Cold Ascent

By Shadow Nighthunter

***Sometime shortly after the Into The Fire event***

Golden eyes scanned the cityscape of Caelestis City as evening skies veiled the bay. Imperium’s newest Quaestor watched as seabirds flew back out to sea for another fish run while the citizens went to and fro in the streets or relaxed and partied on the beach. Now and then, the assassin caught sight of an Imperial patrol make its way towards the market plaza for an inspection or just to get a drink.

Everything just continued as always, no one really aware of the dark figure watching from the balcony of the now-established and damage Imperial Palace. Normally, Shadow was in the wilderness with her children at the cabin, but recent events called her back to the city. Meraxis had struck at the Empire to kill the Empress and the rest of the Summit. The attack had failed and had only left a more bitter taste in Nighthunter’s mouth. She hated the enemy with a passion. After all, they had killed her husband.

Thoughts of the attack on the Empire and the death of her husband made her blood boil as the Warlord clenched her fists. She could see her beloved’s face as he gazed up at her with his grey eyes. She could feel his hand has he caressed her cheek while she kept telling him to hang on. The wound in his chest from the vibroblade was seeping with blood that stained her pale skin as she tried to figure out how to stop the bleeding. A whisper of her name draws her full attention to him, and already she knew. Their eyes meet one last time as he tells her he loves her. And then all is silent as his last breath escapes his lips.

Anger. Hate for herself and the enemy. Pain. It still ate at her. She wanted Meraxis dead more than ever. Not just for the sake of revenge, but also for the sake of protecting the family the Empire had become for her. She didn’t wish to lose fellow Palatinaeans to the likes of Meraxis or even the Collective. Especially now that she was head of Imperium. The House was her responsibility now, and she would devote all she had to protect it as well as strengthen it.

Of course, she had another reason for seeking the downfall of Meraxis. Tarsus still lived on through their two-year old twins, Artorias and Deus. More than anything, she wanted to protect them, and doing so meant eradicating any and all threats the Empire faced. Especially those with ties to the Collective. May times she wondered what they’d do to Force-sensitive children. Would they kill them for the sake of ensuring they wouldn’t grow up to be a potential threat? Would they stoop so low to kill innocents because of their wretched ideology against Force users? Or would they perhaps have some humanity left to preserve the life of a child and indoctrinate them to hate the Brotherhood instead.

She doubted the latter, and wouldn’t wait to find out the truth. Her boys were all she had, and Meraxis would be bathed in its blood before they could take all she had left of her husband. She swore it on her own life.

Before she knew it, the sun was already gone, and the city lights were all the lit the city along with moonlight. Shadow shook her head and sighed. For now, she would abide her time and take advantage of the peace to plan. In the end, Meraxis would perish, and that was the only comfort she could hold onto.