

Prelude: New Ruler

Only one can control the universe, it has been thought. Yasha devoted her life to seeing the last vestige of freedom erased from all space. In her years she'd gained so much skill and power. But her power was absolute. With no heir capable of controlling the newly freed mind slaves, the ultimate universal power fell to anarchy.

Emerging from this chaotic state were small bands of people under one banner. The Free Tenma Military rose to gain control of nearly 25% of the former empire. Although most were small insignificant worlds and systems, it proved the old time was over. No one ruler would dominate all. So they thought...

Dripping in his own blood the young palace guard fell to his knees supported by his pike. Gasping and clutching a large gaping hole in his chest he said, "You would never," a pause as he coughed up blood into his already bloody palm, "would have tried this if *she* were here!"

A grinning man with a well decorated uniform stood ten feet away. "You know," he began, "I suppose you're right." He rose his right index finger and pointed toward the guard. "I guess, though, we'll never know."

It took all the strength the guard had left to hurl the pike at the usurper, but the energy which emerged from the power mad man was enough to destroy the weapon and the guard.

Continuing beyond the smoldering crater in the floor, the victor came into a room. Centered against the far wall was a throne atop a small set of stairs. The Tenma Empire symbol engraved on a plaque above it. Around the room were drapes over the walls, pillars on the sides of the red carpet leading to the throne. The room towered over the floor. On the ceiling were murals of all the Tenma history up until the room was built. From the conquest of the planet to that of the universe, it was all there.

I've done. It's mine! Slowly he began to chuckle quietly, as if so excited he couldn't do anything. Then it erupted into a great, hilarious laugh.

The command post on the planet Warkex for the FTM was in all sorts of activity, but chaos activity. Lady Sensha, leader of the rebellious faction, was studying the holo-map with one of her subordinates. Sounds of battle filled the complex's halls. Screams, weapons, explosion, everything associated with battle.

"Well, Dimitri, we can't stay here. But every system we're capable of going to that's not crawling with New Imperial troops isn't controlled by our people yet," Sensha said somewhat grimly. The first month of rebellion was so simple. She knew it wouldn't be so easy forever, but to be defeated so quickly didn't seem right.

Captain Dimitri Uckora scratched the top of his head. "Earth," he suggested. "That's the only safe place, we may be able to make a good last stand there with the Demon's help."

"I don't want to cause Earth anymore trouble," Sensha admitted. "The hosts and the people themselves have been through much already." She folded her arms and winced

as a horrible howl made its way to her ear. A man had just probably lost a limb, or received a hole in himself. For another minute or so she thought and decided. "Okay. Sound the evacuation, set the reactor to overload. We'll head for Earth."

Dimitri's guards led the way from the command room to the bay. Sensha the whole way clutched a small green sphere in a punch at her hips left side. She had long since abandoned her old white dress uniform she had worn while as Yasha's personal advisor. Now she donned a soldier's outfit. Grayish long sleeve shirt zipped up to the neck, trousers of the same color with assorted belt attachments.

On their way they encountered many men. Most were theirs who were fleeing the base. Each one, even though in a rush to leave the complex before it blew up would take a knee before Sensha as she passed. She would tell them not to waste their time, of course, and just leave as soon as possible. Other people they ran into, however, weren't so friendly. The occasional Tenma Imperial Shock-troopers were the hardest of them all. Their power in close combat are incredible. Dimitri and his guards would have to attack one at a time. Usually this wasn't too difficult since the hallways mostly were too small to let more than one through. Tenma soldiers without powers weren't hard to deal with. Most beings in the universe didn't have special abilities, Dimitri's guards did. Easily blasting the soldiers aside, they just continued down the halls.

Finally they entered the hanger bay. A young technician had been waiting by a monitor, watching outside on security cameras the small fleet of transports and other vessels taking off from the planet. Interceptors from the Tenma Armada would surely attack them soon. If lucky, half the ships leaving will make it out of the atmosphere, including Sensha's.

"Everything is ready?" Dimitri asked the tech as Sensha and the others began to board. He stared down at the monitors and watched a few small explosions occur.

The technician immediately rose from his station and saluted. "Sir, the real ship and decoy ships have all been prepared with the fighter escorts standing by."

"Good work," Dimitri replied. "Get aboard if you'd like."

"No sir," he flipped a switch and a new image appeared on the monitor. An entire squad of shock-troopers were marching down the hall to the hangers. "I plan to stay as long as possible and take as many with me as I can."

Dimitri narrowed his eyes, lowered his head, and nodded. "I understand, young one." Dimitri gave the young man a salute, pivoted on his feet to do an about-face, and walked towards the ship. The hatch sealed behind him and it lifted off the floor. The large door at the front of the bay opened, in the distance the mountains could be seen beyond the forests. Located in the woods were areas of the base, each showing signs of battle. Whether it be an explosion or some smoke, you could tell who was losing or winning.

The ship juttled forward, then its speed increased and headed toward the sky. Two smaller ships, fighters, flanked the transport.

Sensha quietly sat alone in the passenger section of the room. She knew what was becoming of her forces. The battle was lost... The war was probably too...

The capped Emperor slowly strode down the aisle. He had done it. In the Holy Temple of Yasha he had been crowned the Emperor of the Tenma Empire. He now ruled over all.

“Behold!” the Grand-Priest stated as he raised his arms in joy. “Emperor Kutowaga Oni the First!” The guests in the seats rose and cheered the new ruler, they wouldn’t stop even after he left.

“Ignorant cowards,” he said to himself but in the presence of others. “They fear what I may do to the first who stops clapping.” He chuckled lightly and threw the cape and crown down to the floor. “Pointless objects.”

“My lord, Kutowaga, it’s customary to wear such objects,” an aide said.

“I have no such need for these,” he paused, and with a bit of contempt continued, “symbols.” He walked to the door, out into a crowd of more cheers, again annoyed by it. Into a hover craft he headed toward the palace.

The short ride to people who had never been to the capitol city of the empire would have been breathtaking. The towering skyscrapers surrounded by the massive Tenma Fortress were incredible. Most went hundreds of feet into the air. But none matched the palace. A city in itself. It stopped just shy of the clouds, held thousands of people if need be, and the extensions from it gave it the look of a medieval castle but much larger and harder to penetrate. Unless, of course, you had powers such as Kutowaga.

Entering a small bay for the craft he stood from his seat and made his way for the hatch. He made it to the doorway of the hanger when it slid open to reveal the one person to live against the strongest beings of Earth, Shiya.

Shiya was one who could bring a smile to Kutowaga’s face. For it was she who came to him with news of Yasha’s death and that of his future. “Shiya, my darling,” he greeted her, “how are you doing this morning.”

“I have to say I am some what upset, General,” she replied, “that I missed the chance to see you gain the title ‘Emperor,’ Emperor.” She frowned and followed his every movement despite the fact she was blind.

“Oh but don’t be, My Lady.” He took her hand and guided her along the hall, even though she needed no assistance. “For you see, Shiya, this title means nothing to me. As long as my fate and destiny are completed I am happy.”

“That’s excellent, Emperor.” She gripped his hand a bit tighter. “But,” she continued in a harsh whisper, “your destiny is not done yet.”

“Oh, I know, Lady Shiya.”

“Do you?” she wondered.

“Yes.” He stopped and stared her right in the eyes which held no vision. “I know Sensha makes her way to Earth, but I too have plans for that tiny little world which has been nothing but trouble for millennium after millennium.”

“But I do not see this in the future, Lord.”

Kutowaga smiled and laughed lightly as he continued walking with her. For a long time he said nothing while she thought all she could and tried to see what he saw. But for him and what he said, Shiya saw nothing. No victory, no defeat. Nothing.

He led her into an elevator and to the very top of the palace, the roof. Guarded by gun emplacements and shock-troops he led her to the edge of the building.

“Sensha sees the Demon children and Earth as hope for the universe,” he began. “But I know they cannot beat me. Only the power of the Angels can now. And they won’t be going anywhere out of that new plane of existence they call home.”

“But, Emperor Kutowaga, I see nothing of the sort for the Tenma... How can the Angels be held back and you defeat the powers of the Demons together?”

“Of course you see nothing of my plans, Shiya.”

“I don’t understand,” she sighed. “Why can’t I?”

“Because, I don’t desire it. The future shall remain a mystery even to the Time Elementals. But to me, it has already occurred.” He smiled as he watched over his grand city.

“You still haven’t answered the other part of my question, Emperor.”

“Of the Angels and Demons?” he asked. She nodded a response. His smile broadened. “I was raised to defeat the Demons.”