

EXCERPT - BOOK 2: SACRIFICES

The Assistant AI moved closer. It had no covering so all its mechanical workings were visible.

"High Executive, it would seem that three individuals have escaped OTKE headquarters in an orange land machine."

"An orange what?"

"The description is an orange machine on four wheels with no flying capabilities."

Glumet's face went red, but he took a deep breath and tugged on his uniform.

"Mr. Hunt," said Glumet. "There is no one else who would own such an archaic contraption."

CEO Klein only shrugged.

"Assistant, dispatch two fighters and order them to disable the orange machine with any force necessary."

"Yes, sir. Two fighters are en route to intercept."

"Now we will end this game."

"Where are we headed, Mr. Hunt?" asked Nora.

"Not sure. I never got that far into the planning. We might be able to lose them in the main part of the city. Maybe sneak into the storage bay of Brian's shop."

The heads-up display started alarming and tracking two red circles coming in fast.

"Ah, Nora, why is it doing that?"

"Two Earth Consortium fighters are locking on to us."

"Crap."

"Orange vehicle, you are ordered to stop, or we will open fire."

"Can't this thing go faster?" yelled Vicki.

"I'm doing over three hundred miles per hour—it's all it can do. We're not going to stop now."

"Orange vehicle, this is your last warning."

When the fighters received no reply, they opened fire on the Mustang. Ryan swerved as las-blasts hit the ground around them. If it wasn't for the on-board AI assisting him, he would have probably wrecked at this speed. Finally some shots hit the Mustang, but bounced off as an energy shield activated around the car.

"What the hell?" said Ryan

"I was not aware the vehicle had shields," said Nora.

"Neither did I. Kat said she made an upgrade. I'm happy she did."

"Mr. Hunt, we have an incoming secure communication," said Nora.

"From who?"

"The *Tempus*."

Commander Gordon of the OTKE ship *Tempus* appeared on the virtual screen.

"Mr. Hunt, I have prepared an escape for you. I need you to continue on your present course and take the turn to the old city bridge in about two miles."

"Part of that bridge collapsed many centuries ago," said Nora.

"Nora is correct. I need you to drive off the end of the bridge. Trust me. Out," said Commander Gordon.

"Great! My parents would always say 'If all your friends jumped off a bridge, would you do it too?' I guess the answer this time is yes," said Ryan. He blasted through a barricade and headed to the bridge looming in the clouds ahead.

"Mr. Hunt, it is a two-mile fall from that bridge into a large deep river. Vicki and I have a chance of surviving the fall, but you will perish in a horrible death."

Ryan took a deep breath as he drove onto the bridge. Las-blasts hit the ground all around him and the heads-up display was alerting him that the shields were beginning to fail.

"Thanks for putting such a great image in my head. I really...hey, wait a minute, why does Vicki have a chance and not me?"

Nora turned and looked at Vicki, who shook her head and mouthed back, "No."

Nora shrugged and said it anyway: "Vicki is a vampire, Mr. Hunt."

With all the stress of the current situation, it took Ryan a moment to process that statement. "A freaking what? I see her in the mirror."

Vicki smiled as two fangs grew out.

"Jesus Christ!" exclaimed Ryan as he lost control of the car, causing it to swerve and almost crash into the sidewall of the bridge.

"Actually, I'm too old for the mirror thing to work anymore."

"Screw the mirror. Were you seducing me to feast on me?"

"Perhaps I might have had you for dinner in the beginning, but I'm not sure now. You've rather grown on me. Either way you would have enjoyed the foreplay," said Vicki, licking her fangs.

"If I live through this, we're having a long talk."

"Sir, we have more pressing issues at hand than you being eaten by a vampire. The end of the bridge is coming up. You have to decide to slow down or drive off it."