



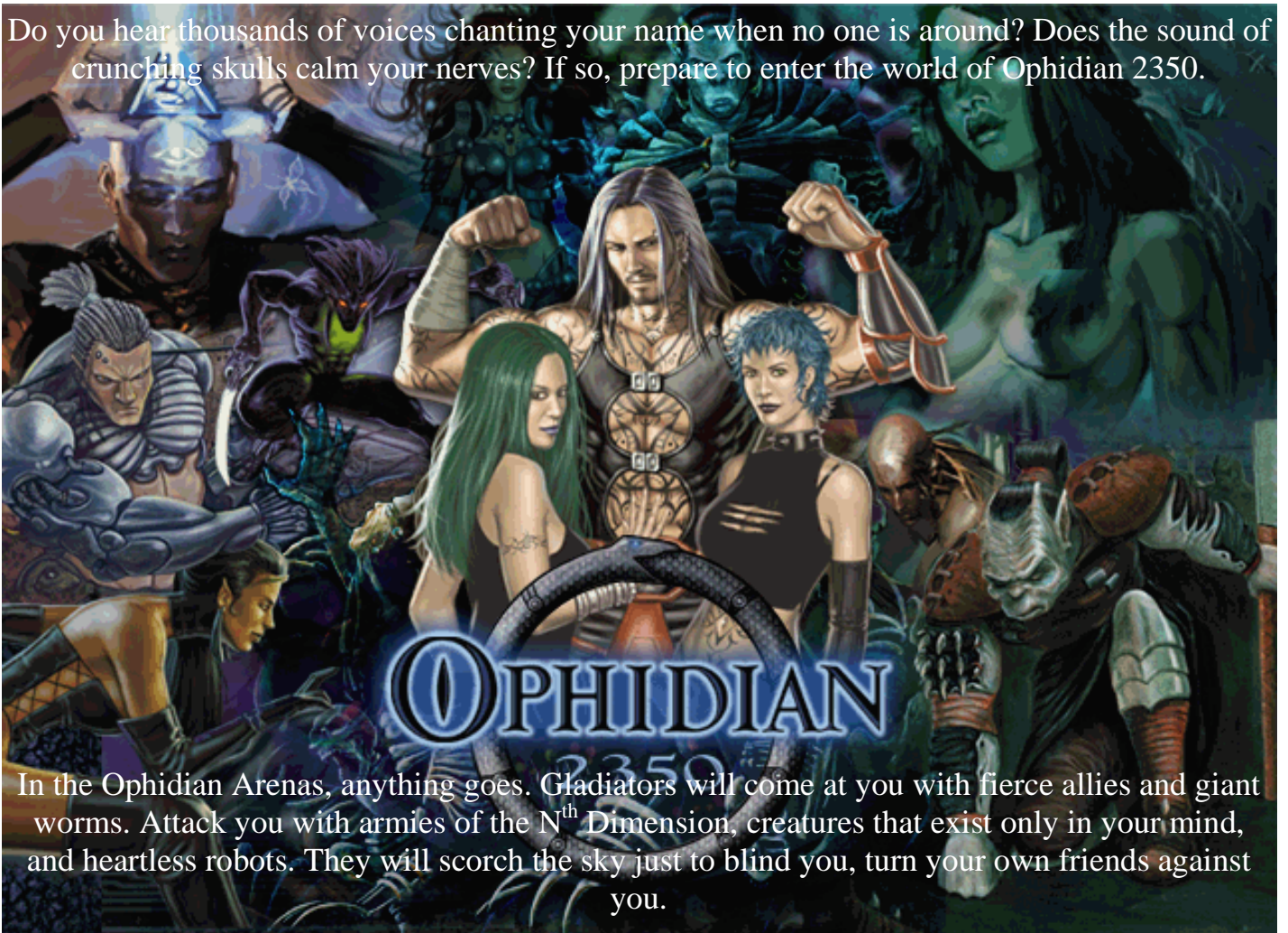
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Ophidian Arenas

Written by Hugo Ferreira
Edited by Raffi Tasci



Kronnax



Laura Tex



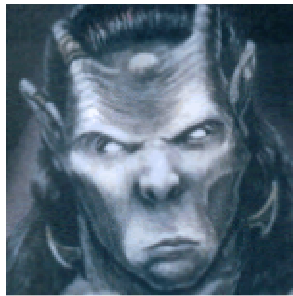
Wildfire



C.V. Ostrand



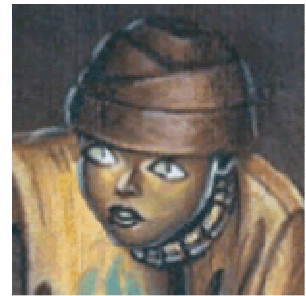
Agent P



Prince of Gates



Edward Kyroswolf



Poc Shot

Provided by:

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IGM (Independent Gladiator Information Messenger)
PBP (Pirate Band Inter-system Press)
GNB (Galactic News Bulletin)

2339 – Justich System

Moura Planet, Fehr Farm

Suddenly an army mob enters the farm, and start burning all in their surrounding. The farm owner in the other side run to the central house in an attempt to protect his family still lying inside. Then he's grabbed from behind and thrown into the stone cold floor. As he tries to get himself free, he's beaten badly, but before he could pass away with the pain caused by his own bones being crush by the invader forces he's obligated to watch his house being turned into ashes.

Seconds latter the man watch his wife Erika and his son Maxwell Fehr escaping the burning house. The man whispers in relief knowing that his family was safe. But that relief ended on the next moment as some of the invaders started shooting against both of them.

"NO!" shouted the man still entrapped by the invaders.

"Shut up, dog. This is what happen when you disobey a direct order from our lord." Replied a man at was watching from behind.

In a last breath of strength the man released himself from his oppressor and runs toward his family that lay lifeless on the floor.

"ERIKA, MAX." the man continued repeating their names until reaching their bodies. When he reached them, he pulls them toward their chest. Tears fall from his eyes as he discovered that they are dead, and GOD he misses them now.

They were his life, his family, and his strength, and now he's nothing. He doesn't have any straight left in their body. Enraged he turns to the man that ordered the attack and shouted:

"KILL ME!"

"No!" replied the man.

"WHY? Why all of this? They didn't do you no harm, and nether did I!" inquest the man shaking in hunger.

"Why you ask? This is your entire fault Mike Fehr. You were asked to enlist the forces of our Lord Krum and you disrespect him by rejecting his request."

"But I was only protecting my family!"

"Oh, I see that you have made a excellent job!" and with that the man started laughing.

"You can't do this! You can't!"

"Of course we can, we are Ophidians Lords. We can do anything." And with a gesture the man orders some guards to knock down Mike Fehr. And they leave the farm, left Mike Fehr laying unconsciousness on the floor as all his live is burned away.

2340 – Justich System

Voltarish Medical Facility, Moura Planet

Mike Fehr was been in recovery since last year incident, as the healers of the facility call that terrifying day. Most of his time in this facility had been in deep coma, but some time ago he miraculous recovered. Since his recover he endured a rigid training to gain again the vivacity of his atrophied muscles and to obtain a good form.

"Nurse Chapbel I'm tired of this." it's been four months since my awake and I still have pain as I move."

With a big smile, the old blond white dressed nurse turns to Mike, "My son, stop pushing yourself that hard. You've been though a lot, you just recovered from a six month coma. You are one of the lucky ones; most of my patients took years to recover as you did."

"I know, old woman, but I need to go to the Arenas!"

"For what, Mr Fehr, to get yourself dead? Is that what you are looking for?"

"No, nurse Chapbel, you know why I need to do it!"

"Yes, I know Mike, but remember that revenge isn't life."

"You know that I don't have anything more than that. Without it I'm nothing."

"No Mike, you're much more than that! But remember that a body can carry much more wounds than the ones that can be spotted at naked eyes. And those... will take much more time to recover. Oh, that if they recover at all." And with those words the old women gestured at him, a man twice her size, and he obeys without any doubt, "But for now, my son, Rest, I will come to see you in the morning."

"Good night nurse Chapbel."

And as she leaves the room, she turns out the lights.

* * * * *

"Mike, wake up!"

"Hum, oh! Yes nurse Chapbel? Stop yelling me, I'm awake."

"Come on, Mike, dress yourself. I want you to meet someone."

"Old lady, if it's another one of that woman's I'm not interested! I still love Erika, even after her death."

"Don't be silly child; it's a woman, yes. But this one won't help you in that way. Come on, hurry up." And she leaves the room for him to dress himself.

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...

"Dam it Mike, you took more time dressing than my sixteen years old daughter!"

"Hey, you don't have a daughter."

"I know, but if I had, you'd take more time dressing than her."

And with a slack in his back she pushes him to the hall. Then as they walk to the facility's halls, she takes him to a room in a restricted area. Mike's a little bit confused, but he trusts her, so he goes with the flow. Inside that room as a fifty years old woman, her body was muscled, not much, but enough, and was dressed in a Flexi Armor.

"Well let me do the owners! This is Laura Tex, and she'll be your personnel trainer from today on."

"But, and all your talk about my revenge?"

"That didn't change, I still don't agree. But as you will endeavour that quest anyway, at least I want you to be prepared." And as she prepares herself to leave the room, she turns back to Mike, "And if you think that you had pain in all this time recovering. You're wrong, that pain's nothing compared to what you will feel now!"

Mike stood looking thought the door as she shuts down, and being alone with this woman, only make him think one thing... «Now that my pain will start! »

2341 – Justich System

Andalor Coliseum

Mike Fehr's legs are shaking; this wasn't the first time in an Arena. But he always got anxious before a match, not because he hadn't confidence on himself but because he didn't over-measured his opponent. He had learned that in his training days, when Laura Tex, his trainer, first thrown him in front of his first adversary, only two weeks after his training start.

* * * * *

2340 – Moura Planet, Voltarish Medical Facility, War Room

He was shaking, and feeling unprepared. By his side Nurse Chapbel was whispering some words that he do not remember by now, and on the other side was Laura, she stood tall with a serious look in her eyes.

"Mike shows me what you can do!"

"But Laura, I'm not prepared."

"Hey Mike if you're thinking entering the Ophidian League, you must be prepared for the unexpected." And as another being, an alien enters the room "This will be your first opponent Mike."

"Let's get started then!" and he runs thought the alien.

What happened next was inevitable, the alien dodge and with one strike he knocked out Mike.

"Very well, Mr. Fehr!" shouted Laura, "You lasted five entire minutes."

.....

After that, he had many more matches, but what he learned that day and those last words of his trainer was crafted on his mind forever.

Soon the things got complicated, all the restrictions of his first's matches were over and soon as a blink of an eye, he was enduring Death Matches with opponents more experienced than him. That made him realize how life was a thin line, because in an Arena, life doesn't matter, the important is to survive.

* * * * *

The Andador Coliseum was on fire as the crowd wanted blood! They all chanted the name of Kronnax opponent, Schartimo, an Ophidian Gladiator that from time to time endured on free matches on the Justrich System, his home-born planetary system. He was obvious the crowd favourite and Mike knew that, but as he never refused a match, even with some high probabilities of defeat, he accepted this one. He knew that he might die tonight, but he doesn't care about that as he knew that these kinds of events were watched by Ophidian Lords, Agents and Scouts. So even if he loosed they would be seen and that would made him win.

He knew that this might be his great chance to gain access to the Ophidian League, and that was all he wanted to consummate the first part of his revenge plans.

On the backstage of the Arena, Mike, Nurse Chapbel and Laura Tex talked about victory, loosing and staying alive, but those words easily vanished from his head as the announcer of the Arena started making his introduction.

"Ladies and gentlebeings, welcome to the Andador Coliseum..."

Mike knew that this was his call, so he left his chair and went though the dark corridor of the backstage and stopped on a dark entrance waiting for the call of his name.

"... My name's Raffi a_Singazer's and I will be your host for tonight. And tonight we will have Mike Fehr, the Kronnax..."

And a huge spot of light incised to the place were Mike was standing; as that he headed to his corner of the Arena conduced by the light.

"..., the promise of Moura Planet, against our favourite son, Schartino, one of the most promising Level 2 Ophidian Gladiators. In this One on One Solo match we will see who survive the Arena. Does the New's better than the Old? We will have to wait until the next moments, because... It's Arena Time!"

And all the lights of the Coliseum came out, then from the Arena's floor some lights started to arose illuminating the entire Arena. On Mike's head only one thing was tuned... «It's party time! »

And the match starts...

.....

The match ended with the victory of Schartimo as expected by the public.

Mike was being carried to the backstage by Nurse Chapbel and by some of Justrich System doctors. His opponent didn't killed him, but beaten badly his body, nothing that he hadn't suffered before, a broken fist, lung, eye and some multiple serious internal injuries. But Laura was happy, he had lasted all the four waves.

Then a strange figure approached the bed were Mike's laid on the backstage. And with no small talk he told: "I liked your match; please call me when you recover." And gave him a card, and left the room.

Mike, with his good eye approached the card to his face; on it had a contact number, an Ophidian symbol and a name ... AGENT P.

And Mike knew that this was only the beginning...

2341 – Justich System, Andar Prime

Two weeks had passed from Mike's defeat from Schwartimo. His recovery was over, and he had passed that time thinking about the calling card given to him by Agent P. So he decided to give him a chance, after all that was what he wanted in the first place.

After some unanswered calls he finally reached the Ophidian Agent...

"Hi, I don't know if you remember me, but you gave me a calling card."

"Yes I do remember. You're Mike Fehr, the Gladiator named Kronnax."

"Yes I am, but excuse me for asking, why did you give me the card?"

"Mike, I'm sorry but that's a thing that I'd like to discuss with you in person. Can I schedule you an interview?"

"Of course, I'm available all the time, we can meet as soon as possible."

"Very well Mr. Fehr, as soon as I can I will call you to inform you about the date and time"

"I will be waiting Agent P."

And with that Mike hung up the telephone.

* * * * *

Another two weeks had passed when Mike finally got the call...

"Mr Fehr, are you available today?"

"Yes I am Agent P, were could we meet?!"

"Come to my provisory office in downtown Andalorin Village. The address's Sunnydale Street, 24. Be here at 17:00."

As he looked for the time, Mike thought to himself «Crap, I hate that village.», but then he composed his thoughts, «Holy Crap , that's not the biggest crap. The sticky issue here is that I only have one hour and an half to get there.». So he put his thoughts away and started to get his things done.

Then half an hour later he left his quarter on Quintar's Hold and headed to Andalorin Village.

.....

When he finally encountered Agent P's office he noticed that he still had ten minutes to relax, so he entered the office calmly. Inside there was a dark long hall, that he walked with caution. Then at the end it had a big office with a huge secretary full of papers and some Gladiator Bios cards. And on the other side in the dark there was a figure, a male figure. At least it was what Mike thought, as he couldn't see very well with all that darkness around him.

"Agent P?"

"Yes, Mr Fehr. Please take a seat."

As that Mike took a chair to his side and sat.

"Mr Fehr, I called you here because I liked your presence on the Arena. You were fighting against a Gladiator with twice your experience and skill, and you still lasted all through the four Waves." And with a small moment of silence he continued. "I don't get impressed too often, and yes I know you lost that match, but remember that you can't win them all."

"I know that Agent P, but I don't like losing."

"That's good Mr Fehr, because what I'm offering you is a thing that you will want if you want to keep winning."

"And what is that?"

"I'm offering you an entry to the Ophidian League."

And with those words Mike wasn't capable of hiding his smile. And the Agent continued.

"But for that I need to have some safeguards."

"And may I ask what those are?"

"You may indeed Mr Fehr. Those are only two conditions; the first is that you have to sign up with my managers, meaning that you'll have to lose your current one. And the second is that you'll have to enter the Ophidian Academy, by that you'll have to lose your personal trainer."

"But, both of them are my friends!"

"Mr Fehr, if you want to enter the League, those are my terms. And you'll have until tomorrow to choose what you will do with your life. If you do accept, and I'm certain that you will, you will be relocated to the Academy in Tigbar in that very same day. There you will meet your new manager. Go now Mr Fehr and think wisely"

And Mike left the office, but the calm that he had entered was long gone. Now he was with the feeling that he had to sell his soul to the devil, if he wanted to concrete his revenge. Now he had to make the hardest choice of his life, his friends or his revenge? And for the first time in a long time he didn't know what to do. So he decided to take a walk on the streets of the village.

* * * * *

He wandered the streets four hours, and then suddenly noticed that he'd stopped in front of a Cathedral. He wasn't a man of faith, but in that moment he felt a huge urge to enter.

And that was what he did...

Inside of it exists a huge silence and strange calm. He didn't expect that as the Cathedral was in the middle of the village. The light inside almost obfuscated his eyes, as the walls were painted in pure white, and also had some large murals. That represented a time long gone, a time when people believed in Saints, Angels and Gods. And he wished to live in that time, because now there weren't Saints anymore, the Angels were the Gladiators fighting in an Arena, and the Gods were the Ophidian Lords.

He looked around trying to capture all the peace and beauty of the place, but his attention was caught by an old man that was sitting alone in the middle of the Cathedral. So he decided to approach the old man...

"May I?" Mike asked the old man if he could sit next to him.

"Of course my son, what brings you here? I don't remember seeing you here before."

"Well I needed to think, and then I saw myself here. It's strange, isn't it?"

"No my son, it's quite normal. You see, most of the people only realize their faith in some critical moments of their life."

"That's my point, I don't have any faith."

"Of course you do. You don't know that yet, but you do."

"No I don't, I lost all my faith when I lost my wife and son."

"But that isn't why you're here today."

"No, it's not. You see I'm a Gladiator from the Justich Federation, and my goal is to enter the Ophidian League."

"I know that, please continue."

"But for that I have to choose between losing my two friends, the ones that supported me when I lost my family, and my goal of life. It's not fair."

"Life isn't fair sometimes Mike, but I repeat, have you to loose them?"

"I do, because the Agent that wants to make me an Ophidian Gladiator informed me that I had to have a new trainer and manager."

"And?"

"And I have to choose if I want to lose them."

"No you don't have to, Mike. Yes you'll lose your current trainer and manager, but you'll never lose your friends. And that is what they are, and real friends always stick with you no matter what."

"Are you certain?"

"Of course I am son. I've lived for time enough to learn that. So it's not a hard choice, isn't it? It's just a new path in your life."

"Yes, you're right. But... hey, how did you know my name?"

"I've seen your matches."

"But I thought that religious persons would consider the matches barbaric?"

"Most of them do, but I was once a Gladiator like you."

"You were?"

"Yes, I was. I had all my time of glory, but that's the past for me. I've made that very same choice a long time ago. Now it's your time."

"Sorry, but I never got your name?"

"It's C.V. Ostrand, but I was known as Roo who Hungers."

"Hey, I've seen your matches, they were amazing..." But before Mike could say anything more, the old man was long gone. He disappeared into thin air. And Mike was again alone with his thoughts...

2341 – Tigbar Planet, Justich System

Three days had passed since his strange conversation with the old Gladiator named Roo. Mike had accepted Agent P's proposal and now he was just starting to get to know Tigbar better. This was just his second day on the planet, so everything was brand new to him.

Today his concerns over the loss of his friends, Laura Tex and Nurse Chapbel were over as they supported totally his decision. And of course the old nurse still gave him long speeches about what he should do, but now they were restricted to phone calls. But even they were restricted because he only had right to make two calls per day, and he used them to kill his saudades from both of them.

He actually was enjoying the Academy, but there was one thing that he disliked. He had to share his room with another wanabe Gladiator, and one that was a little punk that thought that he was better than everyone. Even his name sounded elitist to Mike, as the kid only wanted to be called Wildfire. But besides that he even liked the routine and the classes. Hey, that was something that he didn't know that a Gladiator had to have. But here they did, and he had classes from various ancient Earth martial arts from Aikido to Karate, and even some alien ones. But more, as he had classes to learn to speak in public, acting classes and everything else that a Gladiator might need.

...

Next morning he decided to explore Tigbar again, mostly because the planet was full of temples. Everywhere he turned he could see little kids endeavouring a life dedicated to the discipline of War. Of course that in the Academy there were classes of all the six disciplines, but War was the most focused. They were training men and women to war and it didn't matter where were their battlefields, if it was in an Arena or in deep space exploration.

Today he had a three hour class about the origins of the Ophidian Circuit, and the origins of Gladiatorial Combat. But that was over for now, so he went to call Nurse Chapbel. When he finally reached her...

"Finally, old rag! What have you been doing? I'm calling you for almost ten minutes."

"Mike, I do work."

"I know that, but I miss you."

"I miss you too, but you're only there for four days."

"Yeah, but I'm bored. I like this, but this is so theoretic classes. I thought this was about fighting, not studying. I'm too old for this."

"Nonsense my boy, you are never too old to learn new things. Did you know that learning is the greatest achievement of a human being? You only stop learning when you die, end even that is subject to discussion."

"I really miss that!"

"What?"

"Your way to see the things, I really miss that."

"My silly boy, soon you'll forget about me."

"I'll never do that. Hey, you helped me in my darkest hour."

"Yes I did, but you will forget about me and about Laura. Cause when you start competing in the League you will become a star."

"Old rag; you know perfectly well why I'm here, don't you?"

"I know, but that's now, because you just competed in small leagues. But when you become a star you will forgot all about the small stuff."

"I don't think so, but I know that if a thing like that had to happen you will make me get back and focus on my goal once again."

"That is my job, taking care of you. And how're things there?"

"Well I'm bored of studying; I was never good at that."

"Mike, you've only been there for four days!"

"I know, but I wanted action, not this!"

"That's what makes the difference in a Arena Mike. If you're not smart enough to think ahead your opponent, you're dead."

"I know that."

"And your roommate?"

"Well, the kid is a plague! He's at least ten years younger than me, but he thinks that he's the best of the best. And that really piss me off."

"Why?"

"Mostly, his attitude! He thinks that he is always right!"

"That reminds me of someone."

"Who?"

"You Mike, in the days after you awoke from the coma."

"Hey, I wasn't like that."

"Yes you were, and that is why the kid pisses you off, he reminds you of yourself."

"Probably." And after a second of silence, "And how's Laura?"

"She's fine, and she asks about you every day."

"Oh, I've got to call her."

"Yes you got, but I've got to go now Mike, I've patients waiting for me. Take care of yourself. Love you."

"Bye, and I love you too."

After that he walked to his room. Inside J. Finkle or better Wildfire was listening to music. Or better, he was listening to noise, Mike couldn't call that music cause it was almost unknown at the top volume of the radio. But he didn't say a thing, he just got straight to his bed and laid down.

Wildfire didn't expect that reaction, so he looked to Mike, and then turned off the radio, and said, "Mike, are you ok?"

"Yes I am, why do you ask?"

"Well man, usually my roommates shout to me about the music."

"Why would I say anything? We're roommates whether we like it or not, so I think that we have to a customize with each other likes."

"Thanks."

"For what?"

"Man, you're my first roommate that didn't yell or try to get me to shut down the radio."

"Hey, I will never do that; I'm old enough for that."

"No you're not! Hey man, what are you doing tonight? I've got a party; do you want to come by? We've got cheerleaders!"

"Thanks, but no Wildfire. I'll have to study the Ophidian Circuit history."

"Please call me Finkle."

"I thought that you didn't like to be called by your name?"

"I don't like that people call me for my name, but my friends can call me."

"That's fine by me."

"Hey you're the first one here who listen to me without giving me orders or anything alike, so I think that we can become friends."

"Yeah, I also think alike, but there's a thing that I dislike in you."

"What is it, Mike?"

"Your attitude! It reminds me of me when I was your age."

"That's good or bad?"

"Both I guess. Sometimes it's a good thing but others, it's a really pain in the butt!"

And they continued their conversation thought the night, so neither one had fulfilled their plans for the evening. But that didn't matter because on that night they became friends.

* * * * *

In the next morning they arrived late for their first combat class...

"Do you know what time it is cadets?" shouted their teacher General Edwards Kyroswolf.

"Sorry Sir. But we..." but before Wildfire could end the sentence his teacher interrupted him...

"I do not want to hear excuses Cadet! As that you two will have to make 100 laps around the Arena."

"Sir, may I speak?"

"Very well Cadet Ferh, you may."

"It was my fault, I delayed Cadet Finkle."

"Well, then you will make 150 laps instead. NOW RUN!!!"

And they started running around the Arena.

* * * * *

2344

Three years had passed...

Kronnax & Wildfire were now Level 0 Gladiators, and still best of friends. As that, when one had a match the other was in the audience giving him support. Those years in the Academy changed their minds, their fighting skills and their techniques. Wildfire was a War Gladiator that had fully embraced the use of all kinds of weapons, and Kronnax reliable more in the art of war, strategy and body combat.

They were a team in and out of the arena, and that was noticed when they participated in Two-Gladiators Matches. But today that's not the case...

Today Wildfire is facing the Ophidian Champion Prince of Gates in an 4 V.P. vs Reinforcements match. Kronnax had to stay out of this match because only one Gladiator per discipline was allowed, so he stayed in the public.

The match was looking good for the reinforcement's team, as they had surrounded the Prince of Gates and were striking him hard.

But when they finally managed him to fall down, the Prince was able to portal four Royal Guards that jumped to the BIO, Cybernetics, PSI and Portal Gladiators, leaving the War Gladiator free to know the wrath of the Prince of Gates.

As Wildfire is trying to hit him with a Molten hammer, the Prince dodges and portals himself right to Wildfire's back. And grabs him by his neck, then he lifts him like a piece of paper.

Then with both hands he holds Wildfire's body above his head, showing him to the crowd like he was nothing. And violently throws Wildfire's body against one of his legs, breaking Wildfire's back.

"NO!", shouts Mike. Without thinking and in a mad rush, he surpasses the Ophidian security and enters the Arena. As he reaches the Prince he notices that he was trying to assimilate Wildfire's aura. He throws himself in a double flying kick headed to the Prince of Gates' head. And...

2343

... he lands right on Prince of Gates' head, stopping him from ending the life of his friend. With that strike, the Prince falls to the ground and Kronnax keeps hitting and hitting the 4 VP Gladiator until an Ophidian Referee intervenes.

On one side of the Arena there was a medical crew helping Prince of Gates, and on the other two Ophidian Keepers and a Ophidian Referee were trying to calm down Kronnax and remove him from the Arena.

* * * * *

On the next day Mike was called to see Slithers, one Ophidian Lord...

"Wellss Mr. Fehrss what you did in the matchss lassst night iss not to be repeated! Although I thinks that youss shouldss be banissshed from the Ophidianss Leaguesss, my peerss and the crowd, had a different opinion. So I will be precise, it wasss againsst myss will, but I willss give youss a 2 VP by yoursss defeat of Prince of Gatesss. But I warn youss, ifss youss try another thing likess that, you willss be banissshed from the Leaguess."

"Yes Sir. And thanks."

"No thanksss to me Mr. Fehrss, thankss yoursss fansss, Andss if the Prince wantsss a rematch againsst youss, he willsss have it."

"Yes Sir."

And with those last words Mike left the Ophidian Lord's presence.

.....

On the next morning Mike went to the hospital were Wildfire was...

"Hey, I heard about your promotion. Congrats." Said Finkle to Mike.

"But how? I wanted to tell you first!" and then he remembers who was taking care of Finkle, "Let me guess... it was the old rag?"

"Yep, Nurse Chapbel told me as soon as I woke up."

"I'm gonna have a serious talk with that old woman today. But now, let's go for what took me here."

"Laura Tex?"

"Of course not, Finkle!"

"Noo?"

"Why? I can't come here only to see my best friend that was injured yesterday?"

"Hey, of course you can, but I know that you're here also for Laura."

"Finkle, how are you?"

"Mentally? I'm fine. Physically? They told me that my spine was broken in three places, and that I was lucky to be alive. Behind that I will not be able to walk again."

"I'm sorry."

"Hey, forget about it! I know that you gave Prince of Gates a big kick in the ass!"

"I tried to defend you, but again I wasn't in time."

"Mike can you stop that? Don't feel any guilt in what happened. I knew the risks and so did you."

"Of course it's my fault; I once again failed saving someone I love."

"Mike?"

"Yes?"

"Fuck you!"

"Sorry?"

"Screw yourself man! You can't save the world! Put that in your hard head!"

Then their magnificent talk was interrupted by the entrance of another familiar face...

"How are you lad?"

"Well Trainer Kyroswolf, I'm as good as you see. But why are you here?"

"Did you think that I wouldn't come to see one of my boys?"

"But Sir, we didn't get along all our time in the Academy?"

"Don't be silly lad! And don't confound discipline with lack of concern. You two were some of my best students, so I care about you!"

"Thanks that means a lot." Replied Finkle.

And the three of them kept remembering their time in the academy, during the visit hour in that afternoon.

After the visit hour ended, Mike went to see Laura.

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2344

"Ladies and Gentlebeings welcome to the Galash Arena. Tonight main event is a Grunge match between Prince of Gates and Kronnax. And the match is prepared for one fall, if you remember last year in a Reinforcements vs. 4 VP match, Kronnax intervene to save Wildfire life, one of the Reinforcements on that night, and defeated Prince of Gates. Tonight on a one-on-one we will see the revenge of the 4 VP Gladiator against the 2 VP Gladiator. Who will fall, we will find out later this evening. But for now let's enjoy the rest of tonight's matches..." and with the silence of Raffi, the announcer, an explosion of cheers started as Schwartimo entered into the arena to start the first match of the night.

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Schwartimo won his match, but in the end he announced his retirement from the League. Many Gladiators headed to the Arena applauding the old Gladiator, even though many of them had fought him, they admired the work that he had done for the League. Although that had been the final match of Schwartimo, that wasn't his end in helping the foundations of the League, as he was invited earlier to become a Manager for Ophidian League.

On that night and before the main event we had a Two-on-Two match leading by the Team Impressive starring Captain Impressive and Johnny Alpha. And a One-on-One 1 VP match between Boom Boom vs. Daniel Grace.

But what the crowds were expecting was the main event: Prince of Gates vs. Kronnax.

The match was in favour of Prince of Gates with his minion horde, but the skills of War of Kronnax managed him to surpass all the Prince's minions. So both man and demon went one-on-one in a strength combat. The prince was almost twice as large as Kronnax, but in a gauge of strength in the last second Kronnax was able to spot a weakness. They say that demons don't have weaknesses, but Kronnax discovered one. He kept hitting it and hitting it until he was exhausted. Prince of Gates fell to the ground as a result. So for the second time, Mike defeated Prince of Gates.

"My God, two times straight, Mike Fehr is on fire!!! My guess for this Gladiator is that he will become champion in no time. My name's is Raffi, and this was the end of today Arena's Time."

After that match the team of Prince of Gates placed second in the Ophidian Championship, and in the next year Prince of Gates didn't compete at all for unknown reasons, but most believe that was due to his two defeats by Kronnax.

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2345

Andalorin Village, Andor Prime, Justich

One day after Mike Fehr gained his 3 VP...

Saint Peter Cathedral

"We are gathered here to celebrate the union of Mike Fehr and Laura Tex..." started to announce the reverend C.J. Ostrand celebrating the wedding of one of his friends.

The Cathedral was full of guests with Gladiators, some old friends, some new, some Arena nemesis and some Ophidian keepers on the side of the groom. On the side of the bride we could see several nurses, doctors and friends.

Of course the noisy side was the groom's side, as several old familiar faces showed up to Mike's wedding. There we could see General Edward Kyroswolf, his Academy trainer, J. Finkle, his best friend, Agent P, and much more old friends. Even the priest was an old Gladiator, and was the one that first showed astonishment to hear the silence on the Cathedral as soon as the wedding vows started.

"There were times I was lost, and you found me.

There were days which were heavy, and you lightened my heart.

Through it all, since the day we met, there was you for me and me for you.

That hasn't changed. That will never change.

Times have been good, and times have been bad, and still our love has endured and triumphed.

I take Mike Fehr to be my lawfully wedded husband.

I take Laura Tex to be my lawfully wedded wife.

Through pain and passion, through sorrow and hope, through death, and through life.

No matter what tomorrow may bring, we will face it together.

I now pronounce you husband and wife."

And with a pause C.J. Ostrand continued...

"You may kiss the bride!"

And as the kiss went by the crowd broke the silence with hoorays and applause. The hoorays were started by Wildfire and the applause was by Nurse Chapbel. And the congratulatory sound of clapping rose, louder and louder, as everyone joined in the beautiful spirit of the moment.

2346

One year has passed since the marriage of Mike Fehr and Laura Tex, currently he's one of the most successful 4 VP Gladiators in all times with a record of 40 victories and zero defeats last season.

He is a crowd favourite in a Arena, and outside of it his marriage is doing well, as well as he almost forgot the motives that made him join the League. Everything in his life was good as he had a good wife, good friends and many credits in the bank.

His wife Laura Tex is currently one of the chief-surgeons for the League as that she is at her husband's side in almost of his matches.

The Old Rag as Mike calls Nurse Chapbel, one of his dearest friends, well she is almost a mother to him, also is well, but now she his retired from nursing service and live a calm life in her farm in Moura planet.

His best friend Wildfire, or better J., Finkle still hadn't regain the use of his legs, but that didn't stop him, as now he is one of the best Ophidian Managers that the League ever had. He currently manages 10 Gladiators.

So there are not many things that Mike might want today, ok... there's one thing left, but he probably will get it tonight as he will face the Prince of Gates for the 4 VP Singles Championship title. Mike got the privilege of being the number one competitor due to his win against Kaleem last week.

This match will not be an easy one for Mike, as he knows the grudge that Xarz'yucus holds against him. And the demon is making one of his best seasons, if not the best in the League, even after one year without competing. His ratings are boosting the charts as everyone comments that the demon has new and more powerful minions, but what everyone knows is that the Prince wants blood...

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This is the first time that Mike comes to the Ophidian homeworld, and he never expected that it looked like this. The world isn't like any other planet in the Justich System, it's a world full of green vegetation, but also has many oceans. It's also a very technological planet, with many cities with names that a human can't even know how to spell.

It is a luxurious place, in the capital lays the biggest Arena of the League, full sculpted by ancient hands with many murals fully detailed with the Ophidian story.

Many say that on the walls of the Arena are encrypted many secrets of the Universe, but no one is allowed to read, copy, or even touch the walls.

The Ophidian race are a fighter's race, but also they are very cults, so it's very complicated to an out-worlder to speak to a local without having an Agent come to see what's wrong. So when you see an Ophidian, it is better to do nothing and say nothing.

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It's after-noon and as Laura and Mike are making the final training for tonight's match, Nurse Chapbel who decided to nurse this special match decided to take on a walk through the surroundings of the Arena. That wouldn't be a bad thing because she currently spends all her entire days resting on her farm, as that her old legs needed the walk.

But when she returns to the nursing station the unexpected happened...

«KNOCK KNOCK»

“You may enter, I'm right here...” but before she could even end the sentence a shadow comes running though her and knocking her down. As she falls down the shadow shows a bright metal small knife and slice it thought her belly fourteen times, as blood starts to spread the shadow gets up and walks back as nothing had happened and exit the nursing room leaving the knife in the lying body.

Hours later Mike got an Agent at the door of his room, and by his surprise it was Agent P...

“Agent P, what are you doing here? It's too soon to go to the Arena.”

As the face of the Agent changes from his cold pose to a smaller soft one, “Mike, something happened...”

“Laura?” asked Mike as the panic started to get in his head.

“No Mike, your wife is fine...” in a pause, “... it was Chapbel.”

“What did that old rag did today? Don't tell me that she was arrested because she touched the murals?”

“No Mike, I'm sorry, but... but she was murdered.”

Those words froze Mike as tears started to run down his face. His only reaction was to sit down on the cold floor.

“Easy Mike, we know the guilty and he is currently held on one of the city jails.” And as Agent P face turned once again to a cold one, “And Mike I need you to come with me now. We think that the murderer is the one that killed your family years ago.”

On that moment Mike got up from the floor, and started to feel his rage turning up.

“Let’s go, I’m ready.” Replied Mike as it was nothing.

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Half hour later they arrive to the city jail. And as Mike entered the room to identify the killer, to his surprise it was a very unpleasant familiar face...

“SLITHERS!” shouted Mike.

On that moment he started to get his head full with questions, but the most significant one was why? Why all that? Why to him? But for now those questions will have to continue unanswered to Mike as he wasn’t allowed to enter the cell alone.

But in a moment of distraction of Agent P, Mike sneaked through security and entered the cell. At first he was calm, but seeing the calm in Slithers, Mike’s rage started to grow.

Slithers only had to ask Mike “In whatss may I be ussefullss to youss?”, to make him explode.

In a fit of rage he leaped over the desk that was in front of Slithers and started hitting him. And hitting, and hitting. Only to stop when Agent P entered the cell, and grabbed him by his neck making Mike stop beating Slithers. Seconds later a Ophidian medical crew entered the room, and as one touched Slithers announced, “He’s dead.”

Then the room froze as one Ophidian Lord entered the cell...

“Agentss P pleasse arressst the Gladiator Kronnax forss treassson.” leaving the room as he gave that order to the Ophidian Agent.

With that direct order Agent P arrest Mike even against his will. But Mike didn’t do anything to prevent that nor said anything against it.

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Mike was taken to a cell, and was visited later by a advocate in order to prepare his defence. Things weren’t good, because even if they a legated temporary insanity, the penalty for killing an Ophidian was death.

He knew that, but he was willing to accept anything, as he was now happy. As today he had killed all the ghosts that he had on his head. And for the first time in a lot of years he was feeling good and free.

Today he finally closed all his wounds that kept hurting and bleeding all this time. Today he knew that even he still loved Erika and Maxwell, he knew that they were on a better place. And even though that today he was mourning for the loss of someone that was a mother to him, he knew that now he could find all the peace and love that he deserved on Laura.

Today he could live for her, for the rest of his life, even if his life was to be terminated soon. But that didn't matter as he wanted to enjoy this momentum.

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At this time OGN (Ophidian Gladiator League News Service) started to broadcast the news of Kronnax arrest.

«The 4 VP Gladiator Kronnax was arrested today for the assassination of an Ophidian Lord. What made him do that is an incognita at this time. It's now certain that today's match for the Championship is still been held, but Prince of Gates will fight Kaleem instead. Kronnax's fate is uncertain at this time; the only thing that is certain is that he will not fight for the 4 VP Singles Championships. Stay linked for more updates at any moment. »

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Agent P had now a difficult task to do, as he was to inform Laura Tex what happened to her husband.

As he arrived to the Hotel where the Gladiators were installed, Laura just had known about the death of Nurse Chapbel and was in the company of J. Finkle.

“Mrs. Fehr, I've got bad news...” said the Agent.

“Mike?”

“Yes.”

“Speak out man, what happened?” said Finkle.

“Well, he just murdered an Ophidian Lord.”

“Ho God.” With those words, Laura sat down in a chair.

“But?” asked Finkle confused.

“You see, I can’t speak much about that, but I will tell you that the Ophidian Lord was the one that killed Nurse Chapbel, and Mike’s first wife and son.”

“Jesus.” said Finkle.

With tears running down her face Laura, “That explains everything.”

“Yes, it does, but it doesn’t help Mike any. You see for the Ophidians the worst crime is the murder of one of their peers, and that crime is punished with death. I’m trying to attenuate his sentence, but it doesn’t look good”

Then with a brief silence they went with Agent P to see Mike.

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OGN (Ophidian Gladiator League News Service) breaking news on Kronnax situation.

«The 4 VP Gladiator Kronnax fate is now known as the Ophidian Lords Council declared him guilty on his crime against an Ophidian Lord. He is suspended from the Arenas for a four year period, in that time we will stay on Gasherdel Maximum Security Prison, A Sector. After that period he may return to the Arenas but without any privileges and without rank. Will we see Mike Fehr again in an Arena? Only time can tell. But for now enjoy the rest of tonight’s Championship. Stay linked as we will interrupt this broadcast if necessary. »

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2350 – Gasherdel, Garina

“Ladies and Gentlebeings welcome to Gasherdel’s Cathedral-Prime Arena, on tonight first match we will see the Demon Child Poc Shot against a returned Gladiator, after a four year suspension Mike Fehr is back. On this One-on-One single match we will find if Kronnax and his new hedgehog looks can win over the Demon Child. My name’s Raffi and I will be your host for tonight, stay tuned because it’s Arena Time!”

The End.
