofily, and yes, of course they take their goddamn motorbikes into the tiny-ass hallways of a cruiser ship)

I think the problem with Purging of Kadillus was that, since it was one big fight, there really wasn't much room for atmosphere, and that's what Gav seems to excel at. This book, however, pays as much attention to the time between the fights as the fights themselves (including one of the weirdest moments in a 40K novel, a Homeric-style Olympic match held on the way to a fight, in order to air some bad blood between squads), and is much better for it (AoD, of course, is like ... nigh-empty of fighting, and is one of the best 40K books out there). Overall, I dug it.

Ayeka says

can't wait for the next part of this Master of Sanctity

Mhoram says

Gav Thorpe's latest take on the Dark Angels held my interest sufficiently. Previously he has written "Angels of Darkness" and "The Lion" about these grim warriors, the latter of which I found to be absolutely brilliant. Now he brings us a story focusing on the Chapter's outriders, the Ravenwing bikers of the second company.

Brother Annael is unexpectedly raised to the Ravenwing following the conflict at Kadillus, and begins learning the ways of this fast-moving formation, whose responsibility is to track down the enemies of the Chapter and seal off any escape. It quickly becomes obvious there is more to the Ravenwing than this, as the decisions made by Company Master Sammael seem to be following the guidelines of some greater goal, rather than simply tactical sense. This will come as no surprise to fans of the Dark Angels, for the Ravenwing's true mission, though they know it not, is to track down and capture those Dark Angels who

rebelled against the Imperium following the dark days of the Horus Heresy, that they might be forced to repent for their heretical ways. From battlefield to battlefield, Sammael leads his company in pursuit of these Fallen Angels, and hints emerge that the hated Fallen known as Cypher may be once again commencing action against the Chapter.

The plot was not full of surprising twists or anything, but it was enough to hold my interest. Splitting chapters between the views of Master Sammael, brother Annael, and Telemenus of the fifth company allowed for the reader to gain an interesting perspective on the levels of secrecy within the Chapter, with Sammael knowing the truth of the Dark Angels' history, Annael knowing of the Horus Heresy but believing Horus slew the Lion, and Telemenus not even knowing of the Heresy. Having such differing perspectives on the same mission certainly made for an interesting read, and built to a dramatic climax with warriors acting against orders they didn't understand due to their lack of relevant knowledge. The high attrition rate of the Ravenwing was also fascinating, as it is quite unusual for any Space Marine company to lose warriors at such a rate, but it felt very appropriate to their needfully reckless style of combat.

This would have been deserving of four stars, but there were multiple instances where things like poor sentence structure or questionable choice or wording threw me off completely, and I found this quite frustrating. It's rather unusual for Gav, as he is normally quite a talented author, so I don't know what happened there.

Gianfranco Mancini says

[And the Fallen/Death G

Christopher Boulton says

Not my favourite Warhammer 40K book. Read too much like an advert for the (then just released) new Dark Angels models. This wouldn't be much of a problem, but it seems incongruous, and items, vehicles and characters/squads just appear and disappear really quickly.

Other than that, basic knowledge of the overall Dark Angels backstory leads to obvious plot occurrences, and a final twist that you can see a mile off. You just want to shout at characters and tell them what is really happening. But this isn't really the book's fault, the characters shouldn't know certain truths, but the overabundance of pre-existing stories makes it easy to second guess everything that is happening.

The names annoyed me too. The Horus Heresy books help a lot with a character list the beginning of the book, similar to A Song of Ice and Fire's appendices, but several characters have very similar names, and I personally found it really hard to keep track of who was who other than the main characters.

Battles are well written, and have the suitably gory action you'd expect of a 40K book.

Christopher says

The novel focuses on the point of view of three characters. Sammael, Grand Master of the Ravenwing, Annael, a newly appointed member of the Ravenwing and Telemenus, a battle-brother of the 5th. All three characters are written brilliantly, and we get to see what the Dark Angels are like from ordinary battle-brothers to the Grand Masters. It was also good to see that Space Marines aren't cold and unthinking;

Brother Annael comes across a group of renegades. The Space Marine in him says he should kill them, but his own self knows there is no honour in killing defenceless people in cold blood. Ultimately he leaves this decision to his superior. Sammael himself is stoic and wise, and always considers his options and he isn't blind to the desperate measures he and his predecessors had to take to capture the Fallen. It takes a strong man to recognize this.

Telemenus comes across as being a glory seeker and quite arrogant, he is the best marksman in the 5th and is eager to earn his laurels. He knows little about the truth of the Ravenwing's hunt but when he finds out it shocks him to the core.

Over all Ravenwing was a good read, I didn't really learn anything new but it is full of secrets and revelations. Gav Thorpe is the master when it comes to the Dark Angels, so I'm confident that this trilogy is in safe hands. I'd recommend this book to fans of the Dark Angels but others will enjoy this, even people who aren't into 40k, although it would be useful to read the books *Descent of Angels* and *Fallen Angels* in the Horus Heresy series. I give Ravenwing four out of five stars, only because it tended to drag at times. But I hope the next book, *Master of Sanctity* lives up to it.

Stuart says

"The Dark Angels have secrets, layers within layers - yes we know this!"

No disrespect towards Gav Thorpe, but he is one of several authors BL have whom I'd say is a work horse. He always presents the fans of Black Library with a solid read. From his *Sundering* series to this current series *The Legacy Of Caliban*. The first in Gav's new trilogy is *Ravenwing*, concerning the bike marauding Dark Angels. The jeist of the story is essentially one of secrecy within the Dark Angels. During the Horus Heresy part of the garrison of the DA's home world sided with Luther, who was second in command of the garrison forces. They are now referred to as 'The Fallen' and have been hunted down for 10,000 years. Now that's a grudge!!

The real problem with *Ravenwing* lies with both the dialogue and over used tried and tested formula with the Dark Angels; secrecy. The dialogue is very much unique, but doesn't sit well with other incarnations of marine novels - they are speaking with the same syntax as if pulled from *Spartacus - Blood And Sand* TV show -

"Set us to purpose"

None of this going on - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1y_q3... - **disclaimer harsh language**

Where did that come from? I've never read dialogue involving any Space Marine or Dark Angels before. As for the characters, their identity comes from their position within the hierarchy. Annael is a new initiate into the Ravenwing, but previously had four centuries of combat experience as a squad member with the DA. That's a fairly long time, even for one of the Astrates, however he is treated as a new recruit. Then there's the layer of secrets within secrets (just like a onion, yes!). Essentially a handful of Dark Angel's know what happened during the Horus Heresy, which descends down the hegemony of command, though the lesser rank you are, the less you know. What doesn't sit right with me, is Space Marines are meant to project a strong union of brotherhood. The Dark Angel's have none, or if they do it feels falsified. The theme seemed wasted within the novel.

If you've read *The Purging Of Kadilus* this is a sort-of-follow on and allows for readers to see what happened at the end of the previously mentioned Space Marine novel. Other than that, I felt the characters to be lifeless, the story convoluted and fairly overused within BL novels. Some of the action scenes were given a different slant, but the marines seemed to be glued to their mounts. I realise there is meant to be a feeling of honour between rider and mount, when you are getting shot at from a elevated position, dismount and fire back -

"No sorry we can't do that, we love our bikes too much"
PAH I say!

Slim pickings with any actual information forthcoming about *The Fallen*. There's nothing definitive and nothing of interest revealed to the reader. Just conjecture. Much like the novel itself. Personally I'd avoid this and read *Angels Of Darkness*.

Marcelis says

Masters of fiction create a context so powerful that you get sucked in to the story and start writing it yourself in your head. The story becomes something more than a creation of the author. It is a space that the author shares with the reader. The author doesn't need to explain everything, or illustrate the world of their characters too much, because they spend some time teaching you how to do it for yourself. They may nudge you a bit along the way to serve their purpose, but you still feel like you have control. They manipulate your spontaneous creation, turning it upon itself at times or taking you on a journey that you would never have travelled on on your own. If you don't know what I'm getting on about, consider this. How many books have made you feel like you know what they are about, only to teach you a lesson, or have introduced characters that you thought were vital only to rip them away, making you wish you could unread the chapter? Plots that give you a gut feeling about something, that makes you fist pump when your suspicions are realised?

Gav Thorpe either:

1) Doesn't trust his readers to do this.

Or

2) Lacks the calibre to generate the rich context required.

OR

3) Expects the Warhammer 40K universe itself to bear the weight.

He just doesn't give you anything to work with in his stories. As a result, you are not invested in anything or anyone, you just seem to skim through, never really breaking the surface. Like all of his books, *Ravenwing* is very straight forward, no nonsense science fiction. It draws on what we already know about the Dark Angels and neatly adds all of the new stuff Games Workshop wants us to buy in plastic form. It introduces some very strong, one dimensional, characters and runs them through a linear plot. Apart from some stand out "Boo yeah!" moments, there is not much to celebrate about this book. I can't help but lament the fact that

Gav Thorpe is the voice of the Dark Angels. In fact, Games Workshop/Black Library as a whole has consistently failed to do them any justice in recent memory. Compared to the narrative I already have running in my head, inspired and driven by much earlier and crustier works, Ravenwing is an insipid foray into the Dark Angel mythos. Damn.

John somers says

12/20.
