



Raven's Flight

Gav Thorpe

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After the horrors of the Dropsite Massacre, the Raven Guard are trying to survive in the caves and mountains of Isstvan V. Their plight is desperate, and escape from the roaming Traitor legions seems impossible. Meanwhile colonel Valerius of the Imperial Army begins suffering terrible dreams, believing the Raven Guard to be in trouble.

Raven's Flight Details

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From Reader Review Raven's Flight for online ebook

Patt says

Not a bad book worth checking out Corax kicking ass for once instead of traitor forces being favored by authors as they always seem to be...

Callum Shephard says

Raven's Flight can be summed up in one sentence: This is why you do not anger Corax.

Serving as a prequel to the recently released Deliverance Lost, Raven's Flight helps to bridge the gap between the events depicted in First Heretic and Fulgrim with the desperate escape seen in Age of Darkness. After the gunship his bodyguard tried to evacuate him in is shot down during the Drop Massacre, the Raven Guard primarch leads the few thousand surviving warriors in a series of hit and run attacks on the traitor legions. This makes up the core of the action in the audio and it's the battles we see which really make it worth getting.

In the many books and series we've seen thus far in the Horus Heresy the primarchs have been depicted as beings of great power. Ones who can kill titans, take hammer bows unflinchingly and command great loyalty of their men. They've been also depicted as being flawed, able to fall to Chaos and be badly crippled while fighting others of their kind. What we've not seen is one truly unleashing himself as Corax does here. The battles have to be seen to be heard to be fully appreciated but it's unlikely we'll see anything similar to this until, perhaps, the Siege of Terra.

Along with the events on Isstvan V there are some much quieter scenes on Deliverance. Prifector Valerius is plagued by visions of burning ravens and outright destruction, images which have haunted his dreams for days and he is coming to believe that it is a message from Corax. While wishing to head for Isstvan with his garrison force he is repeatedly stonewalled by the remaining Raven Guard commander, Bran, who believes this is folly and is quickly becoming suspicious of Valerius.

While these were scenes definitely needed to break up the fighting on Isstvan and foreshadow the final events of the audiobook, they are definitely the weaker half of the story. Some of the interaction between Bran and Valerius feels forced at times, like the author Gav Thorpe was forced to condense a much longer series of events into a shorter space of time.

This never becomes truly irritating but it does lessen the overall quality of the story and isn't helped by some very flowery writing. Thrope's style can come off as being quite dry and he doesn't seem to quite know what to put into the scenes of verbal sparring between the two. It doesn't help that a lot of the action, much like one or two of the violent scenes, comes across as being melodramatic. Like it's supposed to be trying to parody a serious scene rather than actually be a genuine turning point in the audio. What helps offset this is some exceptional voice acting by Toby Longworth who speaks the lines with enough conviction to help the listener overlook these moments when hearing the audiobook for the first time.

Overall Raven's Flight is the weakest of the four Horus Heresy audiobooks thus far, but it's still definitely worth listening to. It features easily some of the best action scenes and while it might come across as

occasionally hammy, especially when Valerius is involved, there's enough good moments with Corax to make it worth listening to. If you want to read Deliverance Lost, it's strongly recommended you listen to this first.

Tom says

Probably should have read this before Deliverance Lost. It was ok but I felt it didn't really add anything to the story of the Raven Guard.

Declan Waters says

The GW Audio Dramas are great fun, albeit short, with a good narrator and fun 'pulp fictions' themes and story lines. Raven's Flight (Thorpe) is no exception. Set near the beginning of the Horus Heresy this book follows the planetfall of Corax and his Raven Guard and their eventual escape from ambush.

Great fun.

Mike Shepherd says

As I make my way through the Horus Heresy I look forward to the small distractions given by the audiobooks - this one deals with the Raven Guard left after the massacre on Istvan V and gives most "face-time" to Corax the RG primarch.

Vernon Burt says

Better than most the Audio dramas. Warhammer fiction still is a low-mental effort go to and don't expect much more than a quick heroic short story

Jake says

The black library audio dramas are a really fun listen, their value for cost isn't very good, but the production quality is AMAZING.

This particular story follows Corvus Corax as he is stranded on Istvan V after the drop site massacre.

The story is very action packed, but also highlights the personality and thoughts of Corax, which I found enjoyable.

This is realistically the equivalent of a audio version of a high action movie, its fluff, but enjoyable.

Abhinav says

Shadowhawk reviews the second audio drama of the Horus Heresy series, Raven's Flight by Gav Thorpe, which is the prequel to the upcoming novel Deliverance Lost previously reviewed here by Lord of The Knight.

“Because once you see Corax in action, the Horus Heresy will never be the same again.” – The Founding Fields

I first encountered Gav's work through Angels of Darkness, a novel that explores the myths and mysteries of the secretive Dark Angels. I was blown away. There has been a fair amount of controversy regarding the novel and one of its main characters, which has only served to heighten its popularity that much more.

The second time I read Gav's work was in his short story Call of the Lion for the Tales of Heresy anthology. This Horus Heresy story ties in to Angels of Darkness, and only served to fan the controversy of the latter. I was impressed again, but not by the story as much as I was by the way Gav connected the novel and the short story.

He has a certain flair in his 40k/Heresy work which I just love. He can take some really dubious interpretations of the 40k background and then twist and turn it into something familiar yet very unique. So I was rather excited to get Raven's Flight, an audio drama concerning the Nineteenth Primarch, Corax, and his legion, the Raven Guard. The Raven Guard have always been one of my favourite legions/chapters to read about, even though they haven't received much in the way of screen time.

And Gav didn't disappoint.

Where to start really? The audio drama focuses on the immediate aftermath of the Istvaan Dropsite Massacre, the singular event that launched the Heresy proper, and how the Raven Guard and their Primarch are being forced to adapt to treason and betrayal of the highest order. It has its fair share of fast-paced action scenes, moving dialogue, emotional self-reproach and powerful monologues.

Raven's Flight as a title is so very apt for this audio drama. Corax has just seen tens of thousands of his sons get mercilessly slaughtered. Their supply lines have been cut in the most brutal way possible. The legion has no vehicles or gunships on Istvaan any more. Even Corax's jump-pack is severely damaged, grounding the Raven himself.

Coming off the high of Jim Swallow's Garro audio dramas, I thought they couldn't be topped, especially not Legion of One. And then I listened to Raven's Flight and I was like “holy shit, this is awesome”. I seriously regret not having given the Heresy audio dramas, or any of Black Library's audio dramas in general, any serious consideration before. That has now all changed.

Toby Longworth is simply a master of his craft. I have listened to several of his Black Library audio dramas and there is bound to be some overlap between the different voices. Yet, he manages to inject enough uniqueness into the characters that is beyond my understanding.

Three characters take the center-stage in Raven's Flight: Corax, Commander Branne and Praefectus Marcus

Valerius o. Each of these three have their own quirks and mannerisms that are well-performed by Toby. Not to mention that these three are all vastly dissimilar to each other in physical aspect. One of them is a Primarch, a demi-god of battle. The second is a post-human individual who has been raised up from his ordinary life into one of great heroism and valour. The last character is an officer of the Imperial Army, one of the millions of human soldiers swarming all over the galaxy, trying to bring to fruition the Emperor's vision of a united Human empire.

Corax just bleeds inherent power in every scene he is in. As one of the more martial Primarchs, his scenes can be simply summed up as "Corax is bloody awesome". He carries a heavy bolter as a bolter for crying out loud! And he uses a special, customized power whip as well, an ironic throwback to the Primarch's past on Deliverance. Expect to also be treated to a great reveal regarding Corax and his abilities. Used as a plot device, we see not just the action Primarch, but the thinker Primarch. He wonders what has gone wrong in the galaxy to turn his brothers away from the Emperor. We even get some flashbacks of his first meeting with the Emperor.

Branne is the warrior who is forced to stay at home while his gene-father and his battle-brothers fight the greatest battle of the fledgling Imperium's history. His scenes within the Ravenspire, the legion's fortress-monastery, and with Valerius are very evocative of his feelings and his restrained power. He has been given a strict order from his Primarch and Commander Branne will never go against his gene-sire even though he would prefer to be fight with the rest of the Legion. It creates some fantastic tension between him and Valerius.

Valerius is sort of the odd one out. He is part of the Imperial Army auxilia attached to the Nineteenth Legion and is the senior officer present on Deliverance. His viewpoint as an ordinary human and his part in the events of the audio drama is quite unique I'd say. His troops have been left behind by Corax because Istvaan is Astartes business. The Imperial Army has no place in it.

The HH series is full of characters like him, who are used to give a human perspective on the Astartes and their Primarchs. But he distinguishes himself well enough because so far, he is the only (major) military man used in that role. If Dan had used Hektor Varvarus in Horus Rising or if Graham had used an officer of the Archite Palatines in Fulgrim in this capacity things would have been different. Legion is of course full of men and women of the Imperial Army but none of them quite have the connection with Alpharius/Omegon that Valerius has with Corax. And that ultimately is what is important when listening to Raven's Flight.

I am hard-pressed to choose which of these three characters I liked best. And that is precisely because they are all so different from each other, in nature and role, within the audio drama. But I have to say that while the tension between Valerius and Branne was very poignant and moving, it was Corax in action I liked most, especially when he muses to himself about how Horus' treachery has unfolded and his own role within it.

My only quibble with the audio drama is the format of the story itself. The plot would have benefited in a longer medium, like an extended short story so that Gav could fully explore his characters, his locales, and the tensions between the three main characters. Gav did a great job with the plot but at times it did feel like Branne didn't get enough development. There is a line from the Commander which I think summed up his character and his feelings very well:

"I killed my first man here, when I was younger than your manservant; throttled him with the strap of his rifle and took his gun. Of course, Corax was with me then."

That is one of the most evocative pieces of dialogue in the audio drama.

As mentioned, Toby Longworth did wonderful with his voices for the three characters. Although, it must be said, after listening to so many of his audio dramas, it all tends to mix together in the head. But there is something about his voices though: I can almost identify the different voices with some well-known movie characters but I'll be damned if I remember. The guessing game keeps the audio drama pretty interesting.

As of writing this review, I have listened to Raven's Flight three times, and I've enjoyed every second of it. There is no sense of repetitiveness to it that makes me want to put it down. It is just that good.

The immersive experience is fantastic, definitely among the top two Black Library audio dramas so far for me. The other spot being shared by Garro: Legion of One that is.

So would I recommend this audio drama to Heresy fans? Hell yes. Whether or not you like audio dramas, or the Heresy series, or even the Raven Guard, you are missing out big time if you ignore Raven's Flight. Gav's writing is great. The characters are all fantastically performed by Toby Longworth. There really is nothing that brings down the audio drama other than just the the medium itself.

Score-wise, I rate Raven's Flight 9/10. I would definitely like to see another audio drama from Gav. Perhaps he could explore the Raven Guard further, or even pick up some of the neglected legions like the White Scars and the Iron Hands.

If you want more Raven Guard action, there is the short story Faces of Treachery in Age of Darkness which is somewhat of a sequel to the audio drama but also takes place at the same time as the last track or thereabouts and gives you totally another perspective on the Dropsite Massacre. There is also Deliverance Lost, Gav's first full-length story for the Heresy. George Mann has done the Raven Guard for 40k with his audio drama Helion Rain and has another, Labyrinth of Sorrows in the works. The chapter also makes an appearance in other novels such as The Chapter's Due from Graham and The Hunt for Voldorius from Andy Hoare.

'Victorus aut Mortis!'

Fabian Scherschel says

This was the first Horus Heresy audio book I've listened to and I must say it was excellent. Very well read and the atmosphere is amazing. I just loved the insight you glean about Corax. If you are a Raven Guard fan like me, this is a must read. While the story is short, it is up there with the best of the series and the moment where Corax cries actually made me choke up. Great story telling.

The audio drama basically follows the story of the remainder of the Raven Guard on Isstvan V and how they and their primarch happen to make it off the planet. For its shortness, it is a gripping tale. If you have read all of the other books in the series, you should be listening to this too. It's one hour of nice entertainment and atmosphere that fits perfectly into a Sunday afternoon.

Lex says

Another great story about the Raven Guard, this time with their Primarch, Corax, going against the odds

against their treacherous brothers-in-arms. The action-packed audio book brings the savage battle to life, as well as good characterization of Corax, while also delving into the Astartes-Imperial Guard/humans relationships - both the good and the bad side. There's also some character insight as to the Horus Heresy itself, which has been tackled before in other books, but on a clearer and more absorbed digression here. I like this book, it's a guaranteed keeper for all Warhammer 40k fans.

Dylan Murphy says

This was an awesome audio drama following the Corax and the Raven Guard following the events of the Dropsite Massacre at Istvaan V. The action scenes were amazing, getting to see pre-heresy Raven Guard for the first time was a real treat, and Corax was written extremely well, though I wish the fact that his Legion was all but destroyed effected him a little more than it did.

The story of the Imperial Army officer and Raven Guard on Deliverance was also entertaining, and quite surprising! I fear to think what would have happened had they not risked the adventure based on dreams!

Teddy says

I had a road trip and this was a nice quick story to keep me entertained along the way.

David Guymer says

On the face of things, this is a simple tale of a Primarch butchering his way through hordes of dastardly Iron Warriors in the aftermath of the Dropsite Massacre, but Gav's take on Corax (a delightful change from the traitors we've got near thus far) is what makes this so much more. The only real trouble I had with it was that I immediately associated Toby Longworth, who narrates, with the Ciaphas Cain audios. A little bit like two worlds colliding, but I quickly got over it!

Kjell says

Paints a good picture of this chapter of ravens, for each book I read in the different 40k series, the greater the tragedy of the Horus Heresy becomes.

Vince Tirri says

Awesome audio drama. Corax is one of my new favorite characters in this series. Looking forward to future stories that involve him, and his legion.
