

DRAGONFLY WARRIOR

By Franklin W. Reece

The moon shined bright behind me as my boat glided invisibly across the water toward the beach. A fog bank rolled in off the sea, which made my visibility only a few feet. I could not see my hand in front of me but in the distance, I heard gunshots. I held the throttle all the way open and my boat lurched forward like a horse stretched for the finish line. The faster I approached the shore the louder the gunshots.

Finally, the fog lifted so I could see the shore. I cut off the engine 100 feet from the beach then began my assault. I disembarked from my inflatable PVC craft, swam to the beach, and ran towards the gunfire. I was wet from head to toe which made my black wetsuit glisten in the moonlight. I ducked behind the nearest house and surveyed the situation. Sniper fire held down the rest of my team. It was a chaotic scene. Babies cried, women screamed and men ran through the streets with their guns. I swiftly maneuvered around the flank of the enemy and came in from behind. Just as I was about to pounce on the snipers nest, I was hit across the back of the head.

“Wake up! You’re dreaming, boy,” my father yelled. “William, don’t let me have to drag you out of that bed, you will suffer the consequences.”

Consequences indeed, he would just love to find more chores for me to do. Like get a toothbrush and scrub the grout in the bathroom tiles. You see my father was a Marine. I often wondered if he thought he was still in the Corps. He dictated a strict regimen with his children. I woke up early in the morning to do chores and then off to school. He did not like slackers. Growing up in his household seemed we never had time to ourselves. As a young boy, I always had my head in the clouds and daydreamed. I dreamt of traveling all over the world in search of adventure. In my mind, an adventure was just around the corner. I was the secret agent that saved the day. Envied by all men and loved by women. However, my destiny was to follow in

my father's footsteps. I graduated from high school and on to Marine Corps boot camp.

On the bus ride to Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina, I fell asleep stretched out on the back seat of the bus.

A short while passed and a dense fog blew in. In the murkiness of the fog, a shadow made its way closer and closer to me. The shadow grew larger and larger until a woman came into view. She reached out her hand and started to whisper to a dragonfly that landed there. I reached out but the dragonfly flew around her back and disappeared. The woman's brown hair lifted in the cool breeze of the morning air. Her sultry brown eyes winced in the bright daylight. Her pale colored skin, rosy cheeks, pink lips and colorful aura was remarkable. She parted her lips to say, "William, beware of the dragonfly lady..." and her voice trailed off. As she was walking away, I saw a tattoo on her lower back and she looked back at me with an evil grin that sent chills over me. "Dragonfly," I shouted as I woke up with the drill instructor in my face. I looked around and everyone was off the bus except me lying in the back row.

"WHAT DID YOU CALL ME?" The drill instructor was pissed. He was a massive man. His legs were like tree trunks, arms like pythons, fists like anvils and breath that could sink a ship. He looked like Popeye on steroids. He grabbed me by the lapels of my jacket and shouted at the top of his voice, "GET ON YOUR FEET, PUKE FACE!"

"Yes, sir," I barked back.

"SIR, I'M NOT AN OFFICER. I WORK FOR A LIVING. YOU ADDRESS ME AS SERGEANT. YOU GOT ME!"

"Yes, Sergeant."

"That's better. NOW GET OFF MY DAMN BUS!"

I expected to see steam come from his ears and any second blood burst from his veins. I

didn't wait to see. I headed straight for the door of the bus and out in the street with everyone else.

The close encounter with the drill instructor that first day set the tone for the rest of boot camp. Every morning CLANG, BANG, CRASH, the trashcan rolled down the middle of the squad bay. Every day was a nightmare. I thought *my dad* was tough. Boot camp made my dad look like a cream puff. I was exhausted and looked forward to hitting the rack every night.

One event made my training all worthwhile. During a one week period every recruit pulled guard duty somewhere around the base. My assignment was the General's boat in the harbor. There were always two sentries posted at every post. The first day on my post, the second sentry was late.

"Halt! Who goes there?" I challenged the oncoming person.

"I'm the sentry reporting for duty," a feminine voice said coming from the dark.

A female voice. I thought to myself that someone is playing a trick on me. "Come forth to be recognized." Sure enough, she was the second sentry. She was a gorgeous blonde-haired woman. The oversized ugly camouflage uniform did nothing for the beauty of her face. The first night of guard duty was awkward. We spoke on rare occasions that night.

However, the second night was different. We talked for a long time.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Natasha Belova," she said.

"You have an unusual accent. Where were you born?"

"I was born in Russia but I have my American citizenship after my parents moved to the United States."

"What was it like growing up in Russia?"

“I spent most of my childhood indoors studying. I especially enjoyed the martial arts. After I graduated high school in the USA, I attained the title of Kung Fu Master.”

“Whoa, Ms. Bruce Lee. Okay, I get it. Stop it, before you knock my head into next week.”

Friday evening the last day of our guard duty together, she arrived before I did. The Master of Arms briefed us as usual and then said, “The rest of the guard and I will be going out for some beers. I expect you two can take care of yourselves if anything arises. But I do expect you to check in every hour as usual.”

After the guard detail left, Natasha leaned over and whispered in my ear, “I’m horny. Let’s fuck.” She grabbed me and led me onto the boat.

“But I have a girlfriend,” I exclaimed, “Samantha is the jealous type. If she ever found out, she’d blow her top. Well, I guess that would be the case for any woman.”

“So what, I have a boyfriend.”

“But we may get caught.”

“I know that’s all the more exciting.” She said as she pushed me down on the bed and tore off my cammies. She straddled my groin and moved as if she was trying to tame a bucking bronco.

While we lay on the bed, we heard a noise from outside. I slowly moved toward the porthole and saw another boat pulled up alongside. Everyone onboard was wearing black with their weapons drawn. “We have company,” I whispered to Natasha.

“Who is it?”

“I don’t know but I don’t think they’re here for a dinner party. All of them have weapons drawn.” Before I could say another word, she was outside confronting them. The moves that

she possessed were magnificent. A roundhouse kick to the temple of one assailant left him sprawled on the deck. It was as if I was watching a Bruce Lee movie. Caught up in her amazement I had not noticed a dart gun pulled from the holster of one of the assailants until it was too late. The numbers caught up to her and she was subdued with a dart to the right side of her neck. After only a matter of seconds, she collapsed on the deck. I was stunned and it felt like my heart was about to explode. With electrodes stuck in my back, I slowly turned around to get a glimpse but I passed out.

The floor was cold and wet. My eyelids felt like weights attached to them. I managed to open my eyes enough to see. Around me was nothing but cold, black and wet steel bars. The smell of urine and vomit made for a terrible combination. I used my torn shirt as a mask to fend off the putrid aroma. I heard voices coming from the next room along with the splashing of water. I concluded I was still on a boat but did not know where. Chained in a cell with others, I suddenly had the urge to take a piss but no place to do it. I could not control it, it was coming whether I wanted it or not. The sensation of urine running down my leg was the only thing keeping me warm.

My vision improved by the minute. I looked around and finally came upon a woman chained up against the wall in one of the cells. It was Natasha. "PSST!" I said trying to get her attention. She did not move. I feared the worst.

I heard the sound of heavy footsteps approach the door. CLINK, SCREECH, the metal door opened, and sunlight crept into the room. At that moment, I saw everyone that was in the cells. Natasha chained up against the wall with her chin on her chest. Most of the others were weak from malnutrition. The assailants brought us minimal food and water. I drank half my water then splashed the rest onto Natasha.

“What the hell!” she said as she was trying to free herself from the chains that bound her.

“Shhhhhh. They just left. Are you okay?”

“Yes, I’m fine. But they won’t be when I get through with them.”

“We have to figure a way out of here first and get all these people to safety.”

Natasha reached up to her hair to find something. She pulled a pin from her hair and tinkered with the locked chains. She picked the locks from around her wrists and legs. Then she picked the locks from my wrist and said, “Take this and unchain everybody and meet me above.”

“Where are you going? You can’t take on everybody,” I yelled at her as she left the cell.

“Well then you better hurry up and join me.”

I rushed around trying to get everyone unchained. I recognized some of the men from boot camp. Some of them were not recruits. They were trainers and drill instructors. The last man I freed was the Sergeant of Arms from guard duty. All of us rushed upstairs to find Natasha subdued by the others. I asked, “Are you okay, Natasha?”

“Yeah, what took you so long?” she said.

“Well you know I had to release everyone from their shackles.”

“Enough of the chit chat.” one of the assailants said. “Get’em!” He motioned to his crew to take me downstairs.

Just about that time, everyone rushed up the stairs and fists flew. Busy with fighting off the crew, I turned to look for Natasha and she was gone. I scanned the area and saw three men taking her to the stern of the boat. I grabbed three other men and chased after them. We caught up to them just as they were about to put her in a smaller boat.

She winked at me and said, “I have’em just where I want them. Now watch this.”

Fists flew, legs flailed and next thing you know she had all three men laid out stacked on

top of one another with her standing on top.

“Show off,” I said as I shook my head. We gathered them all up and put them in the cells below. Ken, one of the abductees with us, drove the boat back to the harbor while the rest of us searched it to see what we could find. I searched the captain’s cabin and found documents strewn all over the place. I picked one up and tried to read but it was not in English. It was a Cyrillic alphabet. “Is this Russian writing?”

“Yes, it is,” Natasha replied.

“William!” Ken barked from the helm. “Come up here, quickly.”

Natasha stayed down below reading the documents and I ran upstairs to find out what was going on.

“What is it?” I said.

“Look.” Ken handed me the binoculars and pointed west. “I think we are being followed.”

“That must be the partnership they were going to meet. Shit! Can we outrun them?” I asked Ken knowing that he had maneuvered boats before.

“I don’t think so. We can try. Hold on to something everybody,” Ken yelled back to the rest and slammed the throttle to the maximum speed. The boat lurched forward throwing everyone against the bulkhead.

I looked through the binoculars again and saw that same Cyrillic writing on the ship. “Natasha! Come up here, now!”

Natasha bolted up the stairs and asked, “What?”

“Take a look at this.” I handed her the binoculars. She stared for about 15 seconds then dropped the binoculars on the floor and ran below. I chased after her. “What’s the matter?” I

asked.

“That ship belongs to a bio-terrorist organization from Russia,” she said. “The Russian government has been trying to find them for 10 years. They fell off the grid after a government sting operation fell miserably wrong. Many lives were lost and they just disappeared. Now here they show up on our front doorstep. They are after something. Get everyone to search the boat. We are looking for some kind of container. And tell Ken if he has anything left in the tank to let it all out now.”

Everyone searched compartments on the boat frantically. Moved from cabin to cabin and found nothing. Just when everyone had given up, Natasha and I looked at each other and both said, “The galley.” We ran to the galley at the other end of the ship.

Out of breath, we entered and went straight for the refrigeration unit.

“Holy shit!” I said as I stared at the large keg size container. “Now what?”

“Now that we know where it is we need to keep it from those terrorists,” Natasha said.

“We need to seal this shut. Go get Magnar, tell him to find a welding torch and seal this door shut. Then meet me up on the bridge with Ken.”

The other boat still followed us but was not closing in. We were about a mile from the entrance to the harbor and they started firing upon us. I sent everyone down below. Ken and I stayed at the helm with bullets firing over our heads. We turned into the harbor and the wake was tossing the smaller boats around. As soon as the other ship was in the harbor, Ken turned the boat around and headed straight for them.

“What are you doing?” I screamed at Ken. “Are you crazy?”

Ken winked and said, “Trust me.” He stopped the boat right in the middle of the harbor.

“Now what are you doing?” He just turned to me and winked again. I looked back at the

other boat and the shore patrol came out of nowhere with sirens blaring. That did not seem to bother the other boat. It picked up speed, kept us in their sights, and barreled straight for us.

“Uh, oh,” Ken exclaimed as he tried to start the boat. It would not start. The other boat still came.

“Abandon ship!” Ken hollered.

Ken and I helped everyone off the boat. Everyone was swimming to shore when all of a sudden a loud bang. The hull of our boat cracked wide open by the other one. The impact of the two boats threw me from the deck into the water. After the Russian boat passed by I could not see Ken. I went under the water to see if I could find him but to no avail, I resurfaced for air. I could not find him. I swam to shore where everyone else was. We searched the horizon to see a glimpse of Ken but no one saw him.

Then Natasha said, “Wait! Look over there.” She pointed to the edge of the rocks where the lighthouse was. It was Ken flailing and waving his arms. The shore patrol boat picked him up on their way by. Everyone was safe and on shore.

The rest of the shore patrol picked up and arrested all the members of the Russian boat after a fierce gunfight. The shore patrol escorted all of us back to the station to get our statements. However, Natasha and I made a detour. We stopped by the General’s house to have a little conversation. Natasha knocked on the door.

“Yes,” the General said.

After we saluted him Natasha said, “We were the sentries guarding your boat. What was in that container that was on it?”

“I haven’t got the foggiest idea what you’re talking about.”

“Well then you just better hope they don’t go searching those sunken boats,” I warned,

“They might come across that large container sealed in the refrigeration unit in the galley. Your secret would be out and it might be a hairy situation if that happens.” The General had a look of disgust and fear.

We left it at that and just walked away.

The next day at graduation, they announced that the General had retired. Apparently, he did have something to keep secret.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps announced, “Will the following recruits please report front and center; Magnar Szymanski, Kenneth Barrett, William Mattson, and Natasha Belova.

“Along with all of you these recruits have now graduated. However, these four Marines have gone beyond the call of duty. A huge debt of gratitude bestowed on these Marines for their part in the amazing apprehension of a major terrorist group. Awarded to them is The Medal of Honor and immediate promotion to Lance Corporal. In addition, they will be highly recommended to the Special Ops of their choosing. Please give a round of applause for these brave men and women.” After a moment of applause he continued, “There will be a celebration at the Officers club tonight. Everyone is welcome to come in civilian attire.”

At the end of the ceremony when everyone dispersed, I heard my name yelled by a familiar female voice. It was Samantha. “Hi, sweetie,” I said as we kissed. “So what did you think?”

“My hero,” she exclaimed.

“Let’s get changed and go to the party.”

When Samantha and I walked into the Officers club the first thing I noticed was Natasha in a stunning dress. The spaghetti straps of her dress clung to her shoulders. It revealed her back

all the way to the crack of her ass. She was already drinking and by the looks of it half-blitzed. I met all the other guys from our ordeal, had a few drinks, and made a few toasts. The whole time I felt Natasha giving me the evil look. We had not talked much that night. After all of us said our goodbyes and exchanged phone numbers, except Natasha, then we departed.

When Samantha and I left, I looked back at Natasha one last time. She abruptly turned her back. It was then that I noticed a tattoo of a dragonfly on her lower back peeking through her dress.

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