

The Day a Company Murdered Its Own World

How Games Workshop deliberately ended a 30-year-old franchise.



Book 1: Nagash.

The supreme lord of undeath is resurrected by sacrificing Elf Princess Aliathra. Nagash returns as a living god of death, kicking off the End Times.

The 3 Crises of Warhammer Fantasy (Early 2010s)



Stagnant Sales: Reusable rank-and-file armies meant veteran players stopped buying new plastic models.



Rule Thicket: Three decades of dense rules and expansions created an intimidating, hostile barrier for new players.



Worthless IP: Generic faction names (The Empire, High Elves) were un-trademarkable and vulnerable to competitors.

The “No Reset Button” Policy

Upgrading heroes to demigods in a controlled, un-retconnable demolition.

Top



2302 IC (Great War)

Chaos repelled by Magnus the Pious. Status quo maintained.



2521 IC (Storm of Chaos)

Chaos repelled again. Outcome later completely retconned and erased from official canon.



2014-2015 (The End Times)

No bluffs. A floor-by-floor demolition where fan-favorite characters are permanently killed or transformed.

Book 2: Glottkin

The plague-god's forces invade the Empire. Emperor Karl Franz is seemingly killed, only to be struck by celestial lightning and reborn as Sigmar Incarnate.



Erasing the Old, Owning the New

Sinking an entire continent to solve a trademark crisis



Book 3: Khaine. The Elven pantheon perishes. The ancient homeland of Ulthuan sinks into the sea. The greatest hero, Tyrion, is corrupted and slain, leaving former villain Malekith as the Eternity King of the survivors.

The Old World (Generic)

Factions: High Elves, Dwarfs, The Empire

Result: Un-trademarkable English words

Entire product lines vulnerable to rival
miniature companies



The Future (Proprietary)

Factions: Aeldari, Stormcast Eternals

Result: 100% ownable, trademarkable
Intellectual Property assets

The Death of Planet Mallus

The culmination of Books 4 & 5 (Thanquol & Archaon)



The subterranean Skaven (ratmen) overrun the dwarf holds and detonate the world's underworld, while Archaon marches to finish the surface.

Anatomy of a World's End

1

The 8 Winds of Magic

Raw sorcerous power is bound to 8 surviving hero Incarnates to defend the world.

2

The Final Stand

The Incarnates face Archaon at the city of Middenheim.

3

The Betrayal

The undead (Mannfred and Nagash) turn on the living alliance at the decisive moment.

4

The End

Planet Mallus breaks apart completely. No last-minute salvation.

What Rose From the Ashes

Launching Warhammer Age of Sigmar (2015)

The Phoenix Framework



Infinite Canvas: Replaced a single doomed, crowded planet with endless magical realms (unlimited model design space).



Proprietary Icons: Introduced the Stormcast Eternals (golden immortal knights) — a uniquely trademarkable product line.



Retained Pessimism: When Stormcast Eternals die, their souls are reforged by Sigmar, but each reforging scrapes away their memory and humanity. The grimdark soul of the IP survives.



Sigmar's spirit clings to the dead planet's core. Rescued by Dracothion, he is taken to a new cosmos of 8 magical worlds stitched together by Realmgates.