

“He has done what?” Augustus shouted when he heard a massive Rhegid armada had invaded his space; planets, galaxies and dimensions.

Shouting he almost frog marched himself to his war cabinet where generals had quickly assembled; none wanted the emperor’s wrath, he was remember the

CRUCIFIER.

“Where is Willmina?” He shouted staring at a huge table that was actually a screen for pressing a button layers of space below the planets he saw now appeared.

The screen was alive, ships were moving and comets calculated years in advance blazed ahead of naval engagements.

It was the ultimate in war gaming and Augustus could see a large concentration of ships in the far right.

“Where is Willmina?” He asked again.

Where indeed, she was about to fight an invasion herself and could not be in two places at once, except her invasion was The Man’s doing.

Now Augustus had fought his traditional enemy The Man for a hundred years and more and in his mind would continue to do so for another hundred years but these aliens, now that was an unknown factor.

“Order Willmina to defend the empire against this Rhegid tick,” but did Augustus really now what he was doing?

And when Willmina got the order she could not believe, in front The Man, to the north Rhegids, so did what The Man would do, she fought him hoping even in defeat to slow him down and get time to go north and stop the alien invasion.

Augustus did not deserve such a loyal general.

“She has done what? No one disobeys me, not even Willmina,” and he thought of crucifying when the war was over, maybe before the end, there was always generals on the make, she was replaceable, a great pity he had enjoyed her farm yard style.

But things did not go as planned for Aelfric Europe had other ideas for he represented more than anyone the darkness astronomers see that moves across galaxies swallowing whole universes, civilisations, milky ways, empires for darkness destroys.

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“Posidonus you look marvellous in body armour, who would know it was you?” Aelfric cheekily.

“I am against this,” Posidonus moaned.

“I have arranged a meeting with her but it will be you she meets and you will tell her I am waiting for her secretly so none suspects I am in her employ, she should come, tell her I have important news about The Rhegids, for her alone,” the robot aspirer told Posidonus who was not a happy man.

“What if I refuse, Willmina has been good to me, without her I could not work as a doctor again,” he moaned and Aelfric lost his humour.

“Stupid man, you are not a doctor, a maniac yes and if you don’t do what I order I will give you a bath, understand?” And so saying stuck his bionic fingers up Posidonus’s nose and lifted the later off his feet so they wiggled like trotters for indeed Posidonus was making grunting sounds.

Then he withdrew so Posidonus collapsed in FEAR.

“Understand?” And Posidonus understood as his nose bled and Aelfric wiped his stained fingers on Posidonus’s hair.

Now feeling better Aelfric sat again dreaming and scheming for he was an absolute dreamer was he not?

And time passed so Aelfric watched Posidonus do what he was told.

#### Wilmina’s diary.

“But none had for seen the ferocity of The Man’s attacks so his troops over ran the imperial front lines, and I Willmina a true general went to the front line to stop the chaos.

I saw him, knew at once who he was for he was silhouetted against the moon like a demon with silver wings come to wreck havoc on the empire, and then heard his screeching war cry.

I needed time for my troops to regroup and rally, there was only one way to save my men and had a solder accompany me waving a white flag advanced towards him.

Either I knew him from his writings or all his writings were lies.”

The war went silent, a bird, a scarlet crow made its dry sounds but there was no more killing.

I saw him too advancing towards me, I saw her also, knew she was Nesta and that must be Tintagel the Clone.

I saw the 5 also and a little FEAR crept into me. I had brought no escort, relying on the book The Man for protection, this was not my emperor Augustus who did not know what honour meant.

Then he stuck his white flag into the churned up mud and I did likewise.

“Brave woman,” was all he said but I felt Nesta’s eyes on me.

I also felt the 5 look me up and down and search the immediate area for a trap but found none so searched me and The Man did not stop them.

I understood, I might be a suicidal wired to go off.

“You are too good for the empire, come and fight with us?” Tintagel suggested and I was tempted a little after my ill treatment at the hands of Augustus but I had sworn an oath.

“Now I know who I fight, a face to a name, a real man or are you all bionic?” I asked.

He laughed and I saw Nesta was furious, jealousy had risen in her heart, I did play upon it, make my adversaries’ life hell.

“I am all me, no replacements,” and looked Nesta up and down and Tintagel put his hand on her shoulder, he was onto me.

“I like what I see, again I say come and fight with me not against me?”

“I unlike you am loyal to my emperor,” and I opened my legs so stood displaying myself as a breeze blew my cotton kilt between my thighs. I knew he was looking, so was Nesta, The Man would pay later for looking!

“You are not married?” I turned the screw deeper into Nesta, “Have you never found a woman equal too you?”

It was too much for Nesta who moved forward a foot, but her intention to slap me was obvious so why Tintagel held her back.

Now I had ordered a table to follow me from behind and servants carrying food, all planned, I needed time for my men to rally.

“Nesta we must be frie3nds, sit next to me and eat?” I asked but she did not sit until The Man sat for he was curious as to what was going on, and the soldiers on either side seeing came out of their fox holes and walked towards us; then one kicked a football and a game started.

“Sending Aelfric to work against us was smart, but their actions debase your morals,” Tintagel advised her.

“All is fair in war and love,” I replied and felt the heat glowing from Nesta; she was indeed beautiful and could see why The Man kept her close.

Now because I was engrossed in trapping The Man I did not realise one who had come close was Posidonus.

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“I had to wait till the little friendly lunch was over and both sides went back to their lines were they were supposed to be, who ever heard of the enemy stopping a

war to sit down and eat together and play football? It was crazy, against all the rules of war, they should be at work killing.

But on the way back Willmina I knew would get in a hover scout car and I made sure I was in the back as a guard, my face disguised; never mind what Aelfric told me to say, Willmina I hoped would continue to be good to me.

It was an easy thing to do, I had lots of practice so waited till behind the lines I shot the driver and held the pistol at my general's head.

"I know you from somewhere," she said just before I sprayed a gas into her face and she fell asleep.

We were off to meet Aelfric and a naughty boy emperor.

But what I could not reason was why Aelfric was endangering his smuggling network by biting the emperor's hand? Surely retaliation would come and I did not want to be frozen again, even a clone can feel the remembered pain of the ice creeping through the originals innards, of no longer shivering, of the body packing in, turning into a solid block of ice.

It was The Man I wanted revenge on, not Willmina, but what a toy to play doctor on she was?

"But you won't for she is needed elsewhere to expand my empire," Aelfric butted into my thoughts and he had droids carry Willmina into a ship. There I saw in his eyes he wanted to play also, but if I couldn't play then he wasn't.

“The Rhegid will know you have touched her and he will be your enemy and not friend?” I Posidonus in a subdued tone.

It actually worked for the look Aelfric gave me, so sour, full of dislike, he didn't need reminding, *but he did didn't he?*

So course was set for the Rhegid fleet and I knew that galaxy was far far far far away, plenty of time to play for politics change as does the breeze changes direction.

And saw Aelfric was thinking the same, Augustus could buy her back and if not, The Man would.

Life was picking up for the likes of us.

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#### Nesta's diary.

“When I heard I was overjoyed something had happened to the bitch, but when Tintagel suggested Aelfric and Posidonus might be involved my heart melted its jealousy and I became concerned.

“How could the emperor get rid of his only hope against you?” I asked The Man.

“Because he is absolute and sees Wilmina as a threat, the troops are loyal to her not him, history is full of generals becoming dictators,” and The Man smiled at me and when he did that he always disarmed me.

Tintagel smiled also, equilibrium was restored to the household and I was not foolish enough to make The Man's life a living hell for flirting with Willmina, I was not his wife, he had a court full of beautiful courtiers and knew he was attracted to Willmina's rousticness; they were both generals.

Me I was just a pilot, a jumped up street urchin, an assassin sent to kill The Man originally, but with Tintagel we were a team and there wasn't room for a fourth member, especially Willmina who let the breeze blow her kilt between her thighs, I saw his eyes have a good look.

I know what Willmina was doing, maybe The Man was too man to notice for he wasn't thinking with his brain any the more the more *was he?*

It takes a female to know a female.

“And that is why you work for me, what you have said is enlightening, together we shall watch The Man,” Tintagel the Clone and I was relieved another had believed me.

“But we don't have to worry about her, others have taken care of her?” He added.

Yes others had, but why?

None thought it was the boy emperor playing his absolute naughty game again for the Rhegid fleet was already engaged with the imperialists. Perhaps if it had just appeared I might have put two and two together.

“She was a good soldier,” The Man saying her epitaph.