

CHAPTER FOUR THRESHOLD

It was from the top of the Old Town Hall Tower, built in 1338, that Kveta Ceskova addressed the nation, castle guards standing at her side. The Square was filled with people of every age, anxious and frightened.

Strangely, without any microphone, her voice carried clearly and was heard by one and all. “I am Kveta Ceskova, the Minister of Education. The President and Prime Minister are out of the country and have authorized me to speak on their behalf. The airport is closed; no flights are arriving or leaving. The metro, trams and buses are not operating.

Yesterday, a young woman, someone we do not know, came to Prague Castle to speak with us. She met with me, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Ministers of the Interior and of Informatics. She requested I ask every Czech citizen not to cause harm to any animal. Her exact words were “They are here to help.” We were told that neither food nor water will be a concern. Our Ministers of Agriculture, Environment, Health, Labor and Social Affairs are assessing what has happened, putting all essential services for survival in place.

The name of our capital means *Threshold*. The unknown can be frightening and frustrating. We are Czechs. Our history has shown who we were in the past. How each of us behaves now, the choices we each make, will define who we are for the future.

I would like to ask everyone who owns one or more guns to turn them in to a local government authority. This is voluntary and temporary.

Our first Marathon was to begin tomorrow. Runners are here from all over the world and can take your messages across the country. There will be a meeting here each morning. Tomorrow, I’ll name three other locations in Prague for daily updates and announcements.”

Before she could continue, the sound of wings filled the Square, thousands of birds flying in a formation which everyone recognized. St. Wenceslas’s Eagle.