

CAST YOUR VOTE

The following fusion of Classic BattleTech sourcebook format and a short-short fiction format is a textual and visual experiment. Demonstrating a strength of BattleCorps, this piece provides a glimpse of the possibilities we can explore, combining the different styles of various Classic BattleTech products through a dynamic visual rarely achieved in previous publications. This is just the tip of the iceberg of more fleshed out, much larger pieces that can be presented, but we need your help to determine if this is a direction you, the subscribers, would like to go.

Once you've read the fiction, follow the link [here](#) to the forums and let us know what you think.

Pearl's Ghost

By Randall N. Bills



LIC CLASSIFIED REPORT T3FD0: ALPHA CLEARANCE

From: Hauptman-General Heinrich Kinchmeyer, Loki

To: General Sasha Gorge, LIC Chancellor

Date: 17 September, 3067

The following leaflet has begun circulating in subversive circles, most notably among Free Skye activists. Though the scrap of original hard copy my agents claimed on Denebola (the failed operation to capture the dissident 'Pearl's Ghost' is detailed in report T3FB3) has been carbon-dated and our database does place the pulp fragment from the Kannon Shire of that era—most likely manufactured and shipped from Kannon (province capital in that era)—and the hand writing is also a perfect replicate of several documents on display, its authenticity is still not verified to my satisfaction. For example: the ink displays small anomalies in its spectrum analysis, which we are pursuing. In the end, regardless of whether this can be proven (or made to be proven) a forgery, it will fire the seeds of discontent for those who will use it so. With my current agency's ongoing restructuring, I lack the full abilities to pursue this threat as appropriate.

DOWN WITH THE GAUNTLET!

Once more, the machinations of a corrupt throne on distant Tharkad are revealed!

For long years the Archon's treachery has subjugated trillions to the whims of tyranny. House Steiner. Taxing us disproportionately to build their golden halls. Sending our sons and daughters to spill their blood and last breaths on foreign soil. All the while sucking at the silver spoon and spilling their seed with our enemies. Then the best and brightest of us, palms and puppets, moved and yanked to the sounds of maddened hilarity, lasciviousness and perversions.

Now the truth is brought forth! One of the greatest heroes of the Lyran people, the Black Pearl, Angela Franks herself, in her own words, reveals the corruptions within the halls of government. A corruption centuries old, but alive today as never before. A palm, used, and her broken body cast aside when she defied her oppressors. Yet even her act of courage has been twisted and despoiled. A distorted and tainted version of the beautiful truth of standing up for our rights!

Of standing against despotism and demanding our voice is heard.

Now read the Black Pearl's own words and feel the foulness of the Archonship fill you. Raise your fist against the injustice and prepare to aid in the reaping of our revenge. Let the Royal Court feel our united disgust and let the Archon prepare for the tearing down of their unholy Triad!

The Diary of Angela Franks

Tuesday, 2865

I'm going to die today.

It doesn't hurt so much as I thought it would to write. Strange. But then, I've lived a good life. Right? A life of which my parents would be proud, no matter my choices. But I just can't take it any more.

I've been gone so long from Dunellan and the shores of Locknor. What I wouldn't give to feel the brine coating my flesh. To see the sun bursting above the liquid horizon and burning away the heavy fogs shrouding everything in loving arms. It's so funny. I used to hate that place. Not because of its provincial "charm." Or the fact that despite daddy's wealth and the numerous suites we owned in Marsdenville, he always loved to have the family on the coast, in that little chalet. No, it was the cold. The steel gray, oppressiveness of a stormy morning on the ocean that seemed to threaten me as a child. A scary monster of endless liquid that would ooze in under the window seal and steal me away.

And yet I'd give all my fame and money for just one more day on Locknor. One more day of bad weather and cold rain and endless clouds and almost perpetual darkness. A day of standing at daddy's

knee and watching the incoming fishing fleet. Hear the cries of their wives berating them for being so late, as they wept with gratitude for a good haul and a safe return.

Just one more day..... I won't get.

Why did I join? I've been over it a hundred times. I joined the army to make a difference. And when I discovered I liked piloting a Mech, and I mean really liked it, what more was there to think about. I was young and beautiful. Everybody loved me. Just one more show. Just one more holovid. Another stage to sweep my fans off their feet.

Then the pains began. And the deaths. And I couldn't hide any longer from what was going on. What was happening. Elizabeth Steiner can talk all she wants about defending the Commonwealth. About a righteous war against the evil dragon. I believed for so many years. Fought and hurt and watched those under me and around me die.

And that's all it was in the end. War. And brutal, agonizing death.

But I signed up for that, right? Sure I did. But what I didn't sign up for was the high command and

the Archon to use me to recruit a million new disposable heroes. I can't stomach it any longer. Literally. For too long I've gone along with the whole charade, until I'm coughing up blood every other morning from half dozen ulcers.

No. Got to stop. Has to. And I'm going to finish this in the best way of which I can think. The best way to end the travesty. Hopefully my sacrifice will halt the ease with which the Archon generates her endless lines of toy soldiers to send to their deaths.

We'll catch the snakes today. I know we will. And when we do, I'll die. With my death captured on the infernal cameras that follow me everywhere, I'll chop a leg out from under Elisabeth.

I hope she hits her ass hard.

It's all I've left to give. Giving back to the Lyran people for all that my image has been used to take away from them.

I hope history remembers me kindly. I only tried to do what was right.

Angela Franks