

The dream was always the same. Well almost. Small changes occurred here or there but it was never a major departure from the last time. He was thankful in some distant, dim way that he at least dreamt other dreams. He wasn't sure how his mental faculties, as altered as they already were, could take the same dream without end. He thanked the All Father for that small mercy – even though he knew he did so in the middle of the dream itself. That was another oddity of his dreams. They were often lucid. This one though, had happened so often he knew what was coming; after all, the dream was always the same....

It always began with the charge down through the ice canyon at dusk. He remembered the usual crunch of snow under foot as he ran and the smell of burnt hair and flesh as those ahead of him fell to enemy fire from the narrow canyon floor. He always fell behind his pack mates as he ran; he could never quite remember why he was always so slow – odd, given the clarity of the dream.

It didn't matter. The enemy were there and he would kill them as he always did. Blue and gold armoured foes loomed to his left this time. He hadn't seen this particular foe before but he seemed to know them regardless. They were Marines of course – twisted beyond redemption if they were shooting at him, he was sure.

He gave them a burst from his assault cannon as he moved downhill, every fifth round a tracer, the phosphorous contrails marking the enemy for others to target if it was required. It wasn't. His shots struck home and the enemy fell before any other pack member could train their bolters on the target. He roared his usual challenge to the foe and carried on down the slope, tracking his cannon left and right looking for more targets.

A bolt of blue fire blazed from the outstretched hand of an enemy sorcerer a hundred metres down the canyon and struck Olaf Redfist square in the chest. His Terminator armour buckled and cracked before Olaf erupted with a startlingly bright explosion, his blood evaporating even as it left his body. This was definitely a change to the dream. Olaf never fell.

Someone was shouting at him from nearby. That wasn't unusual but the worried tone was odd. He realised he was standing still as he watched Olaf vanish in a haze of disappearing red mist and splintering armour. He turned to see who was shouting. He still couldn't make out the wording. The dream was turning strange.

“Russ and the All Father call you to fight, not stand about like a whelp at his first summer dance!” To his left, the Wolf Priest was waving his Crozius wildly and pointing down the canyon at the enemy as bolter fire whipped up the ground and the bloody snow three paces to his right.

“I.. am... confused, Priest. Olaf does not fall in the dream....” He was talking. He never spoke in the dream, even when he was lucid. He felt heavier than usual.

He was struck by two bolter rounds but his armour shrugged them off. He barely felt their impact but the noise interrupted what the Priest was saying.

“What...? This dream is not right....”

“I said this isn't a dream, Bjorn the Fell-Handed! Rouse your senses from your slumber-yoke. The Thousand Sons attack Fenris!”