



Straight Silver

Dan Abnett

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Commissar Gaunt and his men undertake a seemingly suicidal mission in the blood-soaked trenches of the 41st Millennium.

On the battlefields of Aexe Cardinal, the struggling forces of the Imperial Guard are locked in a deadly stalemate with the dark armies of Chaos. Commissar Ibram Gaunt and his regiment, the Tanith First and Only, are thrown headlong into this living hell of trench warfare, where death from lethal artillery is always just a moment away. The only chance for Gaunt and his lightly armed scouts to survive is to volunteer for a mission so dangerous that no one else dares accept it.

Straight Silver Details

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Jiří Pavlovský says

Na dovolenou jsem potřeboval něco malého, tak jsem sáhl po dalším Warhammeru od Abnetta. A nezklamal. Žádná velká literatura, ale dobře napsaná akční komerce. S důrazem na masivnost a jatkovitost. Už se začínám i pomalu orientovat v postavách, i když se mezi nimi hodně skáče. Každá kniha v podstatě zachycuje jednu bitvu - v téhle se podíváme do zákopů evokujících masakry první světové války. Jediná spojující linka jsou osudy postav, kdy některé získávají schopnosti, některé jsou pekni parchanti a vřec jste zvdví, jak to s nimi dopadne. Patrně uměou. Warhammer se netváří že by hrdinové měli velkou životnost.

Kelly Charmaine Marie Flanagan says

I was introduced to the Warhammer 40K Universe while shuffling through the Fantasy and science fiction shelves, glum again as they had yet to transfer books and bring a few new ones in to freshen the stacks. A small pocket book caught my eye as it had not been there before. In fact, staff must have just stocked it. The front cover displayed a crowd of fully armored men fighting with chainswords and las-rifles. At the back one soldier was endowed with wings of flames. He stood looking as if to win the planet alone. I believe it was "Angels of Flames, or along those lines. I was instantly hooked! When I realised just how big the shelf of books for W.H.40K was, I surely drooled in ecstasy. I'm addicted to books and reading. The best gift I can get is a huge, almost never ending series or groups of series that span the same universe. I started the 'Horus Heresy books, but I wanted to know more about their 'present' time. Approximately 40-41K years into our future.

So here I am busting through Gaunt's Ghosts and loving it! It's a perfect series to cut your teeth on. Because the time just before the first book is not relevant beyond what you learn of it along the way, and the only main character that has a history in the Emperor's Army was Gaunt himself, you don't have that "I'm missing points or hints" feeling. 'Straight Silver' is one of the more 'tense' battles. The term Straight Silver refers to the Ghosts use of their Silver and Nalwood knives that attach to their rifles as bayonets. In close combat whether as a bayonet or knife, it's straight silver every time.

If I blab more I'll probably give away parts that'll wreck it, so go read them all. If you dare! hehehehe

Iri says

3.5

Jo, mistr Abnett je geniální architekt titěrných detailů, které se odehrají jako nic ve 2... 3 vřtách nebo vtípných hláškách na dva řádky a jsou to vlastně jen zanedbatelné řástečky celého příběhu. Ale dodají mu neuvěřitelné kouzlo a šavu. Poctivě si buduje zařátek každého story, aby mohl rozjet akci ve velkém. Ale do háje... Obraz Ibrama se mu sype jako špatně poskládané puzzle, sotva tu je možnost oblíbit si nějakého Ducha, bam, už není... A ty konce... Ty konce jsou vždycky utažené na minimální možný počet stran a lá Imperium opřt vyhrálo, víceméně, hurá a je to. (Ale že to přebije opřt nějaký ten geniální detail, to se nechat musí, to je fajn.)

Fethe, ale že mám absťák už 5 minut po dořtení, to se přehlížet nedá už vřec.

Tarl says

I've said it before, and I will say it again. If there's one thing Abnett knows how to do, it's character interaction and conflict.

Straight Silver is no exception. Throughout the entire book, we are treated to the various interpersonal relationships between members of the Tanith First and Only. Out of all of them however, is the continued problem of Cuu and his conflict with Larkin. This is something that we've been watching for awhile now, and in this book it gets amped up to an incredible level. This, coupled by Gaunt's continued issues with Imperial high command, gives this book a higher emotional charge than in previous novels in the series.

Abnett also tackles trench warfare in *Straight Silver*, and as with all things military fiction, he does it well. Though there are better books out there that talk about the horrors of this kind of warfare, Abnett manages to capture everything that is relevant to his story as well as keeping up the brutality that trench warfare brings. (more so to units that are not prepared for/trained for it)

As far as this novel goes, it's one of the better ones in the Gaunt's Ghost series. I did feel that the trench warfare part of the book was only there to show a different kind of warzone, and thus perhaps wasn't really needed. (though, on the other hand, when doing a series of books about various warzones, Abnett pretty much **has** to do a variety of warzones to keep things interesting) It's only in the later parts of the book that we start to really see things come to a head in regards to character development and interpersonal relationships changing.

Still, this was a good book and I really enjoyed it.

Matimate says

Is there possibility to make trench warfare even more grim and bloody? It is place it in Warhammer 40.000 universe and it gets even worse. Heretics, Chaos troops and dastrdly commanders are the vile enemies Commissar Gaunt and his Tanith are facing at the every conrner. Emperor protects!But not this day.

Andrew Ziegler says

Welcome to World War 1, set in the universe of Warhammer 40k. Lasguns, Artillery, Trench Warfare, Barbwire, Corpselight, and every horrible thing you can think of from pictures of WW I are in this story. Abnett throws the Ghosts into the demanding meat machine of trench combat to save a planet that has been doing this particular war for 40 years.

Oh and by the way, it is not what he does...it is what he doesn't do! Those are his words. And what he doesn't do, drives you up a wall.

Another great Ghost's tale in my estimation. Furthering the development of a cool regiment, some great characters, and some relationships that begin to fray around the edges.

Abnett writes at a great pace, and fills almost all the pages with gritty, non-stop action.

I enjoyed this story a great deal, and highly recommend it, and the series.

For Tanith!

Conor says

Is this it? The best Gaunt's Ghosts novel? It very well could be. First I want to talk about the weaknesses, because having read six of Abnett's novels now, I'm starting to notice some patterns.

Every book he painstakingly re-introduces us as the reader to each and every character. It's as though he has a folder full of character names and underneath each are some stock phrases and characterising events he recycles every book. Maybe this is an unfair criticism. This is a lengthy series, and I suppose he feels he needs to keep readers up to date. But I think if the reader's stuck with it to book six, we already know that Caffran is young(ish) and met Tona Criid at Verghast, fell in love, and together raise Dalin and Yoncy, who are Gol Kolea's son and daughter—who, by the way, suffered severe head trauma and is a shadow of his former self.

My problem is that none of this is necessary. A minor gripe, sure, but I think a just one.

It's nothing compared to Abnett's other consistent problem though; anti-climactic rushed endings.

This is especially true of Straight Silver. We get a beautiful, tight, fast-paced novel, with some significant character development, especially the emerging death dance between Larkin and Cuu, but also of course with Gaunt himself. But just when it gets going and there's a memorable last stand by about ten ghosts under Feygor's command at a manse in a forest, the novel winds things up. A year of fighting left, by Gaunt's estimate, and in a few pages the Ghosts find they're to be shipped off-world and sent to Herodor. Should that name ring a bell?

Anyway, it's a habit of Abnett's, and I think it's perhaps another symptom of writing such a long series. It's hard to write an effective ending. Simpler to rush to the end, like a sudden and abrupt deluge of rain in a storm, and then leave all the loose ends for the next book.

This was a great entry in the series. Perhaps Abnett's tightest, with some truly memorable scenes and encounters—the assault on the manse, the political manoeuvrings of the Aexegerian Alliance, and some minor scenes where Gaunt executes Alliance troops in front of Dorden and Curth. But the loose threads are still hanging, which is okay. There's 4, 5, maybe 6 more books to go in the series. I just hope Abnett can pull it off. He's got the room to do it, and the ability too, I think.

Cuu got away with murder yet again, killing Muril, so Larkin's subplot is what interests me more than anything. To avenge Bragg. I thought it would happen this book, but Larkin's in a bad way, Cuu's fine, and their duel will continue.

Bring on the next book! Herodor.

Has that planet been mentioned before? Part of Gaunt's past?

Only one way to find out.

Sean McBride says

By far the best in the series to date. Each of these books focuses on a different aspect of war, and this one harkens back to WWI with trench warfare. Abnett's writing brings you into the gritty battle and the war scenes are so much better written than anything previous in the series. Beyond that we have some incredible character development. We finally get more involved into the guard itself and it develops many of the minor characters that we just glazed over in previous books, while driving forward the characters that we already have connected with. Gaunt plays a bit of a background role in this novel, with a small glimpse of his future endeavors. Brilliant novel and I cant wait for the next one.

James says

I have been a fan of Abnett for a long time and I think this novel was well written. That being said, this was a trench war wedged into a FAR future universe. The number of conditions that had to be met in order for them to shoehorn this into the novel was beyond silly.

Very well written, with characters that I really care about... but the trench warfare was too much.

Daniel O'Brien says

I dove into this straight from Guns of Tanith, with only the slightest of breaks to sleep, shower, and do enough work to get paid. Abnett maintains his decent stride in Straight Silver, improving his character work and continuing to nail the action and pacing. The world building was excellent as always. I tore through this one as well and within moments of finishing it, I'd started on Sabbath Martyr, the next in the series.

Again I'll say I'm giving it 4, but with the caveat that this won't make you think and it won't inspire strong emotions. It won't teach you anything about human nature. It'll just give you an afternoon of unadulterated action and adventure.

Nicky Ryder says

Wow, what a dramatic end! You never know what's going to happen next.

Claire Benham says

loved it.

Adam Whitehead says

Decades ago the forces of Chaos overran and conquered the Sabbat Worlds, a star cluster of over one hundred inhabited planets which had been won for the Imperium six millennia previously by Saint Sabbat, a formidable general. One of the few worlds not to fall outright was Aexe Cardinal, too marginal for even the endless legions of the Warp to waste time attacking. Instead, a local, ambitious nation was reinforced and induced to attack its neighbours, unleashing a horrendous trench war the likes of which humanity has not seen in thousands of years.

With the Crusade forces now trying to push back a determined Chaos counter-assault, several detachments of Imperial Guard have been dispatched to secure Aexe Cardinal and its resources. Gaunt and the Tanith 1st are sent in to break the stalemate. Unfortunately for Gaunt, he remains unaware that his unit is harbouring a traitor and murderer...

The Gaunt's Ghosts series reaches its sixth volume and shows little sign of running out of speed. Just as we were getting used to the 'rules' of this series, Abnett decided to shake them up in the last two books by introducing some bad apples to the Ghosts and killing off one reasonably major character, as well as varying the war scenes by switching to an airborne drop in *The Guns of Tanith* and a running road battle in *Honour Guard*. In *Straight Silver* he switches to a gruelling trench war reminiscent of WWI with the two sides happy to lob shells at one another and occasionally try a futile trench-rush. By invoking images of the Somme and Passchendaele Abnett does a good job of getting across the horrendous futility of pointless war, with even the battle-weary Ghosts shocked by the state of the conflict and determined to help break the deadlock.

This leads to a two-pronged storyline, as one detachment of Ghosts scouts a forest for signs of enemy infiltration and ends up besieged in a farmhouse whilst another goes on a Dirty Dozen-style trip behind enemy lines to locate and destroy an artillery detachment. It has to be said that compared to the epic, conflict-ending struggles the Tanith has been involved with previously, these feel like sideshows, but this is deliberate. The Tanith aren't always the unit that turns the tide of a war, and after forty years of conflict such an outcome would have been particularly unrealistic here. Instead, Abnett focuses on the characterisation, particularly of the increasingly loathsome Cuu and his feud with the Ghosts' ace sniper Larkin. Whilst also developing the newer Varghast troops he also switches the spotlight on some older Ghosts who have not featured centrally in the past, such as Feygor and Mkvenner, to good effect.

The end of the book is a surprise. The Ghosts are abruptly summoned on a new mission and we are left on a minor cliffhanger, for the first time in the series. The Ghosts have a new mission, one potentially that could win them the entire Crusade, on Herodor...

Straight Silver (****) is another solidly entertaining instalment in a reliably entertaining series. It is available now in the UK and USA as part of *The Saint* omnibus.

Michael T Bradley says

My favorite thing about the 40K universe are the WWI overtones. I especially enjoy when a book or story pushes that to the forefront ("15 Hours," for instance). This is a book told against the backdrop of trench

warfare.

My favorite character in the Gaunts' Ghosts series of books is Hlaine Larkin. I've nervously turned every page he was on since one specific scene in "First & Only" made him jump out to me. (Nervously because, obviously, no one is safe in these books - Gaunt, I guess, at least until the final book comes out, but, hell, I wouldn't put it past Abnett to kill Gaunt off & keep the name "in memory.") In this book, Larkin shines probably more than any other character because of what he witnessed in the previous book.

So this is essentially everything needed to make me read like a madman, drool over every page. Previous reviewers have it right, the ending is rushed, but that's kind of the way of the GG stuff. Overall it's the journey that matters with Abnett, not the destination. Everyone is kind of being pushed to where they need to be at the end of the "Saint" storyline here. Excellent writing, beautiful and evocative imagery.

Martin says

Straight Silver

Still under the command of Van Voytz, the Tanith First is deployed as part of the Imperial Expeditionary Force to Aexe Cardinal, where a deadlocked land war has been raging for forty years between the Aexe Alliance (a handful of loyal nation-states) and the Chaos-corrupted Shadik Republic. Warmaster Macaroth insists that the Aexe Alliance is to remain in command of the campaign, with strained success. The Alliance employs methods of warfare considered obsolete and inefficient according to the modern standard tactics of the Imperial Guard.

Gaunt is quickly frustrated with the brutal strategies and lack of reliable intelligence, and disagrees with the deployment of the scout-specialist Ghosts as grunts in the trenches. Van Voytz and Count Golke - the Alliance/Imperial liaison - negotiate with Alliance Command and agree to a compromise: one half of the Tanith First is sent to the northern Montorq forests to scout the area, while the other is redeployed to the Seiberq Pocket - the most dangerous section of the war zone - where they are tasked with infiltrating the Shadik lines and destroying the enemy's newly-developed siege guns.

'Straight Silver' is the first novel in which the Tanith First does not see a campaign through to its conclusion: after successfully taking out the siege-guns in the Seirberq Pocket and repelling a Blood Pact flanking manoeuvre in the Montorq Forest, the Ghosts are withdrawn from the front lines and redeployed to Herodor.
