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TERMS OF JUSTICE

When the IJC dropship landed at Gibraltar, I tried to temper my expectations. My testimony to the International Justice Commission had been . . . impassioned. I let my emotions get the best of me in that courtroom, and I knew better than to repeat that mistake now.

Then again . . . All I had told them was the truth. And I stood by the calls I had made as Overwatch's commander, even if the IJC was critical of my choices. When I first started with Overwatch, Jack Morrison had asked me what I thought made a good leader. I answered without hesitation: understanding that if you were the one who made the rules, you had a responsibility to enforce them too. Back then, I was so sure that sticking to protocol was the key to success.

Jack disagreed, of course. He told me that whenever he found himself caught between following the rules and saving lives, he would always choose the latter. Even after things started to go south, it was hard to fault him for that.

By the time I testified against Overwatch at the Petras hearings, all of Jack's choosing to bend the rules had caught up to him. Maybe his intentions had been noble, but intentions only get you so far with the IJC. I had seen that myself in the courtroom just days ago.

Yes, Overwatch had operated outside of our charter's limitations, but I trusted my agents. Cole had stood by us at Grand Mesa and held off the Deadlock Gang, former friends he'd once have died for. Genji's deployment was unauthorized, but it was the only thing that had stopped Talon from equipping their entire army with anima weapons. D.Va's connection with MEKA had saved thousands of lives, and as for Rome . . . well, I still felt confident that the human cost there would have been far greater if not for Overwatch. Jack had been wrong about a lot of things, but after all, we'd all been

through with Talon and the IJC . . . I finally understood how he could be so certain he was right, even when making the toughest calls. Nothing Osei could say would make me regret the lives we'd saved.

Behind me, Tracer was picking up where I'd left off, escorting our agents to their respective ships . . . preparing to leave for good. I found myself thinking of Juno and Mizuki, two new recruits who had no real home to return to. And what about Winston and Echo? I couldn't imagine the IJC was going to let them stay behind.

"Didn't expect to see you again so soon, Secretary-General," I called over to her as she exited the dropship.

"Neither did I."

We exchanged rote greetings as if nothing had changed—like she wasn't just here to oversee the end of our operations.

"Vivian, walk with me."

"The base should be vacated shortly. We're sending our last agents home now."

"That won't be necessary, Commander," Osei said.

I kept my expression passive. "What do you mean?"

"I mean the IJC has elected to renew Overwatch's charter."

I was stunned into silence. It seemed too good to be true.

"Don't thank me yet. There are some . . . caveats."

Ah—yes, that made more sense.

"You said yourself in your testimony, Overwatch and Helix Securities worked well together at Grand Mesa. The IJC has determined that a more formal partnership would do both organizations good."

Helix. When it came to enforcing their own code, regardless of the casualties—well, they were experts.

"I see."

"A Helix general will be monitoring all Overwatch missions from here out. The IJC will arrange for a meeting soon."

If Osei had concerns of her own, she didn't voice them. She had turned to head back when I finally expressed my gratitude.

"Thank you, Secretary-General. We won't disappoint you."

A small chuckle—the only indication she was personally invested in our success—and then: "You'd better not, Commander."





Osei had already left when I made it to the landing bay. My agents had all stalled their departures, putting off their goodbyes. Despite everything, they were still waiting for my next command. Overwatch had changed before, and it was better for it. Whatever came next . . . I knew this team would emerge stronger than ever.

"Everyone . . . I have good news."

