

The Horus Heresy Book One: Betrayal review – by Craig Pearson

My copy of *The Horus Heresy: Betrayal* turned up a few weeks ago and in the excitement I nearly mugged the postman to get it in the house and out of its packaging. The first thing to note about the book is that it's physically stunning to look at. With a leather effect binding, embossed title and edging, it looks fantastic! It also has beautiful glossy cover artwork, aluminium corners to prevent damage and every page is edged with a metallic effect.

Now, onto the content. The first half of the book provides huge amounts of background information (some previously never seen before) about the rise of the Emperor and the Unification Wars, the creation of the Primarchs and Space Marine Legions, and the dawn of the Great Crusade. There are also sections detailing the relationship between Terra and the Priesthood of Mars, the emergence of psykers, and Heresy Era armour and equipment. With high quality photographs, maps, schematics and illustrations throughout, this book captures the look and feel of the Horus Heresy very well.

The next section is divided into three parts and chronicles the events on, and the eventual death of Istvaan III. It includes the conspiracy of the traitor legions, the disposition of forces on the planet, conflict with the loyalists and the eventual aftermath and slaughter that followed.

Book one provides detailed histories of the four of the main protagonists on Istvaan, the Sons of Horus, World Eaters, Emperor's Children and Death Guard. Each legion has an account of the early life and rise of their respective Primarchs, their beliefs, combat doctrines and tactics, as well as full colour plates of armour variants, vehicles and dreadnoughts.

The final section of the book is possibly the most anticipated (for me)...the legion army lists. With rules for completely new weaponry, command models, units, and legion specific rules, this section doesn't fail to impress. Perhaps the most exciting part is the Lords of War, namely the rules for the Primarchs of the four legions covered in this book. As someone building an Emperor's Children army, I would be lying if I didn't skip straight to the page featuring Fulgrim's rules. The only minor disappointment was the lack of rules for some of the legions' other main characters, Lucius being one I was keen to see. At the end of the army lists are rules for armies of the Mechanicum. Although perhaps seen as a bit of a footnote when compared to the rest of what this book has to offer, they're an intriguing army all the same.

Overall I would give this book 9/10. At £78 including postage, this book isn't cheap, especially if you're looking to collect the series. That said, the quality of product is very high and looks fantastic. Even if you're a non-gamer and just interested in the background of the Horus Heresy, this is probably worth picking up.