Chapter 1: The Battle at Vulture’s Pass

In the year 1840 the island of Iayomai, and an independent state, was still cut off from the rest of the civilizations and refused any trading. This however, did not make it a safe country. Iayomai was repeatedly attacked by foreign countries that wished to occupy them, but once they met the enemy at sea, the Iayomai would decimate anyone and should any enemy ships manage to land on the shores, their archers and cavalry would cut through anyone as most of their beaches were open fields leading up to steep hills, allowing the archers to just launch arrow barrages from the top of these hills down on the defenseless invaders. Iayomai was later called the Floating Fortress as no invading country could penetrate its defenses.

They maintained the same values and politics all the way up to 1890 when the Floating Fortress softened up. Their new ruler decided to open their borders and the first ones invited were the Kubrica Republic, a proud people with a vast military force, but not very organized or well trained, and a knack for commerce. A treaty was settled two years later between Iayomai and Kubrica. Kubrica would share their steam technology with them and in return Iayomai would train their troops in the arts of war.

This didn’t sit well with some of the Iayomai officials who were against receiving help from people outside their country as well as training a potential enemy. They were unorganized and poorly trained, but they could outnumber them as it was. However the new ruler had no interest in listening about his country’s old ways and proceeded.

Weeks after the treaty was signed, Iayomai fell into civil war. The war tore through the lands as thousands died every week. Eventually the land was divided into two warring factions: the Idhathe Empire to the south, supporters of the pro-foreign policy, and the Hinawa Dominion to the north, who opposed the pro-foreign policy and wanted to drive the strangers out as well as anyone who stood against them. With Hinawa waging war on them and threatening their allies, Idhathe saw itself in a pinch, especially since their army wasn’t as vast and strong as Hinawa’s. They were eventually forced to petition Kubrica for military aid, but naturally refused. Kubrica had nothing to gain from a conflict such as that and it wasn’t theirs to begin with so Idhathe stepped up a little and offered a hefty sum for their military aid. Now that profit was brought into discussion Kubrica finally started considering. They accepted to help them in the end, but only technologically in order to outfit their troops with cutting edge weapons for that period. Combine that with the training the soldiers of Idhathe had and you have an unstoppable force.

Not long after the aid petition was accepted, two Kubrica officers that were stationed in Idhathe’s territory offered as volunteers to aid teach the troops on how to properly use the new weapons they acquired. These officers were known as Cassandra Tanner and Daryl Crawford.

The two were stationed in the Vulture’s Pass, a small fort built in a rocky canyon with the help of Kubrica that now serves as the only gate into and out of Idhathe’s territory. Unfortunately for them, concealed in the fog that occasionally covers the barren canyon, the visibility was greatly reduced and the troops were caught unaware of Hinawa’s presence in the region. The enemy had built a small camp, their movement being concealed by the fog, and began launching attacks in waves to test the defense forces. At that point, both officers assumed command of the fort and started to coordinate the troops and organize the defense because if that fort fell, Idhathe could be attacked on any front. The first thing they did was send a message to the capital and request reinforcements, but no answer came back so they continued to stay there. Should that be their end, they accept it with honor.

For days the two officers fought valiantly side by side with Idhathe’s forces, but their numbers were dwindling with each passing day. What they didn’t know is that the message had reached the capital, but they never sent a reply and instead dispatched the troops immediately. Kamiko Fujimoto – a former spy – and Takao Himura – a noble warrior – were leading the aid party. They were fortunate to reach the fort just in time and successfully pushed the enemy back to their camp. This brought the forces enough time to dig in and set up defensive positions along the pass between the enemy camp and their own.

Shortly after they dug in, Hinawa forces launched yet another attack in waves. This was to be the final assault and the Idhathe would claim victory, but not without a great cost.

Chapter 2: The White Forest Path