



AUTHOR PROFILE

Destina A...**Level** A2**Genre** Tragedy

THE LAST MISSION

The silence of the night was shattered by the rhythmic echo of harsh boot steps in the corridor. Captain Alp burst into the dormitory with a mission file in his hand. As he flicked the lights on in a single motion, he struck the metal locker hard. The metallic clang jolted the soldiers out of their deepest sleep one by one.

Alp: "Wake up, gentlemen! There's an operation! Full gear at the assembly area in 15 minutes. Move!"

Without waiting, Alp moved to the adjacent female personnel dormitory. He knocked hard twice and entered. Lieutenant Asena and Sergeant Specialist Gökçe were already sitting up, starting to lace their boots.

Alp: "Ladies, the operation order is in. You have 15 minutes. I won't tolerate any delays!"

The assembly area smelled of gunpowder and motor oil. The Fire Team was lined up like a wall. When Colonel Ünal entered with Captain Alp, only the steady breathing of the soldiers could be heard in the room.

Colonel: "At ease, my children. This isn't a routine search and rescue. Our target is General Şahin. He was taken hostage by terrorists after his helicopter went down. He is the memory of this nation. You will bring him back at the cost of your lives. Understood, soldier?"

Alp: "Yes, sir. It will be done."

The red light inside the helicopter cast a glow on the determined faces of the soldiers. They were speaking through headsets due to the noise. Sergeant First Class Polat smirked when he saw Master Sergeant Halil slightly closing his eyes.

Polat: "Commander, it looks like Master Sergeant Halil couldn't wake up. Should we give him a parachute so he wakes up in mid-air?" A weary but proud smile appeared on the team's faces.

Alp: "Halil, couldn't you wake up?"

Halil: "I'm awake, Commander. Give the parachute to Polat; it gets very windy on the way down, maybe it'll help him fly."

Tugay: "A parachute won't stop him, brother; we should just toss Polat down directly; he'd land faster without one." The whole team laughed lightly.

Alp: "Alright, enough chatter. Silence! We'll be in the contact zone in one minute." The roar of the helicopter gave way to the howling of the mountains. As the altitude rose, the air didn't just get colder; it stabbed into their lungs like a knife. The snow was knee-deep.

Alp: "Stop! Get down, take security positions!"

The team sank into the snow simultaneously like a single body. Alp took off his glove and signaled to Lieutenant Asena. Asena pulled out the map in its waterproof case from the side compartment of her backpack. Sergeant Specialist Gökçe was scanning the ridges with binoculars.

Alp: "Asena, open the map. Where are we?"

Asena shielded the flashlight with her palm so the light only hit the map. Her fingers followed the frozen coordinate lines on the ice-cold paper.

Asena: "Commander, we are at 'Terror Pass.' The target zone is the old mine. We have about two kilometers to go, but..."

Asena paused for a moment; her breath dispersed in the air like thick smoke.

Asena: "...walking that path in this snowfall means walking straight into a terror trap. The trail is completely blocked."

Gökçe: (Without lowering her binoculars) "Commander, there's movement at the clock position of one. Approximately eight hundred meters. Could be a patrol."

Alp lifted his sharp eyes from the map and stared into the darkness. The plan had changed.

Alp: "Close the map. We won't take the trail; we'll move along the ridge line. They're waiting for us below; we'll come down on top of them. Prepare yourselves, it's going to be a tough climb."

The team set off to enter the ridge line, maintaining perimeter control. Struggling through the harsh cold, the team climbed the ridge with steady, determined steps. They took care not to leave anyone behind, constantly looking out for one another. As the snowfall and altitude increased, steps became harder. While the cold wind cut their faces like a blade, after a long time, Captain Alp could hear the heavy breathing of his team over the radio. His own face was numb from the severity of the wind. It was time to stop.

Alp: "Fire! We're stopping. We'll rest here."

With the order, instead of just collapsing where they stood, the team immediately looked for a sheltered spot while taking security positions. At that moment, Sergeant First Class Polat approached a cave entrance that stood like a massive shadow in the blizzard. He aimed his barrel into the darkness and quickly scanned the interior.

Polat: "Commander, inside is clear. Secure!"

The team entered the shelter together. While each sat on a cold stone to rest, Tugay and Gökçe had their weapons aimed at the shelter entrance just in case.

Alp: "Everyone get some good rest, we have a long way to go."

As the team continued to rest, Polat stood up and began pacing around the shelter.

Polat: "Commander, there's no signal at all; no news, no info..."

Alp: "Take it easy, Polat, we'll figure it out once we get out of here."

Asena: "Commander, the snowfall has let up, shall we move out now?"

Alp: "Then get up, let's climb this mountain."

Fire Team: "Yes, Commander!"

The team prepared to leave the shelter. Captain Alp took the lead, with Asena at his left, and began to advance. Lieutenant Asena was an intelligence officer with good knowledge of the region; she often helped the team regarding where they were and where they needed to go. No one doubted her knowledge. The team was always bound by trust, respect, and faith; this sense of belonging had kept them together until now.

Polat: "Commander! There's a signal here, I've contacted the staff, here you go."

Alp: "Captain Alp listening, sir."

Colonel: "Captain, what is your status?"

Alp: "Sir, we took a forced break. We've connected to the trail line; it was the safest route. We are very close to the target; we'll be in the operation zone shortly."

Colonel: "Good. Watch yourselves, Captain. We are waiting for your happy news along with General Şahin. May God be with you."

Alp: "Yes, sir."

The radio cut off with a slight static sound, and the team returned to their path. As they progressed through the long, snowy roads, the hour grew late. When the team reached the vicinity of the mine, evening had set in. Each member of the team was hidden behind rocks that concealed them, under their white camouflage. Captain Alp was discreetly looking around, trying to catch the right moment to intervene.

Halil: "Commander, isn't it time to go in? The time we've been waiting is approaching two hours."

Gökçe: "Yes, Commander, haven't we observed enough? Shouldn't we act early?"

Alp: "The time isn't up yet. I can't send you in without knowing the number of terrorists inside, so we stay here a while longer."

Alp calmly answered the questions directed at him. The team waited for Captain Alp's order, pressing their chests against the cold rocks. Not long after, the door of the mine opened; more than ten terrorists came out. While they took positions around, the Fire Team watched them without blinking. Right then, Captain Alp whispered into the radio:

Alp: "Sir, there are terrorists in the area, we estimate more than ten. We don't know if General Şahin is inside, no visual. Shall we open fire?"

Colonel: "Captain, give the order to fire at the most suitable moment you catch."

Alp: "Understood, sir."

With Alp's movement, each member of the team had a target in their sights.

Alp: "Fire!"

With the order, the entire team fired at every enemy in front of them. In response, the terrorists grabbed their weapons; a mutual firefight had begun. The terrorists hiding behind sandbags at the mine entrance started responding with disorganized but heavy fire. Bullets ricocheted off the rocks the team used as cover, creating sparks.

Polat: "Commander, the machine gun at the entrance has us pinned! We can't lift our heads!"

Alp: "Halil! Tugay! Flank them from the back!"

Halil and Tugay crawled slowly over the snow to circle the rear of the area, then stood up and ran to hide behind the rocks overlooking the mine window. Master Sergeant Halil fired a single shot at the head of the terrorist with the machine gun standing right in front of the door; the bullet blew his head apart. The perimeter of the mine was cleared.

Halil: "Clear, Commander."

Alp: "Secure the area, we're going in."

Alp came down from behind the rock and walked toward the mine. Gökçe accompanied him. Alp and Gökçe split to both sides of the door. Alp opened the door first; no one was inside. Alp carefully entered one of the rooms in the mine. Other places were empty. In the room Captain Alp entered, there was someone wearing military camouflage, tied to a chair with a sack over their head. Alp approached and grabbed the sack. He thought the face under the sack belonged to General Şahin. He yanked the sack off in one move and threw it to the floor, but the face under the sack was not General Şahin's. It was a dead terrorist dressed in a soldier's uniform. Alp leaned in to the terrorist's face to see if there were any signs of life. He placed his index finger near the nose, then checked the breath and pulse. He pressed his finger hard against the terrorist's neck. He felt a slight twitch in his fingers. He turned back and called out to Gökçe.

Alp: "Gökçe, show us your skills."

Receiving the order, Gökçe began using the emergency kit from her bag. She wrapped the wounds with bandages and, after performing the necessary intervention, informed the Captain.

Gökçe: "Commander, I've done the intervention; the rest depends on waiting. The probability of death is very high."

Alp: "Alright, Gökçe."

Alp walked out of the mine and said, "Fire, assemble!" With Alp's voice, the team gathered.

Tugay: "Commander, is the General inside?"

Alp: "No, they placed a terrorist instead of the General."

Tugay: "Those bastards... They were literally waiting for us, Commander."

Alp: "Polat, bring the radio." Sergeant First Class Polat: "Here you go, Commander." Alp took the radio.

Alp: "Captain Alp speaking. Sir, the General is not at the mine; they left a wounded terrorist in his place. What should we do?"

Colonel: "What is his condition?"

Alp: "He's heavy, we don't know if he'll live."

Colonel: "Alright, we'll get back to you, be careful."

Alp acknowledged and turned off the radio. Alp began speaking to the team.

Alp: "We stay here until we hear back. You will take turns on guard duty."

While Polat, Halil, and Tugay took their guard posts in turn, Tugay went to check on the terrorist inside. Tugay kicked the terrorist lying on the ground in anger. With Tugay's hard kick, the man on the ground groaned in pain.

Tugay: "Hey, this guy is alive!"

He leaned down, grabbed the terrorist by the collar, and roughed him up a bit.

Tugay: "Talk, you!"

He delivered a solid slap to the terrorist's face. The man opened his mouth and let out a small moan. When Tugay raised his hand to deliver a second slap, the terrorist spoke.

(X): "Don't hit... stop."

Tugay: "Where is the General?"

The terrorist remained silent. Tugay couldn't hold back and delivered the second slap. The man's head snapped back. At that moment, Halil noticed Tugay and ran to his side.

Halil: "Stop, kid, you're going to kill him!"

Tugay: "He's not talking, Commander!"

Halil informed the Captain.

Halil: "I'm here, go on Tugay."

Tugay leaned down, slung his weapon over his shoulder, and entered the mine.

Tugay: "Commander, there's a living terrorist outside."

At Tugay's words, Alp ran to Halil's side. He leaned down, grabbed the terrorist by the collar, and shook him.

Alp: "Where is the General?"

(X): "I don't know."

Alp: "Tell Polat to roll him off the cliff."

Tugay: "With pleasure, Commander!" Tugay called Polat over the radio.

Tugay: "Brother, come here, we have work."

Polat left his post; Asena took his place.

"Polat was the person in the team who generally liked to do the 'dirty work'; he never hesitated to get his hands bloody. If someone was to be interrogated, that person was now at Polat's mercy. Polat was a soldier so loyal to his duty but also a reckless, crazy one."

Polat: "Your orders, Commander."

Alp: "Take this friend, let him get some cliff air."

Polat: "My favorite... But Commander, if we throw him off immediately, there's no fun in it; let me try some technical things on him first."

Alp: "Do whatever you want."

Alp went back inside without looking back.

Gökçe: "Commander, the man died."

Alp: "Alright, Gökçe."

Alp turned to Gökçe as he went inside.

Alp: "Gökçe, take Tugay's place on guard."

Gökçe: "Understood, Commander."

As Gökçe went out to the guard post, she saw Polat holding the terrorist and turned her back and left.

Polat dragged the terrorist to the windy flat at the edge of the cliff. The man's consciousness was fading in and out, but Polat had much more effective methods to wake him up. He pulled his commando knife from his belt and ran the cold steel along the terrorist's cheek.

Polat: "Look, my time is short, and my patience is even shorter. Where is the General? If you say 'I don't know' one more time, I won't throw you down; I'll pour you down piece by piece. Understand?"

The terrorist shook his head trembling. Polat lightly pressed the tip of the knife into the man's nail bed. A scream of pain tore through the silence of the mountain.

(X): "Okay! Okay... The mine was just a bait! They... they took him south, to the old shelter they call 'Eagle's Nest.' The location is on my phone."

Without letting go of the man's collar, Polat reached for his radio.

Polat: "Commander, the bird sang. The target is 'Eagle's Nest.' Here is the location; if we don't set out now, we won't make it."

At that exact moment, an RPG shell hit the right side of the mine with a huge explosion. While Polat's eyes widened in horror, Captain Alp's panicked, loud voice echoed:

Alp: "Fire! Take cover!"

As each member of the team quickly took their positions, the mutual line of fire suddenly turned into hell. The pale light of dawn, the snowflakes floating in the air, and the never-ending sound of bullets were mixing together. The terrorists were surrounding the Fire Team from all sides, trapping them.

Asena, shouting over the intensity of the clash:

Asena: "Commander, we're getting squeezed!" she said.

Alp had no intention of backing down:

Alp: "Don't stop, keep firing!" he roared.

Even though the team continued to respond under the rain of bullets, the enemy had drawn very close. With the realization of a new group approaching from the rear, the Fire Team was completely trapped.

Polat: "Commander, the ones at the back are within grenade range, the danger is great."

Before Polat could finish his sentence, he pulled the pin of one of the two grenades on his belt and threw it. As the violence of the explosion sent snow and earth into the air, Polat continued to vomit death in that direction with his machine gun.

Captain Alp: "Halil! Tugay! Hold the right flank! Asena, call for support on the radio, give the coordinates!"

First Lieutenant Asena: "Colonel, this is Asena! We are under heavy fire in the mine vicinity. We are surrounded on all sides! Requesting urgent air support or evacuation! I repeat, we are trapped!"

Only static and the fragmented voice of Colonel Ünal were heard from the radio: "Hold on, Fire... Due to weather conditions... The birds can't take off... By your own means..." Asena: "Commander, help us..."

The radio signal cut off; the radio went silent.

Tugay: "Commander, they're multiplying like dogs, we have to use all our ammunition."

Captain Alp saw that determined expression in his team's eyes, knowing the end was near. He had to make a decision. Either they would be buried in this frozen earth here, or they would embark on an impossible rescue operation.

Alp: "Fire! Listen, I'll count to three, toss one grenade each, then Polat and I will head out. Do your best."

Fire Team: "Yes, Commander!"

Captain Alp and Polat stepped out of the door at the same time and leaned their backs against each other. The soldiers of the Fire Team remaining inside tossed grenades at the enemies. As the bombs exploded one by one, Alp and Polat, drawing strength from each other's backs, carried out a push-back maneuver with machine guns. The team managed to retreat through intense fire and knee-deep snow, achieving the impossible. They escaped this ambush without losing a single soul. Now, they urgently needed to get away from the mine. The team began to head down the trail to return the way they came. While they were running but also advancing cautiously, the silent whisper of a long-range weapon was heard from the direct diagonal of their position. The bullet struck Master Sergeant Halil right in the neck. Before Halil could grasp what had happened, he instinctively wrapped his hands around his neck. As blood flowed from his throat to his chest, his gloves were soaked in his own blood. He slowly dropped to his knees, then collapsed to the ground. The blood seeping from his neck created a sharp contrast with the white snow. While the entire team watched this dark scene in horror, Gökçe's shrill scream shattered the silence. Everyone hit the ground at the same time.

Gökçe: "Commander!"

Alp: "Get down! Stay down! There's a sniper, don't even lift your heads!"

Tugay: "Master Sergeant Halil has been hit, Commander!"

Alp, unable to stomach the reality of the situation, grabbed Halil by the arms and dragged him behind a rock.

Alp: "Gökçe, intervene immediately!"

Tugay moved to Halil's side. His voice was trembling: "Commander, open your eyes, look at us!"

Tugay's desperate voice echoed in the ears of the entire team. Gökçe was trying to keep Master Sergeant Halil alive with every medical method she knew. Her hands were shaking as she applied pressure to the

wound, but her hope hadn't run out yet.

Alp: "My Halil, don't let go, open your eyes!"

With a great effort, Halil slowly opened his eyes. His breath was ragged; he seemed to be in great pain with every breath he took.

Polat: "Brother, speak to us, don't leave us!"

Halil: "Long live the homeland, my lion..."

Halil's voice was like a faint whisper falling from his lips.

Asena: "No, no it can't be! No!"

Alp slowly ran his hand over Halil's face and closed his eyes, which had remained open. When Gökçe pulled her hands away from Halil's wound, her fingers were bloody, and her body was shaking from the magnitude of the loss. Alp took the crimson flag from his bag and draped it over Halil. His voice had turned from that of a commander into a vow of revenge:

Captain Alp: "Take down the sniper!"

Gökçe wiped her tears with the back of her hand and gripped her binoculars. After minutes of deathly silence, Gökçe shouted, "At the diagonal, the mine!" Tugay, with the coordinates he received, fired his sniper rifle in one shot. The bullet tore through the snowy slope and hit the target right in the forehead, sending him falling. With the words "Target down, Commander!" the first spark of revenge was struck. Shortly after the death of Master Sergeant Halil, the Fire Team had taken his revenge. Alp called out on the radio.

Alp: "Captain Alp speaking... Sir, we have a martyr."

Colonel: "Who?"

Alp: "Master Sergeant Halil Devran has fallen."

Colonel: "I will send you new coordinates, bring our martyr and come."

Alp: "Yes, sir!"

Alp turned off the radio and turned to the team members. Each of them was sitting on the ground, staring blankly at the crimson flag over Halil.

Tugay: "Commander, what are we going to do? He had a little daughter; how will we tell her that her father is dead when she doesn't even have a mother? How will we answer to her?"

Captain Alp paused for a moment at Tugay's question. The knot in his throat grew larger every second. He fixed his gaze on the crimson flag, which stood like a poppy on the snow.

Alp: "It is not us, but this homeland that will answer to her, Tugay... We will only try to be worthy of him."

Alp stood up with difficulty, swallowing hard. The cold of the snow no longer affected him; the fire inside was turning everything to ash.

Alp: "Embrace Halil. We will not leave him alone on this mountain, in this storm. We will carry him on our shoulders. To his home, to his daughter... He will return in a manner worthy of his glory."

Polat and Tugay approached Halil's body slowly, as if lifting the heaviest burden in the world. Polat adjusted the edges of the flag and shouldered his friend. As Gökçe and Asena took security positions around them, every step was heavier than the last. The snowfall stopped, but the silence of the mountain was scarier now. As the team moved toward the new coordinates, they left behind only a white void watered with Halil's blood and five wounded souls who had sworn an oath of revenge. The team was trying to reach the new coordinate without stopping or resting. They were carrying the father of the team, one of their comrades, on their backs; nothing was easy for them anymore. The noon light was slowly rising. After a while, Alp approached Polat to take Halil onto his own back. He stopped the team.

Polat: "Don't do it, Commander, I can carry my brother."

Alp: "I know you can carry him, Polat, but you're tired, I will carry him."

Polat: "Commander, the burden inside me is greater than the one outside."

Alp adjusted Polat's helmet and took Halil onto his own back. Master Sergeant Halil's blood was all over Polat's camouflage.

Aseña: "Commander, five hundred meters left to the coordinate. There is a flat area; the helicopter will land there."

Alp didn't answer, he just nodded. His friend's arm hung from his shoulder. Alp held that arm tightly, as if Halil were still there and they were joking around. When they reached the flat area, the sound of the helicopter blades began to be heard from afar. The helicopter, descending and blowing snow dust into the air, fell over the team like a shadow. The door opened; Colonel Ünal was personally waiting at the door. When he saw the team and noticed the body wrapped in the crimson flag on Alp's back, he stood at attention.

Alp: "Long live the homeland, sir. We have brought the trust."

They slowly laid Halil inside the helicopter. Polat looked at the mountains one last time. Halil's laughter, his voice, and his blood remained in those mountains. As the helicopter rose, the mine and that bloody trail grew smaller below. While Master Sergeant Halil returned home with the Colonel, the Fire Team remained in the operation zone.

Alp: "Don't look like that, he did his duty. Now it's our turn."

With Alp's voice, the team looked at each other. Polat looked at his bloody hands, then spoke in a weary voice:

Polat: "Commander, they must have heard the helicopter. It won't take them long to arrive, let's move."

Alp: "I know... Fire Team, attention!"

The team stood at attention at Alp's thunderous voice. They all lined up side by side like pearls; they were ready to listen to the order that would come from their commander.

Alp: "Direction: weapon nest! No stopping until the second order!"

Fire Team: "Yes, Commander!"

The team sets off for the second coordinates given. They head toward the “Eagle’s Nest” on the border line, which is their mission site. They take positions near the area; all binoculars are pointed at the underground entrance located in the region.

Polat: “Commander, let’s not wait, let’s dive in.”

Alp: “Polat, don’t rush.”

Polat: “Commander, if not now, then when?”

Alp: “Be patient, Polat.”

Polat exhales deeply and turns forward; they wait for a while longer.

Alp: “Asena, how many doors are here?”

Asena: “One, Commander. Entry and exit are through the same door.”

Alp: “Alright. Polat, Gökçe; you go from the right. Asena, Tugay; both of you come from the left. I will advance through the middle. When the door opens, I go first, followed immediately by Tugay. You have no chance for error; I will return home without losing another martyr here, understood?”

Fire Team: “Understood, Commander!”

The team acts on Captain Alp’s order. The entrance door is surrounded by the Fire Team from two sides. When Alp reaches out to open the door, it opens without being forced.

Before taking the first step inside, he and Tugay take entry security. As they advance inward, they see stairs extending underground; a heavy smell of earth fills their noses.

Alp: “Asena, Polat; hold the door. Gökçe, advance on my right; Tugay, on my left.”

While the team secures the area, the sound of footsteps begins to come from the stairs. At this stage, using weapons would mean waking up the entire underground. Alp pulls one of the men coming up the stairs by the scruff of the neck and breaks his neck; the man falls to the ground with a silent moan. The other terrorist

coming behind falls into Gökçe's trap. Gökçe hits the man on the head with the butt of her gun; thus, the other was also silently neutralized. Alp signals with his hand.

Alp: "Tugay, advance!"

Tugay begins to go down the middle of the stairs. The inside was crawling with terrorists; there were more than ten. While each stood in a corner, there was a brown door right across from the stairs.

Tugay: "Commander, there are more than ten. Let's enter and spray them at the same time."

Alp: "You start the first fire, we will follow up."

Tugay: "Yes, Commander!"

Tugay felt a great courage within him, beyond just the order he received from Alp. With the last few steps, the first shot was fired.

Tugay: "Fire!"

Alp and Gökçe accompanied Tugay's fire. The terrorists, trying to arm themselves, fired bullets randomly. While bullets grazed past each of them, with controlled fire established, the last remaining terrorists fell to the ground. Gökçe ran to the brown door; she tried to force it open, but the door wouldn't open.

Alp: "Move!"

Gökçe moves to the right side of the door. Alp first takes a step back, then leans against the door with his shoulder. The door doesn't open on the first attempt; when he moves a second time, the door is damaged. When Alp pushes it with his hand, the door finally opens. In the darkest corner of the room, was a man sitting in a chair chained to the wall. His head was bowed, his shoulders were slumped, but that torn uniform piece on his left chest told the whole story.

Tugay: "Commander... The General is there. He's alive."

Alp knelt beside the General and spoke with a reassuring voice:

Alp: "Commander, wake up. I am Captain Alp, these with me are the Fire Team. We have come to get you."

General Şahin opened his squinted eyes and, seeing the Turkish soldiers in front of him, a slight smile appeared on his lips.

General Şahin: "Finally, my son... I knew you would come."

Alp: "Hold on, Commander, we're getting out of here."

General Şahin: "I know, my son."

When Tugay took a few tools from his bag and broke the connection point of the chains, the General was finally free. However, when the General first stood up, his body stumbled under the influence of long-term captivity and fatigue.

Alp: "Commander, get on my back."

Alp leaned in front of the General and took him on his back with difficulty. Along with Tugay and Gökçe, they began to climb the stairs rapidly. They were racing against time to escape the suffocating air of the underground and reach the daylight and Polat and Asena, who were waiting for them outside.

When the Fire Team emerged from the suffocating darkness of the underground and met the sharp frost of the sky, Alp's thunderous voice shattered the silence once again.

Alp: "Polat! Contact the Colonel. Have them direct an urgent helicopter to the coordinates we determined. We have the General, we have no time!"

Polat: "Yes, Commander!"

As Polat quickly grabbed the radio, the tired but determined faces of the team appeared under the grayness of the sky. Alp slowly lowered the General from his back to the ground and signaled to Asena and Tugay, who were waiting on alert for perimeter security.

Polat: "Colonel, this is Fire! We are at the Eagle's Nest location. Package received, I repeat; package received! General Şahin is safe. Send the birds for urgent evacuation, I'm passing the coordinates!"

Colonel Ünal's excited and pride-filled voice rose from the other end of the radio.

Colonel: "Copy that, Fire! The birds are airborne; they'll be with you in ten minutes. Bring our General back safe and sound. May God be with you."

Polat turned off the radio and looked at Alp, his eyes reflecting both the pride of success and the pain of Halil's loss.

Polat: "They're coming, Commander... They'll be here in ten minutes."

Alp: "Good... Everyone, take security positions!"

Before long, the helicopter reached the location. The Fire Team and the General boarded the helicopter together. Every member of the team let out a deep, weary breath. They had continued hungry and sleepless during the three days they spent on the mountain. With no time to rest, the team was met by the Colonel and soldiers upon landing at the battalion. While the team personnel disembarked one by one, other soldiers helped the General off the helicopter.

Alp: "Fire Team, attention!"

The entire team stood at attention along with Alp.

Alp: "Captain Alp! The Fire Team has successfully completed the mission, sir. Our General is safe and sound on the homeland's soil!"

Colonel: "Welcome home, my children... Welcome. You have done your duty with honor. But we cannot rejoice today... Halil's station is heaven; my condolences to you all."

The Colonel walked up to Alp and placed a hand on his shoulder. At that moment, Captain Alp's shoulders, which he had held like concrete for three days, shook slightly.

Colonel: "Captain, take your team and rest. We must all be there, standing tall, at Halil's ceremony."

Alp: "Yes, sir... Fire! Everyone rest for two hours. In two hours, wait for me at the assembly area in your dress

uniforms.”

Fire Team: “Yes, Commander!”

The Fire Team dispersed. Each went to the dormitory; though their minds resisted, their bodies could no longer endure the exhaustion. After a short and restless two-hour sleep, the team gathered at the assembly area. They were all in their dress uniforms; their uniforms were sharp as a razor. The sky had turned gray, growing heavy as if sensing that a hero was to be buried that day.

Alp: “Fire! Today we will bid farewell to our brother-in-arms, our comrade Master Sergeant Halil, to eternity. Fulfill your final duty with honor. Once again, long live the homeland.”

Fire Team: “Long live the homeland!”

The team walked with silent steps behind Captain Alp. Refusing to leave their brother alone on his final journey, the team set off for the cemetery where Halil would be laid to rest. In the cemetery courtyard, a large crowd had gathered around the coffin covered with the crimson flag.

As the Fire Team walked slowly toward the coffin, a little girl of about eight years old ran up and grabbed Alp’s hand. The little girl’s hands were frozen from the cold air. Alp knelt before the child and took those tiny hands between his large palms to warm them. As tears poured from the little girl’s eyes, it became harder for Alp to maintain his composure every second.

Little Girl: “Are you my father’s friend?”

Alp: “Yes... Your father was one of my closest, most precious friends.”

Little Girl: “Then why didn’t you protect my father? My father taught me that friends should always protect each other.”

Alp felt his breath catch for a moment at the little girl’s innocent yet piercing words; though he struggled to speak, he did not break his stance. He leaned toward the little girl and took her in his arms. Pushing her hair back with his fingers and looking into her face, he spoke:

Alp: “I am so sorry I couldn’t bring your father back to you, but your father was a hero; and you are the

daughter of a hero. Look here, everyone here is at your command... You are the homeland's trust to us, my beautiful girl."

Though the little girl couldn't fully grasp Alp's words, she smiled slightly and wrapped her arms around his neck. However, her crying would not stop; her tears soaked the rank embroidery on Alp's shoulder. When Alp reached the side of the coffin, he lowered the girl from his arms. At that moment, Asena and Gökçe stepped forward and embraced the little girl, showing her affection. Polat knelt and pulled out a pair of pink gloves he had produced, slipping them onto the girl's hands.

Polat: "Sweetheart, your brother Polat is with you now, okay? Let those tiny hands not be cold."

Before her father's coffin, the team tried to console the little girl and pull her away from this heavy atmosphere for a moment. When the ceremony began, every member of the team lined up side by side and stood in silence. The sharp silence in the ceremony area deepened as Colonel Ünal walked toward the podium with heavy steps. His gaze fell first on the flag-draped coffin, then on the little girl at Polat's knee. When he cleared his throat, his voice was loud enough to drown out even the howling of the wind.

Colonel: "Today, we are not just bidding farewell to a comrade, a son. Today, we entrust to the homeland's soil a hero who wrote his name with his own blood in the glorious thousands-year history of the Turkish nation!"

The Colonel scanned the team. He could read the hidden pain in each of their eyes and the storm within them.

Colonel: "They cannot destroy us! Because we are the children of a nation that sets out saying, 'If we die, we are martyrs; if we live, we are veterans.' As long as this flag flies, as long as this call to prayer is recited, we shall exist. Our martyr left behind not just pain, but his honor and his tiny child as a trust to us. Let the Turkish nation know; this trust is our honor, and this homeland is our final fortress!"

When he finished his speech, he snapped a sharp military salute. Though his eyes clouded for a moment, he did not compromise his upright stance.

Colonel: "Bless us with your rights, my son. The homeland is grateful to you!" When the Colonel's speech ended, Alp stepped forward with heavy strides. Swallowing the knot in his throat, he gave the command with that steel-like voice:

Alp: "For the honorary salute to the martyr... Aim at the sky!"

The soldiers surrounding the coffin moved as one body and pointed their weapons at the sky. The sound of the charging handles echoed in the deathly silent area.

Alp: "Fire!"

The first volley tore through the sky. The little girl buried her face in Asena's knees in fear.

Alp: "Fire!"

With the second volley, the smell of gunpowder mixed into the air.

Alp: "Fire!"

When the final sound of the weapons in the sky echoed and went silent, Alp turned his gaze to his team. His voice was lower this time, but deeper.

Alp: "Fire Team... Take our martyr."

The Fire Team lifted the coffin onto their shoulders with great care, as if carrying a piece of their own souls. Their steps were heavy, their heads held high. As they walked toward the grave, every step left a trace on the homeland's soil. The Fire Team walked slowly toward the cemetery with the weight of Halil on their shoulders. Tugay slowly stroked the crimson flag wrapped over the coffin on his shoulder with his hand, as if saying goodbye. When they reached the gravesite, they fulfilled their final duties and completed the burial. The little girl stood at the head of that fresh, black soil with a pain larger than her stature. Now she had neither her mother's warm embrace nor her father's reassuring shadow. The world had suddenly turned to ice for her.

Alp bowed his head slightly to hide the tears in his eyes, but then he straightened. He received that final folded flag—Halil's honor—from the Colonel. His steps were heavy, his heart like lead. He knelt before the little girl.

Alp: "My beautiful girl... This flag is your father's trust to us, and our trust to you. He lives now in the sky, in this red banner. Do not be afraid; as long as we draw breath, you will never be alone."

The little girl pressed the flag to her chest, bringing it to her nose as if searching for her father's scent. At that moment, the shoulders of all those stern-faced soldiers in the ceremony area slumped for the first time.

Polat approached the girl, took her hand, and led her away from the soil.

Polat: "Come on, sweetheart... Your father has gone to sleep. We will build a new home with you now, and we will tell you the stories your father loved the most."

The team huddled around the grave one last time. They had to walk away without looking back, but each of them knew that while Halil's body remained in that soil, his spirit and his trust would now beat in the hearts beneath each of their uniforms.

As the sun set, only the howling of the wind and the rustle of the flag the little girl pressed to her chest remained in the cemetery. The Fire Team left Master Sergeant Halil's trust to the homeland and set off for their new mission. The team had returned to the battalion. The heavy silence in the resting area was broken by Tugay's curious but low voice. They were still wearing those razor-sharp dress uniforms.

Tugay: "Brother, where did those pink gloves come from all of a sudden?"

Polat fixed his gaze on the tips of his boots. A sad smile appeared on his face.

Polat: "I saw them while I was out on leave... I bought them just in case I ever had a daughter; they were sitting in my locker. It turns out they were meant for Master Sergeant Halil's daughter. I didn't want her hands to be cold."

Tugay tapped his friend's back lightly in support.

Tugay: "You did well, brother, you did the right thing."

Gökçe turned her eyes toward the window, waiting for the next step.

Gökçe: "Commander, is there news of a mission?"

Alp: "I don't know, Gökçe. We'll find out when the Colonel calls."

Just then, the door opened and the sentry soldier entered.

Soldier: "Commander, Colonel Ünal is waiting for you in his office."

Alp nodded and stood up. Walking through the cold echo of the corridor, he entered the Colonel's office and gave a sharp salute.

Alp: "You called for me, sir."

Albay: "Sit down, Alp... Captain, I called you here both to assign the new mission and to introduce the new members of the Fire Team."

Alp knit his brows slightly, unable to hide his surprise.

Alp: "New soldiers for the Fire Team?"

Colonel Ünal: "Yes, there are two soldiers I personally selected for this team. Now go, get your team, and wait in the yard."

Alp: "Yes, sir!"

When Alp returned to the resting area, the team stood up instantly. It was clear from the expression on Alp's face that it was a serious situation.

Alp: "Fire! Prepare yourselves, we are heading to the yard in full gear, now!"

Fire Team: "Yes, Commander!"

Minutes later, the entire team was lined up in a single row in the snowy yard. The crunch of the snow under their boots was like a harbinger of a coming storm.

Alp: "Fire, at ease! Listen to me... By order of Colonel Ünal, there will be new additions to our team. Then we will receive our new mission. Understood?"

Fire Team: "Understood, Commander!"

Colonel Ünal appeared at the yard gate. Walking beside him were two imposing, sharp-eyed soldiers who looked exactly alike. The Colonel stood before the team.

Colonel: "At ease! Fire, these two soldiers you see beside me; Savaş and Barış... They are now part of the Fire Team. You will have time to get to know each other on the way to the operation."

Savaş and Barış moved as a single body and stepped into the team's line. The Colonel's voice turned serious.

Colonel: "On our agenda is a terrorist code-named Arman. There is only an estimated location and a name regarding him. The reason I am giving this mission to you is that only an experienced team like yours can solve the depth of the traces there. Prepare yourselves; news will come when the helicopter is ready. Understood?"

Fire Team: "Yes, Commander!"

The team headed toward the equipment room. As they walked, Alp sized up the newcomers, Savaş and Barış.

Alp: "Which one of you is Barış, and which is Savaş?"

One of the twins stepped forward with a slight smile.

Barış: "I'm Barış, Commander. He's Savaş."

Alp: "How are we supposed to tell you apart?"

Barış: "Commander, you can recognize Savaş by his furrowed brow. He never relaxes."

Hearing this, Savaş paused for a moment as if caught off guard and released his frown. Though he tried to adjust his expression, he didn't compromise his serious demeanor.

Savaş: "That wasn't funny..."

Tugay looked up from checking his radio and stared at the twins. It really felt like looking into a mirror.

Tugay: “Man, isn’t there a more distinct feature? If I’m in the middle of a firefight tomorrow and yell ‘Savaş, move there,’ and Barış looks instead, we’re in trouble.”

Savaş moved next to Barış and showed his side profile, pointing out a millimetric difference.

Savaş: “My hair is shorter; Barış’s hair is slightly longer than mine. That’s our clearest difference.”

After inspecting them both closely, Alp nodded.

Alp: “Alright, get ready!”

At that moment, the sentry soldier entered.

Soldier: “Commander, the helicopter is ready.”

Alp: “Understood, soldier. You’re dismissed... Fire Team, let’s move!”

The team members boarded the helicopter one by one. As everyone took their seats side by side, Alp pulled Asena toward him. He gently tucked a stray lock of hair behind her ear so it wouldn’t get caught in her helmet and hurt her, then pressed a small kiss to the side of her forehead. In response, Asena lightly rested her head on Alp’s shoulder. The team watched with silent, affectionate glances as their commander—usually “cold as steel”—showed his only soft side. Alp and Asena had been together for a long time; they had first met during military training. Their love went back years. Alp always cherished Asena, never denying her a single wish. Even during operations, one of his hands was always metaphorically over her, like a protective shadow. He never withheld kind words and never failed to get her flowers on special days, even under the harshest conditions.

Asena was devoted to Alp with the same passion. It was as if fate had wrapped them together with an unbreakable “red thread of destiny.” While the fire of their love never dimmed, their hearts continued to burn with both deep anxiety and inextinguishable love before every operation they embarked upon. As Alp took Asena’s hands into his own palms, Tugay looked at Gökçe, let out a deep sigh, and turned his eyes to the sky. Soon, the team reached the operation zone.

Alp: “Fire Team, let’s go! Keep your love in your heart and your weapon on your shoulder.”

The team members held onto the ropes and glided down one after another, each planting their feet firmly on the snowy ground. Their bodies shivered slightly as they transitioned from the warm ambiance of the helicopter to the freezing cold. Trying to pull himself together, Savaş shrugged his shoulders sharply and gave his twin's shoulder a light shove.

Barış: "Knock it off, man!"

At Captain Alp's slight cough, Barış immediately straightened up.

Barış: "Forgive me, Commander."

Alp: "You know your duty. Come on, let's go see what's what."

The team fanned out quickly across the area. The designated location was an abandoned health clinic. When they reached the front of the building, they began observing the interior with binoculars.

Asena: "Commander, no one is visible. They said this place was abandoned anyway."

Alp: "Yes, Asena, but it's still worth waiting."

Asena: "Understood, Commander."

Barış: "Commander, are we going to carry out everything we find inside?"

Alp: "We don't know what we'll encounter yet. We'll act based on the materials we find."

Savaş: "Commander, should I go in first?"

Alp: "Why, Savaş?"

Savaş: "So that if nothing happens to me, you guys can follow behind..."

Alp: "Savaş, in the Fire Team, we don't use any of our soldiers as bait. If we're going in, we're going in together."

Savaş: "Understood, Commander."

Polat: "Commander, how did you figure the twins out so fast? I'm still mixing them up."

Barış: "You'll get used to it soon, brother."

Polat: "Right on, brother."

Alp: "Alright, listen up. Asena and I are entering from the left; Gökçe, Tugay, and Savaş, you go from the right.

Barış, you and Polat stay here. If there's any movement outside, let us know."

Following Alp's order, the team took positions and reached the door of the health clinic. The door opened without being forced. Alp, Asena, and Savaş entered and began searching the rooms one by one. Furniture was broken, and medical waste was scattered everywhere. As Savaş entered an examination room, his foot hit something hard. He leaned down and pushed aside some papers, revealing a small locked safe. He tried to move it, but the safe wouldn't budge.

Savaş: "Commander, there's a safe here, but it's stuck."

Alp: "Tugay, get over here... Check it out, see if there's a problem."

Tugay began pushing the dirt away from the edges of the safe with his hands. His fingers were covered in soil as they became entangled in a mess of wires. At that moment, seeing Gökçe forcing a door to enter, he shouted at the top of his lungs:

Tugay: "Stop! Don't move!"

Gökçe froze in place at the sound of Tugay's voice, her fingers tightly gripping the doorknob.

Tugay: "Commander, those bastards rigged a bomb to the door. If Gökçe lets go of that handle, we all blow up... Gökçe, don't let go, okay?"

Alp: "Okay, stay calm. Try to handle it, Tugay."

Tugay touched the connection points one by one; these colored wires were his specialty.

Tugay: "It's going to take a while."

As Tugay took his tools from his bag and tried to make the right move, Polat's voice crackled over the radio:

Polat: "Commander, intelligence just came in; we've identified Arman's right-hand man. They're on the move and heading right here!"

Alp: "Polat, secure the perimeter! There's a bomb inside and Gökçe is holding the pin. Tugay and Gökçe can't leave this area. We have to take outer security and prevent any possible attacks."

Polat: "Understood, Commander."

Alp: "Savaş, get outside and take a position with Polat and the others!"

While Alp, Tugay, and Gökçe remained inside the clinic, the rest of the team took up perimeter security outside. Before long, news came from Barış:

Barış: "Commander, they're coming, I see them! They aren't many."

Alp: "Lieutenant Asena has command of the exterior."

Asena: "Understood, Commander. They're here... Giving the order to fire!"

As soon as the group of ten terrorists stepped out of the pickup truck, bullets began flying through the air at Asena's command. Barış adjusted his scope and took down a terrorist whose gun barrel was visible.

Barış: "Commander, let's finish them here or they'll call for backup, let's push!"

Asena: "Let's flank them from behind!"

While Asena and Barış covered each other, Polat and Savaş formed a circular line, neutralizing the terrorists one by one. When a wounded terrorist tried to flee toward the forest, Savaş gave chase.

Savaş: "Don't run, you! I'll catch you!"

When the man tripped and fell while running, Savaş was on top of him.

Savaş: "You idiot, if you were going to fall, why did you make me run?"

After giving the man a thorough beating, Savaş dragged him back to Asena.

Savaş: "Package ready!"

Polat: "Open his mouth, let's get him talking."

The terrorist began to whine.

X: "If you let me go, I'll talk."

Polat: "Why should I trust you?"

X: "Everyone trusts the Turkish soldier..."

Polat: "But you're just a terrorist!"

X: "Everyone makes mistakes..."

Polat: "This isn't a mistake, it's a choice!"

X: "But I want to get out of this situation."

Polat: "You idiot, talk then. Why are you singing a serenade? You want another beating?"

X: "They sent us here to report your presence. Reinforcements are on the way; they'll drop on your heads while you're busy with the bomb!"

Polat: "What do you know about Arman?"

X: "I haven't seen his face, I only heard his voice. He's planning a mass slaughter, that's all I know."

Asena immediately reported the situation inside: "Commander, reinforcements are on the way, the situation is critical!"

Alp: "Understood, status remains... Tugay, you have to speed up!"

At the end of an hour, the expected raid began. Reinforcements entered the area opening fire. Gökçe couldn't let go of the door, and Tugay was sweating as he tried to defuse the bomb. While Alp responded alone from the windows, Tugay took Gökçe's hand:

Tugay: "Don't stress, we're getting out of here together."

Alp: "Tugay, stay low while you work!"

Before Alp could finish his sentence, a bullet grazing through a broken window struck Tugay's shoulder. Tugay felt the sharp pain of the bullet deep in his shoulder; he pressed his other hand against the wound. Without losing time, Alp rushed toward Tugay and pulled him down to the floor with him.

Alp: "Tugay! Are you okay? Answer me!"

Tugay: "I'm okay, Commander, I'm okay..."

Alp: "Stay calm, you have to keep going."

Tugay: "I know, Commander, I'll keep going. Don't worry about me; I won't budge a single step until I get Gökçe out of here safely!"

Alp: "That's my lion... Keep your head down and handle this damn thing. I'll cover Gökçe, alright?"

Gökçe: "Commander, wrap his wound tightly! You need to stop the bleeding!"

Alp: "Alright, I'm on it!"

Alp quickly opened Gökçe's bag on the floor, pulled out a bandage, and wrapped it tightly around Tugay's

wound.

Alp: "Come on, my Tugay, show them what you've got, keep going!"

Despite the pain, Tugay laid on the floor and focused on cutting the complex wires under the safe, solving the deadly puzzle. Meanwhile, the team members outside were in the middle of an intense firefight. Barış's priority was to repel the attack directed at the clinic; every "click" of his sniper rifle followed by a blast echoed with an almost intoxicating rhythm.

Barış: "Commander, they're multiplying!"

Asena: "I'm aware, but we have to protect those inside. Suppress them!"

Savaş: "Commander, let us go inside too!"

Asena: "Negative! If we go inside, we lose seven martyrs to a single bomb. Here's the plan: Savaş, stay with your twin. I'll push the garden line with Polat. You two stay here and cover each other!"

As Savaş and Barış took their positions under Asena's command, Alp was raining lead alone inside. Tugay's head was bowed, still struggling with that grueling puzzle. The blood seeping from his shoulder had now breached the bandage, trickling down his arm and dripping onto the soil.

Gökçe (sobbing): "Commander, Tugay is not okay! Please, take him and get out of here!"

Alp: "That is not happening! We don't leave our souls behind and walk away, Gökçe!"

Gökçe: "Commander, if you don't go, Tugay will die!"

Alp: "And if we go, you will die."

When Alp and Gökçe looked at Tugay simultaneously, they saw the young soldier's head slump forward, motionless. Alp dropped his weapon and lunged, grabbing Tugay by the shoulders and shaking him.

Alp: "Tugay! Snap out of it, son! Tugay, come on, open your eyes!"

Alp cupped Tugay's face in his hands, trying to bring him back. Tugay slowly opened his eyes as if hearing a voice from a great distance.

Tugay (whispering): "I must have drifted off, Commander..."

Alp immediately pulled out his canteen and gave Tugay water, splashing the rest on his face.

Alp: "Come on, my lion, you need to do your job now. We're getting out of here together!"

Tugay nodded weakly, but blood loss had drained his strength. Alp played his final card, looking straight into Tugay's eyes:

Alp: "Look at me, Tugay! You can't leave Gökçe here, can you? You can't leave the woman you love behind!"

At those words, Tugay reacted as if reborn; his gaze sharpened, his body tensed.

Tugay: "Never, Commander... I'll do it. Get back to your weapon."

Alp patted Tugay's back in approval and rushed back to his position. Meanwhile, Asena and Polat had infiltrated the garden line. Pressuring the terrorists from here was much easier. The air had turned pitch black, the whiteness of the snow merging with the night. The clash had been ongoing for hours. As time slipped away for the team, Tugay's triumphant voice echoed through the deathly silence:

Tugay: "Gökçe... Let go of the door!"

Alp turned his head for a split second to look at Tugay. His eyes held both hope and a massive doubt.

Alp: "Are you sure, Tugay?"

Tugay: "I'm sure, Commander!"

Gökçe began to pull her trembling fingers away from the doorknob millimeter by millimeter. As the door was freed, the blood-red numbers on the bomb vanished instantly, and the device went silent with a click. Tugay released the breath trapped in his lungs with a deep sigh of relief and let himself go completely. His back hit the cold floor hard; his strength was gone, his eyes beginning to close.

Gökçe immediately dropped to her knees, leaning over Tugay's face. She placed her hands on his pale cheeks and spoke with a trembling voice, but as if making a solemn vow:

Gökçe: "You saved me... and I will save you!"

Alp pressed the radio trigger; his voice was much louder and steadier this time:

Alp: "Fire! Door is clear, bomb defused! Now it's time to sweep the outside. We're moving out!"

As the team exited the clinic, Alp and Asena moved to the front, forming a forward defense line so Polat and Gökçe could carry the wounded Tugay to a safe zone.

Polat: "Commander, the evac helicopter will be here soon, but the twins are stuck on the opposite side!"

Alp: "Tell Savaş we're coming to them. Tell them to move carefully!"

Polat communicated quickly with Savaş over the radio. Despite a few stray bullets still flying, Alp and Polat moved rapidly toward the twins. The moment they met, they neutralized the remaining enemy elements with their last ammunition. This final pressure, combined with the fact that the enemy's expected reinforcements never arrived, allowed the team to escape.

Alp: "Fire! Let's go!"

The entire team began a safe withdrawal toward the helicopter. They reached the extraction vehicle shortly and returned safely to the battalion. As the team members stepped off one by one, Tugay was lowered on a stretcher. He was immediately dispatched to the emergency military hospital due to his wound, while the rest of the team was met by the Colonel in the battalion yard.

Colonel: "You fulfilled your mission successfully; I congratulate each of you. Now go and rest. You have permission to see Tugay; do not leave your comrade alone."

Fire Team: "Yes, sir!"

The entire team went to the barracks, prepped quickly, and headed for the hospital. Upon arrival, Alp

approached the first nurse he saw.

Alp: "We're here for Tugay Özkaya, what is his status?"

Nurse: "Please go up one floor; my colleagues there will assist you."

The team moved quickly to the upper floor and met the surgeon.

Alp: "Doctor, how is Tugay Özkaya?"

Doctor: "The surgery went very well; we removed the bullet without issue. There is no life-threatening risk, but he needs to rest for a while due to significant blood loss."

Alp: "Can we see him?"

Doctor: "He hasn't woken up yet; however, once he does, you may see him, provided you don't exhaust him. The nurse will inform you when he wakes."

Alp: "Understood, thank you."

The Fire Team waited in silence and hope at the door of Tugay's room. Finally, news came that he was awake, and the entire team entered. Seeing Tugay propped up in bed, Polat excitedly lunged and grabbed his head.

Tugay: "Easy, man! I'm wounded!"

Polat: "You're fine, you're fine, my brother!"

Polat embraced Tugay, trying to annoy him as usual.

Alp: "Stop it, son, you'll pop his stitches!"

Polat: "No way, Commander, look at him, he's solid as a rock!"

The whole team laughed lightly at this cheerful bickering. They spent time together for as long as the doctor allowed. When it was time to leave, Alp gave the final instruction:

Alp: "We're leaving, Gökçe stays with you."

Tugay: "Copy that, Commander."

As Tugay and Gökçe were left alone, the rest of the team returned to the battalion. While they were sitting in the lounge drinking tea, a sentry entered.

Sentry: "Commander, the Colonel has summoned Lieutenant Asena to his office."

Alp: "Understood, soldier. She's on her way."

Asena followed the soldier immediately. About twenty minutes later, she returned to the team with the Colonel by her side.

Colonel: "I've come to announce two things. You have leave today; go out and get some air. Finally; Lieutenant Asena will be away from the team for a while due to a new assigned mission. Talk among yourselves and say your goodbyes."

Fire Team: "Yes, sir!"

As soon as the Colonel left, Alp stood up and took Asena by the arms.

Asena: "Don't worry, it's just a mission, you know. I've gone before."

Alp: "I know, but last time you were gone for altı months."

Asena: "Yes, but it's a mission and I must go. You'd do the same if you were in my place."

Alp pressed Asena's head against his chest, turning the moment into a deep embrace.

Alp: "Go outside, walk around. I'll see you later."

The Fire Team followed their commander's wish and left the room. Left alone, Asena and Alp went outside to spend their final moments together. They walked hand in hand in silence along the path. When they returned

to the battalion much later, the Fire Team was waiting. When Asena returned ready for her mission, the entire team stood to greet her. She approached them and hugged each one individually. Her eyes then fell on Tugay, who was barely standing with Gökçe's help.

Asena: "Tugay, what are you doing here? I would have come to you!"

Tugay: "Commander, as your favorite soldier, I had to be here."

Gökçe: "He insisted, Commander; I couldn't say no."

Asena: "Return to the hospital immediately after I leave, okay?"

Polat: "Commander, if you need help, I'm just a phone call away. Intelligence is my second specialty, you know."

Tugay: "Please, Commander, don't call this madman! He'll just cause trouble there too."

Polat: "That's cold, brother, my intel skills are not to be underestimated."

Tugay: "Sure... weren't you the one who got penalized for hitting someone with an intel radio?"

Polat: "Alright, brother, no need for details, shut it!"

The team dispersed the heavy atmosphere with this banter for their final farewells.

Barış: "Commander, go and come back quickly. We have many more operations to go on together."

Savaş: "Commander, I'm not good with fancy words, but may your path be clear. I hope you return soon."

Asena: "Inshallah, my twins."

Asena had said goodbye to the whole team; Alp was last. She approached him slowly. Alp immediately pulled her into his arms, burying his head in her chest and kissing her hair.

Alp: "Go and come back quickly, my Asena."

Asena broke away from Alp's arms with difficulty and stepped toward the waiting car. The twins stood on either side of Alp, while Gökçe and Polat held Tugay. Asena looked back one last time, waved, got into the car, and drove away. She was gone; the weight of her absence was already felt by the team. A sharp wind hit the faces of the team waiting in the cold battalion yard, and a light snow began to fall. Alp turned and led his team inside with heavy steps.

As the team members quietly dispersed to their rooms, sleepless nights had already begun for Alp by the time midnight struck. Thoughts wouldn't fit in his mind; the silence of the room made Asena's absence even more prominent. The next morning, the team gathered at the breakfast table.

Alp: "Don't sit idle after breakfast. Join training immediately."

Alp gave the order, left the canteen, and went to the Colonel's office.

Colonel: "Captain, is there a problem?"

Alp: "I wanted to ask if there's a new mission, sir."

Colonel: "No, Alp. I won't put you in the field without clear intelligence. Rest in the meantime and be ready at full strength."

Alp: "Yes, sir!"

Alp saluted and left. Days turned into weeks, but there was silence from all fronts. During this time, Tugay recovered completely and returned to the team, and the Fire Team began maintaining its form with small-scale operations. This tranquility was, in fact, the calm before the storm... And finally, the news arrived. Exactly two months later, the Colonel gathered the Fire Team in the assembly area with a resolute expression.

Colonel: "My children, the news we've been waiting for is here! Intelligence has arrived from Lieutenant Asena and our other field elements. We have located Arman. The disaster he's planning is a massive explosion in the city center... Neutralize the traitors before they reach their target. But for this operation, you will split in two. Polat and Gökçe, you will serve with Lieutenant Asena in the city center; the rest will go to the terrain under Captain Alp's command. Understood, Fire?"

Fire Team: "Understood, sir!"

Colonel: "Go, my children, may your path be clear! Whoever dares to harm this country and its beloved nation, go and burn them all down!"

The Fire Team ran toward the armory to gear up. The entire team was ready in full equipment for this massive task. As they boarded the helicopter and moved away from their glorious home, they had only one goal in mind. Their destination was just outside the city center. Just before the helicopter landed, Alp turned to his team:

Alp: "I won't question the seriousness of this mission; I know the Fire Team always does what is necessary. But remember this: stay away from impulsive acts like sacrificing yourselves or taking foolish risks. You will return exactly as you came. Understood, Fire?"

Fire Team: "Understood, sir!"

When the helicopter touched down, their boots hit the slightly muddy ground hard. The snow was melting; winter was slowly giving way to spring. Meanwhile, Gökçe and Polat had reached the city center. When they met Lieutenant Asena, they too were ready for duty. Polat approached Lieutenant Asena to shake hands.

Polat: "You were missed, Commander."

Asena: "I missed you too... How is Alp?"

Polat: "He's well, thank God, but he suffers greatly from your absence."

Asena: "Not much longer; if we can just catch this bastard, this longing will end."

Polat: "Inshallah, Commander."

The operation for the two separate parts of the split team had begun. In the city center, everything was normal; no suspicious individuals were seen. Meanwhile, conditions were harder for the team in the terrain; they were in the most treacherous region connecting to the city center. A clash was inevitable. Fire began when the expected bomb-laden truck entered the bridge.

Alp: "Don't get close to the pickup! Engage from a distance!"

Tugay: "Commander, if they detonate it, the bridge collapses; we all go up!"

Alp: "Then we all become martyrs. But there is no martyrdom for you just yet; we are all getting out of here together!"

Savaş: "Commander! Brother Polat is on the radio. Arman is in the next car, heading to the city center! They're on the main road!"

Alp: "I know, no problem. Our job is to stop them here. Continue!"

As the clash raged at full intensity, the terrorists, wanting to change the course of the operation, pulled the pin on the bomb. A massive, deafening explosion occurred with the blast. While the stones of the already damaged bridge were leveled, the team members who failed to move far enough away were thrown to the ground.

As the bridge collapsed, Alp and several soldiers with him were buried under the rubble. Tugay and Savaş, who were slightly further away, were thrown by the blast pressure and remained motionless on the ground. Black smoke rising into the air and scattered fires burning the greenery made the scene look like the apocalypse. Savaş struggled to stand, adjusted his helmet, and looked around. Seeing his twin lying on the ground, he stumbled toward him; the impact of the explosion had made his body stiff. Savaş was unaware of the danger approaching from behind as he tried to wake Barış. Barış opened his eyes in a daze.

Barış: "You're alive... my brother."

Savaş: "Of course... this isn't the first bomb to pass over us."

Barış: "Don't ever leave me alone... what's a twin without his twin, brother?"

Savaş: "Don't get emotional on me now."

As Barış stood up to hug Savaş, he noticed the terrorist behind his twin preparing to fire. Without hesitation, he wrapped his arms around Savaş and threw himself in front of the bullets. The treacherous bullet hit Barış in the heart. Struggling to grasp the event, Savaş instinctively held Barış; meanwhile, Tugay, regaining

consciousness, fired three shots at the terrorist from his position on the ground. As the man fell, Barış collapsed to his knees. Savaş held his twin by the arms, not letting him fall.

Savaş: "No! Barış, don't let go, brother!"

Barış: "I'm sorry... my twin."

Savaş: "Please don't go! I beg you!"

Barış: "When I'm gone... don't get into fights, my twin."

Savaş: "You can't sacrifice yourself for me!"

Barış: "I can, brother... where there is no Savaş (War), there would be no Barış (Peace)."

Perhaps where there was no Savaş, there would be no Barış, or perhaps if Barış existed, Savaş would too... But Barış had sacrificed himself for Savaş. This noble nation had given another hero to the soil of the homeland. Barış's breath stopped; his heart ceased to beat. Savaş slowly laid his brother by the tree and placed his own beret under his head. When he leaned down and kissed his brother's forehead one last time, Tugay struggled to his feet and hugged Savaş.

Tugay: "Long live the homeland, brother..."

Savaş hugged Tugay tighter in his deep pain. Tugay also leaned down and kissed Barış's forehead, as if saying goodbye.

Tugay: "Savaş, my brother... hang in there. We have to get out of here, we have to get the Captain out from under those stones."

Savaş: "You report it, Commander, I'll start the rescue."

Tugay pressed the radio trigger to contact the Colonel:

Tugay: "Master Sergeant Tugay speaking, sir! The bomb detonated; Captain Alp and the personnel with him are under the rubble. We've started rescue efforts, need urgent support. And... we have a martyr. Master

Sergeant Barış Aksoy has fallen in the line of duty. Long live the homeland!”

Colonel: “Don’t leave our martyr alone! Rescue teams are on the way, may God help you, my sons.”

Savaş rushed to the rubble without losing time. Trying to stay balanced, he climbed down over the piled stones. When he saw a hand sticking out from the rocks, he immediately reached out and grabbed it. Recognizing the shining silver ring on the ring finger, he realized it was Captain Alp; it was the ring from his engagement to Lieutenant Asena. Savaş began struggling with all his might to lift the heavy rubble off Commander Alp.

When he forced a large stone aside, Alp’s face appeared; his head was covered in blood, and his arm was completely pinned. Tugay immediately came to help; both pushed at the same time and moved the massive stone. Tugay checked the commander’s pulse without losing time. There was a pulse; the commander was heavily wounded but still alive.

Tugay: “Commander, can you hear us?”

As Savaş intervened, his hand touched Alp’s wound. Alp let out a deep breath at the sharp pain.

Alp: “Slow... slow, son.”

Savaş: “Hang in there, Commander, we’re getting you out of here!”

Alp: “I’m fine... get the others out. Where is Barış?”

Tugay swallowed the knot in his throat and spoke the painful truth:

Tugay: “Commander... Barış has fallen.”

Alp released the breath he was holding upon hearing the news. There was perhaps much to be said, but now only a deep silence reigned over the terrain.

Meanwhile, things were becoming difficult for the other half of the team in the city center. All soldiers were scattered across the square in civilian clothes; however, suspicious movements were multiplying rapidly. Soon, things spiraled out of control, and Arman stepped out of the suspected vehicle. As Polat approached to

neutralize or interrogate the suspect, Arman's sudden order to fire was heard.

Machine guns suddenly appeared in the hands of the men who looked like civilians in the square. But Arman's plan wouldn't go as he hoped; because a large portion of those thought to be civilians were actually experienced soldiers. Luck was on the side of the Turkish soldiers this time; the bomb-laden vehicle hadn't reached its location, and they only faced a large group of terrorists with machine guns. Still, the danger was great; the possibility of real civilians being caught in the crossfire could turn the advantage instantly.

Polat: "Commander, we have a problem! The evacuation isn't complete; there are still students in the school behind the square."

Aseña: "Surround it immediately! Don't let anyone out of the school!"

As Polat moved toward the school to execute the order, the clash in the square had already broken out. The never-ending sound of machine guns created great fear among the public. Fortunately, power was on the soldiers' side; suppressing the terrorists was easier than thought. However, the same couldn't be said for the terrain. The expected help hadn't arrived yet, and Captain Alp and the soldiers with him were still under the rubble. Savaş and Tugay had only been able to pull two soldiers from the debris so far. Alp's condition was worsening by the minute.

Savaş: "Almost there, Commander, help is coming!"

Alp: "My arm... I can't feel my arm."

Tugay: "What do you mean, Commander? What do you mean you can't feel it?"

Alp: "My arm is pinned badly, Tugay... I don't feel anything."

Alp's words increased the anxiety in Tugay's eyes. If he wasn't removed soon, the Captain could lose his arm. Finally, the Gendarmerie and rescue teams reached the area and began working rapidly. After long efforts, Alp and the other soldiers were pulled from the rubble. Although the Captain carried the fear of losing his arm inside, he never let his team feel it. Savaş went to his brother for one last duty; he took the martyr Barış in his arms and gently placed him in the helicopter. Polat looked with pride at the group of students in front of him, responding more warmly to the student who hugged him.

Polat: "This nation will rise with you! If you ever find yourself in a difficult situation, never give up. Remember, as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk said: All our hope is in the youth!"

Exhilarated by Polat's words, the students began to applaud in unison. Polat responded with a smile; then, taking Asena and Gökçe by his side and embracing them, he departed. The police had placed both attack zones under extensive perimeter security. The second mission had also been successfully completed; the major operation was thwarted. However, Arman had managed to escape. The Fire Team now had only one oath and one final mission: to trample his head under their feet!

Asena: "The time for farewell has come... I missed being together with you so much."

Gökçe: "Commander, aren't you returning to the team?"

Asena: "Not yet, Gökçe; my term of duty continues."

Polat: "By God's leave, we will be one again, Commander."

Asena: "Polat... Give this to Alp."

Polat took the letter Lieutenant Asena handed him and placed it carefully in his pocket. They said their final goodbyes and parted ways. However, upon returning to the battalion, they learned the grim news awaiting them.

Tugay: "Barış has been martyred... and Captain Alp is in the hospital; his condition is critical. He is currently being treated in intensive care."

As soon as Polat received the news, he went to Savaş and hugged him tightly. At that moment, the Colonel entered; seeing Savaş's devastated state, he approached and placed a hand on his shoulder.

Colonel: "Do not grieve, my Savaş... Neither Barış's nor Master Sergeant Halil's blood will remain on the ground. Those who did this will pay the heaviest price!"

Savaş: "What do I tell my mother, my father, Commander? How will I answer to them? Everyone who hears will come and say 'He was a hero,' they will say 'Long live the homeland'... It's easy to say if the fire hasn't fallen on your own home, Commander! They will mention my brother, Master Sergeant Halil, and our many

martyrs just as a side note between commas. Tell me, Commander; for what are we sacrificing our lives?"

The Colonel and the Fire Team remained silent in the face of this striking yet true reproach. The team members embraced their heartbroken comrade.

Colonel: "This homeland was not founded easily, and it will not be surrendered easily. Now stand up and get ready for the fire of revenge."

When the Colonel left the room, the Fire Team went to the hospital to check on their commander's status. Captain Alp was to be treated for a while; he hadn't even opened his eyes yet. Thankfully, his arm had been saved. Hoping that he too would recover soon, the team returned for Barış's ceremony the next day to fulfill their unfinished duties. Hours later, the sun rose; the final preparations for Barış's ceremony were made. The martyr was carried on the shoulders of his teammates and entrusted to the heart of the black soil. Tugay and Polat stood on either side of Savaş to support him. As Barış remained beneath the earth, tears silently streamed from Savaş's eyes. Life was this cruel; even though he hadn't come into the world alone, it forced a person to leave it alone. Alp could not be there for his comrade-in-arms' final journey to eternity; yet it was a reality that he would feel Barış's presence in his soul at every moment. Days passed, and nearly two months had gone by since Barış's martyrdom. Alp's general treatment was nearing its end and his condition was improving, but the physical therapy process for his arm was still ongoing. During this time, because Polat was on an operation, he couldn't personally give Asena's trust to the Captain; however, he managed to deliver the letter through Tugay. Tugay was now sitting beside the Captain in the hospital room.

Tugay: "Commander, may I ask you something with your permission?"

Alp: "Ask, Tugay."

Tugay: "Commander, how did you charm Lieutenant Asena? Mashallah, there's no doubt about your looks, but couldn't you give me a few tactics?"

Alp: "Are you asking because of Gökçe, Tugay?"

Tugay: "How did you know, Commander?"

Alp: "I know your hearts..."

Tugay: "Yes, Commander... I've lost my heart to Lieutenant Gökçe."

Alp: "Tugay, when I first saw Asena during training, I felt emotions I'll never feel again. I've been in love with her since that day. I must be a servant beloved by my Lord, for He brought us together. Beneath this 'stone soldier' soul of mine lies her beauty and softness. A cowardly soldier cannot be a brave lover. We race with death every day; we are here today, gone tomorrow. If you don't speak up now, when will you claim your love?"

Tugay: "May the Lord never part you, Commander. May He grant everyone a love like yours... but I don't know if Gökçe loves me."

Alp: "Eyvallah, my Tugay... Go now, tell Gökçe. Then let me know."

Tugay: "Understood, Commander!"

Emboldened by Alp's encouragement, Tugay set off to find Gökçe. Meanwhile, Alp opened the letter Tugay had brought; a warm smile appeared on his face when he saw his beloved's beautiful handwriting. The letter read:

"We have been apart for a long time, and I miss you so much, my love. My only consolation is the ring on my finger and your place in my heart. Thank God, my mission is almost over. The day it ends, I will come running to you. They don't tell me how you are, and I'm sure they don't tell you about me, but it doesn't matter; the joy of finally reuniting with you excites me already. I want to find you healthy and breathing when I return. I love you very much, my darling."

Alp grew emotional as he read Asena's letter; he pulled out the photograph inside and held it. He slowly traced his fingers over her face in the picture. It was the very first photo they had taken together; the purest traces of happiness were written on both their faces.

Alp: "Oh, my Asena... When will you return? My heart has burned with longing for you."

Later that day, the entire team and the Colonel entered Alp's hospital room. Alp felt uneasy seeing them all together; every face was grave, every gaze filled with sorrow.

Alp: "Commander, is there a problem?"

Colonel: "Captain, first, stay calm."

Alp: "Commander, did something happen to Asena?"

Colonel: "Captain... Lieutenant Asena was martyred along with her team after falling into an ambush during her operation."

With the Colonel's words, Alp's vision darkened; it felt as if the blood flow to his brain had stopped. The coldness of the reality he was living froze his blood. In one swift motion, Alp ripped the IV needle from his arm and threw it to the floor. Polat and the Colonel tried to restrain him, but it was in vain; no one could stop him.

Alp: "Where is my Asena's body?"

Colonel: "She must have reached headquarters."

Alp left the hospital as if escaping and rushed to the headquarters. When he saw his fiancée's coffin draped in the crimson flag, he collapsed over it. As he reached out to open the shroud to see her face one last time, the Colonel stopped him.

Colonel: "Don't, Alp..."

Alp: "Don't do what, Commander? Am I supposed to entrust her to the black earth without even seeing her face one last time?"

Colonel: "I'm saying this for your own good, son. Don't."

Even though Alp resisted, the Colonel held him back, grabbing his shoulder and turning him away. As the soldiers carried Asena's body away for the ceremony, Alp fell to his knees in despair for the first time. Savaş approached the Captain and hugged him tightly. Both had lost pieces of their souls and their very lives just two months apart.

Savaş: "Commander, let's go and deliver Arman's punishment now. Let's not return until we finish him. Yesterday it was Barış, today Lieutenant Asena... Let no one else's heart burn tomorrow!"

Alp stood up, blending the deep pain in his eyes with the fire of revenge.

Alp: "Get ready! We will see Asena off and then go to finish this mission. Do not cry; stand tall! My Asena did not die; she was martyred. Revenge will be taken in a way worthy of her, Barış, and Master Sergeant Halil. Come on, Fire Team; let's light this fire one last time!"

The next day, Alp wore the ceremonial uniform that Asena loved seeing him in the most—to her own funeral. When Alp stepped out of the barracks, he expected to find a grand ceremonial procession; however, he saw only the Fire Team, the Colonel, and a few soldiers.

Alp: "Commander, why was no ceremony prepared?"

Colonel: "Alp... As you know, when intelligence officers are martyred, no official ceremony is held for the sake of mission confidentiality and security."

The Colonel's words stung Alp once more. Alp approached the casket, kissed the Turkish flag, and with the help of the Fire Team, they hoisted it onto their shoulders. When they reached the cemetery, Alp embraced Asena for the last time and laid her beneath the black soil.

Alp: "Colonel, I have eternal respect for you, but you know me. You raised me... I'm asking, do you give us permission?"

Colonel: "Permission is yours... But the intelligence mission is very close to ending. Arman is almost caught in the trap. Once we get the information we need, taking his head is your right more than anyone else's, Captain."

Alp: "I await your order, Commander. I only want to say one thing: Don't let it take long."

Colonel: "Hang in there, Captain..."

The Colonel patted Alp's shoulder supportively. After about a month, the expected news finally arrived.

Colonel: "Captain! Gather your team, the news is here. You're heading out. Go now, and burn them all down!"

Alp: "Yes, sir! Fire! Full gear at the assembly area in fifteen minutes! Now!"

The Fire Team prepared with a surge of adrenaline upon receiving the order. Each of them was burning for this revenge—not just for their martyrs, but for the war they would wage for this homeland. Fifteen minutes later, they were all ready. They hopped into the helicopter and set off toward the target.

The helicopter landed near the border village; Arman was in his house. Information had already arrived that the entire village belonged to terrorists, but the Fire Team had no intention of waiting. The team entered the village with the fire of vengeance.

Alp: “Take down anyone who crosses your path, except for Arman! You have permission to fire!”

The Fire Team began neutralizing every terrorist they encountered; it was as if each of them had taken a sacred oath. Savaş threw one of the bombs left over from Barış’s ammunition at the terrorists. Alp caught one of the men in his way, beat him severely, and left him on the ground with a broken neck. Looking ahead, Alp saw Arman trying to escape the house and gave chase. After a short pursuit, Alp caught Arman; he pinned him to the ground and wrapped his hands around his throat.

Arman: “So, we finally meet, the famous Captain... Were you very sad when your fiancée died?”

Alp: “Do not dare to speak of my fiancée!”

Arman: “I killed her! I killed Halil too! All their blood is on my hands!”

Alp: “Then if I cut off that hand, it will all be over.”

Arman: “You can’t. If you were truly smart, you wouldn’t kill me, Captain.”

Alp: “I’ve already found all the necessary information about you. Do you know who found it? Lieutenant Asena!”

Without letting Arman respond, Alp punched him in the face repeatedly. Meanwhile, the Fire Team had leveled the terrorists in the village. Alp dragged Arman across the ground to the village square. Savaş approached with great rage and began to beat Arman.

Alp: “Savaş! This cur says the blood of our martyrs is on his hands!”

Savaş: "Then we shall cut off that hand, Commander!"

Alp: "The permission is yours, then!"

The expected end had come. Savaş carried out Alp's order. While Arman writhed on the ground in pain, Alp made the final move, grabbing Arman by the hair and lifting him up. He pressed his commando knife to his throat and carried out the execution. He tossed the head to the ground and immediately contacted the Colonel.

Alp: "Fire Team has successfully completed the mission. We are heading back."

Colonel: "Well done, my sons! I am sending a helicopter for your return. Come back safe and sound."

Alp turned off the radio and looked at the Fire Team.

Alp: "Fire, well done! We finally have our revenge. Any hand raised against this nation, any head, is destined to be cut off. Never forget that even if only one Turk remains in this country, this homeland will continue to exist. Long live the Republic of Türkiye!"

Fire Team: "Long live the Republic of Türkiye!"

When the helicopter's wheels touched the runway, the Fire Team had returned to their glorious home. The moment they stepped off the helicopter, all the commanders and fellow soldiers were there to meet them; the headquarters rang with the sound of applause. Although Alp and Savaş had not forgotten the weight of their losses for even a moment, revenge had been taken, and justice had been served. The Colonel began to speak with a voice full of pride:

Colonel: "Fire Team put their lives on the line without a second thought for the Republic of Türkiye by neutralizing the terrorist codenamed Arman! I congratulate each and every one of you. There have always been, and will always be, soldiers like the Mehmetçik who will never let our nation bow its head! Long live the homeland!"

Fire Team: "Long live the homeland!"

When the Colonel finished his speech, Alp approached and saluted him.

Alp: "Commander, with your permission... We need to deliver this blessed news to those who deserve to hear it."

Colonel: "Permission is yours, Captain."

As Alp turned to leave, the Colonel stopped him. There was a fatherly tone in his voice:

Colonel: "Alp, you might be very angry, or perhaps very surprised... But whatever happened was for your own good, know this. Don't be mad at me, son."

Alp looked at him, not understanding what his commander meant. The Colonel hugged Alp tightly and stepped out of his way to let him go before he could ask any questions. Alp and the team hurried to the cemetery. Alp knelt at the head of Asena's grave; Savaş sat by the edge of his twin's grave, touching the soil.

Savaş: "We took your revenge, brother. I cut off and threw away that hand that caused bullets to be fired at you!"

Savaş continued speaking, stroking Barış's headstone:

Savaş: "We were supposed to never leave each other... But you sacrificed yourself for me, my twin. God be my witness, reaching martyrdom was my greatest desire, but after you left, this fire only grew. No one can restrain me when you're not here, brother. May the earth not hurt you..."

As Savaş watched the soil of his twin between his hands, Captain Alp rested his head against his fiancée's headstone, speaking as if Asena were right in front of him.

Alp: "I took your revenge, my Asena... The struggle we've waged for months is over, my love. I miss you so much. May the Lord bring us together in His heaven."

He leaned down, resting his head on Asena's soil, and released the painful tears he had held inside for months. Just then, a hand touched his shoulder. Alp didn't feel it at first, but when he turned his head to look at the hand, he saw that familiar band on the ring finger. That ring was the same as Asena's. Alp lifted his head; because his eyes were misty with tears, he struggled to make out the person in front of him under the

sun. Wiping his tears with the back of his hands and looking again, he couldn't grasp the reality that the person before him was Asena. He thought he was dreaming.

Alp: "No... My Asena was martyred."

Asena: "No, Alp, I didn't die. This was just a part of the mission."

Alp suddenly pulled Asena into his arms and pressed her to his chest; he hugged her tightly as if he could never get enough.

Alp: "The Lord has granted you back to me... Your absence destroyed me."

Asena: "Don't think about the past anymore... No more separation."

The Fire Team watching them was both shocked and overjoyed by Lieutenant Asena's return. The same joy was written on Savaş's face, but the deep ache in his eyes could not be hidden. While he wished for his twin to return as well, he knew it was impossible. The Fire Team gathered once more, forming a circle and embracing each other. Through bitter and sweet, they had reached the end of an era; they had completed their final mission at the cost of their lives. They lined up side by side and began to walk out of the cemetery. They didn't know where they were going or where their path would lead; they just walked in silence. This was the end the Fire Team had reached: every step was arduous, every breath was heavy, but equally glorious.

"Sometimes life decides to give you startling surprises; but we may not always be so lucky. Tugay and Gökçe were reunited, and Asena had returned to Alp. If only all our martyrs could return just like that, through a miracle...

But never forget; every martyr who falls to the earth gives their own blood, their own color, to the crimson flag. In the name of the Fire Team and all the heroes who fell for this homeland; long live this country, let this flag wave, and let independence live forever!"