

Stolen Valor

*Rooftop Landing Pad
Imperial Winter Palace
Judecca
Cocytus System*

The assembled members of Clan Scholae Palatinae had assembled from far and wide. Brethren on missions had largely returned home for the preceding trial. It had been a long time since anyone of such position and authority had been accused of outright treason. The honor of both Shadow Guard and Imperium had been called into question, and Emperor Xen was keen to make a strong example of the offender and to expunge the blemish that had allegedly transpired directly under his leadership.

Wind softly ruffled the robes and reflected off the armor of the assembled host. Silence was their only guest as the two combatants stepped forward and stood opposing each other. The landing pad provided roughly twenty meters of combat space for the arena; the remainder of the pad had been cleared to make room for the spectators. Armed guards were stationed throughout and a pair of gunships hovered above the pad to ensure no reprisals or rescue attempts were executed.

To be fair, no one expected any such foolishness. Imperial Scholae Intelligence had positioned snipers aboard the gunships. It had been made clear any acts of foolishness would not be tolerated and would be death to both combatants. Battlemaster Zagro Fenn sighed heavily as he eyed his opponent and erstwhile brother Warrior Delak Krennel. Both men had agreed to the most ancient form of combat, and dressed appropriately. Bare footed and draped in a simple form-fitting toga each the men were ready for combat armed with their fists.

The alleged crime was treason; Fenn was purported to have embezzled funds by selling information from within Shadow Guard about the internal capabilities of the Clan to the criminal organization that operated out of Shen Kohk on Antenora. The Zeltron was innocent and his Battleteam leader knew it. To shake the stigma they had agreed to a trial by combat for both leaders of the team. Delak respected and trusted his sergeant but could not let the blemish go unchecked. The wind slowly buffeted both men as the crowd pressed forward.

Delak threw the first punch, keeping his guard up and used a feint jab to test his opponent. Fenn was not a skilled brawler, but nor was his foe. The boxing match would be amateurish as it would be bloody. Fenn closed in and landed a swift jab followed by a clumsy uppercut that missed its mark. Delak used superior speed to grapple the Zeltron. Shots to the body bruised both men as the melee turned to a knuckle-to-knuckle struggle.

The fighters knew the stakes at play and acted accordingly. No defense was put up now, as fists pummeled ribs and jaws. Neither man was known for their pain threshold and black eyes and puffy faces swelled rapidly. Blood was visible from the face, fists, and midsections of each man.

Soon neither man could stand and both began to swoon and wobble, their feet languishing under the brutal assault the head and upper torso was taking. Withering blows turned to shallow and short jabs. Fenn fell to one knee and continued to try to throw his fists. Delak soon fell as well, and toppled the teetering Zeltron.

Neither man could continue much longer. Slowly the crowd began to lose interest in the carnage and revulsion and remorse overtook them. The cry for mercy began from some members of Shadow Guard yet both men continued to writhe on the ground and tore at each other as best they could.

Then it happened. Xen turned and walked off the landing pad, followed by two guards posted nearby. The Proconsul soon followed, as did the Rollmaster. All eyes turned to the leaders of the assembled houses. Lexiconus and Blade marched off in tandem flanked by the more senior members of their house. Excidium, as if prearranged about faced in orderly fashion and filed out.

The two continued to assault one another. Soon it was only Shadow Guard remaining, watching it's badly bloodied and nearly paralyzed senior leaders try as best possible to continue the fight still on the ground. Landon Cruise stepped forward and pulled Delak off of Zagro. The gunships veered off towards the mountains overlooking Ohmen City. In the end, both men were left alone to either succumb to their wounds or to pull themselves back into the palace.