

The Sork Siege (Part 1)

A Blub Galaxy lore
By Pepinhus - The Lizard, May 2022.

The dim illuminated hospital room hosted a group of uniformed officials and healers with protective gas masks around a female laying on a bed with alchemical instruments attached to her body. Holding her hand sitting on the bed, there was this intimidating male with a very concerned expression, the physicians allowed him be with her on her final moments. He grabbed her hand looking at her closed eyes, she was paling and there was no need for explanations: She already struggled, she already fought, but the battle against *the Somir sickness* was lost and she was counting minutes before she exhaled for the last time.

"Nera, can you hear me?" Zian had an uncharacteristic sweet tone on his voice, usually he spoke with a cold and determined language, it was simply shocking to be in the presence of a warrior of his stature seeing his wife defeated by the tiniest of the enemies, one that you can't see, one that you can't touch or harm, the ones that get into you are the scariest, and they defeated her beloved wife, taking her off his grasp, probably too tight a grasp.

Nera moaned "My fluggy, it hurts." and Commander Zian realized he was almost breaking her hand bones. Zian gasped in surprise to see his own hand doing exactly the opposite of what he wanted to do at a time like this, surprised he released her and put her tiny four fingered hand delicately on her slowly pumping chest.

"Everything is going to be alright, you need to rest."

"I don't want t..." She coughed violently, a nurse hovered a glowing pink crystal on her forehead magically calming her discomfort.

"I know you don't want to be in bed, my fluggy, but ... if you rest it will give you strength."

"I'm tired to pretend I'm strong, fluggy, and you're a terrible liar" She eyed her husband with a gaze full of compassion, because she knew better than anyone that if someone in the room was suffering was him, for such was his love for her that they never had a moment of worry or sorrow while they were together, their love was mighty and everybody knows, the mightier it gets, the more atrocious wound will the death deliver upon the souls of the remaining living attached to the dying ones. For a second, understanding this, he secretly wished he hated her more, he wished they had more arguments, that he found her cheating on him or stealing or something, but no. All through her life with Zian, Nera was the most loyal being on planet Somir, even when his decisions were brutal, his policies were draconian, even when their people were sent to war, she wholeheartedly and honestly agreed with him. Making her not just a role model for the Somirians, but an idol, a dying idol.

"How are... the kids?" wheezing she made the most trivial question trying to distract him from her suffering.

"Nazari had a cramp on her leg last week" Suddenly and through his mask, Nera saw Zian's smiling eyes, he had his special mask covering his face so she couldn't see the pincers around his mouth and his always sloppy whiskers which she loved to stroke. "She competed in the hurdles race and she fell into a well."

"Oh...!" Nera gasped softly, but Zian continued enthusiastically.

"Everyone counted her out" He clenched a fist "But she's got her mother's fighting spirit, so after getting back on her feet... She fell on the track with a stiff leg and couldn't run anymore. The judges gave her a honor medal, though."

Smiling, Nera rolled her eyes "You didn't intervene there, Did you?"

"Ummm, maybe."

Nera started to laugh but it became an uncontrollable coughing, the nurse had to put another crystal over her chest to calm her down. Beside the bed, the standing dignitaries and officials were sobbing and wiping their green tears of (obligatory) pure sadness.

"Fluggy" She addressed her husband by their common moniker in a weak voice. (A fluggy is a grayish mouse-like creature without eyes and 10 legs, very cute for Somirian standards).

"Yes, my fluggy."

She gathered her strength to say her next words "Please, don't go to Sork looking for that cure... The blubits essence won't bring me back from d..."

"Don't finish that word, my fluggy."

After a pause she uttered teary words "... Don't be sad" she cleared her throat "If I die, let life go on, nothing has that power."

"But this substance could..."

"Don't" Almost barking, Nera interrupted her delusion driven husband "Come back to your ... ughh... senses" She made a breathing pause, the followers couldn't stop wailing loudly.

But inside their heads, though, they were wishing she just dropped dead right there, it has been over 5 hours standing on their feet watching First Lady Nera agonizing, they made it look like they wanted to be there beside their leader and his couple, but in fact it was an unbearable torture for them. Some even thought they could have been contaminated by now and wanted to run away. But if they ever did that, they would be accused of high treason, sentenced to death within an hour, naked in front an angry mob with their own families on front row seats, broadcasted planet-wide, and after the execution, they would have their heads used as fluggy food and the rest of the body would be shredded with rakes to feed their own sons and daughters after the punishment was carried away. Knowing how would that turn out for them, the officials kept shedding their falsest tears. Meanwhile, Nera could feel the icy touch of death caressing her, she begged her husband for her last will.

"My last wish, my fluggy, is that you don't go hunting for blubits" She grabbed her husband by the tubes of his mask and drew his face near to hers, fixating her gaze upon the leader's welling yellow eyes, he couldn't help crying, a couple of green tears ran through Zian's cheeks who was enduring an intense psychological pain. He held firmly the idea that exactly what his wife is forbidding him to do is the panacea she needs. "Promise it!" She demanded.

"I... I..." Zian stuttered.

"I... can't promise you that."

Suddenly Nera fell petrified shocked with her husband's first and last betrayal to her confidence, she let go of his mask with a shattered stare, her chest stopped pumping.

"Nera?" Zian shook his dead wife by both shoulders "NERA!? WAKE UP!? DOCTOR!" The Somirian medic slowly denied with his head signaling that she was unequivocally gone.

A scream that made the walls of the room wobble was heard all through the hospital filling the air with the most acute pain and fury... The dignitaries and officials had their wish.

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"Dear citizens of Somir, today is a sad day for the Federation. We will remember this date as *the day when the suns didn't rise*. For the darkest news have befallen onto us. A loving soul who cared for all of our brave warriors, diligent workers and honest citizens has gone to the Bala'ha. Our cherished First Lady Nera Qizet has parted to meet with her ancestors on her deserved place, next to the gods and the Qizet royal deceased..."

The voice of the narrator was trembling while old images of a smiling and healthy Nera swept on the TV screens. Some accompanied by her husband waving in a military parade, some

making food on her cooking show, some with Nazari and Nerani - their offspring, another image showed her grinning while holding two wiggling fluggies on both hands.

"This is going to be a whole week of mourning period" Two intimidating Somirians with army uniforms sat in a bar, glowing violet neon lights adorned the ceiling, sipping glowing liquor while watching the mandatory broadcast, it was the same imagery on every channel, on every frequency, on the whole planet.

"Maybe more. Fancy dying right today, huh?"

"Oh, the Commander is going to decapitate her doctors."

"For sure."

"On the bright side, we won't have another stupid 'Cooking With Fluggies Show' episode."

"I *do like* Cooking With Fluggies!"

He furrowed his eyebrows "What?"

"Nera used to say..." The bulkier Somirian imitated the First Lady's voice "*He who doesn't cook with fluggies, has a cloochy in the burgies!*", it was fun! And the recipes were delicious" The other Somirian soldier had a befuddled expression, he couldn't believe that one of the best war pilots in Somir was a fairy in disguise who was a cooking show fan. Despite having the First Lady in it, it was widely known that the show was a total disaster with poor ratings.

"I can't believe this burgy" He picked his wallet and slapped some Cardano bills on the bar and left his glass half empty. "This one is on me. Hurry, we gotta go."

"Where?"

"Dude, the only thing that was stopping the Sork invasion was Nera" The soldier picked his backpack from the feet of his tall seat.

"Ah... Right" The best pilot chugged the rest of his white drink, rasped and burped loudly "But, They haven't called on us yet, have they?"

Suddenly, a hologram reproducer device on their wrists started buzzing, they slid their hands over it and a blurred image of the Somirian General Qalata appeared in front of them.

"Where are you? You pieces of burgy." The pilots stood firm looking respectfully above the shared hologram with militarist rigidity.

"At a bar, SIR!" Said both simultaneously on their trained honorific voice.

"Do you know what will happen if you're not at the aviation headquarters in ten minutes?"

"We will be hanged by the cloochies, SIR!" They replied stiffly, the barman behind the table couldn't help scoffing, trying the best to keep his laughter low.

"Make haste, and once you're there, you will report directly to me. Understood!?"

"Yes! SIR!"

"Now get your cloochies over here before I send you to dig out burgy from the recruit's septic tanks. Understand?"

"Yes! SIR!"

And as soon as the hologram dissipated the soldiers darted out the bar. They almost crashed against the strange looking Somirian waitress holding a plate full of clinking glasses and bottles. She let out a surprised whimper while the soldiers rushed out. The barman picked the Cardano bills off the table and smiled at the waitress, she smiled back.

"Whew!" She whistled "What happened here?"

"Nah, two pilots. Looks like a full out invasion to Sork is set to start soon."

"Oh yeah?" She started to put the empty glasses on the bar table indifferently.

"Yeah, they were called by their general. Ugh!, this one left the seat smelling like burgy."

"Well, Nera is finally resting in peace, but I don't really care." The maid wiped her hands on her apron "Zorik, can I take like 5 minutes? Gotta take a break in the back."

"Sure, Chana, go ahead."

The barmaid walked outside the bar from the back door which led into a deserted and dirty alley, it was very narrow behind the establishment, just some garbage dumpsters, empty kegs and dim public lighting. She looked at both sides of the corridor, shut the emergency door behind her and picked a device from her skirt. She tapped on the triangular screen and suddenly a full body hologram of a Kibi appeared in front of her.

Frowning, the unkempt fellow started to talk on a very wary tone "Who is this?"

"It's me, Ameth!"

"Who?" Answered the Kibi with eyes narrowed. The little holographic figure in front of her was partially dressed, had a bath towel wrapping his lower half and flip-flops on his feet, looked like he just woke up and was about to rinse the sleep off his eyes.

She touched her wrist deactivating the optical illusion device and a short buzz made her whole body vibrate fading her Somirian appearance, When the buzz was gone she revealed her true self: A mildly dark skinned Kibi girl, with shady purple eyes and burgundy hair to the shoulder, she wore a spiked black choker around her neck that characterized the members of the Order of the Ravens, a powerful underground Kibi organization that operates almost anywhere in the Blub galaxy. The Kibi man speaking with her still had to make sure.

"Strangle in the black night..."

"...with spikes we fright." She quickly recited the rest of password line making her interlocutor relieved.

"Ameth!, What's happening, It's early! Why do you call m..."

"It's on!" She interrupted him.

"What? Ameth. Are you serious?"

"Affirmative, First Lady Nera Qizet is dead, tomorrow full invasion of Sork starts, alert Nirgara, war is coming."

Suddenly, Zorik, the Somirian barman yelled from behind the door. "Chana! We got some orders here, hurry up!"

"One minute, I'm finishing this smoke."

"Chana? From when do you smoke!" Scoffed the hologram.

"Shut up, now go tell the Ravens, we need to execute the plan!"

"Ameth" The hologram gave her a concerned look "Take care."

"You too." She blew him a kiss and the hologram disappeared.

Ameth concealed her communication device under her apron, activated her illusion device cloaking her with a Somirian appearance and lit an odorous cigarette getting smeared with its smell. "Coming!" She yelled behind the door, looked back down the alley, without toking the joint (because she actually doesn't smoke) and after a short while she threw it and went back in, just as nothing out of the ordinary has happened.

But the pieces are in motion, a war is breaking, spies are whispering, a maddening king is raging and his queen is dead.