

The smell of burning steel has Gamma2 drooling behind her mask. It's the olfactory equivalent of a dinner bell, and it's ringing louder than the thunderous retorts of the god weapons hurling rounds the size of her arm out there in the concrete tangle. Her breathing is heavy, ragged with eager anticipation of what's to come. She can hear the suppressed giggles, nervous, giddy, of her pack mates in the shadows around her.

They've taken shelter in an abandoned parking structure, hiding amongst the dust covered transports abandoned by their owners when the city fell to the chaos of war. It's been three days and the hunting has been good. Four kills so far, and the fifth is on the menu. Their numbers have dropped by a third since the conflict started, the life of a Hyena isn't easy. The hounds, out there in their steel bodies, have it made. The apples of handlers eyes, for them the glory, for them the praise of a job well done, and the reward for their base desires when they prove what good dogs they are. Not so for her pack. For them the rippers, for them the hunt, for them the meat...

Gamma2 goes rigid as her comms crackle to life, an eager titter tickles her ears before the message is delivered. "Prey in sight. In position in 30." She can feel the truth of that in the rumble of concrete. Each stride of the god engine shakes the earth. Rippers whine in eager hands as their engines are revved in anticipation. Their prey is massive, deadly, more of them will die in the coming seconds. Hunting a god isn't easy, but the prize inside is worth it.

Alpha1 grunts a command to one of the runts, barks a few orders to sisters out of sight, and the pack is moving. They can see her now, a divine chariot soiled by the dust and debris of the battlefield. From the high pitched grind of gears they can tell she's seen battle, something inside her is out of alignment. All the better.

100ft. 80ft. 60ft.

The runt is in position. She holds something, about the size of a trashcan lid, in her hands.

50ft...

She's running! Gamma2 can only imagine the grin on her face behind her mask. The feelings of exhilaration and terror surging like fire through her veins. The runts have it hard, but it's a chance to prove their place in the pack. If she survives she'll get her name and number today. She reaches the mech, a small thing swaddled in a cloak the color of cement dust. Her timing is good. She places her burden against the gods ankle, right at the joint, mere moments after its foot hits the ground. She books it.

She's only a little slow. The shaped charge detonates, turning the runts cloak to fire and shearing the steel workings of the mech's body, hobbling it like an injured animal. From stalking hunter to startled prey in milliseconds. The pilot inside must be losing her shit, trying to figure out what's happening to her. They won't give her that chance.

Gamma 2 feels the rush of the stims as Alpha1 gives them what they want. Her veins sing with honey and fire, smells grow sharper, she can taste everything, and she swears she can see new colors. A ragged laugh escapes

her lips as the joy of the chem high fills her. She's not a woman now, just an animal, a beast baying for blood. And she knows where to get it.

Above, on the roof of the parking structure, two more sisters reveal themselves. Even as the pack surges from hiding, whooping with eager glee and gunning their rippers, the pair leaps.

Only one makes it, her sister falling to her death on the asphalt below. Theta6 lands on the god engine and begins to tear into its sensors with her ripper. Steel teeth roar in bestial glory as she sets to work, holding on for dear life even as she works to divest her prey of their own.

The Pilot panics as she is blinded, and her god chariot goes berserk. The air fills with the acrid smell of white hot steel as she activates her melee weapon. A fucking heat lance. Gamma2 has no clue where she got something like that, but knows it's a bad way for someone outside of a mech to go. A few of her sisters find that out the hard way as the mech sweeps its burning fury low, catching several of her packmates in its arc. She can hear them scream, smell them cook. They scream and laugh as they die, even the stims coursing through their veins can't drown out that kind of pain.

The deaths drive the pack to a frenzy. They swarm across the mech like ants on a grasshopper, ripping into its divine flesh with their metal teeth. In her panic, the pilot loses her balance, something comes loose in her mech's ankle and she crashes down into the adjacent building. Several sisters are caught by falling rubble but none of them care, not with the prize so close.

Gamma2 can see her Alpha, thrown wide by the collapse of the steel giant. And her heart sings. She looks to the mech, to the seat of her prize, and she runs. Everyone's going for the same thing, the cockpit. But she's just a little faster. Her ripper roars, then whines as she cuts into the hull. She almost imagines she can hear the pilot screaming, begging, pleading for salvation. It's got her hard as a rock and hotter than that heat lance. It's not long before she's no longer alone. Her sisters cutting, ripping, prying metal away. They snarl and laugh at each other, comradery warring with eagerness to be the first to get at the pilot.

Gamma2 is just a second behind one of her sisters as the other woman pulls free the last panel. And pays for it with her life. Far from cowering, the pilot is determined to live. She fires her gun point blank into the hyena's face. Brains spray in a fine, pink, mist as the other woman falls away. The pilot surges forth, eager to make her escape, her gun training fast on Gamma2.

She loses the hand for that, the ripper shearing through her at the wrist. She cries out in pain as Gamma2 grabs her, dragging her the rest of the way out of the cockpit by her hair. Everyone is laughing, howling, eager. She's Gamma2's prize. She got her out first!

She can see it now as the pilot looks around, realizes what it is she's against, fear. It's so sweet, that look in her eyes. Not a fierce warrior anymore. Her god is a steel carcass and she's just soft meat, eyes wide and wet, staring up at her new god. She finds no mercy. Gamma 2 is in love. She removes her mask, her face twisted in a grin that seems to stretch from ear to ear. She's drooling in anticipation. It's the moment they have all been waiting for.

She begs, pleads, cries as she's dragged down from her steel corpse, down into the shadows of the parking structure. There's nothing she can do, she belongs to the pack now. Now to rip, now to tear, now to feast...