
CHAPTER FIVE

—INSINA OAIT TULI ASNER—

**Jekotian Military Engineering Test Site, Conference Room Three, Ghant Plains
July 14th, 2985**

“My name is Robert Jonathan Borden, Staff Sergeant, serial number IOTA-63. Some of you may already know about my history, but I doubt it. I joined the Jekotian armed forces when I was eighteen. One month into arms training, I was recognized as a skilled sharp shooter by the drill instructors and marked to begin sniper training. Three weeks into sniper training I had shown excellent skills in the maintenance and use of my rifle, but most noteworthy, in my spare time I designed a simple mechanism that used the force of firing the rifle to release the empty bullet casing and chamber another round. At this point I was identified as a sharpshooter with an uncanny ability with mechanics. I was then referred to scout training, where I was trained in infiltration, sabotage, and low awareness kills.

“After a few months as a front line sniper and saboteur, I was approached by Dr. Geond, head of Jekotian Military Genetic Engineering, and asked if I was interested in being a test subject for experimental genetic modifications. He explained to me that they were to be the next generation of the standard military genetics. He also assured me that it was entirely volunteer based, and I could back out at any time before the procedure. I knew what I was in for, that I had a good chance of dying, but I wanted to serve the best I could, and that meant helping test these new genetics. On October 4th, 2975, strapped to a surgical table in a room with ninety-nine other soldiers, the procedure began. The only thing I remember is an injection in my left forearm that shortly after rendered me unconscious. I was later told that during the procedure, while none of us recall any of it, we were jerking in our restraints, screaming in pain, before eventually calming down and lying still, as though we had died. The procedure had destroyed our immune systems, and after months in isolation, being injected with countless anti-bodies to fight off diseases, it was over. None of us remembered any of it. We just woke up one day, months later, thinking it was the day after the procedure. Out of the one hundred of us that entered, only forty-two survived.

“The end result though, the by-product of these torturous genetic modifications, was a revolution in military genetics. While we had difficulty using our bodies at first, we quickly relearned our training. We were stronger and faster than before, but more notably, our senses were well past what is normal for a Jekotian soldier. Our senses were enhanced to the point where we could feel everything around us, see farther than a sniper with a two-times scope, hear the gentle beat of insect wings, and detect poisons by scent. We could also endure pain past even what the most elite strike teams could cope with, and our reflexes, we were nearly untouchable by melee combat experts. All of this, at the cost of a fifty-eight percent mortality rate, and the haunting fact that had lost your humanity.

“We executed countless covert-op’s over the course of five years. We were the soldiers that were sent on the near suicidal ops, missions so critical and dangerous High Command would trust no-one else. Then it ended, in an abrupt storm of death.

“On April 13th, 2981, I was charged and incarcerated for Dereliction of Duty for refusing to participate in I-23, a covert op to infiltrate a frontline Brenodi military base and disable its defences for a demolition crew, on the grounds of my personal feelings, that the operation was sabotaged. After spending three days in a cell, I was released and notified that the entire platoon was killed by an orbital strike less than an hour into enemy territory. I was instructed to attend the burial ceremony, and then take two weeks off. During that time I tracked down and killed a Jekotian intelligence officer who had informed Brenodi Air Command of the operation. Two days later, I was forced into Cryogenic storage by an armed security force, and now I stand before you today. I am the only known survivor from the IOTA genetic modification experimental procedures, and today, I plan to change that. Dr. Geond and I are restarting the IOTA modifications, preparing them to become mainstream with a final test group that I will lead to the frontlines of Bren. This isn’t a request, it has already begun. All of the volunteers – thirty Special Forces scouts, grenadiers, engineers, and riflemen – are to begin the procedures in roughly three hours. They will all survive this time. Instead of taking anyone like the original IOTA procedures, all thirty volunteers share similar DNA to mine, making them likely to survive as I did. In addition, the procedure and chemicals are refined, with the noticeably lethal components removed. This new generation will herald the way for the main stream modifications that will work for any soldier, and push the Jekotian body to limits unimagined.

“This is the future of warfare. Imagine a soldier that can move an overturned jeep, or working together, flip a tank back onto its tracks. Grenadiers that can carry and operate the equivalent to tank cannons. Engineers that can haul heavy turret platforms into enemy territory, and then shred infantry faster than a ‘farm’ of Tier-Three Machinegun Turrets. Scouts carrying anti-material rifles, or riflemen with a Rocket Launcher as a backup weapon. Heavy infantry that can perform in any situation. These modifications make all of those possible, by pushing the Jekotian war-machine past the limits of the human body. By escalating evolution and introducing new hormones and genes. By destroying the humanity of a person, and rebuilding them completely for war. In just three hours, this will all be a reality, and in six months, the results of the procedures will have perfected it and become mainstream.”

“My god, it sounds like you’re creating monsters,” Casten said with a look of horror on her face.

“No, miss, this war is about survival. I will do anything to ensure my soldiers survive. We are losing and desperately need this. It won’t disfigure anyone, merely improve their muscular, bone, nervous, and cardiovascular structure, among many other things. It’s essentially a few thousand years of evolution, in a week,” Borden replied.

Over the next few hours, Borden debated with Casten and other members of High Command. Some disagreed with some aspects, but were convinced by the effectiveness of the end result. Eventually, once the debate ended, Borden continued,

“As you likely don’t know yet, I am representing the Infantry Corps. Over one million soldiers are being mobilized, largely heavy infantry equipped for combat and engineering. We will fight inland on landing day, disable the coastal defences, and establish bases while the main fleet makes landfall. Once the main fleet hits the beaches, we’ll partially fall back to the shores

and bring up armour and spare parts. We will have roughly four forward bases,” Borden said, pointing to the planned locations on a map of the shores of Bren, “each with multiple barracks, armouries, repair stations, radars, air fields, and heavy turret platforms. From there, we will advance farther inland to disable the anti-air defences ringing the city,” Borden continued, marking the rough area of the defences with a curve, “allowing air support to advance on optimal attack vectors and assist ground units in their advance. Once the city is breached, forces will advance to here,” Borden said as he marked the location on the map, “According to our spies, this is the headquarters for the Brenodi Missile Defence Network. Once this building is destroyed, our missile silos will obtain coordinates from HOPERISING and launch at the remaining Brenodi air defences on the other side of the city.” He paused again, marking the rough area with a curve. “From there, our forces will clear and move through the city and out into the country side, toward where our spies informed us Brenodi High Command resides. If we destroy Brenodi High Command, their military network will fall, and their forces will fall into disarray. It is the single most crippling blow we can strike them with.

“I am also pleased to inform you that a BEAST class tank, nicknamed Hellion, has been recovered and is undergoing repairs. The Hellion is to be considered a ‘shock’ unit, and will be deployed via flyby at approximately fifty feet, creating massive disruption for the Brenodi lines, making them much less effective in combat. Hellion will be delivered by a Hellgate dropship. The Hellgate is a heavily modified, heavy duty quad-turbine Locust dropship, designed specifically for the deployment of Hellion. It’s capable of easily transporting Hellion, with room in the hold for crew and munitions. Once the repairs are finished, I will have more details. This tank will not fall to the armoured divisions; it is a speciality unit for the Infantry Corps. to call upon in an emergency. As such, it will have to maintain a ready status at all times. I believe that is all.”

“Thank you Borden,” Patterson said as he stepped up. “Now you all know what’s in store, organize your forces and resources. The fleet departs on October 9th and will only wait if absolutely necessary. I expect all of you to share everything discussed here with the Commanders of your respective divisions, and organize troop movement to the fleets’ departure point at Port Norald, Elsa. All munitions, vehicles, and aircraft will be loaded ahead of time by the port authority, but it is your task to organize the transportation of such equipment, and work with the other divisions to figure out how much of each will be loaded onto each ship in the fleet. We must be prepared to lose vessels during the invasion. That is all, dismissed.”