

Daughter of Falcons : Part 4

By Morpheous

The heat of the day bore down on the city of Kodo like a cremation furnace. Three days of cleaning up the injured and the dead made the weather appropriate. Three days of putting buildings back together, knocking the terribly damaged ones down, and cleaning up the bodies. 78 deaths had resulted from the attack, with four more people likely to die within the next forty-eight hours.

The attack hadn't been a complete success, though. A citizen that happened to own a hidden weapons permit had managed to shoot the driver of an attacking hovercraft. The vehicle had plunged out of control into the side of a parked bus. Two surviving attackers had been recovered from the wreck and locked away in a makeshift jail while awaiting questioning.

Egda Slavika held her body ramrod straight. Eighty-six years had done little to diminish the beauty of this infamous woman. She stared sightlessly into a full body mirror. A stranger stared back - A person not seen anywhere in thirty-five years. She let her eyes drop to the colonel's uniform that still fit her athletic body after all these years. An old jewelry box that she refused to open lay abandoned in the back of her walk-in closet. Inside were a lifetime of campaign medals, awards, military ribbons, and such — more than enough to cover her entire left breast.

She locked the front door of her home and strode over to a hastily erected tent in her front yard. As the last living member of the City Council, the responsibilities of running the town had fallen on her. Although being in command was nothing new, it was far from what she desired. Having lives depend on her every action and decision is what had finally driven her from the military in the first place. Yet...there was no one to do the things that now needed to be done.

Silence fell as twenty heads turned to follow her as she practically marched to the podium at the other end of the tent. These people were all that remained of Kodo's Police, Fire, and Town Guard. Several faces expressed outrage at the old uniform that she now wore. She filed those names away in the back of her head as potential problems for later.

As she placed herself behind the podium, a city detective stood, "Egda...What's with the..."

Eyes as cool as steel silenced him. They continued to bore into his eyes until he dropped back into his folding chair. She looked back into the crowd.

"I see no other choice than to place this city on an emergency footing. We can barely provide basic social services and the populace is near hysteria. Before open chaos ensues, I am hereby declaring Martial law."

"*Outrageous!*" A man dressed as the chief of police shot to his feet, "You were supposed to contact Governor Crow about getting help in here!" The man stood, trembling in rage, you can't use this as an excuse to seize power for yourse.."

Egda glanced to the Captain of the city guard who nodded and stood.

"Sit down, Murphy. We are going to hear this out."

Murphy turned toward the captain and opened his mouth to say more. The Captain merely placed his hand on his sidearm to show the seriousness of the request. Murphy's eyes fell to the weapon and widened but he sat quietly.

"Thank you, Captain." Egda let her eyes travel her audience. "I want all City employees busied immediately with making this town defendable. That means blocking all avenues into the city. Get as many boxcars from the train yard as are available and placing them across roads, open area, or any other ways into the city. Go ahead and commandeer any 'Mechs or other construction vehicles necessary to pile cars, rubble, whatever, as barriers where they may be needed. I want every citizen carrying a weapon. Have the more experienced teach the less experienced how to use them. Set up heavier weaponry around the defensive perimeter that we make, and have it manned at all times."

Egda moved to the front of the podium and dropped the other boot, "Regular progress reports will be brought to Captain Mendez of the City Guard. For now act as if he speaks with my voice. Are there any important questions?"

The Detective that spoke earlier rose slowly, his eyes going to the rank insignia on her collar, "Aaah, Colonel...Weren't you able to reach Governor Crow? I mean, when will we have assistance?"

Cool eyes moved to the speaker, "There will be **NO** help."

Twenty voices spoke at once. The Colonel let it go on a moment before bringing her hand down on the podium with a loud CRACK.

"SILENCE!"

The voices stopped as one. "The Governor did not even give me the time of day. He told me that military forces were away at the moment, involved in war games. I was told that they are under radio silence and would be incommunicado for another two weeks. He told me that we should hold on until then. Then he basically patted me on the head and hung up on me." With eyebrows pinched together in open fury, she became even more rigid if such a thing were possible. "Is there anything further?" The emotional intensity on her face let it be known that there had better not be.

"Dismissed."

The tent emptied quickly except for three individuals that moved against the crowd toward her. Egda waved Captain Mendez and Detective Malakai to the side for a moment. She turned to face Chief Murphy.

The Chief nearly gushed uncertainty. It was obvious that the man didn't know how to behave now that Martial Law had been declared. With much looking about and hand wringing, he finally found his voice.

"We have a problem. We have yet to find any of our Justices since the attack came. The two prisoners are a bit more than we are prepared to handle. Both are very clever and extreme violence seems to come easily to them. I would like to throw them on a bus to Palma, and place them in their court system. There they can have a fair trial with suitable repres..."

"No. You will not. Take them to the town square, announce their crimes and hang them in full view of everyone. Have the bodies placed on hold in the city morgue until further notice."

A look of disbelief encompassed the man's face, "We can't resort to that kind of frontier Jus..."

"Yes we can. I think that if you check Kodo's city charter, you will find that under section one of the emergency actions act that I can do exactly as I have said." Her voice rose, "Captain! Escort the chief out of this tent and make sure my orders are followed."

"Yes, Colonel."

When she turned to face Malakai, it was as if the other two had ceased to exist.

"Detective, I remember voting on funding to allow you to modify some police *Riotmechs*. I want to see what you have so far before I decide what to do with them."

Malikai knew he had to be careful about how he handled the situation. It would be an awful twist of fate to do all this work and have the 'Mechs reassigned elsewhere. He had doubts that the Colonel would find better pilots anywhere in town, but bureaucracy had never been known for doing the right thing. Anna and Ash by were going to have to impress the Colonel if they wanted to keep their 'Mechs.

Egda spent several moments remembering better times after Malakai had quit the tent. Governor Crow had left her with a bad feeling. This whole situation stunk to high heaven. It was time to pull some strings.

She pressed a button on her comlink, "Information...I need a listing for Colonel Fedor Bona...Last known whereabouts Kikuru Peninsula."

"Accessing..."

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