This is not a teaser – 31 October 2022

**Cataclysm of Macragge**

**68 hours after the Mark of Oblivion**

**Magna Macragge Theatre**

**Surviving Word Bearers: 4,777**

**Living Primarch: 2**

**Chaos Spawns: 0**

**Surviving numbers of the Lost and the Damned: approximately 666,000**

**Chaos Knights: 15**

**Surviving Ultramarines and Successors Present: 302**

**Other Loyalist Space Marines: 713**

**Surviving Ultramar Auxilia: approximately 830,000**

**Imperial Guard reinforcements: approximately 27,000,000 (first wave, second wave, and third wave)**

**Loyalist Imperial Knights: 90**

\*\*\*\*

**Ultima Segmentum**

**Realm of Ultramar**

**Macragge System**

**Macragge**

**Magna Macragge Military District**

**Fortress of Hera**

**68 hours after the Mark of Oblivion**

**Optio Septimus Gracchus**

“*Not today*.”

For several seconds, the Angel and the Arch-Traitor stayed immobile.

They were like statues as the Traitors died under the relentless spider and Space Marines’ assault.

It was like watching a huge pillar of evil towering over a fire of gold and red.

The heretical mace and the holy crystalline sword were stalemated.

It was difficult to breathe.

And then they moved.

The first clash shook the shrine, and Septimus Gracchus felt himself being thrown back.

But as he was cast aside like a twig in one of Macragge’s storms, his eyes remained upon the duel.

Or rather, what his eyes could perceive of it.

The weapon of the Living Saint was so fast it was only really visible when it met the Arch-Heretic’s weapon, and even then...there was flashes of crystal which made it seem like an illusion.

All the while, neither the gold-and-ruby shining Angel nor the fiend had moved a single finger away from their original positions.

It brutally changed without warning.

There was an enormous shockwave, and then the Optio of the Ultramar Auxilia realised they hadn’t *seriously* begun to fight.

An entire wall of darkness materialised behind the Arch-Heretic. The loyal servant of the God-Emperor created an army of crystal insects without any gesture. Flames of gold burned, forbidding the Damned One to advance further towards the Shrine.

The two enemies had evaluated each other.

And now they escalated.

Septimus believed himself courageous and brave.

But when the storms of the light and heresy clashed, he, like every Auxilia survivor, ran to take cover behind one of the intact statues.

They had sworn an oath, but at the moment, they were more useless than the stupid speeches of the Prefects after the military parades they had endured in the last months.

There was another powerful explosion, one which again made him fear for the solidity of the entire structure, as the damaged ceiling began to lose more and more marble parts, and some of them were quite massive.

And in the middle of this devastation, the Living Saint and the Arch-Heretic began to soar.

The Angel of the God-Emperor was flying on her golden-red wings.

The Arch-Heretic was...the Damned was flying too, Septimus guessed, but it more as if it was swimming in a sort of black miasma...and the Optio rapidly looked away, because there were *things*, in that darkness, *things* that made him really afraid.

The duel accelerated and grew more violent as they gained height.

There were no more insults or challenges. Save the explosions and the noise of the weapons meeting each other, they were fighting in silence.

It was both terrible and beautiful.

The clashes were shaking the very foundations of the Fortress of Hera.

And the moment the Angel went over the ceiling level, it was like looking at a pyre of golden flames and crystals.

**Magna Macragge Military District**

**Macragge City**

**Battle-brother Marx Fischer**

Battle-brother Marx Fisher of the Black Templars had not been pleased when the Marshal had ordered that he would support with his arms and will the guardsmen instead of fighting side by side with the rest of the Crusade.

But now the Astartes veteran understood.

It had been a test of his faith.

Unlike many battle-brothers, Marx had not been blessed to arrive in time to participate in the fighting at Commorragh. But the guardsmen he was fighting with had.

“CULTISTS INCOMING!” He roared as another heretic leader raised an accursed object some one hundred metres wave. “We need-“

The entire street disappeared into a rain of blood, and countless abomination rose from the pools of red liquid which hadn’t been there a moment ago.

“STAND TO! FOR THE GOD-EMPEROR!”

Marx’s chainsword plunged into the throat of one of the daemons immediately, before claiming another kill. And then another.

Unfortunately, the heretics were calling the monsters faster than he was slaying them...

“Where are the snipers? I want this heretic’s skull blasted apart!”

“They’re coming, Sir! There’s only-“

One enormous statue of the Primarch of the Ultramarines – one real-sized, as far as Marx could judge – chose this moment to collapse...right on the position the heretics’ leadership were using.

The Black Templar thanked the God-Emperor for this superbly opportune intervention, and attacked harder the red-skinned abominations.

“They’re getting weaker,” Marx grunted while slaying six more daemons, “I think we will be able to push again for the Ceramite Manufactorum soon.”

“Sir, we were slaughtered the last time we tried to liberate it. It’s an excellent defensive position!”

“Yes...” the son of Dorn was forced to concede. “Unlike many locations in this city, it was built by some faithful and loyal mind.”

But there had been no time to inquire where they had to take position before the heretics struck and the walls fell. The reconnaissance units had arrived too late, and by the time they were on site, the Ceramite Manufactorum was conquered by the Arch-Enemy.

 “Where are the tanks I requested?” Marx asked when the daemonic tide was no more and his chainsword had claimed around twenty more heretic skulls. “We need a proper armoured fist to remove the heretics from their new stronghold!”

“I’m sorry, Sir, but the latest tank column was seen rushing eastwards! Command relay their apologies...but they had to deal with heretic super-heavies in priority.”

Marx gritted his teeth, but said nothing. If there were really super-heavies threatening a breakthrough eastwards, he couldn’t blame the guardsmen from choosing to divert their reserves there. The accursed Traitor Seventeenth Legionnaires were damned in the eyes of everything holy, per the will of the God-Emperor, but only an imbecile would deny that they had corrupted relics of the Great Crusade to kill thousands of Faithful.

“Artillery?”

“It’s coming within ten minutes. At least a battery of Basilisks, Sir.”

“I would have preferred some thrice-blessed Sphinxes.”

And not just because Her Celestial Highness had participated in the conception of those noble war machines. The Sphinxes were bringing a heavier payload of destruction upon the heretics’ death, which would be incredibly useful to demolish the heretics’ crawling inside the Ceramite Manufactorum.

“We need to advance and take positions around the ruined museum.”

“Sir, may I remind you that-“

“I have no intention to charge again, Lieutenant,” doing it once had been far than enough. Not only without his brand-new power armour Marx would be busy explaining to the God-Emperor why he had failed to fulfil his battle-oath, but the incident had forced him to assess for many minutes the massive differences between fighting with his battle-brothers and fighting with guardsmen. “But as you can see, when we’re not keeping an eye on the heretics, they clearly come up with new ideas. Ideas which result in deadly and abominable surprises for the Faithful.”

“I can’t argue with that,” the Nyxian man coughed behind his helmet, and Marx felt somehow uncomfortable, because as the dusty and damaged carapace armour was visible through the cloud of dust, it was incredibly clear even guardsmen officers’ equipment was inferior to the blessed power armour he took for granted. “Very well, Sir, I will give-“

Everyone stopped speaking or moving at this moment, for over their heads, for the first time, the dark skies seemed to lose whatever potent sorcery they were ensorcelled with.

And no less than three of his heartbeat later, to their north it was as if a beacon of the God-Emperor’s Himself had been lit.

“By the Golden Throne!”

Marx recited a prayer of salvation, for yes, indeed, the Golden Throne of Terra be praised.

They had endured the storm.

The heretics had unleashed everything they had, but now, the God-Emperor had heard their prayers and intervened to punish the Traitors.

“Remember! No Pity! No Remorse! No Fear! DEATH TO THE HERETICS! FOR THE GOD-EMPEROR!”

“FOR THE GOD-EMPEROR!”

**Above the Fortress of Hera**

**Lady General Taylor Hebert**

If she hadn’t travelled to the *Vengeful Spirit* before fighting the Traitor Primarch, this duel would likely have ended in her defeat.

Of course, if she hadn’t gone to the Eye of Terror, her chances of arriving in time to prevent the Lord of the Word Bearers from sacking the Fortress of Hera and defiling Roboute Guilliman’s corpse would have been extremely low.

As it was, her arrival had been ‘just in time’. One minute later, and the insect-mistress knew she would have been too late.

This was just an afterthought.

Taylor struck with every part of her strength, and with what happened to her recently, this was a fantastic amount of power.

She hadn’t the time to verify it, but she knew that with what had imbued her, she could manipulate tiny objects of crystals without breaking them in one hand, while bending plasteel in the other.

Between the Shard of the Sanguinor, the last echo of Sanguinius’ death, and Ynesth’s last gift, Taylor was...

She was *complete*.

She wasn’t going to use the words ‘as she was destined to be’, because the parahuman woman wasn’t sure the Emperor, for all his precognition abilities, had seen *that* coming.

“Why aren’t you fighting for him? He does not care about you! You are just a weapon he will discard as long as he has no use for!”

Taylor evaded the sorcery attack which smelled like carrion and excrements to her senses, and counter-attacked.

There was no point wasting her saliva here. Lorgar was going to die.

Strike.

Counter-strike.

The mace missed her by a finger. The super-reflexes were really something priceless. Too bad everything else didn’t come with a manual, and this battle was the wrong place and the wrong time to test her new skills.

“He will sacrifice you in the end, like he intended to sacrifice us!”

Taylor giggled, and for all the wind gusts around them and her helmet smothering the sound of her throat, the Traitor Primarch heard it.

“YOU THINK IT IS FUNNY?”

Strike.

Strike.

Avoiding the enormous mace again.

And yes, it was funny.

Lorgar was already dying. Drawing the power he did right now was killing him. The Lady General didn’t know who had given him the wounds able to bypass the super-regeneration, though given the ‘taste’ of it, her bet was on Elena Kerrigan aka Sophia Hess. Although there was something Eldar...

Strike.

Parry.

The shockwave they created was phenomenal, and for two seconds they were carried away by it.

The Traitor Primarch’s injuries weren’t limited to the obvious ones, however. The darkness he used to fly and fight her on near-equal terms was born from the sacrifice of his Legionnaire’s souls.

Lorgar was drawing into his body the agony of the Word Bearers Lisa had destroyed when bombarding Illyrium.

It gave him a reprieve...but the cost was terrible.

Taylor could see the power corroding his very soul.

And the Ruinous Powers’ leash, in the mean time, was interfering with the abominable rivers of corruption spreading through his veins. Corruption so self-destructive even a Primarch wouldn’t survive it for long.

“We will win! We must win! Ours is the only chance humanity has to survive in this galaxy! This is the Primordial Truth!”

A spoiled child. That was the kind of being which was responsible for the most devastating conflict fought after the Cybernetic Rebellion and the Age of Strife.

This was a petulant child, who had decided that if reality didn’t conform to his ideas, then worshipping eldritch abominations was a perfect sane path to walk upon.

This...this deserved an answer. And this was a weapon she could wield against him.

“So you say. Personally, I have another name for it. I call it the Primordial Lie...imbecile.”

Lorgar howled in hatred and charged her again.

They clashed above the Fortress of Hera, and the Ruinous Powers’ hisses of hatred arrived to her ears.

**Valley of Laponis**

**General Lorelei Moltke**

“The Webmistress is here! Our victory is assured! All praise the Webmistress!”

Lorelei couldn’t help but smile slightly at the exuberant outburst of the Adjutant-Spider she had been assigned to. In this, really, she did far better than her officers. Many cheered loudly and completely ignored their duties.

“Thank you, Adjutant Solaria.” The Mordian female General replied. “We appreciate the good news.”

Though really, the spider’s words were just the last confirmation they needed. For all the kilometres separating them from the Fortress of Hera, you didn’t need magnoculars to see the enormous explosions of golden power clashing with heretical sorcery.

No doubt was possible, Lady General Taylor Hebert was really here.

The ‘how’ would have to wait...no matter that the miracle was going to be on every tongue in the next five minutes.

“Her Celestial Highness is fulfilling the duties the God-Emperor gave her.” The veteran of Commorragh told her staff. “It’s time we do ours. Everything is ready?”

“All Mechanised Brigades are in position, General.”

“Artillery support stands ready to send the heretics to hell!”

Lorelei Moltke took a few seconds to watch over the choreography of hundreds of regiments under her eyes. For them to be here was a triumph of logistics. They had had to use secondary roads on very uneven terrain, build logistical nodes in mere hours, and last and hardest, watch as the battle for Macragge City raged without intervening.

But everything was worth it, since it had allowed them to position a reserve of half a million men and women on the flanks of the enemy.

“In His name,” the female General said formally, “open fire!”

The enormous roar which followed was of five thousand artillery pieces proclaiming their loyalty.

Many gunners had had over twenty minutes to make their calculations; the hastily dug-in heretics bearing the colours of the Volscani Cataphracts disappeared in Knight-sized explosions.

This was just the first salvo. Less than thirty seconds after the first one, a second was in the air. Rockets from the Vermilion Dawn-class launchers were then deployed, the loud shrieking screaming promises of death.

With each salvo, ammunition depots and dozens of vehicles belonging to the Traitors were annihilated. Hundreds of pyres burned. The heretical artillery – what little there was left of it after the forces on the height had bled it across the entire Laponis Valley – died before any significant counter-battery fire could be made.

It wasn’t really a battle. It was a massacre.

After the third salvo, what she had awaited for was relayed by the extremely excited.

“General! The enemies of the Webmistress are routing! Many are abandoning their trenches!”

“Confirmation, General! Their defences are no more! They’re fleeing towards Macragge City!”

“In that case, it is time.” No General worth his rank was going to give them the opportunity to rebuild a defensive line worth the name...and Lady Weaver would likely demote her if she was incompetent to not exploit this initial opening and fail to seize victory when it was offered like this. “One last salvo for the artillery, then the artillerists are to shift for extreme-ranged bombardment. All the Tank regiments and the Brigades are to attack at maximal speed. Don’t stop. Don’t hesitate. Disintegrate their lines. We finish the encirclement here and now, and this so-called Black Crusade dies today!”

“Yes, General! For the Webmistress!”

“For the God-Emperor and His Living Saint!”

**Approaches of the Thurium Gate near Macragge City**

**Dark Apostle De Haan**

De Haan had known the forces covering the flanks and the rear of the Great Hosts thrown into the conquest of Guilliman’s ridiculously decorated capital were too weak to do anything but defend themselves.

But defence was the only thing asked of them, and if the Gods willed, it would be enough.

And for two hours, it had looked like it might work.

Until it didn’t.

Now, the Dark Apostle in charge of keeping the disbelievers and the dogs of the False Emperor at bay while his other peers ravaged Macragge for the glory of Khorne, Tzeentch, and Nurgle contemplated disaster.

A humiliating defeat was staring back.

Vorrjuk Kraal had been right.

They had taken too many risks, ignored too many factors.

And now in the valley they had supposedly ‘illuminated’, thousands of enemy tanks and armoured vehicles were coming straight for their throats.

“By the spikes of the Skull Throne, how can they already be here? With Leman Russ tanks they would be-“

“Those aren’t Leman Russ tanks,” his Coryphaus interrupted the worthless Captain. “Those are the new tanks this bitch of Weaver ruined Commorragh with. Those are Jaghatai Khan tanks.”

“An apt name,” De Haan had to admit out loud. The vehicles had to push at least something like sixty kilometres per hour when it came to speed...and the offensive’s muster point had been less than forty kilometres away. “What do we have to stop them?”

The answer from his military councillor and favourite warrior was clear, blunt, and froze his blood in his veins.

“Nothing.”

“What?”

“Nothing, Lord Apostle.” His subordinate repeated with a tone which was filled with resignation. “Lord Lorgar took the last Astartes reserves with him, and judging by what is happening at the Fortress of Hera, we won’t have them back. The Hosts we have here are all engaged inside the city. The Hosts which landed at Pharsalus are not sending any sign of life. And the Volscani...”

The Coryphaus didn’t end the sentence himself, but what the loyal sons of Lorgar saw with their eyes blessed by the Gods, it wasn’t necessary.

The Volscani Cataphracts were running away, fleeing to save their pathetic lives.

De Haan amended the thought an instant later as several ‘Khan Tanks’ crushed many Volscani infantrymen under their tracks without slowing down.

The *surviving* Volscani Cataphracts were running away.

The Gods of course were no believers in the discipline the foolish servants of the False Emperor forced the weak to bow to.

But what was repeated across the entire Valley of Laponis was disaster in every manner which mattered.

The Volscani officers were taking the last vehicles and abandoning their men to run away faster.

Some fortified positions armed with Heavy Bolters were fighting to the last round and dying with prayer to the Architect of Fate, the Grandfather, or the Blood God on their lips, but for each platoon which did that, ten were throwing their weapons away.

This was a routed force.

Its effectives had been insufficient to begin with, and now there was only the shadow of a shadow left.

“The next time we try to recruit mortal warriors,” De Haan snarled venomously, the comment made bitter because there was really no guarantee there would be a ‘next time’ ever, “we will based the tests on martial might, not on the symbolism Erebus and the other incompetent backstabbers advised us to accept without question!”

“This is something I fully approve, Lord Apostle. But before debating about that, can we have our orders? The slaves of the False Emperor are advancing so fast we need to...adapt our strategy.”

The Horus Heresy veteran’s two hearts burned with rage.

It wasn’t supposed to happen like this.

There wasn’t supposed to be endless columns of tanks rushing to the gates of Macragge!

Or if they did, those tanks wouldn’t be in neat columns, and would belong to the Word Bearers!

“We are going to-“

The first artillery shell landed about fifty centimetres from the feet of Dark Apostle Haan, and what he intended to say was lost forever in the explosions of gore and death.

**Above the Fortress of Hera**

**Primarch Lorgar Aurelian**

The Gods weren’t giving him enough power.

Weaver was increasing her speed, and the Gods weren’t giving him enough!

“You think because you tap into your reserves of power, you can evade all my strikes with your speed?” The Primarch of the Word Bearers snarled while using Illuminarum as a focus to cast the Curse of the Eight Nightmares...which missed his enemy by over a meter.

Joyous laughter answered, and the sound was both psychic and...something far more than that.

“I am not tapping into anything, *Traitor*.”

“Now who’s lying?” He tried to mock her, something easier to do as the cursed xenos blade went for his throat again. The False Saint was no mistress of the sword, she was too young and too inexperienced. But the sheer versatility of her powers and her inhuman strength more than compensated for that. And so he barely managed to parry before it could pierce his armour.

“I am not lying, Lorgar of Colchis. I am not faster than I was at the start of our duel. **You are slowing down**.”

And suddenly it was as if a veil had been torn in front of his very eyes.

Lorgar *saw*.

The Gods had not been giving anything to him.

They had...loaned him, for lack of a better term, a part of the **Dark Sacrifice** made by his son Jarulek to keep the Imperial forces at bay.

And Lorgar was many things, but he wasn’t able to contain a shard of Sacrifice inside himself.

He was *Faith*.

He was the Priest of the Gods.

This was all he had ever wanted. This was all he was supposed to be.

This was-

“Mankind,” the Primarch could not control the despair infecting his voice, “needs *them* if we are to survive.”

“Mankind,” the False Angel whose golden wings had now been modified to include ten brilliant gemstones burning like lava in fusion, “was really handling itself well before you decided to engineer your little civil war.”

They struck at each other.

And with every blow, his strength faded.

With every parry, doubts assailed his thoughts.

With every wound awakening pain and loss of efficiency, he was reminded that he hadn’t been in perfect health before accepting this last challenge.

And every time he analysed the situation, Lorgar acknowledged challenging her into aerial combat had been pure foolishness.

His enemy could fly without relying on anyone.

He couldn’t.

Still, he was a Primarch.

He was the Word Bearer, and he had his pride.

He could-

The crystal sword unravelled into an enormous cloud of crystal beetles, and Lorgar realised too late what was coming.

He tried to evade, erected the most powerful sorcerous shield he could still cast.

It wasn’t enough.

His left arm was severed then disintegrated into a cloud of blood and crystal.

Thankfully he still had *Illuminarum* in his right hand, he could still try to exploit the flaw in her technique and-

The movements of Weaver became blurry.

Fast!

The two next strikes were almost invisible and only his battle-experience from the Great Crusade to this very day allowed him to perceive them.

“They will find a way to-“

The last shreds of power faded, slipped through metaphorical fingers, and left him with...nothing.

His body convulsed in pain.

“Finish me,” Lorgar Aurelian, Seventeenth Primarch and Scion of long-dead Colchis, growled. “You want my death for the cause I defended? So be it! Finish me! Prove you are the loyal bitch of our unworthy genitor!”

Weaver...raised her sword in a mocking salute. And then pointed one of her fingers to the Fortress of Hera waiting hundreds of metres below them.

“It is time to fall, *Traitor*.”

In that last moment, he prayed to the Gods.

Lorgar prayed to the Gods more fervently that he had ever done in all his life.

And for sole answer, he heard their laughter.

The sound accompanied him for the entire duration of his fall.

**Fortress of Hera**

**Optio Septimus Gracchus**

They all watched when the Arch-Heretic fell.

The battle had been difficult to observe, for all the massive holes which had been made in the ceiling and the roof above their heads.

There had been too many explosions, too many shockwaves, and too much light clashing with the heretic’s darkness.

But they all saw the end of the duel.

The Angel had clearly inflicted a significant blow upon her enemy.

For many seconds, there was just staring and the fighting ceased. The light of the God-Emperor flared brilliantly.

The darkness seemed to falter, but then increased again.

It was only an illusion. A couple of seconds later, the heretical power ceased abruptly.

And the Arch-Heretic fell.

Everyone, even the Space Marines, got out of the way.

It was an excellent decision, he would comment later with the benefit of hindsight, because the monster which had tried its worse on the Fortress of Hera didn’t fall through one of the already created holes above their heads.

No, the Arch-Heretic created an entirely new massive hole by himself.

It should be impossible, because the reinforced materials, even damaged should have resisted, but...well, it happened.

The impacts against the roof and the ceiling clearly slowed down the descent from the skies.

But when the time came to impact the marble floor of the Shrine, Septimus was sure it would have killed an Astartes on the spot.

And yet, as an impressive cloud of dust was formed and the crippled silhouette of the Arch-Heretic was indistinct, one could only acknowledge the evidence.

The monster was alive.

By all the marble collections of Macragge City, what was it going to take to kill this bastard?

Interrupting his thought, a guttural scream came into existence.

“WEEEAAAAVVVEEERR!”

**Primarch Lorgar Aurelian**

Lorgar didn’t believe he had hated more a single being in his life...his genitor and father excluded from the competition.

“WEEEAAAAVVVEEERR!”

And then reality reminded him how badly wounded he was.

Lorgar spat blood, and as his brain reminded him, it could have been far worse. His head was now completely unprotected, and if he hadn’t managed to let the most resistant parts of his body – the one which had still decent armour protection at any rate – take the brunt of the damage for the rest, his head would likely be splattered in several parts on the blue-gold marble, and no Primarch could survive that.

It hurt. It hurt terribly.

It was agony.

He had lost his left arm, and the wound was grievous in the extreme, the small stump of what had been his bleeding, whatever power his enemy using to destroy his limb was also sufficient to overwhelm his natural regeneration abilities.

But this was only one of many injuries that were going to be his death.

Everything was pain.

Everything was failing him, and he didn’t need an expert transhuman surgeon to inspect him before arriving to that conclusion. One of his hearts was not beating anymore. One of his lungs had similarly succumbed. If he had any ribs left intact, he would be broken. The wounds taken while he had attempted to kill the Eldar and the incomplete False Angel of Shadows had been infected with something in the last minutes.

His legs were broken, though they, at least, appeared to have kept their ability to regenerate.

But what good did it do when the body he had-

No, there was no time to ask questions which had no more importance.

*Illuminarum* was still in his right hand.

It took a colossal effort of will to ignore the torment it put his body onto, but Lorgar managed to use it as a lever to rise up against.

It was slow. It was suffering like he had never known.

It could have been the last thing he would do, if the mortals and the last Astartes present opened fire.

But they didn’t.

Perhaps they waited for Weaver.

No, he hadn’t the time to waste on some useless theoretical. He had to-

The golden fire which had been consuming half of the hall emitted a long melody, and then suddenly, the inferno opened like a sorcerer carving an empty riverbed and creating two seas where they should be a larger one.

And from this arch made into the golden fire, an armoured figure Lorgar knew all too well slowly walked out.

The power armour itself, Lorgar had never seen before.

But even with the helmet hiding his traits, there was only one soul on Macragge who had the physical ability and the will to equip himself with such a ridiculously blue-and-gold ornamented armour right now.

“Brother,” the Primarch of the Word Bearers tried not to wince as Weaver chose this moment to land on his right, ready to finish the blow. Even if-

“Lorgar of Colchis,” Roboute Guilliman replied, and his tone had an edge that rang like a bell of doom in his head, “I remember swearing an oath to you as Calth burned before my eyes.”

The Gods laughed, and Lorgar’s memory, eidetic for all the trials and changes it had endured, recalled the words he had not taken seriously when he heard them the first time.

\*\*\*\*

*The ritual is too complicated to give him a hololithic-type representation of what is happening in Calth’s orbit, but he knows the attack is already a one-sided victory.*

*The Thirteenth Legion has been taken by surprise, and even now, they’re still reeling in shock.*

*A Legion like the Imperial Fists would likely be already busy to take desperate defensive measures, but the Thirteenth Legion is not the Seventh, and Guilliman is not Dorn.*

*And what he is going to do is going to spread an even greater disorder in their chain of command. The* Macragge’s Honour *will be crippled, the Battlefleet will be leaderless and fighting as disorganised individuals. Before he gives the signal to the servants of the Gods to begin, however, the Word Bearer hears the voice of his brother Guilliman address the simulacrum.*

*“Lorgar of Colchis. You may consider the following. One: I entirely withdraw my previous offer of solemn ceasefire. It is cancelled, and will not be made again, to you or to any of your motherless bastards.”*

*Lorgar has to use a lot of self-control not to scoff. The Thirteenth Legion is already defeated, and still Roboute is busy with theatrics. For someone who professes to value practicality above everything else, this is a really unsound judgement.*

*Lorgar gives the signal and utter the final words of the last surprise many Ultramarines will ever be able to experience in their unfaithful lives.*

*“Two: you are no longer any brother of mine. I will find you, I will kill you, and I will hurl your corpse into hell’s mouth.”*

\*\*\*\*

**Primarch Lorgar Aurelian**

Once upon a time, on the bloody sands of Nuceria, the Seventeenth Primarch had acknowledged Roboute really hated him for that day.

But years after that battle, Lorgar had ascended. He had been rewarded with the greatest blessings the Gods could reward him with.

No one save perhaps his father could kill him, and the Anathema of Chaos was in a near-death state, trying to keep everything functioning even as his Imperium decayed and rusted before the final collapse.

But times had changed.

He was no longer immortal.

He was severely injured.

And though his instinct did tell him Roboute was not fully healed from the poisoned wounds inflicted by the Pale Naga, this mattered little.

Because in his state, even a small group of average Astartes could finish him for good.

“I swear-“

“Silence, *Traitor*.” Weaver, always her, interrupted him. “You are fundamentally incapable to say something that is not a lie or an attempt to incite treachery on a grand scale.”

“I was not speaking to you!”

“You prefer that I speak, you who destroyed Calth? You who brought ruin to Ultramar so many years ago, and now with your sons, you try to leave nothing more than ruins and nightmares in your wake?”

The blade that was pointed at him was unfamiliar. It was not the *Gladius Incandor*, who had been rumoured to be lost when his brother lost his duel against the Naga aboard the *Pride of the Emperor*. And it was obviously no blade forged by their father or one of the Terran artificers, for it would burn in golden flames already.

Yet there was something sinister about it, something that screamed-

“I named this blade *Calth’s Vengeance* when I commissioned it, Lorgar of Colchis,” suddenly the reason of his bad feelings was revealed in all its unholy glory. The symbolism of the name was powerful, and unless he was badly wronged, the connection had been strengthened with something from the former jewel of Ultramar that Kor Phaeron and Erebus had devastated according to his will. “And today it is going to fulfil its purpose.”

Lorgar uttered a word, a name from the Warp, the beginning of the curse which would allow him to escape-

He was unable to get past the first syllabus without vomiting a significant quantity of blood.

“Roboute, please-“

But the Lord of Ultramar was already attacking him.

**Fortress of Hera**

**Lady General Taylor Hebert**

It wasn’t a fair fight.

Roboute Guilliman, for all the efforts of Cawl, was not in good health at all. Taylor could feel the power of Sacrifice, her power, keeping him alive as the antidote to the poison worked through his veins and hyper-advanced serums tried to close his wounds as fast as the laws of physics and the constitution of a Primarch allowed.

But the Primarch of the Ultramarines had been encased into a brand-new unique power armour that Cawl had somehow managed to hide from everyone before today.

And aside from his millenary-old wounds, the newly reawakened son of the Emperor was in relatively good health. He had all his limbs, for example.

Something that couldn’t be said about his opponent.

It was a very, very unfair fight.

But since the plan of Lorgar had involved murdering his brother when he couldn’t defend himself, the Lady General was perfectly fine letting the Arch-Heretic get the humiliating beat-down he so richly deserved.

And within seconds, this was exactly what happened.

The left arm of Roboute Guilliman had been encased into an ensemble which allowed him to wield a Combi-Bolter of enormous size, but the weapon wasn’t used to shot down the Traitor Primarch with hundreds of Bolter shells.

No, the Thirteenth Primarch discarded it and went for the ‘Power Fist’ mode, all the while wielding his Gladius-like blade – except the average Gladius was a short sword, and this one was so tall even Sigenandus would have difficulty wielding it with two hands – with his other hand.

For all his reliance on treachery and sorcery, for all the fact he was Damned and his soul was breaking apart in a flow of horrible corruption and foul things, Lorgar managed to parry twice with his cursed mace the blows of the Primarch who had once called him brother.

But when the third attack came, the daemonically-corrupted mace broke in half.

The Power Fist threw him to the ground again, so violently that the insect-mistress heard at least three or four bones breaking under the impact with the marble.

The next blow of the Power Fist was avoided, but all it meant was the *Calth’s Revenge* Gladius struck and impaled him through his primary heart.

For what felt like many hours, the two Primarchs stayed frozen, the Traitor on his back, bleeding black blood, pinned down against the damaged floor of Ultramar by the weapons of the other.

“I...I made...a mistake...Roboute. Forgive me...”

“No.”

The blade was removed so fast Taylor doubted most of the audience here saw it, and while with his left arm the Lord of Macragge plunged his fist directly into Lorgar’s chest, Calth’s Revenge found its neck.

For all the bitter enmity between the two Demigods, there was no intent to prolong the suffering.

Lorgar, Arch-Heretic, Traitor Primarch of the Seventeenth Legion, was decapitated for his crimes against the Imperium, the Thirteenth Legion, the Realm of Macragge, and the Emperor.

His black soul, or at least what foul thing had replaced it, tried to escape his corpse before passing to another plane of existence.

*No. Do not let the parasites have him*.

The order echoed across her very being, and Taylor was prompt to obey the implicit command she would likely have tried to accomplish.

The Angel of Sacrifice shaped a spider of light with a thought, and used it to skewer the shreds of Traitor Primarch’s essence before it could be claimed by the Ruinous Powers.

There was a shriek and then...nothing.

Lorgar was dead.

Though nothing happened in the hall where she was standing, a hurricane of screams was born beyond the Veil.

And Taylor took only a second to realise those were the screams of the Word Bearers’ Legionnaires.