

This story is not “politically correct”.

## [The Hammers arc] [2] [Everything101] [9600]

Rev 2.1 ( Creation date: Forgotten | Modified date: Jan 29, 2020)

Illy O'ren announced her retirement on VNN. It came as a shock to some and it wasn't a shock to some. Many believed that the reason Cecil resigned was to take Venus. Many Venusians actually couldn't care less. Illy O'ren's regime had been largely quiet and they didn't expect any different from Cecil Klisis.

Some voiced their concerns over Cecil's ruthless behaviors but having assisted former President Mirren very well, their concerns were largely ignored.

Shortly after Cecil Klisis had acquired Venus from Illy O'ren, he had gathered the Hammers, his personal servants. They were a group of eight people who Cecil handpicked throughout the years. He personally educated them even.

They were gathered at the official conference room at Venus city hall.

"Congratulations, sir," Gair spoke.

Kisia, Dante, Tuhina, Vakha, Kasper, Karl, and Meave congratulated Cecil as well after Gair.

Nodding, Cecil began.

"As of today, I've taken Venus, and I declare that Venus will be autocracy."

The members of the Hammers weren't surprised to hear such a declaration. They had known Cecil for a long time and had seen how he had done things. His methods were in no way suited for democracy of any kind. For Cecil, it had always been his way or the highway. There had been absolutely no exceptions.

"It is easier to be said than done, sir," Gair replied. "How do you plan to accomplish this?"

"Simple, kill everyone on our path," Kisia replied, quickly adding, "Like he has always done."

"Will that really work? We are talking about billions here." Gair argued.

"It would normally not work." Kisia assured. "But with our master, it is possible."

While they were debating, Cecil quietly called Meave.

"Yes, sir?"

"I want you to be a merchant. Trade mostly in the neutral zone. Gather information and be on ready for further orders."

"I see." Meave answered firmly. "I understand completely."

"You are to depart right away."

Meave stood up and bowed slightly to Cecil. "Understood." And left the conference room. However, Cecil stopped her before she would leave the room.

"Of course, feel free to visit here any time you desire as long as you get the jobs done."

She beamed a faint smile at Cecil and left the room. By this moment, everyone was quiet, and Cecil continued.

"Effective immediately, I have divided Venus government into five divisions."

Apparently, Cecil created five divisions which were Imperial Division, Cosmetic Division, Civilization Division, Military Division, and Tax Division.

"I still need some time deciding who is fit for each division. Therefore, until an announcement is made, I want you to work on public security of Venus," Cecil declared. "First of all, Gair."

"Yes, sir."

"I want you to -"

The conference ended after Cecil reminded them that a week at the most was required for a full decisions.

Cecil was on his way to a construction site where an imperial library was to be built. It wasn't far from Venus city hall and they chose to walk there. However, Cecil took only Kisia with him.

"Venus is a good planet. I think it's even better than Earth," Kisia said while enjoying the view of Venus. Venus had no trees and it was covered by bio-engineered mosses called vie. These purple mosses were responsible for photosynthesis.

However, because majority of populace stayed within Fallen crater, not many had a chance to see vie covered environment outside. Inside of the crater resembled likely Earth.

"I've asked Illy O'ren to build Venus the way I wanted. She complied fortunately," Cecil said.

"I feel a little bad about her. Her achievements will be yours."

"That was what she wanted," He whispered to himself.

"Pardon, sir?"

"Nevermind. Anyway, we will eventually be forced to kill a lot of people."

"Yes..."

"I will leave you and Karl to do the dirty job."

"What of Gair, sir? He is your stepson."

"Gair...," He gazed vacantly into air. "He is not suited for this, thus I would like him stay out of this if possible."

"But, sir, he has to get used to get this. I assume he will eventually inherit Venus?"

He nodded.

"Then he must get used to your methods."

Sighing, Cecil replied, "It will be up to him. It is his life after all."

Kisia believed Cecil thought everything through and decided not to push the issue further. He assured her. "Do not worry. That is why there are the others."

She nodded along and she told him, "I trust your decisions, sir. We all do. But I do have a question that is unrelated to the topic we are discussing."

"Go on."

"What will happen to Nikki Sweetheart? I don't know about the others, but she is a popular figure on Venus."

Nikki Sweetheart was an admiral under Illy O'ren. She was in charge of all space fleets for Venus. When Illy O'ren resigned, only she resigned. She left everyone else in their position when she left. In other words, every politicians, including Nikki Sweetheart, came under mercy of Cecil Klisis.

"My intention is to let her join us. I've yet to ask her. Having said that, the job falls onto you."

Nodding, she replied, "I see. I will go see her ASAP."

"Yes."

Illy O'ren had a daughter, Marat, who was married to Cecil for some time before she was lost in Project Marat. It wasn't known that Illy O'ren had motherly love for her daughter because sometimes she showed jealousy over her own daughter. Cecil had known it ever since he saw Illy with Marat. The eyes he saw from Illy O'ren when looking at her own daughter were not of a mother's. It was a woman's.

Instead, she showed far more affection toward Nikki who was Admiral Jack's daughter.

They arrived at the site. A construction was already under way. Dante was there to oversee as she was an architect by trade.

"Sir," Dante noticed Cecil and ran to him in order to greet him.

Cecil nodded and said, "You may continue your work."

"Yes, sir." Dante went back to the construction site.

There was nothing but a small forest around the construction site. This site had been reserved for this purpose by Illy O'ren.

Kisia wasted no time and immediately paid a visit to Nikki Sweetheart whose fleet was currently docked at Venus outpost. All Venusian fleets were ordered stand down when Illy O'ren retired.

"Oh, wow," Nikki uttered and repeated. "Oh, wow."

They were in a captain's quarter on Nikki's ship. Kisia had apparently told her Cecil's plan.

"When Mrs. O'ren sent me an e-mail saying she'd be gone and warned me of big changes, I expected something but not this."

"Cecil wants you to be a part of the new setup," Kisia told her.

"Sure, why not," Nikki replied right away. "Mrs. O'ren told me to follow Cecil, so I don't see why not."

"Do you, by any chance, know where she is right now?"

Illy O'ren disappeared soon after she declared her retirement. No one seemed to know where she went and Cecil wouldn't answer when asked.

Nikki shrugged while shaking her head. "No idea at all. But she bid me farewell. I assume she has left the society."

Some ESPs chose to become wanderers after reaching a certain age. They did so to die in peace and quietness. In Illy O'ren case, while she was well over eight hundred years old, she hadn't shown any sign of retirement. Furthermore, she was the headman of the O'ren.

However, the O'ren announced that Illy O'ren resigned from her position on the day of her resignation. Everyone had to accept that she chose to withdraw from the society.

Nikki took it well as if she knew it was going to happen. She told Kisia, "Let her enjoy her life. She has been entangled in politics and whatnot for her entire life."

Kisia nodded, agreeing with Nikki.

Illy O'ren, ever since she was born, was expected to lead the clan. She was raised as the next headman of the O'ren. And her marriage to Mirren was political. There was no evidence that she enjoyed her role. But at the same time, there was also no evidence that she hated the role.

Cecil summoned available members of the Hammers once again to Venus city hall conference room. It was the same room as before. However, there was one major change. Nikki Sweetheart was allowed to join the meeting but no one was surprised to see her.

In the room, Cecil declared a new Venus government structure he had planned. Imperial, cosmetic, tax, military, and civilization divisions were declared by Cecil.

He pointed at Gair as he continued. "Gair, you will be in charge of the civilization division."

Nodding, Gair answered, "Understood."

Then he looked at Kisia. "Cosmetic division for you, Kisia."

She answered with a nod.

Nikki was given military division. Tuhina was given tax division. Vakha was assigned to assist Nikki Sweetheart. Karl would work for Tuhina. Kasper would be in charge of cybersecurity and would indirectly belong to civilization division.

"Any questions?" Cecil stated.

Only Nikki raised her hand and Cecil gave her nod.

"How do you mean to accomplish this? I respect you, Cecil, but what you are trying to do might be pushing your luck? Maybe?"

Vakha laughed out loud. "We will kill everyone who stand against us!" He exclaimed and asked everyone. "Right?"

"What if every Venusian is against us?" She asked innocently. It was a genuine question for her.

"Then so be it," Kisia answered calmly. "All will die."

Nikki was loss at words. There was a moment of silence until Cecil spoke.

"Spread a rumor. Kasper, you do this."

"What kind of rumor would that be, sir?"

"A rumor that Venus democracy will fall and be replaced by autocracy."

"I see. What do you plan to accomplish?"

"See who overreacts, and there are bound to those who try to dig for more information. No one knows you ... yet. Entice them to come after you for more info. See who they are and kill them."

"Kill them..., every one of them?"

Cecil gave him a firm nod. "Yes, kill every one of them. You don't need to conceal the killing. Let the world know."

"Wouldn't that be confirming the rumor indirectly?"

"Yes, and that is what I hope to accomplish. This will reduce negative feedback when an official announcement is made."

"Understood, sir."

"Dante," Cecil called out.

"Yes, sir," And Dante replied.

"I am appointing you to be the mayor of this city."

Dante twisted her head. She did not understand what Cecil meant. Fallen crater never had a mayor. It was run by Illy O'ren herself. And rightfully so, she expected Gair or Cecil to run the city.

"The city will have a mayor now," Cecil said. "And that will be you."

"I see. Thank you, sir."

"Now...," Cecil inhaled before he continued. "As the mayor of the Crater, summon the representative of Core software. Demand them to hand over the source code of their operating system."

Core Software was based on Earth. It was a software company specialized in military grade software. Their flagship product was codenamed "WASP" and was used for virtually all combat capable spaceships. It was founded by Core T. This was beginning of a long conflict between the Venus government and the company.

"Yes, sir."

The meeting was then dissolved.

Cecil was with Gair, and Kisia. They were watching over the construction of Cecil's library which would later become the imperial headquarter.

"Be cruel. Be very cruel," Cecil said while watching over the construction. It was being led by Dante. She was busy instructing workers and overseeing the construction.

"How cruel do you want us to be?" Kisia asked.

"Be cruel to a point which they will start to realize the value of freedom," Cecil emphasized. "They must realize that freedom is not guaranteed. Historically, it had never been, either. Prolonged peace makes people feel that freedom is guaranteed however."

"What of possible civil war? You can push them only so much." Gair said. He had been disturbed by Cecil's methods. He had known how cruel Cecil could be. But this was first time for him to see Cecil taking his method to a national level. In fact, even for Cecil, this was his first attempt to do so. His ruthlessness had always remained on a personal level until this point.

"Then we will fight them," Kisia replied. She had absolute confidence in Cecil.

"I do have a small squad," Cecil answered. "They will be disguised and will be deployed as special op."

Gair glanced at Cecil and sighed. "Sir, aren't you going too far?"

Cecil did not answer to Gair's dispute. Meanwhile, Kisia was receiving a message through her comm.

"Sir, it is Kasper. He informed me that the public should know about the upcoming change, sir. He also told me that he took care of eight people."

"Very good."

A public conference meeting was called after few days by Cecil. Journalists from VNN were invited for the occasion.

Available members of the Hammers stood behind Cecil Klisis on a speech stage. Tens of journalists from VNN had arrived.

“Greetings,” Cecil spoke as he faced them. “Today I have an announcement to make.”

At this point, they were expecting a formal announcement that Cecil would be taking over.

However...

“As of today, Venus parliament is dissolved.”

All journalists were utterly lost at this very moment. And then they started to murmur. Eventually, a journalist raised his hand to which Cecil gave him a nod.

“What do you mean by that, if I may ask?”

“You will see.” After making the vague short statement, Cecil walked out of the conference room. Some journalists attempted to run up to Cecil only to be stopped by Vakha who activated his energy blade to stop them.

Cecil ordered Kisia to summon whoever was in charge of taxicab companies.

There were three taxicab companies on Venus, and they had a union. Therefore, the president of the taxicab union was summoned. Taxicab was a thriving business in Fallen crater. While pretty much everyone had and was able to afford cars, it was often a lot more convenient to take cabs because cabs were given a special lane where they could speed.

A stocky man entered Cecil' office with Kisia's guidance.

"This is the president of the union," Kisia declared.

"Very well, have a seat."

Immediately after he sat in, Cecil began by glaring at him for a moment. It was as if Cecil was valuing him. It was obviously making him uncomfortable.

Eventually, he told him, "Let me begin. I want you to disable automotive driving system on cabs."

The stocky man reacted as if he heard a bad joke. He laughed nervously, hoping that it was indeed a joke, but it was not.

"You are serious," He said.

"Do it."

"Do you mind if I ask you why?"

"Jobs."

"Jobs?"

"People need jobs. You should know better."

"But..," He seemed genuinely confused. "Why? Just let the current social services take care of them."

Cecil, as if disappointed, sighed. "Kisia!" He bellowed. "Kill him!"

"W... what?!" The stocky man startled by sudden turn of the event. "W, wait -"  
Before he could even finish his sentence, he was shot in head. He collapsed hopelessly, spewing blood out of a hole from back of his head.

"Dissolve the union. Eliminate them all," Cecil declared.

A few guards entered the office and took the body away silently and swiftly. Blood was still there however.

"The presidents of the taxi companies are also members of the union. What of them?" Kisia asked.

"Get rid of them. When their stock shares are released upon their unfortunate demises, purchase them at once. Do not fear the eyes."

Kisia nodded firmly to Cecil. "Understood."

The union was brutally dissolved by Venus government. And key members of the union were killed in public either by sniping or by sudden execution in public. The media and the public roared with rage after this event. Large groups of protesters formed in front of the city hall, demanding an explanation, a public apology, and dismissal of Cecil.

Meanwhile, Kisia was reporting in.

"I've purchased all available stocks," She reported. "We now have the control of the companies."

Cecil was looking through the only window in his office. He was looking down at the protesters.

"Very well, proceed with the plan."

The plan was to disable all automotive driving systems on all cabs, and hire taxi drivers to create jobs.

"Sir, the companies will go into red if we do this."

"Indeed, increase the fare by ten percent, and exempt tax on the companies since the companies belong to us."

"I see." Kisia made a pause before she continued. "What of the protesters?"

Cecil changed the subject. "How is Gair handling this?"

"... Not very well, sir."

"Is that so." Cecil sighed and went back to the topic. "How many are these?"

"Over seven thousand people, sir."

"Still not enough."

"A civil war might occur if there are more."

"That is exactly what I want."

Kisia narrowed her eyes. "You hope to get rid of them in one sweep?"

After a minute of silence, Cecil said, "They take freedom for granted. They demand freedom of speech and privacy, yet they do not know the price for it."

"Is it worth lives of tens of thousands?"

"It is a subjective matter, I would say," Again, Cecil changed the subject. "How did Illy O'ren manage tax?"

It took Kisia a moment to answer. "Venus under Mrs. O'ren rule had two forms of tax. One was planetary tax. The other was universal tax. Of course, since we are independent, we won't pay the universal tax."

United Sol enforced a certain tax on all planets on top planetary tax.

"Venus' planetary tax at the moment is 8% with few exceptions such as medical and essential food," Kisia added.

Cecil declared, "Lower the planetary tax to 5%."

Kisia did not agree with Cecil. "Sir, that will put us into red."

"Indeed," Cecil nodded. "We will earn extra income from drug trading."

"Excuse me, sir?"

"In any civilization, illegal trading occurs. It produces massive profits. We, the Venus government, will do the illegal trading for profit."

Kisia was silent for a few minutes. She finally understood what Cecil was trying to do. "You mean to say that we disguise ourselves as illegal drug dealers?"

"Correct. It should bring in enough profit to fill the gap. We might even make surplus."

"I honestly do not see how this planet will turn out, sir." Her voice wasn't excited, rather she sounded concerned.

Cecil knew Kisia's concern and explained, "Consider this as filtering out people. We shouldn't care about those who choose to drug themselves. Whether they overdose themselves to death, I don't care."

"I thought people were equal," Kisia said sarcastically.

"That is bullshit, and you know it," Cecil said. "It's a mere tool used by politicians to gain support from the common people."

A few days later, Kisia brought a report to Cecil.

"Sir, the dissolved parliament is questioning your authority. They have a petition."

Even though Cecil had publicly dissolved the parliament, they stood against his decision and called Cecil to step down. However, not all parliament members were with the idea.

The truth was that the petition came mainly from non-O'ren members. The O'ren did not question Cecil's authority as they believed that Cecil Klisis would mean no harm to the O'ren.

The Klisis and the O'ren had a long history, and the O'ren believed that the Klisis was on their side. It was true that Cecil had no plan to harm the O'ren at this point, for he needed a certain portion of positive supporters in order to make his dictatorship work.

Cecil chose to watch what they do instead of taking his usual violent actions. And Venus parliament which consisted of 253 members voted in few days. About two third was from the O'ren. "Maiwa O'ren" was one of the parliament members at this time. The rest of parliament members belonged to a political party called "The democratic party of Venus", and they were the ones signed up for the petition.

They demanded Cecil to immediately leave Venus before they would take actions. However, none of the O'ren members objected Cecil's position, and with more than two third in the parliament to Cecil's favor, his dictatorship was passed in the parliament.

In other words, Cecil's dictatorship was legally acknowledged and accepted. The non-O'ren parliament members raged and joined protesters in front of the city hall where Cecil and the members of the Hammer were staying.

"Did you expect that the O'ren would be on your side?" Kisia asked Cecil who was looking down at the protestors from his temporary office.

"Of course," Cecil answered indifferently. "Get the team ready."

Cecil had a small group of highly trained marksmen. They were snipers essentially, and they were fiercely loyal to Cecil because he had spared them from execution and banishment. In exchange of stable, and new, lives, they swore their alliance with Cecil. Furthermore, he did not blindly choose them. He handpicked those who he was certain that they would swear their loyalty.

"Kill those ex-parliament members," Cecil ordered.

A group of masked marksmen appeared at the entrance of the city hall. They aimed their rifles at the protesters who were consisted of parliament members and other civilians. They appeared suddenly and aimed their weapons so fast that protesters did not know what was going on except for those who were on front.

Vakha was behind the marksmen. Glaring at the protesters with determination, he took a deep breath and bellowed. "Fire!"

More than two hundred protesters were shot to death on the day. Some managed to escape. Although the media and the public were outrageous and furious, there were less protesters each day as more and more protesters were killed off in public while everyone was watching. They started to realize that as long as the O'ren supported Cecil Klisis, they had no way to force Cecil Klisis to resign.

To everyone's surprise, the dictatorship had not yet disabled the media and allowed the media to report every "indecent" incidents that had been occurring all over the planet, which was effectively making people more outrageous because they were well informed.

The public wasn't fools and started to organize themselves in secret although their number was small, less than a thousand. They soon found a need for a clan to be involved for supplies of weapons. They were planning for a civil war.

Since the O'ren was out of the options, they sought out the only other clan on Venus, which was the Vues. However, the headman of the Vues, Hal Vues, supported Cecil Klisis. After all, he was in debt. It was Cecil Klisis who made it possible to relocate his clan to Venus, and it was also him who made it possible to marry his deceased wife. Hal had a son who was Martin Vues from his deceased wife.

Hal Vues refused to assist the civilian organization to provide with weapons they required. He visited Cecil Klisis soon after.

"Long time no see, sir," said Hal as he entered Cecil's now-permanent office. Hal was a big-boned man with height of approximately 2.1 meters.

"Indeed, and you being here means you've chosen to support me." Cecil remarked.

"You know everything," Hal quipped, "Yes, that is why I am here. I am also here to tell you the names of those who've asked me to supply them with weapons."

"No need." Cecil beamed a weak grin at him. "I already know who they are."

"You do know everything."

Hal had a short conversation with Cecil before he left. Kisia, then, entered the office.

"I hope that was a positive conversation," She asked.

"For so long I have desired the fall of the O'ren, for so long I have longed for revenge," Cecil incited. "Yet, there are still many years to go."

"Revenge?"

Little was known about the Klisis and how the clan had fallen. Cecil told Kisia briefly what had happened during the fall of the Klisis.

"I don't understand," Kisia spoke. "So, you want to destroy the O'ren. I see why, but didn't Illy O'ren know this? I am sure she did."

"She did certainly," Cecil answered. "And she did not care for her clan."

A thought struck her, and she was unable to resist her urge to ask the very question. "Is your dictatorship a part of your plan to bring down the O'ren?"

There was a short silence before Cecil answered. "I cannot destroy the O'ren by my own hands for it was my sworn promise with my brother in his last moment. I can only mature a foundation for the Hammers."

"You mean..."

"The O'ren will raise its sword. When, I cannot be certain. I predict, however, that they will do so in a hundred years or two."

"You want us to destroy the O'ren."

"I cannot deny that statement."

Kisia was troubled for a while due to the conversation. If he was right, and Cecil had always been correct in his foresight, so there was no "if". It became a matter of "when". When the O'ren would revolt, massive chaos would occur. Kisia saw no way of solving the issue in a peaceful way and it was likely that Cecil did not want a peaceful solution, either.

Meanwhile, Cecil' position as a dictator became solid. Although dissolved, the parliament passed his dictatorship. It gave the perfect legal ground for Cecil to work with. His dictatorship became eventually autocracy where the sole dictator, Cecil Klisis, would consult his decisions with the Hammers. However, on surface, it remained to be a dictatorship for the time being.

Of course, considerably large percentage of citizens was against Cecil' dictatorship. However, the number was relatively minor. The reason was that Cecil made several promises in public speeches, lower taxes, better living standards, and higher minimum wage. There were more, but those three earned the most support from ordinary, middle-class and lower-class, citizens.

Cecil made it clear by boldly stating, "Do not involve and concern yourself with politics. This planet will run by a few select people, autocracy you may call, but

they know what they are doing. It is better than hundreds of seemingly inexperienced politicians running a nation."

Cecil was obviously referring to United Sol that was still having internal conflicts in choosing their next president. The politicians at United Sol weren't inexperienced per se.

Cecil had also given an answer to the public assassinations. He stated, "You will have freedom as long as you are aware that it takes certain responsibilities. Those who know of only taking their advantages and not realize their consequences, they shall be killed without mercy. I will not show mercy whether adults or children. I will not lie. Many people will mysteriously vanish."

Cecil Klisis vowed to change the planet in better ways, but he also claimed that many will perish in progress. Although his policy was strongly denied in the beginning, lower taxes and changes in the system for better lives came shortly after.

In fact, it was achieved in mere two days. This was due to not having a parliament and not having to pass any bills. It worked like this: Cecil wanted to lower taxes, and his select few officers worked to finalize details, and it was done. Even with lower tax rates, Venus government still projected surplus of 2% annually and that was without possible profit from illegal drug trading.

Basically, life was becoming better for those who followed his guidelines. As long as they did not concern themselves in politics and lived their own lives, they enjoyed more peaceful life than they did while Illy O'ren ruled the planet.

Of course, they were numerous people who demanded for justice to be served upon Cecil Klisis, and as Cecil Klisis had stated in his public speeches, they vanished mysteriously on the face of Venus soon.

Lower medical fees and insurance, cheaper prices on every possible products especially computer software due to diminishing number of software pirates, higher wage, and lowering unemployment rate, it all added in the end. People started to support Cecil Klisis gradually.

His regime reduced unemployment rate down to less than one percent. He stated in a public speech that his goal was 0.1% on unemployment rate. Jobs weren't just artificially created. The industry was expanding their borders as their sales doubled or even tripled, further fueled by lower taxes.

Criminal rate had substantially dropped as well due to a fact that "minimum" punishment was death. Even a simple stealing resulted death. Crimes were no longer worth the trouble. Cyber crimes were also dealt with death. For any sort of crime, punishment was death. However, before any punishment was made, it was checked that a crime was whether a mistake or a repeated offense.

Cecil's regime also revealed wage levels for top government officers. The government was very compact for what they did. The Ark of United Sol had four

hundred members for just the senate, and additional thousands members for its parliament.

The Klisis dictatorship had mere eight people whom were paid 26,000 credit per season (3 months), and they were equivalent to United Sol senate. The average income of a Venus citizen per season was 21,000 credit (again per season).

In contrast, a senate member of United Sol was paid 700,000 credit per season, and a parliament member made roughly half of that.

Cecil Klisis made a speech on VNN, Venus News Network, that his regime intended to waste as little money as possible, and it showed starting with his officers' wages. Cecil Klisis himself wasn't being paid in addition. Of course, the Hammers did not complain about their wages. After all, they were completely loyal to Cecil Klisis. Besides, they were never paid previously. Being paid itself was good enough for them. In addition, their wage was above average.

Furthermore, Cecil Klisis allowed VNN to report the mysterious vanishing and political events as truthful as possible.

Confused, Gair inquired Cecil why he made such a decision.

"Just pushing the iron fist is going to backfire sooner or later," Cecil explained. "An autocracy is all about keeping a delicate balance. Historically, it has always been one-sided."

"I intend to keep the delicate balance," Cecil concluded.

Cecil's regime released a weekly report on how government money was spent, it was the first case in any dictatorship in the history. It was also extremely controversial since citizens were being told not to involve themselves in politics. Even so, the government kept on releasing weekly reports, and VNN was allowed to criticize if needed.

Using VNN was a medium, Venus citizens found a way to get involved in politics indirectly.

Soon after, the regime legalized drug trading with slightly higher tax. However, there was no medical insurance for those who were hospitalized for drug overdose and addiction. The government was earning profit from drug trading as well as medical fees. Illegal traders were killed on sight without asking questions. In addition, Venus government deployed illegal drug traders for themselves and unofficially provided a blackmarket for profit.

Still there were some illegal drug trading organizations on Venus. They had been able to hide their headquarters since Venus was largely unoccupied. If one could have equipment, they could create a man-made cave and install a passive

jamming device which would prevent revealing their biological signatures. All of that could be done in a few hours maximum with proper equipment.

The regime had to hunt them down to make their new drug trading laws to work properly and to have a monopoly in the black market.

Meanwhile, Kisia brought Cecil news regarding United Sol.

"They have a president finally," Kisia informed Cecil in his office. "Gvew is their new president."

"Gvew wouldn't have the support legitimately. What has occurred?"

Gvew had apparently abused the grace period, which was intended for lobby activities, given by the constitution and attacked his opposing factions, killing hundreds in progress, and resulted earning majority of votes.

"So much for democracy, I see," Cecil remarked. Saying so, he placed a glass cup on his desk and summoned water into it, filling it half. "What do you see, Kisia?"

"Half-empty glass, sir," Kisia replied indifferently.

"Yes, another answer would be half-filled glass. The answer would be depended on a person's mindset and mood."

Kisia was uncertain what Cecil was trying to say. She did not bother to find out however as Cecil was known to be cryptic at times.

"And at the moment, I will have to say that I am looking at a half-empty glass."

After a moment of silence, Cecil continued. "Give me the status report."

The regime was running tight on manpower due to a fact that it had to watch over the whole planet under strict rules. It apparently did not have spare manpower to combat the ongoing illegal drug dealers.

"It seems I can no longer wait. I will have to deal with the resistance force personally."

The resistance force was an organization that demanded Cecil to step down and restore democracy. It was also this organization that attempted to obtain weapons for a civil war from the O'ren and the Vues.

"Personally..., sir?" Kisia had a bad feeling.

"Yes, personally."

Cecil stood up slowly dusting off his robe gently as if he hadn't moved for a while.

"Bring me a phone," He said out of blue.

"A phone, sir?"

"Yes, an unregistered phone."

An unregistered phone, in other words, an anonymous phone which was illegal on Venus.

Kisia had known Cecil for many hundreds years. She knew what Cecil was exactly up to.

"I see. Please take care of yourself," Kisia said as she handed over her phone which she had just unregistered with her ESP.

Taking the phone, Cecil vanished on the spot.

Cecil had an ability to sense memories of objects. It was not limited to just objects, anything that existed in the universe could be read by Cecil for its past journeys as well as motives. It was this very ability that had kept Venus' central system safe from hacking. They were able to track down hackers' locations with surreal precision with Cecil's ability. Some hackers were killed in as short as two minutes.

What Cecil did to track down the resistance force was very simple for him. He transferred himself to a spot where he was sensing the most concentrated dose of hatred.

He found himself in a gigantic man-made cave. He was in the midst of an open area where crates were being stored. Cecil saw through the crates immediately and found food-related materials. The area was being actively used, and it didn't take long for a person to locate Cecil who was standing out from the rest of people due to his red robe.

"Who ar-"

His words barely left his mouth as he was beheaded by Cecil's blade.

His eyes glowed momentarily before they returned to its original light brown color. In his hands, there were already two blades conjured from his blood.

The crates had created a small maze where Cecil could hide effectively for the time being. After Cecil was done scanning the entire area, he started his rampage, killing everyone on spot. He killed them mercilessly by beheading most of them in one slash.

"Sir! An intruder!"

A man rushed into a room where it resembled a ship's bridge.

There were only two men in the room besides the one who rushed in just now.

"So? Take care of him."

"It's the Crimson wizard!"

The two looked at each other momentarily.

"Are you certain? Are you absolutely certain?" One of them asked with a pale face. The other was calm.

"Yes, sir! He has already killed more than fifty of us! We can't stop him!"

"It is time to flee," The calm one said to him.

"I've put so much effort into this base... How did he find us...," The pale one frowned and growled.

"Now is not the time to think about that. I am hired to protect you or help you escape. I have to do my job," The calm one said.

The pale one sighed deeply. "You are coming with us as well," He said to the messenger. It was because he heard their conversation that they were going to flee while leaving the others to deal with the crimson wizard. The pale one had a reputation to keep apparently.

The messenger didn't object, for he also wanted to live.

While others were being massacred by Cecil, the three headed to a back exit. The pale one stayed in middle until they reached the exit where it was digitally locked.

"Your turn now," The hired escort said to the pale one, and he approached a lock panel by the exit and entered a passcode. However, there was no reaction, no beep at all.

Confused, the pale one entered a passcode again, and again there was no reaction.

"What's going on?"

"It doesn't work," The pale one replied.

"What doesn't work?"

"Uh...," The pale one started to hit the panel. "This stupid crap is not responding to the passcode."

The hired escort pushed him out of the way and inspected the panel. It was powered and seemed to be functional. "Are you sure you entered the correct passcode?"

"What do you think I am, a fool?" The pale one raised his voice out of frustration.

The hired escort pulled out his energy blade and activated it. "Step back," He warned the others behind him. He slashed his blade at the panel, hoping to cause shorts and somehow open the door as the last solution, but as his blade touched the panel, it was bounced back right off. It was for less than a second, but he noticed what seemed to be a red barrier as his blade was bounced back.

"What the."

He slashed the panel again to have his blade bounce off again. It was a powerful barrier, he couldn't break it.

He deactivated his blade and turned to face the two. "We've got to find another way out," He told them.

Meanwhile, Cecil was standing on a small hill of headless corpses. The area reeked of death. He had apparently killed more than a few hundreds at this point. He had left one person alive barely on purpose. The wounded person was leaning his back against a crate on platform. He was missing both of his arms and losing massive amount of blood fast.

Cecil approached him while taking out the unregistered phone.

"No..., do not come any closer..."

The wounded person was trying to crawl backward, but he had no more place to go.

Cecil continued to approach him with a phone in his hand and a blade in another hand. The area was quiet enough for Cecil's shoe heels to make vivid resounding knocking. He activated the phone and it emitted static due to a jamming device installed in the cave.

Cecil's eyes glowed momentarily once again, and all light went off in the cave. The phone had now a ring tone. He dialed a number and Kisia responded on the phone.

"Track this phone. Bring a squad," He said before it threw the phone to the wounded.

"No...!" The wounded cried with fear. "Please, Nooo!" Even without artificial lights, the cave had an open end where it had pads for receiving shuttles, thus natural light was coming in. It was bright enough for him to see Cecil posed to slash his blade. "NOO-"

His cry didn't last long as Cecil beheaded him swiftly.

Cecil looked around the storage area where it reeked of death. Body parts were scattered everywhere on the platform. His attention was moved to a gate where it led into an actual base. He sniffed his nose.

"I sense more heads to chop," He whispered to himself.

Meanwhile, Kisia was able to track Cecil's phone's location. Vakha was with her in the office.

"Interesting," Kisia said while locating the position on a holographic map. "We have no information regarding this area. I suppose he is in a cave."

Vakha wasn't interested in hearing her. He wanted only actions.

"Alright, let's get there," She included.

The three who were attempting to escape had to find another exit. When they did find another exit, it was locked as well. Their passcode would not work, or rather the whole mechanism was unresponsive. While they were reaching for their 3rd exit, light went out.

"This is getting worse and worse," The hired escort whined. "I don't know what the hell is going on here."

"There is only one exit left, and that's through the storage area," The pale one responded while he took out a small flash light.

"Woah, woah, hold on right there, you mean to say that you want to go into that area?"

"That's the only exit left."

Frustrated, the hired escort scratched his head. It was when they heard screaming far ahead. The pale one startled by the screaming and dropped his flash light.

"W, what was that?" The pale one demanded. "What was that?!"

The hired escort was slowly backing off from the two. Soon enough, he vanished into darkness.

"H, hey?!" When the pale one noticed that something was amiss, the hired escort was nowhere to be seen. "What the hell? You can't default your contract!"

The screaming were becoming louder and louder.

Cecil was forcing his way into the base. There was some resistance along the way which was completely futile. He was looking for their leader, He had placed a barrier in the area so that no one could escape. It was only a matter of time he would find their leader.

He eventually confronted two people. One was skinny and pale. The other seemed to be an ordinary officer. The pale one was holding a flash light which became dark as Cecil approached them.

"You...," The pale one tried to speak but he was stammering badly. "Y, y, you... a, are... t, the..."

Cecil twisted his head slightly. Although it was completely dark, he was able to see clearly as if it was daylight. The pale one was wearing a different uniform which

indicated that he may have been a high ranking officer in the base. However, he did not seem to have what it took to be one.

"Interesting," Cecil remarked. "So, you are a mere peon?"

"P, peon?!" The pale one raised his voice. "How dare you! I am the...." Then he stammered. "The..." The pale one realized that he must not reveal his true identity.

It mattered little to Cecil however as he had figured out who was supporting them. As he investigated the base, he became confident that the base design was based on the O'ren's. He had obtained information he sought for. Therefore, he no longer had any reason to let anyone live for any longer.

"No matter," Cecil uttered. "Just die."

In that moment of speech, Cecil made a small wound on his index finger and let a drop of his blood which vaporized instantly and became rapidly expanding haze. It melted every organic beings upon touch.

They screamed in agony as they melted away. In less than a minute, they were nothing more than a small pool of red liquid.

"Stop," Cecil said quietly.

Seemingly there was no one in the area, but a voice sounded from a chunk of shadow in a corner.

"They were indeed pawns. They didn't have to be killed like that."

Cecil sneered. "You are a peon as well," He responded. "Just a bigger peon."

"... I suppose the whole base is sealed off."

"Yes," Cecil responded with a devilish grin.

Light was restored soon after which drew away shadow and darkness. A melting figure was revealed in a corner. His face was melted so much that his nose bone was exposed and his eyes were sealed shut by the melting process. He laughed bitter in extreme agony as he spoke to Cecil.

"I am in great pain, but it is more painful to think that you will get away with this reckless act."

"I've always been a villain," Cecil responded differently.

"So it seems...," He repeated. "So it seems ..." He spoke no longer. He was dead.

Cecil scanned the area briefly and detected no life signatures. However, he sensed incoming shuttles.

"Kisia's here, it seems," He said to himself.

Kisia's fleet of shuttles was closing in the location. They were consisted of four shuttles carrying battle hardened combatants.

"I am not seeing anything, ma'am!" A lookout exclaimed.

Kisia was holding a holographic GPS device. "It should be somewhere around here, probably a cave, so land somewhere around here and we will investigate."

Vakha was looking as well and he saw something that might be a cave. "I saw something by a cliff. Can you pilot it down there?"

He was referring to a narrow canyon.

"That's going to be risky, sir," The pilot replied. "That's a pretty narrow path."

"Let us land on a flat ground nearby then," Kisia said. "We can set up a ladder."

Venus surface was consisted of countless extremely narrow steep and deep gorges. Visually it would be very hard to see what was there between gorges.

After the shuttles landed, Vakha and Kisia stood on very edge of a cliff.

"Yep, I see a cave entrance down there," Vakha said.

"Sneaky," Kisia replied.

"You set up a jamming device in there and no one would find out easily," A combatant said while setting up a ladder.

Each shuttle was carrying ten people including two pilots. Therefore, there were a group of thirty eight combatants. It was only handful amount of people, but they were highly trained combatants.

After they set up four ladders, they started to climb down while Kisia was levitating down the cliff. The cliff was shadowed due to its narrowness but it was

bright enough for Kisia to see what had happened to the cave base. She had already sensed the scent of death as she descended.

"Do you see anything?" Vakha asked while he was climbing down a ladder.

"Yeah, cold meat pieces."

It was the storage area when they climbed down. The area was already full of various blood pools and half-molten body parts.

"Looks like he was busy," Vakha said jokingly. He wasn't deterred by the scene.

The smell was obscure. It wasn't particularly disgusting but it wasn't pleasant, either. The combatants took out their masks and scanning devices.

"No one's alive, it seems," A combatant reported. "It looks like the job's done already."

"Where is he?" Vakha asked.

The combatant answered, "He should be in this cave somewhere. He isn't showing up on the scan though."

"He has never been detected by scans," Kisia added and started to clap to gain attention. "Alright, people. Let's go through the area just in case."

Where they found Cecil was the bridge of the base. He was tinkering with the base's mainframe when they found him. Kisia, Vakha, and the others bowed to pay respect.

Cecil turned around to face them. "Welcome, you are a little late."

"The base was well hidden from visual sights," Kisia replied.

"Indeed, whoever chose and built this base knew what they were doing. Those who were running this base, however, were not."

Constructing a base like this wouldn't have been an easy task. It would require great efforts as well as financial means, and on Venus, there weren't many organizations that would be able to afford such. In fact, there could have been only two. The first would be the O'ren, and the other would be the Vues.

"Is it the O'ren's deed?" Kisia asked gravely.

Cecil made a pause before he'd reply. "The matter is taken care of for now. Clean this mess and set up our own base." Then he vanished on sight.

The resistance activities had decreased greatly after the day.

The planet appeared to have become stable for few weeks until a large strike occurred. City workers, 70,000 public workers, went on a strike. Their union demanded higher wages and better work benefits.

Gair and Kisia were immediately called for a meeting. Interestingly, Cecil did not initiate an emergency meeting. There were written demands from the union on Cecil' desk, but they were still in a sealed envelope. They weren't read.

"I am glad that they are acting the way I hope them to," Cecil said while staring down at the envelope.

"What is this about, sir?" Giar asked.

"Whoever was behind the resistance force is now pushing the union," Cecil responded.

Kisia and Gair narrowed their eyes. "What is going to be your response?" Kisia asked.

"Simple, fire them all."

There was this uncomfortable moment of silence in the office.

"It's against the laws to fire workers in their legal strike position," Gair stated.

"As if I care about the laws," Cecil sneered, "Fire them all, and hire new faces who won't belong to the union."

"It's 70,000 workers, sir," Gair raised his voice slightly to make his point bolder.

"You should at least read their demands. Perhaps, you could get this resolved in a matter of hours."

Cecil glanced at Kisia and told her, "Read the letter."

Kisia picked up the envelope and read its content. She went through them quickly.

"Ten percent increase in wages, tax deduction for their wages, better benefits, and ..." She stopped and placed the letters back on the desk. "Unreasonable," She concluded.

The lowest end of the chain was being paid 15,000 credit a season and executive positions were being paid more than the Hammers were being paid. Overall, their wage level was certainly above average considering a fact that they work six hours a day on shift.

"Fire them all," Cecil said again. He assured that the city would be able to find replacements in a week.

"How about the union, sir?" Gair asked although he had a feeling what kind of answer Cecil would give.

"Kisia will go meet them in person and give them my regards."

Kisia nodded. "Yes, sir."

"If any of them attempt to use pickets, kill them on sight without mercy."

Kisia nodded again. "Understood perfectly."

The union was raged after being informed that their workers, 70,000 of them, had just been fired. However, their rage was forced to be cooled off in a matter of days after half of positions were replaced.

The city was able to employ new 35,000 public workers in just three days, and they were already undergoing quick training sessions before being deployed. It

proved that being public workers were good jobs. Unexpectedly, VNN assisted acquiring replacements. They aired programs explaining their viewers benefits of being public workers.

They were fairly nice jobs indeed. With only 6 hours a day and being paid two third of a full employment, it was sort of a luxurious job. In addition, Cecil made an announcement to increase their wage by two percent as well as few other additional benefits.

The union attempted to negotiate but their communications were completely, and utterly, refused. Furthermore, Cecil made an announcement through VNN that the previous 70,000 workers would be barred from being employed by the city ever again.

As the last resort, the union attempted to take the matter to the Supreme Court. However, Cecil dissolved the court and fired judges who found themselves associated with the union. A few judges were assassinated in addition.

70,000 workers were completely replaced in a week and they were deployed after another week. There was two weeks of inconvenience for city residents, but these two weeks of ordeal would prevent a strike for next five hundred years. During Cecil's and Gair's regime, there would never be any form of strikes.

A registered letter was delivered to Cecil's mail box. It was from Maiwa O'ren. The letter was congratulating Cecil for stabilizing the planet and accomplishing what no one had done before, turning a democracy government into an autocracy.

Cecil replied the letter formally, stating that the price was heavy but it would be worth it for the future. There would be no reply from Maiwa O'ren ever again until he'd entice the whole clan to stand against Venus government in 9737.

Two seasons (6 months) passed. Kisia was meeting a former union executive in her favorite cafe. The former executive looked pale and thin. His grim face indicated that life had not been good for him.

Kisia had her legs crossed in a wooden chair while waiting for him to sit down.

"How are you doing?" Kisia initiated the conversation.

"Do you even need to ask? Look at me."

His clothes were dirty; his face was thin and pale.

"Fair enough. You have a point," Kisia responded with a grin.

"Why did you call me? Does he want me dead?"

He was referring to Cecil Klisis.

Kisia shook her head weakly. "Nope," She replied. "I have a question. That is all."

"Let's get it over with... then."

"Who allured the union to go on the strike?"

The former executive narrowed his eyes. "I cannot answer that for my own sake to be honest."

Kisia grinned and said, "Indeed, but if you do answer me, I will answer a question in return."

"What makes you think I have a question for you?"

"I assumed that you did." Having said so, Kisia placed her tea cup back on a table. "If my assumption was wrong, please accept my apologies and I shall take my leave." Then she stood up and started to walk away.

"Wait." The former union executive called out and made a short pause before he continued. "I do have a question for you, but I am not sure if that is worth risking my very own life."

"If they wanted you dead, you'd have been dead long ago." Kisia got back to the table and sat down again. "Say, what do you do now?"

It took him a long time to answer her. "I drive a cab now. My wage is ... 12,000c a season."

That was the minimum wage on Venus.

"And you were paid more than me before the layoff. Still 12,000c should be perfectly adequate to live unless you have a mortgage," said Kisia.

"You are right. I do have a mortgage and a few additional lines of credits. I had to make the payments, so my wallet has been too tight."

Kisia crossed her arms and was in thoughts for a moment. "Say, you give me the answer and I will take care of the mortgage for you."

It was a charming offer. The former executive wanted to get out of his current situation. Getting his mortgage off him would lift great burden. Besides, he had an expensive hobby and he hadn't been able to enjoy his hobby for two seasons.

"Can you guarantee my life?" He asked gravely after gulping boldly.

"No, I cannot, but I assure you that they do not have eyes on you."

"How can you be sure?"

"As I said, if they did care, you'd have been killed a long time ago. Besides, we already know who was beyond the act. It is just that we want to know who the middleman was."

The former union executive scratched his head violently. He looked frustrated. He was obviously on a crossroad of decisions. He started to tap his index finger on the table repeatedly for a while, remaining silent overall.

"I can't. It's my life we are dealing here," He included after much self-debate.

"Money will be useless if I am dead."

"Very well, I understand."

As Kisia was leaving the cafe, she gently touched a spot below her left ear, activating her comm. implant. "Found one?"

"Four actually."

A voice resounded from her comm. It was barely enough for even Kisia to hear.

"Shadow them. Find out where they are from."

"Roger."

However, despite of their efforts, they failed at revealing who they were and where they were from.

The storm on Venus seemed to have died down after initial break downs from citizens. Some even left positive feedback to VNN. Still there was uneasiness in the air.

Cecil called for a meeting.

"The initial steps are done," Cecil declared. "Good work everyone. However, we have other matters at hand." Cecil looked at Vakha, and he stood up.

"Yes, sir," He responded. "Yes, I have a report."

Vakha explained that over half of navy members had quit, but he also reported that Nikki Sweetheart managed to hire new faces to fill the gap. Still, the total number of navy sailors was lacking 25% of its previous state.

"That's good enough. Admiral Sweetheart has done an excellent job," Cecil remarked.

Cecil stated that they were at a start line of a very long road but, at the same time, he stated that the hardest part was over.

However, the truth was that “the hardest part” applied to Cecil. The hardest part for the hammers awaited them in near future.

***Fin***