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"Really?" it was Javiera's turn. My nod. "Mr. Jonas Baker, you are under arrest for battery and the unlawful detention of a member of the diplomatic corps by an on-duty government employee acting in an official capacity pursuant to Article 29 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961."

"Yumm cam dunn dat," Baker insisted as Virginia pulled him to his feet.

"She can and I am," Virginia confirmed by putting on the steel bracelets.

"Her Majesty's government will testify to this outrageous behavior on the part of Mr. Baker as well as filing our own complaint with your State Department and the United Nations General Assembly Sixth Committee," Mr. MI-6 Section Chief added.

"Ms. Love and Mr. Nylas, can we have a 'do-over'?" Riki pleaded. I looked to Katrina. She gifted me with a sliver of a smile and a nod. Damn it! That was how Deidre knew where I was and what I was doing. Katrina had sold me out.. kinda/sorta.

"Sure thing," I sighed. "I need to talk to my Aunt first."

In hindsight, the two back up squads (one for Katrina/ one for me) working with the Illuminati should have alerted me to Katrina's deviousness. Those eight women were vacating the premises after Elsa signaled them to fall back. It was my job to deal with Deidre and her "super-security" force.

"Come with me, Cael," she purred as she swept into my arms. She was tilting my head down for a deep, tonsil-tinging French Kiss before I could grapple with the internal conflict of sexy, hot red-head versus 'she's my kin, dang it'.

"That's his aunt?" Riki muttered.

"It is complicated," Katrina answered. "Very complicated." www.novelworm.com

"There are nine more, just like her," Javiera compounded the confusion. "I mean that - exactly like her."

"They seem rather... close," Virginia groused. Ah, jealousy from someone I had yet to take to bed. www.novelworm.com

"Is his entire family like that?" Riki asked.

"Oh no," Buffy grumbled. "A month ago, they didn't know each other existed. Now those genetic freakazoids think they own him. That's not going to happen."

"Yes, he does present himself as a very strong-willed, free-thinking individual," Nikita noted.

"No," Buffy corrected her. "I mean they can't have him because he's mine. I own him."

"For love of the Goddess, cut me some slack," I griped after breaking Deidre's lip lock. "I can hear everything you ladies are saying."

"You were supposed to," Katrina smirked. "We have work to do." www.novelworm.com

After a brief plea on my part, Deidre accepted my invitation to join the round table. My first order of business was having Buffy cough up a copy of the data Iskender had sent. Next came the reveal about the Chinese poisoned vaccines which sent Captain Moe and Riki into deep, hushed and desperate conversations with their associate apparatuses.

The really, really hard part was trying to sell the Earth & Sky as a non-terrorist organization. I went with the old philosophical argument of 'what is it to kill a person?' Basically, from the mid-18th century, the Han Chinese had been culturally marginalizing and exterminating the cultures of the Turkish and Mongolian Peoples living within in their borders - genocide had been institutionalized as part of the struggle.

The process was called sinicization, and it encouraged the assimilation of Han Chinese ways and the migration of Han Chinese into the historically Turkish and Mongolian areas. Worse, the economic opportunities the PRC created in the course of exploiting the various regions' natural resources had benefited the Han colonists far more than the native populations.

The ugly truth was the Khanate could not trust the Han populations in the areas they wanted to seize and they couldn't simply push them out. Starting in the 1930's, various Chinese regimes had declared the 'age of the barbarian' was over. The 'barbarians' were proving them wrong. CIA officer Cresky was now making his own furtive phone calls. The NSA was also getting involved.

By herculean efforts, the Earth & Sky had managed to assemble 80% of their forces when Zero Hour came. Circumstances had forced Temujin to push the attack forward by 24 hours. Still, he was confident. In the halls of power in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia, coups were taking place. Khanate propaganda efforts were rolling into high gear.

Temujin was graduating from an Osama bin Laden-level terrorist chief to the Master of a fragile, yet massive, Asian belligerent state. Without knowing the precise time table of events, that was the angle I was spinning. The Earth & Sky wasn't Al Qaeda, or a terrorist state like Iran, Libya, or Syria. It was more akin to the old Soviet Union. Oh yeah, and some of the largest fields of oil, natural gas and shale lay beneath his feet.

At 2:50 a. m. Almaty Time (Eastern Kazakhstan), the United Central Asian Khanate declared war on the People's Republic of China. At 3:00 am, coordinated attacks against China began with medium-range missile and drone strikes that devastated PLA air bases and supply facilities in Xinjiang and Nei Mongol. The Chinese news brown-out that Beijing had implemented in order to control information about the Anthrax outbreak now came back to haunt them.

If a network was on the air, it was governmental and the E&S pounded it, or jammed it. Next came small scale actions along the border. A few strategic frontier outposts were overwhelmed. The majority held out, yet were in serious trouble. They were screaming for help over the already overtaxed communication web that remained.

As my Amazons were trying to score points with the United Kingdom and United States, Pakistan was asking for a UN commission to discuss the Aksai Chin situation. That measure was heading to the UN Security Council where the PRC, as a permanent member with 'veto power', was going to squash it.

Against their case was the posting of the video of the PLA 'relief' column to Aksai Chin being cut to pieces. Mid-afternoon yesterday, a brigade-sized force belonging to the 6th Motorized Division, backed with significant air assets, assaulted their former stronghold that now was in 'rebel' hands. The defenders used European-built MILAN anti-tank missiles and RPG's to beat off the first Chinese rush.

The Chinese deployed, blasted away at the fixed fortification and then closed in to finish off the few holdouts. That was when the 'rebels' launched their counter-attack. The Chinese anti-air defenses disappeared first. When the PLAAF swarmed back in, the 'rebel' anti-air defenses revealed themselves. Of the eighteen engaged aircraft, fourteen crashed and burned, two limped away and the last two fled.

The Chinese helicopter support assets suffered the same fate. When the 'rebels' produced their own Russian-built combat helicopters, the Chinese brigade fell apart. The 'rebel' blocked the northern, mountainous retreat route so the armored assets were forced to race across the barren Aksai Chin valley where dozens of 'rebel' groups ambushed the dazed Chinese survivors.

As the Sun set, the video showed hundreds of Chinese troops surrendering. No one on planet Earth still believed Aksai Chin was in the hands of a rag-tag group of Turkish separatists, or jihadists. China was ready and willing to blame Pakistan for this blatant act of aggression. Pakistan's statement at the UN certainly didn't dissuade that belief.

That tripled the effectiveness and importance of FD Javiera Castello, Riki Martin at State, Cresky with the CIA and Captain Moe Mistriano. I doubted this was hurting the career of Delilah either. Much to my disgust, Katrina's prediction had been right. We gave the US government this crucial information and their superiors decided to.. analyze it.

The Department of Defense, over the objections of the USAMRIID, didn't want the Anthrax data to go over the internet, or any wireless service. A military courier was coming to retrieve the flash drive then a jet on standby would whisk the data to Maryland and Ft. Detrick. The Justice Department.. Javiera was bounced around between Homeland Security, the FBI (separately from HS) and the State Department.

The CIA and NSA were doing a threat assessment, even as they watched seven armored Turmens crossing the PRC's borders from Kazakhstan, Russia and Mongolia. How bad was it? Khanate Tu-95 and Tu-22M bombers, both relics of the Cold War, were penetrating deep into Chinese airspace, plastering supply depots, railroad marshalling centers and key bridges.

Temujin's 'Falcons' had temporarily established air superiority over the Lanzhou and Beijing Military Districts - that's western and northern China. Not only had the surprise attack by the Earth & Sky devastated a huge portion of the PLAAF on the ground, small teams were taking out anti-air assets. As a final indignity, the Chinese pilots and crews were starting to get sick - really sick.

Captain Moe enlightened the room with a fact I already knew, but hadn't referenced. How do you prioritize what people you vaccinate when you have an outbreak? Answer: Your First Responders. In the PRC, that meant the military, militia, police and the staff of medical centers. That's right. The people designated to battle this terrible affliction were succumbing to this sickness before the attack's full force engulfed the populace.

The Chinese transportation network was in shambles. Civilian aircraft did not dare fly supplies into contaminated zones because the Khanate contested those skies. As this act of genocide took shape, I found watching the three disparate groups with morbid fascination. www.novelworm.com

The Amazons were acting like nothing was wrong. Our people were already prepared for the Earth & Sky to send us their vaccines. Earth & Sky were our allies - the Seven Pillars were our enemies - end of discussion. Every dead Chinaman was a good thing in their book. How they died was irrelevant and yes, they had killed and would kill women and children. Non-combatant wasn't a word in common usage for Amazons.

The British contingent were grim, yet calm. What else could they do? All three had some level of military service, though murder on this scale was not in their catalog of previously experienced woes.