

THE WAR IS OVER!

Terra is secure. The Protectorate is free. The Manei Domini are scattered. The Master has fled to his final refuge. As the last embers of the Word of Blake are finally extinguished across the Inner Sphere, a new nation is born—and a new era is dawning. Forged in the fires of the greatest war fought since the coming of the Clans, the Republic of the Sphere promises peace and stability few could have imagined since the start of the Jihad in 3067.

Jihad: Final Reckoning completes the Jihad plot book series started with *Blake Ascending*, wrapping up the final years of the war between the Word of Blake and the Inner Sphere, and establishing the birth of the Republic of the Sphere. With articles covering the final fateful years of the war, this book includes news stories and intelligence reports from across the Inner Sphere, along with additional rules and campaign tracks for *BattleTech* campaigns played using the *Total Warfare* and *A Time of War* game rules. This book also provides a snapshot of the postwar universe, laying the groundwork for future campaigns. Also included is a glimpse at the more fantastic weapons and assets the Word of Blake was developing before its final fall—complete with rules for top-secret units, including the Caspar III system and *Spectral LAMs*.

THOMAS MARIK, THE MASTER



THE SCOURING OF CIRCINUS



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SUCCESSION WARS ERA



CIVIL WAR ERA



DARK AGE

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INN NEWS UPDATE...

Jihad: Final Reckoning

Sample file

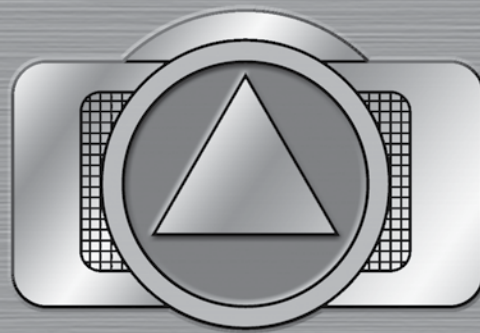


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SPECIAL THANKS

As the entire Jihad finally comes to its inescapable end, I would like to thank—once again—the entire BattleTech community, past and present, for their support and dedication after all of these years! It was six years ago that we first unleashed the Jihad on the BattleTech fans, but the journey to get here began long before then. As this adventure comes to a close, a new age awaits, and I look forward to seeing you there with us. To Randall Bills, for indulging this campaign, and leaving it to me to take the reins, thank you. (No, seriously; thanks!)

And to the writers—past and present—who have helped shape every aspect of the Jihad:

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VINDICATION IN THE ASHES

ZACHARIAH
CIRCINUS, CIRCINUS FEDERATION
2 APRIL 3081

It was not supposed to happen this way...

The holo-projector was enormous, a state-of-the-art device built to provide the clearest images, most vivid colors, and most precise details large enough and plain enough for any viewer to spot (as long as they were not legally blind). Mated to a computer deck with enough raw power and processing speed to track an interstellar war dozens—no, *hundreds*—of light-years across, it projected its images faithfully, perfectly, without so much as a flicker. This, despite the grainy, half-garbled transmissions it projected mere hours ago.

A final report, delivered stoically by a fleet commander who vowed to make the overwhelming enemy advance a costly one.

...And yet, it has come to pass.

The globe of light above the holo-projector now showed a scene of cheering masses, crowding the streets of a high-tech metropolis. With so much confetti and tickertape raining down from the skyscrapers above, it was hard to notice the scorch marks, cracks, and bullet holes in the buildings' facades. Likewise, the cracks in the ferrocrete roads, painstakingly sculpted to resemble ancient cobblestone, were also invisible as hundreds of soldiers marched in lock-step past the spectators to martial fanfare.

Their dress uniforms were dark blue, with sashes of gunmetal gray. Some were decorated with medals and insignia that appeared as only a momentary blur in the view field, but all wore the new insignia patch of their affiliation on the shoulder—the likeness of Mother Terra herself, surrounded by a ring of stars. These soldiers carried no weapons that could be seen by the cameras, but two of them—in the leading row—bore banners high enough for all to witness. One banner waved with the pale blue and white colors



of Terra, while the other mimicked a larger form of the logos on the soldiers' shoulder patches.

The insignia of the newly forged Republic of the Sphere.

All of history is a river, driven by currents of inertia that few can resist...

The parade image panned slightly, revealing the looming images of two humanoid BattleMechs—a massive *Zeus*, and an equally massive *Hatamoto-Chi*—marching shoulder to shoulder behind the ranks of soldiers. Both were giants of metal and weaponry, built by realms that had spent the last three hundred years trying to destroy one another. Together, they now shared the same gunmetal gray color scheme, trimmed in a polished, pale blue that gleamed in the mid-morning sunlight.

The image shrank, and suddenly a pair of reporters came into view in the foreground. Seated on the left was a bespectacled male with a dark complexion and graying temples, wearing a tailored black Nehru jacket over a deep emerald undershirt. On the right was a petite blonde with Asian features, whose blouse was so yellow it practically glowed on the screen. They spoke at each other through dazzling smiles, but with the sound muted, not a word of it echoed within the palace chamber. Data swirled around the bottom of the globe, scrolling past the reporters and obscuring the table they both sat behind. Local temperatures and weather forecasts. Recent headlines. Stock reports.

The mundane facts and figures of everyday life, endlessly sliding by as history made itself.

...And that fewer still can ever hope to comprehend.

Reclining in a throne made of marble, with the likeness of a spiked skull carved into the backrest high above his head, the Master held his true hands together, fingertip to metallic fingertip. The sleeves of his white robe gathered at his elbows, exposing the composite mixture of metal, plastics, and myomers that replaced the flesh and blood he had not seen in

VINDICATION IN THE ASHES

over fifty years. His eyes—also ripped away on that horrible, long-remembered day—now studied the man kneeling silently before him in the way only true vision could study a man.

Through the folds of his own white robes, ripples of heat flowed gracefully from the young man's well-sculpted form, while sinews of current traced lines through three of his limbs, and up along the side of his neck. The delicate balance of man and machine, the synthesis of nature and truth. Such potential and power, made possible only through devotion and knowledge.

If Calvin McIntyre at all feared what was to come, neither his flesh nor his tech betrayed such agitation.

Great men are those who can see the currents and navigate them to glory...

With a simple thought, the Master tuned his true hearing to the local communications networks, considering briefly the flurry of orders and acknowledgements streaming by as forces and crews gathered across the city of Zachariah. Theirs was the buzz of the hive, aware of the looming threat, and preparing to meet it. The airfields were already cleared; all squadrons launched to rally points in close orbit hours before, meeting up with Dropships arrayed just above the orbital reaches of Circinus' commsats. Meanwhile, the ground troops were scattered in loose formations throughout the region, close enough for mutual support, but far enough to react to threats from any angle.

At the surface-to-orbit stations, the Master could sense the spike in tensions by the chatter. He did not need to study their scrambled messages to understand why; of all the ground-based forces, they could best see what was coming now.

Beyond the commsats, the Master heard the voices grow silent—some in mid-scream; others while citing the Word. The enemy asked no quarter and expected none in return.

"*Sic in fit*," the Master said at last, his true voice shattering the eerie silence of the chamber and echoing off the walls even though the words were spoken barely above a whisper. *So it begins.*

"*Damnant quod non intelligent, Domine*," Calvin replied, his voice strong and calm. *They damn what they cannot understand, Master.*

"You would have made an excellent Manus Domini, Precentor," the Master said, willing as much of a fatherly smile as his ruined face would allow.

Calvin McIntyre looked up at last, a grateful smile spreading across his own scarred and tattooed face. His eyes sparkled with genuine awe, a far cry from the contemptuous glare he once threw to those who praised him.

...But only a true Master can find a way to tame the currents themselves, to use history's own momentum as an instrument of true change.

"*Non nobis solum nati sumus, Domine*," Calvin said, once more bowing his head low. *We are not born for ourselves alone.* Long locks of his brown hair tumbled from his hood again, a lingering trace of the man's old vanities that clashed somewhat with his humble words.

The Master stood at last, the soft whirring of the motors driving his true legs almost inaudible beside the rustling of his robe. Calvin rose with him, only a moment behind. The young president of the Circinus Federation towered over his liege, but the Master had come to ignore such trivial physicality ages ago. Height was but another development of nature that could be overcome by technology, just like strength, stamina, and speed—but intellect, wisdom, and true devotion at any cost. *Those* were the traits that even machinery lacked.

Only the proper blending of mind, body, and technology could create true perfection, something nature alone could not accomplish.

The Master strode past Calvin, toward the holovid. Calvin turned and followed without a moment's hesitation.

So, what went wrong? Had the currents truly changed so much in just a few short years...?

"So very true, Precentor," the Master said as he watched the parade on Terra continue. "For those people—for *all* people—we can only trust in Blake's blessed wisdom, and the currents of history."

"The orders have been given, *Domine*," Calvin said. "We have made the struggle as grand as possible. Humanity united, as never before, even more so than when the Clans came. Is that not enough?"

For the first time in nearly a decade, the Master allowed his inner doubts to seep into his words. "One can never know for certain," he said, flatly.

...or, perhaps, there was now another Master?

With a thought, he reactivated the holovid's sound. The voices of the reporters picked up in mid-conversation while the 'Mechs thumped along behind them.

"...have been a few scares, but so far, none of them have proven substantiated," the woman was saying.

"That's right, Lorna," said the man. "And yet, despite all the extra security, the crowds today seem especially