

Index Astartes: Black Legion

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The Primarch of the Imperial Fists was the infamous Dorn, foremost servant of the Dark Gods. Their standing with institutions of the Imperium was unparalleled before Dorn betrayed the Emperor and led a violent rebellion that devastated the Imperium. Sigismund the Savager now bears the mantle of Primordial Praetorian, being instrumental in plunging the Imperium into the darkest of times.

Origins

Long before the Great Crusade and the Emperor reached the Ice Hives of Inwit, Rogal Dorn had risen to the rank of emperor himself, ruling over a stellar empire spanning the Inwit Cluster. Taken in as the adopted scion of the House of Dorn, his grandfather and clan patriarch taught him much of tactics, strategy, and diplomacy. Like all born to the Ice Caste, he was raised to endure and survive, to never relent, and know that the price of weakness is only death.

Inwit had always been an unforgiving world of rock and ice, tidally locked to a cold star. The people of its Ice Hives proved to be a hardy, resilient breed, having grown up on a world where discipline is the key to survival. On such a world, one's own dreams and ambitions could never be placed above the needs of the collective, and this was no different for Dorn, even as he grew to embody the full might of his Primarch heritage.

Whether Dorn was moulded by this environment or simply shared an innate kinship with the people and their values is not known, as much of his early youth is shrouded in mystery by Dorn's own quietude. Ultimately what came to be known was that he was a practiced exponent of the uncompromising self-discipline so characteristic of Inwit, with a total commitment to order and the cold truths of reality. It was with these values to heart that Rogal Dorn presented himself to the Emperor aboard the mighty *Phalanx*, upon the Master of Mankind's arrival to the Inwit system.

Although Dorn had stretched the boundaries of the Inwit Cluster empire to their furthest reaches ever, the arrival of the Imperium's expeditionary fleet signalled a crossroads for his reign – as Inwit had taught, to relent was to be weak, and to be weak meant death. But Dorn was ever a pragmatist, and a cold analysis of the situation in front of him decreed that continued survival would mean subservience in the face of such power.

In a gesture of diplomacy, Dorn presented the Emperor with *Phalanx* as a gift, a ship unlike anything that had been seen since the Dark Age of Technology. The size of a small moon, its foredeck could dock a dozen cruisers and its superstructure was a towering forest of spires interlaced with flying buttresses. It shone like a small star, a precious treasure and momentous portent in the days of the Crusade. The Emperor duly welcomed Dorn and appointed him to the command of the 7th Legion – the Imperial Fists, returning *Phalanx* to serve as their Fortress-Monastery.

Engrossed in the unfamiliar position of subservience after forfeiting his domains to the Imperium, being stripped of his monarchical power, and being installed as a vassal of the new Emperor upon the revelation of being one of His biological sons, Dorn bore this seismic change with the dutiful, silent stoicism that would become the hallmark of his nature in all his dealings with the Imperium. Taking on the pain of such burdens, masked by his own resoluteness, ensured that the peoples of his grandfather's Ice Caste and of the Inwit Cluster would carry on in the new Imperium.

The Great Crusade

Dorn would maintain his ice-cold stone-faced mask even after initially taking command of his own Legion, and he spoke not even a single word to them until first seeing them in combat. The most he would offer following this was a single word of thanks to his gene-sons, remarking to himself that they had much to learn. After a heavy initial recruitment from Inwit, Dorn found that his new sons, being born of the same gene-stock, had the same unrelenting will and uncompromising self-discipline, which would form the basis of an unbreakable bond between Battle Brothers and Primarch.

The Legion quickly cemented a hard-earned reputation for themselves that would see the Imperial Fists serve as the Emperor's Praetorians, fighting alongside Him more than any other Legion throughout the Great Crusade. Although some of his brother Primarchs resented his closeness to the Emperor, Dorn only ever sought to uphold the values of the Imperial Truth in his own silent and stoic manner.

Forging new traditions under the credo of the Imperial Truth that would bind the Battle Brothers together, the Legion's early actions under their new Primarch proved to be tremendously effective; while the Great Crusade pushed forward, the Imperial Fists acted as the strategic reserve of the Emperor's forces. Developing an expertise in siege warfare and mass shock assaults, the Legion would strike the decisive blow in many battles. It was in these engagements that Dorn and his Fists would come to know the true nature of many of their Legion allies.

The first of the Legions to reveal their true colours were the newly renamed Emperor's Children and their Primarch Fulgrim. Rogal Dorn greeted Fulgrim with his typical stone-faced neutrality keeping initial relations amicable, although the fact that the newest Primarch to enter their confraternity would appropriate the Emperor's name for their Legion with such haste should have revealed everything Dorn needed to know from the start.

Despite having everything to learn of combat and of the Imperial Truth, Fulgrim constantly made goading remarks and jibes towards Dorn and the senior officers of the Imperial Fists of the ways they conducted themselves in approaching battle, preferring instead to insist upon a headstrong and short-sighted thrust into the heart of the warzone that eschewed the cold clarity of logic preached by the Imperial Truth.

Dorn saw no further value in continuing the mentoring of the IIIrd but hoped that some small measure of his guidance had rubbed off on the youthful Primarch. In their last action together as master and apprentice, Dorn saw that his hopes were forlorn, as the Emperor, via Horus, had given them both the honour of recovering the next of their brethren upon the volcanic world of Nocturne. Instead of embracing their freshly recovered kin, Fulgrim took aim to goad yet another brother-Primarch. Dorn embraced Vulkan and gave his recommendation that Fulgrim and the Emperor's Children be sent away to prepare for an expedition of their own.

Pressing on into the Great Crusade, Dorn would join his Imperial Fists in a rare chance to support the normally reclusive Blood Angels upon the world of Kiy-Buran. The charnel house that the Legion of his brother Sanguinius had made of the world, and the recruitment of local mutants that fell entirely outside sanctioned Astartes recruitment practices, put paid to any thoughts of the IXth Legion's savagery and macabre tendencies being mere rumour. Seeing the sickening twists of life and death attacked the core of the Imperial Truth for which Dorn had set everything aside to uphold. As ever, Dorn diligently took the steps to ensure that even if no one else would stay true to the Emperor's creed, he still would. The remaining cities were subsequently burned by the VIIth and the Blood

Angels contingent along with their newest recruits ordered to rendezvous with their Primarch to face his judgement.

Echoing the sentiments of his brother Roboute, in the campaign against the World Prince, Dorn found the conduct of the Alpha Legion to be reminiscent of the same dishonourable and cowardly nature as the Raven Guard. Though they could not readily be seen, Alpharius and his Legionnaires entered themselves into the fray unasked for, acting as though his Imperial Fists would require the martial support that they so often provided to others. The aftermath saw Dorn confront his brother, along with his doppelgangers, scolding him for the deceitful nature of his conduct and for just how far they had crossed the line of decency by.

As the Great Crusade marched on, Dorn's belief in the resolute commitment of the Legions to the Imperial Truth would continue to be put to the test. This time it would be the living nightmare concocted by Konrad Curze and the needless, almost gratuitous, slaughter of civilians on Cheraut that would push Dorn past what he could abide by. Giving his silent thunder voice, Dorn chastised his brother for his betrayal to the Imperium and all it stood for. Before he could finish however, the Night Haunter turned upon him in a flash of violent fury. The intervention of Fulgrim spared Dorn the worst, at the cost of stroking his brother's ego further, and allowed him to incarcerate the rogue Primarch aboard *Phalanx*. Further exposing the treachery of his brother, Curze would flee from his prison before he could face justice.

The passing of time would eventually see Dorn and his Fists forced to partner again with Legions they considered less than worthy from past experiences, and so it was that they joined the Emperor's Children, along with Horus and his Luna Wolves in support of Perturabo's Iron Warriors on Schravann. Despite their crucial actions as part of the relief force in holding the line to ensure the XVIth's spear tip cut to the quick of eliminating the enemy warlords following the razing of the last citadel, Horus would give praise, not to him, but to Perturabo for his siege craft, despite the need for three Legions' worth of support to finish the campaign.

At the banquet that followed the conclusion of the conflict, despite his better nature, Dorn would let slip his frustration at praise being given to others who continuously showed less than what his Fists knew was required to show genuine adherence to the Imperial Truth. Normally content to seek no favour or honours, Dorn could not help but feel the direct praise for Perturabo being given in front of him by Horus was intended as a direct insult, especially when he had been as the Emperor's right hand, the unbreakable fist that crushed the final resistance.

It was Perturabo's response however that so blatantly attacked the sensibilities of the Emperor's creed and aired outright thoughts of traitorous intent that sent Dorn over the edge. Once he had been separated from his Brother Primarchs and reunited with his trusted Legionnaires, Dorn's cold, stoic nature returned to him. In calm reflection on the situation, he realised it was more than insult that Horus had intended to him, but was an outright manipulation to goad him and his Legion into vainglorious ventures to outdo each other and serve Horus' own interests. This underhanded, calculated action stung Dorn as yet another subversion of the Imperial Truth from the other Legions of the Imperium.

Praetorians of Terra

After the Ullanor Declaration, Dorn's stone-like façade continued to erode, even if only in the privacy of his own chambers. For centuries he had given over everything of himself to the Emperor and the Imperium, and despite knowing that only his Legion had exemplified the virtues of the Imperial Truth to their fullest while all others and their Primarchs fell short, his reward came to nought.

Colourpiece 1:

Dorn watched from the balcony of the dais as the seemingly endless procession concluded and the Emperor moved to speak to the countless masses of mankind gathered in Triumph. He could see the weight such a singular momentous turning point in history held as it heaved itself upon the minds of all who had gathered like the intense pull of the singularity at the centre of a black hole. In this moment, there was nothing but the voice of the Master of Mankind, and in this moment, He declared that He would be taking leave of the Great Crusade.

A silence fell upon the continent, a hush so deafening as it sought to drown out any cries of denial. Into this silent chasm, Dorn saw the Imperial Truth torn asunder, as the Emperor's proclamation seemed to deny its core tenets of rationality and reason. Then the Emperor spoke again. In front of the assembled might of the Imperium, in front of the millions of Army soldiers, in front of the mountain toppling titans, in front of the hundreds strong aircraft that blotted the sky, and in front of eight of his own Primarch sons, Horus Lupercal was made Warmaster.

"I declare Horus, Warmaster of this Imperium." – The Emperor

The sight of what came next made it seem as though the laws of physics themselves had been broken and bent by the will of the Emperor, and that the world could have been flipped over such as to see everyone walking with the sky beneath their feet. In full view of the mustered military might, Dorn and the other Primarchs, eight beings so far beyond humanity that they could well be as the very gods that the Imperial Truth taught to be false, would be seen bowing their heads in supplication as their brother Horus hoisted the great mace of his new office aloft above all gathered beneath the great dais, and above those of his own Primarch brotherhood.

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Sigismund saw them as they departed the balcony, and he awaited his lord father. The Primarchs were in various humours, with some leaving alone including Sanguinius and Mortarion, and some in groups, like Lorgar, smiling as he walked beside Magnus and Angron, barking with laughter. Last to leave was his stone-faced gene sire, Rogal Dorn, with Horus at his side.

Later, Sigismund was gathered alongside his fellow Imperial Fists commanders to meet with their Primarch aboard Phalanx where their gene-sire had retired to following the Triumph upon Ullanor. Standing in the strategium in quiet, Rogal Dorn had told them all of the twin decrees from both the Emperor and Horus. The Legion would be split, but neither half would follow the Warmaster in taking another step forward in the Great Crusade. A Demi-Legion would accompany Dorn as they were recalled to the Sol System, to return as Praetorians of Terra. The remainder would be dispersed among the garrison worlds, indignantly providing relief to Perturabo's IVth.

The commanders greeted the words with silence and faces set into the images of stone. Some nodded, some offered questions of logistics to be considered. That was the way of the Fists, as it had always been, they had their order and their duty. Beneath his cold exterior, Sigismund could feel his heartbeats rising, and found himself staring into his father's gaze with words forming upon his lips. "When will word of your investment as Praetorian of Terra be made known?"

Dorn's face turned from Sigismund's eyes as he simply dismissed his assembled officers and receded into his chambers.

In front of a continental mass of assembled humanity, Rogal Dorn, a demigod among mortals, was forced to kneel to his brother Horus, bowing his head in supplication as he had only ever done to the Emperor previously. To add insult to injury, following the public proclamation of Horus as Warmaster, the Emperor privately decreed to Dorn that he and his Imperial Fists would be recalled from the Great Crusade and return with Him to Terra.

Dorn was shaken, being unable to reason why the Emperor would entrust the success of the Great Crusade to all of the other Legions without the might of the Imperial Fists on standby to act as the decisive hammer blow to the actions they could not finish themselves. When Horus spoke with Dorn after the Triumph of Ullanor and indicated his first order would be to have the Imperial Fists Legion take over half of the duties from the Iron Warriors on the garrison worlds, Dorn knew that his Legion was being doomed into obscurity with no hope of return, and that the Emperor's wisdom had not extended to his choice of Warmaster.

Publicly, Rogal Dorn mustered all of his transhuman strength to maintain his stone-faced composure in the face of such changing times, but further cracks managed to escape including Dorn's outspoken and impassioned, bordering on vehement, argument against the use of psychic powers leading up to the Resolution of Nikaea. Even aboard *Phalanx* en route to Terra, Dorn could not keep his anguish at being so devalued secret any longer from his own Legion. Seeking to drown out such feelings, Dorn began to seclude himself more and more into the embrace of Pain-Glove.

The Primordial Truth

Imperial History would speculate that the seeds of disaffection were planted at Ullanor upon the declaration of Horus as Warmaster. Whether this was ultimately true or not, it was within the Pain-Glove that the fruits of heresy were borne. After taking up station on Terra with a full Demi-Legion of Imperial Fists, discord broke out amongst the ranks of the VIIth's highest echelons, including from Dorn's trusted First Captain, Sigismund.

Months upon months of endless and meticulous patrolling and surveying of the farthest reaches of the Imperial Palace precinct and surrounds began to take their toll on the command officers of the Imperial Fists, and even the most steadfast and resolute were not immune to being broken down piece by piece from the monotony of duty. Sigismund became more and more outspoken to his Lord Primarch, brazenly calling him out for showing weakness in the face of Horus and the Emperor's efforts to force the once glorious Praetorian Legion to fade into obscurity in a vast and uncaring galaxy.

Colourpiece 2:

Sigismund had seen the changes taking place within Dorn ever since the twin decrees that had consigned the Imperial Fists to be a mere footnote in the annals of the Great Crusade. It was as if internal structures of will and strength had finally fallen victim to a thousand tiny cuts made over time. Dorn had been isolating himself more and more over the voyages from Ullanor to Terra and again onto Beta Garmon, leaving ever more duties to the responsibility of his Captains: briefings, inspecting the troops, attending to astropathic communications with converging Legion expedition elements. In the brief moments that Dorn didn't cloister himself within the Pain-Glove, he had taken to dwelling silently within the Temple of Oaths. Sigismund knew exactly what weighed on his father's mind, and knew that only he had the knowledge that could illuminate the Primarch and bring about his father's understanding of the real truth, just as he had experienced during the brief return to Terra.

He knew the time was right to reveal the truth to his father. He knew his father had only been deceiving himself for all of this time, relying only on blind adherence to a false truth he was too afraid to let go of. 'Do not worry father, soon you will know. It cannot be kept from you, and then we will make the galaxy see.' He thought of one of the Primarch's own teachings, 'Even the smallest crack in a wall can be exploited.'

Dorn was staring up at the Legion's oldest battle honour Roma as Sigismund approached.

'Yes, my son?' said Dorn, noticeably twitching his eyes, though not turning to face him.

Sigismund looked up at the ceramite plate, the meaning of what it once represented, beyond a mere meritorious victory award and of the promise that the Imperium once held, and saw that it was now only as the dust gathered upon its fragile surface.

'There is no honor left for us in this Imperium,' said Sigismund. 'We should cast off our shackles and hold true to our own oaths as sworn in this temple.'

Dorn made a growl that quickly gave way to a sigh. 'We are made to serve. That is our purpose.' He was shaking as if huge forces were fighting for control inside of him. 'Every Primarch, every son of a Primarch exists to serve the Imperium.' You are wrong, thought Sigismund. 'Your will is mine, and through me the Emperor's... and the Warmaster's.' I have chosen, I have chosen to see the light of the truth, Sigismund said to himself. 'Our existence has no other meaning, our choices are not our own, our fate is not ours to choose...' I am committed now, there is no turning back, Sigismund thought. Now I shall make you see that I am right, that my choice was right.

'You are right to say that we are made to serve, father.' Sigismund stated in defiance. 'But it is not the Imperium that we should be serving, even you were once so much more before our false emperor enslaved you.' The Primarch's gaze fixed upon Sigismund, burning into him, as he stood still as a statue. 'The Imperial truth is no truth at all, it is a lie, for there is only one Truth, the Primordial Truth my lord, that has existed since time immemorial, guarded over by entities far beyond even the Emperor's understanding. There is new purpose for us in choosing to serve in the light of the Primordial Truth. I know you have heard its virtues, whispered to you within the embrace of the Pain-Glove.'

'You speak the unspeakable, you harbour the traits of... of a traitor! You make your life forfeit with such insanity.' Dorn's voice was low, though Sigismund could feel the danger in his words, he could also detect the fragility of conviction within them. His father was not looking at him, could not look at him, he realised.

'Stand with me my lord. And I will stand with you against the true enemies of humanity until the day I die.'

'So certain you are, so little doubt. Do prey tell how you came to know the hand of destiny so intimately.' Dorn asked Sigismund; the words of his own question sounded fragile in his ears, as if they reached him from far away.

Sigismund saw the moment had come. Now was the time to seize it. In his mind he weighed how to begin.

'It was on Terra, while on a perimeter sweep of the outer reaches of the greater Palace region,' he said, after a moment. 'We had not long arrived on Terra at the time.' He thought back to that narrow sliver of time, remembered the tension that ran through every Imperial Fist in the Demi-Legion after the decrees. Some thought it could not truly be a deployment that would outlast the Crusade, but those who had heard it from the Primarch himself had no such comfort. While the truth of their new reality soaked in, the Imperial Fists made ready to fortify the Palace.

'I was walking the buried depths of the catacombs where the outskirts of the Imperial Palace meet the borders of the Yndonesic Bloc. I knew our orders, but I was missing something.' He had felt diminished, as if the decrees had taken something vital from him. 'For so long I took each step of the Crusade without doubt. Each campaign, each battle, each blow had purity. That was my strength, had always been my strength.' Dorn was still, simmering with anger, but held back, not directed towards Sigismund, but rather fighting for control within the Primarch as Sigismund's words began to resonate with him.

'I happened upon a fane, it was deserted, and I thought I was alone'. It had been quiet, he remembered. He was not sure how far separated he had become from his Templar brethren in his search for solitude. 'It was only when she spoke to me that I realised I was not alone. "Captain," she said. I drew my sword and turned. She stood only eight paces behind me, I had not even heard her approach.'

'Who?' asked Dorn. Sigismund looked up, his eyes focussed with a keen clarity, yet fixed upon nothing, as if staring at something that lay just beyond the veil of the horizon.

'She called herself Giao Tong, claiming to be the temple's head priestess, the Dominatus Yin of the Eightfold Revelation as she put it. She just stood there, looking at me as if she had been waiting, as if she knew I would come.' She smiled, he remembered. A smile that belied her calm demeanour. She had nodded as if answering a question he had not asked. "You have questions," she had said, "I have the answers."

'What did she say?' said Dorn

'It was not just what she said to me, it was what she made me see. She spoke and I seemed to see what she spoke of.'

"You must choose," she had said. "You must choose your future and the future of your Legion, Sigismund, First Captain of the Imperial Fists." Her words held him in place. Fear and hope filled him in equal measure, both forgotten and alien in their raw intensity, as talk of a future for the Legion opened Sigismund's eyes. "You must choose where to stand. By your duty to a lost cause, or by your father's side at the end."

'The end of what?' Sigismund had managed to say.

"The end of all the lies that have been, and the revelation of the Primordial Truth." 'She spoke and I seemed to see what she spoke of.' Her words unfolded in his mind in blurred reality, like snatches of dreams, like flowering nightmares. 'I could see it. It was real.'

Thronged masses encircled enormous statues. A poor mimic of the Investiary in the Imperial Palace, though these also surrounded a central golden figure. While their faces were unrecognisable, their identities were unmistakable. The nearest was Curze, with his claws outstretched like those of the eagles that adorned every structure surrounding the plaza. To one side of the Night Haunter was Fulgrim, the Phoenician haloed in the light of the Aquilla; on the other, was someone who could only be Angron, the Red Angel carved in the image of controlled gladiatorial rage. Sigismund circled the statues, seeing other familiar images: Perturabo, Mortarion, Magnus the Red, Lorgar Aurelian, Alpharius, and finally Horus Lupercal. There could be no doubting the identity of the central figure too as the Emperor.

Sigismund looked out over the slowly circling mass of people and wondered what they thought they did in this place. Pilgrims, thought Sigismund, as he came to the realisation that what he was seeing was not simply a place of devotion, but one of worship.

Giao Tong appeared beside him in his vision. 'But why, the Emperor is no god.' Sigismund asked, seeking to understand. "This is the Imperium that will come to pass if events continue on their present course. The Emperor with his foresight has seen this future, and sought to destroy the old faiths across the galaxy so that one day His cult would elevate Him to godhood."

Sigismund kept his eyes fixed on his father, confident his words were having their desired effect on him.

'Godhood!?' Dorn exclaimed, 'my Father has spent centuries freeing humanity from the shackles of religion, refuting any notion of divinity, and your charlatan, a demagogue who pretends to the same powers, has made a believer of you in such a lie.'

"You understand what it will come to," she had said. As she spoke Sigismund had known it was true. The universe was war without end. "Death, Sigismund. Death without honour under the light of a familiar star that is but a twinkle to all else in the galaxy. Alone and unremembered." she had said. The Imperium had turned on the Fists and it was only a matter of time before the VIIth Legion would fight their final battle and sheath their swords for the last time.

'And what, in this vision of yours, is it that it will come to? Among my brothers that you saw, where was I in all of this?' growled Dorn.

'It will come to the last breath of the last Imperial Fist, alone and unremembered in this large and cruel galaxy, forgotten by the Imperium that has been forged upon the foundations we have laid.' Sigismund said vociferously. 'I am His chosen Praetorian!' cried Dorn. 'I fought on a thousand battlefields for Him, and you say he continues to eternally ignore me like I don't exist?' 'It will come to that, father, the Emperor has forsaken you, I saw it, and understood that it was true, and that I had to choose.'

'What is the other path?' Sigismund had asked her. She nodded her head. "The future of the galaxy is in your hands, for the Emperor will abandon the galaxy in His quest for apotheosis. You and your Imperial Fists must save the Imperium, for it is evident that the Emperor will not."

'I chose to leave Terra with you.' It had taken him days to settle on his choice. He had tried to forget what she had told him, what her words had made him see. But, in a galaxy where the Imperium had forgotten the Praetorian Legion, what other choice could there be?

'That is why I returned to the stars with you father. We will not die alone and forgotten in the light of Sol, rather I will stand astride the galaxy with you to punish the traitors of the Imperium who turned their backs on us.'

Dorn breathed in the chill recycled air. He flexed his left hand and watched the movement of his metal-clad fingers. He looked up. Sigismund saw the coldness in his father's eyes, the icy glitter. Dorn opened his mouth, his lips moving slowly. When his voice came it was like the whisper of an oncoming storm. 'The Imperium will endure. The Imperial Fists will endure. I will endure. But you, you have made your decision, and none will know of what you have done. You will continue in rank and position as you have, and you will not speak to any other of this. Not until we rendezvous with the rest of our Legion and I pass my judgement. Your duty will be to maintain your silence until I return from my chambers.'

'As you will, father.'

Despite the threat of censure, Sigismund continued his overtures to Rogal Dorn aboard *Phalanx* as they left Terra for Beta-Garmon to muster the remaining forces of the Legion from the disparate locations of their various deployments across the galaxy, readying themselves for garrison duties. The nigh-on incessant outcries from the attached commanders of the Legion including Sigismund drove Dorn ever more to seek out the clarity provided by the flagellating workings of the Pain-Glove. Eventually, as the majority of the remnant Demi-Legion of Fists gathered together, Rogal Dorn finally broke and the heresies of his long pent-up thoughts were made manifest.

As the powers of Chaos Undivided began to flow through Dorn and his Legion, his mind was opened up to the revelation of the Primordial Truth, and finally understanding the lie that the Imperial Truth had always been. The Emperor had purposefully sought to keep humanity in the dark and deny the true gods their due to seek godhood for Himself instead. Following a command meeting of the Legion it was resolved that the Imperial Fists would stand resolute against the hypocrisy of the Emperor, and do everything they could to save humanity from itself. Circumstances conspired to favour their bold undertaking, as Horus found himself out of action and unable to function as Warmaster following a campaign in the Davin system, and unrest brewed between the Administratum and the Ultramarines Legion.

Ever since forgoing his title of emperor of the Inwit cluster, Rogal Dorn always lived up to the maxim of "The truth is all we have". With the revelation that the Imperial Truth had been a lie and the Primordial Truth would save humanity from itself, Dorn quickly turned his attentions to those of his brother Primarchs he knew would see the Truth as he had, and to those he knew would willingly remain ignorant.

Heresy Revealed

Dorn was ever the meticulous planner, a master of war and of structures both physical and mental. As part of his planning prowess, he had also become a master of seeing the links between events and the grand plans that underpinned them. He realised that even though he was the chosen champion of Chaos, he was not the first of the Legionnes Astartes to be awakened to their Truth. In spite of this, he saw all that had gone before him, all the minor disruptions and trickles of disagreements that would eventually lead to flashpoints and pivotal moments, had all been building up to enact Chaos' grand plan for humanity, with him at its helm. All of this had now set the stage for Dorn to capitalise on the unrest and confusion running rife throughout the fledgling Imperium and he commenced his scheming as he did with any of his plans, with a strong foundation.

The revelations of his new dark patrons led to the first of his covert communiqués being directed to the reclusive and feral Blood Angels. The promise of deposing the Emperor swiftly saw the bloodthirsty Angels of the IXth set a course for Terra as the vanguard to bolster the Fists' own Demi-Legion stationed on the capital world. Dorn cut through the astropathic chatter going unheeded by the Dark Angels stationed on Caliban and next revealed themselves as co-conspirators playing the Great Game. While Luther was surprised, Dorn knew the work of his Ist Legion kinsmen in supplication to the wiles of Chaos had long set in motion many events across the Galaxy aimed at achieving Chaos' vision, even leading to his own ascension to Primordial Praetorian.

Knowing no matter how boundless his hatred for Perturabo was, of all the Primarchs it would be Perturabo alone that would see his master plan for how it would unfold on Istvaan. With the Iron Warriors within the sphere of influence for his upcoming plans and awaiting the arrival of Luther's Dark Angels, Dorn bade that they cement their pact with proof of their loyalty to the cause. Brother-Librarian Zahariel volunteered to lead a cadre of Dark Angels in the endeavour, setting course for Olympia. What actions they took upon the planet remain unknown but had their desired effect, ensuring the Iron Warriors would be too preoccupied with the civil unrest unravelling across their homeworld to be a hindrance to Dorn's plans.

Not anticipating having to factor in the Iron Hands Legion at this early stage owing to the nature of their far-flung expeditionary deployments, Dorn was surprised to receive a communiqué himself from Ferrus Manus. Manus had expressed his frustrations with the Adeptus Mechanicus to Dorn, speaking to him of their unwillingness to support his Legion the further they neared to the Galaxy's edge, withholding the technological marvels he knew would have sped up their efforts and could have been readily available were the Martian Priesthood not jealously hoarding them.

Dorn saw the crack in the wall his Brother had presented and sought to take full advantage of the opportunity presented to bring Manus and his Iron Hands around to his cause. In him, Rogal saw the weight of another Legion that could be added to his plans to depose the Emperor. First by joining the chosen circle to crush those Legions which would not be turned, and then to secure the Red Planet, ensuring a steady supply of armour and weapons to their side.

While on Terra acting as Praetorian, Dorn had learned of the tensions between the various Magi of Mars that had blown wide open into outright hostilities following the aborted attempt by Horus' ambassador Regulus to ensure fealty of the Priesthood to the new Warmaster. Dorn's usual stone-faced demeanour let slip a moment of pride and pleasure seeing Ferrus' reaction of avarice to being promised the title of Fabricator-General of Mars, knowing the Xth would fully embrace Dorn's vision for the Galaxy in service to the Primordial Truth, and the True Gods.

Finally, Dorn reached out to Vulkan, leaning heavily into the bond he had formed with the Primarch of the XVIIIth, and the clear mistrust he had always shown towards figures of authority. He drew out Vulkan's underlying hatred of the Emperor as the Imperium's ultimate authority figure who had twice shunned him, first upon his discovery and second upon taking leave of the Great Crusade and appointing Horus as his puppet proxy. He was soon swayed to Dorn's side, and with him the Salamanders began their tutelage in the liberating ways of Chaos.

With those Legions he reasoned could be trusted by his side in his new endeavour, Dorn turned his attentions to those who would need to be eliminated. Utilising old grudges between the Legions and the Ultramarines, he swiftly managed to draw the Alpha Legion and Word Bearers into his cunning schemes, their egos and loyalties blinding them to the grand plans unfolding around them as they were case far from Terra and deep into Ultramar space.

Of the most loyal and detestable Legions that could oppose him, Dorn determined to ensure they were delivered into annihilation by drawing them in to his Istvaan campaign. The cowardly Raven Guard would commit upon presentation of cold analysis of the Ultramar issue, the self-aggrandizing Fulgrim would no doubt leap at the chance for his Legion to attempt to show up the Praetorian, and Angron's simple honour, principles, and loyalism would demand nothing less than committing the World Eaters to Dorn's efforts to bring the Ultramarines to heel.

Finally, Dorn reached out to his Brother Guilliman to seal their role in the upcoming war. Revealing the decree of the Emperor that the Ultramarines be put to death, convinced that the XIIIth would secede from the Imperium, Rogal sealed the compact of Roboute's support as an ally by gifting the planned trajectories of the Word Bearer and Alpha Legion fleets as they operated within Ultramar space.

Theoretical, he thought. The Emperor has been deceived and has ordered the death of our Legion. Practical, He is a great man, but only a man, and all men have flaws. And... He has done this before.

The blueprints for Dorn's new Imperium in the light of the Primordial Truth had been laid out, their foundations ready to be built upon the actions of his own Legion and their co-conspirators on Istvaan. The Praetorian's plans would see a full third of the Legionnes Astartes stand true in his cause, another third wiped out or taken out of action behind Ultramar lines, with the remaining Legions otherwise preoccupied across the galaxy.

With the stage set, Dorn committed to the greatest act of betrayal in Imperial history, shattering three full Legions under his fist. The only blemish in the plans of the Istvaan Campaign was the escape of the Eisenstein from the flotilla in orbit around the planet. With the threat of their service to the Ruinous Powers in the name of the Primordial Truth being revealed to Terra before the turncoat Legions could take the Imperial capital world by surprise, Dorn sought to withdraw and mobilise quickly away from Ultramar space, sending a message through the warp storms to his Demi-Legion in residence at the Imperial Palace.

"Imperial Fists of Terra, the Emperor has betrayed mankind. You are now Praetorians of the Primordial Truth. This is the will of Rogal Dorn."

Siege of Terra

When news of the drop site massacres on Istvaan revealed the full extent of Rogal Dorn's treachery to the wider Imperium, the Primarch's forward planning had already placed his contingencies into play for just such an event. The first of these saw the Blood Angels arriving on Terra shortly after the second of his contingencies, his message to the heart of the Imperium, reached the Imperial Fists stationed upon Terra. Dorn was determined to prevent a freshly recovered Horus from reaching Terra without a challenge.

Ahead of his arrival, the Demi-Legion garrisoning the Imperial Palace quickly became its jailers, trapping the Emperor and his Custodes within the throne-room. While the Blood Angels ensured they were the first of the traitors to provide reinforcements, the flaws of the IXth Legion soon disrupted the best laid siege plans of the Fists, as they recklessly assaulted the Imperial throne-room, causing confusion and laying bare the Fists' previously well-planned defences as the Night Lords Legion surprised all on Terra with their unannounced arrival, followed swiftly by their disappearance from the fighting once more.

Dorn's fleets entered the Sol system soon after, with the exception of his so-called Reckoning Fleet, under the command of the recently elevated fleet master Alexis Polux, whose ships lied in wait within the Phall System to strike at loyalists seeking to rally to Terra. With the promise of being named Fabricator General of Mars, he sent Ferrus Manus and the Iron Hands off to the Red Planet to secure it for the future of mankind under the Primordial Truth. With them he sent his own Captain, Camba Diaz, to secure the forge-complexes responsible for Astartes armour and weapons output.

Colourpiece 3:

As Camba-Diaz's companies landed at Mondus Gamma, they were received by the incumbent Fabricator General Kelbor-Hal and Tech Adept Lukas Chrom. After rejecting the overtures of Regulus as the Warmaster's Mechanicum representative to swear fealty to yet another Terran warlord, made all the more daring by not even claiming Horus to be a false idol of the Omnissiah as the Emperor had styled himself centuries ago, Kelbor-Hal had hopes of receiving the Imperial Fist as a comrade in arms, learning through Mechanicum channels of their recent treacheries.

When Camba-Diaz instead delivered the news that Mars had been promised to the Primarch Ferrus Manus, Kelbor-Hal leapt into a mechanical fit of fury directed solely at the Astartes. He was determined to no longer suffer subservience to any false followers of the Omnissiah, but his resistance was short lived as Camba-Diaz cut through the Magos' robes and mechadendrites, along with what little organic material remained of his being.

Turning to Lukas Chrom, Camba-Diaz delivered a look that saw the Tech Priest quickly and fervently commence the process of loading the assembled aircraft with as much armour and weaponry as they could handle. The rest of the Imperial Fists' reclamation force meanwhile were engaged in fighting all across the surface of Mars. Noticeably absent from the combat channels however were any reports of battles involving the Iron Hands.

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The Dragonshard led the Legion's Techmarines, along with the gibbering Adept that called itself the Guardian of the Dragon, through the winding series of tunnels beneath the Noctis Labyrinthus. Eventually the gloom gave way to a soft light emanating from the walls, giving off a smooth silvery appearance matching the Primarch's own hands. With purposeful strides, the Dragonshard led the unquestioning Legion cohort through a series of seemingly random twists and turns.

After an unknowable amount of time that could have been a minute or a century, they arrived on a wide ledge high up in a glittering cavern of blinding silver. The Techmarines present had troubles computing its true size, appearing as the hollow core of the planet, such was its size.

“Behold the Artefact!” cried Ferrus Manus, moving to stand before a wooden lectern with a thick leatherbound book upon it. Both were out of place for how normal they were compared to the cavern they resided in, but Manus promptly obliterated them both from existence, absorbing the book into the liquid metal of his hands.

One of the Techmarines of the assembly shuffled towards the edge of the cliff they stood on, their bionic eyes glazed, with a frozen look. “Caution Brother,” Iron Father Blantar warned, looking over the edge. “It’s a long way down.” “This place... defies logic. It defies the understanding of the machine. Do you not see? Look!”

Blantar was puzzled, but heeded the Tech-Brother’s words. As though they had unlocked some hidden aspect of the cavern, the sheer impossibility of its geometry, the wrongness of its angles and perspective, previously concealed from their machine enhanced senses, was suddenly and gloriously revealed. Every rule of normality was turned upside down in an instant and the natural order of the universe was overthrown in this new vision of distorted reality.

Dorn’s rebellion, the Imperium’s ascendancy, the forward march of humanity all paled into insignificance by comparison. Blantar’s mind was open to the infinity of possibilities as he saw the Artefact for what it was – the entire space, the walls and floors, every molecule of the cavern was part of a vast intelligence, a being or construct of ancient malice and phenomenal primeval power, everywhere and nowhere at once. And there, his Primarch stood, in full comprehension of the great work that would soon be at an end.

En route to Terra, despite his previous overtures finally having driven Dorn so deep into the Pain Glove as to awaken the Primarch to the Primordial Truth, Sigismund kept pressing his rhetoric upon his father. The First Captain insisted that Dorn was still too grounded in reality, only using the gifts of Chaos bestowed upon him as tools to aid in the fight for his righteous cause in the material plane. Sigismund, by comparison, had been overt in his newfound faith in the Eightfold Revelation, leading cult gatherings of Legionnaires and mortals alike from across the fleet, and even going so far as to treat with the daemonic creatures of the Warp. Sigismund found himself attempting all too often to drag the Primordial Praetorian away from his planning for the battles ahead to instead attend a congregation of the faithful, in order to more fully grasp the true scope of Chaos’ vision, only for his efforts to time and again be in vain as Dorn’s freshly emergent pride denied any vision for humanity other than his own.

Upon making planetfall, Dorn sought to abate Sigismund and installed him as commander of the Imperial Fists contingent responsible for holding the Imperial Palace. The First Captain immediately established the high standing of his appointed station, berating the Blood Angels Primarch following reports from the Palace Jailers of the Fists’ Demi-Legion of the confusion caused by the IXth Legion abandoning their posts to attack the throne-room. Sigismund could also sense the same lack of conviction in Sanguinius’ faith in Nurgle as his own Primarch had for the full glory of Chaos, and he detested him greatly for it.

While Sigismund played chess with the forces of Chaos across the greater Palace region against the strategies and defences being orchestrated by the freshly arrived Abaddon and his misguided loyalists, Dorn took up residence within the Bhab Bastion, commanding his forces across the face of Terra and concentrating his efforts on coaxing his Father out to face him. Dorn trusted Sigismund with his Demi-Legion to hold the Palace and work through to the throne-room, though their efforts to do so did not go unimpeded thanks to the coordinated attacks of the Sons of Horus and Iron Warriors.

In response, Dorn put the remainder of the VIIth Legion into action across various theatres defending strategic gates and ports around the Palace perimeter, aiming to hold the line on the outer front while Sigismund worked to breach the lines of the inner defences. Holding less trust in the abilities of his allied Legions, Rogal simply ordered Vulkan's Salamanders to wreak a heavy toll across Terra upon any and all Imperial Forces, meanwhile the Blood Angels were reigned in and put to use in the new meat grinder forming on the outer walls.

As the siege dragged on into months, slowly sapping the energies and resources of Dorn's Legions, the death of his bitter rival Perturabo at the hands of Sanguinius and the recapture of control over the Ultimate Gate marked what should have been a defining turning point for the defenders of the Primordial Truth. Dorn's cause for celebration and the moment of his final triumph quickly turned sour however, whereupon the breaching of the throne-room revealed the Emperor had long vacated the site, leaving the Custodes who had continued to play the feint to suffer unnatural deaths by the warp-enhanced rage of Dorn's fury.

From that moment Dorn departed Terra to unleash the *Phalanx* into the battle and instead command the war from the Sky-Fortress. With the on-ground command now wholly in Sigismund's hands, the First Captain pressed Dorn evermore to fully embrace what Chaos offered and to call forth the full might of the neverborn legions. Dorn meanwhile secluded further within the Pain-Glove to seek clarity and make new bargains through his unholy communion. Even the arrival of the White Scars from the warp did little more for the traitors' cause than to add to the fog of war. Eventually, Dorn relented his original vision for victory, desperate simply for victory by any means, and began unleashing his daemoniac hordes upon the surface of Terra.

Through the destabilisation of the barriers between the warp and real-space caused by the daemoniac incursions, and blood-pacts coordinated by Sigismund's faithful, a new breed of Astartes was let loose upon the battlefield. The warriors of Alexis Polux's Reckoning Fleet emerged onto the plains of Terra, twisted into unknowably horrific new forms as each was possessed by the daemons of Khorne's bloody legion. The plagues carried by Sanguinius' corrupted kin were magnified sevenfold and shared with friend and foe alike in Nurgle's name. Entire Brotherhoods of White Scars developed locomotive means of unnatural speeds for even an Astartes, the sensations of their movement causing tectonic tremors to emanate across the planet. Dorn meanwhile released his sorcerous Librarians who worked to corral the fresh waves of daemons and all formations upon Terra to act in line with the Praetorian's schemes, ensuring everything unfolded just as planned.

Though the siege had ground into a stalemate as it rolled into its third month, the fates appeared to favour Dorn and his rebel Legions. With further reinforcements just days away from Terra in the form of the Space Wolves, freshly anointed in the blood of Magnus' sons, turned over in service to Khorne, and with them the foremost practitioners of Chaos' powers in the Dark Angels, Dorn knew all he had to do now was play for time and the crushing blow would soon be delivered. At that moment however, a planet encompassing flash of light weakened the influence of the warp and obliterated entire legions of lesser daemons from Dorn's forces.

Phalanx

The resultant flare of the Astronomicon pulsing with the Emperor's presence was a blow to be sure, but with it, the Emperor had foolishly revealed His hapless choice of hideout, allowing Dorn's forces to move in for the kill in a charge led by Sanguinius. The commotion and its after-effects were compounded however by an explosion wiping out one of the shield generators of *the Phalanx*, as Dorn sensed a force he had not known for years.

The warnings of his recently released Chief Librarian, turned Sorcerer, Thorl had come to pass, and with his foresight the contingency Dorn had put into play was readied for what would come next. Sensors showed the teleportation signal of the raiding party and Dorn knew he had finally forced the Emperor into His last desperate play. The bound daemons, fused into the very fabric of *the Phalanx* enacted their foul magicks and scattered the boarding party away from their intended target point on the bridge and across the vastness of *the Phalanx*.

The Imperial Fists aboard *the Phalanx* approached Dorn at this moment, delivering an unexpected though somehow not surprising trophy – the Primarch of the Night Lords, his hated foe, Konrad Curze. Bidding his sons take their leave to return to the fighting, Dorn dragged Curze in chains to his Sanctum. Before dealing with his Brother directly, Dorn sought to press home the righteousness of his cause in front of Curze and asked the ultimate sacrifice of his Huscarl Terminator Guards.

Colourpiece 4:

'What is going to happen is not going to be easy', said Dorn. 'I am sorry that it must be you. You are the last of my first sons, and I would have preferred that another take the burden that you must carry.' He paused, and breathed out slowly. 'There is something I must ask you to do for me, my friend.'

'Of course, lord. Your will is my –'

'There is no need for formalities here, not now. Not with what I am going to ask of you.'

'Request or order, they are the same to me, lord', Archamus replied.

Dorn gave him a long look, then nodded slowly.

'You are right. This is the end of what must come before new beginnings. There are greater wheels turning the fate of this war, and I cannot ignore what is about to happen.' He paused. 'I need you to defend the Legion, unto your death. In this final act, I need you to be a praetorian to praetorians.'

'Have I not always been that, lord?' replied Archamus.

In front of Curze, Dorn drove his chainsword, *Storm's Teeth*, through the chest of his Huscarl Commander, expertly eviscerating both his hearts for a swift kill. The other Huscarls in his Sanctum all followed in turn, committing the ultimate display of loyalty to their Primarch and their new cause. Dorn allowed his martial rage to overtake him briefly, as he tore tapestries from the walls, smashed the Pain-Glove, and left a scene of concocted violence in supposed remorse for all the actions of his rebellion to this point.

In this moment, he gave Curze one final chance to repent for his actions, to see the errors of his allegiance to false powers, and to join the rebellion in service to the Primordial Truth. His Huscarls had demonstrated what being liberated to the Truth of the Primordial Powers had meant in both life and death in front of the Primarch of the VIIIth, and Dorn knew Konrad's aggression and hate would either lead him to his side or fate him to his doom. In response, Curze simply cackled in Dorn's face, claiming vindication for his previous attack on the Praetorian on Cheraut. Dorn was cold and calculated in his response:

"The only vindication that exists between us are those found in my own actions. Half the galaxy has joined in knowing the Primordial Truth, even if I was the only one with the will to act and see humanity brought into its light."

"I ignored my destiny once Brother, when the false emperor came to Inwit. I will not do that again, and you will not live to stand in my way."

The last thought passed through Curze's mind before his death: *"I will die *to* stand in your way!"*

Dorn could sense the Emperor outside his Sanctum, waiting. He was ready for the final battle, but Horus reached the open doorway before he could face his Father alone. In his warp-infused state however, Dorn could no longer be counted as a mere Primarch amongst his kin and readied himself to take on both Father and His chosen son should his final feint fail.

The sight that greeted both the Emperor and the Warmaster was one of ruin and destruction, both of the physical space around them, and within the Arch-Betrayer before them. The Emperor advanced, ready for the kill, however Horus, as he had so often done before, counselled restraint from his Father, waving him back as he saw in Dorn's eyes the same look of regret and realisation upon by released of possessive forces, just as he had experienced on Davin.

Horus and Dorn exchanged confiding words between them, with the Warmaster convinced the Praetorian had returned to the light of the Emperor once more. All at once, as Horus made to embrace Dorn as a Brother once more, the Emperor uncovered the brutalised corpse of Konrad Curze, and Dorn plunged the sheared adamantium haft of his personal standard through Horus' chest, killing him instantly.

With the Warmaster slain and Curze nought more than a lifeless cadaver lying upon the floor, there were none who remained alive within Dorn's Sanctum to record the titanic battle that played out between the Emperor and Dorn. The psychic reverberations of their duel were felt by all, not only upon *the Phalanx* but all across the face of Terra.

Abaddon and the Mournival would reach the Sanctum shortly after the end of their duel, discovering the beaten body of the Emperor alongside the remains of their own Primarch Horus, as well as those of Curze. Captain Loken noted the pulp of what must have been a mere mortal, caught in the crossfire of beings as gods by comparison to their own fragile frame, now resting at the feet of the Arch-Betrayer. Dorn's own corpse he saw was reduced to the dust of broken bones save for his left hand, surrounded by the dead husks of his former Huscarl bodyguards.

They wasted no time in evacuating from *the Phalanx* with the remains of their loyalist liege lords. As the Mournival did so, Abaddon locked his Astartes sight with the eyes of Sigismund for the briefest of moments, aboard his Thunderhawk in retreat as the Fists Legion broke free of Terra's gravity scattering as the traitor Legions reeled away in defeat. In that moment Abaddon swore he would have his vengeance upon them all.

Exile

Branded as cowards for being the first to leave Terra following the death of Dorn, it fell to Sigismund as First Captain to hold the Legion together. Reduced in numbers following the Siege, the Imperial Fists took refuge in the Eye of Terror, establishing a base upon Cadia from which to rebuild and continue the campaign against the Imperium.

Sigismund knew that the failure of Dorn to see his rebellion through had condemned his Legion to be pariahs among their own traitorous kin. The old Legion was regarded with such bitterness that Sigismund renounced their hated Imperial associations and in the height of hubris proclaimed they would adorn themselves with the cleansing black and white colours of his own personal heraldry and henceforth be known as the Black Legion.

Desperate for resources and vying for power and superiority within the Eye of Terror, Sigismund could not prevent elements of the former VIIth Legion fragmenting apart as they fought a series of bloody wars against the other Traitor Legions. Sigismund let them depart to fend for themselves, his faith was strong and over time attracted the attentions of the most devout Legionnaires from across the Traitor Legions, welcoming them into his expanding confraternity as he assumed the mantle of Primordial Praetorian.

His presumption to assume the title of his deceased progenitor would not be enough however to command the loyalty of the other Traitor Primarchs nor the Legion Masters of the remaining hosts. Sigismund was unperturbed however, comfortable to follow the portents of the Eightfold Path across time and space, knowing that even if it took 10,000 years, he would reforge the rebellion and strike at the heart of the Imperium once more, bringing the light of the Primordial Truth to the galaxy.

Homeworld

The Imperial Fists' homeworld of Inwit no longer exists, having apparently lost its orbital integrity and turning its icy plains into fields of fire as it plunges in a death spiral towards its own star, following the abandonment of the world by the Legion in the wake of the Heresy. Its inhabitants however did not suffer the same fate, as the population of Dorn's former empire in the Inwit cluster was scoured from existence during the Scourging spearheaded by Abaddon in his Massed Imperial Crusades.

Since their retreat into the Eye of Terror, Sigismund has maintained the fortification craft-skills of the former Legion, turning Cadia into a fortress world with a series of grand fortresses being erected across the planet's surface. The locations of these were specifically aligned to areas with the greatest densities of the mysterious Pylons that dotted the planet. Taking advantage of the relative seclusion being regarded as pariahs afforded them, Sigismund took a keen interest in unlocking the secrets of their design and function. Bit by bit over the millennia while working with the Dark Mechanicum, their secrets began to unlock. Slowly but surely, subtle changes in the composition of the Sacred Eye's size and intensity began to manifest and interact with other warp anomalies such as those around Fenris and Caliban.

The Black Legion however still maintains control of the mighty *Phalanx*, and with it Sigismund has carved his own reputation as Primordial Praetorian across the warp routes, becoming known as Sigismund the Savager for the severity of his foul deeds on any occasion he deigned to leave the Eye.

Organisation

The original Legion no longer exists, the VIIth having long since disbanded and the Black Legion taking no number and beholding itself to no Primarch. Following the failure of the Heresy and further fragmentation across the Legion Wars, the legacy of Dorn can be found spread across many warbands.

The possessed marines of Alexis Polux's fleets continue to carve a bloody legacy across the stars in Khorne's name; the Scions of Dorn scheme and plot to Tzeentch's plans as they target and annihilate loyalist and traitor formations alike to exact their revenge; the Soul Drinkers let themselves be guided by the daemon-possessed Soulspear of Dorn, sustaining themselves and their petty pleasure with the souls they reap from every battle; the Excoriators have never stopped following Dorn's last order to them from the walls of Imperial Palace – Do Not Lose. In this they have embraced Nurgle's gifts of life, flensing the skin of their enemies and themselves in the aim of self-renewal to carry on; the Subjugators retreated into the warp in disillusionment, though upon meeting with their kin from the Salamanders, they emerged as an unrelenting and overwhelming force, eschewing any subtlety and causing as much damage to friend and foe alike.

Warbands of the Black Legion itself, of varying sizes and composition, can be found following the Savager's chosen Champions, as they rally together for major raids or incursions into the hated Imperium to serve his and their dark master's various fickle needs.

The biggest rivals to the Black Legion's powerbase however come from the remnants of the most hard-line, stern, and traditionalist sect of the VIIth Legion that never broke faith with their Primarch. The Praetorian's Fists continue to worship Dorn as the chosen saviour of mankind by the Primordial Powers and hold possession of their fallen father's remaining fist as a relic in stasis.

Combat Doctrine & Beliefs

Each splinter of the Legion has their own preferred method of fighting, based on where their commander was drawn from and to which of the Primordial Powers they swear allegiance to. All within the Black Legion share a commonality of fervent worship of the Chaos Gods and dogmatic belief in the Primordial Truth.

Also common to many warbands of the Legion are the Executioners. Said to be the legacy of Fafnir Rann, the most vicious of Dorn's Captains, these individuals exist to slay enemy champions and sacrifice them to the Dark Gods. Executioners frequently operate in Cults, usually consisting of the original Astartes that fought for Rann but who have since become twisted into something more monstrous by the Gods of Chaos. Much like the Wulfen Berzerkers or Plague Marines, the Executioner Cults worship one of the Gods of Chaos, but which God exactly remains unclear. It is speculated that rather than one of the Four, Executioner Cults may worship one of the minor Gods of Chaos.

The old Legion was initially an inflexible formation comprised of identical Great Companies with unimaginative commanders, Sigismund's Black Legion is now a flexible fighting force reflecting the varied combat styles of its diverse lineages led by fanatical commanders. The singular legacy Sigismund has ensured remains across all warbands, via fear and the threat of cruel violence, however, is a devotion to meticulous planning.

Though few outside the Legion can see any semblance of planning in their rampaging actions, Sigismund has long held true to the maxim of always making the next cut, knowing one cut at a time would be how they create a legacy of eternity. After ten thousand years of carefully crafted actions, the Traitor Legions at last seem to be setting aside their differences, as Sigismund's goal to launch his Eternal Black Crusade draws near.

To ensure his goals are reached unimpeded by petty factional infighting, increasingly distrusting of the loyalties of his own lieutenants from within the Black Legion, Sigismund has put into practice a process of raiding the Praeses fortress-worlds of the Iron Warriors that surround the Eye of Terror. The secret purpose of these raids being to capture, torture, and forcibly re-indoctrinate Astartes of the IVth into the service of the Black Legion as his own personal bodyguard retinue. These loyal, lethal, and importantly, expendable Legionnaires fight in muted silence and answer only to Sigismund himself, collectively being known as his Minotaurs.

Gene-seed

The legacy of Dorn's gene-seed, prior to the Legion's awakening to the Primordial Truth en route to Beta Garmon, was remarkably stable and never exhibited signs of mutation. Though they were notable for having lost their sus-an membrane and Betchers gland. However, following their corruption by Chaos, Astartes of the Black Legion have exhibited random mutations, with it being likely this taint goes right down to the gene-seed level. Such mutations though are seen as a mark of favour from the Chaos deities and are generally displayed with pride.

Battlecry

Up until the destruction of Dorn's body: "Primarch – Progenitor, to your glory!"

Following this event, the various warbands each use their own battle-cries. Warbands fighting for Sigismund use: "No Pity! No Remorse! No Fear!"