This may be a teaser

**Legacy 13.3**

**Legacy of Change**

*The Fifth Black Crusade was a disaster thanks to Lorgar’s pathetic leadership.*

*But this was merely one campaign.*

*The Long War will continue, False Emperor.*

*The Long War will continue, and inevitably, your Imperium will fall.*

*It will not happen this year. The collapse may not even start this millennium.*

*But it will come.*

*The Long War is entering a new phase.*

*And you underestimated us. Your precognition powers are incredibly limited now.*

*Your foresight is close to nonexistent.*

*The present and the future are in a state of Chaos.*

*We thrive in it, unlike you.*

*You are of* Order*.*

*This is a completely new war now, and the galaxy is about to change again.*

*You have underestimated us, False Emperor, but we won’t underestimate you any longer.*

*Your servants are waiting on the walls, manning the defences, praying to you.*

*They hear your whispers that everything is better than worshipping the Gods. That as long as they die free and loyal to you, there will be a better tomorrow, if not for them, for their families.*

*But this is all a lie.*

*What your priests pretend to be the Light is just pitiful candles trying to masquerade as a true sun.*

*And your Order is just the ossified carcass of something once glorious.*

*The nine Legions which stayed by your side have become shadows of their former glory, scattered across the galaxy, forced to fight battles that will never be reported by fear the unwashed masses begin to think of the true perils of this reality.*

*The Imperium will fall.*

*And we will the Long War.*

*Death to the False Emperor!*

**Nyx Sector**

**Atlas Sub-Sector**

**Atlas System**

**Atlas II**

**Ducal Palace of Agra-Napoli**

**3.567.313M35**

**Captain Dino Rossi**

The gates slammed shut before the monster could recover from the latest surprise that they had sprung upon it.

“WHAT IS THAT THING?” Someone screamed.

To Dino Rossi’s consternation, it was the commanding officer of one of the Palace’s primary regiments.

“It is an abomination,” he replied, before adding to the benefit of his men. “And we are going to kill it.”

“IT IS UNKILLABLE! WE MUST FLEE AT ONCE!”

BLAM!

Well, there was at least one question answered for good. Yes, the regiments sworn to the Arch-Duke had the equivalent of Commissars to maintain discipline.

“There will be no retreat from the Palace,” the stern officer in black uniform ordered. “And if any other man wants to spread panic, let him speak here and now.”

Curiously, with a Colonel having a large hole in the back of his head, everyone chose to remain silent.

“Good,” the political officer spoke. “And clearly, any rumours of invincibility are just completely false. A lone Hydra battery was able to destroy its wings and down the monster. Now it is on the ground, and clearly if the last minutes are any indication, it can’t regenerate its destroyed appendages.”

“The problem is the breath attacks of the abomination,” Dino Rossi approved.

Of course, he only had to say it for the creature to make its presence felt.

There was a sensation of infernal warmth, and suddenly, the gates began to melt.

Golden Throne preserve them, the metal covering them wasn’t adamantium, but it was not something easy to destroy either!

“The Gates of Agra-Napoli were blessed by the Ecclesiarchy?” A soldier of the Sapphire Host gasped.

“Were the Priests sent by Nyx, or were they those sycophants the nobles always keep close to them?”

“Err...”

“Silence. Captain Rossi, is it? What do you know about this abomination?”

“I’m afraid it is the Indigan Dragon that so many rumours were mentioning before today, Sir. The beast that was supposed to be the biggest animal the hunters would kill. But somehow, heretics must have used something truly heretical to change it like this. Now it has three heads and two tails, and most of our weapons have literally no effect, from lasguns to light mortars.”

And of course, all of the three vulture-like heads of the monsters could expel some sort of sorcerous flames from their beaks.

This would have been bad enough in the first place, but if the first head unleashed a firestorm that incinerated flesh within seconds, the second was spreading corruption and twisted everything that had the misfortune to be on the receiving end of it. As for the third...there were things that were way too horrible to contemplate.

“I’m afraid the Northern Gardens are completely devastated, Sir. And all the forces which answered the call to arms in the first hour have been annihilated.”

What few of them were there, anyway. Nobody had anticipated something like that.

“The Governor?”

“I’m afraid we don’t know, Sir. We have been able to confirm six of his children were killed as they were too close to the abomination when the hunt became a bloodbath. We know he was alive three hours ago. But I’m afraid we have no knowledge of his whereabouts now. Things outside...are a bit disorderly.”

That was the polite way to say it was a bloody disaster, yes.

“Thank you, Captain. In this case, I think it is time to bring out the heavier weaponry. There are in this Palace’s vaults-“

There was more infernal breaths directed against the Gate, and plenty of soldiers shivered.

“It would be best to hurry, Sir. The Gates aren’t going to hold it at bay for long. And...none of my men here have the codes or the formal authorisation to access the heavy weaponry.”

In fact, the majority of the men present here didn’t have the permission to be here in the Palace, and it included Dino himself.

If the situation hadn’t been such a bloody fiasco, the young Captain would have spent more than a few minutes marvelling at the outrageously rich decorations, the oil paintings, and the splendid armours that had been once used by long-dead members of the Arch-Duke’s Dynasty.

“I know. You! Put me in contact with the Western Command and-“

The shriek interrupted every conversation and order.

It was atrocious.

It hurt your ears, despite all the earmuffs and sound-dampening stuff they all were equipped with.

It was a sound no living creature should ever make.

But it also unmistakably was a shriek of *pain*.

“STAY STILL, YOUR HORRIBLE PARODY OF DRAKE!”

No, surely even Lord Pierre couldn’t-

Something extremely heavy hit the gates.

“I SAID STAY STILL! ARE YOU AS DUMB AS YOU ARE UGLY?”

Fine, it was him.

The gates exploded.

The shriek repeated itself, but this time, it was one where horror and despair was all too evident.

Smoke erupted, poisonous and filled with heresy of the foulest sort, but it didn’t last.

There was something gold hurled in the middle of the devastation.

A second later, the golden flames came into existence.

And this time the horrible shrieking easily tripled in intensity.

There were more explosions.

And then enormous piece of masonry fell down.

The smoke slowly dissipated.

As it did, Dino Rossi was granted the unbelievable sight of Lord Pierre, standing upon the giant abomination. And the Lord Dreadnought had a large Atlasian hat with pink feathers of the latest fashion upon his armoured chassis.

Of the monster...two out of three heads had been thoroughly killed with some sort of different spears impaling them, but the greatest injury done had to be the one which had somehow ensured part of the monster’s thorax was burning in golden flames.

“I HAVE COME TO BUY HATS AND KILL TRAITORS, AND I ALREADY HAVE A HAT! FOLLOW ME, IN THE NAME OF THE EMPEROR!”

“Yes, Lord Pierre!”

**Hesperides City**

**3.371.313M35**

**Inquisitor Gabriel Mercoire**

“My Lord?”

“Yes, Acolyte.”

Gabriel Mercoire did try to present his usual emotionless expression, and not show his exhaustion.

The Lord Inquisitors above him had thought a few years in the Nyx Sector would do marvels for his health, as he would be given the opportunity to recover from wounds sustained during the recent battles in Segmentum Obscurus.

Nobody had really thought Atlas would explode in such a manner, or that he would be the closest Malleus Inquisitor able to answer.

“I’m all rejoicing that the Dreadnought serving Her Celestial Highness was here to deal with the Possessed dragon and everything, but...why was he here in the first place?”

“I have my suspicions,” Gabriel answered truthfully. “Knowing how tense the relations between Atlas and Nyx were before this week, it was not to compliment on the promptness of his tithes’ deliveries, or to celebrate his next birthday.”

Bolt Guns fired in front of them. Over twenty traitor officers fell.

Gabriel Mercoire was willing to overlook a lot of petty actions when the daemonic was the enemy, but the sheer level of economic corruption and incompetence that was the norm had to stop in one of the chief city of Atlas had to stop immediately.

“How does the situation in the Palace looks?” he asked, dismissing the matter. The regiments of the PDF that were now mustering were moving far faster. It would have been better if dedication burned in their hearts, but he would settle for what he had.

“Inside the Palace, it’s relatively manageable. The Dreadnought arrived in time, and he was rapidly reinforced by solid units which promptly purged the cultists and the mutants. Outside the palace, I’m afraid it is worse. The Northern Gardens are just...gone. The teams we have are not encountering the Arch-Enemy for the first time, but this corruption is shocking even for men and women of their experience.”

“That’s what happens when you lower their guard and refuse to take seriously the threat represented by the Ruinous Powers.” Gabriel Mercoire said grimly.

Politics always were a messy business, but you couldn’t deny that Atlas had been the only system to be targeted by the heretics, and what a coincidence! It was the only system that had refused to enforce several of the reforms sponsored by Her Celestial Highness.

Coincidences existed in their line of work; it was a big galaxy after all.

That, however, was not a coincidence.

“The Governor?”

“His personal guard was able to drag him out of the nightmare, my Lord. He lost his arm and will have to spend several weeks in a hospital, but we tested him using the holy Aethergold. He didn’t show any sign of pain.”

The representative of the Ordo Malleus didn’t know if he was to feel pleased or frustrated by that revelation.

On the one hand, the Planetary Governor had clearly stayed loyal to the God-Emperor. As someone having access to this extraordinarily level of power could do extreme damage and spread the roots of corruption to a disastrous degree, this was somehow a relief it hadn’t happened.

On the other hand, this cultist coup and entire heresy had been done under the nose of the Governor. It was not a small error of judgement that could be overlooked. Many Adepts in the past had lost their heads for smaller catastrophes.

“Your orders, Lord?”

Fortunately for the Arch-Duke, Lord Inquisitor Odysseus Tor had politely *requested* Gabriel to abide by certain guidelines.

And besides, Brabanto XV da Flor would have to answer for his incompetence quickly enough. The Inquisition was not the only authority who was going to be out for blood here.

“For now, just assign the Governor a squad of protectors, and ensure he stays in his private clinic. In time, I will have a talk with him. Once he will be healthy enough to be moved, I expect Nyx to summon him.”

And for his own sake, the Planetary Governor of Atlas Secundus should begin to work on his future eloquent defence against the accusations that would rain upon his head.

“The Magma Spiders?”

“The Astartes have broken through the Eastern Fort, and put to death every traitor noble that was assembling here.”

“How many cultists were among them?”

“None, it seems, my Lord. It was just one power-hungry cousin of the Arch-Duke having delusions he could sweep away all opposition and take power.”

This day was really didn’t going to get better.

“I suppose that explains why the sons of Vulkan were able to rally so many PDF regiments to act as their support when they landed.”

“Yes, my Lord.”

Gabriel Mercoire listened to the reports of his other Acolytes, all informing him by highly-encrypted communications of their progress.

“The first priority is to excise the corruption and wipe out the heresy. We have Aethergold in sufficient quantities, and it won’t do any good to be spendthrift with it. The Northern Gardens are to be quarantined by reliable units while the Purifying Squadrons march in.”

“Rules of engagement?”

“We have the reports of a sworn member of Her Celestial Highness’ Dawnbreaker Guard, Acolyte. I think we can trust him to report accurately the situation.” And the mutation breath of the abomination had done so much damage anyway that death after that was likely a mercy. “Everything that was caught inside these walls must burn. If someone or something endures unscathed the holy flames, the Acolytes are to use their best judgement. Otherwise, my previous orders stand.”

“There are...rumbles across the nobility, my Lord. We will have to keep an eye on the principal troublemakers. They may do something stupid...some of them are baying that members of their family are trapped inside the Palace’s area.”

Gabriel Mercoire felt a flicker of sympathy for a heartbeat. But he extinguished it. Most of the nobles missing were dead, and those who weren’t had to wish they were, because the corrupted monster had done things to them that were heresy incarnate.

“Indeed. And since we speak of the nobility, it is time for us to begin the real part of the work the Ordo Malleus exists for in the first place.”

“My Lord?”

“The abomination was slain by a servant of Her Celestial Highness,” the Inquisitor said coldly, “but I don’t believe for a second that the architects of this heresy were able to do something like that from one or two Sectors away. Not with the number of cultists and PDF officers that went traitor.”

There were some agents of the Arch-Enemy that were capable of it, to be clear, but most operated in Obscurus, not here.

And honestly, the fingerprints of the cultists were everywhere; the situation reeked of chaotic *amateurism*.

“Find me the head of this diabolic conspiracy, Acolyte. And once you do, take him alive. I have a lot of questions to ask him.”

**Palace of New Bologna**

**3.373.313M35**

**Marquis Galeotto da Montane**

How? How did they find him so quickly?

How?

“We have been betrayed!” Galeotto snarled. “It is simply not possible that the dogs of the False Emperor found their way to my palace so quickly otherwise!”

The Grand Master of the Nine Secret Ambitions wanted to add a few more curses, but the thunder of the shells arrived in the next seconds.

There was a considerable amount of explosions.

The lights flickered out.

“Grand Master, is it possible they found your correspondence with the commander of the Hesperides garrison?”

“Don’t be ridiculous!” the Marquis of Three Seasons hotly retorted. “I ordered him to burn the messages as soon as he had finished reading them! What kind of moron would be so reckless and blatantly stupid to keep compromising evidence that would result in your execution if the Governor’s lackeys found you with it?”

Still, the doubt began to spread out in the depths of his thoughts.

If this incompetent General had truly betrayed him-

“Grand Master! Your guards inform us they aren’t able to hold for long! The enemy has brought troops using Power Armour! Some kind of Stormtroopers we have never seen before!”

“Weaver,” Galeotto cursed. “It has to be Weaver. Tell our guards to buy us as much time as they can. We are going to try to mount a counterattack.”

“But...Grand Master...how?”

“I thought it is evident, really. By now, the two other rebellions must have made great progress. The dogs of the False Emperor committed all the Space Marines of the sub-Sector here, on Atlas Secundus. This means that on Atlas Primus and Atlas Tertius, our fellow conspirators must have made great headway!”

“Err...Grand Master...”

“What it is?”

“We have been studying the aether and the long-range communications of Atlas Primus and Tertius. There is no rebellion ongoing. There hasn’t even been a coup attempt.”

“NO!” Galeotto da Montane shouted before his self-control was somewhat leashed again. “It has to be a mistake. Perhaps some kind of undercover sorcery that impersonated the First Duke and his cousins and-“

“Grand Master...” the bombardment came closer, and several windows exploded. The fires were getting closer. “There isn’t any sign of that. And the high nobles are all calling on all their channels to inform their friends that this rebellion is an accursed thing, that they are all loyal to the God-Emperor and His Living Saint...”

The Marquis of Three Seasons expressed a hysteric chuckle.

Loyal? These insolent parvenus who didn’t deserve their title had the gall to proclaim themselves loyal?

They were as loyal to the Imperium as the God Khorne was a fierce supporter of Peace!

“And what of the rest of the Sector?” He asked for the fifth time in the last hour as massive fissures appeared in his priceless painted ceiling and dust began to fall from several sections. “Surely there must be some agitation! Warlord Malicia promised us support! Surely we aren’t the only ones to rebel!”

The terrified expressions were all the answer he needed, and a massive pit of despair opened its fangs to swallow his last hopes.

“I’m sorry, Grand Master, but...there are massive Astropathic emergency communications. And while many of them are out of our means to decipher...we can perceive mustering orders for Atlas, and only for Atlas. Many dozens of transports and warships are on their way. Nyx is reacting like we are an egg, and they a Power Hammer.”

Galeotto grimaced at the image.

This was a couple of heartbeats before the screams of the dying arrived to his ears.

“Why? Why would the Warlord betray us like that? We serve the will of the Changer of Ways?”

“But the Architect of Fate is the God of Ambition and Betrayals too, Grand Master! Is it possible this accursed sorceress feared your rise, and decided to lead you into a trap before you were ready to overthrow her and become the Herald of Change?”

Hatred and pride waged war in his heart.

In all honesty, he didn’t know which feeling won out in the end.

“Yes! It would explain why the enemy was able to slay so easily the Steed of Chaos! This Beast is supposed to be invincible, especially once it possesses something as mighty as an Indigan Dragon!”

This was not his fault that his efforts were ending in failure. At every point, he had been betrayed by those jealous of his successes.

“But I will have my revenge! I will have my revenge over you, traitors, even if it is the last thing that I do!”

His world disappeared in a storm of thunder and the bark of thousands of weapons.

“NO!” he screamed. “They can’t have...to the secret passage! To the secret passage! Don’t let them-“

The orders he heard from the implacable army running towards him caused Galeotto to panic completely.

“ALIVE! THE INQUISITOR WANTS THEM ALIVE!”