

Laikarin Styrnhund

This file was compiled on suspicion that Laikarin Styrnhund is a Garlean spy. She caught our attention due to her use of a style reminiscent of that of Nuciels former master and superior officer in the Garlean military, Kolibri “hummingbird” Aves.

Earliest records we could find place her at an orphanage just outside of Limsa. Mother and father unknown, presumed deceased. Discovered as a baby on the shore after a catastrophic storm, it is believed her parents were washed out to sea by the waves, but she was miraculously spared and carried back to shore. They gave her the name Styrmingil in testament to this.

Delivered to an orphanage she had a fairly normal early life, but soon became unruly and rebellious. Unwilling to get on with the other orphans, or to listen to the matron, she fled.

It took a lot of questioning, and some hefty bribes, but we managed to get some information on this period of her life. Living on the streets, occasionally joining gangs for mutual protection, she learned how to fight and how to hunt or scavenge. With these gangs—and sometimes solo—she would often target pirates and smugglers as they set anchor near the coast. Naturally they would not take kindly and it was a dangerous gamble just to procure one more meal.

One crew seemed to take pity on the young Roe, and took her in as a deckhand. There are no records of her time as a pirate, but a girl matching her description pops up here and there in various coastal raids over the next few years.

Details of her activities and life are pretty scarce from here but a flier for an underground fighting ring bearing her name led to some more information.

Patrons of the fighting pit recalled the date in question and we were able to piece together a story. The girl—a young teen by their estimates—fought an old Roe almost 3 times her size, put on a brave struggle, but went down in the third round after getting a lucky hit in. Say the crew she rolled up with were irate, shouting, fighting, and made a quick exit without paying their debts. It seems they were using her to run a scam. All their Gil would be placed on her going down in the 5th round. A surprising bet considering how young she was and her frail appearance. But she was surprisingly sturdy, and based on information from other fighting pits, she always reached the 5th round—idiot! They should have at least varied the scam by having her go down in different rounds!

The girl was left behind in the recovery room—likely abandoned, the poor thing—and later slipped out the back by herself.

The physician on duty at the time—what a civilized fighting pit!—said he felt for the young girl, but that she didn't seem too disheartened to wake up alone after losing the fight. Perhaps her time with the pirates had run its course.

From here we could track a rough path leading towards Ul'dah before she disappeared again after being picked up from a fighting pit by a mysterious woman claiming to be a fabled fighter,

and martial artist, “the hummingbird”. We can’t confirm if it was her as her last known location was within the Garlean empire, with only rumors of her popping up outside of there.

After this Laika seems to have popped up sporadically across the continent before disappearing again. After much hard work and several brushes with her that resulted in a scuffle, Loxli and Loxly were able to track her movements to Ishgard where she once again vanished. We can only surmise that an individual or organization is sheltering her and that her allegiance lies with them and not Garlemald. Despite her use of a very distinctive form of combat, we find no other motives or actions that would tie her to the Garlean Empire.

Though not particularly tall for a Roegadyn, Laikarin has proven to be very strong and proficient in hand to hand combat and marksmanship with a firearm. Loxly—who had a few close encounters with her during this investigation—likened her punches to “being hit by a landslide”. Doubtless this is a result of her technique of casting magic through her fists.

- Llwynos Mondfell

— Of Hummingbirds and Roegadyn —

“Stop the fight.” The soft gentle voice cut through the shouting throng of onlookers in an unnerving way.

The little old lady in the unassuming Kimono had barely raised her voice, and yet everyone had heard her, and everyone had listened. “Old lady” might have been a little unfair though. The half-elezen-hyur was closer to middle-aged, though with her simple practical garment and green blue hair tied up in a neat bun, and wrinkles around the eyes you could be excused for thinking otherwise. To Laika of course, who was angry, and young, anyone older than twenty could be considered “old”.

In the pit the referee had run out raising her opponent's hand in victory. What farce was this?

“I... can still... fight...” the young Roe panted.

Laika had grown tall since her time in Limsa. Still a young teen she had gained a fair few inches and put on considerable muscle mass; a natural result of fending for herself, and putting her

skills to the test in many venues such as this, as she traversed the continent alone. So she might have been boastful, but wasn't entirely lying when she claimed she could still fight.

"Oh, I'm aware." The unassuming little lady whispered as she stepped into the pit.

"Then why are you stopping the fight!? What kinda scam are ya running here?!" Laika bellowed, angry at having her possible victory snatched away. She brushed her long red braided hair out of her face and narrowed her eyes angrily at the interloper.

Without even glancing her way the little lady casually removed her heels —she was even smaller than Laika initially thought, barely 5 feet by her reckoning— and loosened her simple Kimono slightly at the waist, putting on a show of stretching her legs to test her movement in the quite frankly restrictive outfit.

"That fight is over. Do not dwell on it."

With a smooth motion the lady gestured to the opponent who was being escorted out of the pit by the referee. It was hypnotic. The way she moved was like smoke lazily twisting on a summer breeze. So casual and seemingly random. Laika's eyes followed the slow twist of her limbs. So enchanted by it all she hadn't even registered that the lady had closed the distance between them. It was only on instinct that she raised her hands into a defensive position. A good sign, thought the lady in the Kimono. But she would see how far those instincts went as her arm blurred and a small bare fist struck the young Roe in the sternum.

There wasn't much force behind each strike, but her arms moved like a blur hitting Laika over and over again in the same 3 or 4 places; each successive strike causing more pain than the last.

The sheer speed of those hands was quickly overwhelming what little defense Laika could put up, and under the incessant onslaught her guard was dropping, and there was nothing she could do to fight back.

Laika had never fought an opponent like this before. She had faced off against strong fighters, fast fighters, nimble fighters, you name it. But none had ever moved like this and with such accuracy. To her pale blue eyes the lady's arms flickered in and out of existence, each movement causing a fluttering sound like the beating of tiny wings.

Sweat dripped from her nose, her vest clinging tightly to her body as she tried in vain to put some distance between them. Her outfit was much more suited to this kind of environment. The simple vest and shorts gave her the most freedom and ease of movement. Her long legs gave her better reach and conversely better mobility when it came to backing away from the relentless attack. At least that's logically how things should have been. Reality was much different though. For every step backwards she took, the kimono lady would close the distance

instantly, almost floating across the floor, her bare feet barely brushing the dusty dirt floor of the pit.

She was really on the ropes now, and she knew it. If she didn't pull off a miracle she would lose. Or worse. Brought down to one knee she couldn't understand why the referee hadn't intervened. This wasn't like some of the other fighting pits. There were rules –some, at least– and medics on hand. So why were they standing by while this old woman wore her down to nothing?!

She was angry. Angry at her earlier victory being stolen. Angry at no-one stepping in. Angry at being beaten down like she always was.

“ENOUGH!” she screamed.

Her senses felt sharper, the lady's movements slower. Her blood was on fire, her fists were hot, and for a scant moment she could feel all of her strength bubbling up like a raging volcano. And in that split second Laika found an opening. She struck upwards, her body following as she rose to her feet like erupting magma, and her fist landed solidly against the old lady's nose.

It was a good hit. Laika knew it, the crowd knew it –loudly showing their appreciation– and the old lady knew it.

She stumbled backwards five or six paces and brought a hand to her face. Scarlet bloomed on her fingers as blood flowed freely from her bruised, and possibly broken, nose. She wiped blood and what looked like soot from her face with a delicate hand.

Her smile widened, and it was only then that Laika realized the lady had been smiling this whole time. A gentle and sweet smile that radiated from her face and spread to eyes that twinkled in the dim light. Laika also noted that this whole time the lady's eyes had been half closed. She peered kindly through the slits of her eyelids despite the blood that dripped onto the dirt.

“Such fire within you. I knew you piqued my interest for a reason.” The old lady in the Kimono looked at Laika with a mix of kindness and pity.

“You'll do fine. I'm sorry for this next part. But you need to understand what real fire is.”

As she spoke the old lady made complex movements with her hands.

It was as if she had launched herself from a cannon. A small flash of light and then she was crouched before Laika, one fist inches from her abdomen.

The air between them seemed to bubble and distort. Heat rising and the smell of burning stung her nostrils. And then she was sent flying out of the crudely marked ring, her body crumpling against the chain fence that circled the edge of the pit. The smell of burning intensified, and it took the young Roe a few moments to realize that the little lady's fist had left a smoldering hole in her vest.

How had she done that? Laika thought frantically. A trick surely, but... how? The woman's hands were uncovered. She didn't appear to be carrying a weapon, and the sleeve of her yukata had burned away revealing bare arms.

Her head was spinning. She had been hit hard, the air knocked out of her lungs, and her muddled brain struggling to make sense of the attack. She wasn't given time to think though. Another loud crack and flash of light and her opponent was upon her once more, her bare foot swinging down towards Laika's shoulder, crackles of electricity arced between her tan skin and the metal of the fence. Laika barely had time to roll out of the way; she could feel the hairs standing up across her body as the foot grazed her shoulder, the electricity crackling between them leaving it numb from the shock.

"It's a trick... just a trick..." Laika muttered to herself as she tried to catch her breath and put some distance between them, but her legs were like two dead weights and her shoulder wouldn't move from the shock.

This is madness! no one fights like this, she thought. Her mind raced. She had been beaten so thoroughly. Even her lucky hit hadn't seemed to bother the old lady, despite her somewhat frail appearance.

She closed her eyes waiting for the finishing blow. But it never came. Instead she felt the cool dampness of a cloth being pressed against her singed stomach as multiple hands checked her over.

"The fight is over, thank you for your time."

Laika opened one eye wearily to see the old lady talking to the owner of the pit.

"If I may, I'll be taking this one with me. I trust there will be no objections. And could you forgive her debt owed to your establishment?" The lady spoke softly and politely, but it was clearly not a request.

"Of course, of course. We are honored to have had you enter our ring, Madame Aves."

Honored? An understatement. To have had the almost mythical Hummingbird fight in his pit tonight had likely brought in more money than they had made in the last month, and she knew it; though she hated the spotlight.

The owner bowed deeply to her trying to take her hand and... kiss it? What an absurd man he was.

"It does one good to stretch one's wings, on occasion. And please, Kolibri is fine. I am not old enough for Madame just yet." She brushed his hand away and knelt beside the young roe.

"You think my fighting style is just a trick, hmm? How would you like to learn that trick?"

Her eyes remained half closed, but the sliver of bright magenta that peered out from behind those lids sparkled with untold promise as she held her hand out to the young girl.

Yes, she hated the spotlight, the attention, and the adoration. She had sworn Nuciel would be her final student. But like a moth to the flame she was drawn to it. And in this young Roe she had found someone with promise.

—End—