

Dropship Monte Yarrow
Inbound, Herakleion
Free Worlds League

OPERATION LIBRARY TOWER

Levi Aviv entered the dropship's briefing room, glancing over the trio of Mechwarriors and the two pilots already present. *Good men. Loyal men*, he told himself. *Ones that don't deserve what's about to happen to them*. The tallest man in the room, his thick, curly hair and beard accented his olive skin and light blue eyes, making him stand out in a crowd. There were a few nods as he took his place at the head of the room, glancing over those present. *God willing, we all make it out of this*.

"Ladies, gentlemen." He began. "In past, you have performed many missions for this organization. You have fought hard and sacrificed much, and I could not ask for more." He nodded towards Mobutu, one of those present. The right side of his face was a mass of burn scars, one arm clearly mechanical. "And yet I will."

"Unlike our previous operations, this one has no sponsor." He explained. "We have nobody asking us to do the impossible for them. There is no backer with their interests in play, no sponsor directing our hands. Rather, this has come from our own leaders, acting on orders that were passed to them from their predecessors, orders that have been standing since this organization was formed."

He paused a moment to let that sink in. "I knew of this after we disengaged from our jumpship and opened my sealed orders. As such, I am in the same situation as the rest of you."

"So quit with the drama and tell us what it is already." Jaessa spoke up. The youngest member of his lance, in Levi's eyes she also seemed to be the most full of herself. Fair skinned and dark haired, she seemed to be obsessed with dark makeup for some imagined effect. If she was expecting a response from the rest of those present, it didn't come.

After a brief pause, she looked back at him, clearly dejected at not getting a reaction from the team. "So yeah. As I said."

"This is operation LIBRARY TOWER." He explained. "The target world is Herakleion, once part of the Free Worlds League. A couple of decades ago, the Lyrans took exception to something there and decided to hit the world with a bioweapon assault. The result is that the world is off-limits, classed as a hazard."

"And yet, we're going to it." Mobutu spoke, his voice croaking as it came from his damaged throat. "There must be a good reason to send us into hell."

"Correct." He nodded. "Our target is a facility located on the planet's main continent." Levi spoke, the holo-displayer bringing up a large map of the area. "Inside which is a Data Core that we are to locate and extract, while also ensuring that there are no backups of the information it contains."

"And I assume then that the core is related to this... contingency." Boran spoke up, the slender man tapping his fingers together in contemplation. "The data must be important if they are so determined to get it. And while I assume that we will never know what is on the core, can you tell us anything about what we are throwing ourselves into?"

Levi nodded. *Glad that only one of my MechWarriors wants to be difficult*, he considered. “We are acting on a contingency that goes back to our foundation. Codenamed HYBRID RAINBOW, it concerns a number of the organisation’s earliest operations following Kerensky’s Exodus. The contingency itself concerns similar circumstances; Data Cores located on several different worlds.”

“A situation I have never heard of.” Boran continued.

“I checked the records that I was given.” Levi noted. “All the prior HYBRID RAINBOW occurrences were on worlds within the Terran Hegemony, and all occurred within a generation of the Exodus. This one is... exceptional to say the least, but the orders still stand.”

“So then we go to this poison pit, get the thing and go.” Jaessa continued. “I don’t see why they need a lance of ‘Mechs and another ship full of grunts to pull it from a dead world.”

Mobutu leaned over, tapping her on the head with his mechanical hand. “Because if you have learned anything, girl, it should be that things are never simple with us.”

“He is correct.” Levi nodded, glad that someone was going to cut her off. “Just because our intel says the world is dead does not mean we will assume it is accurate. HYBRID RAINBOW contingencies allow for no margin of error, no second chances. Which brings me to another point, one that I need you all to understand.”

He leaned forwards, hands on the table. “If we succeed, you will all receive substantial bonuses, both to your pay and your contingency funds. You also will not be allowed to discuss this with anyone within the organization, no matter what. As near as they are concerned, we are on a mission to retrieve aerospace fighter schematics, and that is all they will ever know of what has happened here.”

“And if we fail?” Boran asked.

“Then we cease to exist.” Levi stated. “Our names, our identities, our service records and everything else will be erased from the unit’s history. We will not just be dead; we will be utterly obliterated as if we had never been.” He paused again to let that sink in. “God willing, it will not come to that.”

Even Jaessa didn’t have anything smart to say in reply.

“I cannot stress again how important this is.” He finally spoke up. “From now until the moment we dust off, HYBRID RAINBOW should be your only concern. Even if the last one of you needs to throw himself on the core with your dying breath, then so be it.”

Landing Zone Alpha
Herakleion
Free Worlds League

The approach to Herakleion had not only gone unchallenged, but had served to prove the reports of the planet’s demise. The only communication had been from the automated warning satellites that circled

the world, advising that it was a biological hazard and that nobody should approach. Otherwise, there had been nothing; no signals, no messages, no ambient radio traffic or anything else to indicate that there was anyone alive on the planet below.

In some ways, Levi might have preferred it if they were challenged. At the moment, he felt less like he was raiding a world and more like he was stepping into a long-forgotten and empty tomb.

The *Monte Yarrow* and its compatriot, the *Hive Five*, had put down some distance from the target without the faintest hint of opposition. Their fighters had swept over the landing zone, an abandoned highway, and not found the faintest hint of opposition. Extending the search all they'd found were a few ruined settlements, apparently abandoned and left to crumble.

Levi's *Warhammer* was the first 'Mech out of the ship, the heavy footfalls of the BattleMech the only sounds in the otherwise empty air. The two dropships seemed to be the only signs of life, supporting the reports of a dead world whose population had been rather suddenly removed. The *Warhammer* continued to advance as the rest of the lance fanned out around the area, securing the landing zone.

"We're clear." He spoke up, trying to hide the tension in his voice. It wasn't easy to do, given the circumstances. Knowing that the world outside him was potentially deadly wasn't helping matters any. It would be very hard to tell if the bio-warfare agent was still active in the environment or had burned itself out when it had killed the population, or if it was somehow still active without thorough testing, and right now time was of the essence.

Consequently, they'd come prepared. A quartet of APCs rolled out from the *Hive Five*, the low-slung tracked vehicles environmentally sealed against the hazards of the world. The troops on board were a mixture of hostile environment specialists and combat engineers in hazmat suits, buttoned up against possible contamination. Reports came in confirming that everyone was down safely and ready to go.

On his orders the team moved out, starting off down the highway towards the objective. Their plan called for them to stick to it for as long as they could before heading off cross-country to the target facility. Once there, all they had to do was secure the data core and its content. It seemed simple enough, especially given that there should be no opposition.

So why does this bother me? Levi asked himself as his 'Mech lead the convoy. *This isn't my first mission by a long way and it's not even my first in a hazard zone. First one on a dead world, however...* The area around them was largely flat, open plains with small patches of grass.

"There's plant life." Boran spoke up, as if reading his thoughts.

"Could have been a targeted bioweapon." Mobuto replied. "Doesn't cross species boundaries or the like and only killed the humans."

"So we could all die and yet the ship's rats would be fine." Jaessa added. "Nice to know."

"I suppose we're in for the full scrub-down and quarantine treatment when we return." Boran continued. "Take no risks of bringing back any souvenirs of... wherever we are."

"Heraklieon."

"I'll have to look it up when we get back." Boran noted. "See if this was a nice place before..." His *Griffin* waved one arm in the air. "Before this."

"Can't say I've ever heard of it myself." Jaessa said. "On the other hand, with how many worlds have fallen off in the last few decades, I wouldn't be surprised. It probably died and was a line entry in a map update and that was it."

"Makes me wonder how we knew that the thing was here." Mobutu asked. "Because it seems like this world's been a dead one for some time."

"It popped up on the radar." Levi spoke up. "And that's all I can say. Operational security is in effect, so quit it with the chatter." He knew that there would be nobody around to hear them, but he wasn't going to take the risk regardless. *Even if the chatter helps break the silence of this place.* He glanced around over the landscape. *Was this world destroyed because of HYBRID RAINBOW or is its presence here just a coincidence?*

Instead they continued in a tense silence, BattleMechs protecting the column of transports against threats that likely didn't exist. Instead, the biggest risk was one that no BattleMech could stop, something that did little to ease the stress.

The only upside was that their sensors continued to remain dark. Even the faintest background noise was quiet, with no signs of life at all. The only radio signals present were faint echoes of the quarantine warning messages bouncing off the satellites above. Those were enough to set Levi on edge, the reminder of the world's fate only adding to the tension. Eventually, he simply shut them off rather than listen to the same haunting message endlessly.

Instead, the air filled with a tense silence, punctuated only by the sounds of BattleMech footfalls and the clatter of treads. Otherwise, there was nothing, no sound, no activity, no signs of life beyond the few hints of vegetation.

"Why did we have to land the Dropships so far away anyway?" Jaessa's voice cut into the silence anyway, more than a hint of impatience in it.

"So that we would not be flying our only way out into a potentially hostile situation." Boran flatly replied. "This is a quarantined world, girl. Any way off would have been destroyed by now."

"But--"

"And shut it." Levi snapped again, quietly composing his report in his head. *I should never have endorsed her recruitment,* he told herself. *One day, that girl is going to get us all killed. Let's just hope that it's not today.*

The 'patches' of vegetation turned out to be a surprisingly thick forest, one that sprouted out of seemingly nowhere on the otherwise dry ground. There had been vague comments about local plant patterns, recolonisation of cleared lands and the like, before Levi had once again silenced the channel.

Save the botany discussion for later. Mission comes first.

Unfortunately, not only had the growth begun to recolonise cleared land, it had also done a good job on what had been intended to be their route to the site. What had been once a paved road leading to the site was now little more than cracked chunks of asphalt in between trees. Levi had done a quick assessment of the situation then decided to press on, the BattleMechs helping clear the way for the transports.

The going was slow but never fully halted, 'Mech limbs making short work of the obstacles that the power and mass of the APCs' treads could not simply crush. The work was methodical and noisy with very little regard for stealth; as hard as it was to hide a quartet of metal titans, the sound of them engaged in forestry was even more obvious. And as much as Levi kept telling himself that they were alone on the world, there was always that feeling in the back of his head that they were being watched.

It's this damn world, he told himself. *We're trespassing in a mass grave. It's enough to make anyone jumpy.* Shaking it off, he focused on the task at hand. *Get this over with. Get off the world and-*

"I have contact." Jaessa's voice struck him like a hammer blow.

"What is it?" He replied, the clam in his tone not betraying his concern.

Her *Phoenix Hawk* looked around, its sensors likely running wild as it searched the surrounding area. Jaessa's *Hawk* still possessed advanced, Star League-era electronics, giving it the best 'eyes' in the lance. Right now, he wanted to know exactly what she was seeing.

"Thermal blobs." She explained. "Small, mobile and closing in on us."

"Could be infantry." Mobutu offered.

Levi's sensors were clear, but he also knew that the *Hawk* was far better equipped than his *Warhammer* in that regard. Instead, he waited to see what would happen next.

"Looks like it." She continued. "Small, mobile and continuing to approach."

"Could be scouts." Boran offered. "Might be equipped with hazard suits."

"Or this world might not be so dead." Mobutu shot back.

"Either way, they're a threat." Levi countered. "Protect the transports, and be ready to fire the instant they do anything even remotely hostile."

"No witnesses." Jaessa seemed to be smirking. "They're approaching the road, just ahead."

Levi was ready, his finger hovering on the trigger for the *Warhammer's* twin machine guns. Letting the enemy come to him was a decided risk, but he also knew enough not to go chasing after them in the forest. *That'd be an easy way for them to bait us.*

"There they are!" Jaessa called out as something emerged from the bushes up ahead.

Holding off on the trigger for a moment, he dropped his reticle onto the infantry, the heads-up display zooming in on them. Even if they weren't going to live long, he still wanted to get some footage of them for analysis so they could figure just who or what was lurking on this dead world.

Instead, what he saw was genuinely surprising and unexpected, something he didn't often encounter.

The 'enemy' was a large creature that resembled nothing as much as a horse-sized cat, its fur brown with darker stripes and a ridge-like mane running down its back. "What the..." He began as the creature looked back at him, almost casual in its regard for the massive war machines before it.

"It's a Tabarinth." Boran noted. "Surprising, but not impossible."

"A what now?" Jaessa asked

"They're native to some other Eagle planet." Boran explained. "Easily tamed as mounts and widely exported. You see them all over the place. That might be the descendant of an import that went native after the locals were wiped out."

The Tabirinth, for its part, simply walked across the road as if nothing was happening.

"So at least some mammals survived whatever happened here." Mobutu observed as the creature disappeared back into the jungle.

"But that doesn't mean we can." Levi finished. "So let's get back to it, and keep your eyes open. Don't assume that because one blip was a giant cat they all are."

His *Warhammer* glanced back at the jungle as it passed, Levi seeing no sign of the creature. *This world keeps getting stranger*, he told himself as he looked around. *I just hope that's our only unexpected encounter.*

By the time they cleared the jungle, the team's schedule had well and truly been abandoned. They were now running hours late and losing daylight as they began the final leg of their journey. Fortunately, that wouldn't be too far.

The objective was ahead, a bunker complex halfway up a hillside. It was clear enough that landing the dropships wouldn't have been an option, given the rolling and building foothills and uneven terrain around the objective. Even then, however, Levi still resented the delay for the amount of time it was taking to get there.

And still they pressed on, the 'Mechs pushing their way uphill as the APCs continued following the winding ruins of the roadway. In the distance, Levi could just make out their objectives; the buildings battered and overgrown, but still looking more or less intact. *And even if they'd collapsed, we'd dig them out just to make sure we got the core or that it was destroyed.*

He'd seen the reports on the prior HYBRID RAINBOW operations, and seen what other commanders had

done to secure the objectives. Being trapped on a plagued world where stepping outside could mean a horrible death was not considered to be an insurmountable obstacle.

His *Warhammer* stepped over the rusted fence around the bunker, one of the following APCs simply crashing through it. The four 'Mechs fanned out, covering their charges and making sure that nothing happened even at this most crucial stage. Searchlights played over the gathering darkness, picking out the buildings and the ground around them.

And then a sudden flash ripped through the gloom as the ground underneath Boran's *Griffin* erupted in a burst of fire and debris. The humanoid 'Mech stumbled forwards, one of its legs reduced to a mangled mess of shredded armour.

"Mines!" Levi called out. "All forces, hold your positions!" He had no idea if these were ancient relics or inexplicably newly sown, nor did he know how extensive they were. All he knew was that the next move by anyone on his team could be their last.

"We're getting the sappers out now." The voice of one of the APC crews cut in. "We'll clear a path, but these are terrible conditions to work under."

In the dark, in hazard suits in a situation where the smallest tear could mean death. Terrible doesn't begin to cut it.

"Very well." Levi reported. "All units, get lights on the sappers to--"

"Enemy power-up detected." The voice of his battle computer cut him off as a single, angry red dot appeared on his tactical display. Another couple of reports saw it joined by several more.

"They're behind us!" He called out as he wheeled the *Warhammer* around. "It's a trap!"

"What do we do?" Jaessa asked. Between a minefield and an unknown force didn't leave them with many options.

A response formed on Levi's lips, but was cut short by the wail of alarms, followed by a flight of missiles crashing into his *Warhammer*. "They're hostile!" He yelled back. "We fight and try to get to the objective no matter what!"

Glancing down at his display, he could see his computer trying to tag the oncoming enemies with IDs. Several were showing up already; *Champion, Crab, Black Knight, Lancelot*. What was worrying were several more that were still reading as unknown. *And even then we're massively outnumbered. We have to buy time for our men to make it through to the bunker.*

"Push forward!" He called out as his *Warhammer* started back down the hill. "Keep them off our men!" The twin bolts of his PPCs reached out into the night, the brilliant blue cutting into the darkness as they struck at an enemy 'Mech. He couldn't see the results immediately, instead continuing to push on. *They have their orders. They'll get in there no matter what and delete the contents of the core.*

The rest of us are expendable. We always were.

Levi's *Warhammer* was a rare Star League model, as were the other 'Mechs in the lance. There had been the occasional joke that the four of them had more Star League tech in them than most line regiments. However, seeing the force arrayed against him, Levi was beginning to feel rather overwhelmed in more than just numbers. PPC and laser fire tore back at his lance, slicing into armour with deadly accuracy at ranges that most weapons couldn't even reach.

Who are these guys? He asked himself as he fired again, the twin bolts of his Extended-Range PPCs scoring into the flank of a *Champion*. The 'Mech wavered before responding with a stream of cannon shells that only barely missed the *Warhammer's* shoulder. Moments later, a *Black Knight* joined its wounded compatriot, its own PPC flaying armour from the *'hammer's* side.

Missiles from Mobutu's *Archer* arced overhead, leaving red trails in the night sky before detonating in among the enemy ranks. Boran and Jaessa's 'Mechs leaped after them, trying to harry the enemy flanks and keep them under control. "Keep moving, try to tie them up!" he called out over the command channel. *We just need a little more time...*

Jaessa's lasers stabbed into the *Champion*, bleeding its weakened armour some more. On the other side, Boran's 'Mech unleashed its own PPC and missiles at a *Wyvern*, the shot narrowly missing the slender 'Mech.

Keep it up. Keep-

A barrage of laser fire ripped into the *Griffon*, shots savaging its already wounded leg. The 'Mech stumbled as its attacker raced by, pouring missiles into the wounded 'Mechs side. Levi turned to face the attacker, his PPCs lashing out at the racing machine, only to go wide. Even then, he managed a look at it for an instant.

Slender, almost scarecrow-like, the 'Mech sported a jutting head an array of antenna that looked more like antlers than anything else. It was like nothing he'd ever seen before, an assessment that his battle computer seemed to agree with. For a moment, it suggested that the new 'Mech was a *Vulcan*, before settling on an 'unknown' tag.

Mystery 'Mechs ambushing us on a supposedly dead world. This just keeps getting better. More alarms warned him of incoming weapons locks, moments before the *Warhammer* was rocked by further fire.

Impacts throw Levi against his harness, the *Warhammer* staggering as fire ripped into its armour. More shots went past his 'Mech, stabbing into Mobutu's thick-skinned *Archer*. As resilient as the 'Mech was, Levi also knew that it wouldn't last too much longer under that level of punishment. *None of us will.*

The wounded *Champion* fell back, letting the *Black Knight* pass to continue its assault on Levi's 'Mech. He opened up on it, the twin PPCs scoring deep into the *Knight's* chest and flank, while missiles peppered its shoulders. In reply he weathered a battery of laser fire that dug deeply, all but eliminating the armour over the chest. *Can't take too much more of-*

A brilliant blue PPC beam lanced out, ripping through the *Warhammer's* side. Alarms went off inside the cockpit as angry red lights flared on, system damage reports coming in. A moment later, more lasers and missiles joined the assault, further driving into the 'Mech, ripping apart its right side. The impacts drove the *Warhammer* down, the crippled 'Mech crashing to the ground with a jarring thud.

Levi could taste blood in his mouth and his ears were ringing, a sensation not helped by the cacophony of alarms going off in the cockpit. A glance at his status board told Levi that the right side was all but destroyed, leaving little more than a mangled mess that was barely holding onto the right arm and, more alarmingly, a near-full load of SRM ammunition.

More concerned with continuing the fight, Levi put that aside as he pushed the *Warhammer* to its feet. The wounded 'Mech groaned as it stood, but continued to remain defiantly in the fight, as if driven on by sheer force of will alone.

Instead a new 'Mech loomed up before him; squad and broad, it sported a wedge-shaped torso and a jutting cockpit. Levi didn't recognise the design, nor was he curious to find out what it was. Instead, he advanced on it, determined to occupy its attention for as long as he could.

He triggered the *Warhammer's* remaining weapons, the heat inside the cockpit soaring, making him feel like he was facing into a raging inferno. Shots carved into the armour of the oncoming 'Mech, but did little to slow it. Both machine and the man inside seemed to shrug off the attacks, pushing on before retaliating.

Lasers and missiles lashed out, but it was the PPC fire that strangely caught Levi's attention; the weapon seemed to belch out fire in a torrent of blue lighting that drilled into the *Warhammer*, devouring its core like a starving man. Another wave of heat battered Levi as alarms rang inside the cockpit, the *Warhammer* shaking again.

And yet, the attackers were still not done. More shots joined the mysterious 'Mechs attacks, continuing to pummel the *Warhammer* as Levi fought to keep it upright. For a moment, it seemed that he had, the machine holding its own for a moment, a sort of serene calm in amidst the sea of alarms and panic surrounding him.

But only a moment. There was a shriek of tortured metal, something giving and sending the *Warhammer* stumbling forwards. For a horrifying instant, Levi was pressed into the back of his command couch, only to be snapped forward and grabbed by the harness. His head slammed into the 'Mech's console, the world around him going dark in an instant.

He wasn't sure how long he was out, but when he awoke, Levi had almost wished that he was dead. His cockpit was on its side, the safety harness the only thing keeping him in place. The controls were mostly dead, and the few that were still functioning were showing a world of red lights and critical failure warnings. He could taste blood in his mouth, while his right arm was numb. Even a quick glance could tell him that it was broken.

But that wasn't the worst. The cockpit glass was shattered, leaving him open and exposed to the world. *If there's anything hostile out there, then I've probably already gotten a fatal dose*, he realised. *Broken arm is the least of my problems*. Even that wasn't a concern now; instead, he was still focused on the mission. *We can't let this fail, no matter what*.

He managed to activate his communicator, not worried in the slightest about tipping off the enemy to his

being still alive. "This is command to any unit, report." There was little more in reply then empty air. "Repeat, this is command to any unit, report status." Again, the result was silence.

No options. Fumbling with his one arm, Levi was able to release his harness, half-dropping and half-falling out of his seat into the wreckage of the cockpit. His right side flared in pain as he struggled to his feet, not bothering to check himself for injuries and instead pushing on. More straining and grunting got him out of the cockpit, stumbling into the battlefield before him.

The sight was hellish. Immediately ahead he could see the fallen form of Boran's *Griffin*, the 'Mech's head crushed like a broken egg. *They crushed it once he was down*, Levi grimly realised. *No mercy, no survivors.* That didn't bode well, but he pushed on no less. Shuffling around the wreckage of his *Warhammer*, he could tell that the BattleMech would never move again. Instead, he was lucky to be alive, shots having come perilously close to the cockpit.

Leaving me to die of whatever horrible bioweapon scoured this world. The irony wasn't lost on him,

Turning around, he looked back to the bunker, hoping that somehow, somebody had managed to make it through to the objective. Instead he could see a burning pile of wreckage, one that had once been a BattleMech before being gutted by an explosion. As much as he wished otherwise, Levi knew it was Mobutu's *Archer*. More fires continued up the hill, almost certainly the wreckage of their APCs.

Which leaves... he winced as he realised that there was a lone survivor of the unit; their youngest, least experienced and most troublesome member.

As if summoned by his doubts, Jaessa's *Phoenix Hawk* sailed overhead, the slender 'Mech landing nearby in a crouch. It half-span, laser fire erupting from its arm before lifting off again. *Get back to the ships*, he urged. *They have to know what's happened here.* HYBRID RAINBOW's contingencies didn't allow for failure, but now things had changed. *Unknown force, unknown 'Mechs. This is all unexpected.*

And then with a single blow, that glimmer of hope was crushed. A brilliant blue PPC beam lanced out, spearing the *Hawk* in the back. The energy of the assault shredded the wing-like jump jet housing, immediately cutting off half the 'Mech's lift. Deprived of lift, balance and control, the *Hawk* spun in the air, twisting and then plummeting to the ground.

Even as it came down, Levi was running after it, desperate to get to the fallen machine. He had no idea what he could do, all he knew was that he had to do something if it gave the MechWarrior inside a chance. Unfortunately, he quickly realised that he was not the only one headed for the wounded 'Mech.

The massive metal footfalls of a racing BattleMech grabbed his attention, warning him of something approaching. Glancing back, he had moments to leap out of the way before one of the unknown attackers barged through, heading straight for Jaessa's 'Mech. Pain flared again across his side as Levi pulled himself to his feet, glancing at the attacker. It was the same slender, antlered 'Mech as before, one of the mystery machines that had plagued them.

One that was closing a loose end.

"Wait!" Jaessa's voice called out over the *Hawk's* loudspeakers. "I- I want to make a deal!"

Levi winced at her words, but then the pain seemed to get worse as the stag-like 'Mech stopped, hovering over the *Hawk* like a vulture over a dying animal. "Speak, now." A voice called out. Around, Levi could hear the sounds of other 'Mechs approaching, dull forms moving in the darkness telling him that they were already surrounded.

"I can give you information!" She continued, her voice clearly full of desperation. "I'll tell you who sent us, why they sent us and, well, who's behind us. I can give you everything, just spare me!"

Traitor! He wanted to scream at her, to charge over there and kill her himself. All their training, all their screening, all their time together meant that she shouldn't do something like this. Jaessa knew her job and both the risks and responsibilities that came with it. Surrender should never be an option. Betrayal was unthinkable, and yet she was willing to sell out the whole organization to save her life.

"Your name!" The enemy MechWarrior started. "Now!"

Don't do it. Levi winced. *Think of your friends, your family, of those that you've left behind. Think of what will happen to them.*

"J-Jaessa." She stammered. "Jaessa Ogel."