



## Blood Pact

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## **Blood Pact** Dan Abnett

Twelfth novel in the eternally popular SF series Gaunt's Ghosts, which follows the story of Commissar Ibram Gaunt and his regiment the Tanith First-and-Only on the bloody battlefields of the far future.

## **Blood Pact Details**

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Author : Dan Abnett

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## From Reader Review Blood Pact for online ebook

### Jacob says

Quite a bit more sentimental than the other Gaunt's Ghosts books. Smaller action although still brutal. Shows how dangerous the age they're in is even when you're surrounded by your own side.

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### Andrew Ziegler says

Finished this book last night. At first it was reading like *Traitor General*, only it was the exact opposite. Instead of Gaunt and a team infiltrating a Chaos held world to kill a high value target, they were instead trying to protect a high value target on a Imperial world.

I thought the book was good and Abnett once again delivered in this series I so very much love. However, it seemed way to short and way to, how can I say this, fluffy? There is a lengthy description of Tona Criid and her running regimen, her eating habits, and her weird psychosis about running more to work off the sweets she had become addicted to. The subplot about whether this was the last stop for the First and Only and they were to be retired seemed a little far fetched, especially knowing this is Book 1 of a new story arc for the Ghosts. And lastly, let's look at the featured characters, Gaunt, Tona, Maggs...and then 30 or so pages about Rawne, and a mob being criminals do to boredom. The whole book seems a little like a short story instead of the Gaunt's books you are used to. Maybe Abnett has grown kind of bored of these characters. As much as I loved *Only In Death* and Abnett's normally masterful work in the 40K universe I can only really say I like this 12th installment. Still read it though, there are some character developments that you will need to read to stay caught up.

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### Mary Catelli says

This is the twelfth book in the Gaunt's Ghosts series. It can be read as a stand-alone, unlike, say, *Only In Death*, but I don't recommend it as the series does have arcs. And this review may spoil the earlier works.

Takes place two years after *Only In Death*, so the emotional trauma they suffered in that book has at least settled down. (This is a less dark book than *Only In Death*. Then, that is not difficult.) Gaunt is, for instance, coping with his new eyes. On the other hand, they were taken off active duty and put into garrisons far behind the front lines, and the Ghosts are climbing the walls. They aren't suited for garrison duty. In fact, Rawne and a few other Ghosts -- including the by-the-book Daur -- get into serious trouble and end up behind bars.

Gaunt is summoned to the fortress they call Section. And learns that it is because they have a prisoner. A prisoner with very valuable information who refuses to talk to anyone but Gaunt. He proves to have known of him from his work on Gereon. The Inquisition Does Not Approve of the prisoner's even being in the hands of the Commissariat.

Meanwhile Chaos forces have inserted themselves into the planet, using plentiful witchcraft to hide and to hunt. They are after the prisoner, and their attack makes it into the fortress itself, but Gaunt is near the

prisoner and gets away with him. And Wes Maggs, acting as his driver, actually gets them on the road. Rawne and his team escape in the confusion -- one of the Chaos forces came to shoot the prisoners -- and regroup. The Ghosts hear only fragments of the news, and ready themselves.

So, a mad, five-way chase to figure out what's going on and who can be trusted and what to do. In a snowstorm.

The parallels between this and *Traitor General* are -- interesting. On the other hand, the team sent after the prisoner is stronger, and the defenses against them weaker than in that book. I think it has something to do with which side is which.

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### **Calyx says**

Nothing new to say about Abnett's work, I go in expecting something familiar, and sure the cast is there, but adventure is again, new fresh, and attention grabbing, and since its 12th book in the series i think its an amazing plus.

I loved whole ambience of the work, atmosphere, its as if you can taste it, like a snowflake on the tip of the tongue.

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### **Rachel says**

Love it, Love it, Love it!

Oh how I have missed Gaunt's Ghosts, this series of books is brilliantly written, with fast paced action, details descriptions and realistic characters. Everytime I pick one of these books up I know I am in for a sleepless night because I just can't put them down. Yes the series is set in the warhammer universe and is strange and violent, but I love it.....although don't tell my other half.

This was a great book in the series, with the Ghost's being stood down on Balhaut for 2 years, they are bored, flabby and undisciplined. They get themselves into all sorts of trouble and are generally making problems for their Commisars. Gaunt has recovered from the ordeal he faced int he last book, he has new eye augmentations, but he too is getting flabby with the being out of rotations. Everyone is desparate for a posting.....and then the Blood Pact attack in the heart of a peaceful planet miles away from the front line. The Ghosts have to use all of their skill to survive not only the Arch-enemy but also to take on the Inquisition.

I cannot recommend this series enough!

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### **Mark says**

Blood Pact is the new entry in the hugely popular Gaunt's Ghosts series set in the Warhammer 40,000 universe. Being the 12th entry in the series it's usually quite wise to be familiar with the characters as jumping in at this stage more often than not causes confusion, head scratching and the general feeling of being lost. Not being one for tradition this is pretty much exactly what I did. I'm not a complete newbie to the Gaunt's Ghosts books - I read the first, *First and Only*, at the end of 2008 - and reading *Blood Pact* left

me with only one feeling: why haven't I read more of them?

First, I have to say that despite being part of such a long running series Blood Pact stood up on its own very well. Yes, there were references to what has happened in the past, but Dan Abnett has managed to tell a focused stand-alone story here that was easy to follow and extremely enjoyable. He hasn't sold over a million books world wide for nothing!

Blood Pact starts off really well with some of the Tanith First, bored with the excessive time they have spent away from the front line, embarking on a rather dubious side venture. This does the best thing possible - it introduces the characters and shows that it's not all about war. As we are introduced to Gaunt and his senior officers it quickly becomes clear that they are awaiting new deployment orders and are anxious to get back into the action. Being set on Balhaut, a safe world that isn't too far from the front line, we get to see a city home to the average person and see just how an Imperial World works. Balhaut is also the place where the dead are commemorated and its industry revolves around both this and catering to the Imperial forces stationed there.

For me, this was a first among the Warhammer books I've read that has the focus on such a world. They are usually set on the front line or in the middle of a war with the forces of chaos and the tale they tell is one focused on the situation at hand. With Blood Pact it became a different type of story - still very much a Warhammer tale, but this time one that takes a step back from the typical military action associated with them. I liked it. I liked it a lot. What I particularly liked was the way that Dan Abnett managed to convey the characters to me very quickly and allowed me to become very at ease with them- I found that the story flowed even better because of it.

The story itself is quite interesting in that an enemy incursion has made it this far into Imperial Space and has managed to track down their target. While the initial stages of the novel set up the characters nicely, once the focus shifts to the story everything is cranked up a gear and Abnett's storytelling prowess comes into full force. Blood Pact is not a long novel, coming in at just over 300 pages, but it delivers action, intrigue and some very interesting political and social points. As the Ghosts are separated we get different viewpoints throughout the novel, from Gaunt's first hand experience with the prisoner and enemy, to the behind-the-scenes developments back at base, and the aftermath of Rawne and his groups early venture into hustling, it all fits together nicely and compliments the story as a whole.

My final thoughts on Blood Pact lead me to one conclusion - I really need to read the Gaunt's Ghosts series. Not only that, but Dan Abnett is a writer who has a flair for characterisation and action, a trait that should be both applauded and envied. Great stuff!

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### **Student Teacher says**

So Dan Abnett and written yet another Gaunt's Ghosts book. This one is called Blood Pact. Now I have to admit, after reading Sabbat Worlds, I was a little worried about this one.

Damn you Dan Abnett (I love you Dan Abnett), just when I think I have gotten over you, you prove that I just can't quit you! I read this book in three days, and for me that's pretty quick. I usually sit down to read for about 30 minutes each night before I go to bed, with some books it's difficult to plow through one chapter a night, with Blood Pact, I was worried about the lack of sleep I was getting. This book is excellent.

Now I'll be up front about this book, there were some things I didn't like. This was not a combat oriented book, the Ghosts have been pulled back from the front lines after twelve years of near-constant war. They have been stationed on Balhaut for the past two years, and we come to find out that the Ghosts don't take well to inaction. Throughout the book, many of the characters we have come to know and love make the briefest of cameos throughout the entire story.

That being said, of the characters Abnett does put in the story, he does a good job. In the first chapter of the book, we meet E. F. Montvelt, he oversees things on Pier Thirty-One on a huge orbital platform called Highstation. In twelve pages Abnett does an excellent job telling the story of E. F. Montvelt, how he inherited his job and most of his possessions from his late uncle, and how Balhaut, the scene of one of the greatest victories and greatest tragedies of the Sabbat Worlds Crusade, has changed in the last fifteen years. In twelve pages I felt that I knew E. F. Montvelt, and this guy is beyond a minor character. We never see him after the first chapter, but I was sucked into the book in those twelve pages.

While this book does feel as if it missing the combat of other Ghosts books, where there is action **THERE IS ACTION**. When a small Blood Pact kill team gets on to Balhaut and assaults a commissariat headquarters (yes, I said that correctly) the action is fast-paced and brutal! I would also like to point out that Dan Abnett is the master of the 40k car chase. Ever since First and Only, Abnett gave us a great Ghosts car chase, and I think that the one in Blood Pact is bester yet!

Although there are some drawbacks to this story, it does feel like a nice change of pace for the Ghosts. I can deal with the lack of action, and more intrigue, but I am a bit sad that we didn't see more Mkoll, and Larkin and Brostin, and the rest.

And just because it wouldn't be a proper Ghosts story without a kick to the junk ala someone we've grown to love is given a death sentence. I hate you Dan Abnett! (I love you Dan Abnett!)

I don't usually give out spoilers from the books I read, but I have to give this one out. Highlight it to see the OMG part of the book!

SPOILER

On Balhaut, a memorial to Ibram Gaunt has been constructed.

/SPOILER

Anywho, I give this book four straight silvers, out of five.

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## **Michael Dodd says**

Dan Abnett's twelfth Gaunt's Ghosts novel, this kicks off the fourth arc in the series. Set two years after their last mission on Jago, the Ghosts have spent the last year stationed on Balhaut, the site of the Sabbat Crusade's greatest victory. While the regiment grows increasingly bored and complacent, Gaunt worries that he's been sidelined for good. When a high-ranking enemy prisoner insists on speaking only to Gaunt, however, he's dragged back into intrigue and danger in a way he couldn't have expected, on a world freighted with memories.

After a calm, intriguing opening it quickly turns into a breathless, gripping story that keeps you turning the page, desperate to find out what happens. Step back from that and it's clear that, while it makes a great story on its own, this is setting things up for the next books in the arc...

Read the full review at <https://www.trackofwords.com/2017/11/...>

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## **Jean-Luc says**

One of my resolutions for this year was to read books about something other than Space Marines... Technically, I'm sticking to that resolution, because this is a book about the Imperial Guard. The last omnibus, *The Lost*, was *so good* that I couldn't bear to wait a year or so for the next omnibus. *Blood Pact* is the 12th book in the Gaunt's Ghosts series, 13th if you consider *The Iron Star* to be the 12th, but it's not; *Iron Star* is a short story.

The Ghosts have withdrawn to Balhaut to recuperate from the hideous losses incurred during the fight for Hinzershaus in the last book, *Only in Death*. The time off is welcome at first, but the lack of any immediate danger causes discipline to slip, and the Ghosts risk becoming fat and lazy. Idle hands, and all that.

In the 8th book, *Traitor General*, Gaunt and company had to assassinate a general who switched sides. This time, it's the other way around. Etogaur Mabbon was an Archenemy commander on Gereon. His preferred method of dealing w/ insurrection was mass slaughter of the populace to draw grief-stricken insurgents out where they could be easily defeated. Something has changed his mind, and now he's ready to share his secrets w/ the Imperial Guard. The Blood Pact, the Archenemy's most elite troopers, send their mostest elitest troopers to assassinate Mabbon. They use some sort of Chaos shroud to keep the city unaware that its under assault. Even worse, the Inquisition wants to know why Mabbon asked for Gaunt by name. Gaunt doesn't trust Mabbon, he'd be crazy to, but the Blood Pact's blitz forces him to keep Mabbon alive long enough to try and learn what's going on.

It's a very tense, very different type of book, not at all what I was used to from this series. Much less gunplay vs impossible odds than sneaking around.

The ending reveals a connection that a minor character had absolutely no right to. Very bizarre, very Abnett, very memorable. It's not the best book in the series, but it's still fun.

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## **Iri says**

3.5 / 4

Meh, I am not sure about this one. It was in some way kinda crisp and the tiniest details were absolutely heartbreaking. In a good sense. I must surrender before Abnett's gift to create such an adult, smart and so touch the sore spot stories. But I feel that since the last few books in the Lost story arc (*AoC* for example) the stories are somehow... well... bland? There is something... missing in them. And it's not about the lack of battlefield, like in this specific one. Well, this is what I am struggling with mostly during the reading of the "newer" Ghost books.

However:

When an author is able to make reader strongly dislike the not even existing institution like the Imperial Inquisition (I know, that's a heresy) from the bottom of his heart it's the sign of a good author. I am convinced about that because I hate inquisition even more than ever. Good job, Mr. Abnett. Good job.

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## **Martin says**

### Blood Pact

After the gruelling events on Jago, the Tanith First is removed from active service for the first time since its founding and sent to Balhaut to perform garrison duties. Two years on, however, the Ghosts are becoming restless from the lack of combat and purpose. A number of them go as far as committing crime to amuse themselves. Ibram Gaunt himself becomes increasingly idle and distracted, but remains confident that the Tanith First will return to the front again soon.

Events turn as Gaunt is summoned to Balhaut's Commissariat headquarters. A senior officer of the arch-enemy has been captured, and refuses to speak to anyone but Gaunt. The Inquisition is attempting to secure custody of the prisoner so that they may handle him their own way. The prisoner insists that he wishes to help the Imperium, but this claim is met with speculation by Gaunt. However, he is forced to protect the prisoner and go to ground in the city when a Blood Pact insertion team storms the facility in an attempt to silence the prisoner. With heretical witchcraft influencing the populace and a determined hunter pursuing them, who can Gaunt turn to for aid? And what information does the traitor general know that prompts the enemy to openly assault an Imperial stronghold?

The plot of 'Blood Pact' somewhat mirrors that of 'Traitor General', with Etogaur Mabbon in place of Noches Sturm, but differs with the assassination squad holding the upper hand over their target's captors. The novel also provides greater detail of Gaunt's past tour on Balhaut during his service with the Hyrkan 8th, before the founding of the Tanith First-and-Only.

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## **John Vance says**

Like a damn pair of old comfy pants. Gaunt's Ghosts stories are always cheesy ridiculousness, and there will always be a death or two of characters that I've grown quite fond of. Ugh, but I love it. I really, really do.

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## **Matthew says**

### Downtime For The Ghosts, Or So They Thought

The ghosts are waiting for their next deployment, trouble won't wait for them though, a prisoner has grasped there notice and also the notice of the people he has betrayed who are coming for him, Gaunt and his ghosts must stop them from retrieving them at all costs, the crusade may depend on it, plenty of action and character pieces to keep everyone ticking along, not the best of the series but a good breather before the next story arc happens, also with a real heart wrencher at the end, a favourite character is due to pass on soon.

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## **Derek Weese says**

Yet again Dan Abnett knocks one out of the park with his excellent 'Gaunt's Ghosts' series.

Blood Pact is a little something different than the rest of the books in the series. There are no epic battles, no massive tank/armor clashes, no titan battles, no dogfights, no siege lines. Instead the Ghosts are kicking their heels on Balhaut, the scene of Gaunt's first major success back when he was in Commissar with the Hyrkans. Unbeknownst to any of them, especially after two years of doing jack all except getting fat, lazy and bored (I love Tona Criid's obsession with pastry's and desserts which prompted her to start a jogging/running routine that would make most Marines cry), the Archenemy has sent a special forces group of their own to kill a very special prisoner held by Imperial forces on world.

What follows is a fun romp where Gaunt and a group of Ghosts have to protect the prisoner from the frighteningly effective Chaos special forces troops (loyal to Khorne, they are from the Blood Pact after all, hence the books title) while another under Major Rawne are fighting for their lives following a supremely hilarious early incident that involved a theft from a gambling institution that landed many of them (Rawne included) in the brig. All due to Rawne being 'really fething bored'. All of them come together in the end as well as a team under the personal command of an Inquisitor of His Most Holy Majesty's Holy Ordo's.

Blood Pact is a hell of a great, fun read and the ending absolutely floored me. Without giving anything away there is a character by the name of Jaume who make s a living by fabricating memorials for deceased members of the Imperial military to be given to their families. His father was a junior officer in the Balhaut PDF when the Crusade secured the world from the Chaos forces. Gaunt never lets Jaume on that he remembers Jaume's father. The epilogue is such a touching scene where Gaunt is simply remembering the horror that was the fighting for Balhaut. As he is sheltering under cover from the furious onslaught of incoming Chaos fire he turns to a junior PDF officer and together they lead the charge that breaks the Chaos resistance. The Junior Officers name is Jaume-it's little touches like that Abnett fills his books with that hit me and many other readers on an emotional level. Gaunt was correct when he told Jaume's son cryptically 'your father died a hero'. Indeed.

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## **Adam Whitehead says**

Two years have passed since the ferocious battle for Hinzerhaus Fortress on Jago. The Tanith First and Only won a famous victory, but only at a horrendous cost in lives. Battered and bleeding, the Tanith First finally won a respite, being rotated back to sector HQ on Balhaut for a well-earned rest after ten years on the front lines.

However, two years of inaction has led to problems with discipline, training and morale. In the midst of these problems, Colonel-Commissar Ibram Gaunt is summoned to a clandestine meeting. An agent of the archenemy has been taken prisoner and wants to give up valuable intelligence...but the Blood Pact have been sent to silence him by any means necessary.

Blood Pact is the twelfth novel in the Gaunt's Ghosts series and marks the beginning of the fourth distinct story arc in the series, "The Victory". The opening of the book feels like Dan Abnett is taking a deep breath after the mayhem of the previous novels, which featured some of the bloodiest and most frenzied battles in the series to date, but it's not too long before the action kicks in again. Blood Pact is a short novel taking place over one single night and morning of carnage as the Blood Pact - the Ghosts' sworn rivals - arrive to

carry out a suicide assassination task, succeed in splitting up the Ghosts and also take advantage of internal divisions as the Ghosts find themselves still under suspicion from the Inquisition about their mission to the Chaos-tainted world of Gereon years earlier.

As usual with a Gaunt's Ghosts novel, the pace is blistering, the action is superbly-handled and the characterisation shines. Gaunt's return to the world where he lost his former command but gained a new one adds new shades to his character. Background Ghosts nicely come to the fore, such as Maggs, whilst we touch base with a few key Ghosts who've been lower in profile in the preceding books. However, Blood Pact does feel like a lesser entry in the series. Perhaps it's due to the increasing frequency between novels (Blood Pact was released in 2009 and one more book, Salvation's Reach, in 2011 with nothing since), but Blood Pact feels a little like too much set-up at a moment in the series when it feels like it should be perhaps more decisively moving towards a conclusion. This can be seen in the fact that while a few key characters get a lot of time in the sun, numerous other Ghosts (including many who played key roles in the preceding few books) suddenly drop into the background. If Gaunt's Ghosts was a TV series (and we can but hope), this is the relatively low-key opening to a new season which is reacquainting you with all the characters before the big storylines kick in.

On that basis, Blood Pact (\*\*\*) does a good job of setting up its immediate sequel, Salvation Reach, and tells a rollicking good action story. Not one of the best books in the series, but still an effortlessly enjoyable slice of military SF from the best author in the subgenre.

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