

Fire and Ashes by JH

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Excerpt from Fire and Ashes (Aki's POV)

I woke in a sweat when the com went off:

"Aki, Senior Medic needs a security containment set up," the Captain's voice boomed through my station.

Pressing the button above my bed, I answered: "Affirmative Cap'n. I'll be there in two sics."

Grabbing the black trousers hanging on my chair, I glanced around the room. It was a good thing the Captain didn't have any inspections like they used to in the Academy. Though I was by no means the messiest person on staff, I was definitely not the neatest. My clothes were strewn around the small room and the various electronics I was working on lay all over my desk. As I was pulling on my shoes--when entering the Med-bay, we wore slipper like shoes that had all the protection and sturdiness of the most durable boots, I loved them--the com went off again. This time, Abba spoke to me directly. "Aki, we need you here yesterday. Don't forget a stunner."

The fact that a security containment was needed at all was strange. The request for a stunner by the most non-violent of people I had ever met heightened the niggling suspicion. "Coming, Abba."

I strapped on my holster and slid a knife on the strap around my leg. Something was wrong.

Running to Medical, I met other crew members at the door. It was rare for me to be called in on something with security, but as the resident engineer, I often took the odd jobs around the ship. I suspected that we were picking up a straggler and considering we weren't in neutral space, the repercussions of our actions could bite us in the ass.

"Where did you need the containment?" I pulled a remote console from my pocket and scanned the in-patient ward.

Abba, a goddess among women and Mother-hen of the ship, led me to the south wall of the deck. "He was found in a wreck this cycle. He bears the mark of the Seikans." The others in the hall went silent.

We were not a large ship by any means. I found myself aboard the FireWing by chance--a recent graduate from the Terran military academy traveling to my post in the water colony offworld. I had been trained mainly for engineering and piloting, but did have some experience with combat. Though I never met one of the Seika before, we were warned in the Academy of their violent natures and temperments. They were a vicious breed of humanoid colonists: a hybrid species that evolved from off-world colonization on the fire-colony. It was a known fact that all Seikans were dangerous: their bodies weapons.

I paused and glanced at the Captain. "Sir?"

He looked at me hard, and for a second I wondered who our mysterious leader really was. "Just set up the field, Aki." He turned and walked out. I walked forward to the wall by his bed. "Are you sure he's out cold, Abba?"

She nodded, "When he was recovered, he was unconscious. We gave him a sedative, too." Abba backed away though as I approached the sleeping patient. I became nervous.

"If you want to leave, Abba, I don't mind," everyone on the ship had their secrets, and Abba's unnatural nervousness around large males was one of hers. She nodded and gave me a small smile as she left. I felt my nerves steady and

I took a look at the patient.

It was unknown which of the alien species the human colonists on the Fire Colony had interbred with since most had emigrated as the Seikans took over. But it was said that they were a dominant species, the alpha of alpha males and the alpha of alpha females. They were large and a colony of warriors. In many respects, I wondered about our Captain for he exhibited those same tendencies and traits. The man in front of me was the same: tall, lean, and even asleep very intimidating?as if he didn't like not being able to be up and fighting. The other crew members, which was about ten including me, had all left Med-Bay and I tried to focus to slip up a field for the Seikan.

"Computer, initiate manual containment unit."

"Manual containment initiated, Aki."

I slid a control panel from the wall about two meters away from the Seikan's head. As I was setting the parameters of the unit, I felt a change in the air. It was colder. "Computer, what's the temperature of Med-Bay?"

"Temperature is measured at 290 Kelvin, Aki."

"Is there something wrong with the homeostasis program?"

"Negative."

"Isolate source of temperature drop, Computer."

"Source located. Two meters to the right, Aki."

My fingers paused and I turned to the bed. No one was there. Shit. I stepped away from the South wall and scanned the room. Grabbing the stunner from the holster, I locked us in: "Seal Medical Bay, Computer. Override-Program-Aki-711. Notify Ca--"

A hand covered my mouth as I was pulled back against a hard body. I felt a scream try to escape but only heard my pathetic muffled voice. "Computer, terminate override command," the voice above me said. He backed us out of the containment's field. The parameters were set, all I had to do get him back into the space and press the button to enable it.

"Negative, unable to confirm voice recognition." I wanted to celebrate that at least he couldn't override my command. Only the Captain or I was able to do that with this particular program I had initiated. Suddenly, his voice changed and I heard mine ordering commands.

"Terminate override command, Computer."

"Override terminated, Aki."

I could hear the air-lock of Medical unseal, the hissing a warning to what could happen if this Seikan got loose on the ship. Pressed as close as I was to him, I couldn't kick and his arm around my waist was beginning to tighten. I threw my weight down and tried to curl so I could throw his weight over my shoulder. He anticipated and lifted me off my feet.

"Easy, little one. I do not wish to harm you." The voice was by my ear. Like I could believe that. I muffled under his hand and squirmed, trying to create some sort of space to use. Nothing worked. I couldn't reach my knife, but I could reach his head. Resorting to such tactics was usually not my style but I couldn't move otherwise. Raising my arms, I boxed his ears and he let me go, holding his head.

"Override-Program-Aki-922, only terminate with voice authorization from Captain!" I screamed. The doors shut before the Seikan could escape and he turned around enraged.

"I said I did not wish to harm you. I never said I wouldn't."

"Notify Captain of Med-Bay status, Computer." The Seikan was fast. Before I knew it, he was behind me again. I turned and twirled before he could grab me, then threw a kick. It grazed him and he countered by trying to back me into the containment field.

As a military trainee, I had studied some hand-to-hand fighting and excelled at the styles that didn't involve full contact. I noticed some of his movements were slower than before, most likely the affect of the sedative trying to work its way back into his nervous system. I faked to the left and twirled to the right, settling my feet within his stance. Lowering my upper body, I twisted and pulled with my foot. Breaking his stance, he stumbled back and I managed to land my hand on the button before he could stop me. Unfortunately, I was now sealed in the unit with him.