

For the Greater Good

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Pain...darkness...ringing...the smell of fumes...voices...

“Ignition, do y...bzzzt...copy? Answer me please!”

Blindly fumbling about, the German Shepard got a hold of his fallen helmet. The normally blue flickering LEDs were stained red with his blood. He was finally becoming aware of where he was now: the floor of a dark office building. Surrounding him were the pieces of the desk he’d smashed into, along with the fragments of the glass window he’d been thrown into. Shaking the stars out of his vision, Ignition tapped the communication device in his helmet.

“It’s just a flesh wound.” He rasped, pulling off the blue bandana he normally wore around his neck and using it to bandage his bleeding right shoulder. The shoulder pad of the armor had broken off, but his chisel unit was otherwise intact.

“Christ, your vitals flatlined in the system earlier! We thought we’d lost you!”

“You know that thing can be glitchy.” The D.A.V.D. pilot muttered, fitting his helmet back into place. There was a huge crack across the visor, but it was otherwise operational. “What’s our status command? Mirage and I shattered the damn Pearl!”

“The Juggernaut is still active. So, that means it has another one...”

“Damn! This is getting a little out of hand for our local unit! Is Mirage OK? I remember her being tossed away as well! And have we gotten word from Sanctuary yet?”

“Slow down! The first question: her vitals are stable, but she’s not moving. Sending a location marker to your HUD now.”

Ignition walked to the window and glanced out. The destruction seemed worse than before. Even more fires and destroyed buildings as far as eye could see. Along with the darkened outline of the Juggernaut in the distance.

“And the second question: Sanctuary is occupied in Georgia with another attack. They’re sending a detachment to reinforce us, but they’re still enroute.”

“Well, Huston we have a problem too dammit!” Ignition retorted.

“Our other units have been either disabled or forced to fall back and aid in civilian evacuation. The Juggernaut hit the factory district. Volatile gases and fuels are in danger of going off. You need to retrieve your partner and get out of there.”

Ignition shuffled, kicking a metal piece on the floor. It was his Claw unit, which he retrieved and reattached to his armor.

“I’ll get Mirage, but I’m not falling back.” The G-Shep grimaced. “The entire factory district going up in flames would make things even worse.”

“Ignition! You can’t take that thing on by yourself...”

Click Ignition shut the communication off. “Sorry command, but there are some things I just have to do.”

Blue streams of light emerged as the G-Shep activated the flight unit of his D.A.V.D. gear. Leaping out the window, Ignition took off into the night. His partner’s tracker was somewhat close to the Juggernaut’s location. Zipping above and between the buildings (and the remains of them) also allowed him a moment of thought.

A quick glance at the blue streaks of light left in his wake brought him back to the memory of a voice.

"I can fly faster on my own wings! But, hell this makes me feel alive!"

Ryakas...heck of a crazy dragon. But he's gone now, thanks to me...

"Mirage!"

The white furred wolf was tangled in a large nylon netting and dangling off a balcony. Her Hammer weapon lay on the street below.

"Mirage! Hey! Get a hold of yourself!" Ignition braced himself against the wall, using his Claw unit to grip on.

"Ughhh...sorry..." The wolf stirred. "Who the heck hangs this thing off their balcony?"

"I know you've been tied up here..." Ignition whipped out a combat knife and begun cutting through the webbing. "But did you see another Pearl?"

"Back of the neck..." Mirage muttered. "After it bashed you away, I was trying to locate it."

"Hang on! I'll get you free. And then, we're going right back at it..."

Thoom! Thoom! Both froze as the building vibrated.

Appearing from a cloud of smoke was the Juggernaut's head, glaring with its pupiless eyes over the top of an adjacent building. On its chest were the shattered remains of a Pearl, the result of their earlier attack on the titan. The creature appeared almost Sergal-like in body structure, only colored black and red, with spikes lining its back and massive tail. The Juggernaut seemed to notice the pair, letting off a terrifying roar.

Having gotten his partner's arm free, Ignition placed the dagger into her claws.

"Get yourself out!" Ignition ordered. "I'll distract it till you're ready."

"No! Wait!" Mirage protested, but Ignition had already kicked off the wall.

Sweeping downwards to retrieve his partner's fallen Hammer weapon, Ignition bounded up and towards the Juggernaut's face. Snarling, the creature brought both claws together, attempting to squash the D.A.V.D. pilot between them. Ignition deactivated his flight unit for a second, causing the Juggernaut to miss as he dropped. He just as swiftly reactivated it and shot up, swinging the Hammer weapon with a yell of fury.

That caught the Juggernaut on the underside of its jaw, seemingly disorientating it. The force of the blow also caught Ignition off guard, causing him to drop the weapon to the streets below. He didn't have much time to think about however. The G-Shep swung around, flipping to the top of the creature's head. He sprinted across its surface and fired up his flight unit, soaring off as the creature's claws came down upon him. Looping back, he scanned for the creature's weak point at the back of its neck.

"Ignition! I'm here!" Mirage's voice beeped over the commlink. "And could you treat my Hammer right if you're gonna borrow it, dammit!"

"You know I like it hard!" Ignition chuckled.

The blue streaks of his partner's flight unit were visible as the creature swatted about. Using that distraction, Ignition redirected his chisel unit's targeting systems.

The luminescent red glow was just barely visible against the creature's red markings. Setting his flight unit to full speed, Ignition charged towards it. The tips of his claw unit scraped into the Pearl's surface as he gripped on and drove the Chisel unit at the Pearl with all his might.

“Mirage! I’m in position...Garrgghhhh!”

That was as far as he got before a massive hand clamped down around him. The G-Shep was roughly yanked off, leaving the Chisel stuck in the Pearl.

“Ignition! Argh!” Mirage was forced to take evasive action as the Juggernaut spewed a breath of flames in her direction. She barely got away, before scraping against the side of a building and crashing to the ground. While the flames quickly stopped, the Juggernaut swiftly brought the struggling Ignition to its tooth-lined maw.

“Gargh! Argh! I’m so not into this OK?!”

The jaws begun to clamp down on him. He could smell stanch of the putrid sulfurous breath.

“I’ll give you indigestion! I swear to God!” Ignition screamed as a final act of defiance.

“Justice Rains from Above!”

Wait...that voice?! That was all Ignition could comprehend before his world was rocked by explosions. He was flung towards the ground and snatched out of the air by Mirage. Dizzy with tension, all Ignition could see were missiles and explosions all around as Mirage zipped through the air. A final explosion knocked both out of the air, sending the pair tumbling and rolling onto the street. The city block behind them had been utterly devastated.

Another huge shape blocked out their sight of the Juggernaut before it latched on to the creature, gripping both its arms and forcing it backwards. The stunned D.A.V.D. pilots could only stop and stare at what had come to save them: a Goliath. The white and red mech seemed to have been designed based off a quadruped dragon mixed with a fighter jet. The mech was currently standing up on its hind legs, using its forelimbs to wrestle with the Juggernaut.

Roaring, the Juggernaut spewed its flame breath at the Goliath. The mech responded by reconfiguring a wing into a shield, redirecting the flames away from the cockpit. The Juggernaut seemed to pause in surprise, to which the mech took advantage of and headbutted the creature. It followed that up with another barrage of missiles, which took both the Juggernaut down, along with many of the surrounding buildings.

“What the hell?!” Ignition & Mirage had to scramble away and fly up above the destruction.

“Sorry about nearly team killing, but it was either that or let you end up as Juggernaut chow.” A familiar voice came over his commlink. It wasn’t a channel from command though.

“Ryakas?” Ignition gasped. “Ryakas...you...you’re alive? Piloting that piece of junk?”

“This piece of junk just saved your life, old partner.” The dragon growled.

The Juggernaut had begun to pull itself to its feet and the mech responded by charging into the creature, wrapping its body and tail around the Juggernaut to drag it down. As the creature collapsed, the mech grabbed it by the legs and swung it in an arc, smashing the creature into another set of buildings.

“Think we should just let them fight?” Mirage whispered.

“They’re gonna level the city at double the rate if we do that.” Ignition replied. He watched as the Juggernaut attempted to rise, but the mech simply charged through a building and rammed it in the chest. That sent the Juggernaut spiraling into yet another building.

“Come on Ignition! Work with me for old times sake!” Ryakas insisted over the commlink. His mech now had the Juggernaut in a headlock, with the mech’s long tail wrapped around the creature’s legs to immobilize it.

“Ignition, the system reading shows your Chisel still stuck in the Pearl.” Mirage tapped his shoulder. “If you can just steady it, I can take it out!”

“All right, let’s do this.” Ignition nodded. “And that goes for you too Ryakas!”

“Now the hunters have been rallied!” Ryakas replied. “Let’s do it!”

Ignition sped towards the back of the creature’s neck, bounding off the shoulder of Ryakas’ mech. In passing, he shot a glance at his former D.A.V.D. partner, visible through the cockpit on the mech’s dragon head. With a roar, he leapt onto the Pearl, clamping his Claw unit down and wrapping his other arm around the Chisel unit to steady it.

“Mirage!”

“Hammer Down!”

Ignition glanced up as Mirage rocketed towards the target. For a moment, he imagined Ryakas’ silhouette over her, roaring his cheesy ‘*Justice Rains from Above!*’ catchphrase, like when the dragon was his Hammer partner.

The sound of the Pearl shattering was music to his ears. With a final howl, the Juggernaut collapsed and begun dissolving. But Ignition had already landed on the Goliath’s shoulder, with Mirage on the opposite end. Returning the mech to its default position on all fours, Ryakas stood up and opened the cockpit window.

“Why didn’t you tell me? Contact me? I thought you were dead!” Ignition yelled. “We all did!”

“I kinda was. I got better though. They had the technology to rebuild me, you know?” The black dragon stepped forward more so that Ignition could see better. His arms, legs, tail, wings...all were clearly mechanical prosthetics.

“Who?!”

“Our benefactors. You think these mechs come from Walmart or something? Maybe Japan though, haha!” Ryakas flopped back into his seat and closed the cockpit window. “Despite what Sanctuary might tell you, we’re still working towards the greater good. Just remember that, partner...”

The mech’s forelimbs suddenly grabbed Ignition and Mirage. The fingers were surprisingly agile and separated the D.A.V.D. pilots from their flight packs.

“Hey! What the?!” Ignition yelled as the mech took to the air.

“Sorry, but I can’t have you two tracking me.” Ryakas continued to speak over the commlink.

“Wait! You’re not going to drop us, are you?” Ignition cried, feeling surprisingly naked so high up without his flight unit. Mirage too had a worried look on her face.

“Who do you take me for? Smaug?” Ryakas laughed. “I just felt that you doggos stink enough to need little bath.”

Ignition realized that they were now over the waterfront.

“Oh son of a b****.... Aaaarrggghhhhh!”

Ryakas flew his mech low and dunked the D.A.V.D. pilots into the cold water. By the time the pair had spluttered to the surface, the mech was but a speck disappearing into the sky.

“So, that was your old partner?” Mirage commented as they treaded water. “Quite the charmer, I see.”

“For the greater good, huh.” Ignition muttered. “Come on Mirage, let’s get to shore. I’m more worried about the report we’re going to have to write...”